

Dear Members of the Academic Planning Committee,

I am writing as an alumnus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where I earned my Master's degree in Statistics, to strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed elimination of the Statistics Department due to the budget crisis. As an international student, the education and support I received from the Statistics Department were pivotal in shaping my career and achieving the American Dream. I firmly believe that eliminating this department would be a significant loss for current and future students, as well as alumni like myself who continue to rely on its resources.

The Statistics Department played a transformative role in my professional journey. Through its rigorous academic training and dedicated faculty, I gained the skills necessary to secure a position as a statistical analyst in the pharmaceutical industry—a field with abundant opportunities for statisticians. The department's career support was instrumental in helping me launch my career, and I have never faced difficulty finding employment due to the high demand for statistical expertise in this industry. Building on this foundation, I later founded a small consulting company specializing in statistical analysis for the pharmaceutical and biotech sectors, further demonstrating the practical and entrepreneurial value of my UNL education.

Beyond my initial education, the Statistics Department has remained an invaluable resource throughout my career. The ability to consult with my former professors when facing complex statistical challenges has been critical to my success. This ongoing support underscores the department's role not only in educating students but also in fostering a lifelong connection with alumni who contribute to society and the economy.

Eliminating the Statistics Department would have far-reaching negative consequences. For future students, it would close the door to a field with robust career prospects, limiting their access to high-demand, well-paying jobs in industries like pharmaceuticals, biotech, and beyond. For alumni like myself, it would sever a vital lifeline of expertise and collaboration. Moreover, the department's dissolution would diminish UNL's reputation as a leader in preparing students for data-driven careers, at a time when statistical literacy is more critical than ever.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,

Qingwen Zhao

UNL Master's in Statistics (Biometry), 1996

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