

**Summary of Communications Exchanged and Information Provided to the
Ad Hoc Metrics Committee
(February - March 2026)**

Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Metrics Committee members: Beth Lewis (chair), Maria de Guzman, Leslie Delserone, J.D. Madson, L.J. McElravy, and John Shrader

Purpose of the Committee: To gather information about the document, "Strategic Plan System Metrics v 1.07."

The following status report is respectfully submitted to the UNL Faculty Senate on March 31, 2026. The committee met four times (2/23/26, 2/25/26, 3/3/26, and 3/10/26), including our meeting on March 3, 2026, with EVP and Provost Dr. David Jackson.

At the first meeting on February 23, we discussed our committee's charge and crafted the email below with an initial set of questions about the metrics. This email was then sent by FS President John Shrader on the committee's behalf to NU System President Gold (cc Jackson and UNL Chancellor Ankerson and EVC Button)]:

Dear President Gold,

The Faculty Senate approved the creation of a NU System Metrics Ad-Hoc Committee to review Strategic Plan System Metrics, vl.07 as shared with Faculty Senate President Shrader.

In order to better understand this process and the long-term effects of using these metrics, the committee respectfully asks for a response to the following questions from the University leadership:

1. What is the purpose of these metrics (i.e., how will they be used)?
2. How will the data be gathered?
3. Whose responsibility will it be to collect and report this information?
4. What are the desired impacts of these metrics on the student experience, research efforts, and engagement across the state?
5. What is the anticipated cost for gathering and implementing the metrics?
6. What resources will be used to support meeting the goals outlined in the metrics?

Please know that we see our role as collaborative in the process of shared governance and continual improvement to promote UNL's odyssey to extraordinary.

Best regards,

John Shrader, Beth Lewis, Maria de Guzman, L.J. McElravy, J.D. Madsen, Leslie Delserone
UNL FS Metrics Ad Hoc Committee

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The following email response was sent to FS President Shrader on 2/25/26 and shared with the committee:

From: Jeffrey Gold <jeffrey.gold@nebraska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 11:49 AM
To: John Shrader <john.shrader@unl.edu>; David Jackson <djackson@nebraska.edu>; Katherine Ankerson <ankerson@unl.edu>
Subject: FW: NU System Metrics Ad-Hoc Committee asking for response

John,

Please find enclosed responses to the questions asked. Let me know if you need additional information...jg

1. What is the purpose of these metrics (i.e., how will they be used)?
 - a. The metrics will be used to support the implementation of our system wide strategic planning. Each metric is associated with one or more of the five foundational pillars and one or more of the fourteen strategies nested within the pillars. They will hopefully guide campus leadership as we move forward, will be reported in aggregated format to the Regents periodically, and used for key advocacy/fundraising purposes as needed.
2. How will the data be gathered?
 - a. The metrics will be gathered system wide by the EDS team in close collaboration with the campus data teams. Many can be derived directly from existing system wide and campus specific data sources with little or no manual data input.
3. Whose responsibility will it be to collect and report this information?
 - a. The responsibility to collect and compile this information rests with EDS, as well as those who maintain the system wide data sources (NESIS, NEBIS, etc.). Campus validation has been part of the process for each metric.
4. What are the desired impacts of these metrics on the student experience, research efforts, and engagement across the state?
 - a. The desired impact is to enhance our mission driven goals, as expressed in the five foundational pillars, which clearly include student experience, research, and engagement across the state.
5. What is the anticipated cost for gathering and implementing the metrics?
 - a. The responsibility for collection and compiling of the metrics, as well as the creation and maintenance of the dashboards is centralized within the EDS team, who have been engaged in this effort for over a year. There are currently no incremental costs, as this work has been integrated into the EDS workflow.
6. What resources will be used to support meeting the goals outlined in the metrics?
 - a. We will continue to work with government and private sources of funding to lift up new and existing prioritized strategic areas and to support areas that have metric demonstrated needs for improvement.

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Notes:

<https://nebraska.edu/strategic-plan/>

<https://nebraska.edu/strategic-plan/docs/strategic-plan-2025.pdf>

EDS = Enterprise Data Solutions

“The EDS team is responsible for maintaining the reporting data warehouse that holds business and finance and student data. The team builds and maintains the warehouse and works with campus constituents to support data needs and provide technical solutions for data management, infrastructure and security. The team also provides consultation across the University system to support data-informed decision-making.” <https://nebraska.edu/offices/enterprise-data-solutions/meet-our-people/>

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The ad hoc committee met again on February 25 and decided to request a meeting with EVP David Jackson as he had indicated that he would be available for an initial meeting with a smaller group (in lieu of attending a full UNL FS meeting) to discuss the metrics. Thus, we then sent the following set of follow-up questions and met with him on March 3, 2026. The following is a summary of the questions and the conversation, which he approved us to share with the FS.

Follow-up questions:

1. At what level have the 5 Pillars and their associated metrics been presented for input and feedback (e.g., chancellors, vice chancellors, deans, department executive officers, faculty, staff, and students)?
 - a. What is the history of these metrics?
 - b. Who was involved in developing the pillars and metrics?
 - c. On what were they based?
2. Who will these metrics be shared with (“transparently distributed”)?
 - a. How are these metrics to be applied and interpreted (e.g., system, campus, department, faculty/staff)?
 - b. How were the baseline and growth rates decided upon?
 - c. In what ways do you anticipate faculty and departments being held accountable for the growth expectations?
3. Data validation, which occurs at the campus level, may require considerable effort. Given the lack of validation of metrics in the last round of budget cuts, what makes you confident that the resources exist to validate this data?
 - a. How will campus, colleges, departments, and individuals be able to validate the data?
 - b. What is the relationship between the metrics and Academic Analytics data, which we learned was not accurate during the budget reduction process in 2025? And when will faculty be able to view their own data in AA and request corrections to their records?
4. How do you anticipate the NU-System-, university-, college-, and department-level budgets to be impacted by these metrics? Will they be used to compare different units to evaluate productivity?

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Summary of Conversation with EVP Jackson (3/3/26):

1. **The Progress Metrics were designed to evaluate the NU System is making towards overall progress on our Odyssey to the Extraordinary.**
 - Metrics are intended to provide a real time view of the entire NU system as a whole.
 - The **System** is not using these metrics to perform:
 - Direct evaluation of individual departments;
 - Direct comparison across campuses, colleges, nor units;

- Direct budget allocation decisions or departmental evaluations.
- The **Campuses** will have access to academic and business unit longitudinal data as a tool to measure progress, set growth targets and enhance effectiveness. Campus leadership, with faculty, and staff are expected to determine how each campus, major business unit, College, Center, etc. should be contributing towards the improvement of each metric in alignment with mission, strengths, and opportunities for growth/improvement (see #2, below)
- Most metrics are items that external parties evaluate us by, mandated reporting requirements, or normal business data (e.g., headcount, AAU, etc.).
- The initially specified growth rates are **estimates and placeholders previously determined by campus and system leadership**, which are not set in stone and will be annually adjusted for external realities, baseline data values, and shifts (e.g., lack of previously available federal grants).
- Once campuses/units evaluate their contribution toward each metric, growth rates will be fine-tuned. This also provides an opportunity for campuses to determine how they will view the metrics in relation to campus-based unit assessments.
- There has been no discussion around budgeting related to the metrics, but if campuses are not progressing on some of these, there may be questions.
- Metric growth targets are expressed in 1 and 3-year values and, as conditions warrant, will likely be updated annually.

2. Context-specific Application:

Metrics will apply differently across campuses and units. Each campus must determine its realistic contribution and strategic focus for each metric. Within campuses, colleges and business units vary further (e.g., Journalism vs. Arts & Sciences for federal grants; Extension vs. academic departments for community outreach vs. student retention).

3. Background and Development of the NU Metrics.

Earlier phases:

- July 2024: Strategic planning was undertaken by President Gold, Chancellors, Vice Presidents, NU Foundation, and community members with continuous input by the Board of Regents.
- Mid-Feb 2025: The Pillars and Strategies were distributed to faculty and staff on all campuses via email for comments; prior distribution and discussion with the chancellors and VCs.
- Pillars and strategies presented to and endorsed by the Board of Regents.
- Metrics were then developed and aggregated after the strategic plan was finalized; extensive feedback sessions with campus chancellors, Vice Presidents, most using system wide data that is currently collected and reported in different formats at different times.
- All Chancellors, Vice Presidents, and NU President attended retreat(s) to review and refine metrics; the growth numbers initially added as rough estimates.

- Metrics presented to and endorsed by the Board of Regents.

Current and forthcoming phases:

- **Currently:** There is a focus group examining the metrics, including data experts. Very precise data definitions are available for ~70-80% of the metrics. The focus group is highlighting key questions that stakeholders will ask to better inform a communication and rollout plan. Opportunities will be made available for deep dives into the data for those who have an interest.
- **Forthcoming:** NU will expand communication and feedback gathering more broadly. Also, a dashboard will be released summarizing metrics information.
 - After the 2026-27 metrics are formally released with clear data definitions and baseline data: Chancellors and deans will need to come together to explore what their individual academic and business unit growth targets will be, based upon the strategic plan strategies, initiatives, and the progress metrics.

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After we met with Jackson, we met on March 10 to discuss the summary of our notes that Faculty Senator de Guzman had drafted for us and next steps. Faculty Senator Lewis then sent our notes to EVP Jackson for his review and further comments. Jackson approved the notes to be shared with some elaborations (which have been incorporated in the above summary).

From: David Jackson <djackson@nebraska.edu>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 2:10 PM
To: Elizabeth Lewis <elewis3@unl.edu>
Cc: Leslie Delserone <ldelserone2@unl.edu>; Maria de Guzman <mguzman2@unl.edu>; L.J. McElravy <lj.mcelravy@unl.edu>; JD Madsen <jdmadsen@unl.edu>; John Shrader <john.shrader@unl.edu>
Subject: Re: Thank you and notes for your review

Beth et al.-

Thanks for the opportunity to provide comments on your summary. Given the brevity of our conversation, my response may include additional information and nuances not fully outlined during the Zoom meeting. Please reach out if you have questions.

We plan a broad communication effort across the system, followed by campus leaders communicating their approaches to interacting with and making decisions in conjunction with faculty and all campus constituents. I anticipate that effort will kick off in mid to late-April. As noted in the summary, we'll offer "deep dive" workshop-style opportunities for anyone interested in the progress indicator metrics. At least some faculty (beyond data experts) on each campus would benefit from these workshops to better understand the data and, more importantly, help decide which metrics do and don't align with campus-, college-, and discipline-based improvement expectations.

Also, I'd be pleased to continue to interact with your committee to whatever extent you may wish.

David

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Final Committee Recommendations:

In summary, the committee recommends that the UNL FS consider formally requesting:

1. EVP David Jackson to report on NU metrics in person annually to the UNL FS to ensure that the senators are regularly informed on their progress.
2. Chancellor Ankerson and EVC Mark Button co-present to provide the UNL-only results.