

People, Programs and Points of Excellence (P³E)

Report for June 20, 2025

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. Board of Regents approves Neal Schnoor as next chancellor of the University of Nebraska at Kearney

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents has officially appointed Dr. Neal H. Schnoor as the next chancellor of the University of Nebraska at Kearney. A Nebraska native and former UNK faculty member and administrator, Schnoor will begin his duties July 1. He returns to UNK with more than 30 years of leadership experience in higher education, most recently serving as president of Northern State University in South Dakota. Schnoor succeeds longtime chancellor Doug Kristensen.

Related Media Item: <https://unknews.unk.edu/2024/06/21/board-of-regents-approves-neal-schnoor-as-next-chancellor-of-the-university-of-nebraska-at-kearney>

2. UNK College of Education proves it's making the grade in preparing tomorrow's teachers

The University of Nebraska at Kearney's College of Education has earned accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), reaffirming the strength and quality of its teacher education and graduate programs.

The distinction recognizes UNK's commitment to preparing competent, compassionate educators and its dedication to continuous improvement in teacher preparation. UNK was one of only 34 institutions nationally to receive CAEP accreditation during the spring 2025 review cycle.

Related Media Item: <https://unknews.unk.edu/2025/04/22/unk-college-of-education-proves-its-making-the-grade-in-preparing-tomorrows-teachers>

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

1. Nebraska Engineering paves way for plastic road in South Sioux City

Millions of plastic bags are giving an old road in South Sioux City, Nebraska, a new look thanks to the expertise of Jamilla Teixeira, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and a \$500,000 grant from Nebraska Environmental Trust after South Sioux City applied for funding through NET.

South Sioux City constructed a 4,000-foot stretch of Foundry Road near Siouxland Freedom Park using a cutting-edge asphalt blend made from two million recycled plastic bags.

Related Media Item: <https://news.unl.edu/article/nebraska-engineering-paves-way-for-plastic-road-in-south-sioux-city>

2. Website showcases thousands of ways UNL serves Nebraska

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Engagement Collaborative group and Nebraska Extension have launched a webpage that, for the first time, compiles the resources, services and programs the university offers to Nebraska's communities. Hundreds of resources are organized into 20 broad categories to make finding things easier. With a few clicks, visitors can find public classes, workshops, community services, informational resources, and professional development opportunities.

Related Media Item: <https://news.unl.edu/article/website-showcases-thousands-of-ways-unl-serves-nebraska>

University of Nebraska Medical Center

1. College of Dentistry re-starts dental caravan

The UNMC College of Dentistry has restarted its longtime dental caravan, sending out college leaders, faculty and staff across the state to connect with alumni and friends of the college. The caravan was a college of dentistry mainstay for years before it stopped for a break in 2017, then relaunched in 2019 only to go on hiatus through the pandemic years.

Related Media Item: <https://www.unmc.edu/newsroom/2025/06/13/unmc-dentistry-back-on-the-road-with-dental-caravan/>

2. New portable unit boosts UNMC's biocontainment response

UNMC received a Portable Biocontainment Unit (PBCU), the first of its kind globally and to be used domestically in the fight against highly infectious diseases. The unit is funded by the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

Biocontainment is among the areas in which UNMC has an international reputation, and the PBCU is the first domestic resource for isolating and transporting patients with contagious infectious diseases, for example Ebola, to specialized treatment centers.

Related Media Item: <https://www.unmc.edu/newsroom/2025/06/13/new-portable-unit-boosts-unmcs-biocontainment-response/>

University of Nebraska at Omaha

1. Amid LA protests, senators raise questions about safety at Olympics, World Cup

At a Senate subcommittee hearing, lawmakers examined how the federal government can enhance public safety at major international sporting events like the World Cup and Olympics, raising concerns about travel restrictions, drone threats, and local-federal coordination. Experts, including University of Nebraska's Gina Ligon, warned about the use of AI and drones by bad actors, while Olympic organizers emphasized readiness despite protests and immigration crackdowns in Los Angeles. Lawmakers stressed the need for advanced planning and effective partnerships to ensure both security and a welcoming environment for global visitors.

Related Media Item: <https://nebraskaexaminer.com/2025/06/10/repub/amid-la-protests-senators-raise-questions-about-safety-at-olympics-world-cup/>

2. Make sure you stay hydrated': Meteorologists warn of upcoming heat wave

As extreme heat hits Omaha during the College World Series, University of Nebraska at Omaha assistant professor Daniel Vecellio is urging fans to take heat safety seriously. Vecellio, who studies how heat affects the human body, warns that early-season heat waves can be especially dangerous since people aren't yet acclimated. He advises fans to stay hydrated, wear protective clothing, and seek shade to avoid heat-related illnesses.

Related Media Item: <https://www.ketv.com/article/omaha-meteorologists-warn-of-upcoming-heat-wave/65106333>

Agriculture and Natural Resources

1. Nebraska Cooperative Development Center helps launch Nebraska's first home care cooperative

The Republican River Valley Homecare Cooperative (RRVHC), Nebraska's first worker-owned homecare cooperative, was established in April 2025 to provide non-medical in-home care in Arapahoe and surrounding areas. The effort began in 2021 when Arapahoe resident Jane Maynard contacted the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center (NCDC)—part of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources—about homecare cooperative job opportunities.

NCDC, which helps communities form cooperatives, found that no such model existed in Nebraska and began working to fill that gap. The center launched the Nebraska Homecare Worker Cooperative Project, which included a series of informational webinars and a seven-week Homecare Worker Cooperative Academy in 2022.

After the closure of Arapahoe's only assisted living facility, NCDC and local caregivers began developing a cooperative to meet community needs. RRVHC now has four worker-owners and aims to serve older residents while offering caregivers ownership and input in how the business is run.

Related Media Item: <https://ianrnews.unl.edu/article/nebraskas-first-homecare-cooperative-opens-in-arapahoe>

2. University of Nebraska Hosts 3rd U.S. Precision Livestock Farming Conference

The University of Nebraska, a national leader in precision livestock agriculture, hosted the third U.S. Precision Livestock Farming (USPLF) Conference June 2–5, 2025. The event brought together more than 180 professionals — including researchers, entrepreneurs, veterinarians, and policymakers — to explore how emerging technologies are transforming livestock production. Precision livestock farming uses tools to monitor animal health, welfare and productivity while reducing environmental impacts.

Led by Tami Brown-Brandl, professor of biological systems engineering at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, the conference featured presentations, panel discussions, workshops and tours of cutting-edge research facilities such as the Feedlot Innovation Center. It also included an education roundtable focused on preparing the next generation of precision ag professionals.

State and university leaders emphasized Nebraska's commitment to agricultural innovation, with Gov. Jim Pillen and other officials underscoring the potential of smart, autonomous technologies. The event showcased 143 research papers and highlighted Nebraska's growing role in shaping the future of animal agriculture.

Related Media Item:

- **IANR News:** <https://ianrnews.unl.edu/article/university-of-nebraska-hosts-3rd-us-precision-livestock-farming-conference>
- **National Hog Farmer:** <https://www.nationalhogfarmer.com/livestock-management/cutting-edge-precision-livestock-technologies-took-center-stage-at-unl-conference>

University of Nebraska Foundation

University of Nebraska Foundation confers service awards

The University of Nebraska Foundation has bestowed its 2025 service awards on two Kearney, Nebraska, couples who have dedicated themselves to service to the University of Nebraska.

Galen Hadley, Ph.D., and Marilyn Hadley, Ed.D., received the Harlan J. Noddle Award for Distinguished Development Service. Marilyn served as dean of UNK's College of Education, and Galen was dean of UNK's College of Business and Technology. He was also mayor of Kearney and a Nebraska state senator, where as speaker, he worked on a legislative package in 2012 called "Building a Healthier Nebraska," which advanced key University of Nebraska priorities. The Hadleys have been University of Nebraska Foundation Trustees since 2017.

Tom and Mary Henning received the Perry W. Branch Award for Distinguished Volunteer Service. Tom is CEO of Cash-Wa Distributing Co., and Mary taught school in Lincoln and Kearney and is actively involved in the arts and storytelling. They have been foundation trustees since 1992 and during that time have been a part of three comprehensive campaigns, including their current roles on the Only in Nebraska: A Campaign for our University's Future campaign committees for UNK and UNMC/Nebraska Medicine.

Related Media Item: <https://nufoundation.org/university-of-nebraska-foundation-honors-two-kearney-couples/>

Buffett Early Childhood Institute

Superintendents' Plan Summits Convene 10 Districts to Share Impact and Encourage Cross-District Collaboration

More than 100 educators and administrators from multiple school districts in the Omaha metro convened at two Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan collaboration summits on June 3 and 9.

The Buffett Institute led the events as part of its work implementing the Superintendents' Plan.

Through poster progress walks, district spotlight sessions, and dedicated team planning time, participants shared successful strategies from their schools' work with the Institute team around topics like attendance, family engagement, and early literacy. District leaders and school staff heard what's working in other districts, highlighted their commitment to ensuring early childhood education is prioritized within schools, and prepared action plans for the upcoming school year.

Members of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties Coordinating Council attended, too, giving them deeper insight into how the Institute partners with schools. Nearly 4,500 students are served at the more intensive School as Hub sites through the Superintendents' Plan. That number climbs to 15,000 students when considering school administrators and staff who receive professional development, coaching, and other services.

The plan is a collaborative initiative of the 11 school districts in metro Omaha that make up the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties to develop early childhood programs, especially for children living in poverty. The Learning Community funds the Superintendents' Plan.

Related Media Item: <https://nebraskapublicmedia.org/en/news/news-articles/schools-in-douglas-sarpy-counties-see-improvements-in-attendance-with-school-as-hub-model/>

Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute

Global Impact Through Immersive Learning and Research: A collaboration between DWFI and the Yeutter Institute

The University of Nebraska's Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Clayton Yeutter Institute of International Trade and Finance collaborated to send Yeutter Student Fellows on an immersive trip to Ghana.

The goal was for students to research Africa's irrigation needs and foster their personal and professional growth. They investigated Ghana's various landscapes and interacted with key agricultural stakeholders, including farmers and government agencies, to understand irrigation feasibility. Their findings will inform a research project for Valmont Industries on addressing Africa's irrigation requirements.

Related Media Item: <https://news.unl.edu/article/huskers-tackle-global-irrigation-challenges-through-immersive-trip-to-ghana>

National Strategic Research Institute

FEATURE: Diagnostic tests for emerging threats: Researcher stands ready for next challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 upturned lives across the globe, and anyone who did not already understand the importance of public health learned about it quickly.

Dr. Mara Jana Broadhurst, director of the U.S. Region 7 Emerging Pathogens Laboratory & Nebraska Biocontainment Unit Laboratory at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), didn't need the reminder. She had experienced the consequences of unchecked infectious disease in a big way as the Partners In Health diagnostic lead during the 2014-2016 Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa.

Ebola drove her down the path to her current specialty in infectious diseases, but her interest in medicine began while earning a bachelor's degree in biology at the University of Oregon. Dr. Broadhurst's first experience with community health was working with a women's health organization to promote health advocacy and education in India.

"It opened my eyes to the need to translate science to inform community-based programs," she said. "And that got me on the M.D., Ph.D. track."

She went on to earn her dual doctorates at the University of California San Francisco, followed by Clinical Pathology residency and Microbiology fellowship training at Stanford. All of this education and experience ultimately led Dr. Broadhurst to her current roles as director of the Biocontainment Unit and Emerging Pathogens Laboratories in 2019.

Related Media Item: <https://nsri.nebraska.edu/news/news-releases/2025/06/diagnostic-tests-for-emerging-threats-researcher-stands-ready-for-next-challenge>