

# **TOWARD EXCELLENCE**

*A Plan for  
The Development of  
the University of Nebraska*

Adopted

By the Board of Regents

January 6, 1973

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA**  
**Board of Regents**

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## FOREWORD

The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska unanimously adopted "Toward Excellence," the five-year plan of the University, on January 6, 1973. That action ratified recommendations developed over a two-year period by a committee representing each campus and reviewed and modified by students, faculty and staff within the University and by interested segments of the general public.

Thus the final document contains input from various groups, both within and outside the University. This publication presents the major sections of that document.

The purpose of "Toward Excellence" is to offer guidelines to assist the individual collegiate entities, the System staff, the Board of Regents, and the external constituencies of the University through 1977. Future detailed planning will take place within the context of this plan.

University plans normally embrace a longer time span than five years. But at no time in the history of higher education have developments moved so rapidly. This is due partly to the constriction of time within society as a whole and partly to the increasingly rapid response of education itself to the problems created by the rapid expansion in the Sixties. Thus, it seems more prudent to think in terms of a shorter period of time—five years—rather than a longer planning cycle. What is done in the coming decade, however, will have its impact for many years beyond.

Planning for a university is a hazardous and imprecise undertaking, yet the University of Nebraska must have an outline to guide it toward a fundamental objective: restoration to the position as one of the most distinguished academic institutions in this region. It is the campus faculties and administrators, with student involvement, however, who must assume the main burden of refinement, review, and implementation of these generalizations on a sound intellectual basis.

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## I. THE PURPOSES OF THE UNIVERSITY

In planning for the University of Nebraska for the 70s, one must not ignore the history of this institution. Neither a "master plan" nor legislative act can abruptly change a university which has had 103 years of history and growth. Human institutions which survive—and universities are among the hardiest of survivors—change slowly, but change they do. Indeed, the University has survived because of its ability to change—but always within the framework of its intellectual tasks.

And so as we plan for the future, perhaps it is of value that we restate firmly what this University is—and at least in summary fashion acknowledge our historic inheritance and the opportunities this presents us.

Establishing the University of Nebraska as the intellectual center of the State—an institution of scholars and students, professional researchers, and initiates into the craft—and as a place of lively debate and controversy has been a difficult, often solitary, frequently unpopular, but almost single-minded task of administrators, faculty, regents, and students alike. The University was attacked for immorality at least as early as 1912 when the Cornhusker was censured and recalled. The faculty debated extensively over its functions almost from the very beginning; and though the development of graduate education came early (Nebraska organized the first graduate college west of the Mississippi) it came with turmoil. The University of Nebraska is durable because it has stood for intellectual and human values—because it has defended those values, because it has argued the merits of those values within and without its walls. So, too, must we act now.

This University, which is a community shared by students, faculty, and staff, exists to serve both society and individuals. Its responsibilities are inter-related. First, it critically re-examines, interprets, and communicates a body of knowledge. This knowledge is not static; it is an active part of experience requiring effort for use by both teacher and learner. This process takes place in museums, libraries, laboratories, studies, classrooms, and the world at large. The University contributes to knowledge. It makes its conclusions widely available through

teaching and publications—thus the University Press, conferences, the Center for Continuing Education and all agencies of communication. Indeed, we must communicate with a far wider group of individuals than at present—the University must be for all citizens of the state, not selected citizens.

The University differs from other educational institutions in the depth of its commitment to the examination and advancement of knowledge. The freest investigation into the nature of the world, society, and individuals is made here for the ultimate public welfare. This examination is called research. We differ from a research institute in the width of our investigation, and we address ourselves to the total society, not to a restricted clientele.

A contemporary university differs from the historical university by both the increased width of its learning and the variety of its audience. It seems to disseminate learning to all in the society who can use it. It is a unique organization created by society at large, at considerable expense, to preserve, refine, and continuously strengthen the society's intellectual life; and if it is not intellectually sound and free to operate, it is nothing.

Lord Bryce once observed, "A university should be concerned with its times, but not give in to them." The University of Nebraska is influenced by the monumental changes which are taking place in students, faculty, educational processes, and the larger society about us. We must adapt but we must also preserve.

Efforts and studies by the Carnegie Foundation, the Newman Report, and the 85 theses of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, countless other studies and prescriptions in the nation and at Nebraska, plus our own perception of time and place in Nebraska, all indicate the need to plan for some new directions.

An urgent task for the University is to define and pass on the cultural traditions which have established human dignity and social responsibilities as goals worth striving for. The University must help the student gain a historical perspective to guide him in examining his position. This will not be an easy achievement and it will be made more difficult by a public reaction to change which dictates a rigid conformity to convention and tradition. But without respect for both individual and the public, the American ideal of a free society cannot be achieved.

A sense of cultural and educational identity may not be achieved solely through 128 hours of carefully measured and studiously monitored departmental cubbyholes. The University of Nebraska must develop alternate, integrative approaches to learning which will encourage students to develop a historical, moral, and intellectual appraisal of their world by encouraging them to participate in studies not formerly defined within the

university and by means not commonly utilized.

A land-grant university cannot and does not want to escape its vocational responsibilities. This does not mean developing programs for all possible vocations, but rather insisting that for those vocations which are part of our program, our people will be excellently prepared. It means the onrushing complex of social problems will require new skills which teachers must investigate and students must be taught. For example, how does law relate to problems of society, as well as to commerce and crime? Should lawyers be trained in mediation, as well as advocacy?

The University of Nebraska in the 1970s will need a variety of educational programs—not necessarily a greater number of specialties and certainly not more departments—designed to meet the wider variety of student needs. The University of Nebraska needs to provide a curriculum which will allow its students to compete in a national, as well as a state market, and an intellectual and philosophical foundation which will deepen their commitment to orderly change.

## II. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Planning must be based on an understanding of the constraints and the identification of certain underlying assumptions which govern the process. The following general assumptions are of value for planning within the University of Nebraska through 1977:

### ASSUMPTION 1

**Post-high school education will continue to be socially and economically desirable but the level of demand in Nebraska will remain relatively constant through this period.**

Projections of high school graduating classes indicate no real change in numbers by 1977. The 25,004 twelfth graders of 1970 are estimated at only 25,500 by 1977.\* In the fall of 1970, 44.6 percent of all Nebraska twelfth graders enrolled in four- or two-year colleges or universities within Nebraska. An estimated three percent enrolled in vocational-technical schools, another two percent in private vocational schools, and about nine percent enrolled outside Nebraska. Thus, 58 percent of Nebraska twelfth graders now go on to some kind of education beyond high school.

The already high college-going rate and the stable high school twelfth grade classes give substance to the conclusion of a flattening of the demand curve through 1977. The increases in number of twelfth graders that do occur are largely in the urban centers of Nebraska. A projected increase of some 1,200 twelfth graders in Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster Counties is offset by decreased enrollment in most other counties of the State.

Enrollment trends and their impact are difficult to predict. Under one possible scenario the evidence suggests that only two major student groups remain to further increase the normal college attendance rates—women and low-income minority students. More of these students will attend the University, but this gain may be offset by the increasing number of students who will pursue their educational objectives in one of the improving Nebraska junior colleges or vocational schools. This shifting of some students will mean—particularly for the Lincoln campus—that growth will be concentrated increasingly at upper division levels through transfers and that lower division enrollments will remain at about current levels.

\*According to the Nebraska Commission on Higher Education Facilities Act.

But, alternatively, tuition increases at private institutions and for non-residents at public institutions may well reduce the percentage of Nebraska high school graduates who leave the State for their entire higher education. This could lead to enrollment increases at the University of Nebraska unless controls are imposed. Recognizing the difficulty of making precise enrollment projections, it seems reasonable to assume that by 1977 the enrollment on the Lincoln campus will be about 23,000 students, on the UNO campus about 15,000 students, and on the Medical Center campus about 1,750 students, including the College of Pharmacy. This rather substantial growth at the Medical Center is heavily dependent on the availability of additional state funding and especially of non-state funding.

### ASSUMPTION 2

**The University of Nebraska will continue as the major graduate institution for the state.**

In 1966, the planning firm of Taylor, Lieberfeld and Heldman issued a report for the Lincoln campus which noted: "Despite the shift in enrollment composition (to graduate and professional education), undergraduate enrollment will still account for 79 percent of all students on the Lincoln campus." This prediction has been substantiated during the ensuing years. In 1971, 81.5 percent of all Lincoln campus enrollment was undergraduate; the balance was professional 4.6 percent, and graduate 13.9 percent. At the Omaha campus some increase in part-time graduate enrollment will take place as programs are developed to serve the needs of the State's largest metropolitan area.

The numerical size of the graduate enrollment will be about the same on the Lincoln campus and while it will grow percentage-wise at the Medical Center, there will not be major numerical increases there.

Along with the emphasis on undergraduate education, major efforts will be needed to bring distinction to some portions of the graduate program, if the historic role of the University of Nebraska is to be preserved.

### ASSUMPTION 3

**Intimately connected with its role as the major public graduate institution in Nebraska and in continuing high quality undergraduate education, the University will continue to strengthen basic and applied research, encourage scholarship, and foster creative activity.**

A university exists to increase knowledge, as well as to transmit it. Indeed, significant education (at both the undergraduate

and graduate levels) will thrive only where there is a learning faculty. The encouragement of scholarship in the University will also insure that citizens of Nebraska, especially teachers at other educational institutions in the State, have available a center at which they can stay in touch with recent developments in their fields and upgrade their own professional training.

The development of a sabbatical leave system for faculty, an increase in funding for research and creative activity, and an attempt to improve the access of citizens to the opportunities of the University are important specific ways in which the University's role as the research component of the State's educational system can be strengthened. Such activities, if developed in close relation to the University's teaching programs, will strengthen its educational efforts for both graduate and undergraduate students.

#### ASSUMPTION 4

**There will be increased pressure for measures of efficient resource use and the University will be called upon to assess more accurately the cost and social and economic value of its educational programs.**

Cost-benefit analysis in education is largely an uncharted field. The University itself has made some preliminary efforts in cost analyses and statistical modeling techniques. These kinds of analyses are increasingly becoming a part of executive and legislative budget discussions around the nation, and the University needs far better concepts of the input and the output of our campuses than are now available. There is little doubt that over the next five years all University planning will have to consider the cost of programs as compared to measures of their productivity, value, and quality. This is a difficult and hazardous undertaking and great care must be exercised not to distort the institution into one in which costs are the primary concern. It must be stressed that there are significant aspects to education that do not lend themselves to measurement; the true value of what happens educationally—whether in a teaching or a research endeavor—is not always immediately or tangibly apparent.

#### ASSUMPTION 5

**Because of some of the foregoing factors—as well as others, such as increasing student and faculty desire to continue to improve the curriculum and teaching—there will be much interest in innovation and experimentation in the instructional program and a corresponding need for thoughtful response to this interest.**

There are major national as well as important local forces which will produce considerable change within the University of Nebraska system. Reports like those of the Carnegie Commission on Education and the Newman Report, prepared for the U.S. Office of Education, and the work of the Study Commission on the Undergraduate Education of Teachers will no doubt be in the forefront of suggesting new curricular and teaching approaches to higher education. Although in many cases curricular and teaching innovations can be implemented at no additional cost, it must be noted that some innovations cost money: educational changes may well improve teaching and enrich the curriculum, but they do not all come free of additional costs.

The growing interest in the "university without walls" concept is being explored locally through the S-U-N (State University of Nebraska) program. Students have increasingly taken active roles in suggesting educational reform, and collegiate faculties themselves have been in the forefront in many areas. Among the likely changes foreseen over the planning period are shortening the time to earn a degree in certain areas, more independent study, extension of credit for off-campus educational experiences, more interdisciplinary programs, and wider use of technology to enrich the entire teaching process.

#### ASSUMPTION 6

**The demand for general educational services in the State will grow. Particularly, the University will be asked to assume new obligations for the economic and cultural development of Nebraska and for greater services to both rural and urban communities.**

The land-grant tradition has always included a large element of practical problem solving as part of the university service function. It was out of this purpose that the agricultural experiment stations and extension services, the bureaus of business research, and the entire litany of service functions grew. This pressure is increasing throughout the nation—and in Nebraska, universities are being asked increasingly to help solve the new range of societal problems the nation faces. There can be little doubt that the public land-grant university has a role to play. But the University is not, or should not be, an activist. Rather, our role should be a training and service one, offering a base where a variety of solutions can be discussed fully and openly within the protections of academic and intellectual freedom.

The urban role which UNO has (and in which the Lincoln campus must participate) indicates a very large increase in service programs for the cities. The Medical Center also has an expanded

service role in developing model health delivery systems for both rural and urban medically deficient areas of the State.

#### ASSUMPTION 7

##### **Capital construction funds will be available from state sources for high priority projects.**

Between 1953 and 1965, capital construction on the University of Nebraska – Lincoln campus and the Medical Center campus was financed by a small property tax levy from which the University was required to finance deferred maintenance and remodeling also. This left a very modest amount for new construction. At the University of Nebraska at Omaha the merger found only two permanent academic buildings.

Thus, despite the existence of a major capital facilities program at the University since 1965, there are still very large facility requirements which exist on all campuses. Most of these are very specialized—not the typical classroom building. The specialized needs add to the cost of meeting the institutional requirements. Estimates of fund availability over the planning period, however, indicate that the most careful allocation of priorities to projects must be adhered to. These priorities are delineated in the balance of this report, but at the very minimum \$35 million in state funds at current costs will be needed for University construction by 1977, excluding projects currently funded or authorized by the Legislature. Because of the continuing rise in construction costs, this \$35 million is likely to be a much higher figure by the time the facilities are finally constructed.

#### ASSUMPTION 8

##### **It is expected that the general fund operating appropriations will increase at a rate of ten to twelve percent per year to meet the minimum needs over the next five years; additional revenue will need to be provided for major improvements and for new programs.**

A combination of three independent phenomena will continue to require some growth in the University's minimum needs for operating revenues: (1) increased workload, primarily, but not exclusively, in the form of more students; (2) continued inflation, hopefully at a reduced rate from that experienced between 1966 and 1971; and (3) some minimum level of increased real expenditures to maintain a pattern of increasing quality of the educational experience.

Increases in enrollments and other workloads will probably proceed at a rate of two or three percent annually over the next five years. Assuming that national economic stabilization policy

is successful in bringing the inflationary factor down to about three and one-half percent a year, the University can expect a parallel experience. A minimum goal for increased quality would be four percent a year, adjusted for inflation. Assuming these growth rates, the University expects minimum requirements for operating revenues from appropriated tax dollars to rise from 10 to 12 percent annually between 1972-73 and 1977-78.

The University has, in the past decade, seen some significant changes in the revenues accruing from its four traditional sources: (1) charges to students for tuition, (2) sales of goods and services, (3) Federal Government appropriations to the institution, and (4) State General Fund appropriations. For example, between 1965-66 and 1971-72, the share of the total University operating budget financed from tuition went from 16 to 21 percent.

It is assumed that within the next five-year period tuition will pay no greater a proportion of educational and general costs than is currently the case, with the possible exception of the Medical Center.

It must be emphasized that the assumption of a 10 or 12 percent annual increase in general fund operating revenues will not permit the introduction of new programs or a significant improvement in institutional quality. If new programs are introduced or if it is determined that the move toward excellence must be accelerated, then there must be additional funds available from the general fund, from tuition, from the federal government, or from private sources—or from a combination of these sources.



### III. A SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Building on the basic planning assumptions, a number of broad objectives have been identified and suggested for refinement and review on the campuses. Not everything can be done in five years, but it is vital—if this planning is to have validity—to identify specific objectives for action in the five years ahead. It is in this spirit that the following areas are established for priority consideration during this planning period. Eleven areas are identified as applicable to all campuses of the University.

#### The University of Nebraska—All Campuses

1. **Improved Teaching.** This must be more than a pious proclamation. Aggressive and diligent action must be taken to assure an improvement in the effectiveness of the total learning situation on all campuses. A primary ingredient is effective teaching. This means that we must refine and improve our techniques for the evaluation of teaching effectiveness and establish a clearly understood system of rewards for excellence in teaching. This must include salary increases, promotion, a workable system of leaves of absence for professional improvement, and general recognition within the University community. Similarly, this improved evaluation process must be exercised in eliminating ineffective teachers from the faculty ranks.

2. **Improved Understanding of the Learning Process.** It is unlikely that any enterprise in America invests so much in production and so little in product research as does the enterprise of higher education. Our primary purpose is the education of our students; yet we spend precious little of our time or our resources in studying the most effective processes for accomplishing this objective. In the hope that we may find more effective ways to generate and transmit knowledge and to advance genuine learning with our students, it is proposed that one-half of one percent of the instruction budget on each campus be set aside for this purpose in the 1973-74 budget, with the amount moving to a minimum of one percent by the 1975-76 budget. There is a strong possibility that outside funds can be attracted to substantially augment these University resources.

3. **Strengthened Graduate Education.** The University of Nebraska was the first university west of the Mississippi to have a

formally organized graduate college. In past years graduate education and research on the Lincoln campuses have attained a distinguished national and international reputation, but for a variety of reasons this reputation has not been sustained in more recent years. An urgent task of the University is to restore national distinction to its graduate programs.

In the 1950s and 1960s, given the impetus of federal funding, graduate education in American universities took on a large national—as opposed to a regional or local—character. Graduate programs were designed to meet the broadest possible market. The tremendous need for graduate scholars was fueled by national educational priorities and the swift growth in undergraduate collegiate enrollment. Since these forces have changed very rapidly, it is necessary for higher education to reassess the needs and nature of its constituencies and to build excellence in the light of this reassessment. Clearly, this implies that some programs of graduate education and research at Nebraska will be chosen for emphasis while others will not. In this context the unique needs of this State and region should determine the emphasis in most areas, while in others we may still seek to meet part of a national—or even global—requirement. It seems appropriate, for example, that if Nebraska were to look at development of programs in ecology, these would be geared to the particular problems of ecology balance in the State of Nebraska and the plains region. National eminence will certainly flow from distinguished programs having this kind of orientation.

Not all graduate education can be state or region oriented, particularly in the humanities and some social sciences, and the intellectual character of the University must include strength in many of these areas as part of a broad spectrum of scholarship; furthermore, we have an obligation to Nebraska students to provide as extensive a student program as possible. Nonetheless, state and regional requirements for academic research and graduate education should be kept firmly in mind as one very important criterion for selecting areas of emphasis.

Strong and courageous action must be taken, with no delay, to improve the national standing of graduate education at the University of Nebraska. This will necessitate these steps, among others:

- a. A continuing critical review and evaluation of existing graduate programs with the objective of phasing out certain programs—possibly as many as ten—and consolidating others.
- b. The identification of selected programs—possibly as many

ten—which will be built to a level of national recognition by 1978.

- c. The development of a stronger competitive stand in attracting outstanding graduate students in selected areas.
- d. A conscious and dedicated effort to strengthen the library resources supporting graduate programs.
- e. A special effort to attract small teams or “clusters” of promising graduate-type faculty members in a few selected areas.
- f. An improved level of funding for equipment and support for those graduate programs identified for emphasis in this five-year period.
- g. Efforts will be made to develop a regional approach to graduate education by identifying certain programs to be offered at only one of the several institutions in this area, and by means of other collaborative actions.

4. **Curricular Review.** Critics of higher education frequently allege that universities are adept at addition and multiplication but totally unable to comprehend the principles of subtraction. It is just possible that a grain of truth exists in the allegation. In any event, it is imperative that each of the campuses begin immediately a thorough review of the curriculum with the objective of justifying or eliminating every college, school, division, department, and course. A report of progress will be called for on September 1, 1973.

5. **Review of the Academic Organization.** Increasingly, universities are examining their organizational structure to determine whether the present segments and fragments are appropriate for the task we now face. It is now time for each of the campuses of the University of Nebraska to undertake a review of the current administrative groupings, with a continuing concern for the most effective possible way to accomplish our educational objectives with the resources available. A report of progress will be called for on September 1, 1973.

6. **Equality of Resource Allocation.** An understandable concern is frequently expressed by spokesmen for the University of Nebraska at Omaha about the resources available to this campus. Historically, the Omaha campus has suffered from financial malnutrition. Within the resources available, the funding for educational programs at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln should be equal for similar educational programs. This does not mean that the level of funding for each individual program must be identical because it is

expected that priorities and emphases may well be different on the campuses. However, it does mean, for example, that financial support for undergraduate education should be identical on the two campuses to the extent that the programs conducted are comparable.

In this same spirit, the salaries, fringe benefits, and workloads on the two campuses must be made essentially identical where similar qualifications, experience, and work assignments exist. Steps must be taken immediately to identify those areas where differences exist and to correct these differences.

These comments have made no reference to the Medical Center only because of the highly specialized nature of the Medical Center. Where appropriate, the policy spelled out in the above paragraphs of this section should apply equally to the Medical Center.

7. **Equal Opportunity.** The policy of the Board of Regents on the subject of discrimination has been stated clearly in the Bylaws. However, there has been a rebirth of interest in this subject, particularly as it pertains to discrimination against women. The intent of the Board of Regents has always been clear, but the implementation of this intent has recently been the subject of some inquiry. As a matter of immediate and urgent priority, the question of equal opportunity—in fact—in employment, compensation, and general working conditions must be reviewed and such action taken as may be necessary to bring the intent of the Board of Regents to reality in practice. A progress report will be called for on September 1, 1973.

8. **Inter-Campus Closed-Circuit Television Connection.** The three campuses of the University of Nebraska are separated at most by 50 miles. Studies indicate that it is quite feasible to establish a closed-circuit television linkage with talk-back facilities, and that the cost would be in the range of \$250,000. Such an arrangement would provide invaluable educational and communications possibilities, and must be ranked as an urgent and immediate priority.

9. **Student Retention.** A distressingly large number of students fail to complete their collegiate work—for a wide range of reasons. The attrition is particularly acute for those students who graduated in the bottom one-third of their high school classes. When the University admits a student, it assumes an obligation to help that student succeed. A new effort—positive, conscious, and deliberate—must be made on all campuses to reduce the student “fallout.” The method of improving this situation will be the responsibility of each campus, and a progress

report will be expected from each campus by September 1, 1973.

10. **Off-Campus Programs.** In order to utilize to the fullest the resources available to serve the people of this State, every effort must be made to achieve the maximum possible cooperation in the off-campus programs of the University. A system-wide committee, to include representation from agricultural, medical, nursing, and other groups being served, will be appointed to explore ways in which the several off-campus programs can be brought into closer cooperative relationships. This committee will be charged with submitting a report to the President's office no later than September 1, 1973.

11. **Development of Non-Traditional Educational Opportunities.** Vigorous and continuing efforts must be made to identify and perfect more effective ways for making post-high school education available to the citizens of this State under terms and conditions convenient to these citizens. The fundamental concepts incorporated in the current State University of Nebraska (S-U-N) proposal must be studied and refined with a view to implementation at the earliest possible date. While there is great enthusiasm across the nation for innovative approaches of this kind, it must be recognized that the experience of higher education in this field is somewhat limited. For these reasons it is recommended that pilot and experimental programs be developed at the earliest possible date, working in full cooperation with existing educational institutions throughout the State.

Specific objectives and areas of concern of each of the campuses and the System Office are identified in the following sections.

## **The University of Nebraska – Lincoln**

1. **A Period of Slow Enrollment Changes and Holding Graduate Enrollments Constant.** Enrollment controls in the 70s are not the same kind of quantitative issue they might have been during the 60s within Nebraska. Previous data have indicated that the number of high school graduates is now stable and projected to remain so in Nebraska. Furthermore, the Lincoln campus has long since passed the threshold of entering into the large multi-university state, and its problems now revolve around devising programs to accommodate that fact. It does appear that controls should be exercised with respect to graduate enrollment, however, in light of market-place considerations. Thus, graduate enrollment will be held constant during the planning period by increasing quality controls on admissions.

During this period of enrollment growth, the Lincoln campuses need to continue their efforts at recruitment of disadvantaged and minority students. But recruiting students with poor academic backgrounds imposes special obligations on the University to provide sufficient remedial programs to insure their success. This is not new at the University in Lincoln. When the University was founded, it also included a preparatory school so students could be brought to college-level work. Only in very recent years has it been possible to discontinue general remedial courses as the quality of Nebraska public school improved markedly. Making it possible for all students to succeed at the University is one of its best traditions.

The Lincoln campuses now enroll some 400 foreign students. These students provide cultural enrichment to the campus and are a valuable part of the educational atmosphere. With the limited resources available, however, it does not seem prudent to seek any increase in this number over the planning period.

2. **Areas of Emphasis.** To identify special areas for emphasis may be interpreted by some to imply a reduced level of support for other non-specified programs. This is not the intent of this statement; rather it is to point out those program areas where circumstances strongly suggest that this University should be placing particular emphasis during this period. To the extent available resources will permit, the following additional programs must be emphasized in the five years ahead:

- a. **Agriculture.** No college in the University is more important than the College of Agriculture in terms of the direct benefits which flow immediately to the agribusiness sector of the State's economy. This fact needs to be restated frequently so that the College of Agriculture will continue to receive its fair share of resources. Without these resources from both State and Federal sources, the College will be unable to maintain its position of leadership in maintaining and strengthening its vital role in the future development of the agricultural industry in Nebraska. As one of the first five leading states of the Union in agricultural production, Nebraska can afford nothing less than a College of Agriculture that ranks among the first five colleges of agriculture in the United States. This goal is not impossible and should be pursued with great tenacity.
- b. **The Life Sciences.** This broad area has not been given the proper level of support during the past two decades, yet it is vital to a sound academic program and is directly

related to the economic well-being of the State. With the enormous involvement of this entire State with plant and animal science, it is imperative that this program be designated for priority resource allocation in the half decade ahead. An essential ingredient is the development of adequate physical facilities, and a new life sciences building is among the highest priority building projects on the Lincoln campuses. The development of this program will necessarily call for an expanded faculty and increased support funds, and it will also require closer coordination with the programs of the College of Agriculture. Related to—and a part of—this renewed emphasis on the life sciences is the need for further growth and development in the programs in veterinary science. However, it should be made clear that there are no plans for the development of a College of Veterinary Medicine in the foreseeable future. The current reciprocal arrangement with adjacent states to provide a fixed number of positions for qualified Nebraska students who choose a career in veterinary medicine is a prudent use of resources.

- c. **Engineering.** Here, as in some other areas, the single program serving the State of Nebraska is the engineering program at the University of Nebraska. Recent reports from the professional accrediting agencies have provided little cause for satisfaction or complacency so far as engineering education at the University of Nebraska is concerned. However, there is reason to believe that this program can be made an area of strength within the University and with a relatively modest infusion of resources. The new physical facility, the special discretionary grant made by the Legislature, and the recent administrative merger of the Lincoln and Omaha programs all underscore the new potential. Because this program has a role to play in helping expand the economic base of the State and because this is the single such program available to Nebraska students, it is proposed that engineering education, research, and extension be improved significantly. This emphasis is a qualitative rather than a quantitative one. Of necessity this will require a corollary improvement in mathematics and computer science.
- d. **Natural resources and environment.** For too many years the programs of this University concerned with the natural resources have been fragmented. This is acutely true in the vital field of water resources and their management, their utilization, and their conservation. It is proposed that this

entire area be studied with the specific objective of coordination and consolidation and the establishment of a new, comprehensive administrative unit. This new unit will be concerned not only with natural resources but will also be charged with providing leadership in the rapidly emerging area of environmental concerns.

- e. **Library.** The library resources of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln are inadequate and represent one of the major obstacles to achieving the desired level of academic excellence. During this five-year period the holdings of the library must grow from the present level of a little more than one million volumes to one and a half million volumes—an increase of 50 percent—if we are serious about achieving our academic goals. Stated another way, this means that during the next five years the acquisitions must equal half the total of the previous 104 years! To accomplish this the current acquisition rate must be augmented from external sources by about \$1 million. It is equally imperative that a qualitative evaluation of the current collection be made and that a program be developed for using library augmentation funds to correct specific inadequacies. It is hoped that the University Alumni Association will undertake this as a challenge of the highest priority in helping improve the University of Nebraska as an educational institution.
- f. **Nebraska Opera-Musical Theatre Program.** Given the history of growth in the School of Music and given the achievements in recent years by the opera program at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, emphasis should be given to the continued and rapid development of a major program in opera-musical theatre. Since both opera and musical theatre incorporate music, drama, art, literature, architecture, and dance as integral ingredients of a complete, humanistic approach, a five-year proposal has been designed which would promote a greater involvement, and cooperation of these various arts disciplines.

## The University of Nebraska at Omaha

1. **A Period of Growing Enrollment.** Current indicators suggest a total enrollment of 14,000 to 15,000 before 1978. Presumably both the strengthening of certain programs and new programs will attract a larger percentage of the potential student population. Further, it is expected that a larger percentage of the population of minority students will be recruited at UNO during this period.

2. **Implementation of the Report of the Regents Commission on the Urban University of the 70s.** This report—the result of an extraordinary, cooperative effort involving statewide citizen participation, as well as faculty, staff, and student contributions—provided directions and guidelines for development of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The several recommendations made by the commission have been studied in depth by working committees of the faculty, and the implementation of the principal recommendations in this report is the purpose to be served by the Urban Systems and Extension Services (U.S.E.S.) Project. The programs which qualify under this project will have been designed to organize the resources of both research and teaching in support of urban extension services. As a result of this way of organizing every U.S.E.S. program—in conformity with the standard requirements of the Projects as outlined in Chapter IV—several developments or movements of UNO toward excellence may be expected to emerge. These may be called areas of emphasis, and among the first to emerge should be at least the five included below.

3. **Areas of Emphasis.** Consistent with the recommendations of the commission, certain programs have been implemented<sup>1</sup> and others have been identified within the UNO five-year plan for priority emphasis.

Designating areas of emphasis for UNO is by no means intended to preclude collaboration with sister institutions, particularly UN-L and UNMC—nor should the areas of emphasis listed under UN-L and UNMC preclude UNO's participation at any level in areas such as the life sciences and health programs, engineering sciences and technology, or natural resources and environment. In particular, "UN-O faculty members increasingly should be involved in graduate education and research as members of the Graduate Faculty of the University System" (commission report, p. 20).

The Regents' Commission urged that a few "peaks of excellence" be established immediately, and it is in this spirit that the following program areas are designated for special development.

a. **The Social Sciences in Conjunction with the Arts and the Humanities.** The irreducible requirements of a liberal education invariably include not only viable knowledge and communications skills but also imagination and sensitivity in human relations. Therefore, these interdependent areas must be developed further and reinforced with emphasis on the social sciences at UNO because of their pertinence to the social problems and learning opportunities of the urban community.

<sup>1</sup> As examples: (1) the establishment of the School of Public Affairs and Community Services; (2) the Goodrich program; and (3) the work-study program.

- b. **The Performing Arts.** With the very substantial population base in the Greater Omaha Community and the growing interest both locally and nationally in the performing arts, this is a logical area for emphasis, development, and leadership at UNO. Program development in this area provides an unusually promising vehicle for relating the University and the community, and with the physical facility now under construction, this emerges as a promising area for achieving excellence within the meaning of the commission report.
- c. **Engineering Technology.** Persistent evidence emphasizes the need for increasing numbers of engineering technologists, even when the demand for professional engineers has declined. Nationally, a new interest is emerging in the development of accredited programs in engineering technology, at both the two- and four-year levels, and an emphasis in this area at UNO would simultaneously serve the needs of the community and the students. It would, at the same time, place UNO in the vanguard nationally in a rapidly expanding area.
- d. **Master of Business Administration.** Because of the nature of the constituency and the relationship between the urban university and the community, it is proposed that renewed efforts be made to enlist the support of the business community in building an excellent program leading to the Master of Business Administration degree. A suitable foundation already exists in the institution and there is evidence that the business leadership would enthusiastically respond to a program of exemplary quality designed to serve primarily the promising young executives who are fully employed in the community.
- e. **Special Education.** A unique opportunity exists for UNO to create an exciting program in Special Education. The availability of pertinent resources of the Medical Center, the characteristic needs of the urban community in this area, and the existing program base in the College of Education all reinforce a decision to identify Special Education as a priority program for emphasis in this five-year period.

Designating areas of emphasis in a summary makes it inevitable that other crucial programs not be mentioned; but this in no way implies a lack of interest, or enthusiasm, or support. Because of the interdependence among the various programs, particular notice must be given to the need to appropriately and concurrently support:

Both the broad liberal education of the Arts, the Sciences, and the Humanities as "the core program" at UNO and the professionally oriented programs including Engineering, Business Administration, and Education;

Both undergraduate and graduate education in the core and in the professional programs;

Both education and research in conjunction with public service;

Both credit and non-credit programs in continuing education including advanced study beyond graduate degrees;

Both full-time and part-time study together with both continuous and discontinuous enrollments; and

Both essential, established programs—now including the work-study, the Goodrich, the SPACS programs—and "new programs and services focused upon community problems" as recommended by the commission.

Reaching even a few "peaks of excellence" also requires improvement in supporting educational services, including computer services and library holdings at UNO, improvements commensurate with carrying out the recommendations in the Regents' Commission report.

## **The University of Nebraska Medical Center**

The Medical Center of the University of Nebraska faces an unusual dilemma. At a time when many college graduates find it difficult to secure employment, there is a crushing, unmet need for health care personnel. Yet it must be recognized that the training of health care personnel is an expensive process, and there are serious questions about the willingness and/or ability of the State and the Federal Government to provide the resources necessary to meet this need. Clearly, the student interest is high and a large percentage increase in enrollment could be achieved simply by the allocation of the necessary resources. In trying to balance these factors, the Medical Center establishes the following areas of priority for the five-year period ahead:

**1. A Substantial Expansion in the Residency Program.** It is now well documented that doctors have a strong tendency to practice medicine in the state where they do their residency training. For this reason and in view of the substantial shortage of practicing physicians in Nebraska, it is planned that the number of residents will approximately double in this five-year period. While this will involve a substantial increase in the dollar support

available from a combination of sources, the end result of more practicing physicians is so crucial to the health and well-being of the citizens of the State that this is considered an item of highest priority.

**2. The Development of Rural Health Programs.** There is relentless pressure in the State of Nebraska to improve the level of health care for rural Nebraska. While not as persistent, the same level of problem exists in some of the financially disadvantaged areas of the State. In both these areas there is need for action, and the Medical Center proposes that special emphasis be placed on the development of a variety of programs to help provide solutions for these problems. One of the principal efforts will be the continued development of the program in family practice, with an emphasis on training doctors as family physicians with the hope that many of them will choose to practice in the smaller towns in rural Nebraska. A second technique for improving this service is the Institute for Rural Health Care which has recently been launched and which has promise for making a significant contribution in helping rural communities identify ways to cope with their health care needs. Other approaches will be developed and expanded in this five-year period—such as the program under development at Broken Bow—to help extend the resources of the Medical Center to rural Nebraska.

**3. Continuing Education for Practicing Physicians.** An increasingly difficult problem for practicing physicians—especially in an area such as Nebraska where there is a shortage in the supply of doctors—is the ability to keep current on new practices, new techniques, and new medicines. The Medical Center, during this five-year period, will place a renewed emphasis on the development of continuing education programs to alleviate this difficulty. These programs will be developed in cooperation with practicing physicians throughout the State and will utilize all the resources available in helping keep doctors current, with a minimum expenditure of the physician's time. This is a matter of urgent priority.

**4. The Development of Outstate Resource Centers.** The Medical Center is experimenting with an outstate resource center in cooperation with the community and the physicians in the Broken Bow area. This holds promise for extending the resources of the Medical Center to central locations across the State, with the hope and expectation that this will improve the ability of doctors throughout the State to deal more effectively with their patient loads. The principal purpose of this development is to

make the extensive and sophisticated resources of the Medical Center available to the physicians of the State in the most economical way possible. Consistent with this objective is the rapidly emerging recognition that the Medical Center represents an untapped reference resource for physicians throughout this region. The regional library located at the Medical Center has an enormous technological potential for reinforcing physicians in their own work throughout the area. It is a matter of some urgency that the Medical Center resources be made more readily available in serving health care needs of the citizens of the State.

**5. The Expansion of the Nursing Education Program.** Faced with a never-ending shortage of trained nurses, every effort must be made to expand as rapidly as possible the nursing enrollments. Two factors are crucial to this expansion: (a) the completion of the new College of Nursing building, and (b) the early funding of the Lincoln-based nursing education program. Both the new building and the expanded program must be given a high priority.

The Federal Government has made a strong policy statement concerning the improvement of health care for all the citizens of the nation. The Legislature of the State of Nebraska has similarly expressed in tangible ways its interest in better serving the health needs of the citizens of this State. Both of these indicators are encouraging, yet it must be pointed out that in order to meet the needs of Nebraska effectively, a very substantial investment must be made during the course of the next five years. How much of this will come from the Federal Government is unknown at this time. Equally indefinite is the level of financial support which can be expected from State sources. For these reasons the specific planning for the Medical Center is hazardous. However, this much can and must be said—the supply of students is abundant and the needs of the State are pressing. The Medical Center stands ready to respond to these needs to the maximum extent possible within the limitations imposed by financial constraints.

**6. A New Emphasis in Pharmacy.** The College of Pharmacy is committed to a superior program of instruction in all phases of pharmacy. This commitment has caused a conversion in the curriculum of the College to bring particular attention to a developing clinical role of the pharmacist. Relocation of the College into the Medical Center complex permits a new interdisciplinary relationship with the clinical facilities and the other colleges of the Medical Center. The development of this new educational program has put the College in a position of national leadership in undergraduate pharmacy education. It is calculated that the current class size of 72 new students per year will approximate

the demand for new pharmacists within the State. The College is additionally committed to conducting graduate programs at the doctoral level which shall be of moderate size to meet the needs of the region but which shall be of excellent quality to meet the expectations of the State and of the University. Accomplishment of the academic and manpower objectives of the faculty in this new setting will require sufficient new funding to provide facilities in the Medical Center, to reach at least the national average of faculty student ratio, and to provide graduate programs sufficient to maintain the research interest of a dedicated, young faculty.

### **The University of Nebraska System Office**

The primary role of the University of Nebraska System office is that of coordination and policy making. It is anticipated that in the five years ahead the functions of the System office will be sharpened in the areas of program evaluation, program and policy audit. Continuing studies will be made to determine how the needs of the State and the students can be served in the most effective and efficient way possible consistent with good educational practice. Making certain that program and personnel audits take place on the campuses and are evaluated centrally will continue to be a function of the System office. The audit function in the area of business management is clearly a System responsibility.

While the System office can serve as a stimulator, a coordinator, an evaluator, and an auditor, the educational impact of the University of Nebraska will be developed and delivered on the three campuses and in the outstate facilities. This means that the System office must stand on the one hand as a continuing critic of the functions of the campuses, but more importantly it must serve as a base of support, as a source of reinforcement, and as an expeditor to make it possible for each of the campuses to accomplish its own objectives more effectively.

## IV. CONCLUSION

The University of Nebraska is a vital resource for this State, serving as an ally and a partner to its citizens in developing the human resources, as well as the economic resources, of Nebraska.

Our objective is to provide the best possible educational experience for the students who study with us, to contribute to the fund of new knowledge available to our students and to our society, and to provide a rich educational resource for all the people of the State. Accomplishing that objective requires a continuing evaluation and re-evaluation, and this can be done best when interested persons, both within and without the University, contribute to those processes.

As was stated in the beginning, this document represents the combined thinking of principal staff officers on the three campuses. Refinements have been made in response to comments and criticisms made by interested citizens. Finally, the document has been subjected to careful review by the Board of Regents before its formal adoption.

The task has not been easy. Not every position stated in this document has been endorsed unanimously by all involved groups. But out of these deliberations has emerged a plan of action for the five years immediately ahead—which merits the full support of all those interested in and involved with the University of Nebraska.