

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Capital Project Planning Decision Procedures

Purpose

The University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL) established this Capital Planning Decision process to address the need for a well-coordinated and communicated capital planning process. The need for quality university space is considerable with the growth in university programs and research as well as the requirement for existing facilities to meet the university’s teaching, research, and outreach goals. In a time of limited resources, meeting this growing demand requires detailed review, analysis, justification, and connection to the university’s strategic planning priorities.

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that capital projects at UNL are properly reviewed by the Chancellor and senior administration and that projects are consistent with university priorities. To this end all capital projects, including new construction and /or renovations over \$500K, are required to follow 5 specific steps: Program concept, needs assessment, early estimates, programming, and Board of Regents approval.

Step 1. Program Concept

A capital project begins as a concept when a faculty, staff, chair, dean or other university stakeholder believes that current facilities are not sufficient to meet program requirements and new or renovated facilities will provide a solution. While specific costs are not outlined in this phase, if a project is expected to be significant – specifically \$500K or more - the concept needs to first be vetted to the Dean or Director of the college or unit. If the Dean or Director believes the capital project concept to be worthy of university consideration, the Dean or Director will present the concept to their cognizant Vice Chancellor (VC). If the VC believes the concept is justified and consistent with university priorities, s/he will bring the concept before the Chancellor’s Senior Administrative Team (SAT).

Step 2. Needs Assessment

University vice chancellors are responsible for presenting capital project concepts to the Chancellor and SAT. The Chancellor and SAT will assess the concept to determine the overall need, connection to other university programs and initiatives, and consistency with university priorities. If the concept project meets these requirements and does not conflict with the existing UNL Master Plan, it is forwarded by the Chancellor to Facilities Management & Planning for early estimates.

Step 3. Early Estimates

The intent of this phase is to acquire additional information about the concept project including general requirements, sizing, implications, and projected costs. Once received by FM&P, UNL FM&P staff or outside consultants will work with the originator(s) of the project to identify the needs, requirements, and costs. Once complete, the information is forwarded to the cognizant VC and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning for final presentation to the SAT. If approved by the SAT, the project is presented to the

Academic Planning Committee (APC) following the existing Project Initiation Request guidelines. Once complete, the project is added to the official university capital planning priority list managed by the Chancellor and maintained by Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP).

Given that funding is not always immediately available, the project may or may not move to the next phase – Programming. Projects not immediately forwarded on for programming are subject to annual estimate updates and inflationary increases to keep project costs as current and accurate as possible. This update activity is the responsibility IRP and FM&P and any revised estimates will be provided to the SAT and originators of the request. Any costs incurred by the institution to keep project estimates current are the responsibility of the project originator.

Step 4. Programming

Programming can begin once all approvals are finalized. This involves the creation of a formal program statement by FM&P in conjunction with requisite university stakeholders. Once created, the draft program statement is vetted to the campus for input, modified accordingly, and finalized.

Step 5. Formal Program Statement and Board of Regents Approval

Once complete the final program statement is submitted to Central Administration for addition to the Board of Regents (BOR) agenda. Once the BOR approves the program statement, construction on the new facility or renovation can begin.