

People, Programs and Points of Excellence (P³E)

Report for August 30, 2024

The People, Programs and Points of Excellence (P³E) is a biweekly update from across all four campuses of the University of Nebraska System leaders that focuses on the best work happening across the University of Nebraska and allows us to recognize and lift up the outstanding efforts of our faculty, staff and students.

University of Nebraska at Kearney

1. UNK recognized as national leader in advancing first-generation student success

UNK was recently recognized as a national leader in improving first-generation student success, joining 13 other universities from across the country in the inaugural class of FirstGen Forward Network Champions. This recognition highlights the university's commitment to supporting students who are the first in their families to attend college, ensuring they have the resources and support necessary to thrive academically and personally. UNK's efforts include a variety of programs and initiatives aimed at improving access, retention, and graduation rates among first-generation students.

Related Media Item: <https://unknews.unk.edu/2024/08/15/unk-recognized-as-national-leader-in-advancing-first-generation-student-success/>

2. Eye-opening Experience: UNK students spend 3 weeks in Italy

A group of students from the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) recently returned from a three-week study abroad experience in Italy. The trip, which included visits to multiple cities rich in history and culture, provided students with an eye-opening opportunity to immerse themselves in Italian life, explore significant historical sites and deepen their understanding of global perspectives. The experience emphasized experiential learning, broadening the students' academic and personal horizons.

Related Media Item: <https://unknews.unk.edu/2024/08/19/eye-opening-experience-unk-students-spend-3-weeks-in-italy/>

3. Pratt-Heins Awards: UNK faculty recognized for their impact on campus, community

The University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) recently honored several faculty members with the prestigious Pratt-Heins Awards, recognizing their outstanding contributions to teaching, service, and scholarship. These awards are a testament to the recipients' significant impact on the UNK campus and the broader community, highlighting their dedication to student success, academic excellence, and service to others. The Pratt-Heins Awards are among the highest honors bestowed upon faculty at UNK, celebrating their commitment to the university's mission and values.

Related Media Item: <https://unknews.unk.edu/2024/08/21/pratt-heins-awards-unk-faculty-members-recognized-for-their-impact-on-campus-community/>

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

1. Huskers make big impact on state through teacher education

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is the top producer of educators for Nebraska's public schools, with one in four new teachers graduating as Huskers. According to data from the Nebraska Department of Education, from 2015 to 2022, 24% of first-year teachers are graduates of UNL. Overall, UNL grads comprised 17% of all Nebraska teachers in 2023. Of the 27,514 K-12 teachers employed during the 2022-23 school year across the state, 4,733 have a UNL degree.

Related Media Item:

- **Lincoln Journal Star** – https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/unl-teacher-nebraska-college/article_f5face7c-5fd2-11ef-a79d-37b7963c34d3.html
- **Nebraska Today** – <https://news.unl.edu/article/huskers-make-big-impact-on-state-through-teacher-education>

2. McDermott wins coveted Voyager Scholarship for Public Service

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Luke McDermott, a first-generation student from Omaha, has been awarded a 2024-26 Voyager Scholarship, the Obama-Chesky Scholarship for Public Service. McDermott is a political science, economics and history major and University Honors Program member who is also working toward a Certificate in Public Policy Analysis.

Related Media Item: <https://news.unl.edu/article/mcdermott-wins-coveted-voyager-scholarship-for-public-service>

3. UNL beginning project to digitize famed author Mari Sandoz's archive

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln has begun an effort to digitize the archive of beloved Nebraska author Mari Sandoz (1896-1966), who chronicled pioneer life in the Great Plains, the Lincoln Journal Star's Chris Dunker reported Aug. 23. The project, like the university's Willa Cather Archive, would make nearly 200 boxes of manuscripts, correspondence, research materials, notes, maps and items from Sandoz's personal library accessible to a wider audience online.

Related Media Item: https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/unl-teacher-nebraska-college/article_f5face7c-5fd2-11ef-a79d-37b7963c34d3.html

4. Nebraska Law played key role in developing first-of-its-kind space manual

Students and faculty from the College of Law played a leading role in developing the Woomera Manual — the first comprehensive examination of how Earth-bound laws will be applied during times of peace, tension or crisis, and armed conflict in space. It is the first comprehensive examination of how Earth-bound laws will be applied during times of peace, tension or crisis, and armed conflict in space.

Related Media Item: <https://news.unl.edu/article/nebraska-law-played-key-role-in-developing-first-of-its-kind-space-manual>

University of Nebraska Medical Center

1. MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

The Child Health Research Institute (CHRI) and the Department of Pediatrics hosted middle school students to learn more about careers in science and health care, and to get hands-on experience with the technology we use every day.

Related Media Item: <https://www.unmc.edu/newsroom/2024/08/07/pediatrics-chri-host-community-partner-career-day/>

2. COLLABORATION WITH DHHS IN NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED JOURNAL

In May, Dr Patrick Maloney, with collaborators from NE DHHS and UNC-Chapel Hill, published a paper titled Durability of XBB.1.5 Vaccines against Omicron Subvariants in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Related Media Item: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2402779>

3. GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH ON NICOTINE, YOUTHS

UNMC College of Public Health faculty including Daisy Dai, PhD, (biostatistics) received a research grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to fund research on the health effects of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) on youth. The new funding will allow a research team to investigate the impacts of ENDS use on youth brain functions and the resultant cognitive outcomes. This groundbreaking research will longitudinally assess a nationally representative sample of more than 10,000 U.S. youth aged 9-10 years at baseline from 21 study sites, with follow-ups for 10 years.

Related Media Item: <https://www.unmc.edu/newsroom/2024/06/11/grant-to-study-vaping-devices-impact-on-youth-brains/>

University of Nebraska at Omaha

1. UNO STEM TRAIL Center Open House Aug. 30

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) hosted an open house event for the newly renovated STEM TRAIL Center on August 30 at 2 P.M., featuring speakers including U.S. Rep. Don Bacon and UNO Chancellor Joanne Li. The renovated 8,400-square-foot space in Roskens Hall includes innovative STEM classrooms, flexible workspaces, and an event space, designed to enhance education and community engagement. The ONE STEM initiative, supported by the U.S. Department of Education, aims to diversify and grow Nebraska's STEM workforce by equipping educators and preparing students for high-demand careers.

Related Media Item: <https://events.unomaha.edu/event/stem-trail-center-celebration-open-house>

2. UNO Alum Jeromie Meyer to Compete in Paris Paralympics

Jeromie Meyer, an Iowa native and University of Nebraska at Omaha alum, will represent Team USA in men's wheelchair basketball at the Paris 2024 Summer Paralympic Games, aiming for a third consecutive gold medal. Meyer credits UNO's wheelchair basketball program with helping him develop as an athlete, and he now works in adaptive sports while pursuing a master's degree. Meyer is excited to compete on the world stage and hopes to contribute to his team's historic pursuit of a third straight Paralympic gold.

Related Media Item: <https://www.ketv.com/article/iowan-paris-2024-paralympics-wheelchair-basketball/62009249>

3. Phani Tej Adidam, Ph.D., Appointed Fulbright Specialist in Sri Lanka

Dr. Phani Tej Adidam, Professor and Chair of Marketing and Entrepreneurship at UNO, will serve as a Fulbright Specialist at Eastern University in Sri Lanka this January, where he will help develop their Bachelor of Business Administration and MBA programs with a focus on Entrepreneurship. Previously, he has made significant contributions to global education, including his time as a Fulbright Scholar in Austria, and has been recognized for his transformative impact on UNO's business programs.

Related Media Item: <https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-business-administration/news/2024/08/adidam-fulbright.php>

Agriculture and Natural Resources

1. Elite 11 Signing Ceremony

19 CASNR students were accepted into the first cohort of the Elite 11 scholarship program. This program aims to increase the number of large animal veterinarians practicing in Nebraska. Nebraska, like many states, is facing a critical shortage of large animal veterinarians. This shortage is acutely felt by the state's livestock industry, which is the largest sector of the state's ag industrial complex. The Elite 11 program will pay for 50 percent of students' tuition their first two years of college. 13 of those students will then be accepted into the next level of the program and receive full tuition paid for the last two years of their undergraduate education. Ultimately, 11 students will be selected as the Elite 11, and will have their tuition and fees paid for their participation in the 2+2 vet med partnership program between UNL and Iowa State. In return, students will practice veterinary medicine in practices that serve the livestock industry for at least 8 years upon completion of their veterinary degree.

Related Media Item: <https://nebraskaexaminer.com/2024/08/27/19-nebraska-students-selected-for-inaugural-food-animal-veterinary-scholarship-program/>

2. Unified Showing

CASNR student Allison Walbrecht, when she was still in high school, founded the Unified Showing 4-H program to expand access in 4-H livestock events. Unified Showing pairs youth with disabilities with a showing buddy. Together, the showman and show buddy prepare animals for 4-H competitive livestock showmanship events, and compete at the county and state level. Today, Allison has grown the program to include 60 youth participants in 6 counties. Participants report finding a sense of belonging and renewed confidence.

Related Media Item: <https://news.unl.edu/article/walbrecht-opens-4-h-livestock-opportunities-to-youths-with-disabilities>

3. Nebraska LEAD 43

30 Nebraskans from across the state were recently selected to take part in the Nebraska LEAD program. The 30 individuals in this year's cohort represent a diverse group of professionals from across the state, bringing with them a wealth of experience and expertise in various sectors of Nebraska's agricultural industry. Over the next two years, they will participate in a rigorous curriculum designed to enhance their leadership skills, broaden their understanding of domestic and global agricultural issues, and prepare them for greater roles in their communities and industries. For more than four decades, Nebraska LEAD has prepared rural Nebraskans and those engaged in the agriculture sector to take on leadership roles in their communities. Since then, LEAD alumni have represented their communities at every level of public service in the state, spanning community groups, commodity boards, state and county commissions, and the Nebraska Legislature.

Related Media Item: <https://ruralradio.com/rrn/news/thirty-nebraskans-selected-for-nebraska-lead-class-43/>

University of Nebraska Foundation

University of Nebraska donors give record private support (\$388.8 million in new funds committed to support all campuses of the university system in FY24)

The University of Nebraska Foundation announced \$388.8 million in new funds committed in fiscal year 2024 – the most ever – to support the University of Nebraska. In addition, 57,603 donors made gifts to advance the University of Nebraska during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The record-setting giving occurred as part of Only in Nebraska: A Campaign for Our University's Future. The multi-year campaign seeks to engage 150,000 unique benefactors to give \$3 billion to support the University of Nebraska. As of June 30, \$2.35 billion has been raised from 141,677 unique donors toward the campaign goals.

Related Media Item: <https://nufoundation.org/university-of-nebraska-donors-give-record-private-support/>

Buffett Early Childhood Institute

'Getting to Know You' Conferences Help Bellevue Parents, Teachers Start the School Year on a Positive Note

This piece recognizes the family engagement efforts of Belleaire Elementary in Bellevue, one of the School as Hub schools that the Buffett Institute works in. With the start of the new school year, an Institute team of 12 has been working hard to support school partners.

Related Media Item: <https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/blog/2024/08/getting-to-know-you-conferences-help-bellevue-parents-teachers-start-the-school-year>

Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute

DWFI co-convenes sessions at World Water Week 2024, the leading conference on global water issues

Representatives of the Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute (DWFI) at the University of Nebraska co-convened and participated in several sessions at World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden, August 25-29, 2024. World Water Week 2024 is centered on water cooperation, for peace and security in its broadest sense. DWFI Associate Director of Sustainable Agriculture Water Management Nicole Lefore was invited to serve as a member of the Scientific Programme Committee for the conference, which attracts about 15,000 participants from nearly 200 countries and territories each year. Along with partners which included the World Wildlife Fund and the Nature Conservancy, DWFI also co-hosted a “Nature Hub” exhibition booth at the conference, further extending the institute’s reputation as a leader in global water and food water security.

Related Media Item: <https://waterforfood.nebraska.edu/irrigandmech/news-events/events/world-water-week>

National Strategic Research Institute

National Stakeholder Engagement

Within the past three weeks, NSRI staff, NSRI Fellows, NU Faculty and NU students have engaged nationally with thousands of DOD and USG stakeholders at some of the DOD’s most significant conferences in our mission space to demonstrate capabilities and capacity across NSRI’s research portfolio. Engagements have included exhibit booths, presentations, posters and meetings at the following events. Follow ups have already included proposal development.

Related Media Item: <https://nsri.nebraska.edu/news/news-releases/2024/08/from-classroom-to-command-nsri-strategic-deterrence-interns-engage-dod-leaders>