

UNK RESPONSE TO MEETING THE REGENTS' FOUR-YEAR GUARANTEE

The Board of Regents recognizes that it is important for University of Nebraska undergraduate students to be able to earn their bachelor's or first-professional degrees in timely fashion.

The University of Nebraska therefore commits itself to providing each student all assistance necessary to help him or her graduate within four years of entering, provided the student has appropriate high school preparation, pursues a course of study that is intended for four-year completion, and adheres to prudent practices in pursuing a degree.

These prudent practices include:

- selecting a major early in college and adhering to the same;
- working closely with academic advisors to develop a four-year curricular plan;
- pre-registering early during each semester's pre-registration period;
- registering for and completing 15-18 credit hours per semester, with acceptable grades;
- working at a job fewer than 20 hours per week;
- in case of a possible delay caused by unavailability of a course, notifying the department chair prior to the end of the semester before that in which the course is needed.

For its part, the University guarantees the student that he or she will be able to enroll in courses that permit graduation in four years, or, if for any reason that is not possible, mutually acceptable alternatives may be provided, including allowing the student to substitute a different course.

The mutual commitment by the university and the student outlined in this resolution will result in four-year graduation.

Adopted by the Board of Regents 6-1-02

Addressing the Regents' Guarantee that every undergraduate student at the University of Nebraska can be graduated within four years.

At UNK, we are committed to assuring that there are no institutional barriers preventing on-time graduation and that there are multi-layered institutional mechanisms to assist students in achieving timely graduation. Specific actions taken at UNK toward this goal are:

1. Notice of the Regents' Four-year Guarantee (<http://www.nebraska.edu/current-and-prospective-students/four-year-graduation-guarantee.html>) is prominently posted on the UNK Admissions Webpage and on tables in the Admissions reception room, it is included in standard information packets given to and/or sent to prospects, it is routinely brought to the attention of prospects by our recruiters, and – in publications such as catalogs and student handbooks – the guarantee is prominently stated.
2. Our strategic plan highlights the fact that we are developing a self-conscious, intentional strategy that will mobilize and enable all student-program-completion capabilities on campus. The strategic plan also highlights the importance of a comprehensive view that integrates academic and nonacademic capabilities.
3. The First Year Program encompasses programming and academic courses purposefully designed to introduce students to university expectations and resources, and to produce better retention and graduation results. We work in partnership with both academic and student affairs departments to facilitate multi-faceted experiences focusing on the learning outcomes where students take responsibility for their own education, develop a strong sense of belonging to campus and school pride. Assessment shows that first year students participating in our program will have a higher rate of success and retention to the institution. Additional areas of focus within these are initiatives we have undertaken to create a better on-campus climate for people of color, who have special needs in a mainly white institution. We are succeeding in attracting more minority students, and we continue to examine what we can do to retain higher proportions of them. We realize that progress in diversifying the faculty and curriculum is critical to attracting and retaining a diverse student body, and we continue to work to improve diversity among our faculty and staff.
4. UNK has undergone a major shift in the campus culture regarding assessment over the past several years, and now assessment is a major part of our academic programs on many levels, but regarding academic outcomes in particular. The effort is aimed at assessing student learning outcomes and then to adjust programs so as to produce better outcomes. Better learning outcomes means more student success, and that translates into more progress toward graduation.
5. The Academic Affairs Committee has established policy that limits the number of credit hours that can be included in academic major and minor programs. In addition, the policy prohibits "hidden prerequisites" that would add to the length of a student's program.
6. At UNK, the General Studies Program is university-wide, so regardless of the college in which a student begins work toward a degree program, there will be no general studies impediments to changing a major to another college. This maximizes student flexibility and minimizes academic consequences of changing majors. This is particularly important because nationally, and in Nebraska, most students change majors several times before graduating.
7. UNK academic departments are committed to offering courses out of the planned sequence or providing alternate courses to assure that students who need a course to graduate can take it without adding time to their programs if they, through no fault of their own, find that a required course is not scheduled at a time that will permit graduating on time.
8. Every student is assigned an academic advisor and must see the advisor each semester to examine progress. Students are precluded from registering for classes until the advisor has lifted a flag indicating the advising requirement has been met.
9. The Academic and Career Services Office provides additional advising to students seeking such advice, and to all students identified in the Early Warning Referral System. Once classes begin, faculty have the option of submitting an Early Warning Referral to the Advising Center, identifying any student who might be experiencing academic difficulty. These students are then notified by letter and phone and offered assistance that might help them complete their classes successfully. Faculty have found this process to be very helpful and supportive to students.
10. The Writing Center helps all students, and the improved writing skill it imparts bolsters students' academic success in general.
11. To further support student success on progress toward graduation, UNK has several online tools such as the web-based degree audit system, available to students and advisors. The audit, in particular, is a powerful aid in monitoring progress toward the degree as it

provides test scores for proper course placement, GPA breakdowns, and it tracks any substitutions approved by the department.

12. The Registrar's Office automatically runs degree checks each semester once a student earns 95 or more credit hours. This audit is a summary report of the student's progress toward graduation and it is automatically sent to the student's e-mail address and to the student's advisor(s) electronically.
13. Tutoring for most undergraduate courses is available to all students with an academic need.
14. UNK academic departments offer courses out of the planned sequence and provide alternate courses to assure that students who need a course to graduate can take it without adding time to their programs if they, through no fault of their own, find that a required course is not scheduled at a time that will permit graduating on time.

Monitoring Student Progress Toward Graduation

At UNK, we take seriously the commitment to enabling students to be graduated in a timely manner. To this end, we monitor each student in several ways:

1. Every student is assigned an academic advisor and must see the advisor each semester to examine progress. Students are precluded from registering for classes until the advisor has lifted a flag indicating the advising requirement has been met. At that time, the progress of a student and any institutional barriers to that progress can be addressed.
2. The Academic and Career Services Office provides additional advising to students seeking such advice, and to all students identified in the Early Warning Referral System. Once classes begin, faculty have the option of submitting an Early Warning Referral to the Advising Center, identifying any student who might be experiencing academic difficulty. These students are then notified by letter and phone and offered assistance that might help them complete their classes successfully.
3. UNK's web-based degree audit system, available to students and advisors, is a powerful aid in monitoring progress toward the degree as it provides test scores for proper course placement, GPA breakdowns, and it tracks any substitutions approved by the department.
4. The Registrar's Office automatically runs degree checks each semester once a student earns 95 or more credit hours. This audit is a summary report of the student's progress toward graduation and it is automatically sent to the student's e-mail address and to the student's advisor(s) electronically.