



UNIVERSITY OF
**NORTHERN
COLORADO**

**Rowing, Not Drifting 2030
Key Actions, Phase 1
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022**

DRAFT NOV. 2020

OVERVIEW

The University of Northern Colorado is Colorado's leader in education. UNC sets the standard and models innovative strategies focused on the holistic growth, development, and life-long success of our students – this is how we define a *Students First* university. [Rowing, Not Drifting 2030](#) guides our direction and aspirations for the next decade of serving students and our community.

Our Vision for 2030

The University of Northern Colorado will be the institution the state looks to as the future of higher education. Our students will experience a personalized education grounded in liberal arts and infused with critical and creative inquiry; establish relationships with faculty and staff that nurture individual development; gain the skills and knowledge that provide upward mobility among alumni; and share a commitment to the values of inclusion, equity, and diversity.

Our vision takes shape in the form of five elements that serve as our foundation over the next 10 years in support of and service to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community.

- ***Students First:*** We exist to transform the lives of our students. We focus on all aspects of their success by making intentional decisions to meet their needs and the needs of our community.
- ***Empower Inclusivity:*** The diversity within our university and state is a distinct advantage that we celebrate and nurture. We ensure learning occurs through meaningful discussion of shared and different experiences, viewpoints, and ideas.
- ***Enhance & Invest:*** The success of students relies on a healthy and strong team. We provide our staff and faculty with the support they need to succeed as professionals, educators, and in life. We foster an environment where their individual well-being and sense of belonging are vital to our collective success.
- ***Innovate & Create:*** Learning occurs through critical inquiry, discovery, and creation. We leverage technology and capitalize on opportunities to innovate and improve instruction. We anticipate and address societal needs by transforming the campus into a creative laboratory that asks questions, solves problems, and shapes Colorado's future.
- ***Connect & Celebrate:*** Strong community connections provide authentic learning experiences and reciprocal partnerships and collaborations. We set the standard for how engaged universities enrich the lives of those on campus, throughout Colorado, and beyond.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The 10-year strategic plan, [Rowing, Not Drifting 2030](#), was developed in 2019 following an extensive, collaborative process with university stakeholders; this resulted in the development of UNC's aspirational vision and 2030 outcomes that will serve us over the next decade.

The strategic plan is divided into five two-year phases. This allows UNC to remain flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of our university and community.

- Phase 1: July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2022
- Phase 2: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024
- Phase 3: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026
- Phase 4: July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2028
- Phase 5: July 1, 2028 - June 30, 2030

Since the beginning of 2020, the President's Leadership Council has further engaged the UNC community in the strategic planning process. Strategic planning subcommittees, comprised of faculty, staff, and students, have been meeting throughout the fall semester to develop key actions in support of the five vision elements. The key actions create a broad foundation for UNC to build upon over the next two years.

UNC will track and measure progress for each of these key actions to ensure alignment and in support of the 2030 outcomes. We will continually review our work to determine areas of improvement as well as utilize this information to support the subsequent two-year phases in the strategic planning process. Each member of our university will have opportunities to provide input, share ideas, and contribute in meaningful ways in support of current and future key actions.

KEY ACTIONS

UNC is progressively seeking opportunities to demonstrate what a *Students First* university means today and into the future. We must continually identify new opportunities and key actions that support our students' academic success, personal growth, and prepare them for their chosen professions. Because of our commitment to serving students, UNC looks for ways to enrich the experiences for faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader community. Diverse experiences, new programming, and engagement opportunities will be paramount to the work we conduct throughout the next decade.

In support of this vision, the university is committed to the following key actions during Phase 1:

- 1. Develop and implement a plan to ensure UNC is a student-ready campus at all academic levels.*
- 2. Complete the discovery phase of the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) 2025 plan.*
- 3. Create systems of accountability, effectiveness, and collaboration to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion across the university.*
- 4. Establish an infrastructure and set a foundation for a supportive culture of career-long professional development for staff and faculty.*
- 5. Enhance and refine career readiness in the curriculum for all disciplines.*
- 6. Develop a new university-wide data infrastructure focused on improving strategy, organizational effectiveness, and student success.*
- 7. Establish a robust infrastructure to support research, discovery, and creative work that engages students and provides opportunities for faculty to contribute to the creation of new knowledge.*
- 8. Develop and deploy a consistent and constructive process of evaluating and rewarding employee performance while also fostering varied opportunities for feedback and growth outside of the traditional supervisor-employee dynamic.*
- 9. Develop and begin implementation of a data-driven strategic marketing and communications plan that showcases the university's important role on a local, regional, state, and national basis.*
- 10. Implement UNC's Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 Campaign including the creation of philanthropic investment opportunities, engagement and fundraising goals, feasibility study, and timeline for all campaign phases.*

KEY ACTIONS (continued)

1. Develop and implement a plan to ensure UNC is a student-ready campus at all academic levels.

Student success is often connected to a student's sense of belonging and their quality of engagement across all areas of the university. From the traditional academic setting to campus life and support services, we will better understand how our students interact with UNC departments and programs, and how it impacts their progress toward graduation. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Establish baseline data sources and needs related to student success and engagement across all areas of the university
- Analyze data to determine specific student engagement and academic success outcomes
- Share data with the campus in order to develop *Students First* action plans at the department level

Vision Elements: Students First, Empower Inclusivity

2. Complete the discovery phase of the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) 2025 plan.

As the demographics of Colorado and the UNC student population change over the next decade, the university must take an intentional approach to achieve the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation. By working to secure this designation, UNC will establish structures and practices that enhance and expand the opportunities for our Hispanic students and enrich the experiences of our entire student body. Research shows that enhanced engagement leads to a student's sense of belonging and contributes to improved academic success, and higher retention and graduation rates. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Facilitate exploratory conversations with UNC's diverse stakeholders to gain insight and perspective to inform the HSI 2025 plan
- Draft goals and create pre-implementation and assessment strategies that integrate the HSI 2025 plan across the university's operations

**Vision Elements: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Innovate & Create,
Enhance & Invest, Connect & Celebrate**

KEY ACTIONS (continued)

3. Create systems of accountability, effectiveness, and collaboration to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion across the university.

The diversity of the student population at UNC has changed over the years and will continue to do so as we face the future. Faculty and staff should represent the demographics of the student body. Therefore, to foster a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable university, UNC is committed to addressing racial disparities, gender equity, and the university's overall climate. Creating a system of accountability, such as establishing standards of conduct embedded in personnel evaluation, UNC can achieve equitable outcomes for all students, faculty, and staff. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Require that all search committees complete training on equitable hiring practices, including ways to improve the diversity of hiring pools
- Publish a formal statement on Respectful Behavior to lay the foundation to establish a culture of trust, support, respect, and inclusivity
- Develop proposed evaluation metrics, measures, and processes for all faculty, staff, and administrators
- Implement the DEI measurements and processes that were developed as a result of the new systems of accountability

Vision Elements: Students First, Empower Inclusivity

4. Establish an infrastructure and set a foundation for a supportive culture of career-long professional development for staff and faculty.

UNC invests in our faculty and staff and supports the growth of their careers by providing ongoing and intentional professional development opportunities. As professionals who are dedicated to serving our students and their academic and career success, the university will provide professional development opportunities in the areas to include but not limited to: emerging academic technologies, management and leadership, engaged pedagogy, transdisciplinary research, diversity, equity and inclusion, and educational entrepreneurship. These, and other opportunities as needed, should be made available to the campus community so that our employees and our programs can enhance the service and support provided to our students. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Establish a faculty advisory board to create a clearinghouse of all professional development currently offered on topics of instructional best practices, equitable teaching practices, engaged learning best practices, and online instruction best practices
- Conduct regular workshops on grant writing for new Principle Investigators through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
- Develop a catalog of professional development opportunities for classified and exempt staff that will be maintained by the Office of Human Resources

Vision Elements: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Innovate & Create, Enhance & Invest, Connect & Celebrate

KEY ACTIONS (continued)

5. Enhance and refine career readiness in the curriculum for all disciplines.

As part of our *Students First* mission, UNC will establish new ways to connect our curriculum to career pathways. The university will further enhance our students' career opportunities by combining career-specific learning and high-impact practices with our strong liberal arts core.

UNC acknowledges that the academic and co-curricular experience is crucial in preparing our students for their careers post college. As such, we will strive to increase career preparedness within curriculum and student service offerings. Access to career guidance, networking opportunities, and educational offerings to include graduate and extended education, are hallmarks of a university-wide career readiness program. A focus on career preparation and growth affirms our life-long commitment to our community of Bears. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Map existing career readiness initiatives and explore processes and best practices for badging and micro-credentialing
- Engage in conversations about career readiness and curriculum across all academic units
- Establish an Academic Affairs Advisory Board that includes alumni and business representatives to serve as a mechanism for identifying future employment and career trends

Vision Elements: Students First, Connect & Celebrate

6. Develop a new university-wide data infrastructure focused on improving strategy, organizational effectiveness, and student success.

UNC is an evolving organization, able to adapt to the changing environment of higher education. Developing a sound data infrastructure allows for organized and functional systems thinking to inform decision-making, problem-solving, and overall improvements in service to student success. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Establish data governance and usage standards for the university
- Create Power BI Dashboards for academic monitoring of trends in majors, student credit hours, retention, 4-year graduation, and 6-year graduation with the ability to disaggregate
- Integrate data training into Chair and Director workshops

**Vision Elements: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Innovate & Create,
Enhance & Invest, Connect & Celebrate**

KEY ACTIONS (continued)

7. Establish a robust infrastructure to support research, discovery, and creative work that engages students and provides opportunities for faculty to contribute to the creation of new knowledge.

A strong commitment to research, scholarship, and creative work is a hallmark of a research university. These activities are crucial components of the faculty role, both for their own professional growth and because of the role they play in enhancing our students' academic experiences. Student collaboration with faculty in independent research and creative activity provides an engaging learning experience that reinforces, enhances, and integrates the student's learning beyond that which can be accomplished solely in a classroom setting. Successful research, scholarship, and creative work also creates new knowledge and highlights our faculty's expertise, which reflects positively on the university in numerous ways. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Establish internal supports for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work (RSCW) in the form of new and existing internal grants at the university and individual college levels
- Establish equitable practices across all colleges that allow for differentiated workloads
- The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) will establish regular grant writing workshops focused on different funding sources for faculty from different disciplines
- Establish a baseline of external grant activity for each academic college and set targets for increasing this activity to return UNC to a Carnegie R2 Classification

Vision Elements: Innovate & Create, Enhance & Invest, Connect & Celebrate

8. Develop and deploy a consistent and constructive process of evaluating and rewarding employee performance while also fostering varied opportunities for feedback and growth outside of the traditional supervisor-employee dynamic.

Faculty and staff work with students each day and their effectiveness and morale impact how students are served. Attracting and retaining our high-quality staff and faculty workforce provides uninterrupted and consistently exceptional services and experiences for our students. An essential aspect of fostering a high-quality and rewarding work environment is ensuring that our employees know what is expected of them and that they are given the opportunity to grow. By regularly and consistently evaluating employee performance, supervisors can gauge their employees' needs and provide appropriate support. By holding supervisors accountable for the timely completion of evaluations, we ensure that employee development and support remain a priority. A focus on establishing core values, collaboration, communication, and an inclusive work environment is tantamount to creating a positive and supportive workplace culture. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Establish a compensation plan for staff and faculty
- Research evaluation tools and processes for exempt employees to meet the university's needs
- Adopt new employee performance and evaluation processes and implement in 2022

Vision Elements: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Enhance & Invest

KEY ACTIONS (continued)

9. Develop and begin implementation of a data-driven strategic marketing and communications plan that showcases the university's important role on a local, regional, state, and national basis.

A strong marketing and communications plan is critical to the university's prosperity. Such a plan positions UNC as a first-choice place to study, work, and engage. The marketing and communications plan will highlight: (1) The value of a UNC degree for prospective students, current students, and alumni alike, (2) that our diverse alumni and students are leaders who are on the front lines solving problems, (3) the powerful impact UNC has on our community, region, state, and nation, and (4) the vital partnership between UNC and Greeley. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Conduct quantitative and qualitative brand research with stakeholders to identify brand attributes to support competitive positioning and advertising
- Develop value propositions and key brand messaging based on research findings
- Develop and implement a public relations strategy in order to showcase the expertise of UNC faculty and highlight our students, staff, alumni, and community partnerships

Vision Elements: Innovate & Create, Enhance & Invest, Connect & Celebrate

10. Implement UNC's Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 Campaign including the creation of philanthropic investment opportunities, engagement and fundraising goals, feasibility study, and timeline for all campaign phases.

The University of Northern Colorado values relationships with alumni, donors, and the community. These strategic relationships are mutually beneficial and are necessary for the university to achieve its 2030 goals. Our alumni and friends are among the university's greatest assets. They are crucial in helping UNC to secure the investments necessary to reach our goals and add value to the experience of our students through mentorship, co-curricular experiences, and career support. In support of this key action, UNC will begin by completing the following:

- Document and formalize a coordinated constituent and community relationship management and engagement strategy
- Work with campus leadership to identify and prioritize investment opportunities in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Athletics in support of UNC's strategic vision
- Set fundraising and engagement goals for the campaign
- Finalize a complete timeline for all phases of the campaign
- Launch feasibility study with UNC donors and alumni to finalize campaign priorities

Vision Elements: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Connect & Celebrate