

## Christopher Bilder

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**From:** Marina Ptukhina <ptukhim@whitman.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 16, 2025 11:05 AM  
**To:** Christopher Bilder; Bhaskar Bhattacharya  
**Subject:** Fwd: Support for the Department of Statistics at UNL

**Caution:** Non-NU Email

Hi Chris and Bhaskar,

Please see the letter that I sent to the administrators. I hope that this helps during the October 10th meeting.

Marina

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Marina Ptukhina <ptukhim@whitman.edu>  
**Date:** Mon, Sep 15, 2025 at 10:38 AM  
**Subject:** Support for the Department of Statistics at UNL  
**To:** <[chancellorbennett@unl.edu](mailto:chancellorbennett@unl.edu)>, <[president@nebraska.edu](mailto:president@nebraska.edu)>, <[thengmoss2@unl.edu](mailto:thengmoss2@unl.edu)>, <[karen.griffin@unl.edu](mailto:karen.griffin@unl.edu)>

Dear President Gold, Chancellor Rodney Bennett, Vice Chancellor Tiffany Heng-Moss and Karen Griffin,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Department of Statistics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and to advocate against its proposed elimination. Having been both a student and an educator in this outstanding department, I feel compelled to highlight its essential role within the university and beyond.

During my time at UNL, I had the privilege of learning from exceptional faculty members such as Walt Stroup, Steve Kachman, and Erin Blankenship, among others. Their dedication to teaching not only enhanced my understanding of statistics but also transformed me into a more competent educator and researcher. The skills and insights I gained have had a profound impact on my career and research capabilities.

The Department of Statistics is a foundational pillar for numerous disciplines across UNL. As a Teaching Assistant and Lab Assistant for courses like the design and analysis of research studies, I witnessed firsthand the critical importance of statistical knowledge. Students from diverse fields, particularly animal studies and agriculture, depend on these courses to conduct meaningful research. Eliminating this department would severely undermine the quality and integrity of these programs.

Statistics serves as the backbone of any research initiative, and a strong Department of Statistics is vital for UNL to maintain its status as a leader in innovative research. Moreover, as UNL aims to return to the ranks of the Association of American Universities (AAU), a robust statistics program is indispensable in

achieving this goal.

My experience at UNL was not only academically enriching but also personally rewarding. The friendships and professional relationships I built during my time there continue to support my career. Similarly, my fellow graduates share my view that the education we received was unparalleled, empowering us to excel as educators, researchers, and colleagues.

I urge the university leadership to reconsider the elimination of the Department of Statistics. Preserving and strengthening this department is crucial for the continued success and excellence of UNL.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,

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Marina Ptukhina (Pa-**too**-he-nuh), PhD  
*Pronouns:* She / Her / Hers  
Associate Professor  
Department of Mathematics and Statistics  
Whitman College  
Walla Walla, WA

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