

Shared Values and Beliefs

Focusing on this *Plan's* vision for postsecondary education will help ensure that Nebraskans now and in the future benefit from the "good life" for which the state is known. The vision is based on the following values and beliefs that the Coordinating Commission shares with the leaders of Nebraska postsecondary education institutions and their governing board members:

- All Nebraska citizens, unrestricted by age, culture, disabilities, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, socioeconomic status, or geographic location, deserve reasonable and affordable access to postsecondary education opportunities appropriate to their individual needs and abilities.
- While access to postsecondary education is paramount, it is not an end in itself. Student success is the ultimate goal of postsecondary education and is the shared responsibility of students and institutions.
- 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 postsecondary education and K-12 education is needed to ensure that students enter postsecondary education prepared to succeed.
- Postsecondary education has an important role in supporting the state's economic development goals by contributing to a competent and competitive workforce for our state, by ensuring lifelong learning and training opportunities for our citizens, and by promoting an innovative and entrepreneurial culture that rises to the challenge of globalization.
- Nebraska's postsecondary institutions fill a vital role in many communities by serving as a cultural hub, not only educating their students in the arts and humanities but sharing those learning opportunities with the public whenever possible.
- Postsecondary 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 of Nebraska 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 taxpayers for making wise use of resources for programs, services, and facilities, as well as for avoiding unnecessary duplication.
- Nebraska strives to perform at the highest levels nationally in terms of postsecondary access, success, affordability, efficiency, and impact and will measure its performance and progress in these areas.

Major Statewide Goals

The following major statewide goals are critical to the achievement of this *Plan's* vision for postsecondary 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 major goal form the framework for Chapters 2 through 6 of this *Plan*:

Meeting the Needs of Students (Chapter 2)

- Nebraska's institutions and policymakers will increase participation and success in postsecondary education, particularly for low-income and underrepresented populations, and ensure that all Nebraskans are able to access and successfully complete postsecondary education appropriate to their individual needs and abilities, unrestricted by age, culture, disabilities, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, socioeconomic status, or geographic location.
- Nebraska postsecondary institutions and policymakers will collaborate to ensure that lack of financial resources will not prevent students from accessing and completing postsecondary education in a timely manner without unreasonable student debt.
- Nebraska's postsecondary institutions will cooperate to increase effectiveness, reduce students' costs, and shorten time to degree through innovations in course transfer such as reverse transfer and seamless transfer agreements.
- Nebraska's postsecondary institutions will be student-centered, create inclusive environments that foster student success, and offer lifelong learning opportunities that are responsive to students' and workforce needs.
- Nebraska colleges and universities will foster critical thinking skills and provide their graduates with the knowledge and workplace skills needed to be successful employees, innovative entrepreneurs, and responsible citizens on a global stage.

Meeting the Needs of the State (Chapter 3)

- Nebraska will close the historical educational attainment gaps between majority and underrepresented populations and be among the leading states in overall educational attainment.
- Postsecondary education in Nebraska will be responsive to the workforce development and ongoing training needs of employers and industries to build and sustain a knowledgeable, trained, and skilled workforce in both rural and urban areas of the state.

- Postsecondary institutions will contribute to the health and prosperity of the people and to the vitality of the state through research and development efforts, technology transfer and technical assistance, and by attracting external funds to support these activities.
- Postsecondary education institutions will assess evolving needs and priorities of the students and people of Nebraska in a timely manner and will adopt new methods and technologies to address them.
- Postsecondary 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 maintain their distinctive role as providers of cultural and artistic opportunities to students and their communities through study, research, and programming.

Meeting Needs by Building Exemplary Institutions (Chapter 4)

- Each Nebraska institution will fulfill its role and mission in an exemplary manner and will compare favorably with peer institutions.
- Nebraska will value postsecondary education and support its investment in public postsecondary 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.
- Postsecondary 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, sustaining, and demonstrating exemplary teaching, learning, research, and public service.

Meeting Educational Needs through Partnerships and Collaboration (Chapter 5)

- Postsecondary education institutions will work as partners with one another and with other entities, including those in the private sector, whenever appropriate to share resources and deliver programs cooperatively to enhance learning opportunities for Nebraska residents.
- Postsecondary education will work effectively with elementary and secondary schools to improve teaching and learning at all levels of education, provide opportunities for early college enrollment, and ensure the college and career readiness of all high school graduates.

Facilities Planning to Meet Educational Needs (Chapter 6)

- Nebraska will promote a physical environment at 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.