

Motion to the UNL Faculty Senate with Procedural Directions and Text for Vote of No Confidence

November 2, 2025

Purpose

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL), and higher education more broadly, stands at a pivotal moment. Strong and effective leadership is essential for UNL to achieve its mission of teaching, research, and service to the State of Nebraska. Given the current social and economic turbulence, this mission has never been of greater importance. The purpose of this document is to orient the UNL Faculty Senate members to a series of procedures that must be followed to bring a motion for a “Resolution of No Confidence” for Chancellor Rodney Bennet before the body for a vote.

Directions to UNL Faculty Senators

Please read the following information to be prepared to engage with UNL Faculty Senate procedures and discuss this issue at the **November 4, 2025, 2:30 - 5:00 pm** meeting.

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I. Rationale for the Motion

Chancellor Bennett's current tenure has eroded faculty trust, destabilized the university's strategic direction, and jeopardized the institution's standing within Nebraska and among its Big Ten peers. The UNL Faculty Senate, exercising its constitutional role in shared governance, must act decisively.

Informational Guideline

Faculty Senates use a *Resolution of No Confidence* when a chancellor has:

- Bypassed consultation processes with faculty bodies;
- Ignored faculty input on decisions regarding budgeting and academic programs;
- Made decisions that have compromised institutional integrity, data accuracy, and accreditation;
- Engaged in misleading communication; and
- All other attempts at dialogue, negotiation, and remediation have been exhausted.

A *Resolution of No Confidence* is necessary to send a message to the Board of Regents (BOR), the President, the wider university community, and Nebraska's taxpayers that actions that violate the premises of shared governance and place the financial and academic integrity of Nebraska's flagship university at risk will not be tolerated by the Faculty Senate and the larger faculty body.

The primary goal of a *Resolution of No Confidence* is to formalize the judgment that the Chancellor is unfit to continue in office due to a comprehensive failure of leadership and to provide the BOR with formal institutional evidence that the Chancellor has forfeited the necessary confidence to lead. A *Resolution of No Confidence* can trigger a formal review, prompt public scrutiny, provide pressure for accountability, and reassert faculty members' roles in shared governance and commitment to institutional integrity.

In our case, holding a vote of the proposed ***Resolution of No Confidence*** is both justified and necessary to restore transparency, collegial governance, and fiscal integrity at Nebraska's flagship campus.

II. Procedural Timeline

Based on the Faculty Senate Bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order, the following timeline is proposed for the *Resolution of No Confidence*.

Date	Action
Sunday, Nov. 2	Request to add motion to the agenda 1. Send President Shrader, Faculty Executive Committee members, and Karen Griffin the set of motion materials to share with the UNL FS Senators for their review and consideration.
Tuesday, Nov. 4	Full Faculty Senate Meeting 1. Introduction of Procedural vote to bring a “Resolution of No Confidence in Chancellor D. Bennett” before a special convening of the faculty senate on Tuesday, November 18th 2. Discussion 3. Vote
Tuesday, Nov. 4 to Tuesday, Nov. 18	Input, Feedback, and Consultation 1. Faculty Senators seek input, feedback, and consultation from departmental faculty colleagues 2. Faculty Senators share information with departmental faculty colleagues
If the motion to convene a special session passes: Tuesday, November 18	Special Full Faculty Senate Session 1. Vote on the No Confidence motion 2. If passes, then report vote immediately to President Gold and BOR

For reference: Timeline for UNL Budget Reduction Proposal and Final Decision

Date	Budget Reduction Process
Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2025, 12-5 pm Nebraska Union, City Campus	President Gold’s visit to UNL to meet with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and other campus groups’ executive committees.
Approximately Nov. 21	Chancellor Bennett's response to APC recommendations and final recommendations to the Board of Regents
December 5, 9:00am Varner Hall	Board of Regents meeting and vote on program(s) elimination and mergers

III. Motions

Step 1: UNL Faculty Senate Procedure

Procedural resolution to bring a “Resolution of No Confidence in Chancellor D. Bennett” before a special convening of the UNL faculty senate on Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 2:30pm:

WHEREAS, the Chancellor has failed to uphold the duties of leadership, financial stewardship, and governance integrity as mandated by the Board of Regents Bylaws (Chapter II, §2.8.1), resulting in substantial loss of confidence among the faculty of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, administrative decisions under the current chancellorship have undermined shared governance processes, violated established consultation norms with faculty and staff, and caused measurable harm to institutional morale and trust; and

WHEREAS, the Chancellor’s fiscal management practices, including the use of external consulting entities and the implementation of non-transparent budgetary reductions, have eroded confidence in the University’s commitment to responsible public stewardship; and

WHEREAS, these failures collectively constitute a breach of the Chancellor’s fiduciary duty to the people of Nebraska and compromise the University’s mission to serve the public good through education, research, and extension;

WHEREAS, the decision to pass a “Resolution of No Confidence in Chancellor D. Rodney Bennett” requires careful, thoughtful consideration as well as consultation with departmental colleagues;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Faculty Senate must hold a special convening to vote on November 18th on the “Resolution formally declaring a Vote of No Confidence in Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett;” and
2. That Faculty Senators should consult with their departmental colleagues to receive input and feedback on the Resolution; and
3. That Faculty Senators should share relevant information with their departmental colleagues in a timely way to help provide for more informed input and feedback on the Resolution.

Step 2: Motion to Vote on the Resolution

Resolution of No Confidence in Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett

WHEREAS, the Chancellor has failed to uphold the duties of leadership, financial stewardship, and governance integrity as mandated by the Board of Regents Bylaws (Chapter II, §2.8.1), resulting in substantial loss of confidence among the faculty of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, administrative decisions under the current chancellorship have undermined shared governance processes, violated established consultation norms with faculty and staff, and caused measurable harm to institutional morale and trust; and

WHEREAS, the Chancellor’s fiscal management practices, including the use of external consulting entities and the implementation of non-transparent budgetary reductions, have eroded confidence in the University’s commitment to responsible public stewardship; and

WHEREAS, these failures collectively constitute a breach of the Chancellor’s fiduciary duty to the people of Nebraska and compromise the University’s mission to serve the public good through education, research, and extension;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Faculty Senate formally declares a *Vote of No Confidence in Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett*, citing documented failures in strategic leadership, fiscal stewardship, governance integrity, external relations, and personnel management.
2. That this declaration be transmitted to the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and the President of the University, with a formal request for immediate review of the Chancellor’s continued fitness to serve.
3. That the Faculty Senate urges the Board of Regents and the President to initiate proceedings under Board policy for removal or negotiated resignation, consistent with contractual obligations and system bylaws.
4. That all further academic program discontinuance proceedings be suspended until such time as an interim Chancellor is appointed and shared governance processes are demonstrably restored.

Memorandum: Motion for Vote of No Confidence in the Chancellor

To: UNL Faculty Senate Members

Date: November 2, 2025

Subject: Motion for Vote of No Confidence and Recommendation for Removal of UNL Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett

I. Purpose and Authority

Under Article II, Sections 1–3 of the **University of Nebraska–Lincoln Bylaws** and consistent with the **University of Nebraska Board of Regents Bylaws (Chapter 2)**, the **Faculty Senate** and its committees may formally advise, petition, or recommend actions on matters affecting the academic integrity and governance of the institution.

This memorandum seeks initiation of a **Vote of No Confidence** in Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett for demonstrable failure to uphold his executive duties as the campus’s chief administrative officer (CAO) and for conduct inconsistent with the obligations of shared governance, fiscal stewardship, and strategic leadership expected of a Big Ten chancellor.

II. Governing Standards and Executive Duties

The Chancellor of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln serves as the chief administrative officer of the campus, with explicit duties to:

1. Provide strategic leadership aligned with institutional mission and system-wide goals.
2. Exercise fiscal and administrative stewardship ensuring financial integrity and sustainability.
3. Protect the academic integrity and shared-governance processes of the faculty.
4. Represent the UNL’s interests in external relations, including alumni, donors, and public agencies.
5. Foster a positive work environment for faculty, staff, and students through transparent, fair, and participatory management.

These obligations are codified in the **Regents Bylaws (2.8.1)** and the **UNL Bylaws, Article II, Section 3**.

III. Findings of Executive Failure

A. Strategic Leadership Failure

- The Chancellor's **2025 Budget Reduction Initiative**, totaling \$27.5 million in state-aided reductions, fails to provide adequate strategic leadership to further the mission of the institution.
 - Released in Summer 2025, the identified criteria (referred to as the "metrics") lacked transparency and meaningful faculty input, and contained gross errors in both data collection and analysis, which led to proposed UNL academic program eliminations that are contrary to the mission and strategic plan of the institution.
 - Qualitative factors referenced to support program eliminations were not provided to department faculty prior to the cuts becoming public, violating APC bylaws.
- Due to substantial flaws in the metrics used to identify academic units for elimination, eliminations of entire departments that provide core academic programs (specifically, the UNL Departments of: (a) Community and Regional Planning, (b) Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, (c) Educational Administration, (d) Landscape Architecture, (e) Statistics, and (f) Textiles, Merchandising, and Fashion Design) are inconsistent with UNL's published strategic plan, which emphasizes research intensity, STEM capacity, and student success.
- No evidence of scenario modeling, risk analysis, or impact assessment has been provided to the APC or Faculty Senate, precluding informed faculty participation.
 - For example, the proposal makes invalid assumptions about the costs of continuing to teach general-education courses in statistics, indicating a failure to appropriately model the consequences of the proposed cuts across the university. The effects of cutting the Department of Statistics on programs outside IANR were similarly not considered, threatening large and well-regarded programs, such as math, computer science, and business. These omissions indicate that the Chancellor does not view UNL as the interconnected entity it is.

Result: Chancellor Bennett has failed to apply basic strategic and evidence-based principles for organizational leadership. As a result, he has endangered UNL's reputation and violated his fiduciary obligation to steward the flagship campus of the university's resources to benefit the state of Nebraska and its residents.

B. Fiscal Stewardship Failure

- Chancellor Bennett's plan relies upon immediate cost-reductions and across-the-board cuts rather than multi-year fiscal modeling or revenue diversification. This is counter to commonly understood best-practices for how to resolve structural deficits.
 - No pro forma or longitudinal financial model has been published for review.
 - It is unclear if a forensic audit of the budget has been performed and the results thereof have not been presented to the university community to validate the claimed structural deficit or to pinpoint direct causes of the deficit.
 - In fact, an outside review (using university financial statements and information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) by Garrity (October 2025), "highlighted that revenue outnumbered expenses over the years for both the overall system and the Lincoln campus."
 - Garrity found that "since 2016, revenue has improved by 33.6%, which includes tuition and fees, federal grants and state appropriations, among other revenue sources. "The system and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln both show many signs of good financial health, increasing net positions, total revenue exceeding expenses, increase in state appropriations, budgeted revenue and expenses projected to grow," Garrity said."
- [Report shows University of Nebraska in good financial health, questions proposed cuts | Nebraska Public Media](#)
- The plan jeopardizes future revenue streams (e.g., graduate enrollment, grant productivity) and creates structural instability rather than addressing root causes.
 - No teach-out plans were developed prior to proposing the programs' elimination to determine how long it will take to reach the fiscal cuts from the proposal.
 - No provisional or draft teach-out plan was developed before announcing the program eliminations, contrary to Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation policy requiring institutions to notify and prepare for teach-out "as soon as they become aware of or anticipate" closures, risking costly investigation and possible sanction.
 - This omission additionally undermines fiscal transparency because the true timeline and costs of program closure, including continuing instruction, dissertation advising, and student support, remain unknown and unbudgeted.

Result: Chancellor Bennett's approach constitutes short-term fiscal management inconsistent with Big Ten best practices and fails to meet the standard of "ensuring fiscal integrity" under the UN Board of Regents Bylaws.

C. Governance and Academic Oversight Failure

- The August–December 2025 budget reduction process announcement and timeline precludes meaningful faculty and departmental leadership consultation, compressing the review window for the Academic Planning Committee and undermines the possibility of completing a thorough review of evidence, consequences, and public comments.
- No published rubric or scoring framework was shared to allow fair assessment of proposed program discontinuance.
- The process risks violating both AAUP standards and UNL’s own commitments following its 2021 removal from AAUP censure.
- By failing to provide data in response to UNL faculty or staff senate requests for additional information about the budget cut metrics and processes, the chancellor has refused to engage in the shared governance processes put in place by the NU Board of Regents.

Result: The Chancellor’s conduct reflects disregard for shared governance, a central tenet of academic legitimacy and university accreditation.

D. External Relations and Reputational Damage

- Chancellor Bennett’s communication strategy—announcement of large-scale cuts without pre-alignment with faculty, alumni, or donors—has led to widespread public criticism and reputational harm.
- The UNL 2025 budget cut process has been covered closely by local, state, and national media (e.g., Nebraska NPR, Lincoln Journal Star, Flatwater Free Press, Omaha World Herald, Inside Higher Ed, Higher Ed Dive):
 - The budget reduction process has been reported in the news as a controversial and highly debated issue, marked by public hearings with passionate pleas from students, faculty, and the public over concerns about a lack of transparency in the decision-making metrics, and alarm over the potential elimination of six academic programs.
 - Media reports have highlighted faculty and student worries about job security, the impact on state education and labor shortages, workforce development, and the potential for exacerbating "brain drain."
 - Media reporters have also investigated the budget reduction at UNL via public records and have characterized the budget reduction as “devastating” and “indiscriminate,” undermining public trust in UNL’s leadership and stewardship of state resources.

- Key donors and community partners have signaled diminished confidence in the current administration.

Result: UNL Chancellor Bennett has failed to represent and advance UNL's interests as required by his office.

E. Personnel Management and Campus Climate Failure

- The Chancellor has been noticeably absent from many significant meetings with established committees and groups, including, but not limited to:
 - o Many missed meetings with the **UNL Faculty Senate (FS)** on:
 - September 2, 2025. The first Faculty Senate meeting of the academic year and at a time when the campus is facing a \$27.5 million budget reduction and academic programs are being considered for elimination.
 - February 4, 2025. Did not meet with the full UNL Faculty Senate or the Senate Executive Committee during the month of February. (UNL Bylaws states that the Chancellor is to meet with the Senate Executive Committee twice a month, although one of the meetings can be waived if the Chancellor meets with the full Faculty Senate.)
 - September 3, 2024. First full UNL Faculty Senate meeting of the academic year.
 - February 6, 2024. Did not attend.
 - The Chancellor did not meet with the Senate Executive Committee from December 1, 2024, to January 23, 2025.
 - Only met with the Senate Executive Committee twice in the summer of 2025, and twice in summer of 2024.
 - o The **UNL 2025 annual service awards ceremony**:
 - The Chancellor sent a video recording instead of handing out the awards to staff and faculty in person.
<https://ianrnews.unl.edu/article/university-celebrates-decades-of-education-at-annual-service-awards>
 - o The three **Chancellor's Commissions**:
 - Chancellor Bennett has never met with his commissions.
 - By comparison, his predecessor Chancellor Green met with each of the Commissions once each semester.
 - o The **Academic Planning Committee (APC)**:

- Chancellor Bennett has not met with the APC since April 17, 2024; not even to invoke the procedures for the budget reductions this summer (2025).
 - In all previous budget reductions requiring the APC to be involved, the previous Chancellors met with the committee to discuss the situation with them directly.
 - In August 2023, the APC was made aware that the committee would need to work on reducing the budget by \$12 million, yet the Chancellor did not invoke the procedures until October 3, 2023, and the proposed reductions were not made public until November 29, 2023.
 - The APC needed to make its final recommendations to the Chancellor by December 8, 2023, which left little time for the APC to consider the proposed reductions and make recommendations.
 - The same is true for this year's UNL budget reduction of \$27.5 million. The APC was not called to meet until August 6, 2025, but had to submit its recommendations on the proposed cuts by October 24, 2025. This time frame required public hearings for the six departments slated for elimination and four departments slated for realignment and merger.
 - Throughout the 2024-2025 academic year the Chancellor made it clear that the campus was going to have to deal with a major budget reduction yet the procedures to deal with the budget reductions were not enacted until August leaving little time for the APC to do its work.
 - Chancellor Bennett did not attend any of the public hearings for each of the departments proposed for merger or elimination under his initially proposed budget plan.
- The absence of a published personnel-transition framework for buyouts, layoffs, or reassignments has produced anxiety, inequity, and morale collapse among faculty and staff.
 - The Chancellor's communications with the campus during the budget cut process have been sporadic, unidirectional, ineffective, demoralizing, and uninformative.
 - The Chancellor has failed to take responsibility for the size of the budget cuts, which might have been less dramatic if imposed earlier in his tenure.

Result: The Chancellor's actions have compromised the dignity, fairness, and trust essential to an effective institutional culture.

IV. Legal and Policy Basis for Action

1. **Board of Regents Bylaws, §2.8.1:** Chancellors are accountable for “the general administration of their respective major administrative units” and must ensure the protection and advancement of the institution’s interests.
 2. **Board of Regents Policy RP-2.1.6:** Establishes that “Scholarship at UNL should emphasize teaching and discovery but should also include the scholarship of integration and application.” The Chancellor’s 2025 budget reduction plan violates this directive by employing narrow evaluative metrics that disregard integrative and applied scholarship central to UNL’s land-grant mission, thereby undermining the University’s required alignment between scholarship, mission, and statewide service. This constitutes poor judgment and non-compliance with the Regents’ governing policy.
 3. **UNL Bylaws, Article II, Section 3:** The Chancellor “shall exercise such executive powers as are necessary for the proper governance of [the university].” By advancing a budget-reduction plan based on inaccurate data, narrow metrics, misapplied analysis, and by disregarding APC procedures, omitting required consultation, and exposing the institution to accreditation risk, the Chancellor failed to exercise the executive powers necessary for proper governance.
 4. **UNL Procedures To Be Invoked For Significant Budget Reallocations And Reductions, Article II.A.2:** “Information used in the reallocation and reduction process must be made available to the budget planning participants and affected programs in a timely manner so that corrections and explanations can be made before it is released to the public.” Faculty were denied access to underlying data and learned of the metrics only after public release, contrary to the mandated timeline.
 5. **UNL Procedures To Be Invoked For Significant Budget Reallocations And Reductions, Article II.A.3:** Consultation is defined as “more than just giving and receiving information” and involve administrators, faculty, students, and staff “with ample opportunity for advice prior to recommendations being developed.”
 6. **UNL Procedures To Be Invoked For Significant Budget Reallocations And Reductions, Article II.A.5:** Each proposal must include an implementation timetable and analysis of impact on students. No such timetable or impact analysis accompanied the proposed eliminations; this omission directly links to the absence of teach-out plans and HLC compliance risk.
 7. **AAUP Statement on Shared Governance:** Faculty hold primary responsibility for curriculum, research, and academic standards; administrative actions that undermine these without due process warrant censure or no-confidence proceedings.
 8. **Institutional Precedent:** Prior no-confidence actions at peer Big Ten universities (e.g., Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois) have relied on comparable procedural failures and governance breakdowns.
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