

# UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA ONLINE

AN ACADEMIC PARTNER IN BUILDING THE FUTURE

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

The University of Nebraska Online is the University's collaborative distance education initiative focused on providing greater access for more students to the high-quality courses and programs offered online by the four campuses of the University system.



UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Online

KEARNEY | LINCOLN | OMAHA | MEDICAL CENTER

## CORY HALVORSON, STUDENT

HISTORY, MA

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY

I needed a master's program that allowed me to serve my country and pursue my dream of teaching history. As a child, I was a fan of non-fiction, not comic books or cartoons. So teaching history and joining the military were two things I wanted. I needed a credible, online graduate program; a diploma from a university I would be proud to hang on my wall. I found that with the University of Nebraska at Kearney. I ended up deploying twice while in the program and never had a problem. The school and faculty were incredibly accommodating. This program prepared me for my dream; this is an online program that will take me places.



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



## MARY NIEMIEC

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION  
DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA ONLINE

The tag line for this annual report — *An Academic Partner in Building the Future* — has a multi-faceted meaning: University of Nebraska (NU) campuses partner with each other to bring 135 programs to students who want or need to study at a distance; NU partners with educational institutions across Nebraska to prepare students for the future; NU partners with business, industry, public and governmental entities throughout our state to meet workforce needs and strengthen the Nebraska economy; and NU partners with students to achieve academic and career success. NU Online is a University-wide partnership with a clear public service mission — provide access to affordable, high-quality education.

As you review this annual report, please take special note of the initiatives, improvements and enhancements in support of digital education that so many individuals made happen this past year. These efforts came to fruition only because we have that commitment to partner for the future of our state, our University and most importantly, our students.



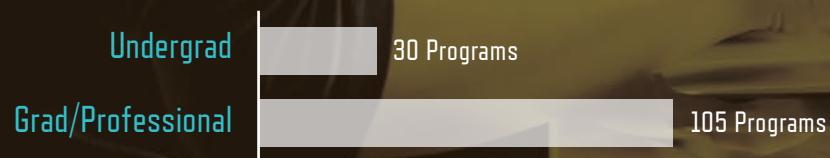
A stylized, handwritten signature in light blue ink that reads "Mary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.



# ONLINE PROGRAMS

Collectively UNK, UNL, UNO and UNMC offer 135 fully or primarily online programs.

At the University of Nebraska (NU), our distance education tradition stretches back more than 100 years and is rooted in our land-grant mission of access to quality education. By leveraging the latest in technology innovations, NU can meet Nebraskans and others across the country and around the world where they are with a wide array of credentials available online.



## Areas of study offered online

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE & LIFE SCIENCES

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR DESIGN

BUSINESS

COMPUTER SCIENCE

EDUCATION

ENGINEERING

FAMILY STUDIES

HEALTH SCIENCES

HUMANITIES & ARTS

JOURNALISM & COMMUNICATIONS

LAW

LIBRARY SCIENCES

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES

NATURAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCES

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNITY SERVICE

SOCIAL SCIENCES



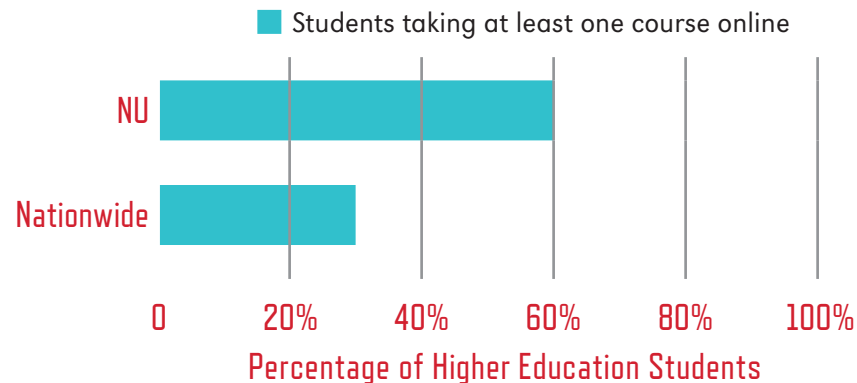
# MEETING STUDENT NEEDS

Nationwide, 30% of all higher education students take at least one course online in an academic year.\* At NU 35,258 students, or 60% of the NU student body, took at least one online course. Through the flexibility of online programs and courses, more students are able to advance toward their academic goals.

Online learning fits the needs of many adult students who may be juggling multiple

demands including work, family and other commitments. Students on campus often choose to blend face-to-face courses with online choices as a way to accommodate their busy schedules.

Online learning integrated throughout our campuses' academic offerings is a vital strategy for NU to remain competitive in today's educational marketplace and to meet student needs.



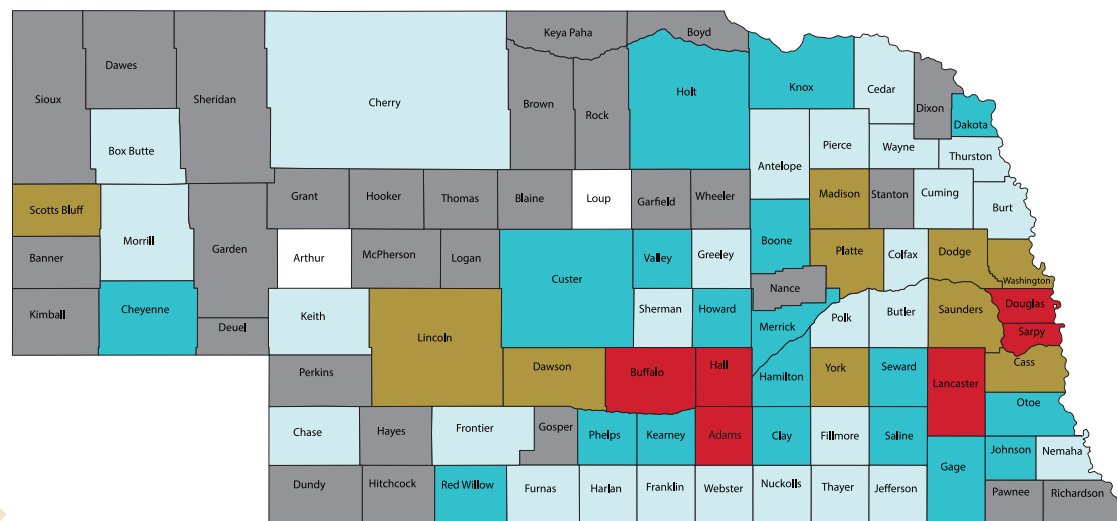
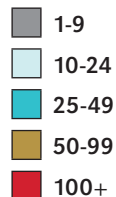
*\* Digital Education Enrollment Report, Digital Learning Compass 2017*

# SERVING OUR STATE

In a state with a very low unemployment rate, labor availability becomes a key focus for workforce development and economic vitality for Nebraska. As the state's only public university, NU remains committed to strategic efforts to increase degree attainment and college going in Nebraska. This is especially important for the nearly 300,000 Nebraskans who have completed some college credit but have not yet earned a degree.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, a record 6,080 Nebraskans studied entirely at a distance.

Number of Students



A photograph of a woman with voluminous, curly hair in shades of purple and brown. She is wearing a black and white horizontally striped t-shirt and is sitting on a dark metal bench. She is holding a dark laptop on her lap and looking off to the side with a warm smile. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green trees. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red and yellow gradient. On the left side of the red area, there is a large, light-colored right-pointing triangle. On the right side of the yellow area, there is a large, light-colored left-pointing triangle.

## TALEISHA NEWBILL, STUDENT

GENDER AND LEADERSHIP, UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

As a Nebraska native, I attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha on-campus to complete my undergraduate degree. After graduation, I began working full time and started a certificate program online. I decided to pursue this program because it complements my degree and allows me to dig deeper into subjects I'm interested in. The online format made it possible to be in the program with my complex schedule. The program has allowed me to meet many people with different views and have an open dialogue. This program has been an additional source of inspiration and I can see it benefiting me professionally.

# PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Across our University, faculty and staff are dedicated to improving, enhancing and expanding opportunities for our students. New programs and innovations this year occurred in multiple areas and were possible because of the collaborative efforts across the system.

Several of the new key innovations and programs that have a significant impact on digital education are:

- University-wide Instructional Design Summit attended by instructional designers from all four campuses
- Strategic increase in online offerings of high-demand bottleneck/gateway courses
- Implementation of a system-wide tool for video captioning led by OneIT, improving accessibility and ensuring ADA compliance
- Expansion of open access textbook initiative to find and develop open academic resources to replace traditional textbooks and assessment to reduce the financial impact on students
- Courses for faculty development and student success developed by UNL and UNO, respectively
- NeSIS team integration of intercampus registration within student information system
- Front-line staff development program in support of students interested in online programs





**HANK M. BOUNDS, PHD**  
PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

“Our digital education strategy impacts all our students. NU faculty and staff have a commitment to leveraging the latest in technology developments in a way that enhances instruction and maintains the highest academic quality.”



**SUSAN M. FRITZ, PHD**  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT & PROVOST,  
DEAN OF THE GRADUATE COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

“Digital education is an exciting area where talented experts from our four campuses are working to test and implement innovative approaches in teaching excellence, collaborative learning, access and affordability. NU’s Open Educational Resources initiative is just one example of strides being made to ensure an accessible, affordable, quality education. With higher education increasingly linked to individual and economic success, our commitment to these areas has never been stronger.”

## NATALIA MCCAIN, STUDENT

NURSING, RN TO BSN

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER

Nursing is a career I can grow in. When deciding to advance my education, I chose the RN to BSN program from the University of Nebraska Medical Center for their esteemed program recognitions and long-standing accreditation history. Each course gave me a different outlook on nursing practice. Courses looked at population, health promotion, evidence-based practice and the unique talents in leadership roles. With a full-time job and being a mother of two, I appreciated the convenience and flexibility of the online program. Nursing provides endless opportunities to make a difference in the world — this degree has laid a strong foundation for me to continue successfully.



# AY 2017-2018 DIGITAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES

## Bottleneck/gateway courses

Beginning in summer 2017, a program to increase the number of sections and availability of high-demand bottleneck/gateway courses was launched. During the 2017-2018 academic year, 73 new course sections were created and three section enrollment caps increased resulting in an estimated 1,893 additional enrollments.

## Instructional Design Summit

Launched in October 2017, a new Instructional Design Summit brings together instructional designers from across the four campuses to collaborate and share ideas and effective practices. Summits are held each semester, with a rotating in-person summer session showcasing the host campus' instructional design efforts.

## Research in innovative course design

A pilot program funded through the Office of the Provost focused on the development of four key undergraduate online courses — Geography (UNK), Statistics (UNL), and Anatomy and Physiology 1 & 2 (UNMC). The research study integrated as part of each course development process will provide transferable knowledge related to design strategy, use of technology and the impact on learning outcomes and student success.

## Programs now available online

- Animal Science, minor
- Applied Behavior Analysis, graduate certificate
- Applied Biostatistics, certificate
- Beef Cattle Specialization, MAS
- Business Analytics, MS
- Curriculum & Instruction, MA Ed (STEM)
- Data Management, undergraduate certificate
- Emergency Management, BS
- Finance, MS
- Gender & Leadership, undergraduate certificate
- German Language Teaching, graduate certificate
- Government, graduate certificate
- History, BA
- Information Technology Administration, undergraduate certificate
- Intelligence & National Security, graduate certificate
- Management Information Systems, BS
- Public Health, MPH (Epidemiology)
- Public Health, MPH (Health Promotion)
- Public Health, MPH (Health Services Administration & Policy)
- Public Relations & Social Media, graduate certificate
- Social Work, BS
- Social Work, minor
- Systems Development, undergraduate certificate
- Tribal Management & Emergency Services, undergraduate certificate





# DEVELOPING, LEARNING AND SHARING

## Innovation in Pedagogy & Technology Symposium

Each spring, NU Online partners with Information Technology Services (ITS) to offer a system-wide faculty and staff development opportunity, the Innovation in Pedagogy and Technology Symposium, which focuses on the use of technology to teach and support the academic mission.

More than 550 attendees gain exposure to plenary and extended workshop sessions led by nationally-recognized speakers, along with dozens of NU-led sessions that highlight effective practices in a variety of areas and provide time for sharing across the institution.



## Campus Conversations

Expanding the opportunity for professional development and networking throughout the year, Campus Conversations covers key topics related to online learning. These events are generally offered as a 'lunch and learn' and include an on-campus presentation and online webcast option, allowing NU faculty and staff access to a range of expert speakers from across the country.

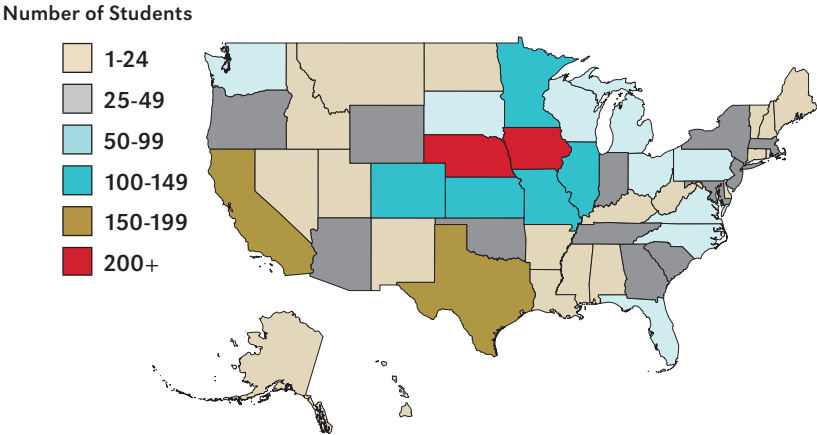


# ENROLLMENT GROWTH

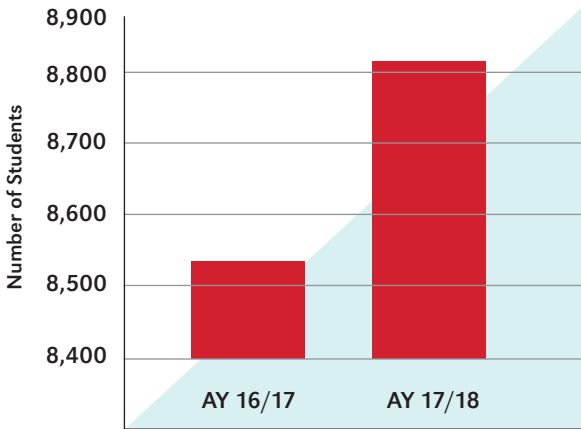
Nationally, working adult student enrollment is projected to increase more than twice as fast as full-time student enrollment through 2022.\* With a robust portfolio of online programs, NU is well-positioned to capitalize on the full continuum of student demand and its steady enrollment growth reflects this. During the 2017-2018 academic year 8,806 students were enrolled entirely at a distance.

In addition to serving students who study at a distance in NU online programs — students who would not have enrolled without the flexibility of distance delivery — NU leverages technology and innovation in course design for on-campus students who choose to take one or more online classes in an academic year.

## Online enrollments come from every state



## Growth in NU students studying entirely at a distance



Final, end-of-term data inclusive of Fall, Spring and Summer

\*Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success



## ANTHONY BLAKE, STUDENT

MASTER'S OF PUBLIC HEALTH, OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER

I wanted to continue my education. My wife knew this, but also knew how busy I was — we just had our first child and I was working full time — so she suggested online courses. As I learned about the program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, I realized it would allow me to combine my passion for the sciences, the environment, medicine and helping others. At first I was concerned that I wouldn't get the same education as someone taking courses in person, but that hasn't been the case. The amount of information is the same, the classes are just as rigorous and the professors are always available. I was also able to select a concentration specific to what I want to do. I have the foundation to do many different things. It has been my mission to always continue educating myself and with this program I've been able to keep pursuing my goal.

# NU STUDENTS STUDYING AT A DISTANCE

**33** IS THE AVERAGE AGE

UNDERGRADUATE 27  
GRADUATE 35  
PROFESSIONAL 39

**57%** ARE IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS

**60%** ARE WOMEN

**69%** ARE NEBRASKANS

**86%** ATTEND PART-TIME\*

\*Fall 2017



**KAYE SHELTON, GRADUATE**  
EDUCATIONAL STUDIES, SPECIALIZATION IN EDUCATIONAL  
LEADERSHIP & HIGHER EDUCATION, PHD  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

My prior graduate research centered on my passion for online education, so when I decided to pursue my doctorate online, the bar was set high. What I found at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was incredible. They made it possible for me to juggle a PhD program and the rest of my life. I wasn't just going through the motions. My research made a difference and is being used across the U.S. and internationally.



**BRIAN WILSON, INSTRUCTIONAL  
DESIGN TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST**



**CHRISTINA YAO, ASSISTANT  
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL  
ADMINISTRATION**

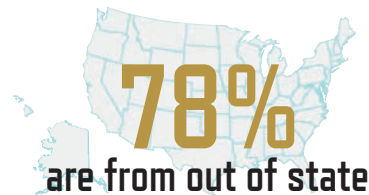
Brian Wilson and Christina Yao are recipients of a 2017 Online Learning Consortium Effective Practice Award. The award recognizes effective techniques, strategies and practices that advance quality and access to online programs. Wilson and Yao organized a working group and collaborated with EDAD faculty to develop a Student Success Center — an early orientation for online students — in the Department of Educational Administration.

The Student Success Center is available completely online in Canvas, the University's learning management system. It helps students know how to engage in a community of online graduate students and helps them socialize into the department and their field of study. The resource is designed to reduce students' feelings of isolation and to make them feel part of a learning community.

# NU ONLINE WEBSITE

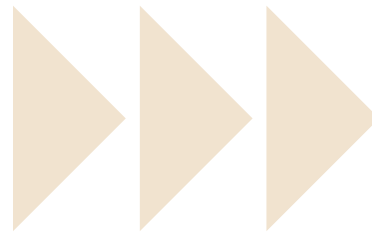
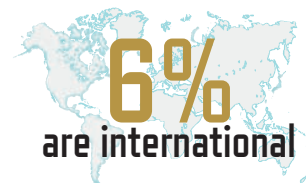
To assist prospective students in learning about NU's online programs, the NU Online website provides a comprehensive view of the online offerings of the four campuses. With 78% of traffic coming from out of state, the site is effective at reaching non-resident prospective students — a key objective.

## Who's searching for NU's online programs?



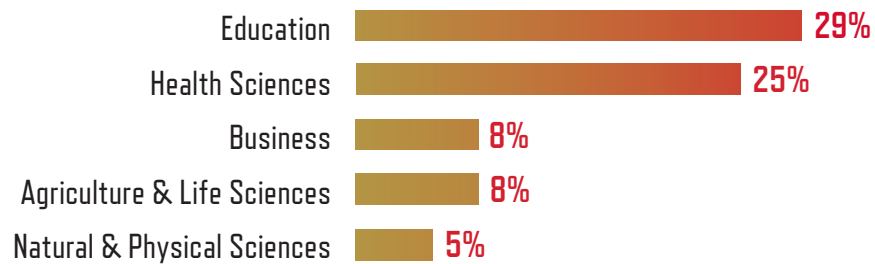
### TOP STATES for non-resident searches

1. California
2. Texas
3. New York
4. Illinois
5. Florida



**11%**   
of requests for information  
click **'Apply Now'**

▶▶▶ Top Searched Subjects



29%



of prospective students report not  
yet having earned a bachelor's degree



# SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

As a member of the Nebraska P-16 Initiative, the University of Nebraska plays a central role supporting students in reaching their educational and career potential.

UNIVERSITY OF  
NEBRASKA  
**HIGH  
SCHOOL**

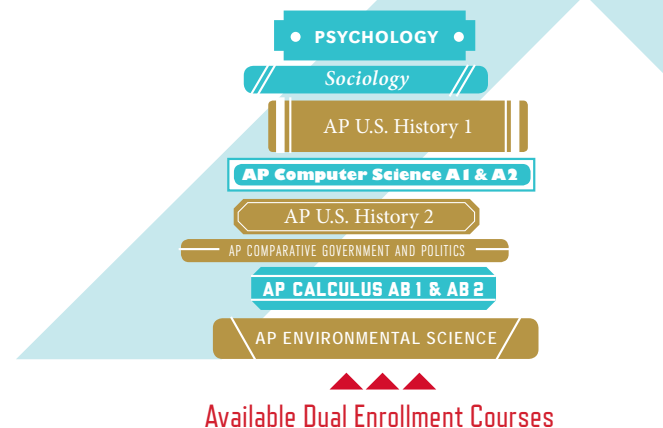
Accredited. College-Prep. Online.

## Online options for high school students

The University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) contributes to the P-16 Initiative by offering students online access to more than 100 courses ranging from career and technical education to Advanced Placement selections. UNHS offers open enrollment and a self-paced schedule in a student-centric environment where credit can be earned for a full diploma or for transfer credit to a local school. Nearly two-thirds of UNHS courses are also NCAA-approved for student-athletes seeking academic eligibility in college.

In collaboration with the University of Nebraska at Omaha, qualified students have the opportunity to earn college credit for select UNHS courses. Students may earn credit equal to their first year of college, which delivers a significant cost savings to families and contributes to a timely — if not accelerated — college graduation.

Nearly **60%** increase in students taking dual enrollment courses over the previous year.







## ANJANESHWAR GANESAN, UNHS GRADUATE

UNHS honor roll student and 2018 graduate Anjaneshwar Ganesan is currently attending the University of Nebraska–Lincoln after receiving the Global Laureate Scholarship, which is awarded to international students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement and meet the English language requirement for unconditional admission. Anjaneshwar was accepted into the UNL Honors Program where he is currently studying mathematics and physics.



# WHO WE SERVE

UNHS is proud to serve thousands of students around the world with flexible online high school curriculum.

## PUBLIC & PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Students in local schools choose UNHS for a variety of reasons: to take courses not offered at their school, fit courses into their busy schedules, get ahead on credits, catch up in time to graduate, earn college credit from dual enrollment, and take summer school.

## HOME SCHOOL

Through UNHS, students can take single courses to supplement their curriculum or work towards earning a UNHS diploma.

## ATHLETES

The quality of UNHS courses helps student-athletes meet NCAA requirements, while the freedom in scheduling allows them to maintain their practice and competition schedules.

## INTERNATIONAL

Reaching more than 100 countries, UNHS provides students from around the world the opportunity to earn an accredited American diploma or the option to take individual courses for transfer credit. UNHS also offers a variety of AP courses, the completion of which may qualify students to earn an AP International Diploma, a globally recognized credential for students interested in pursuing university study outside of their native countries.



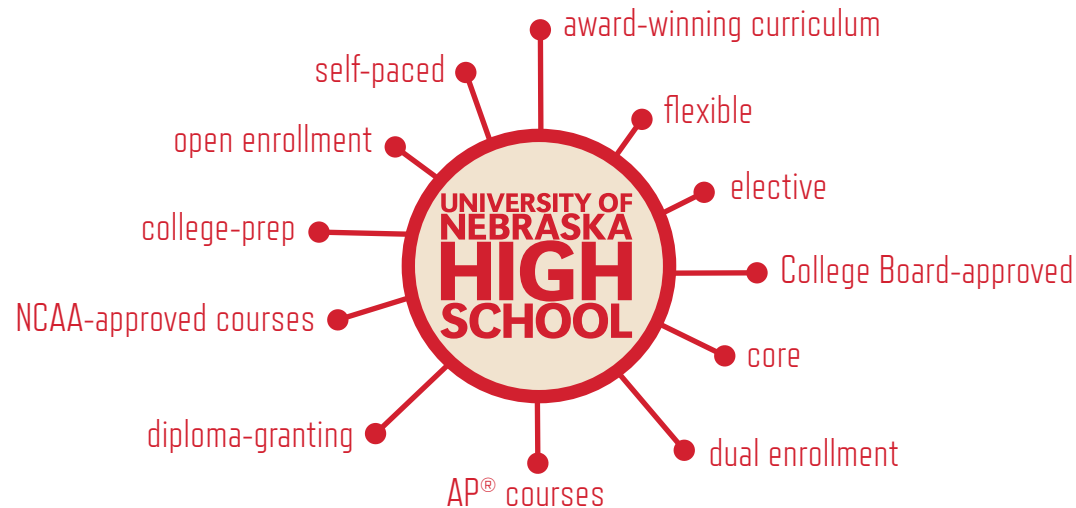
# ACCREDITED HIGH SCHOOL

UNHS is designated as a Special Purpose School in accordance with Nebraska Rule 10: Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools. The school has been continuously accredited by the Nebraska Department of Education since 1967 and regionally accredited by AdvancED since 1978.

Courses are created to meet national and state standards and developed by subject-matter experts with knowledge in distance education pedagogy. Courses are taught by certificated teachers who

are endorsed in their subject areas. Additionally, UNHS is staffed by full-time professionals in administration, teaching, instructional design, advising and customer service.

UNHS advisers play a critical role in the success of students and serve to evaluate transcripts, guide course selection and ensure student-athletes meet NCAA eligibility requirements.



# VALUED IN NEBRASKA

Nebraska schools use UNHS courses to diversify their course offerings, keep students on a path to graduation, accelerate student progress and address teacher shortages.

Demand is strong for upper-level STEM and AP® courses, but need has also been discovered in many schools for world languages, English and language arts, and career education courses. Through its partnership with Nebraska schools, UNHS is able to respond to new curriculum needs and as a result has recently added new courses including Civics, First and Second Year German, Introduction to Computer Science Coding, and Physical Science 1 and 2, with plans to add more courses in the future.

## LAURA SERRANO, UNHS GRADUATE

I chose UNHS because it has all possible accreditations. What I liked most about this school experience was taking certain courses that I had not seen before, such as, Economics, World Cultures and British Literature. I learned a lot from this great experience — it helped me get to know myself and my methods of study.



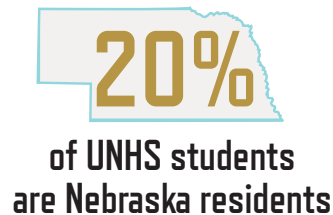




# KNOWN AND RESPECTED

Serving Nebraskans is central to the mission of the University of Nebraska High School, but the reach and impact of UNHS is experienced throughout the world. In 2017-2018, UNHS served students in 49 states and 100 countries.

## ▶▶▶ UNHS Students



# GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

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 align with the mission and goals of the University as a whole and the NU campuses.



## 2017-2018 Steering Committee Members

Christine Arcari, Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs,  
Associate Professor, College of Public Health  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

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

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

Amy Goodburn, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor,  
Dean of Undergraduate Education, Professor of English  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Jaci Lindburg, Director, Digital Learning  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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

Tawnya Means, Assistant Dean, College of Business  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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

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

Jan Tompkins, Assistant Dean for Academic 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](#)

Mary Niemiec, Associate Vice President for Digital Education  
& Director of University of Nebraska Online  
[mniemiec@nebraska.edu](mailto:mniemiec@nebraska.edu)

[University of Nebraska High School](#)

Barbara Shousha, Associate Director, University of Nebraska  
Online and Director of University of Nebraska High School  
[bshousha@nebraska.edu](mailto:bshousha@nebraska.edu)



## CURTIS REESE, GRADUATE

BIOLOGY, MS

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY

The online Biology, MS program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney was flexible and helped me advance my career. It helped me become a better educator because now I'm more comfortable. I have more knowledge and I'm able to get students interested. I also explain things better, and make it easier for my students to understand. I'm now teaching high school biology and environmental science, while also teaching anatomy and physiology as an adjunct instructor at a community college. It was hard work, but the program has opened up opportunities for me.

# ONLINE.NEBRASKA.EDU



KEARNEY | LINCOLN | OMAHA | MEDICAL CENTER