

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska[®]

Online

KEARNEY | LINCOLN | OMAHA | MEDICAL CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



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The University of Nebraska Online is the University-wide strategic initiative created to provide increased access to quality education for Nebraska residents, students across the U.S. and the world. NU Online is a collaborative partnership that draws on the combined strength of the University of Nebraska campuses, the University of Nebraska system and the University of Nebraska High School.

NU Online priority areas of focus:

- Facilitate collaboration and efficiencies across the University of Nebraska to collectively provide a diverse and relevant portfolio of online programs
- Promote and support online programs that provide relevant credentials in response to the needs of working adults and place-bound residents of the state of Nebraska
- Enhance national and international awareness of the University of Nebraska



MARY NIEMIEC

Associate Vice President for Digital Education
Director, University of Nebraska Online

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

A little more than ten years ago the University of Nebraska (NU) made the decision to build on the collective strength of its four campuses by establishing a central, system-wide online initiative now known as NU Online. At that time, the four campuses offered 65 programs online and 4,839 NU students studied fully online. In Academic Year 2019-2020 (AY 19-20), NU collectively offered 155 programs online and UNK, UNL, UNO and UNMC enrolled more than 8,200 students who studied fully at a distance.

The drivers that set NU Online in motion ten years ago were access, affordability and enrollment growth. The campuses have made access to a quality credential possible – evidenced by the 70.2 percent growth in distance only students. The growth of unduplicated headcount in online programs has continued every single year since the initiative started and the University of Nebraska continues to offer programs at a tuition rate that is competitive and lower than many of its peers. The drivers in 2010 remain the drivers of today – only stronger.

The NU campuses have embraced the use of technology in teaching to meet the diverse needs of learners across the full continuum of our institution. The growth in courses offered online in the last ten years is significantly

strategic. These online courses provide students who need flexibility to continue progression towards a degree, make it possible for transfer students to take the prerequisite courses for admission to the degree of their choice and positively impact time-to-degree by increasing capacity in bottleneck/gateway courses.

Consequently, the campuses' infrastructures that support online coursework also made possible our necessary pivot to remote and online teaching in the spring. The University of Nebraska knows how to teach effectively online and that was very apparent during the 2020 spring and summer semesters.

As you read NU Online's annual report this year, note the messages from those responsible for making access to a NU education possible and the stories of our students who trusted us with their future. The University of Nebraska is committed to student success and NU Online is a collaborative, strategic initiative to support and advance that commitment.


A stylized, handwritten signature in teal ink that reads "Mary".

RESILIENCY AND RESPONSE

No one predicted the spring and summer semesters our students, faculty and staff would face as the COVID-19 pandemic changed the world. The University of Nebraska (NU) responded with decisive strategies for a monumental shift to wide-spread distance learning that impacted nearly every program and student across all four campuses. This call to serve our students would be met with a resiliency and response best known only as hardworking, Nebraskan ingenuity.

The University of Nebraska stood ready to rise to the challenges of this year. The expertise, creativity and student-centric approach of faculty and staff who have long provided quality online learning experiences, proved invaluable as a quick transition to remote learning was necessitated. At NU over 36,000 students took at least one online course with 8,200 students taking courses fully online in AY 19-20. The University of Nebraska proudly provides quality online programs with flexibility that builds careers and propels students to their next stage in life, no matter the obstacles.



A black and white portrait of Walter "Ted" Carter, Jr., President of the University of Nebraska. He is a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, smiling slightly. He is wearing a dark, pinstriped suit jacket over a white dress shirt and a dark, patterned tie. A small, circular pin is visible on his left lapel. The background is a dark, textured wall. On the left side of the image, there are three large, light-colored chevron shapes pointing to the right.

“The affordability and accessibility of a University of Nebraska education is our true North Star. **OUR HIGH-QUALITY, FLEXIBLE ONLINE PROGRAMS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THAT MISSION.** The University of Nebraska is committed to keeping the doors of higher education open to all who seek it.”

WALTER “TED” CARTER, JR.
President, University of Nebraska



“Above all, the University of Nebraska is called upon to provide an outstanding education to the young people who will lead Nebraska forward. And we have a responsibility to do it as affordably, efficiently and transparently as possible. Our online programs are one way the University can stand behind its commitment and **ENSURE ACCESS ACROSS OUR STATE.**”

SUSAN FRITZ

Executive Vice President and Provost
Interim President, University of Nebraska

NEBRASKA ENROLLMENT

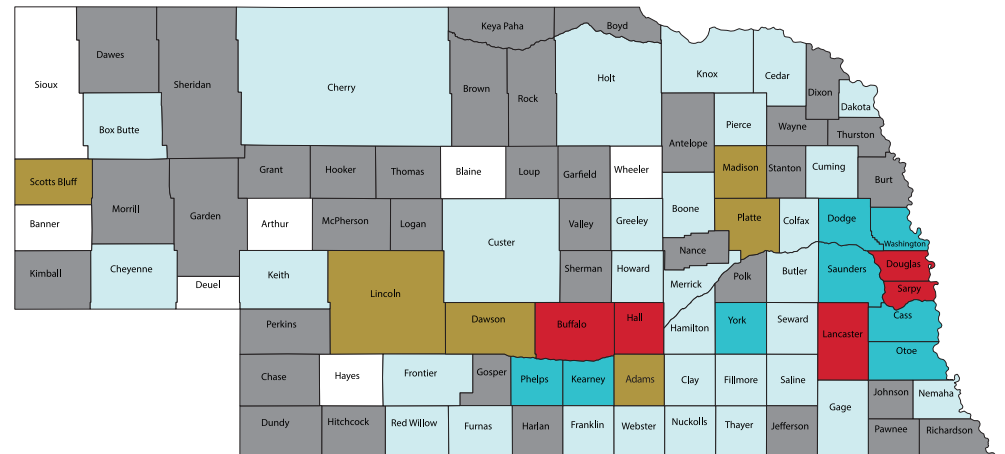
The University of Nebraska Online is dedicated to serving Nebraskans and providing access to a quality online education. With highly affordable, competitive tuition rates, University of Nebraska students paid on average 13 percent less than students enrolled in comparable programs across the U.S.*

Currently, 23 percent** of Nebraskans have some college with no degree. Ensuring access to education for residents includes providing varying levels of degree programs including certificates, endorsements, bachelors, graduate, professional and doctoral programs to meet the needs of many.

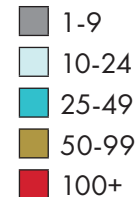
The desire to pursue further education through online programs is strong across Nebraska. Fully online undergraduate and graduate enrollment increased 10.5 percent from the previous academic year.

*Based on 2019-2020 tuition rates

**Center for Public Affairs Research, 2014-2018
American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau



Number of Students



“The development and delivery of quality online courses directly contributes to the University of Nebraska at Omaha living out its access mission. The UNO Digital Learning team enjoys having the opportunity to partner with our expert faculty to consider course design options that **MAXIMIZE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, FOSTER COMMUNITY AND CREATE FLEXIBLE OPTIONS** for learners in Omaha and beyond.”

JACI LINDBURG, PHD

Assistant Vice President, University of Nebraska ITS
Director of Digital Learning
University of Nebraska at Omaha



ONLINE PROGRAMS

Collectively, UNK, UNL, UNO and UNMC offered 155 fully or primarily online programs during AY 19-20.

At the University of Nebraska (NU), our dedicated faculty and staff on each of the four campuses are one of our greatest strengths. From these unique institutions come expertly designed and taught online programs that

range from education to nursing to business and more. By leveraging our talent and harnessing the latest in technology innovations, NU works to meet Nebraskans, as well as other students around the country and the world with a wide array of programs available online.

30 NEW ONLINE PROGRAMS IN 16 AREAS OF STUDY WERE ADDED TO THE NU ONLINE WEBSITE DURING AY 19-20.

- Alcohol and Drug Counseling, Graduate Certificate - UNK
- Business Administration, BS (Accounting) - UNK
- Business Administration, BS (Comprehensive Management) - UNK
- Business Administration, BS (Entrepreneurship) - UNK
- Business Administration, BS (Logistics and Supply Chain Management) - UNO
- Business Administration, BS (Marketing/Management) - UNK
- Early Childhood Inclusive, Additional Endorsement - UNK
- Educational Administration - School Principalship, PreK-8 or 7-12 Endorsement - UNK
- Financial Communications, Graduate Certificate - UNL
- Forensic Anthropology, Graduate Certificate - UNL
- Engineering Management, Graduate Certificate - UNL
- History, Graduate Endorsement - UNO
- Human Resource Management, Graduate Certificate - UNL
- Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Graduate Certificate - UNMC
- Information Technology, Graduate Endorsement - UNK
- Leadership in Instructional Technology, Graduate Endorsement - UNK
- Master of Social Work/Master of Public Administration Dual Program - UNO
- Political Science, MS (American Government) - UNO
- Political Science, MS concentration in International Affairs - UNO
- Professional Sales, Undergraduate Certificate - UNK
- Psychology, Minor - UNK
- Public Administration, MPA (Emergency Management) - UNO
- Public Administration, MPA (Public Policy) - UNO
- Public Health, MPH (Emergency Preparedness) - UNMC
- Rural Economic and Community Vitality, Graduate Certificate - UNL
- Social Justice and Diversity, Graduate Certificate - UNL
- Social Work, MSW - UNO
- Transitional Certificate - UNK
- Work-based Learning, Undergraduate Endorsement - UNK
- World Language Teaching: Spanish, Graduate Certificate - UNL



NURTURING THE ONLINE STUDENT



In January 2018, a two-year pilot established an inter-campus team of online program lead nurturing specialists with the objective to support prospective students of online programs and increase the application and enrollment rates. One new position was hired at UNO, UNK, UNMC and UNL identified an existing employee to serve in this role.

The ultimate goal of this initiative was to develop a systemic, effective, efficient and sustainable infrastructure for lead nurturing and recruitment of distance education students. The positions support enrollment growth and, as conversion rates improve, sustainability of these functions is created through increased distance education tuition captured by each campus.

At spring 2020 census, in aggregate across the system, conversion of NU Online inquiries^{*} to application increased nearly 2 percentage points. Conversion of inquiries to enrolled students held steady even while the total volume of inquiries increased 24 percent, indicating a very strong nurturing program. Overall, the number of enrolled students increased 22 percent, or 224 net new headcount enrollments, resulting in increased tuition and revenue for the institution and more students pursuing their educational goals.

**These metrics are for inquiries through NU Online*



“Online students need that extra assistance as they face the challenges of college life while also juggling careers and family life. Each student poses their own challenges as you put together their future education “puzzle” and **SOLVING THAT PUZZLE FOR THEM IS THE MOST REWARDING THING ABOUT MY JOB.**”

STACEY SCHWARZ

Online Program Coordinator
University of Nebraska at Kearney

“Returning to finish my online business degree with the University of Nebraska at Kearney was a big fear of mine. I had never completed an online class before starting with UNK. Stacey Schwarz, I remember distinctly. She asked what my timeline goal was for graduation and helped me accomplish it. She **WENT TO BAT FOR ME** and never let one question go unanswered.”

CLINTON ZEGERS

Business Administration, BS and Degree Completer
University of Nebraska at Kearney





“I knew I wanted to pursue my Master’s in Social Work online with the University of Nebraska at Omaha because of my daily experiences as a paramedic. I felt like I needed to educate myself to make a difference, not only for people who need help, but also to make the world we live in a better place. **THE ONLINE PROGRAM FIT WITH MY LIFESTYLE PERFECTLY.** I can literally get caught up on reading and homework anywhere I go. While I am on duty at the fire station, we have personal downtime where I am able to do homework and assignments.”

MELISSA SCHMAHL

Master’s of Social Work, MSW
University of Nebraska at Omaha

ONLINE STUDENTS @ NU

33 IS THE AVERAGE AGE

29 for undergraduate

35 for graduate

36 for professional


64% ARE WOMEN

65% IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS

85% ATTEND PART-TIME

68% ARE NEBRASKANS





“I believe the University’s commitment to online students is present by helping each student to feel **CONNECTED WITH INSTRUCTORS, CLASSMATES, STAFF AND THE CAMPUS ITSELF.** Online students, like anyone else, are looking for opportunities to get connected, to have the feeling of belonging.”

OLIMPIA LEITE-TRAMBLY

Instructional Designer
University of Nebraska at Kearney

FORGING A PATH FOR SUCCESS

Transition to distance learning for the spring semester of AY 19-20 created many questions and required quick answers to ensure student success. Across the University, the online learning community led the way, actively engaging with faculty to provide expertise on a remote access-learning

model. Instructional designers with previous knowledge were ready to help, offering resources for the transition. Keep Teaching sites at all four campuses aided faculty, as well as Keep Learning sites for students to seamlessly shift to an online learning experience and ensure academic success.

“Before pivoting to completely online in March, students at UNMC were already doing a significant amount of coursework online. UNMC’s IT department **ENSURED STUDENT, FACULTY AND STAFF SUCCESS during this unprecedented time through the development of support websites, seminars and one-on-one sessions.”**

JAN TOMPKINS
MPH, MT (ASCP)

Director of Distance Education
University of Nebraska Medical Center





“The flexibility of the online program allowed me to continue to work in my profession, complete my degree and **ALLOWED ME THE TIME I NEEDED WITH MY FAMILY.**”

KRISTINA SOBALLE, GRADUATE

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

University of Nebraska Medical Center

VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

Hosted annually in the spring by NU Online and Information Technology Services, the Innovation in Pedagogy and Technology Symposium focuses on the latest pedagogical practices and uses of technology to teach and support the academic mission.

In March 2020, already several months in preparations and just two months prior to the event, the Symposium was converted to an entirely virtual format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Coordination with the four campuses to explore and establish secure, integrated and effective presentation technologies led to a successful virtual event.

643 REGISTRANTS
25% increase from 2018-19



20 SESSIONS



4 WORKSHOPS



GATEWAYS OF OPPORTUNITY



Beginning in summer 2017, a program to increase the number of sections and availability of high-demand bottleneck/gateway courses was launched. Grants categorized as bottleneck/gateway are designed to address enrollment concerns centered on high demand courses.

During FY 2020, the University of Nebraska Online awarded grant funds to address bottleneck/gateway to support the addition of over 50 course sections, enrolling approximately 1,400 students taking nearly 4,000 credit hours.

Bottleneck/gateway grants tend to have at least one of the following four features:

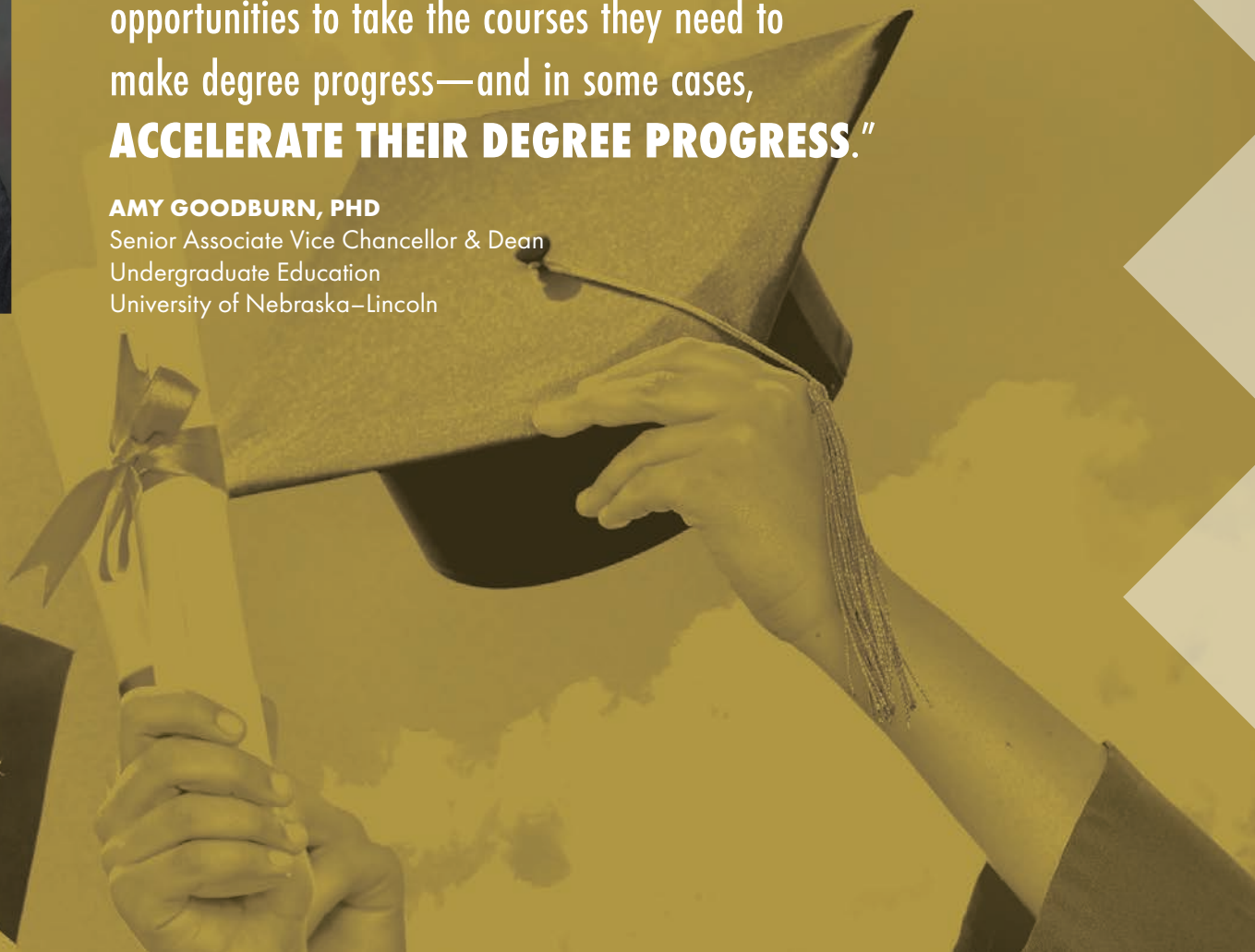
- Features related to course access/high demand enrollment.
- Features related to course outcomes.
- Features related to major or interest exploration for students not enrolled in that major or program.
- Features related to gateway or requirement courses for multiple majors/programs.



“Using the bottleneck/gateway grants to offer online versions of courses provided students at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln additional opportunities to take the courses they need to make degree progress—and in some cases, **ACCELERATE THEIR DEGREE PROGRESS.**”

AMY GOODBURN, PHD

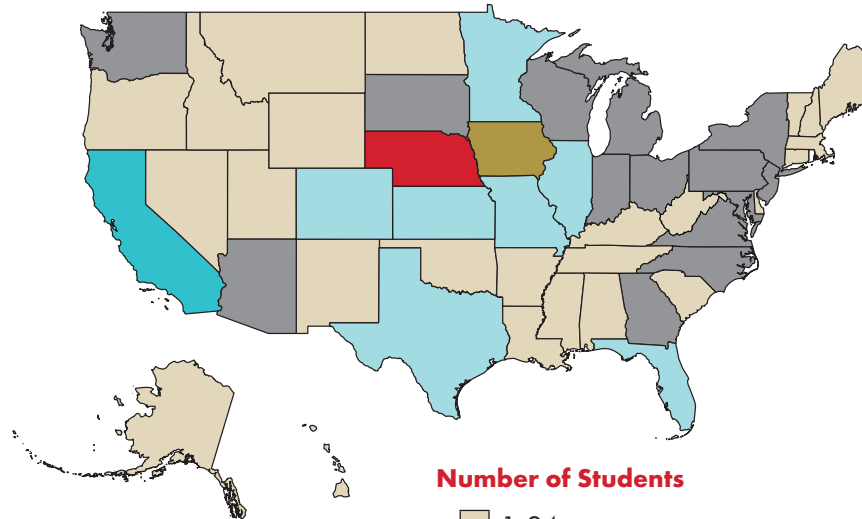
Senior Associate Vice Chancellor & Dean
Undergraduate Education
University of Nebraska–Lincoln



ENROLLMENT GROWTH


Now more than ever, students across the country are seeking flexible online programs to continue their education during uncertain times. Nationwide, online-only enrollment continues to grow. The University of Nebraska's (NU) tradition of providing quality online programs has brought enrollment growth with students enrolled in online classes from every state. NU's commitment to affordability, flexibility and expert faculty has all contributed to NU's online program growth. During AY 19-20, students enrolled entirely at a distance grew 9.6 percent.

STUDENTS ENROLLED ENTIRELY AT A DISTANCE GREW 9.6 PERCENT, DURING AY 19-20.



Number of Students

- 1-24
- 25-49
- 50-99
- 100-149
- 150-199
- 200+



“As an undergraduate, I found my passion for helping people lead healthy lives. **I TURNED THAT PASSION INTO A MISSION** as an online master’s student in public health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.”

BEAU SANCHEZ, GRADUATE

Master of Public Health

University of Nebraska Medical Center

QUALITY AND EXCELLENCE

The University of Nebraska has a long-standing commitment to distance education, with some of its first correspondence courses dating back to 1906. Quality is at the forefront of online education across all four campuses, with many programs being the first in their field to enter the online sphere. Today, many programs are recognized by U.S. News & World Report, a global authority in


education rankings for excellence in student engagement, faculty credentials, student services and use of technology. Institutions from all across the country participated in the survey with three of the University of Nebraska campuses recognized with high ranking online programs.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY



#28
out of 309 in Best Online Graduate Education Programs

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN




#5
out of 19 in Best Online Master's in Education Programs Special Education




#7
out of 27 in Best Online Master's in Education Programs Educational Administration and Supervision

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA



#5
out of 83 in Best Online Graduate Criminal Justice Programs



#23
out of 96 in Best Online Graduate Engineering Programs



#22
out of 335 in Best Online MBA Programs

ONLINE.NEBRASKA.EDU

16.4% 

increase of new visitors from previous year

67% 

of out of state visitors requested for more information

8% 

are military

30% 

bachelor seeking

10% 

of requests for information click 'Apply Now'

16.4% 

increase in unique prospective inquiries



WORLDWIDE IMPACT

UNIVERSITY OF
NEBRASKA
HIGH
SCHOOL

The University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) first provided correspondence courses in 1929 when the program was originally established to help a small cohort of students in western Nebraska fulfill

graduation requirements. The influence of UNHS in Nebraska remains strong with 40 percent of students being Nebraskans, but nearly a century later, UNHS has served students in all 50 states and more than 100 countries to enable them to graduate from high school and pursue their career and life goals.



3,278 
students enrolled from
July 1, 2019- June 30, 2020 

2,275 
students live in the U.S.

1,003 
students are international

10,667 
course enrollments



“Schooling at home is not for everyone, but if it feels right for your family, the opportunity for your children to study independently with a well-written curriculum **CAN HELP TO REINFORCE THEIR STRENGTHS AND TALENTS.** Students will take the life experiences of living through a worldwide pandemic and come out stronger. They will discover how to be resilient, apply their independent-thinking skills to make good decisions, reflect on the memories of having more time with family, and take all of this experience with them to one day be **OUR FUTURE LEADERS.**”

DEBBY BARTZ
Senior Adviser

University of Nebraska High School

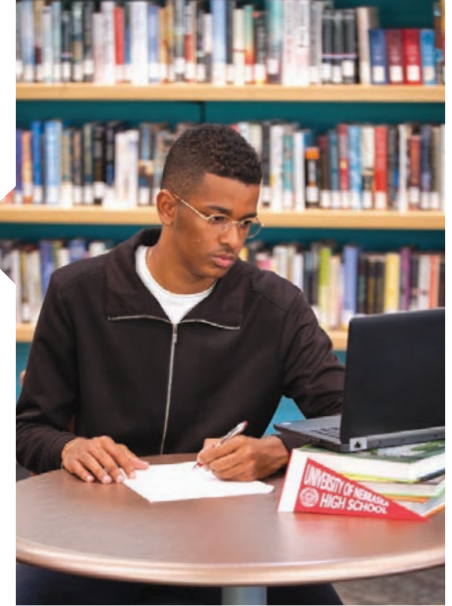
RESPONDING TO THE NEED

A leader in distance learning since its inception, the University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) has a long and distinguished history of supporting its students through the years. UNHS continues to meet the needs of their students and navigate unprecedented times with purpose and a focus on its students.

HELPING FAMILIES DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

During the spring of 2020, when so many students and families were suddenly affected socially and economically by the pandemic, UNHS responded by offering 10 courses tuition-free for four months. UNHS also offered free math placement tests in algebra and geometry during this time.

470 students enrolled in the free courses. Out of these 470 students, 68 students enrolled in additional courses (August 1 – September 30), approximately 15 percent. Interest in the courses was evenly distributed with the strongest enrollments in Study Skills and Basic Grammar.



BASIC GRAMMAR

INTERMEDIATE GRAMMAR

BASIC MATH 1

BASIC MATH 2

GENERAL MATH 1

GENERAL MATH 2

PRE-ALGEBRA 1

PRE-ALGEBRA 2

STUDY SKILLS

CITIZENSHIP MODULE

SERVING NEBRASKA

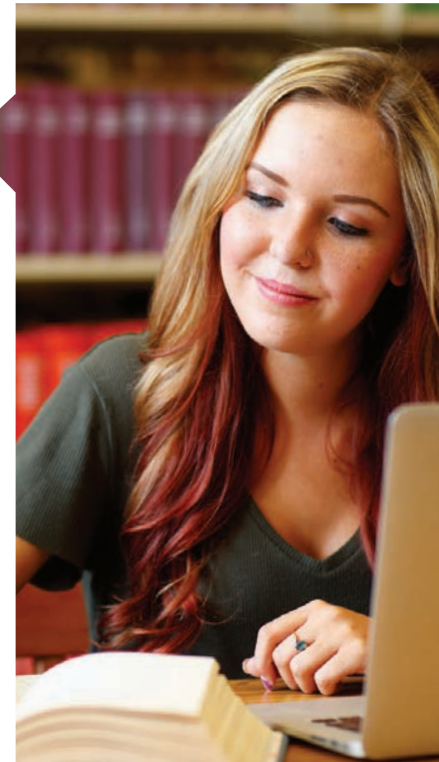
In 2011, the University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) established the Nebraska Virtual Scholars (NVS) program to offer schools throughout Nebraska the funds necessary to enroll in courses at no cost to local communities. Over the past nine years, the NVS program has provided more than 1,000 scholarships, serving more than 270 schools and nearly 700 students across both rural and urban regions of Nebraska.

NVS scholarships were used this past year primarily for world language and math courses, but also for science and health courses. UNHS responds to curriculum needs revealed by local schools by enhancing course content, and in 2019-2020 introduced or updated more than 20 courses across six subject areas.



“As a small school, we do our best to offer as many electives to students as we can with the teachers we have. We are proud to offer a pretty wide variety; however, at times we need to seek alternative resources, such as UNHS, to provide **COURSES THAT CAN HELP ENRICH A STUDENT’S SCHEDULE.”**

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATOR
Rural Nebraska
Class D



LASTING PARTNERSHIPS

The University High School (UNHS) supports college-bound students by giving them flexible and affordable course options online that prepare them for success in college and beyond. UNHS is an accredited, diploma-granting high school with an award-winning college preparatory curriculum consisting of more than 100 core, elective, AP®, dual enrollment and NCAA-approved courses.

UNMC Partnership: MITS course

In Fall 2019, UNHS released a new course entitled Medical Imaging and Therapeutic Sciences. This course was developed and implemented in a collaboration between staff of UNHS and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). This course provides students with an introduction to the field of medical imaging and therapeutic sciences and addresses the practitioner's role in the health care delivery system.

UNO Partnership: Dual Enrollment

Through a dual enrollment program partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), UNHS provides students with the opportunity to earn college credit for certain online courses. Students can earn credit equal to their first year of college, delivering considerable cost savings to families.

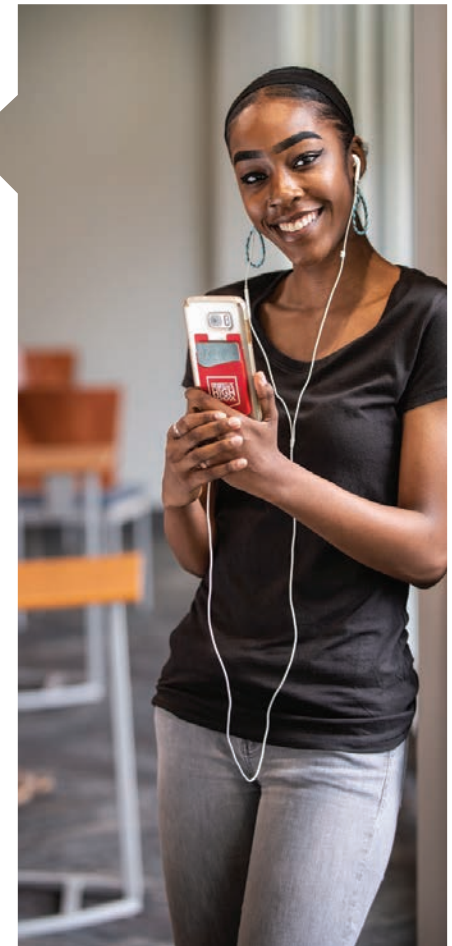


VIRTUAL GRADUATION EXPERIENCE

Like many schools that had end-of-year activities disrupted by the pandemic, and similar to the University of Nebraska college campuses, the University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) pivoted to recognize and celebrate 2020 graduates through a virtual (online) experience.

More than 200 graduates and their families were invited to watch video addresses from UNHS leadership. Additional videos allowed viewers to see a roll call of graduates as well as photos and messages of recognition from UNHS staff and members of the class of 2020.

▶▶▶ [HIGH SCHOOL.NEBRASKA.EDU/GRAD2020](https://highschool.nebraska.edu/grad2020)



GOVERNANCE AND 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.

2019-2020 Steering Committee Members

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

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

Renee Batman, Assistant Vice Chancellor & Chief
Administrative Officer
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Mark Ellis, Dean, Graduate Studies
University of Nebraska at Kearney

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

Jaci Lindburg, Director, Digital Learning Faculty,
Women's & Gender Studies
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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

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

Jan Tompkins, Assistant Professor, Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs,
Director, Health Professions Teaching & Technology Program,
College of Allied Health Professions
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Gloria Vavricka, Director, eCampus
University of Nebraska at Kearney

Alyssa Wyant, Associate Director & Interim Director, eCampus
University of Nebraska Kearney

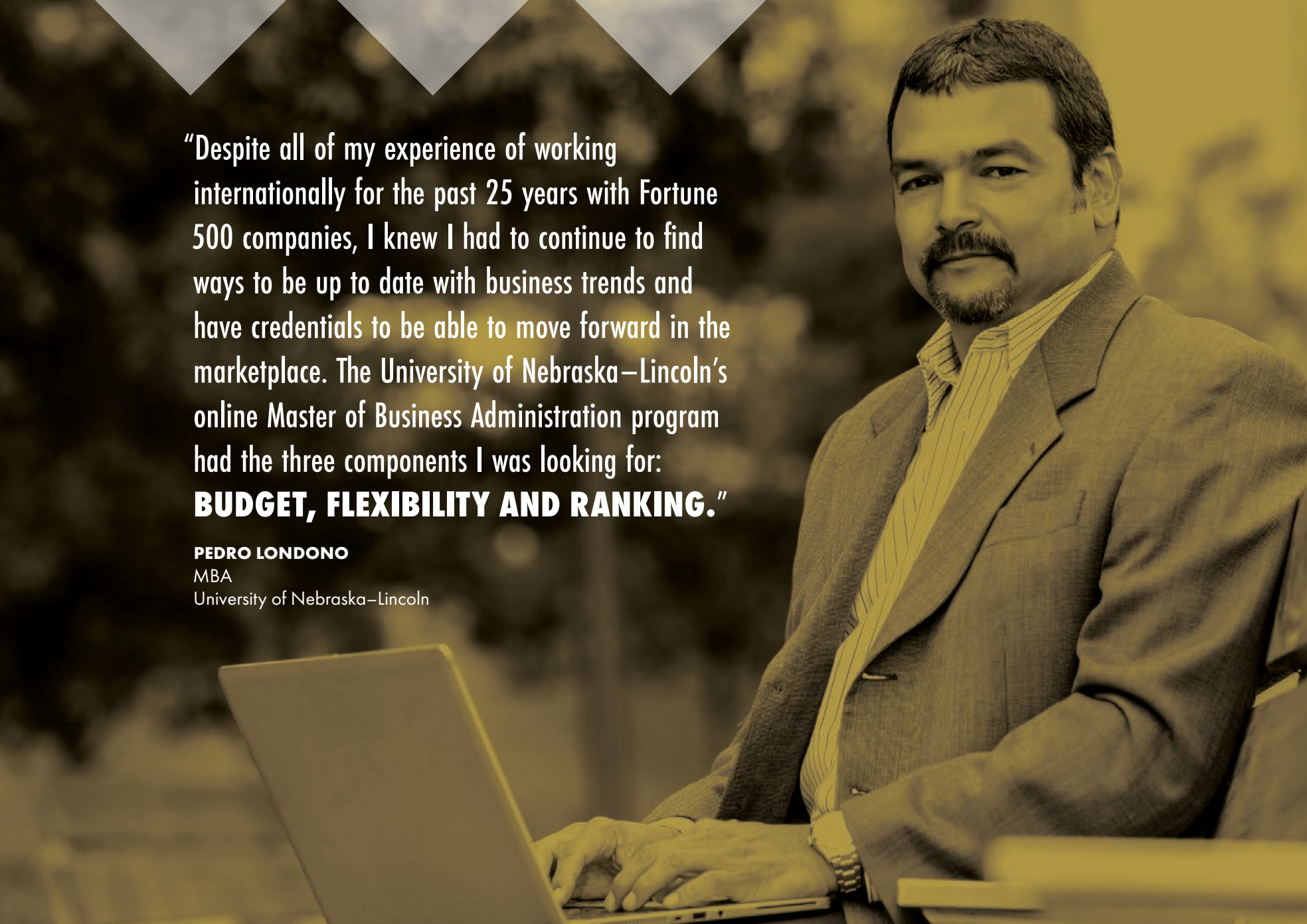
For More Information

[University of Nebraska Online](#)

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[University of Nebraska High School](#)

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



“Despite all of my experience of working internationally for the past 25 years with Fortune 500 companies, I knew I had to continue to find ways to be up to date with business trends and have credentials to be able to move forward in the marketplace. The University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s online Master of Business Administration program had the three components I was looking for:
BUDGET, FLEXIBILITY AND RANKING.”

PEDRO LONDONO

MBA

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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