

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA ALUMNI QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WITH DR. GOLD



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Q: Can you explain more about why the state budget is so important in supporting NU?

A: As a public, state-funded institution, the University of Nebraska relies heavily on state budget allocations. While federal, philanthropic, and other sources support research and scholarships, about two-thirds of our operating funds come from state dollars, with the remaining third from tuition. We recently testified to the Appropriations Committee on behalf of our budget ask, which you can read [here](#). Our partnership with the state is vital to ensuring that we can continue providing high-quality, affordable education to nearly 50,000 students and driving research and innovation that benefits all Nebraskans.

Q: What challenges are the University of Nebraska facing during this legislative session?

A: This legislative session, the University of Nebraska is navigating a range of challenges. Budgetary pressures are at the forefront, as we advocate for the funding needed to support our strategic priorities, maintain affordability, and continue delivering high-quality education.

As the higher education landscape evolves, we must balance immediate fiscal realities with long-term strategic goals, ensuring that we remain a resilient, forward-thinking institution. It's critical that we make our case clearly to state leaders, demonstrating the significant return on investment that the University of Nebraska provides to the state's economy, workforce, and quality of life.

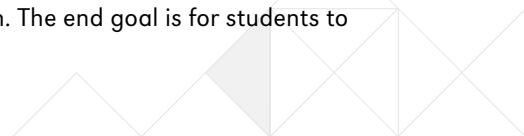


Q: What impact will the reduction in federal funding for research have on NU?

A: Federal research funding is a vital source of support for the University of Nebraska's research enterprise. It fuels discoveries in critical fields and helps attract world-class faculty and graduate students. Reductions in federal funding will limit our ability to undertake large-scale research projects, compete for top talent, and drive innovation. For example, the recent directive from the National Institutes of Health capping the reimbursement rate for facilities and administrative costs at 15% would require the university to absorb more than \$27 million to sustain its current research and facilities. This underscores how critical external support is to maintaining our research momentum.

Q: What is the University's strategy for addressing brain drain in Nebraska?

A: Addressing brain drain is a top priority for the University of Nebraska. Our strategy focuses on keeping students in Nebraska for college and helping them build careers here after graduation. Initiatives like the Presidential Scholars program are designed to attract high-achieving students to our campuses, offering opportunities that make staying in-state an attractive option. We also work closely with industry partners to align academic programs with workforce needs in high-demand fields. Through internships and experiential learning, we connect students with Nebraska employers early and often. The end goal is for students to choose to live, work, and thrive here long term.



Q: What do you see as the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the University of Nebraska today?

A: The biggest opportunity that we have is to be laser focused on our strategic planning at a time of significant policy, fiscal and ideologic challenges. Multiple external forces facing the University of Nebraska today include financial pressures, shifting public perceptions of higher education, and a rapidly changing policy environment. We are also working to address future enrollment challenges and ensure that our academic programs meet and exceed the evolving needs of students and employers.

At the same time, Nebraska is uniquely positioned to lead in fields like agriculture, rural healthcare, defense, and technology. Our research and innovation capabilities offer solutions to national and global challenges, and our commitment to workforce development can help bridge critical talent gaps across the state. By staying focused on our strategic vision and working collaboratively with stakeholders, we can navigate these challenges thoughtfully and position the University of Nebraska for long-term stability and success.

Q: How is the University ensuring that students, faculty, and staff have the ability to engage with diverse perspectives and learn about a wide range of cultural and intellectual viewpoints?

A: The University of Nebraska is deeply committed to fostering an environment where a wide range of perspectives are not only welcomed but encouraged across all of our campuses, colleges and programs. Our priority remains to provide students, faculty, and staff with opportunities to engage with a broad spectrum of ideas and viewpoints. We believe that exposure to different perspectives is critical to a well-rounded education and we strive to create a campus culture that values critical thinking, respectful dialogue, and lifelong learning.

Q: How do we address the affordability of higher education?

A: Affordability is a critical priority for the University of Nebraska. We are committed to keeping tuition increases as low as possible, expanding scholarship opportunities, and providing financial support that helps reduce student debt. The Nebraska Promise program, for example, offers free tuition for qualifying in-state students with a family income of \$65,000 or less, ensuring that a high-quality education remains accessible to all Nebraskans, regardless of their financial background.

Q: How can alumni learn about opportunities to organize and advocate for higher education?

A: Alumni are among the University of Nebraska’s greatest assets. Your experiences, voices, and networks play a powerful role in advancing our mission. One of the most impactful ways to support the university is by joining NU Advocates. This program provides tools and information to help you share the university’s story and advocate for higher education. By engaging with policymakers clearly and often, participating in advocacy efforts, and helping to demonstrate the value of public investment in education, you can make a difference in ensuring a strong future for the University of Nebraska.

