

Christopher Bilder

From: Bhaskar Bhattacharya
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 7:40 PM
To: Statistics Faculty
Subject: Fw: Support for your department

Thank you, Reka, for contacting Dr. Hoegemeyer.

Bhaskar Bhattacharya

Professor and Department Head

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From: Thomas Hoegemeyer <thoegemeyer@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 4:05 PM
To: Bhaskar Bhattacharya <bbhattacharya8@unl.edu>
Subject: Support for your department

Caution: Non-NU Email

Dear Sir,

While we have never met, I wanted you to know that I have made all the contacts I know how to, with Regents whom I know (and addressed a letter to the board directly) and to all the administrators on the list that Reka Howard sent me. Here is essentially what I shared with them:

I don't envy your position in this whole budget situation, however I felt that I needed to express my concerns to you.

My background is in quantitative genetics and plant improvement—I owned my own company for 30 years, worked for a multi-national corporation, and spent nearly 7 years as a faculty member in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture. In the agriculture/food world, virtually all the genetic traits of interest are continuous, rather than discrete—and must be measured in means, variances, and co-variances. Further, since the advent of genomics and multi-omics data, statistical descriptions of genotypes and phenotypes and related genomic selection techniques have become standard operating procedures in commercial plant and animal genetics operations. Our UN-L students who earn advanced degrees in these disciplines are highly sought after, and command higher starting salaries than most full professors in our departments.

The proposal to eliminate the Department of Statistics at UN-L will deliver a severe blow to all the biological sciences at UN-L, but especially the Plant and Animal Sciences graduate programs (who already collaborate extensively to offer many courses together in these statistically related disciplines). It

will effectively eliminate our ability to offer most graduate degrees in these disciplines, or relegate our graduate programs to the “minor leagues.”

In addition, the Department of Statistics, both via teaching and consulting has been and continues to be an integral part of the research performed by IANR and the Beadle Center. These groups continue to garner a large share of the total research grants awarded to the University. Statistics faculty are consistently integral to the design, analysis, and interpretation of nationally important studies. If we are serious about remaining an “R1” university, much less regaining AAU status, we absolutely need these people, the courses they teach, and the help they provide. In my professional judgment this is best done by retaining a stand-alone Department of Statistics. The alternative is to hire MOST of these professors as faculty in other departments—they are integral to our success.

My wife and I have donated nearly a million dollars to UN-L, and have helped raise millions more through the University of Nebraska Foundation—you are welcome to check with them. I see no reason to continue if UN-L can no longer have strong programs in these fields.

I am long since retired from UN-L (Agronomy and Horticulture), where I taught plant breeding and genetics courses, and had lots of opportunities to interact with Kent Eskridge and Reka. My Ph.D minor was in statistics at Iowa State (more graduate credit hours in statistics than agronomy or plant genetics). My commercial career very much depended upon making sound decisions, and I had the opportunity to appreciate lots of statistical techniques and advancements. We will be doing future plant and animal breeders (and the people they serve) a distinct disservice by not giving them the opportunity to do more than "sample" introductory statistics.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Hoegemeyer, Ph.D