September 20, 2025

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Administration
University of Nebraska-Lincoln 1400 R Street Lincoln, NE 68588

RE: Reconsideration of Statistics Program Elimination

Dear UNL Administrators,

As a professor directing a data analytics program at Doane University, I am writing to express my significant concern regarding the proposed elimination of the Statistics Program. After reviewing the provided rationale, I believe the "distributive model" being considered reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of statistics as a discipline, its potential growth and widespread relevance.

While numerous disciplines certainly utilize statistical methods, these methods exist because of the dedicated work of professional statisticians. In a world where all organizations rely on analytics for decision-making, the role of statisticians in developing and validating new techniques is more crucial than ever. The statistics major recently established at UNL represents a forward-thinking investment in your university's future, since data-related careers continue to offer exceptional opportunities for graduates with four-year degrees. These graduates typically secure high-paying positions and become loyal alumni with the capacity to give back substantially. But, unfortunately, you are not choosing not to capitalize on this opportunity.

At Doane University, we have witnessed firsthand the value of investing in data analytics education. Our program has experienced 100% growth in class sizes over the past few years, primarily driven by minors and certificate seekers. These students consistently secure lucrative employment offers before graduation. And, while our program majors represent approximately only 2% of our student population, they account for over 20% of all alumni donations—a metric that merits consideration in any program evaluation.

Doane has maintained a productive relationship with UNL's Statistics graduate programs. We utilize Dr. Chris Bilder's excellent textbook in our MTH316 Categorical Analysis course, and several of our alumni have successfully matriculated to your program. Two of our alumni will complete their master's degrees this spring, fortunately before any potential program closure. Three of our current seniors are planning to apply this spring, assuming the program remains available. Our successful alumni who completed UNL's Statistics program include these leaders, who have risen to the top of their organizations:

1. Billy Garver, UNL Statistics M.S., 2013, Chief Compliance Officer & Co-owner, Leibman Financial Services, Louisville, NE *Donated over $100,000 to Doane last year*
2. Julie Couton, UNL Statistics Ph.D., 2017, Senior Data Scientist, Incredible Health
3. Katie Kallenbach, UNL Statistics M.S., 2012, Statistician, USDA
4. Zack Gabelhouse, UNL Statistics M.S., 2005, Director of Client Strategy, Deluxe Corporation

There is substantial, easily obtained evidence showing the strong future demand for data-related careers like the ones these alumni have [1][2]. These careers primarily utilize tools developed by statisticians like those in your program. Employment of data scientists is projected to grow 36% from 2023 to 2033, much faster than the average for all occupations [1][2]. Demand for similar roles is expected to increase by 30-35% between 2023 and 2027, driven by the exponential increase in data and adoption of AI tools [3].

In addition, the global data analytics market is forecast to expand from $7.03 billion in 2023 to $303.4 billion by 2030, representing a compound annual growth rate of 27.6% [5]. This growth reflects widespread enterprise reliance on data-driven insights and AI integration [1][5].

For Nebraska's flagship university to overlook these forward-looking indicators is concerning for those who value our land-grant university's mission and our state's economic future. I respectfully urge you to reconsider these additional variables as you review the appeal from the program's faculty.

Sincerely,

Peggy Hart

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2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023). Data Occupations.
   https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2023/data-on-display/data-occupations.htm

3. Exploding Topics. (2023). Data Analytics Statistics.

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4. 365 Data Science. (2023). Data Analyst Job Outlook 2025.

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5. William Jessup University. (2023). Data Analyst Career Outlook.

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