

Hi, Dixon.

Here's what I submitted. Hoping common sense prevails.

Tim

*As an alum of UNL, 50-year resident of Lincoln and spouse of an emeritus professor, I've witnessed my share of University budget crises up close. There's no question that the Legislature (and whoever was Governor at the time) have perennially faltered in state government's obligations to both K-12 and post-secondary education. And lots of responsibility for the current financial crisis can be placed smack at the Statehouse's door.*

*But the UNL Administration's own recommendations to gut six departments now (though with the 'chain-saw' mentality that's being exhibited, I'm guessing we'll be seeing another batch of savaging cuts in the not-too-distant future), the Chancellor's Office is calling into question its own commitment to maintaining a flagship educational institution.*

*Already, in the just-released 2026 U.S. News & World Report ratings, UNL ranks dead last academically among its 17 peer institutions in the Big Ten (158th nationally—and the only school not a member of the AAU; the next lowest-ranked conference member is Oregon at 110th).*

*If, after 14 years, the Administration's only serious response to this last-placed standing is to further pare down UNL's academic offerings to our state (good bye Statistics, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and Community & Regional Planning, to name just three), then perhaps UNL should re-think its pretensions of being a member of the Big Ten. Apart from its performance in athletics, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has no business trying to keep such company academically. We embarrass ourselves and do no favors to the academic standing of the conference as a whole.*

*This mention of athletics, though, does perhaps offer a way forward out of the current budget crisis. Since Nebraskans and our state elected officials (Governor, Board of Regents members and State Senators) seem as enthusiastic as ever about supporting UNL Athletics, maybe it's high time the academic arm of UNL demand that the Athletics program begin paying an annual 'user fee' for the privilege of wearing the University of Nebraska brand. While academics are being mauled yet again, the cash reserves for football, basketball and volleyball seem bottomless. A 'surcharge' on the athletic programs sponging off our state's Land Grant University and premier institution of Higher Education could well help close that \$27.5 million shortfall that set this most recent bloodbath in motion. The football program, as you might recall, bought out Scott Frost's contract for \$15 million dollars without blinking an eye.*

Tim Rinne  
Class of '79