



COLLEGE OF LAW

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

APRIL 2021

law.unl.edu/strategic-plan

OUR MISSION



WE DEVELOP

INCLUSIVE LEADERS

WHO ADVANCE JUST

SOLVE PROBLEMS, AND

SERVE WITH INTEGRITY

VALUES

At Nebraska Law, we

- Think Creatively
- Listen Graciously
- Speak Thoughtfully
- Value Diversity
- Build Community
- Serve Humbly
- Act Courageously
- Work Hard
- Demand Excellence

S TICE, ND RITY.

From December 2018 until May 2019, a group of approximately fifty University of Nebraska College of Law faculty, administrators, staff, students, and alumni met to create a strategic plan for the College of Law. The plan was finalized over the summer of 2019 and includes a new mission statement, an expression of our values, and three primary commitments, as well as specific strategies we would take to fulfill those commitments and key indicators of success. We expected to begin implementation of the plan during the 2019-20 academic year.

As detailed below, the College did implement several aspects of the plan, but full implementation was delayed as the dean was called to serve as the Interim Executive Vice Chancellor for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from June 1, 2019 to March 22, 2020. Immediately upon the dean's return to the College of Law, the administration and faculty became consumed responding to the immediate needs of the College community resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic. Managing this crisis required much of our energy and attention. As a result, however, some implementation of the Strategic Plan was delayed.

This Report on the Status of the Strategic Plan Implementation is both backward-and forward-looking. It will provide a clear-eyed assessment of the progress (and lack of progress) we have made on our three commitments to date. It also will consider what can be done to move forward this spring and summer, recognizing that the College is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, it assumes that some relative "normalcy" will return to the College's operations by September 2021 and it will identify some key steps the College will take during the 2021-22 academic year to live its mission, promote its values, and fulfill its original three commitments.

COMMITMENTS

To achieve our mission, live our values, and build upon our strengths, the Nebraska Law community is focused on three shared commitments:

1. Building an inclusive and connected community;
2. Preparing our students for a lifetime of learning, service, and ethical leadership; and,
3. Solving vital societal problems.

FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENTS - HIGHLIGHTS AND PLANS

The three commitments we identified in 2019 have guided our work and will continue to do so moving forward. In the pages that follow, we present a few key successes for each commitment from the last 18 months. We also identify key goals for the next 18 months. A

more comprehensive list of our efforts since September 2019 can be found online at XXX.



DIVERSITY

Led the creation of the Nebraska Legal Diversity Council, a nonprofit involving stakeholders from law firms, corporations, government offices, nonprofits, law schools and the state bar association, dedicated to recruitment and retention of diverse legal professionals in Nebraska

Commitment One: Building an inclusive and connected community

September 2019 - March 2021



INCLUSIVE

Developed a series of presentations to and workshops with faculty regarding inclusive pedagogy in the classroom



SPEAK THOUGHTFULLY

Led campus-wide conversations on civil discourse and productive disagreement for Peace + Civility Week and Election Day



STRENGTHS

Hired an expert consultant to provide manager and team coaching related to Gallup's Clifton Strengths assessment as well as to work throughout the academic year with staff, administrators, and students on understanding and developing their individual strengths

LEADERSHIP

Worked in partnership with the College of Business to host Women Lead 2020, a day-long conference focused on bringing together women who lead in law, business, government and nonprofit organizations



LIBRARY

Obtained \$6 million to renovate the Schmid Law Library to build more community spaces and classrooms



April 2021 - September 2022



PLANNING

Complete and begin executing a strategic diversity and inclusion plan



PROGRAMMING

Engage in community educational programming aimed at building an inclusive community



RECRUITMENT

Develop and implement an innovative plan for recruitment of a diverse student body, including the exploration of outside scholarships for diverse students and the creation of an online summer institute for first-generation college students interested in the law



STRENGTHS

Expand the College's Strengths program to ensure all students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity to explore how to succeed by utilizing their strengths



WELLNESS

Develop a robust wellness program for students to coincide with the opening of the renovated law library

Commitment Two: Preparing our students for a lifetime of learning, service, and ethical leadership

September 2019 - March 2021



LEADERSHIP

Launched 2L Inclusive Leadership Pilot Program - a program designed to connect 2L students with curricular and co-curricular opportunities that will help them achieve their professional goals.



POLICY

Joined the ABA Police Practices Consortium in Fall 2020 to provide opportunities to students interested in policy development with law enforcement



PRO BONO

Emphasized involvement in the ABA Free Legal Answers Program, resulting in national recognition by the ABA as a Pro Bono Leader for 2018, 2019, and 2020



RESEARCH

Expanded the Schmid Research Fellows program to provide pro bono legal research for nonprofit organizations



PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Received approximately \$500,000 in grants to fund the Children's Justice Clinic for another three years



SERVICE

Co-founded the Tenant Assistance Project to give students hands-on experience representing tenants in eviction proceedings, as well as researching proposed changes to landlord-tenant laws and testifying about those changes before the state legislature

April 2021 - September 2022



CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Complete report on how to measure and track
Learning Outcome #6 related to cultural co



CURRICULUM

Actively search for
professors to teach
Race and the Law and to
offer courses focusing on
systemic racism



ETHICS

Develop ways to infuse
ethics and integrity in
classes beyond
Professional
Responsibility



LEADERSHIP

Develop and implement a program on Inclu
opportunities, mandatory curriculum for up
leadership opportunities, and faculty and st



LEARNING

Complete report on how to measure and track
Learning Outcome #1 related to our core ed



SERVICE

Develop a center or program focused on pu
work - become the best place in America fo
interest work and public service



Commitment Three: Solving vital societal problems

September 2019 - March 2021



BUSINESS

Joined the College of Business in submitting a proposal to Board of Regents to begin a Law and Business major at the College of Business, which will include multiple courses taught to undergraduates by College of Law professors



RURAL RECONCILIATION

Started the Rural Reconciliation Project, an interdisciplinary exploration of the past and future of rural areas



TECHNOLOGY

Started the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center to connect research among the Colleges of Law, Business, Engineering, and Journalism, funded by over \$5.5 million in grants, including hiring two new professors and two staff to build out the Center



MARKETING

Implemented a multipronged and wide-spread marketing and communication effort highlighting the work of individual professors, through direct mail, revamped website, and social media. Launched the campaign with focus on the work of Professors Blankley, Hurwitz, and Schutz; finalizing the campaigns for Professors Shoemaker, Medill, Berger, and Langvardt for release in Spring 2021



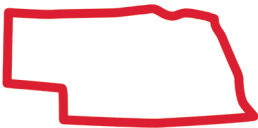
April 2021 - September 2022

CHILDREN

Obtain permanent funding for the Children's Justice Clinic

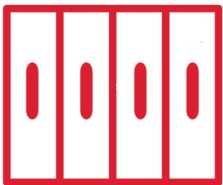
GRANT FUNDING

Encourage and assist law faculty who wish to engage in grant-funded research opportunities



LOCAL ISSUES

Evaluate and propose ways in which faculty and students can interact with Lincoln and Nebraska stakeholders to help solve local and state problems and legal issues



RESEARCH

Strengthen and expand core programs by developing three-year strategic plans to grow funding and research opportunities for the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center, the Space, Cyber, and Telecommunications Program, Law & Psychology, the Rural Reconciliation Program, and the Law+Business Program



TRADE

Hire a Yeutter Chair in Law as part of our commitment to the Yeutter Institute of International Trade and Finance

FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENTS

Conduct a periodic assessment and prioritization of administrative organization and support systems to promote efficiency and organizational effectiveness;

Develop a College-wide technology plan, including funding strategies, to ensure the efficacy of our pedagogical and administrative practices; and

Evaluate on- and off-campus events to ensure alignment of each activity with our mission and the effective use of our resources.

KEY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Identify and develop key metrics to help us measure our success in recruitment of students, diversity, job placement, research impact, and budgetary efficiency

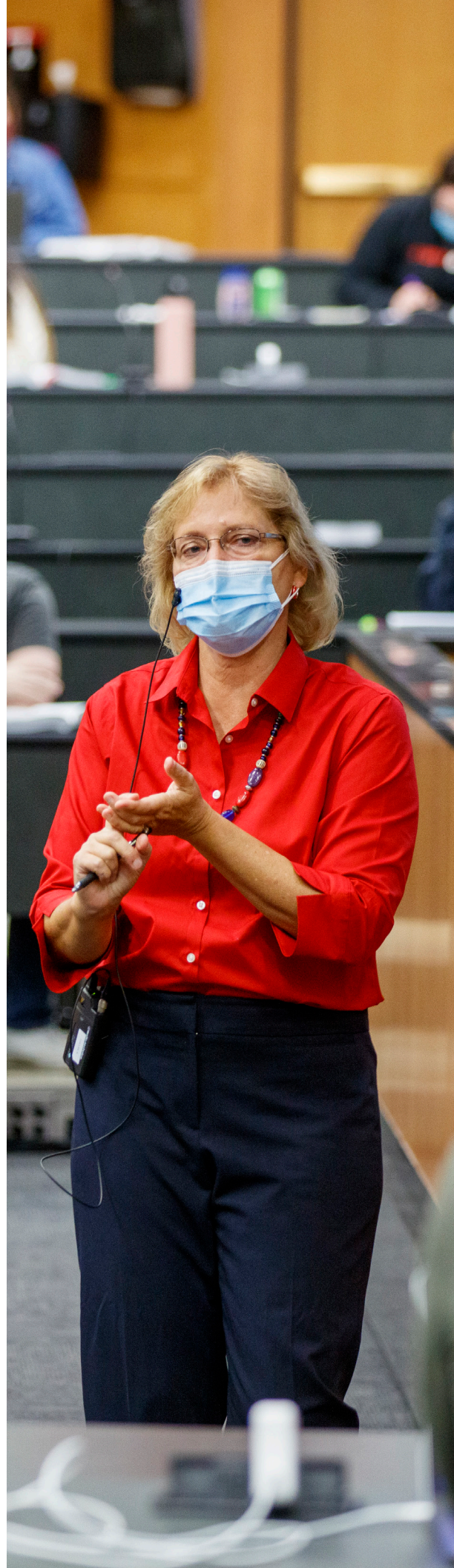


CHALLENGES DURING THE LAST 18 MONTHS

It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted our ability to significantly fulfill aspects of Commitment One. Specifically, it was difficult to “create and sustain interactions among College professionals, current students, and alumni that enrich the Nebraska Law experience for all members of our community,” in 2020-21. We struggled to build community and places for interactions among College professionals, students, and alumni in the face of the health and safety restrictions of the pandemic. Programming over Zoom was not well-attended and in-person gatherings were considered too risky during 2020-21. Student recruitment efforts were hampered by the inability to bring prospective students to campus in a group to experience the sense of community that helps distinguish the College.

The diversity goals of Commitment One remain challenging, not because of lack of effort but rather because of our location and Nebraska’s legal restrictions. We have made offers to diverse faculty candidates but not succeeded in recruiting a faculty person of color to move to Lincoln. We have increased our applications from and offers of admission to prospective students of color, but have been unable to increase our percentage of students of color because such students often do not accept our offer of admission. Many faculty have begun to examine aspects of race in a variety of doctrinal courses; however, we have not offered any new courses related to race and the law. This is an area we can control and will focus on going forward.

With regard to Commitment Two, areas that did not receive significant attention during the last 18 months include emphasizing collaboration with other professions and professionals. We have made progress on developing numerous opportunities for students interested in public service and public interest work. However, we have not moved forward significantly on



creating a formal Center or Program that brings these efforts together with curricular offerings and professor scholarship. Finally, although we have run a pilot program on leadership and professional development for a group of twenty 2L students during each of the past two years, we have not developed a plan to require small-group training for all students in professional skills. We are working on scaling up the pilot program but it is a work-in-progress.

With regard to Commitment Three, we did begin a number of significant new research initiatives, including the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center and the Rural Reconciliation Project. However, we have not invested similar time or resources into some of our more established programs. For example, the Law & Psychology Program has not expanded its footprint at the College of Law and perhaps has even shrunk in terms of faculty and student interaction with the Psychology Department. We have not hired a Yeutter Chair to participate in the Yeutter Institute (although Professor Matt Schaefer has been significantly engaged with the Institute in his role as the Veronica A. Haggart & Charles R. Work Professor of International Trade Law). The Space, Cyber, & Telecommunications Program has grown its scholarly profile and reputation, particularly with its participation in the Woomera Manual project. It also attracts JD students who want to study those topics. However, the LL.M. and J.S.D. enrollments remain flat. Finally, we offered a robust schedule of faculty workshops, even throughout the pandemic, but we have not focused on a variety of methodologies nor identified significant grant funding opportunities for faculty.

Another important impact of COVID-19 has been on the ability of the College to engage in some of the administrative self-reflection identified by the Strategic Plan under the “Fulfilling our Commitments” section of the Plan. This work did not happen because our administrative bandwidth was consumed with delivering our normal services in the midst of the global pandemic. Our administrative response to COVID-19 included moving to entirely remote teaching and working for the end of the spring 2020 semester and that summer, reconstituting the structure and technological capabilities of our building and classrooms to be able to offer a learning environment that permitted classes to be offered both in-person and online, creating comprehensive health and safety protocols and procedures for the 2020-21 academic year, and reducing the College’s budget by 9.2% over the next three years.

APPENDIX

See the below for specific accomplishments from the past 18 months (identified in red) and for specific goals for the next 18 months (identified in blue).

Commitment One: Building an inclusive and connected community

STRATEGIES:

- Attract and retain a diverse Nebraska Law community of students, faculty, administrators, and staff committed to excellence in academics, service, and character
 - Our commitment to diversity has allowed us to attract an increasingly diverse pool faculty, staff, and administrators at the law school, including
 - Welcoming multiple black and Hispanic/Latino individuals to the College staff
 - Black faculty members recognized as Distinguished Fellows and serving in senior academic leadership roles
 - Multiple offers extended to black faculty candidates to join our faculty
 - Created and executed a plan for specific outreach and recruitment of prospective law students of color
 - Led the creation of the Nebraska Legal Diversity Council, a nonprofit involving stakeholders from law firms, corporations, government offices, nonprofits, law schools, and the state bar association, dedicated to recruitment and retention of diverse legal professionals to Nebraska
 - Submitted proposal to Board of Regents to begin a Law and Business major at the College of Business
 - Deepened relationships with multicultural undergraduate student groups at UNL, UNK, and UNO
 - Develop hiring processes and plans to obtain a highly diverse applicant pool for every open position at the College of Law
 - Develop and implement a robust plan for recruitment of a diverse student body
- Support the personal and professional development of Nebraska Law employees
 - Hired an expert consultant to provide manager and team coaching related to the Gallup Strengths assessment as well as to work throughout the academic year with staff, administrators, and students on understanding and developing their individual strengths
 - Created a Gallup Strengths Advisor group of trained staff and faculty to help the College of Law become a Strengths-Based institution
 - Incentivized faculty to take an online teaching course to prepare for teaching

during the pandemic; over 80% completed the course during the summer of 2020

- Expand Clifton Strengths program to ensure all students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity to explore how to succeed by utilizing their strengths
- Develop and implement programming and policies designed to address well-being in the Nebraska Law community
 - Connected with University resources and psychological counseling, including having a regular time for a counselor to meet with law students
 - Law student counselors have received wellness training offered by UNL Student Affairs
 - Develop a robust wellness program, and dedicated wellness space, for students to coincide with the opening of the renovated law library
 - Examine leave and work-from-home policies that may enhance work-life balance and decrease any systemic gender biases perpetuated by traditional work models
 - Explore ways in which strengths exploration and activities can help reduce anxiety and foster a growth mindset
- Create new, or take advantage of existing, opportunities to connect faculty, students, administrators, staff, and alumni to the broader University of Nebraska community
 - Developed a regular weekly speaker series (“Three Points in .3”) that promotes the great work being done at the College through faculty and administrator presentations on interesting and current topics
 - Worked in partnership with the College of Business to host Women Lead 2020, a day-long conference focused on bringing together women who lead in law, business, government and nonprofit organizations.
 - Lead campus-wide conversations on civil discourse and productive disagreement for Peace + Civility Week and Election Day
- Foster an environment that is inclusive, cooperative, and promotes respectful professional relationships among the entire Nebraska Law community
 - Held small-group discussions with faculty and staff to discuss issues of racial justice, including a reading series
 - Developed a series of presentations to and workshops with faculty regarding inclusive pedagogy in the classroom
 - Created public displays and signage about Nebraska Law values and infused public statements and speeches from the dean with discussions about our values
 - Obtained \$6 million in funding to renovate the Schmid Law Library to build

- more community spaces and classrooms
- CDO collaborated with OUTLaw student organization to identify speakers for program offering advice and insights on interviewing and working in NE while LGBTQIA+
- Develop a strategic diversity and inclusion plan
- Engage in community educational programming aimed at building an inclusive community

Commitment Two: Preparing our students for a lifetime of learning, service, and ethical leadership

STRATEGIES:

The College worked to maintain its commitment to providing foundational legal education, even in the midst of the global pandemic.

- Ensure that every Nebraska Law graduate acquires the foundational knowledge and understanding necessary to work successfully with clients from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and to collaborate successfully with other professions and professionals;
 - Maintain and strengthen our core curriculum as a crucial foundation;
 - Emphasize ethics, integrity, and leadership throughout our educational program;
 - Prioritized in-person 1L courses when the pandemic reduced our classroom capacity by 75% and many courses were forced online
 - Added significant learning modules related to racial justice and systemic racism to numerous classes across the curriculum
 - Changed focus and emphasis of legal writing to include specific work on legal analysis and legal research; expanded the role of librarians in teaching extensive legal research skills to 1Ls; reoriented LAWR course to enhance consistency and rigor across sections
 - Assigned the teaching of core litigation courses (trial advocacy, pretrial litigation) to in-house, full-time clinical faculty to provide greater consistency to the courses
 - Obtained \$6 million in funding to renovate the Schmid Law Library to enhance the teaching of digital legal research
 - Develop and implement a program on Inclusive Leadership that includes 1L opportunities, mandatory curriculum for upper-class students, co-curricular leadership opportunities, and faculty and staff learning opportunities
 - As positions open, hire new faculty with outstanding records and diverse perspectives
 - Actively search for professors to teach Race and the Law and courses focusing

on systemic racism

- Develop ways to infuse ethics and integrity in classes beyond Professional Responsibility
 - Complete report on developing a new Honor Code for the College of Law
 - Complete report on how to measure and track College's success in satisfying Learning Objective #1 related to our core educational outcomes
 - Complete report on how to measure and track College's success in satisfying Learning Objective #6 related to cultural competency
- Encourage and empower students to co-create their educational program through heightened connections and communication between and amongst students, advisors, faculty, alumni, practitioners, and other professionals;
 - Expanded alumni mentoring program to include over 130 alumni-student mentoring teams
 - Launched 2L Inclusive Leadership Pilot Program – a program designed to connect 2L students with curricular and co-curricular opportunities that will help them achieve their professional goals.
 - Expand, coordinate, and maximize active, including experiential, learning opportunities to make them central to a Nebraska Law education;
 - Changed faculty rule to double the amount of externship credits students could take before graduation
 - Joined the Police Practices Initiative in Fall 2020 to provide opportunities to students interested in policy development with law enforcement
 - Received approximately \$500,000 in grants to fund the Children's Justice Clinic for another three years
 - Co-founded the Tenant Assistance Project to give students hands-on experience researching cases and representing tenants in eviction cases, as well as researching proposed changes to landlord-tenant laws and testifying about those changes before the state legislature
 - Developed an Estate Planning Clinic to be taught regularly during the summer
 - Develop a coordinated program focused on encouraging and supporting students who desire to work in public service or for a public interest organization;
 - Expanded opportunities and support for those interested in post-graduate fellowships with a public interest organization
 - Develop a Center or Program focused on Public Interest and Public Service work – become the best place in America for students interested in public interest work
 - Expand opportunities for students, faculty, administrators, and staff to engage in

community service and pro bono representation;

- Co-founded the Tenant Assistance Project to give students hands-on experience researching cases and representing tenants in eviction cases, as well as researching proposed changes to landlord-tenant laws and testifying about those changes before the state legislature
 - Emphasized involvement in the ABA Free Legal Answers Program, resulting in national recognition by the ABA as a Pro Bono Leader for 2018, 2019, and 2020
 - Expanded the Schmid Research Fellows program to provide pro bono legal research for nonprofit organizations
 - Continue to offer to all law students, regardless of their class year, an opportunity to be involved in the Immigration Clinic's annual naturalization clinic, which assists those who are interested in becoming U.S. citizens
- Explore requiring substantial small-group training for all students in professional skills including client counseling, negotiation, effective communication, leadership, wellness, and technology.
 - Developed 2L Inclusive Leadership Pilot program related to leadership and professional development, enrolled 20 2Ls in each of last two academic years
 - Embrace the Clifton Strengths program to become a Strengths-based Institution

Commitment Three: Solving vital societal problems

STRATEGIES:

- Leverage our location within a major research university in the capital of an entrepreneurial and globally connected state to foster alignment between Nebraska Law research and community needs;
 - Started the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center to connect research among the Colleges of Law, Business, Engineering, and Journalism, funded by over \$5.5 million in grants
 - Started the Rural Reconciliation Project, an interdisciplinary exploration of the past and future of rural areas
 - Implemented public policy curriculum as part of the Civil Clinic in which students research and testify on potential legislation before the Unicameral; students testified numerous times during the last two years
 - Raised \$6 million to renovate the Schmid Law Library
 - Begin a Health Equities Law Institute
 - Obtain permanent funding for the Children's Justice Clinic
 - Evaluate and propose ways in which faculty and students can interact with

Lincoln and Nebraska stakeholders to help solve local and state problems and legal issues

- Establish a national reputation for expertise and research excellence, particularly in our areas of national or international prominence, such as:
 - Space, Cyber, and Telecommunications;
 - Hosted a conference in partnership with U.S. Strategic Command for active military and civilians to discuss “Law and Global Warfighting: The Challenges in 21st Century Practice”
 - Hosted 12th Annual Space Law Conference in D.C., bringing together 200 industry leaders and practitioners, students and media to discuss “Global Perspectives on Space Law and Policy”
 - Law & Psychology; and
 - The Yeutter Institute of International Trade and Finance
- Explore and evaluate the feasibility of developing new programs including Technology Governance and Law & Business that strengthen our commitment to confront and solve vital societal problems;
 - Opened the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center
 - Submitted proposal to Board of Regents to begin a Law and Business major at the College of Business
 - Strengthen and expand core programs:
 - Nebraska Governance and Technology Center
 - Develop three-year strategic plan to grow funding and research opportunities
 - Space, Cyber, and Telecommunications Program
 - Develop three-year strategic plan to grow funding and research opportunities
 - Develop plans to grow enrollment, particularly in the online environment
 - Yeutter Institute
 - Hire a Yeutter Chair in Law
 - Rural Reconciliation Project
 - Develop three-year strategic plan to grow funding and research opportunities
 - Law and Psychology
 - Work with Chair of Psychology Department and Director of Law & Psychology Program to create 3-year strategy for enhancing the College’s presence and participation in the Program
 - Law and Business

- Develop three-year strategic plan to grow funding and research opportunities
- Bolster the faculty's ability to approach problems nimbly, through diverse methodologies and scholarship formats;
 - In addition to hosting guests in the areas of policy and technology, the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center podcast, Tech Refactored, invites Nebraska Law faculty to address current legal issues and topics.
- Develop an internal Nebraska Law culture that emphasizes scholarship;
 - Host Vice Chancellor for Research to discuss with faculty ways in which law faculty can engage in grant-funded research opportunities
 - Invite UNL professors from across campus to present law-related scholarship to law faculty in a colloquia setting
 - Produce monthly report on faculty scholarship for distribution through newsletter or at faculty meeting to share information about faculty successes
- Promote and increase the impact of our scholarship through enhanced outreach to the widest possible audience including our stakeholders and the media
 - Implemented a multipronged and wide-spread marketing and communication effort highlighting the work of individual professors, through direct mail and email, dedicated website, and social media. Launched the campaign with focus on the work of Professors Blankley, Hurwitz, and Schutz; finalizing the campaigns for Professors Shoemaker, Medill, Berger, and Langvardt for release in Spring 2021
 - Continue promotion campaign focusing on the impact of professor scholarship
 - Hire librarian to assist in measuring, cataloging, and explaining impact of faculty scholarship
 - Create systemic and comprehensive means by which faculty can report their accomplishments and work
 - Hire a staff member charged with external communications and outreach specific to the Space, Cyber, and Telecommunications Law program