



A leading university online,  
partnering for student success.

Annual Report 2014-2015

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
OnlineWorldwide

KEARNEY | LINCOLN | OMAHA | MEDICAL CENTER





"I started taking history classes at the University of Nebraska at Kearney – and I was hooked after the first class. The quality of the curriculum and the professors made me decide to keep going and get my master's degree. I wanted a degree that would mean something. In my last year of classroom teaching, I was named Texas History Teacher of the Year. Now I run the social studies department for my entire district. Getting my degree at the University of Nebraska changed my life."

**Steve Sonksen, Texas  
History, MA  
University of Nebraska at Kearney**

# Message From the Director

I'm pleased to share with you the 2014-2015 University of Nebraska Online Worldwide Annual Report. This collaborative initiative of the University of Nebraska (NU) pulls together the collective strength in online education of the four campuses – University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK), University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL), University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). The NU Online Worldwide partnership also includes the accredited, college-prep University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) that recently celebrated 85 years. In this report you will see the depth, the growth and the innovation of this initiative, and have an opportunity to meet some of our amazing students who study from a distance.

During academic year 2014-2015, student credit hours in online courses grew on all four campuses by a dramatic 19 percent. How is this consistent with the mission of the University of Nebraska? By providing access to high-quality courses and degrees, the NU campuses were able to serve more Nebraskans – those who attend on campus and those who study at a distance. The flexibility of online coursework also provides students the option to take advantage of experiential learning opportunities such as internships and study abroad and keep on

track to graduate in a timely manner. Across our university, online education is a key strategy to meet goals of retention, persistence and student success.

This past year, UNHS in partnership with UNO offered eight dual credit courses to students currently in high school. By partnering with schools and school districts across Nebraska, UNHS is having an impact on the cost of education for those students who wish to earn college credit while finishing their high school careers.

By working together as one university, we can bring the academic rigor, access to quality faculty and the accredited programs of our campuses to more students. NU Online Worldwide leverages the uniqueness of each of our campuses to provide students with meaningful options and choices as they pursue their academic goals. Student success is our primary goal.



**Mary Niemiec**  
Associate Vice President for Distance Education  
Director of University of Nebraska Online Worldwide



# Committed to Student Achievement

In today's world technology is ubiquitous and students have come to expect it in nearly every aspect of their lives. As educators we have a responsibility to evaluate available technologies for their best applications to enhance learning and create greater access for more students.

Recognizing this, our campuses are working together to share best practices and develop dynamic, relevant programs to meet workforce needs. NU faculty continue to demonstrate their commitment to student success through the use of technology to teach and share their research knowledge.

With the changing face of postsecondary students, the need for flexibility in the delivery of education is more important than ever. Using technology as a platform, more students are now able to advance their education and engage with world-class faculty no matter their location or life circumstances.

**Nationwide, 5.6 million postsecondary students take at least one online course in an academic year.**

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Fall 2013

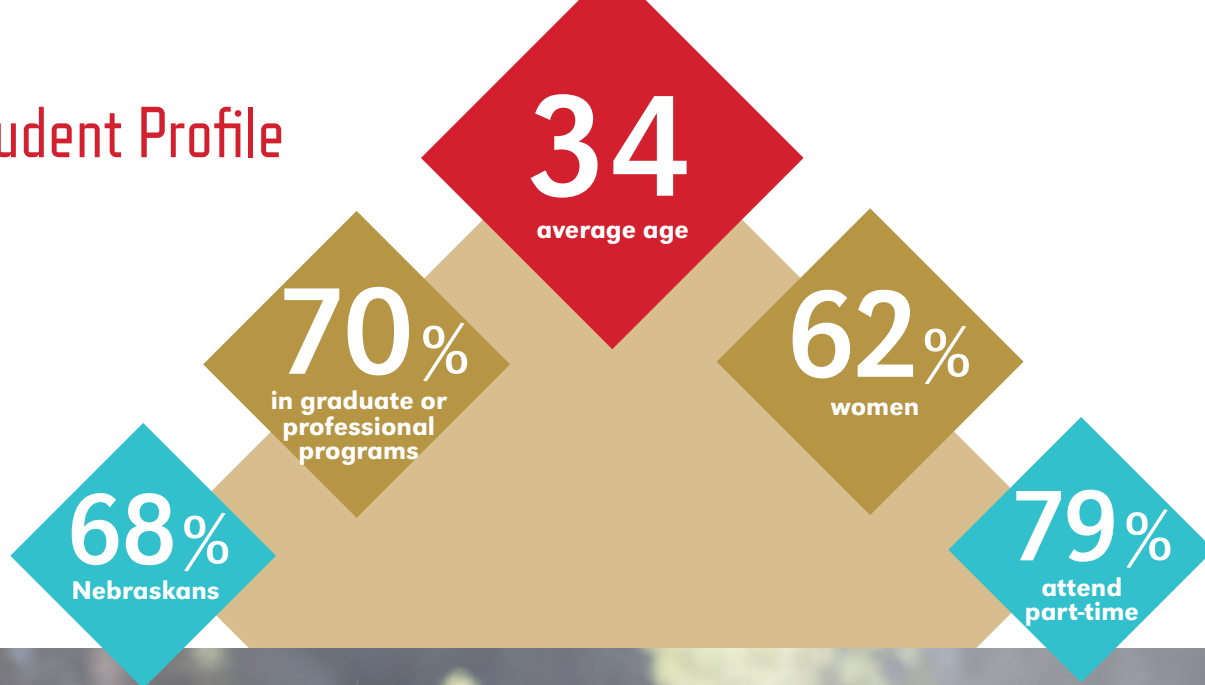


**"Online learning flattens the world. It opens up opportunities for individuals who want a University of Nebraska education, but are not able to come on campus."**

**Dele Davies**  
**Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs**  
**University of Nebraska Medical Center**



# NU Online Student Profile



"I knew I wanted to go back to school, but I didn't want classes to interfere with my work as a teacher and, living in a remote, rural area, I knew I couldn't be on campus every day. At the University of Nebraska at Kearney, I created a schedule that worked for me and I learned both subject-area knowledge and teaching techniques that I could immediately apply in my classroom. Most of all, I loved the challenge — and I loved learning that I can do a lot more than I thought I could."

**Joanna Utecht, Nebraska  
Biology, MS  
University of Nebraska at Kearney**

# A Strategy for Success

In establishing the University of Nebraska Online Worldwide initiative, the Board of Regents set a goal to increase resident enrollment from students who study at a distance as well as nonresident enrollment in online programs. These are students who would not have otherwise enrolled in an NU program if not for the flexibility online education provides.

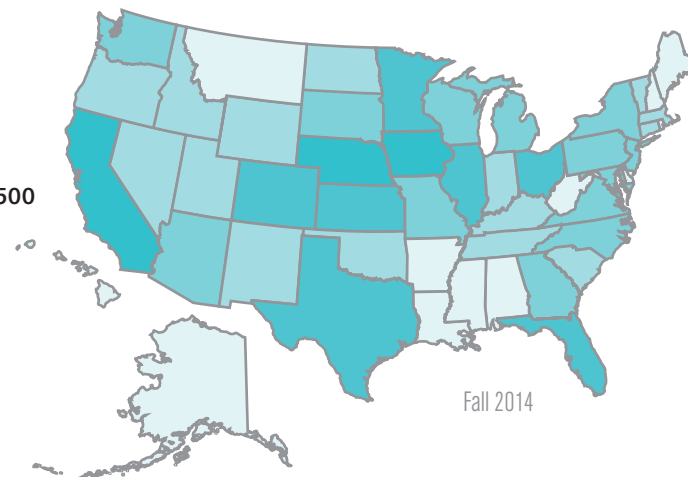
- ▶ 70% of NU Online Worldwide website traffic comes from outside Nebraska.

Through the NU Online Worldwide partnership and extensive portfolio of online programs, NU enjoys greater visibility and recognition in a very crowded and highly competitive marketplace. A significant role of NU Online Worldwide is the marketing of NU online programs to Nebraska, regional and national audiences in collaboration with NU campuses. NU Online Worldwide marketing strategy is focused on building awareness, reaching prospective students from a broad geographic area and maximizing marketing resources through university-wide coordination.

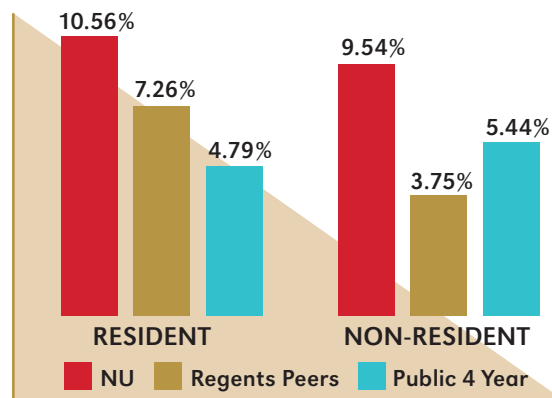
- ▶ Many NU Online Worldwide marketing efforts have earned national recognition from UPCEA, leaders in professional, continuing and online education.

- ▶ Online enrollments come from every state.

Number of Students



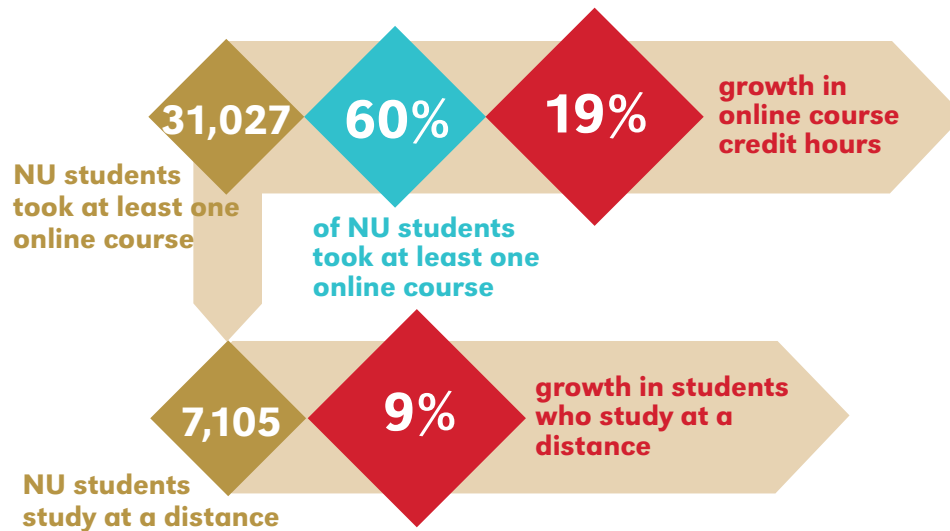
- ▶ NU surpasses peers in growth of students who study at a distance.



Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2013



At NU, online education is a key strategy our campuses use for retention, persistence, enrollment growth and to help students stay on pace to graduate in a timely manner. Online courses provide greater access to students who study at a distance and allow students who primarily study on campus the ability to address scheduling conflicts, study abroad or participate in experiential learning opportunities without losing time-to-degree.



**"At UNO, 45% of students on pace to graduate in four years enrolled in at least one online course last academic year."**

**T. Hank Robinson**  
Director, Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

# Meeting the Needs of Nebraska

Online education at the University of Nebraska aligns with the institution's goals of increasing access to quality education for more Nebraskans, meeting student needs and producing a highly skilled workforce.

As a state with exceptionally low unemployment, the university plays a role in supporting the economy of Nebraska by continuing to grow enrollment and facilitating degree attainment in the state. This is especially significant for the nearly 300,000 Nebraskans who have some college credit but have not yet earned a bachelor's degree.

► 66% of distance students choose to enroll at an institution within 100 miles of their location.

Source: Online college students 2015: Comprehensive data on demands and preferences. The Learning House, Inc.

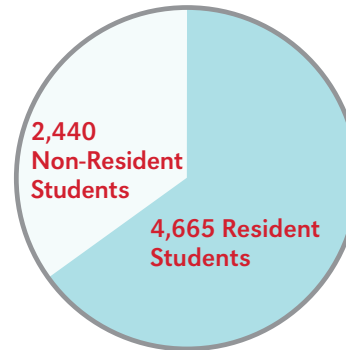
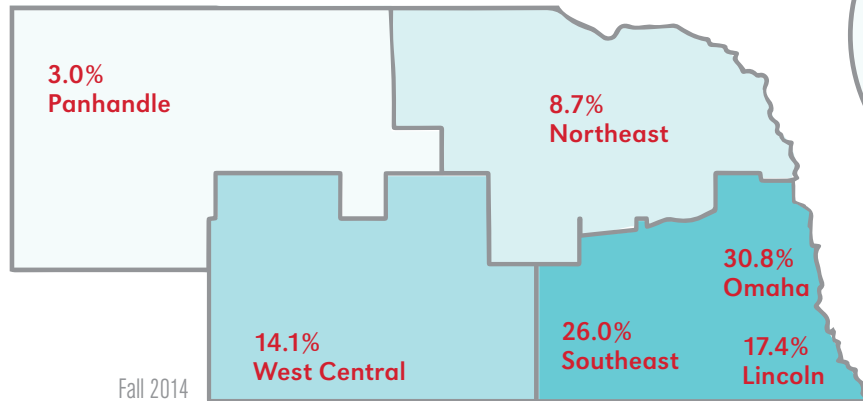
"Getting my degree at the University of Nebraska Medical Center has given me more confidence in my job. Most importantly, my degree represents a personal success; I enjoyed the satisfaction of getting it done."

**Janet Steinwart, Nebraska  
Clinical Laboratory Science, BS  
University of Nebraska Medical Center**





► During the 2014-2015 academic year, 4,665 Nebraskans studied at a distance.



“Online education opens up a world of possibility to Nebraskans. It allows them to take college courses and work toward a degree in a way that fits their own personal situations.”

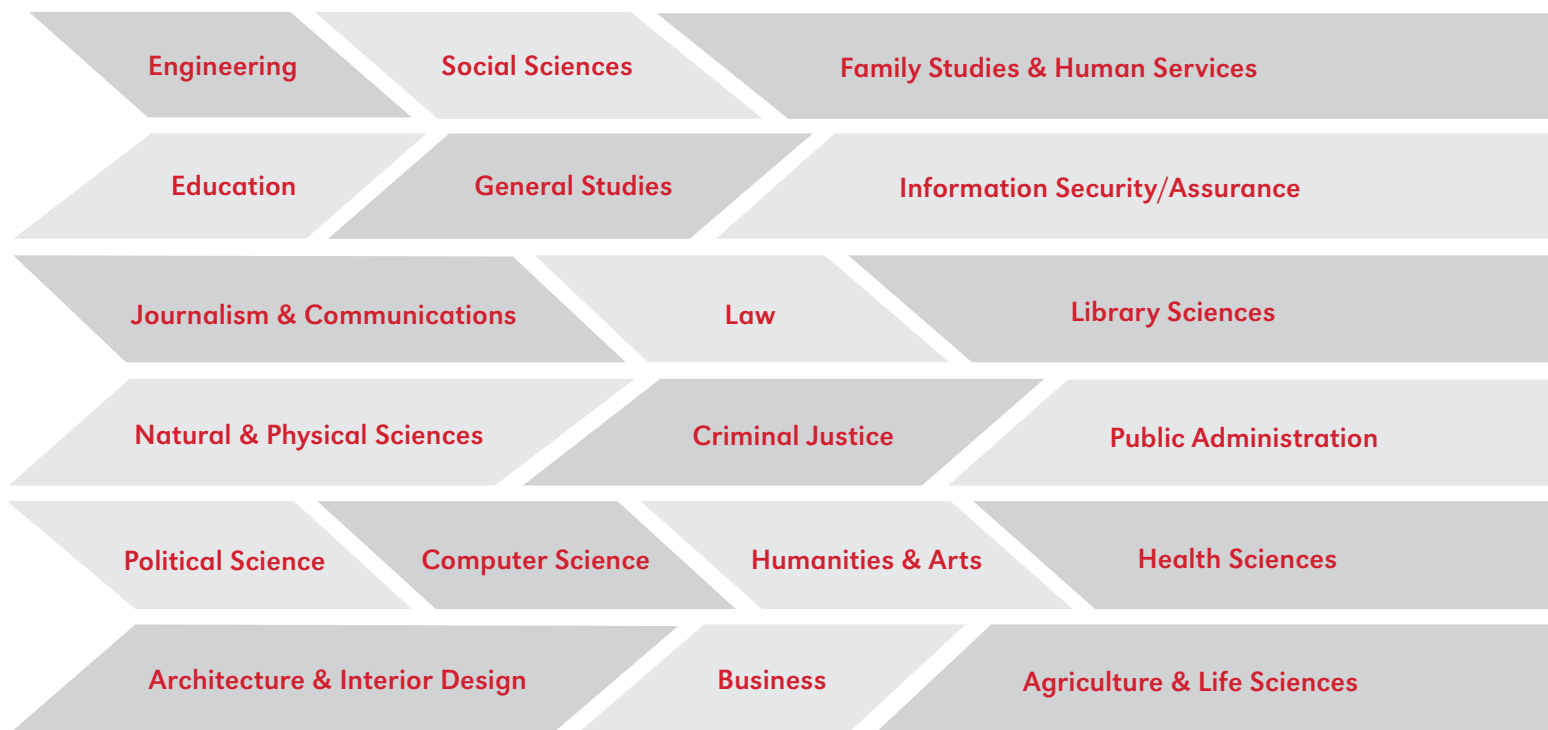
**Dr. Hank M. Bounds**  
7th President of the University of Nebraska



# Access, Opportunity and Choice

Through this collaborative online effort, the University of Nebraska offers a full array of online degrees, certificates, endorsements and minors – from bachelor's through doctorate – across numerous subject areas.

## Areas of Study





# Program Development Grants

Each year NU Online Worldwide offers grants to support the strategic development and growth of distance education at the university. To date, nearly one million dollars have been invested in developing new programs and building the capacity of popular existing programs.

## 2015 funded programs:

- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences/Master of Public Health (Dual Degree) (UNMC)
- Graduate Certificate in Quality Improvement (UNMC)
- Graduate Certificate in Applied Health Informatics (UNMC)
- Animal Science minor (UNL)
- Early Childhood & Family Advocacy, comprehensive bachelor's degree (UNK)

“The NU Online Worldwide funding allows us to build capacity in our program and to reach students across the state and country. The online minor develops an additional skillset in students vital to businesses in Nebraska and globally. As the only animal science program at a university in a state with extensive animal-related industries, providing access to education in this area helps enhance the Nebraska workforce.”

**Lisa Karr-Lilienthal, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor Department of Animal Science  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

# Academic Partners for Student Success

With programs partnering across campuses and the system, the university is leveraging expertise and resources. This enables NU to bring programs to students more quickly and offer unique programs made possible as a result of the collaboration.

“It’s helpful to bring multiple campuses to the table. It’s enabled us to pool our resources and talents and to think about the ways that we can best serve our students.”

**Julie Campbell**  
Chair and Associate Professor  
Department of Criminal Justice  
University of Nebraska at Kearney

## Interdepartmental collaboration

In response to the aging population, the UNO Department of Gerontology and UNL College of Architecture have partnered to offer an innovative graduate certificate which equips professionals with skills to address the physical environment needs for our aging population.







## Meeting Student Needs

At the University of Nebraska, we embrace the use of technology to advance our mission and achieve our goals. This strategic and academically-driven approach to online education at NU addresses the goal of student success. Geographic proximity is no longer a barrier to a quality education and valuable credential. The more than 100 online programs offered by the NU campuses meet the diverse academic needs of students including those who have some college credit but no degree, those who are place-bound due to work or life circumstances, our active military and returning veterans – all who need or want to study at a distance.

“After serving my country with tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, I was equipped with the fundamentals. But I knew there was room to grow and more to learn. At the University of Nebraska at Omaha, I found a highly-ranked program available online that worked with me while overseas and helped develop the skills I apply in my role each day. Thanks to my advanced degree, I’m able to use my leadership and managerial expertise to tackle administrative challenges. And I’m excited to see my opportunities continue to grow today and tomorrow.”

**Jeff Lehmkuhl, New Mexico**  
**Public Administration, MPA**  
**University of Nebraska at Omaha**





In addition to the partnerships created by collaborative programs, the University of Nebraska Online Worldwide facilitates communities of practice in the areas of military and veteran student services and instructional design. These groups are comprised of personnel from the campuses responsible for these vital supports and provides opportunity for staff to share and learn from one another.

More broadly, NU is doing more than ever to address the needs of military and veteran students with a system-wide, day-long workshop on topics related to this student population. This past year both UNK and UNL established military and veteran student centers, modeled on UNO's nationally-recognized center.



### Military-friendly campuses and programs

- Military advisers on each campus
- In-state tuition for active duty students and their spouses stationed in Nebraska
- Flexible deployment policies
- Evaluation of non-traditional credits



*Proud participant in the Yellow Ribbon Program.*




### US News & World Report Best Online Programs for Vets

- Bachelor's – UNL #35, UNO #52
- Graduate Business – UNL #18
- Graduate Education – UNL #5, UNK #20
- Graduate Engineering – UNL #29




### US News & World Report Best Online Programs

- Bachelor's – UNL #40, UNO #58
- Graduate Business – UNL #21
- Graduate Education – UNL #5, UNK #23
- Graduate Engineering – UNL #34



**Nontraditional is now the norm: 74% of college students have one or more nontraditional characteristic.**

Source: National Center for Education Statistics



"I realized that to contribute more to my team and move up in my career I would need a better understanding of the industry as a whole. That meant getting my MBA. I was living in my hometown of Kenai, Alaska, so I knew I would have to study online. With my degree from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, I'm now in a new planning role that combines my passions for engineering, exploration and business."

**Wally Ward, Alaska**  
**Business Administration, MBA**  
**University of Nebraska–Lincoln**



# Collaboration and Innovation

## Innovation in Pedagogy & Technology Symposium

NU Online Worldwide partners annually with University of Nebraska Information Technology (UNIT) to deliver a system-wide faculty and staff development opportunity focused on the use of technology to teach and support the academic mission.

### 2015 Symposium:

- 2 nationally-recognized experts
- 34 NU sessions
- 550 faculty, staff and IT professionals

## Campus Conversations

Extending the opportunity for professional development and networking throughout the year, a series of lively discussions about key topics related to distance learning is available for faculty and staff. Presentations are co-hosted with each campus and web-streamed live.

### Topics:

- Terms of Engagement: Understanding Student Engagement in Today's University Classroom
- Developing Quality Indicators for Online Learning
- Neuroscience + Learning Research + Education Technology = Education 3.0



## State Authorization

In recent years, states and federal agencies have placed increased emphasis on the authorization of distance programs to enroll out-of-state students. Compliance can be time consuming and complex, requiring vigilant monitoring of individual state regulations. Failure to comply with state regulatory requirements could jeopardize NU's ability to offer distance education programs outside of Nebraska.

NU Online Worldwide has dedicated resources to meet compliance requirements and as a result NU campuses are able to admit students who reside in all 50 states and Washington D.C. to most, if not all, of our online programs. NU Online Worldwide developed a State Authorization dashboard to track NU's current authorization status in each state and communicate that status to prospective students, faculty and staff. The dashboard has become an invaluable tool for helping faculty and staff accurately advise prospective students. The tool was developed under a creative commons non-commercial license and has been adopted by other universities across the country. The creation and utilization of the dashboard was recently recognized by the Online Learning Consortium as a 2015 OLC Effective Practice.

2015  
OLC Effective  
Practice Award Winner





# Postsecondary and Secondary Partnerships

As a senior partner in the state's P-16 initiative, the University of Nebraska works to increase Nebraska students' college readiness and attendance as well as the overall affordability of postsecondary education.

The University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) supports this initiative by working with local high schools to offer UNHS' rigorous, college-prep online courses. As an accredited, diploma-granting school, UNHS maintains the highest standards in curriculum development to prepare students for college.

"Providing quality secondary education that prepares students for college is the mission of the University of Nebraska High School. We are proud to partner with local schools to make it possible for students throughout the state to access the coursework they need to reach their academic goals."

**Hugh McDermott, Principal  
University of Nebraska High School**



### ► College credit for high school students

In partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha, UNHS offers online high school courses for college credit.

With a focus on general education courses, students may earn credit equal to their first year of college, greatly reducing their overall cost of postsecondary education. Extending the university's reach, students in Brazil and Bahrain took advantage of these dual enrollment courses during the 2014-2015 academic year.

### ► Dual Enrollment Courses

- Psychology
- Sociology
- AP Comparative Government and Politics
- AP Environmental Science
- AP Calculus AB 1
- AP Calculus AB 2
- AP U.S. History 1
- AP U.S. History 2
- AP Computer Science 1
- AP Computer Science 2





# UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOL

Accredited. College-Prep. Online.



"The most important thing is that the University of Nebraska High School has provided flexibility in my learning without sacrificing the quality of my education."

Abby, UNHS student

**100+**  
Core & Elective  
Courses

**67**  
NCAA-Approved  
Courses

**11**  
Advanced  
Placement®  
Courses



# Academic Excellence to Meet Students' Goals

Established in 1929, the University of Nebraska High School provides students around the world with rigorous, accredited secondary education that allows them to pursue their interests and reach their academic goals.

4 UNHS students received National Merit Finalist honors in 2014-2015.

With access to UNHS award-winning courses, schools can expand curriculum and solve important issues such as lack of staffing and budget constraints. Students may also earn a UNHS diploma, which is accepted by colleges and universities worldwide.

## How UNHS Works

- Accredited by AdvancED & Nebraska Department of Education
- Recognized in Nebraska's Rule 10
- Financially self-supporting through tuition dollars



# Committed to Nebraska

Distance high school courses were originally created by the university for students in rural Nebraska, and UNHS has remained dedicated to this history, serving 615 in-state students in 2014-2015.

In support of Nebraska schools, NU has provided the Nebraska Virtual Scholars program, which awards a limited number of scholarships to school administrators to use for UNHS courses. In 2014, 212 scholarships were awarded to 35 Nebraska schools in 25 counties.

Through application information and requested courses, UNHS has learned how to better serve Nebraska's schools and students with:

- Increased STEM offerings
- Rigorous courses for upper-level students
- Career-related courses to help students explore their interests



**NEBRASKA  
VIRTUAL SCHOLARS**

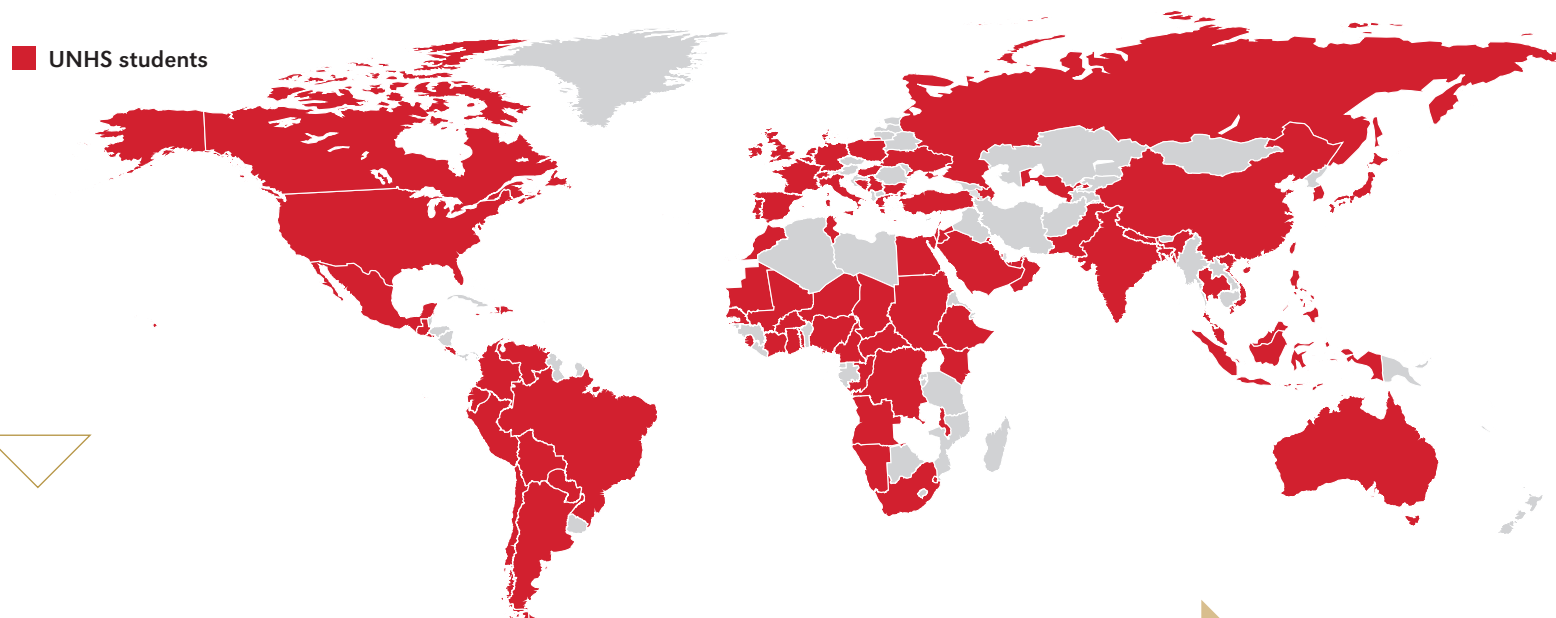
"We had a student who wanted to take upper-level science and was considering astronomy as a college major. UNHS' astronomy class went very well for him. It provided a way for him to explore the field before entering college, and it was challenging enough to keep him engaged. We appreciate the scholarship program that helped us give him this opportunity."

**Lori Merritt, Counselor**  
**Grand Island Northwest High School**  
**2014-15 Nebraska Virtual Scholars recipient**

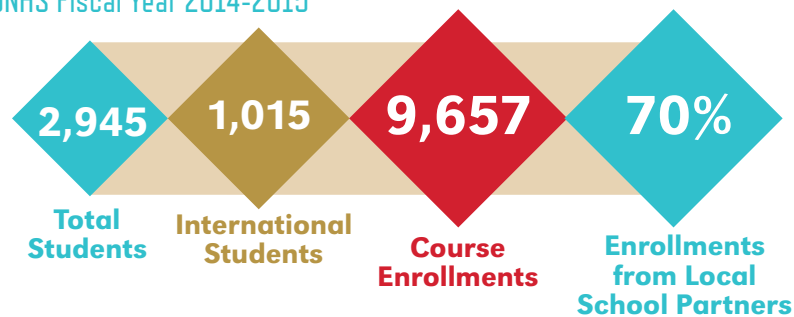


# From Nebraska to the World

Throughout 2014-2015, UNHS offered the same high-quality curriculum as Nebraska students received to students in 49 states and 98 countries.



► UNHS Fiscal Year 2014-2015





# Governance Structure

A university-wide steering committee appointed by the president of the University of Nebraska provides insight, input and consultation to assure that the strategy, direction and efforts of NU Online Worldwide align with the mission and goals of the University as a whole and the NU campuses.

## Steering Committee Members

**Marie Barber\***, Executive Director, Online & Distance Education  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

**Amy Goodburn**, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs & Interim Dean of Academic Services and Enrollment Management, Professor of English  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

**John Bartle**, Dean, College of Public Affairs & Community Services, Professor, School of Public Administration  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

**Lanyce Keel\***, Executive Director Information Services, Academic Partnerships for Instruction  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

**Chris Marvin**, Professor, Special Education & Communication Disorders  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

**Juliann Sebastian**, Dean & Professor, College of Nursing  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

**Alice Schumaker**, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Associate Professor, Department of Health Services Research & Administration, College of Public Health  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

**Kenya Taylor**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs & Dean, Graduate Studies & Research  
University of Nebraska at Kearney

**Jan Tompkins\***, Director of Academic & Student Affairs, Assistant Professor, Health Services Administration Division, College of Allied Health Professions  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

**Gloria Vavricka\***, Director of eCampus  
University of Nebraska at Kearney

## For More Information

### University of Nebraska Online Worldwide

**Mary Niemiec**, Associate Vice President for Distance Education & Director of University of Nebraska Online Worldwide  
mniemiec@nebraska.edu

### University of Nebraska High School

**Barbara Shousha**, Associate Director, University of Nebraska Online Worldwide & Director of University of Nebraska High School  
bshousha@nebraska.edu

*\*Executive committee member and distance education director from each campus*



"I grew up in an immigrant family. I didn't realize it at the time, but my parents didn't always know how they were going to feed us. As an undergraduate, I found my passion for helping people lead healthy lives. I turned that passion into a mission as a master's student in public health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. While I'm working on my degree, I'm already helping families get the food they need, and someday I'm going to lead a nonprofit that will help put an end to hunger."

**Beau Sanchez, Pennsylvania**  
**Public Health, MPH**  
**University of Nebraska Medical Center**



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