

Chapter One

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR NEBRASKA'S FUTURE

Vision for Nebraska Higher Education

Nebraskans will reap many benefits from affordable, accessible and high-quality higher education. Nebraska's people will value and support higher education institutions that are vital, vigorous and visionary. Each higher education institution will fulfill its role and mission with distinction by being responsive to changing academic, workforce, societal, economic, and community development needs. Together, Nebraska's institutions will provide access to educational opportunities that meet the diverse needs of students and citizens while exercising careful and creative stewardship of available resources.

The Evolving Environment

Nebraskans often speak of the "good life" in Nebraska, made possible by good public K/12 schools, relatively safe and clean communities, a strong work ethic, and an array of higher education opportunities. Some believe this "good life" may be in jeopardy in the future, given the current demographic and economic realities within the State. This Plan charts a course for creative and proactive leadership in education and technology that can position this State for an exemplary future.

Nebraska is a geographically large state with a widely dispersed population. Minority populations are the only segment of the population projected to show any long-term growth in the coming years and that growth will be gradual compared to the rest of the nation. Nebraska's working-age population is projected to stop growing in approximately 2015. The only significant population growth will probably occur in the two metropolitan areas of the State. These demographic projections, combined with Nebraska's traditionally low unemployment rates, its aging population, and its lack of net new migration, will exacerbate existing workforce shortages and threaten the State's future economic growth.

While the State's population is projected to be relatively flat, the costs of needed local, state, and federal government services and infrastructures, including those of public higher education, will most likely grow. This places an increasing burden on the taxpayers of the State. Nebraska traditionally has one of the highest participation rates in higher education in the country. It also ranks among the top ten states in the nation in per capita state appropriation for public higher education. Many of the State's taxpayers are working

in low paying jobs compared to other states, making the tax burden even greater.

The State of Nebraska is at a pivotal point in determining its future. In this “Information Age,” higher education and technology are more important than ever before. The development of this Plan is timely for Nebraska and capitalizes on the educational strengths of the State. The State of Nebraska and its higher education institutions can work together to effectively address the problems facing the State and prepare the State and its citizens to be successful in the Twenty-First Century. The economic base in Nebraska may have limitations, but Nebraska’s educational base is very promising and provides an opportunity to determine the State’s destiny.

The following section highlights some of the major forces for change in the future along with their potential impacts on higher education and the State.

DEMOGRAPHIC FORCES

- The State as a whole will experience slow population growth, with metropolitan and other urban areas experiencing most of the growth.
- Statewide, total numbers of high school graduates are projected to drop over the next decade, with increases only in metropolitan areas and a few rural counties (primarily those with meat processing plants).
- The population will become more diverse as numbers of Hispanics and other minorities grow faster than the general population.
- Nebraska will continue to rank high compared to other states in higher education participation rates.

Potential Impacts:

Overall, institutions of higher education will see increased competition for traditional-age, in-state students.

Nebraska institutions will intensify efforts to recruit out-of-state students and will work harder to retain Nebraska students.

Institutions will develop new strategies and support programs for attracting and retaining minority population students.

ECONOMIC FORCES

- Employers are demanding a workforce that can keep pace with an explosion of knowledge and rapid technological change.
- Corporations are purchasing increasing amounts of education and training services, often from third party vendors, to fill needs quickly for employee knowledge and skills.
- Businesses are seeking technical assistance in using technology to become more

- productive and profitable.
- Economic growth in Nebraska is limited by shortages of workers, especially those with technical training.
 - Nebraska has one of the nation's lowest unemployment rates.
 - Nebraska ranks low, in comparison with other states, in private and federal research funds, limiting opportunities for new business growth and innovation within the State.
 - Agriculture is becoming more technical and diversified, with increasing emphasis on value-added processing and niche marketing.

Potential Impacts:

Postsecondary institutions will need to respond rapidly to employer needs and become increasingly flexible in course content and in the use of technology in delivery of instruction.

Institutions will see a growing demand from business for specialized knowledge and skill certifications (in professional, vocational, and technical areas such as information technology) to meet workforce needs.

The State will consider incentives for recruiting and educating students in targeted workforce shortage areas.

Businesses will expect increased levels of assistance from higher education in the areas of technology transfer, applied research, and technical assistance.

Advances in information technologies will create expanded opportunities for businesses to locate production facilities at sites remote from central offices.

It will become increasingly important for the State's primary research institutions to attract federal and private research funding.

POLITICAL FORCES

- Competition for State funding is continuing to grow.
- Provision of services for an aging population are requiring more attention and resources from State policy makers.
- Support remains strong for public institutions that demonstrate responsiveness to local, regional, and State needs.
- State and national policymakers increasingly expect measures of accountability and performance for higher education.

Potential Impacts:

Attempts at collaboration on funding issues between higher education and K-12 education leaders may become increasingly difficult, yet no less important.

The accountability expectations of governing boards, legislators, consumers, and accrediting agencies will result in improved institutional accountability

structures.

Postsecondary educational institutions will have a strong, vested interest in the welfare of Nebraska's economy.

TECHNOLOGICAL FORCES

- Statewide, communities and employers are demanding equitable access to broadband communications and information technologies.
- Innovations in information technologies have created a global and highly competitive higher education marketplace.
- Information technologies have vastly expanded consumer access to higher education. Distance is less relevant to off-campus postsecondary instruction for more and more learners.
- Technological advances have outpaced the capacity of traditional institutions of higher education to utilize these new technologies.
- Nationally, corporations and for-profit postsecondary institutions are responding rapidly to the open market environment, greatly expanding adult opportunities for in-house corporate training and courses offered via the Internet and other information technologies.
- A growing disparity in the use of information technology exists between the metro/urban areas and other areas of the State, partly due to uneven availability of technology and connectivity. (Rural areas are less likely to have access to high-speed internet services and wireless communications technology.)
- Consumer and business expectations are growing for any time, any place delivery of postsecondary courses to meet specific personal or business needs through multiple information technologies.

Potential Impacts:

Connectivity of hardware and delivery systems will become essential for the State and its higher education institutions. State support will be important in developing infrastructure and connectivity to serve rural areas.

A higher proportion of students at public institutions will utilize various forms of information technologies to acquire needed course work.

Technology will provide students with access to programs and courses not otherwise available through Nebraska institutions.

Institutions will use technology to respond to consumer forces that demand convenience and responsiveness.

The high up-front development costs of technologies will drive institutions to share course development costs through consortia or purchase courses from other institutions or third party vendors.

Pricing structures of distance learning courses will develop to meet competition

and to amortize development costs.

Increasing utilization of information technologies will dramatically affect the demand for and the design and cost of higher education facilities.

Residents of rural areas will have greater access to higher education services.

INSTITUTIONAL FORCES

- The community college's expanded role in academic transfer education is attracting more traditional-age college students to their campuses.
- Nebraska has traditionally had a very high rate of participation in postsecondary education, ranking the State in the top ten states nationally for the percentage of high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education.
- Both the cost of education for taxpayers and price of education for students and parents are rising faster than general inflation.
- In spite of great progress in addressing deferred maintenance needs, many facilities on the campuses are aging and are in need of repair, replacement or renovation and adaptation to new technologies.
- The role of the faculty is changing as a result of the use of technology to deliver courses off-campus and to bring new resources into the classroom on campus.

Potential Impacts:

While overall enrollment in higher education is projected to remain somewhat stable, there will be enrollment shifts within sectors, in particular if more students choose to begin their education at community colleges and then transfer to four-year colleges.

The State and the institutions will continue to direct funds toward maintenance, repair, replacement, and renovation of existing facilities, as well as adapting facilities to new technologies.

As costs of education continue to escalate, institutions increasingly will look toward methods of collaboration with other institutions to become more efficient. More students will use student loans to fund their education and many will be employed while in college, typically adding to the time it takes them to complete their education.

The faculty will be expected to be proficient in the use of new technologies and many will be more involved in developing technology mediated course materials in addition to their other responsibilities.

The faculty and institutions will increasingly look to third party vendors to purchase courses or course modules.

Shared Values and Beliefs

Moving toward this Plan's vision for postsecondary education will benefit Nebraskans now and in the future. The vision is based on the following values and beliefs that the Coordinating Commission shares with the leaders of Nebraska higher education institutions and their governing board members:

- All Nebraska citizens deserve reasonable and affordable access to higher education opportunities appropriate to their individual needs and abilities, unrestricted by age, culture, disability, color, national origin, gender, economic status, or geographic location.
- Nebraska's citizens benefit from a comprehensive network of diverse and high quality postsecondary education institutions that maintain distinct, but complementary, roles and missions.
- The State benefits when Nebraska institutions focus resources on unique areas of excellence in which they can bring major benefits to the State and to students.
- A cooperative relationship between higher education and K/12 education is needed to ensure that students enter higher education prepared to succeed.
- Higher education has an important role in supporting the State's economic development goals by contributing to a competent and competitive workforce for our State and by ensuring lifelong learning and training opportunities for our citizens.
- Higher education's ability to apply information technology effectively to respond rapidly to changing student, employer, and State needs is critical to its success.
- Nebraska's public institutions rely on State funding policies that are fair and predictable and offer appropriate levels of support to enable the institutions to meet the educational needs of students and the State.
- Nebraska public institutions are accountable to the State for making wise use of resources for programs, services, and facilities as well as for avoiding unnecessary duplication.

Major Statewide Goals

The following major statewide goals are critical to the achievement of this Plan's vision for higher education in Nebraska. Accomplishing these goals will require substantial cooperative effort on the part of all persons involved with higher education in the State. Further discussion of each major statewide goal and strategies for the accomplishment of each of the major goals form the framework for chapters two through six of this Plan:

Meeting the Needs of Students (Chapter Two)

Nebraska institutions and policy makers will seek methods to increase

participation and success in higher education, including low income and under-represented populations, and to ensure that access to higher education institutions' programs and services is not restricted by factors such as geographic location, economic status, age, culture, disability, color, national origin, or gender.

Nebraska's postsecondary institutions will be student-centered and will offer life-long learning opportunities that are responsive to students' needs.

Postsecondary education institutions will provide appropriate support services to help all students reach their educational goals, regardless of where or how the instruction is delivered.

Nebraska colleges and universities will provide their graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed as capable employees and responsible citizens.

Meeting the Needs of the State (Chapter Three)

Higher education in Nebraska will be responsive to the workforce development and ongoing training needs of employers and industries to sustain a knowledgeable, trained and skilled workforce in both rural and urban areas of the State.

Institutions will contribute to the health and prosperity of the people and to the vitality of the State through research and development efforts and technology transfer and technical assistance, and by attracting external funds to support these activities.

Higher education will serve the State by preparing individuals for productive, fulfilling lives and by developing and nurturing the citizens and future leaders of Nebraska.

Postsecondary education institutions will assess evolving needs and priorities in a timely manner and will be prepared to change and adopt new methods and technologies to address the evolving needs and priorities of the students and people of Nebraska.

Meeting Needs by Building Exemplary Institutions (Chapter Four)

Each Nebraska institution will fulfill its role and mission in an exemplary

manner and will compare favorably with peer institutions.

Nebraska will value higher education and support its investment in public higher education through fair and reliable funding policies that provide appropriate levels of support to enable institutions to excel and meet the educational needs of the State and its students.

Higher education in Nebraska will be effective in meeting the needs of students and the State, will be efficient in its expenditure of the State's resources, and will be accountable for developing and sustaining exemplary teaching, learning, research, and public service.

Meeting Educational Needs through Partnerships and Collaboration (Chapter Five)

Higher education institutions will work as partners with one another and with other entities whenever appropriate to share resources and deliver programs cooperatively to enhance learning opportunities for Nebraska residents.

Higher education will work effectively with elementary and secondary schools to improve teaching and learning at all levels of education and to facilitate the transition from one level of education to another.

Facilities Planning to Meet Educational Needs (Chapter Six)

Nebraskans will advocate a physical environment for each of its public postsecondary institutions that is supportive of role and mission; is well-utilized and effectively accommodates space needs; is safe, accessible, cost effective, and well-maintained; and is flexible to adapt to future changes in programs and technologies.

Chapter Two

MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

The heart of any great higher education system is the student, the learner. Education that is vital, vigorous and visionary begins by identifying and addressing the current and future needs and aspirations of its students.

Goals and Strategies

Major
Statewide
Goal:
*Participation
and Access*

Nebraska institutions and policy makers will seek methods to increase participation and success in higher education and to ensure that access to higher education institutions' programs and services is not restricted by factors such as geographic location, economic status, age, culture, disability, color, national origin, or gender.

Access to postsecondary education is vitally important to the people of Nebraska. Its citizens strongly believe that postsecondary education opportunities should be readily available to them. For the most part, Nebraskans do enjoy reasonable access to postsecondary education. The sectors of postsecondary education provide Nebraskans with many educational choices and, as a network of institutions, offer access for students of all ability levels.

PARTICIPATION

Nebraskans attend college at a higher rate than the national average and the great majority choose to remain in Nebraska for their education. Other states have exceeded Nebraska's participation rates in recent years, however, dropping Nebraska's national ranking. Improving participation rates, especially for under-represented minorities, is still an important goal.

- **Strive for the highest participation rate in postsecondary education among the states.**

AFFORDABILITY

Family income levels should not determine whether an individual has access to higher education. Ensuring financial access to higher education is a shared responsibility of state and federal government, higher education institutions, and the students and their families. They must combine to provide sufficient support to ensure

that qualified financially-needy students have the opportunity to attend postsecondary education institutions that best match their needs, aspirations, and abilities.

- **Keep the net price of higher education affordable for students.**

Financial Aid

One means of keeping higher education affordable is to provide sufficient amounts of financial aid to needy students. Nebraska does not currently provide adequate financial support to financially-needy students.

- **Increase State support for the state-administered, need-based financial aid programs to improve Nebraska's competitive position to above the national average.**

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are another factor in the affordability of higher education. The rising cost of postsecondary education throughout the country has raised concerns that some students may be priced out of opportunities. While tuition and fees at Nebraska's public institutions are generally less than national averages, paying for a college education is a barrier to higher education for many students and their families.

- **Continue the existing State policy of maintaining moderate tuition rates at public postsecondary education institutions to promote access. Tuition rates will be moderate in comparison to each institution's peers and will be consistent with the recommended guidelines on page 11.**

College Savings Plans

Encouraging families to prepare financially for the cost of postsecondary education is another means of making college more affordable. In 2000, Nebraska created a State College Savings Plan program to assist Nebraska families to save for the cost of postsecondary education. Inherent in this program and other such programs are investment and tax benefits that motivate families to begin saving.

- **Encourage Nebraska families to invest and save funds to offset the future costs of higher education through various private and public college savings programs, including the State College Savings Plan.**

DIVERSITY

Nebraska's population is becoming more diverse each year, with growing numbers of Hispanics, African-Americans, Native Americans and Asians. The changing demographics of the State are reflected in the increasingly diverse student bodies of the campuses, yet issues and barriers to higher education—either real or perceived—still exist for many from these population groups. This is especially true for first-generation college students. Overcoming these barriers will benefit these students and their families as well as the State, by increasing the numbers of Nebraska citizens who have

the education and training needed to contribute to the State's economic and social well-being.

**Coordinating Commission's
Recommended Tuition & Fee Guidelines:**

1) Tuition and fee rates are set at a level within each sector that is appropriate to that sector's role and mission.

- S** Community colleges, which offer students entry-level career training or lower division academic transfer programs, will have the lowest tuition of the three sectors to ensure that they remain the sector with the broadest access. To keep community college tuition at a level that encourages public access, it will be necessary to maintain appropriate levels of state support for community colleges.
- S** State Colleges, which have a role and mission focusing on undergraduate and limited graduate-degree education, will have a mid-range level of tuition and fees. Tuition at these regional institutions will be maintained at levels which continue to encourage access by the citizens of their regions.
- S** The University of Nebraska's campuses, which have more comprehensive and differentiated missions that encompass research and extensive professional and graduate-level programming, will have the highest and most differentiated tuition rates of the three public sectors, based on the role and mission of each campus.

2) The State's taxpayers continue to bear the majority of the cost of education for students at public postsecondary institutions, on a per student basis. The students' share of the cost of education, as measured by student payment share, should be appropriate to the role and mission of each sector.

Student payment share, defined as the total revenue from tuition and mandatory fees compared to the total of tuition, mandatory fees, state support and local support, should adhere to the following differentiations within each sector:

- S** The student payment share at the community colleges should be the lowest of the three public sectors.
- S** The student payment share at the State Colleges should be greater than the student share at community colleges, but less than that at a University of Nebraska campus.
- S** The student payment share at the University of Nebraska should be greater than either the State College or the community colleges.

3) Institutions set comparatively low non-resident tuition and fee rates to attract out-of-state students to the state, which may eventually help to meet the State's needs for additional workers, and may encourage cultural diversity on the campuses.

4) Tuition for graduate-level and professional courses reflect the higher costs of these programs.

As part of its statutory responsibility to provide the Governor and legislature with a biennial report on tuition and fee rates at Nebraska public postsecondary education institutions, the Commission compares the tuition and fee rates of Nebraska institutions with those of their peer institutions identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission also provides data to help measure the affordability of higher education in Nebraska in terms of tuition as a proportion of family income.

Campuses must also be aware of the special needs of students with disabilities and of returning and first-time adult students. As institutions have become more accessible and accommodating to special-needs students and more flexible in scheduling for non-traditional age students, these students' numbers have also increased, adding to the diversity on the campuses.

- **Support existing programs and undertake new initiatives to support equity and promote diversity within the institutions' student bodies.**

- S Assure that all students, particularly students of color and other under-represented groups, are welcomed and integrated into campus life and have opportunities to succeed.
- S Increase efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student body.
- S Implement programs and allocate resources toward the goal of increasing baccalaureate degree completion rates of under-represented populations.
- S Use existing databases and indicators to track the progress of under-represented population groups in higher education in areas such as enrollment, retention, and completion.
- S Implement initiatives to eliminate discrimination, support equity, and promote diversity within student bodies, faculty and staff.
- S Provide virtually universal access at community colleges, which will provide educational opportunities ranging from foundations course work to technical and academic transfer programs.
- S Assure that campuses are accessible to students with disabilities.
- S Provide flexible hours and daytime and evening classes to meet the scheduling needs of students.
- S Target recruitment plans to attract students of color and other under-represented students to the campuses and help prepare them for college.
- S Actively recruit faculty and student role models for the new student populations so that as many students as possible see persons like themselves in a variety of responsible, admirable positions, particularly for women and minorities in fields in which they are often under-represented, such as mathematics, science, and engineering.
- S Support special activities, such as mentoring programs and peer counseling, that help first-generation college students and students from under-represented populations succeed in the campus environment.
- S Promote an awareness and appreciation of cultural and racial diversity through curriculum and student campus activities.
- S Encourage the allocation of state funds for achievement of these objectives.

USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY TO BROADEN ACCESS

Expanded use of electronic distance learning and other instructional technologies is a key strategy in broadening access to postsecondary education and life-long learning for Nebraska citizens. Geographic boundaries and remote locations present few

obstacles for most of these technologies. Courses may be delivered via terrestrial or satellite-based telecommunications, such as a two-way interactive video classrooms, or individually to students through computer-mediated or internet-based programs at times and places of choice.

Nebraskans are able to choose from a broad array of educational options offered through these various technologies by in-state and out-of-state institutions, businesses and other entities. Increasingly, course work offered via technology is student-centered, self-paced, and flexible as to time and place.

- **Commit to the use of information technologies to expand educational opportunities; overcome geographic barriers; provide high quality, accessible education programs; and make higher education available at nearly any time or any place.**

S Through expanded, coordinated and well-planned use of instructional technologies throughout the State, institutions can:

- < Provide a reasonably efficient method of broadening and enhancing access to postsecondary educational opportunities.
- < Allow opportunities for innovative and coordinated educational projects among the schools, postsecondary education, and the communities they serve.
- < Tailor courses and programs to meet the needs of specific groups of people, regardless of their location.
- < Serve businesses through increased access to, and sharing of, educational and business-related expertise.
- < Share high quality courses and programs taught by outstanding faculty to broaden and enrich the educational experience of students at more institutions and provide greater efficiency in use of the State's resources.
- < Enable learners to gain competencies in a variety of ways and be certified by objective means.

S Ensure that all distance learning programs available in Nebraska result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degrees/certificates awarded.

- < Inform citizens of the expectations and standards for educational programs delivered through instructional technologies and, to the extent possible, assure the quality of those educational programs and support services made available to students residing throughout the State.
- < Endorse the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and School's *Guidelines for Distance Learning* and take measures to ensure that courses offered in Nebraska via instructional technologies meet or exceed the standards. (See Appendix 2 for the North Central Association's Guidelines for Distance Learning.) The Commission will utilize these guidelines in fulfilling its Constitutional and statutory duties to review new programs and to review applications for out-

of-state programs and new private colleges.

- S Encourage and reward faculty for incorporating technology into courses and subjects.

Learning Centers

The rapidly expanding use of new distance learning technologies has not only greatly enhanced access, but has also made possible cooperative ventures among institutions inside and outside the state that broaden the learning experience of students and expand learning opportunities. Cooperative educational projects, such as community-based learning centers, bring beneficial programs to different regions of the state while saving money for the state and its students.

- **Participate in learning centers and educational consortia that increase access to and participation in higher education throughout the state.**

The development and operation of a learning center are dependent on the commitment of the community, the state, and the participating institutions for ongoing success. Responsibilities are shared as follows:

- S Communities are largely responsible for undertaking the initiative to create the learning center within the community, including providing the facility to house it.
- S The State has a major responsible for providing the statewide connectivity and technology that allows learning centers to import needed programming from higher education institutions.
- S The institutions that serve the community have primary responsibility for meeting the community's needs in providing appropriate courses and programs.

Major
Statewide
Goal:
Student

Nebraska's postsecondary education institutions will be student-centered and will offer learning opportunities that are responsive to students' needs.

Equally important to the opportunity to participate in higher education is the opportunity for students to succeed in higher education. Institutions that truly meet student needs provide programs, services and campus environments that not only meet the current needs of students, but also are sufficiently flexible to meet the need of a changing student population.

PREPARATION AND ADMISSION STANDARDS

Clearly defined preparation and admission standards within a coordinated system of postsecondary education help ensure that students have access to institutions that meet their needs and provide the best opportunity for success. Neither the needs of the students nor the needs of the state are best served when academically unprepared students enroll in institutions.

- **Clearly define and communicate preparation and admission standards to students so that they enroll at institutions where they have the opportunity to succeed at achieving their educational and career goals.**
 - S Identify appropriate admission standards reflective of each postsecondary education institution's role and mission and communicate these standards to the K/12 school systems and to adults who are considering enrolling in postsecondary education.
 - S The content and expectations of freshman-year coursework should be consistent with the admission and preparation standards set by the institutions to help ensure that a gap does not exist between high school graduation competencies and freshman-year academic expectations.
 - S Continue articulation agreements between the community colleges and the four-year colleges and universities to assure that students who do not meet admission standards at four-year institutions have the opportunity to achieve a baccalaureate degree by beginning course work at a community college.
- **Set preparation and admission standards at Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions that are comparable to those of their respective peers and that are consistent with the recommended preparation and admission standards guidelines on page 16.**

ARTICULATION

Students do not come to postsecondary education with equivalent preparation levels, yet each student deserves the opportunity to progress through higher education to the level that meets their educational and career goals. A truly coordinated system of postsecondary education facilitates opportunities for individuals to move easily from one sector of postsecondary education to another as their abilities grow and their needs, interests, and educational goals shift.

- **Foster additional articulation agreements that ensure students enrolled in most programs will be able to transfer from one institution to another with ease and with minimal loss of credits or loss of time required to complete their degrees.**
 - S A student's options for postsecondary education are not limited by his or her choice of where first to attend college. Provided the institution is properly

accredited, learning achievements from the first institution will open doors to new opportunities at other institutions.

**Coordinating Commission's
Recommended Preparation and Admission Standards Guidelines**

1) Preparation and admission standards will help Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions demonstrate institutional effectiveness in areas such as retention and graduation rates through comparisons with each institution's peers.

2) Community College Guidelines:

- S Community colleges continue their policy of open admissions, although not necessarily to all programs within an institution. Different preparation and admission standards that reflect the differences in programs within the community college system are acceptable.
- S Community colleges inform prospective students of the recommended preparation level for their anticipated course of study. The entry-level skills of new students are assessed to guide students into courses and programs that facilitate progress to their education or career goals.
- S The community colleges provide foundation education coursework for those who are unprepared for college level work.

3) State Colleges Guidelines:

- S Students admitted to any of the State College institutions will be prepared to succeed at the State College level upon admission.
- S The Nebraska State Colleges identify and recommend those high school courses that, if completed satisfactorily, will provide the skills and competencies needed for students to have reasonable probability for academic success at a Nebraska State College.
- S The preparation standards recommended by the State Colleges are communicated by the institutions to K/12 counselors, students and their parents.
- S The State Colleges fund and implement programs to assure that recommended preparation standards do not interfere with the access or diversity goals of the State Colleges.
- S Ideally, the foundations education needs of students are provided for whenever possible through cooperative arrangements with community colleges.

4) University of Nebraska Guidelines:

- S Students admitted to any of the University of Nebraska campuses will be prepared to succeed at the University level upon admission.
- S The University's admission standards are communicated by the institutions to K/12 counselors, students and their parents.
- S The University funds and implements programs that promote admission standards consistent with the diversity goals of the University.
- S Ideally, the foundations education needs of students are provided, for whenever possible, through cooperative arrangements with community colleges.

- S Articulation agreements at Nebraska postsecondary education institutions are consistent with the recommended guidelines on page 18.

TIME TO DEGREE

Students, their parents, institutions, employers, and Nebraska taxpayers all share an interest in timely progression through postsecondary education into the workplace. For students and their parents, issues of financial burden and cost effectiveness come into play. Institutions benefit because students who are progressing quickly through their instructional programs are less likely to drop out and are more satisfied with their college experience. Given labor shortages in Nebraska, employers also see advantages to timely graduation. Taxpayers prefer students to progress smoothly and quickly through the postsecondary system so that State and local appropriations for public institutions are wisely used and not duplicated.

- **Institutions help students to graduate within a reasonable and predictable time-frame.**
 - S Programs are structured with consideration for time to degree as well as assuring competency in required knowledge and skills. Flexibility in course scheduling, such as adapting to the schedules of working students, facilitates program completion.
 - S Needed support services are available to all students to increase the likelihood of timely graduation.
 - S Comparable and reliable measurements of retention rates and graduation rates are available and publicly accessible from all sectors of postsecondary education.

SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE CAMPUSES

Parents and students rank personal safety as a priority. Fortunately, students on Nebraska college campuses are far more secure than at many campuses in other states. Reports of assaults and violent crime on Nebraska campuses are rare and below national averages. In recent years, many Nebraska institutions have undertaken measures to make their campuses even more secure through better lighting, emergency phones, additional security personnel, etc.

Most facilities on Nebraska campuses are safe, accessible to the disabled and are fully ADA compliant. Fire safety is a concern on all campuses, but especially those with older residence halls. Accessibility also remains a challenge at some campuses.

- **Institutions continue efforts to provide safe and accessible campuses that are responsive to changing student needs and supportive of a learning environment.**
- **Campus facilities are well maintained to assure the safety of students.**

**Coordinating Commission's
Recommended Articulation Guidelines**

1) Academic credits for equivalent courses at Nebraska public institutions are appropriately recognized by the other public institutions, creating a seamless, coordinated public postsecondary educational Needs network. This Recommendation

articulation based on the results of this report.

Major
Statewide
Goal:
Support Services

Postsecondary education institutions will provide appropriate support services to help all students reach their educational goals, regardless of where and how the instruction is delivered.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Students drop classes and leave institutions for a variety of reasons, many beyond the control of the institutions. However, a comprehensive mix of student support services can make the difference in retaining students and helping them to succeed and are fundamental to the students' overall college experiences. These support services include academic assistance, such as advising or mentoring programs; services that meet students' personal needs, such as health centers and personal counseling; organizations aimed at special groups, such as minorities or non-traditional age students; and student activities such as student government, intramural sports, and campus cultural events that give students opportunities to be involved with the campus.

Providing Preparation and Support

Many people enrolling in postsecondary education lack the preparation they will need in some academic areas to learn successfully. Students who are under-prepared or lack learning skills come from a wide variety of situations, including recent high school graduates as well as people who haven't been in a classroom for decades. In addition, recent immigrants frequently need some foundations education to prepare them for further education in this country. For all of these individuals, enrollment in foundations education courses and support through counseling or mentoring programs may mean the difference between their educational success or failure.

- **Provide academic assistance through foundations education courses to assist students who are not academically prepared for college-level courses. When possible, these courses are provided through the community college system.**
- **Offer tutoring, mentoring, and counseling programs that provide appropriate assistance for students.**

Providing Resources

Today's higher education environment is shifting from a focus on teaching to a focus on student learning. Students are becoming more actively engaged in their own

learning process, utilizing a number of resources available to them through multiple sources such as faculty, libraries, classroom and lab experiences, instructional technologies, and the Internet. Creating campus facilities and support services that nurture this learning environment and meet the needs of both on-campus and off-campus distance learning students is a growing challenge for institutions.

- **Provide learning support systems, including accessible libraries, well-equipped computer labs, and classrooms that are equipped for the newest technologies and support an enriched, flexible, and effective learning environment for all students.**

S Students have the opportunity to conduct campus administrative functions, such as registering for courses, dropping and adding courses, and checking financial aid and bill payment status, on-line.

S Faculty are encouraged to provide course syllabuses, class notes, supplemental resources, and class announcements on-line for the convenience of the students.

- **Ensure that all distance learning programs available in Nebraska result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree/certificate programs awarded on campus, and that students enrolled in distance learning programs have access to support services comparable to those utilized by on-campus students.**

Major
Statewide
Goal:
Skilled Graduates

Nebraska colleges and universities will provide their graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed as capable employees and responsible citizens.

The ultimate goal of any student-centered institution is to provide its graduates with the skills, knowledge and critical thinking abilities they will need to meet their personal and career goals. To achieve this, students need exposure to courses that challenge their minds and motivate them to learn, while preparing them for the reality of today's workforce and society.

THE NEEDS OF GRADUATES

The skills and knowledge students will need to succeed are constantly changing as the world around them changes. Today's students need to be efficient, self-directed and active learners who are prepared for a lifetime of learning in a global, technology-driven society. The process begins in the classrooms of the campuses, or wherever and whenever postsecondary education courses are being delivered to students, with high quality programs that actively engage students minds.

- **Provide interesting, challenging, and rewarding classroom experiences that engage students as active participants in their learning process and**

motivate them to high achievement.

- S** Recognize and reward faculty members whose teaching methods produce student outcomes consistent with this goal.
- S** Encourage faculty to use instructional technologies that enhance student learning.

- S** Encourage faculty to use innovative teaching methods that allow students to actively participate in their own learning experience, both inside and outside of traditional classrooms.
- S** Assess student learning outcomes and use the results to enhance the quality of student learning.

Too often, a gap exists between what students learn in college and the skills and knowledge they will be expected to have mastered when they enter their careers or advance in their education. To close this gap, colleges and universities are increasingly incorporating work experience into course content and measuring accomplishment of competencies and skills appropriate to students' fields of study.

- **Incorporate “real world” experience into college curricula through internships, required work experience, volunteer service, exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities, and activities that increase cultural and international awareness.**
 - S** Institutions prepare students to work effectively within the context of the emerging diversity within communities, the state, region and nation.

- **Ensure that graduates are competent in areas appropriate to their field of study, as determined through measures identified by the institutions.**
 - S** Institutions choose from a variety of assessment tools, such as competency testing or external certifications.
 - S** Employers have a role in identifying competencies needed for graduates to succeed in the workforce in their fields of study.

Chapter Three

MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE STATE

The State of Nebraska and its public higher education institutions depend on each other and shape each other's future. The State needs a strong higher education network that prepares students for productive and fulfilling lives, enhances workforce development, and helps solve the State's problems. Postsecondary education, in particular the public institutions, relies on the State's ability to expand its economic and population base to provide resources to support the institutions. The two must work together and grow together to address the future needs of both the State and the institutions.

Beyond the key economic importance of higher education to the State, institutions of higher education have an historic and continuing obligation to help students reach their maximum intellectual potential. Perhaps the greatest contribution any educational program can make is to enable individuals throughout their lives to be successful and contributing members of society who are able to think critically, gather and evaluate information, communicate effectively, understand and respect the physical environment, and participate actively in political decision-making. The future of our State continues to depend on higher education institutions that shape thoughtful and adaptive citizens who thrive in a period of rapid change and multiple careers.

Goals and Strategies

Major
Statewide
Goal:
*Workforce
Development*

Higher education in Nebraska will be responsive to the workforce development and ongoing training needs of employers and industries to help sustain a knowledgeable, trained, and skilled workforce in both rural and urban areas of the State.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Employers in Nebraska face many critical issues and challenges. Shortages of skilled and trained workers exist throughout the State. Each day technology transforms how, when and where business is conducted, creating an ongoing need for employee training and retraining to stay current and competitive in an increasingly competitive and global market. Finding ways to operate more productively and effectively is critical to businesses' growth and survival.

Central to this Plan's vision is the belief that postsecondary education has an important role in assisting businesses and contributing to the overall prosperity of Nebraska's economy. In today's global economy, the success of Nebraska's businesses and the future of the State's economy are dependent on a partnership among the State, its higher education institutions, and the employers to secure skilled and

knowledgeable employees for innovative and progressive businesses, industries and services throughout the State.

Prepared Graduates

Employers need college graduates and trained workers who have extensive and varied knowledge, skills and demonstrated competencies that prepare them for entering and succeeding in the workforce. To advance in business and succeed in their careers, these graduates also need good oral and written communication skills, computer competencies, teamwork abilities, general workplace skills, and, increasingly, conversancy in more than one language.

C Improve the workforce readiness of graduates of public institutions.

- S** Review program content and, where needed, incorporate workforce readiness competencies into curricula.
- S** Use employer advisory councils to identify needed changes in existing program content or to create new certificate or degree programs to meet evolving needs.
- S** Increase opportunities for students to attain job experience while in school via internships, apprenticeships, service learning, etc.
- S** Prepare graduates for employment in a global marketplace through required coursework in foreign languages, international affairs and finance, and other courses that will expose them to other countries' cultures and economies.
- S** Undertake measures to become eligible training providers, as authorized under Federal Workforce Investment Act regulations.
- S** Equip classrooms with state-of-the-art facilities and provide faculty opportunities to be appropriately trained in new technologies being utilized in industry.
- S** Monitor and assess the success of job-seeking graduates in finding employment in their field of study.

Targeted Skills

Institutions in Nebraska are being asked to produce more graduates and trainees in workforce areas of high demand, such as information technology. In addition, employers are stressing the need for broadly educated employees with key workplace skills.

C Respond to workforce needs by developing, offering, and promoting degree or certificate programs in needed areas.

- S** Provide specialized certification programs in professional, technical, and vocational fields that address regional and State needs. These certifications often will be provided through external entities.

- S** Create “portable programs” designed to meet specific needs and serve a

specific area or cohort of individuals which, when the needs have been met, can be moved to another area of the State where there is similar need.

- S Cooperate with State and local workforce and economic development agencies and employer advisory councils to project workforce needs and employers workforce demands. Respond to projections with appropriate adjustments in program availability and capacity.
- S Work with the State and employers in Nebraska to target key industries for workforce development and utilize State incentive funds for grants or contracts with public or private institutions that can deliver needed instructional programs, technical assistance and research/development in the area.
- S Explore internships or work/study opportunities in high demand fields to encourage students to enter these fields and remain in Nebraska upon graduation.
- S Align recruitment of students to disciplines and programs with the State's workforce needs in specific industries and geographic locations across the State.
- S Produce graduates with the skills to think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively as members of problem-solving teams in the workplace.

Teacher Training

Nebraska's school teachers are one of the State's greatest assets. By many measures, achievements of Nebraska elementary and secondary students consistently rank among the highest in the nation. Teachers exert a profound influence on students' lives. Yet many school districts are finding it difficult to attract and retain qualified teaching staff given an aging teacher workforce, salary levels that are marginally competitive with those in neighboring states and private industry, and state-imposed property tax caps.

- **Encourage education leaders and policy makers to address workforce needs for new teachers.**

Life-long Learning

With rapid technology, knowledge, and skill transformations occurring in most of the workforce, workers need constant retraining to remain productive and competitive. Higher education needs to be responsive to these changes and prepared to provide education and training to meet the needs of workers in Nebraska

- C **Provide life-long learning and retraining opportunities to all Nebraskans, especially in the area of technology.**

- S Provide in-home and workplace distance learning opportunities of high quality and reasonable price that help workers keep current in their fields or move into new careers.
- S Enhance collaboration between colleges and industry to improve availability and value of in-service training to upgrade the skills of the existing workforce.
- S Respond to requests from students, employers, and communities for needed programs or training opportunities to address changing workforce needs.

Expanded Workforce Diversity

Minority populations are a growing component of Nebraska's population and workforce. Unfortunately, minority populations are under-represented in postsecondary education participation, although their participation levels are improving. Encouraging more minorities to participate in higher education could help address the State's need for more trained workers.

C Enhance educational and workforce development opportunities for minority populations who have been under-represented in the workforce.

- S** Develop and implement programs to prepare racial/ethnic minority students for entry into postsecondary education and the workforce.
- S** Encourage and support campus-based programs that support the recruitment and retention of minority students and create an open and supportive campus culture.
- S** Work with middle schools and high schools to encourage students of color, first-generation college students, and academically at-risk students to complete high school with courses that prepare them to succeed in college.
- S** Explore methods of bringing educational and work experience opportunities to minority populations in their own communities that encourage enrollment in postsecondary education.

Attracting and Retaining Students

Nebraska faces labor shortages in a number of critical areas. Attracting more of Nebraska's top students, as well as more students from other states, to Nebraska postsecondary institutions, and retaining them through graduation could help the State address workforce shortages, particularly in targeted fields.

C Effectively recruit and retain more Nebraska students and attract more out-of-state students to Nebraska higher education institutions, especially those students entering targeted career fields that address workforce needs in Nebraska.

- S** Provide merit-based scholarships and grants to students with talents and achievement in targeted workforce areas.
- S** Support reduced out-of-state tuition levels to attract more students from other states.
- S** Encourage internships and work/study opportunities so that graduates of Nebraska colleges and universities are more likely to remain employed in the State.

Major
Statewide
Goal:
*Research and
Technology
Transfer*

Institutions will contribute to the health and prosperity of the people and to the vitality of the State through research and development efforts and technology transfer and technical assistance, and by attracting external funds to support these activities.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Research is an important role of higher education and a vital component of the State's economic competitiveness. Business and industry increasingly depend on higher education to develop and share new discoveries and technologies that can help them stay competitive in today's changing economy.

Nebraska's economic future is dependent on its ability to attract new businesses and industries and assist existing businesses to be competitive in the Twenty-First Century. Higher education has a critical role, generating and transferring knowledge that helps business and industry to compete and succeed. Equally important is higher education research that directly impacts the citizens of the State by contributing to their social, educational, and health needs.

- C Conduct research focused on the economic, social, educational, and health needs of Nebraskans.**
- C Improve technology transfer and technical assistance to Nebraska employers to enhance the productivity of Nebraska industries.**
 - S** Provide ongoing assistance to Nebraska's agricultural industry through shared research, technical assistance, public services, and programming focused on areas such as value-added production and international marketing.
 - S** Participate in partnerships with industry, government, and private organizations that are responsive to current and projected future State needs.
- C Increase awareness of the contributions of research programs to the quality of life in Nebraska to improve the understanding of research activities and to attract increased support for research activities.**

ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE

Adequate health care, especially in under-served rural areas, is a critical issue that postsecondary education can help resolve through health education programs, research and services. The University of Nebraska and community colleges, as well as some independent colleges and universities and private career schools, all have important

roles in providing education and training in the many health-related fields. Most of these institutions incorporate training at rural hospital sites into their curriculum to expose students to rural health career opportunities.

- C Institutions with a role in health care education identify and respond to the changing health care needs of Nebraska’s citizens, including those in under-served rural areas.**

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The growth and diversification of Nebraska’s economy depend to a substantial degree on the success of small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures. Higher education can assist by providing education programs, technical assistance and advice, and accessible life-long learning opportunities that will help these individuals and small businesses to succeed.

- C Incorporate an entrepreneurship focus into instruction and community outreach programs to facilitate the growth of entrepreneurship and Nebraska-based small businesses.**

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

Research is not always directly applicable to the economic development of the State. While often difficult to measure, scholarly research conducted at higher education institutions enhances the learning experience of students within the institution, the academic currency of the faculty, and the knowledge base of Nebraska citizens.

- C Provide a scholarly environment that will add to the intellectual accomplishments of the State, providing knowledge valuable to its citizens.**

Major
Statewide
Goal:
Serving Citizens

Higher education will serve the State by preparing individuals for productive, fulfilling lives and by developing and nurturing the citizens and future leaders of Nebraska.

In the Twenty-First Century, Nebraska will need more than trained and skilled technicians and professionals. It will need creative, intelligent citizens who can generate new ideas, adapt to new technologies, analyze issues, solve problems, and utilize life-long learning opportunities. All sectors of higher education have vital roles in creating an environment for this learning community within the State.

EDUCATED CITIZENRY

Workers in Nebraska need not only the knowledge, expertise, and technical skills to do their jobs, but also the ability to think critically and creatively in order to advance and succeed in their careers. The abilities to communicate effectively, understand other cultures, speak another language, and think critically will be valued in an increasingly global and complex society.

- C Provide general education courses that prepare students to understand and contribute constructively to the nation’s social, economic, and governmental frameworks.**
- C Prepare Nebraska’s students and citizens for global opportunities and competition by integrating an international perspective into institutions, faculties, programs, and activities.**
- C Facilitate access to educational, technological, and cultural opportunities in urban and rural communities throughout the State.**

THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS

Much of the recent growth in Nebraska’s population has resulted from immigrants who have come to Nebraska to make a home, raise their families, and find work opportunities. For many, language is the first barrier they must overcome. Obtaining the education they need to enter the workforce is the second. Higher education, in particular the community colleges through English-as-a-Second-Language and basic literacy courses, can be the key to prosperity for these individuals.

- C Provide accessible English-as-a-Second-Language and basic literacy programs throughout the State, primarily through the community college system.**

Major
Statewide
Goal:
Technology

Postsecondary education institutions will assess evolving needs and priorities in a timely manner and will be prepared to change and adopt new methods and technologies to address the evolving needs and priorities of the students and people of Nebraska.

USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY TO MEET STATE NEEDS

Information technologies have the potential to transform how, when, and where higher education is delivered, making it available virtually any time and any place. Tremendous potential also exists to make education more efficient and effective while at the same time enhancing access and quality. Without the statewide connectivity of

hardware needed to create a coherent, interconnected higher education network, however, the potential for technology's many educational uses is much more limited.

C Study carefully the implications of and potential uses for technology in addressing educational needs, including its:

- S potential for expanding access to higher education programming;
- S use for more efficient campus operations,
- S impact on facilities planning and curriculum development, in particular the many opportunities for sharing of facilities, courseware, and other resources
- S impact on faculty issues, including professional development opportunities and inter-institutional sharing of talent; and,
- S implications for lifelong learning opportunities for the whole citizenry.

C Cooperate to provide statewide technological connectivity to ensure that citizens in all regions of the State have access to higher education programming and services.

- S Aggregate the demand for technology connectivity by government, higher education, employers, and communities and their residents to leverage the overall investment in technology for better rates and services.

The expanded use of information technologies, including data processing hardware, software, and other services, can improve learning, teaching, and other key processes of higher education institutions. Virtually every key process and program within higher education ultimately will involve the use of information technology.

C Use instructional technologies as a way to increase learning productivity, including effective use of student-centered and self-paced learning activities.

- S Develop and regularly update standards for instructional and other information technologies based on best practice guidelines, such as those developed by the North Central Association (See Appendix 2) and other such regional and national associations, and share descriptions of standards with other institutions in the State.
- S Set appropriate expectations and requirements for students and faculty regarding the use of information technologies.
- S Use exemplary instructional technology programs that are purchased from or shared by other organizations in addition to those programs developed internally.
- S Provide supportive environments and professional development opportunities that allow faculty to acquire the technical skills needed to fully utilize new learning and instructional technologies in the classroom and lab.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Higher education's role in Nebraska extends far beyond the walls of the classrooms and the buildings of the campuses. Each campus has a multi-county service area for which it shares responsibility with other institutions to meet the higher education needs of the citizens. Some campuses also have statewide programmatic or public service responsibilities, such as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's responsibility for agricultural public service. Through outreach to communities throughout the State, higher education can support community development initiatives by providing needed educational programming, specialized technical assistance, leadership and human resources, and cultural awareness opportunities.

- C Postsecondary education institutions make concerted efforts to reach out to their communities and across the State to identify and meet educational, research, and public service needs and to be proactive in assisting economic and community development.**
- C Explore methods of effectively and efficiently meeting the changing needs of different constituencies throughout the State such as agriculture, business, government agencies, community organizations, cultural and recreational groups, and families.**
- C Institutions report and effectively communicate their success in meeting the educational, research, and public service needs of the State and its citizens.**

Chapter Four

MEETING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS THROUGH EXEMPLARY INSTITUTIONS

This Comprehensive Plan's vision for higher education in Nebraska calls for institutions that are vital, vigorous, and visionary; that fulfill their roles and mission with distinction by being responsive to changing needs throughout the State; and that exercise careful and creative stewardship of available resources. It is a vision committed to the development and support of a first-class, nationally recognized higher education system in Nebraska. Realization of this vision will require the steadfast commitment of higher education governing board members, administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as the support of State policymakers, current and future students, and the citizens of the State.

Goals and Strategies

Major
Statewide
Goal:
*Exemplary
Institutions*

Each Nebraska postsecondary institution will fulfill its role and mission in an exemplary manner and will compare favorably with peer institutions.

Exemplary institutions provide high quality education and skill development opportunities that prepare students to be personally and professionally successful, to be good citizens of the State and knowledgeable contributors to an increasingly global and multi-cultural society, and to be life-long learners. They attract motivated and high-performing students, as well as top-quality faculty and staff. They are student-centered, yet offer rigorous courses and programs that challenge students to learn. They are heavily engaged in leading edge research, both basic and applied, and compete successfully for external research funding that can stimulate the State's economy. They actively pursue opportunities for public engagement, technology transfer, and technical assistance to meet the needs of Nebraska businesses, communities, and government. They are responsive, flexible, and innovative. They receive appropriate levels of funding from the State and invest it wisely to meet their needs and aspirations. They have visionary leaders who create a culture of continuous improvement.

Comparisons with peer and competing institutions can provide indicators of where an institution is and where it wants to be in the future. Such comparisons also provide a method of measuring and demonstrating an institution's progress toward specific goals and outcomes. Governing boards and administrators provide leadership to establish goals for their institutions and leverage them to greater accomplishments. Faculty, students, State policymakers, and Nebraska citizens also have significant roles in the accomplishment of these goals.

- **The governing boards and administrators of each Nebraska institution are responsible for and encouraged to commit attention and resources to the following:**
 - S Fostering a collaborative model to connect students, educators, and practitioners together, whenever appropriate, in the design and implementation of instructional programs with both academic goals and working world applications.
 - S Focusing energy and targeting resources on areas of excellence in teaching, research (if appropriate to role and mission), and public service that benefit the students and the State and enhance the institution's regional and national reputation;
 - S Promoting quality and innovation in teaching and learning within each institution's designated role and mission, particularly in areas of importance to the State;
 - S Assessing student learning and using the results to enhance the quality of the students' learning experiences;
 - S Eliminating existing programs and services that are non-viable or marginal in terms of outcomes, costs, and centrality to the role and mission of the institution;
 - S Improving retention and graduation rates so that higher percentages of students who are seeking degrees achieve their educational goals;
 - S Attracting, developing, and retaining high quality faculty and staff members;
 - S Implementing student recruitment strategies aimed at enrolling Nebraska's top performing students in Nebraska postsecondary education institutions;
 - S Using information technologies and resource sharing to enhance learning opportunities both on and off-campus;
 - S Being responsive to the changing needs of the State and its citizens;
 - S Providing creative, efficient, and flexible leadership and planning that will help institutions achieve exemplary status;
 - S Conducting analysis and evaluation of the educational and service needs of the institution's service area through ongoing dialogue with employers, civic leaders, and citizens;
 - S Promoting diversity on their campuses in the hiring of faculty, staff, and administrators; in recruitment of students; and in curriculum development and student activities; and,
 - S Providing supportive environments and professional development opportunities that allow the faculty to acquire the technical skills needed to utilize new learning and instructional technologies in the classroom and lab.

RESEARCH

Research is a vitally important role of higher education. Research conducted by higher education institutions has been a major contributor to the economic productivity of the country, literally transforming the way daily business is conducted. It has made a major difference in the quality of life, lengthening life expectancies, developing new products, creating new job opportunities, transforming the agriculture

industry, and bringing new knowledge and understanding to the citizenry.

- **Public institutions with major research roles, including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, set goals and prioritize areas of research to become more prominent and nationally competitive for research funding and to meet the health and economic needs of the State.**

- S Focus energy and resources on areas of excellence in research that will advance knowledge and bring national recognition to the institutions.
- S Expose students to research skills and experiences that are relevant to their field of study and future career goals.
- S Increase the visibility of the contributions of research programs to the quality of life in Nebraska to improve understanding of research activities and to attract increased support from within the State for these activities.

- **High quality, state-of-the-art research facilities on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center will help the institutions to attract external research funding.**

Major
Statewide
Goal:
Funding
Exemplary
Institutions

Nebraska will value higher education and support its investment in public higher education through fair and reliable funding policies that provide appropriate levels of support to enable institutions to excel and meet the educational needs of the State and its students.

FUNDING EXEMPLARY PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Adequate and stable funding is critical to any successful, high quality higher education institution. Nebraskans traditionally have been supportive of higher education. For a state with a relatively small population base, Nebraska provides a proportionally high level of financial support for its public postsecondary education institutions. Nebraska also has a higher proportion of its high school graduates enrolled in higher education than most states. As a result of high levels of support and participation, the people of Nebraska have enjoyed the benefits of a comprehensive and accessible network of public postsecondary education institutions.

Institutions face growing demands for more and better programs and services. At the same time, the State's resources are being stretched by demands for services in other critical areas such as health, corrections, and the public schools. It is crucial that in this environment Nebraska's public higher education institutions receive appropriate levels of support that will allow them to meet the needs of the State in the Twenty-First Century.

On-going State Funding

State appropriations are the mainstays of Nebraska's public postsecondary education institutions. Almost one-fourth of the State's general fund appropriations go toward public postsecondary education institutions. It is important, therefore, that there is agreement between the State and higher education on major funding policies and priorities.

- **State funding for the University of Nebraska, State Colleges and Community Colleges:**
 - S Reflects the State's educational needs and priorities and provides additional funding to institutions that demonstrate they are addressing these needs and priorities;
 - S Is a priority in the State's spending plan, reflecting the commitment of the legislative and executive branches to achieve the educational goals set forth in this Comprehensive Plan;
 - S Supports higher education's significant role in the State's economic and workforce development efforts;
 - S Is sufficient to provide salaries and professional development opportunities that will attract and retain high quality faculty and staff at the institutions;
 - S Rewards institutions that utilize partnerships and collaborative efforts to achieve greater efficiency, enhance access, or address student and State needs; and,
 - S Is focused on the efficient and effective utilization and management of education resources for purposes of attaining optimal educational results.

Emerging State Needs

State appropriations for the State Colleges and the University of Nebraska are based on review of base budgets and incremental funding, not formulae. The State also provides some matching funds for external grants. The State expects auxiliary services at public postsecondary education institutions and some student services, such as residence halls, bookstores and food services, to be self-supporting.

The State provides some funding incentives to public higher education targeted at specific State goals, such as funding for the Nebraska Research Initiative (NRI) and the Nebraska Center for Excellence in Electronics. Increasingly, higher education is expected to be responsive to new and emerging needs throughout the State.

- **As high priority State needs and demands are identified, the State and its public postsecondary education institutions will target new State funds to meet these needs and demands.**

Technological Connectivity

A key element for a high quality, statewide network of higher education institutions that prepares Nebraska's people for the Twenty-First Century is statewide connectivity of technology hardware. Instructional technology expands access to higher education across the State and promotes efficiency through sharing of courses, faculty and other resources. Quality is also enhanced as institutions import courses and classroom resources that would otherwise be unavailable to their faculty and students. The workforce training needs of the State's employers are also better served as training and professional development courses are delivered on-site or at sites convenient to employees via distance learning technologies.

- **Recognize statewide connectivity of information technology for Nebraska postsecondary education institutions and the communities they serve as a State policy and funding priority.**

Community College Funding

The State, area property owners, and the students all contribute to the operating costs of the community colleges. Ideally, the State pays 40 percent of the operating costs of the community colleges, property owners pay 40 percent of the costs through a tax levy established by the community college area governing board, and 20 percent of costs are covered by student tuition and fees and other sources of revenue.

- **Community college funding continues to reflect a shared responsibility of the State, the property taxpayers of the community college areas, and the students.**

Foundations Education

The State has given the community colleges primary responsibility for foundations education within postsecondary education. In some instances, the State Colleges also provide some foundations education courses. Foundations education includes targeted entry-level education for recent graduates of secondary education with deficits in specific knowledge or skills, as well as adult learners returning to postsecondary education and needing to refresh or advance their knowledge and skills in specific areas.

Initiatives such as the new K/12 standards and the P/16 advisory council ideally will lessen the number of under-prepared students entering postsecondary education. No matter how successful these initiatives, there undoubtedly will always be a need for some level of foundations education. The institutions currently cover the cost of these non-degree credit programs through their regular operating budgets. The cost of the courses are covered primarily by revenues paid by students. State and local revenues help support Adult Basic Education, General Education Degrees, and English-as-a-Second-Language courses. As a result, evaluating the overall cost of foundations education courses to the State is difficult. Addressing solutions to foundations

education and its costs to the State will require an evaluation of the overall costs by the State, higher education and the elementary/secondary school systems.

- **In cooperation with the elementary and secondary school systems, pursue avenues or means to diminish the need for foundations education in postsecondary education.**
- **To the extent that such needs exist for foundations education, assure that funds are available to address the needs.**

Research and External Funding

Nebraska provides comparatively strong support to the University of Nebraska for research. Most of the State's research funding is targeted toward specific research areas. Some funding also is provided for human resources and support services for research.

- **The State continues to provide financial support for research conducted at the University campuses, particularly when it is targeted toward specific fields that provide economic impact on the State.**

S Institutions demonstrate effectiveness and productivity in the use of State research funding through measurable outcomes.

Higher education institutions increasingly are looking to other sources for funding support to help continue existing activities and develop new ones. These additional funding resources may result from collaboration with corporations, donations from private sources, funding from the federal government, or partnerships with other entities. These resources not only bring funds to the institutions, but also can enhance the strength and richness of the institutions' instruction, research, or public service roles.

- **Governing boards, administrators, and faculty share responsibility for competing for and acquiring increasing levels of private, federal, corporate, and other non-state funds for institutional development and enhancement.**

Facilities Funding

Exercising careful and creative stewardship of available physical resources, as articulated in Chapter Six, is an important part of this Plan's vision for higher education.

- **The State will continue to invest monies for the ongoing and deferred repair and maintenance of existing facilities at the public institutions, and for new facilities when warranted.**

S Ongoing preventive maintenance of facilities is the responsibility of the institutions.

Major
Statewide
Goal:
*Accountability
and Effectiveness*

Higher education in Nebraska will be effective in meeting the needs of students and the State; will be efficient in its expenditure of the State's resources; and will be accountable for developing and sustaining exemplary teaching, learning, research, and public service.

One of the greatest challenges faced by higher education is being responsive to the many needs of the State and its citizens within the reality of State, institutional, and student resources. To improve quality, expand access, adapt new technologies, meet the diverse needs of students, and be creative and visionary in fulfillment of their roles and missions, higher education institutions must develop methods to become more efficient and productive. It is equally important that higher education institutions measure their productivity and share the results of those measurements with the public to generate a better understanding of the outcomes of higher education.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Exercising careful and creative stewardship of available resources is an important part of this Plan's vision for higher education. If higher education is to have the ongoing support and confidence of the people of Nebraska, it must practice effective and efficient use of resources and communicate how it maximizes use of public funds for the benefit of students and the citizens of the State.

- **Institutions maintain the confidence and support of the public by allocating resources wisely and seeking cost efficiency and effectiveness in their operations and management of resources.**
 - S Governing boards reduce and/or eliminate unnecessary duplication in program offerings and in all operations of the institutions.
 - S Governing boards focus institutional resources on areas of excellence within each institution's role and mission that meet the needs of students and serve institutional, regional, and State priorities.
 - S Whenever feasible, campuses share resources and collaborate as a way of maximizing their resources.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Increasingly, governing boards, accrediting bodies, and the general public are asking not only for accountability for the use of public funds but also for assessment of outcomes for higher education. Are students learning? Are research efforts producing results? Are the citizens receiving needed services? It is important for higher education to be able to evaluate effectiveness and productivity through appropriate

measurable outcomes.

- **Postsecondary education institutions evaluate and communicate measurable outcomes and benchmarks appropriate to their role and mission in areas of importance to students and the State. These include student retention, degree completion, and job placement rates; comparability with peers in quality of teaching, learning, research, and public service; and student satisfaction.**
- S Governing boards set standards of excellence appropriate to their role and mission and identify measurements that reflect their productivity and enable them to demonstrate progress toward achievement of their standards.
- S Higher education institutions inform the public about the outcomes and benefits of their instruction, research, and public service roles.

Chapter Five

MEETING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

No higher education institution or sector can operate successfully in isolation. To realize its full potential, higher education must extend beyond colleges and universities and forge partnerships with businesses, industries, K/12 schools, government agencies, cultural institutions, communities, and families. Such partnerships offer many benefits to the institutions as well as the State and its citizens.

Goals and Strategies

Major
Statewide
Goal:
Partnerships

Higher education institutions will work as partners with one another and with other entities whenever appropriate to share resources and deliver programs cooperatively to enhance learning opportunities for Nebraska residents.

PARTNERSHIPS AMONG PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Collaboration and partnerships among the State's public postsecondary education institutions will improve efficiency and save taxpayer dollars. Beyond the savings, however, collaboration also offers institutions a means to improve quality and enhance the scope of their offerings through integrating learning opportunities, and sharing of expertise and resources. The result of such partnerships will be a network of institutions with distinct roles and missions and unique areas of excellence that work together to ensure that the State's higher education needs are met.

- **Meet State needs through collaborative ventures and institutional partnerships that produce efficient uses of courses, instructional resources, faculty, and other campus resources.**
 - S Opportunities for collaboration, cooperation and sharing of resources are a high priority of higher education administrators.
 - S Public institutions are encouraged to enter into cooperative ventures resulting in cost efficiencies to the State, or address local, regional and/or State economic development goals.
- **Through the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC), support and encourage the coordinated and productive use of instructional technologies to expand access to higher education and improve efficiency.**
 - S Explore methods to cooperate in the development and use of informational and

instructional technology and develop joint plans for addressing current and future educational needs through the use of new technologies.

There are excellent examples within Nebraska of higher education sharing facilities with other institutions, government entities, and communities that yield many benefits to the users. Learning centers in Alliance, LaVista, Norfolk, and Grand Island are examples of differing learning center models that have all yielded successful results for improving efficiencies and meeting needs.

- **When possible, partner with other higher education institutions, communities, businesses, and other entities to share facilities, to improve efficiencies, and to accommodate the needs of students and communities.**

PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS

Nebraska's independent colleges and universities and private career institutions are valuable education resources to the State.

Independent institutions are predominantly liberal arts institutions with distinct characteristics that in some cases attract a national and international student body. Some offer a strong religious affiliation, others offer specialization in certain disciplines. Some independent colleges and universities include a focus on specific populations, for instance, targeting the older, returning college student.

The State's private career schools provide short-term, career-oriented training programs in disciplines such as business, cosmetology, allied-health, trade and/or technical fields, and modeling. Entities that license and regulate the postsecondary education courses offered through these schools include the State Department of Education, the Board of Barber Examiners, the Department of Health, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Real Estate Commission.

The positive and competitive environment created by the presence of both public and private institutions within the State is beneficial to the overall quality of postsecondary education. Nebraska will realize the best use of its resources through communication, cooperation, and collaboration among public, independent, and private institutions.

- **Encourage cooperation and partnerships, whenever possible, between public and private higher education to realize the best use of resources and to enhance educational opportunities.**

S Independent colleges and universities and the private career schools are invited to participate in statewide educational planning and coordinating processes.

S The public and private sectors of higher education share an interest in assuring that financially-needy students have access to postsecondary education opportunities.

S Public higher education institutions enter into partnerships with the two tribal colleges in the State to help increase the level of participation and the success

of Native Americans in higher education and to provide the tribal colleges and their students with access to needed programs and technologies.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER STATES

The State of Nebraska cannot attempt to provide programs to meet everyone's educational needs. Postsecondary educational services that are not readily available and are expensive to replicate in Nebraska may be available via regional, national, and international consortium linkages. To make maximum use of these collaborative efforts, the institutions and students need heightened awareness of the educational opportunities they present.

- **Participate in regional interstate compacts, including the Midwest Higher Education Commission (MHEC), which will help broaden educational opportunities for Nebraska students and promote resource sharing with institutions in other states.**

By statute, the Board of Regents is authorized to negotiate contracts with accredited schools of optometry and veterinary medicine to provide admission to these programs for qualified Nebraska students. These contracts save Nebraska the expense of offering these programs while providing access to the programs for students through reciprocal agreements.

- **Continue to use reciprocity agreements with other states to provide access for Nebraska students to specific programs that are not otherwise available within the State.**

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education has responsibility to determine whether out-of-state institutions will be permitted to offer classes in Nebraska. The Commission's primary concern is the creation of any unnecessary program duplication by allowing out-of-state institutions to operate in the State.

- **Out-of-state institutions cooperate and coordinate with in-state institutions to avoid unnecessary duplication and to focus program offerings to fill existing voids for which the resources of Nebraska are unavailable or of low priority.**

S The Coordinating Commission considers the availability of instructional programs in Nebraska through existing public and private institutions when making a judgment about whether an out-of-state institution should be authorized to offer programs in Nebraska.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

An active partnership between higher education and Nebraska’s business sector is essential if the economy of the State is to grow. Coalitions formed by a wide range of leaders can help guide institutions to educate and/or train students for the economic and social realities they will encounter. Community-level partnerships may include joint planning, collaborative research, and cooperative education and training programs.

- **Partner with the State’s employers to provide ongoing training to employees in both rural and urban locales to sustain the workforce’s knowledge, skills, and readiness for change.**

Major Statewide Goal: K/12 Schools	Higher education will work cooperatively with elementary and secondary schools to improve teaching and learning at all levels of education and to facilitate the transition from one level of education to another.
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PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

The ability of students to enter college directly upon graduation from high school and succeed in their studies is the shared responsibility of the K/12 schools, postsecondary education, and the students and their families. The K/12 system must provide the appropriate breadth, depth, and quality of learning for students in the elementary and secondary grades. To help students make smooth transitions from high school to college, colleges must provide appropriate curriculum, course work, and levels of support to students when they reach their institutions.

Responsibility for the quality of learning also is shared by the K/12 schools that hire and retain quality teachers, the postsecondary institutions that prepare teachers initially and upgrade their skills throughout their professional careers; the agency that credentials teachers for Nebraska’s schools; and the families, communities, and postsecondary education institutions that shape students’ enthusiasm for higher levels of academic achievement. In turn, the State of Nebraska is responsible for providing access to college for those students who are prepared to enter and succeed in Nebraska’s colleges.

Cooperative Ventures

Cooperative ventures between K/12 and postsecondary education can be vehicles for improved communication and cooperation on shared issues between the two levels of education.

- **Higher education will support the efforts of the State Department of Education and cooperative ventures to improve communication and**

cooperation between K/12 districts and schools and Nebraska’s public and private postsecondary institutions.

S Participate in working groups that have been established at the discipline level so that math and reading/writing teachers at the K/12 district level and college faculty work together to discuss course content to meet both K/12 standards and lead to proper preparation for college freshmen classes.

Prepared Students

Students who are not academically prepared for college-level work are likely to become discouraged or dissatisfied when they enter college and are not successful. A truly coordinated system of education that ensures that students transition easily from one level of education to another begins with an understanding of the abilities of students as they leave one system to enter another.

- **Higher education will collaborate with K/12 to inform all students attending Nebraska’s schools, as early as middle-school, what they need to learn and accomplish in order to enter and have the best chance to succeed in Nebraska’s colleges.**

S Work with K/12 educators to clearly communicate to students and their parents, as well as to new teachers and educators, the prerequisite knowledge, skills, competencies, and course work needed for admission to and success in colleges in Nebraska.

S Increase exposure of K/12 students and their parents to Nebraska’s postsecondary education campuses through programs such as College Fairs, career and job placement services for students, campus visitations, and presentations at various student organizations.

S Provide information that helps families prepare financially for college, including information about college savings plans, federal and State financial aid, and scholarship opportunities.

- **Higher education will collaborate with school districts across the State to identify and address any gaps between K-12 standards for graduation and prerequisite college-preparation for admission to and success in Nebraska’s public postsecondary institutions.**

S Collaborate with school districts in curricula reform to reduce the number of students unprepared to succeed in college-level courses.

S Provide feedback to the K/12 school system regarding the academic performance and retention of recent high school graduates enrolled in Nebraska’s colleges and universities.

S Work in concert with K/12 to define academic standards for students that clearly connect high school graduation with college preparation, admission and success, and clearly connect the curriculum in the first two years with standards

for admission.

S Review curricula and course work for appropriateness to the level of entering students, the sequence of general and major field course work, and the instruction, learning support and advisement for students in their first two years of postsecondary education.

- **Higher education will collaborate with K/12 districts and schools to assure statewide access to advanced placement and college-level courses for academically prepared students to facilitate a successful transition to postsecondary education course work.**

S Enhance students' access to existing and emerging postsecondary education/high school programs by permitting academically-prepared high school students who are "on track" for high school graduation to be eligible to receive dual high school and college credit for the college-level courses they complete satisfactorily while attending high school.

< Encourage and/or enable institutions (*e.g.*, through funding priorities) to use technologies to deliver advanced placement and college-level instruction across the State to academically prepared and eligible students who are admitted to Nebraska's colleges while still attending high school.

< Collaborate with the Nebraska Department of Education and the State to align state funding policies and formula for K/12 funding with postsecondary education funding and tuition policies to provide equitable and appropriate tax funding for such programs.

S Promote high school students' participation in college-preparation and college-level instruction through programs such as Tech-Prep, School to Career, high school-college academic summer courses and camps, and other such programs.

Teacher Preparation

- **Higher education and K/12 leadership will collaborate in the recruitment, preparation, and retention of quality teachers in Nebraska's schools.**

S Institutions offering teacher education undertake initiatives to:

< Improve the academic and pedagogical competency of their candidates for certification and assist schools in mentoring new teachers and in the professional development of all teachers.

< Develop more integrated approaches to the preparation of teachers in both the Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences.

< Equip teacher education graduates with continuing education and professional development opportunities that provide knowledge and skills in utilizing new instructional technologies in the classroom.

- < Provide graduates with skills and interest in teaching diverse groups of students who are at-risk and in need of remedial/developmental education.
- < Collaborate with school districts and Education Service Units to improve the availability and the value of in-service training, to mentor new teachers, and to recruit high schools' best students to the teaching profession.
- < Regularly assess the content and methodology of postsecondary education's teacher and counselor preparation in response to reform in K/12 curricula.
- < Identify the need for additional pre-service and in-service training in terms of K/12 curricula reform, changing characteristics of students, and changes in college curriculum, teaching, and advising.
- < Collaborate with the Department of Education to find ways that elementary and secondary schools can improve the productivity of learners and teachers, such as through expanded use of technology.
- < Work with the K/12 community to address issues related to teacher shortages, including teacher salaries and recruitment programs.
- < Encourage teachers to promote and encourage their students to consider teaching as a rewarding and meaningful career option.
- < Assure that all new teacher graduates possess the requisite skills to effectively teach courses using distance learning technologies.

Chapter Six

STATEWIDE FACILITIES PLAN

The college and university campuses of the State represent decades of investment in the creation and maintenance of intellectual and physical environments designed to support the fundamental missions of higher education.

Students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors must be supported by a physical, technical, and natural environment that encourages intellectual growth and human interaction. The physical environments of the campuses must be functional, well utilized, safe, accessible, cost effective, well maintained, and responsive to the changing needs of the institutions' programs and the people served. The campuses must possess a sense of place, beauty, and quality that clearly represents their priorities and mission-driven responsibilities.

Increased use of information technologies has significant implication for planning, constructing, and utilizing facilities for colleges and universities. How changing technologies will affect future teaching and learning styles both on and off campuses must be considered and addressed in institutional facilities planning.

To some students, the "campus" is their computer at home or wherever a laptop can take them. To other students, a branch campus, learning center, or job site can serve as the "campus." How institutions bring academic and student services to this geographically diverse student population is a facilities planning issue. In addition, high speed connectivity between campuses, to learning centers, and to homes, is increasingly necessary to enable the learner to access information at any place and any time. Expanding partnerships with local communities; businesses; and local, State, and federal agencies can enhance institutional efforts to meet these needs.

Within this context, the following questions are being asked of those who are responsible for the planning, construction, maintenance, and financing of the physical environments of postsecondary education institutions:

- S** What are the best ways to adapt the existing physical environment to support changes in academic programs? What facilities will these programs require? How will the courses of these programs be delivered?
- S** When new facilities are constructed, how can they be made more adaptable to future change?
- S** What are cost-effective strategies for maintaining campus facilities?
- S** How will the various infrastructures of the campuses be enhanced and maintained - not only the utilities, but the information technology networks, roads, walks, landscapes, and instructional and research equipment?
- S** How will those physical elements of the campuses that support and encourage human interaction be preserved and enhanced?
- S** How can these challenges best be addressed by State funding policies?

The following goals and strategies frame an approach that should enhance the physical environments required to support effectively the current and future programs of Nebraska's institutions of postsecondary education.

Goals and Strategies

Major
Statewide
Goal:
Facilities

Nebraskans will advocate a physical environment for each of the state's postsecondary institutions that supports its role and mission; is well-utilized and effectively accommodates space needs; is safe, accessible, cost effective, and well maintained; and is sufficiently flexible to adapt to future changes in programs and technologies.

FACILITIES PLANNING

College and university facilities are becoming increasingly complex, requiring careful planning to meet the functional, social, educational, technological, and environmental challenges of the present and future world. Branch campuses, shared learning centers, online learning, and other educational advances are accelerating the pace of change. Within this context, facility planning has become more important than at any time in the history of postsecondary educational institutions.

In developing institutional comprehensive facilities plans, a facilities' information database can serve as an excellent tool for making prudent and wise planning decisions. Facilities plans should be developed in cooperation with local residents, so that both the institution and community at large may benefit.

- **An institution's comprehensive facilities plan will be an integral tool that supports the institution's role and mission and strategic plan.**
 - S The content and format of institutional comprehensive facilities planning documents should be flexible in order to be responsive to a rapidly changing educational environment.
 - S A statewide facilities information database will be available to support the development and review of institutional comprehensive facilities plans.

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Facilities are perhaps the best example of how institutional decisions are made permanent, with long-term effects on operating budgets and programs. Buildings constructed to meet today's immediate needs have the potential of either enhancing or impeding institutions from meeting needs of future generations. The same may also apply to buildings that are offered to institutions as gifts. Therefore, weighing the

initial contribution of a gift with its long-term costs and benefits is a critical factor in determining need.

- **Individual capital construction projects will support institutional strategic and comprehensive facilities plans; comply with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education, which includes the Statewide Facilities Plan; and not unnecessarily duplicate other facilities.**
- S Collaboration and cooperation between higher education institutions and public and private agencies can enhance an institution's programs and services and provide for efficient use of resources. When economically and programmatically feasible, institutions will share facilities with one another.
- S Commission evaluation of individual capital construction projects are based on the following review criteria:
 - < Prior Commission approval of applicable academic programs that would occupy space in the capital construction project has been granted.
 - < The project demonstrates consistency with the governing board's institutional comprehensive facilities plan.
 - < The project addresses current and projected needs.
 - < The project enhances effectiveness and efficiencies of institutional programs and services.
 - < Reasonable project alternatives have been considered.
 - < The amount of funding requested does not represent insufficient or extraordinary proposed expenditures of tax funds and the use of tax funds is appropriate.

FACILITIES FUNDING

Facilities funding has historically come from a variety of sources. These sources of funding and example applications include:

- S state and local taxes for infrastructure projects, academic instructional, academic and operational support, and public service facilities;
- S user fees for student centers, residence halls, and parking;
- S federal funding for research facilities;
- S self-generated funding for auxiliary programs such as bookstores, child care centers, hospitals, etc.;
- S student tuition and fees, which increasingly are being used to support renewal and renovation of academic and support facilities; and,
- S private funding available to support each of these types of facilities projects.

Institutions are responsible for on-going preventive maintenance of campus facilities. Facility operating and maintenance (O&M) funding has historically come from state and local taxes, student tuition, user fees and auxiliary funding. Federal or private funding has rarely been used for facility O&M in the past. However, there is a

recent trend nationally to request private donors to contribute to a facility O&M trust fund when donating funds for a facility project. State tax funds also are used for deferred maintenance, fire and life safety, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and energy conservation projects at the University and State College campuses. The State has also created a Building Renewal Assessment Fund to collect depreciation charges on all new capital construction projects, building additions, major renovations and purchases or acquisitions of facilities at the University and State Colleges.

State funding for University and State College facilities is provided during a biennial budget cycle. Community colleges have not received State funding for capital construction projects. The University of Nebraska Board of Regents and Nebraska State College Board of Trustees submit a capital construction budget request to the Governor and Legislature biennially on even-numbered years. These requests include a prioritized list of capital construction projects submitted by each governing board. The Commission reviews and makes recommendations on the governing board capital construction budget requests and submits a unified prioritized list that recommends the sequential order of appropriations for approved capital construction projects. The Commission's prioritization process is based on numerically weighted criteria that establish the recommended funding order of individual projects. The process is reviewed biennially with the University and State Colleges for needed revisions.

- **Adequate and stable funding will be available for maintenance, repair, renovation, and major construction projects as identified in the comprehensive facilities planning and review processes**
 - S Provide adequate funding for appropriate maintenance of facilities, utility and infrastructure systems and to provide a safe, accessible and energy efficient physical environment.
 - S The Commission will consider national standards and work collaboratively with the public higher education sectors and other State policymakers to set standards for appropriate levels of funding routine maintenance, deferred repair and renovation/remodeling projects that will help ensure that campus facilities are will maintained and that deferred repairs and needed renovation and remodeling projects are completed.
 - S Continue the use of dedicated and stable funding sources for capital construction projects to include:
 - < the community college areas' dedicated capital improvement property tax levy;
 - < State funding to meet depreciation charges for all University and State College capital construction projects that are assessed a two percent depreciation charge for accumulation of amounts in statutory Building Renewal Assessment Funds; and
 - < State funding of the Task Force for Building Renewal.
 - S Provide additional dedicated and stable funding sources for capital construction projects such as establishment of capital construction fund

reserves or development of dedicated funding sources for capital construction projects.