

People, Programs and Points of Excellence (P^3E) Report for November 6, 2026

The People, Programs and Points of Excellence (P3E) is a biweekly update from across all four campuses of the University of Nebraska System 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 Office of the President

New report highlights Nebraska's potential to lead in growing global bioeconomy

A new report by the Council on Competitiveness outlines why Nebraska is uniquely positioned to lead in the rapidly developing industrial bioeconomy, which relies on biological resources, such as crops, microorganisms and organic waste, to create food, materials, energy and other products. The industrial bioeconomy is a major arena of global competitiveness and projected to grow from a $4 trillion annual sector today to more than 10 times that by 2050.

Related Media Items:

- News release: https://nebraska.edu/news-and-events/news/2026/10/new-report-highlights-nebraskas-potential-to-lead-in-growing-global-bioeconomy
- Report: https://compete.org/wp-content/uploads/ccaa-nebraska-competitiveness-conversation-summary-report.pdf

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University of Nebraska at Kearney

1. 'It's invaluable for our community': UNK helps grow the healthcare workforce rural Nebraska needs

UNK and the University of Nebraska Medical Center are expanding Nebraska's rural healthcare workforce through academic programs, clinical training and partnerships with 24 hospitals and healthcare systems. UNK Health Sciences enrollment grew 32% from 2020 to 2026, reaching 989 students. The $115 million Douglas A. Kristensen Rural Health Education Complex includes a new $95 million facility, expanding professional education opportunities in Kearney. Since 2015, 85% of graduates from UNMC programs based in Kearney have gone on to practice in rural Nebraska. Graduates illustrate this impact, including Brianna Wood, a medical laboratory scientist at Merrick Medical Center in Central City, and Dr. Hilary Miller, a physician at Valley County Health System in Ord. Programs such as KHOP and rural hospital immersions help students gain experience and develop professional connections in communities needing healthcare providers.

Related Media Item: https://unknews.unk.edu/2026/10/12/its-invaluable-for-our-community-unk-helps-grow-the-healthcare-workforce-rural-nebraska-needs/

2. UNK Teacher Scholars program builds a pathway from college to the classroom

UNK's Teacher Scholars program is strengthening Nebraska's teacher workforce by combining scholarships, faculty mentorship, professional development and hands-on classroom experiences. Led by director Emily DeVall, the program welcomed 26 freshmen in fall 2026, joining 17 sophomores. Students participate in cohort classes, school visits, community service and peer mentoring, with selected freshmen receiving tuition assistance and housing support.

Sophomore Sage Larson of Arapahoe plans to return home to teach, while Revin Nyberg of Stromsburg hopes to teach at Cross County or another nearby school. Kearney native Avery Longshore participates in both Teacher Scholars and the Kearney Teachers Tomorrow Scholarship program. The program's impact is also evident in alumna Michaela Becker, a 2024 graduate now teaching second grade at Buffalo Hills Elementary School in Kearney.

Related Media Item: https://unknews.unk.edu/2026/11/03/unk-teacher-scholars-program-builds-a-pathway-from-college-to-the-classroom/

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

1. Nebraska to lead cybersecurity for national AI research project

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is a partner in the Fabric for AI-Driven Science, a five-year, $24.5 million project selected by the U.S. National Science Foundation to help build the nation's future data backbone for AI-driven research. The project aims to weave together distributed data, AI and computational services into a single fabric that reaches researchers and educators across the country.

Related Media Item: https://news.unl.edu/article/nebraska-to-lead-cybersecurity-for-national-ai-research-project

2. Record number of Husker entrepreneurs compete in 3-2-1 Quick Pitch

A record 195 University of Nebraska–Lincoln students, representing 40 majors and eight colleges, registered for the 18th annual 3-2-1 Quick Pitch competition Nov. 3. Hosted by the Nebraska Center for Entrepreneurship, the competition awarded $18,000 to 36 winners and connected students with experienced entrepreneurs and business leaders.

Related Media Item: https://news.unl.edu/article/record-number-of-husker-entrepreneurs-compete-in-3-2-1-quick-pitch-0

University of Nebraska Medical Center

1. Program takes new angle on treatment of stimulant use disorder

UNMC's Department of Psychiatry is launching Nebraska's first contingency management program for stimulant use disorder, supported by a two-year, $260,000 grant from Clarkson Institute. The program will use evidence-

based motivational incentives to help individuals with methamphetamine or cocaine use disorders, addressing a significant treatment gap in a field where no FDA-approved medications currently exist. The team expects to begin enrolling patients in early 2027.

Related Media Item: https://www.unmc.edu/newsroom/2026/10/14/program-takes-new-angle-on-treatment-of-stimulant-use-disorder/

2. Researchers develop tool to predict breast cancer subtypes

UNMC researchers have developed an artificial intelligence tool called ViSTA that predicts breast cancer subtypes using only DNA mutation data, potentially providing a more affordable and accessible approach to cancer classification. Published in Genome Biology, the NIH-supported research demonstrated promising accuracy and identified genetic patterns that could eventually help guide more personalized cancer treatments. The project used computing resources from both UNMC and NU's Holland Computing Center, highlighting the benefits of collaboration across the university system.

Related Media Item: https://www.unmc.edu/newsroom/2026/11/03/researchers-develop-tool-to-predict-breast-cancer-subtypes/

University of Nebraska at Omaha

1. UNO Awarded Record-Breaking $42 Million in Research Funding in 2025-2026

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) secured a record $42.5 million in external research awards in FY 2025–2026, surpassing $40 million for the fourth consecutive year and breaking its previous single-year record. The awards, supported by 94 sponsors, including 14 federal and eight state agencies, funded 185 proposals involving 101 principal investigators. Additionally, UNO awarded nearly $750,000 in student research awards, reinforcing the university's growing research impact, strong partnerships, and commitment to community-engaged discovery and innovation.

Related Media Item: https://www.unomaha.edu/news/2026/10/uno-awarded-record-breaking-42-million-in-research-funding-in-2025-2026.php

2. 13 UNO Faculty Ranked Among "Top 2%" of World's Researchers

Thirteen current and emeritus University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) faculty members have been recognized among the world's top 2% of cited researchers in Stanford University and Elsevier's annual rankings, an increase of three from the previous year. Notably, five UNO researchers ranked among the top 500 globally in their respective fields, highlighting the university's growing national and international research reputation and its commitment to academic excellence and innovation.

Related Media Item: https://www.unomaha.edu/news/2026/11/13-uno-faculty-ranked-among-top-2-of-worlds-researchers.php

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Agriculture and Natural Resources

1. Nebraska Beef Summit to highlight timely production and industry challenges

The 2026 Nebraska Beef Summit, organized by University of Nebraska–Lincoln students, will bring together beef producers, researchers and industry leaders Dec. 9 at the Younes Convention Center in Kearney. Held in conjunction with the Nebraska Cattlemen Convention and Trade Show, the summit will provide producers with practical insights, research-based strategies and market intelligence to help them make informed decisions and strengthen their operations. Sessions will address herd rebuilding, heifer retention, cattle health, carcass value, international beef demand and emerging technologies. The event also offers valuable opportunities for networking and collaboration across the beef industry.

Related Media Items:

- IANR News Release: https://ianrnews.unl.edu/article/nebraska-beef-summit-to-highlight-timely-production-and-industry-challenges
- Nebraska Ag Connection: https://nebraskaagconnection.com/news/nebraska-beef-summit-2026-to-address-industry-challenges

2. Innovative food processing technique boosts Nebraska companies, educational outreach

Research led by Mary-Grace Danao at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is positioning Nebraska as a national leader in high-pressure processing (HPP), a technology that improves food safety, extends shelf life and preserves nutritional value. Through partnerships with private industry, UNL's Food Processing Center is helping strengthen Nebraska's multibillion-dollar pet food industry, supporting innovation, workforce training and economic growth. The research also has applications beyond pet food, including improving the marketability of beef and potentially reducing risks associated with avian influenza. With advanced equipment, specialized expertise and strong industry partnerships, UNL is helping establish Lincoln as a hub for HPP research and innovation.

Related Media Items:

- IANR News Release: https://ianrnews.unl.edu/article/innovative-food-processing-technique-boosts-nebraska-companies-educational-outreach
- The Fence Post: https://www.thefencepost.com/news/innovative-food-processing-technique-boosts-nebraska-companies-educational-outreach/

University of Nebraska Foundation

1. Women Investing in Nebraska grants support early autism diagnosis, food insecurity efforts

Women Investing in Nebraska awarded $305,710 in grants to two Nebraska initiatives during its annual awards ceremony Oct. 29 in Omaha. Recipients were the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute and Saving Grace Perishable Food Rescue. The awards will support efforts to expand access to an early autism diagnostic tool across Nebraska and to address food insecurity by delivering excess perishable food to nonprofits serving people facing hunger.

Related Media Item: https://nufoundation.org/women-investing-in-nebraska-grants-support-early-autism-diagnosis-food-insecurity-efforts/

2. First recipients of Conway Nursing Scholarship announced

Women Investing in Nebraska awarded $305,710 in grants to two Nebraska initiatives during its annual awards ceremony Oct. 29 in Omaha. Recipients were the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute and Saving Grace Perishable Food Rescue. The awards will support efforts to expand access to an early autism diagnostic tool across Nebraska and to address food insecurity by delivering excess perishable food to nonprofits serving people facing hunger.

Related Media Item: https://www.unmc.edu/newsroom/2026/11/05/first-recipients-of-conway-nursing-scholarship-announced/

Buffett Early Childhood Institute

Buffett Institute Founding Executive Director Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award

ZERO TO THREE, the nation's premier national nonprofit for infants and toddlers, awarded Buffett Early Childhood Institute Founding Executive Director with a 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award at the LEARN Conference on Oct. 29. Meisels received the award from current Buffett Institute Executive Director Walter Gilliam, the ZERO TO THREE board president, and Matthew Melmed, the ZERO TO THREE executive director, in front of 3,300 conference attendees in Portland, Ore. The award, ZERO TO THREE'S highest honor, recognizes individuals who have made remarkable contributions to improving the lives of infants, toddlers and their families. Meisels's has dedicated more than 50 years to children's learning and development and served on the ZERO TO THREE board for two decades. He helped found the Buffett Institute in 2013 before retiring in 2023. The Buffett Institute's Michelle Sarche, senior director of Tribal research, policy, and partnerships, also serves on the ZERO TO THREE board, and she hosted the conference's keynote address with former children's TV star Steve Burns.

Related Media Items:

- News Release: https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/news-and-events/news/2026/10/zero-to-three-honors-samuel-meisels-with-lifetime-achievement-award
- Omaha World-Herlad: https://omaha.com/news/local/article_6c2f3446-517d-4dee-ac7f-601bedc45ad9.html

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Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute

DWFI and SLU partner on seminar to advance agricultural water security

The Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute (DWFI) partnered with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) to host a collaborative seminar focused on advancing global agricultural water security. The joint event brought together international researchers, water specialists and agricultural experts to share insights on sustainable irrigation management, climate adaptation, and resource conservation. By bridging scientific research and practical water stewardship, the seminar highlighted innovative strategies to protect vulnerable water resources while supporting productive, resilient farming systems worldwide.

Related Media Item: https://waterforfood.nebraska.edu/news-and-events/news/2026/10/dwfi-and-slu-partner-on-seminar-to-advance-agricultural-water-security

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National Strategic Research Institute

NSRI delivers prototype in Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center modernization effort

The National Strategic Research Institute (NSRI) at the University of Nebraska has delivered the requested prototype in the second year of its effort to modernize data architecture for the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center (AFNWC). The work supports U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), which sponsors the institute as a University Affiliated Research Center designated by the U.S. Department of War. The Enhanced Consequence Assessment Alternatives Analysis of Emerging Technologies Database Analysis project launched in 2024 as part of an effort to replace legacy systems that support mission planning and analysis. Its success has resulted in ongoing funding for the database effort and for additional prototyping initiatives led by the NSRI team. After NSRI's review and recommendations for a modern toolset in year one, AFNWC approved year two to develop a prototype and document requirements for full implementation. That prototype has been delivered. "Modernizing data architecture for AFNWC is about ensuring the systems that underpin strategic deterrence remain resilient, agile and ready for tomorrow's demands," said Josh Miller, NSRI senior analyst. "Our team's work helps reduce the burden on operators while positioning the enterprise for long-term success."

Related Media Item: https://nsri.nebraska.edu/news/news-releases/2026/10/nsri-delivers-prototype-in-air-force-nuclear-weapons-center-modernization-effort