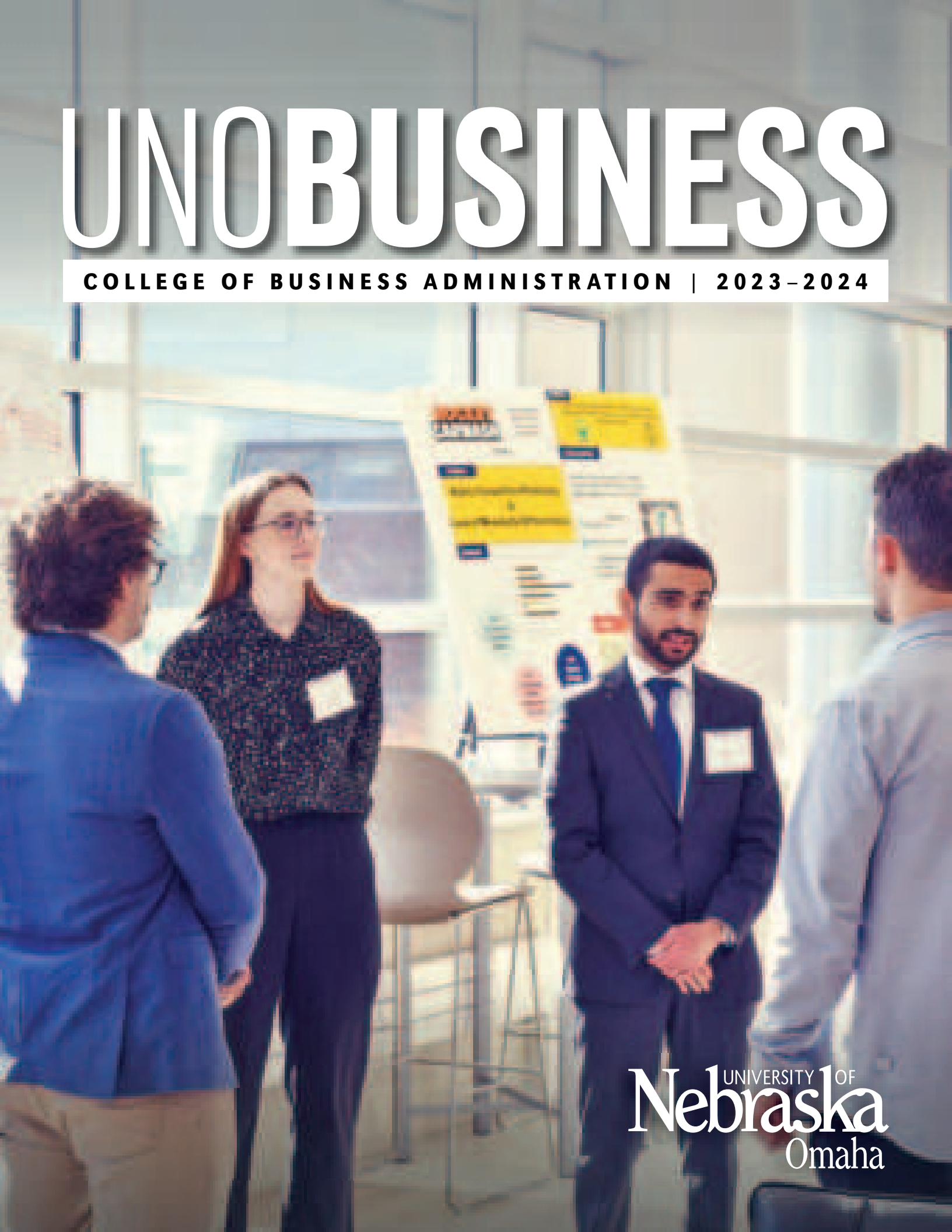
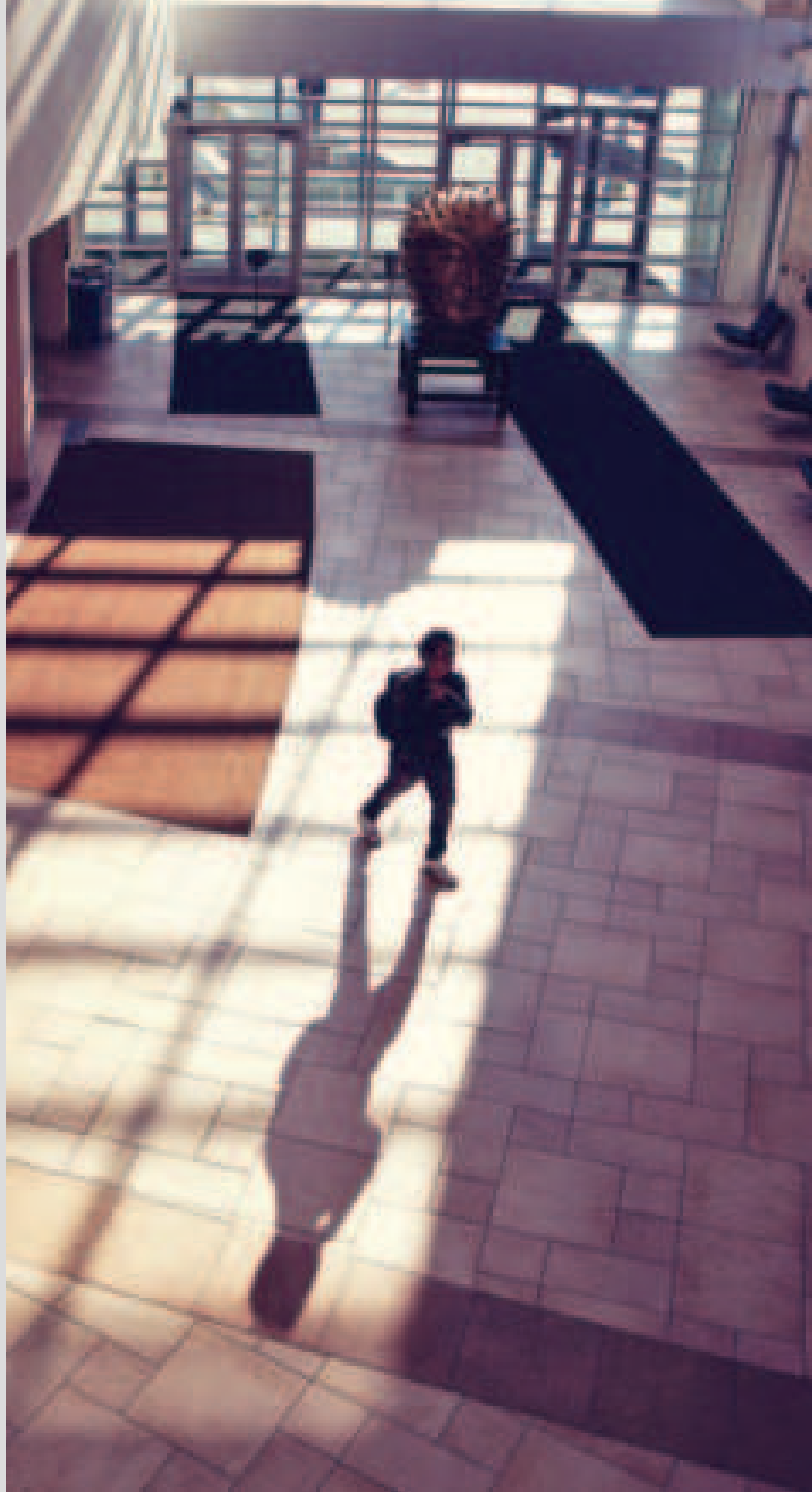


UNOBUSINESS

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION | 2023-2024



UNIVERSITY OF
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MICHELLE W. TRAWICK, PH.D.
DEAN, UNO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Looking back on another incredible year at the College of Business Administration, innovation comes to mind when I look at this year's magazine. You can find it in every corner of Mammel Hall and every one of our outstanding students, faculty members, and CBA alums.

Our talented students are innovative, like Johnnah Bailey, who has found new ways to serve her community. And Sami Parr took the tiny seed of an idea and turned it into a real, functioning business. The Capstone Cup is another example of how we have created an innovative competition that allows our graduating seniors to “wear” their consulting hats and exercise their skills in front of over a dozen community member judges of their presentation, creativity, and business expertise.

Please read about our superstar faculty members like Jane Liu, Burch Kealey, and Ed Cochran doing innovative

work inside and outside the classroom! Check out Burch's tool that academics and other researchers across the country use every day, and make sure you read more about Ed's newly created micro-credential course, designed to empower leaders during these uncertain times.

And let's not forget our vast network of alums! With over 13,000 CBA graduates working in the Omaha metro region, you are making a difference! I can't wait for you to meet Alejandra Valdez. This entrepreneur is a recent CBA alumna who owns Viva Fit Kitchen, an

Omaha-area business devoted to healthy meals for busy people. We also sat down with prominent Omaha CPA Leonard Sommer to find out why giving back to his alma mater is so important to him.

Nothing says innovation like CBA being named a National Science Foundation Innovation Corps site. This new partnership will connect scientists and engineers with the resources they need to commercialize their innovative ideas. We are pleased to be the entrepreneurial epicenter for groundbreaking new ideas moving toward commercialization.

This magazine only scratches the surface of the remarkable things happening at CBA. I would love to share more stories about our phenomenal students,

faculty, and staff. Join me at CBA's Stedman's Café. We will say “hi” to Ahmed, who you can read more about in this issue, and grab a coffee or a snack. I can't wait for you to learn more about the many ways we are innovating here at CBA and in our community.

I would love it if you wanted to support the programs mentioned in the magazine or the other fantastic work we do in the college with your time, talent, or treasure. Just email or call me, and we will figure out how to connect you with the right program or people. Review the simple instructions inside the back cover if you are particularly interested in supporting us financially during our Only in Nebraska capital campaign. Without your support, we couldn't do all the exceptional work you are reading about!



A 'FULL-CIRCLE' MOMENT LEADS CBA STUDENT TO GET INVOLVED ON CAMPUS

“THE ACADEMY HAS ALLOWED ME TO ELEVATE MYSELF INTO A BETTER BUSINESS STUDENT.”

ISHANI ADIDAM
MEMBER OF THE 2019 COHORT

Ishani Adidam never set out directly to get involved with Student Government at UNO, it just happened naturally.

“I wanted to be involved in college. I heard about the First-Year Leadership Commission (FYLC) from a couple of friends who were already on the commission, and they had lots of good things to say about it. Since Mammel Hall (home to CBA) is not on the main campus, I thought that it would be a great opportunity to meet other incoming students from a variety of backgrounds and majors. I was thrilled to be elected as a First Year Ambassador to serve in the Senate. I found a ton of value in being able to voice my concerns as a student and work alongside the administration in creating more opportunities for students to excel. I also met a couple of my best friends during my first year, and they persuaded me to serve as CBA’s Senator. Additionally, I had the chance to serve as the Women and Gender Equity Center (a student government agency) Board Member, Student Activities Budget Committee Senate Commissioner, Rules Committee and Mental Health Circuit Chair. All these roles and positions that I held this past year gave me the ability to grow in my leadership and advocacy, which lead to being the recipient of the SGA Personal Achievement Award in May 2023. In 2023-24, I will be serving as Director of Leadership

Development where I will be overseeing FYLC—the group that made me fall in love with SGA—a very full-circle moment!” Adidam said.

The Omaha native spent her high school years involved with DECA and taking marketing and accounting courses, knowing she wanted to pursue her undergraduate degree in business.

“Growing up in Omaha I have been a part of and have been impacted by UNO’s broader community. Whether it was attending summer camps such as Aim for the Stars, Techademy, the Maverick Young Entrepreneurs Boot Camp, and the GLOBE Camp while in grade school or seeing UNO represented at sports and community events, I saw the direct influence it had in enhancing the quality of life in the Omaha community, and I have always wanted to be a part of it,” Adidam said. “After securing admittance into the CBA Scholars Academy, I pretty much knew that I was going to be attending UNO!”

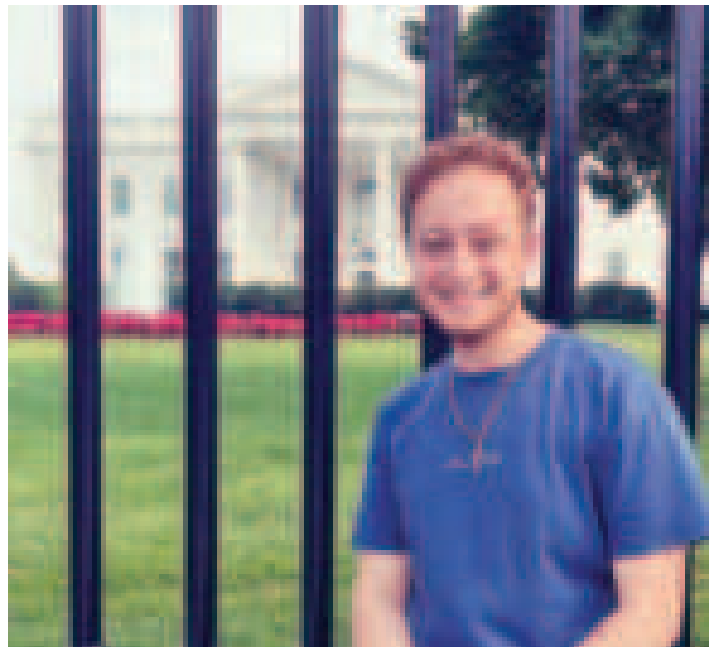
The Scholars Academy is a close-knit community of ambitious and high-achieving students who want to challenge themselves while pursuing a degree. Throughout the four years in the program, Scholars are mentored by business professionals in the Omaha community, enroll in special business courses taught by award-winning faculty, and gain real-world experience through community engagement and international travel.

“The Academy has allowed me to elevate myself into a better business student and explore opportunities that I wouldn’t have known without the program. The classes have had the biggest impact on me. For instance, this past semester, I took DEIA Solutions to Minimize Risk with Dr. Sewell, and we partnered with the Service-Learning Academy and CHI Health to analyze current health disparities in their hospitals. Exposure to businesses via corporate visits, in addition to such projects, has allowed me to strengthen myself as a business student,” Adidam said.

As she continues to work towards graduation in 2025, Adidam is not ruling anything out when it comes to a future career path.

“I will continue to be an advocate for the things I am passionate about after I complete college! I can’t visualize what that looks like right now. After graduation, I intend to work in a role relating to Human Resources Development. These past two years, I have held internships in Training and Diversity and Inclusion and look forward to being in similar strategic roles in larger corporations in the near future,” she said.





OUTSIDE THE COMFORT ZONE

“THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SAID ABOUT GOING OUT AND GETTING SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES AWAY FROM HOME OR COLLEGE.”

FILO HABIB
CBA SCHOLARS ACADEMY

When Filo Habib was deciding which college or university to attend, he didn't have to look too far from home. Habib's family is originally from Assiut, Egypt, but the College of Business Administration rising senior was raised just a few miles down the interstate, in Waverly, Neb.

“I chose to come to UNO because I knew that this school could help me accomplish my goals and give me the college experience I was looking for. I wanted a diverse school that was close to and has connections with several Fortune 500 companies. Additionally, the scholarships and programs offered by the CBA Scholars Academy were unmatched at other schools,” Habib said. “It has been an amazing experience so far. I have met many of my best friends in the program and have had many professional doors opened as well.”

One door that the Scholars Academy helped to open for Habib was his summer internship. Habib landed a highly selective internship with Capital One Financial in Washington, D.C. as an Associate Relations Intern.

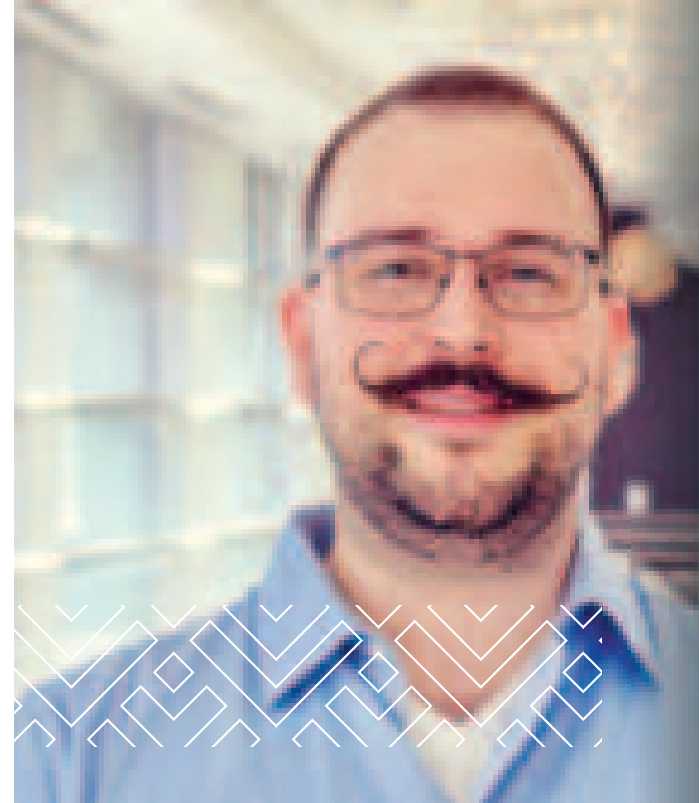
“This internship has a heavy emphasis on employment law and human resources; my role is centered around predictive systems and data analytics. I am on a product development team that is

creating tools to be critically used by the broader Associate Relations, HR, and legal teams. The Capital One HRIP is a cohort-based summer internship that includes mentoring, project work, and several cool events throughout the summer. They only selected 18 of us from across the nation. So far it has been an amazing experience learning and growing,” Habib said.

Habib has thoroughly enjoyed his time in the nation's capital. As a self-described history and government buff, he has enjoyed being close to the monuments and museums. He also encourages his fellow Mavericks to apply for internship experiences like this one, even though it may be outside of their comfort zones.

“There is something to be said about going out and getting summer opportunities away from home or college. While Omaha is an amazing community, I encourage everyone to shoot for an internship away for at least one of their summers. Many companies will cover/assist with housing and transportation. There's an abundance of opportunities out there, and a summer internship is a great way to explore a new city for a limited time,” he said.

Habib will graduate in May with three concentrations in Legal Studies, Management, and HR Management. When he graduates he wants to go to Law School.



INSPIRED AT SEA: UNO A SMART INVESTMENT FOR NAVY VET

If you don't think that one book can make a difference in a person's life, then you haven't heard Jake Hermann's story.

When Jake Hermann graduated from CBA in the spring of 2023 with a bachelor of science in business administration with concentrations in business finance, portfolio management, and banking and investment sciences, it was the culmination of a dream that started several years before that, on a ship in the middle of the sea.

In 2014, Hermann was in the Navy and began reading books to gain as much practical knowledge as possible.

“I decided that I wanted to learn about personal finance and investing. After some research, I finally found a book that sounded interesting. In the belly of an aircraft carrier, somewhere in the middle of the South China Sea, I picked up ‘The Intelligent Investor’ by Benjamin Graham and my life hasn't been the same since. A passion was sparked and suddenly, I couldn't get enough finance,” Hermann said.

“IT BECAME APPARENT TO ME THAT WHEN I GOT OUT OF THE NAVY, I NEEDED TO GO BACK TO COLLEGE TO PURSUE THIS NEWLY FOUND INTEREST.”

Hermann finished his Navy career as a Nuclear Machinist Mate and decided to enroll at UNO's College of Business Administration to continue learning about finance as a non-traditional student, several years older than the rest of his freshman cohort.

“It was different in the beginning, I was always aware that I was older, we do not speak the same language,” he said, laughing. “But I treated it like a job, I showed up, did the work, and along the way, I became friends with a lot of my classmates.”

Hermann would stay late or come in early to help classmates in study sessions. He became involved in the Maverick Investment Club and went to events with friends from class.

Hermann even made it to the finals of the Capstone Cup, a semester-long competition that is required for every student enrolled in the undergraduate strategy course, Corporate & Business Strategy. Students are placed in the role of a consulting firm and asked to analyze and develop recommendations to a complex business problem. His team placed third.

“I think I have grown tremendously during my time at UNO. I've developed

skills in communication, teamwork, and computer skills that I expect will serve me for the rest of my life. I now have a lot of knowledge in a variety of subjects, and I'll likely use much of that knowledge every day in my job. At the very least, it will be the foundation of understanding for new information.”

“MY INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES CLASS LAST SEMESTER FELT LIKE PROOF THAT I HAD CHOSEN THE RIGHT PATH.”

“The class was based around value investing and taught the same principles that I had learned when reading ‘The Intelligent Investor’ years before. I felt a true full-circle moment when I walked out of that final. That was especially true considering that the book was impossible to understand without any background in finance,” Hermann said.

Hermann is considering pursuing his CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) certification and hopes to become a portfolio manager in the future.



GIVING BACK TO CHANGE LIVES

UNO CBA Alum Leonard Sommer discusses what drives him to give back to UNO and its students.

Leonard Sommer has witnessed first-hand exactly how a college degree can change a life.

As a first-generation college student, Sommer graduated in 1976 from CBA with his bachelor of science in business administration degree with a concentration in accounting. He then embarked on a career as a CPA that is still going strong today.

"UNO changed my life," Sommer said. "The college degree in accounting opened up many doors in accounting in the CPA world."

"I NEVER FORGOT THE UNO EXPERIENCE. I'VE ALWAYS APPRECIATED IT, AND I'M VERY, VERY GRATEFUL FOR WHAT IT AFFORDED ME AND THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IN MY CAREER."

Because of those opportunities, Sommer has felt the pull to give back to the institution that helped him get to where he is today. As a young alum, he worked with the Alumni Association to call other UNO alumni and try to raise funds for the greater university.

"It [raising funds] was hard, but rewarding, for me that planted the seed to be more strategic about my giving," Sommer said.

"THIS WAS A STEP IN THE PROCESS OF DOING MORE. I FOUND THAT ONCE SOMEONE GIVES ANY AMOUNT TO THE UNIVERSITY, THEY ARE INVESTED IN GIVING MORE."

And so, Sommer and his late wife, Kate, also a UNO graduate, decided to do more. They put together a fund for the Accounting Fraternity Beta Alpha Psi that allows students to travel to events. The hope is that the fund has a greater impact on the student; they can travel, meet people, and perhaps make connections that will prove important for their later careers.

"We wanted students to know that we have their backs. We are trying to put students in the position to be successful and hopefully remove any barriers to seeking an education," he said. "We want them to see that the value of a college education is immeasurable."

When CBA opened the Rod Rhoden Business Innovation Center, the new addition to Mammel Hall in late 2021, Sommer and his family decided to make a larger gift to the school to create a space for students, faculty, and staff to come together. It's called the Sommer Family Mezzanine.

"It was an honor to be able to do it, it felt good to me to have a place for everyone to come together, just a quiet space, where everyone was comfortable," he said. "At first, I was not sure I wanted a name on the space. As I thought about it, it seemed to me that if seeing a name on this space would encourage others to make a gift, then it was worth it. And it also was a way for me to publicly thank UNO for all they've done for me."

"UNO is a very large institution, but it is all about the people that work there and come through the institution and experience all that it has to offer," Sommer said.

"The great thing about the school of accounting and its faculty, business community and students, is there are opportunities to be better individually and collectively."

"WE HAVE THE COMMON GOAL OF HAVING THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE BE ALL THAT IT CAN BE FOR THE STUDENTS. MY PASSION COMES FROM WANTING TO BE A PART OF THAT AND ULTIMATELY BE AS IMPACTFUL AS POSSIBLE FOR THE STUDENTS."

"There are a lot of needs that are not easily financed through the public resources in a public institution so those of us that are in a position to help need to recognize that there are things that we can and should do to elevate the quality of the educational experience."



BLACK EXCELLENCE: BLACK FACULTY OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recently, the student organization Black Excellence awarded Dr. Shana Redd, Assistant Professor of Marketing & Entrepreneurship at CBA, their Black Faculty of the Year Award.

The group selects the winner by reviewing faculty members who have helped them both inside and outside the classroom. Johnnah Bailey, President of Black Excellence says, Dr. Redd spoke at an event for the group about knowing your brand.

“BECAUSE OF THAT, I KNEW I HAD TO TAKE ONE OF HER COURSES THIS FALL. SHE JUST MADE A BIG IMPRESSION ON ME, AND THE REST OF THE MEMBERS JUST THROUGH THAT ONE EXPERIENCE.”

“Countless studies demonstrate the profound impact of *belonging* in a college setting. A genuine sense of belonging fosters elevated learning, high academic achievement, and a strong commitment to completing academic programs. This sense of belonging is not limited to the student experience.”

“I AM DELIGHTED TO BELONG TO THE BLACK EXCELLENCE COMMUNITY AT UNO, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WITNESSING OUR STUDENTS REACH THEIR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL GOALS AND INSPIRE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME,” DR. REDD SAID.

Black Excellence was formed to serve as a resource for Black students across the UNO campus. They want to celebrate Black students, faculty, and staff members’ accomplishments and achievements. They have several events throughout the academic year including their Black & Bougie Gala in the spring, a welcome back BBQ in the fall, held with other Black Student Unions at college campuses across the metro, events during Black History Month, and a talent show, to name a few.



MEETING A NEED

“OUR TOOLS ARE USED BY ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS TO COLLECT DATA THAT IS NOT AVAILABLE FROM OTHER SOURCES.”

Accounting Professor Burch Kealey never set out to start his own business, it was born out of necessity when he was trapped in the tedium of collecting data for his research and sorted out ways to use technology to speed it up. “When the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) came out with EDGAR (Electronic Data Gathering, and Retrieval) database system I was intrigued by the possibility to collect data faster than the process we were using to inspect one web page at a time” Kealey said.

The EDGAR system performs automated collection, validation, indexing, acceptance, and forwarding of submissions by companies

and others who are required by law to file forms with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). All publicly-traded companies and certain individuals use EDGAR to submit required, time-sensitive documents to the SEC.

So, Kealey started to look at how to search SEC filings, search engines like LexisNexis were one way to do it but weren’t as useful as they initially seemed. They were good for finding all instances of certain words or phrase or they would quickly help you identify all instances of words or phrases in the filings of one company but none of them would allow you to easily run a search over a specific subset of companies that might number in the hundreds or thousands. Even more limiting was how they returned the search results.

“So (then-Dean) Lou Pol and I decided that we were going to try to create a platform to search the filings and make it available to other universities. Other universities have platforms that most business schools across the country buy—the University of Chicago has an archive of stock prices that date back to 1964, the Wharton School of Business has a platform, and there are others as well,” Kealey said.

Kealey went on to develop the directEDGAR platform, which allows users to Search for, Extract and Normalize content from SEC EDGAR filings. They have a custom-developed search engine with nine search operators and more than 35 ways to filter documents. Their normalization tools help convert the “stuff” in EDGAR filings into data. The data is made available to their clients minutes after the original filings have been pushed to EDGAR.

“Our tools are used by academic researchers to collect data that is not available from other sources to test new and complex hypotheses about factors that influence stock prices and corporate governance. Governance professionals use our tools to help them develop solid recommendations for their clients, and corporate clients use our data to keep track of compensation changes happening more quickly with their competitors and peers,” Kealey said.

Since the infrastructure to create a product within CBA was not available as the initial development was complete, Kealey ended up licensing some of his early work from the University. Kealey thinks he was the first faculty member at UNO that had intellectual property that needed a licensing agreement with the university. Faculty and students at UNO CBA use directEDGAR for free and Kealey licenses his product for use at other universities. But the company and product benefits both Kealey and UNO.

“While CBA faculty and students use the product for free, the company pays a royalty to the university for the sales that we make to other business schools,” Kealey said. “Some of those clients include Ohio State, TAMU, University of Oregon, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales and LSU.” Kealey said his family always roots for their clients when they show up for the CWS!

Today, AcademicEDGAR+, which is the parent company for directEDGAR, has been in business for about 15 years, Kealey has about eight employees and interns.



VIVA FIT: FROM TRANSFORMATION TO INSPIRATION

Alejandra Valdez is the founder of 'Viva Fit Kitchen,' an Omaha business devoted producing healthy meals.



Alejandra Valdez had known for years that she wanted to be an entrepreneur and own her own business. But she was uncertain exactly what kind of business it would be. Valdez graduated from UNO's College of Business Administration in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in business administration with concentrations in marketing, management, and entrepreneurship.

"I'VE ALWAYS HAD BIG DREAMS AND I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A LEADER AND CHANGE-MAKER," VALDEZ SAID.

"I have always loved marketing and sales, and I am passionate about entrepreneurship, but I had to find the right opportunity."

Valdez graduated and landed a job with Werner Enterprises but never forgot her dream. A few years in the corporate world at a desk job began to take its toll on her body, and she quickly gained weight.

"I went from working on-the-go jobs like waiting tables to working at a desk all day, and that caused me to gain weight,"

Valdez said. She even became pre-diabetic in 2016. Then came one fateful trip to the Omaha Zoo where Valdez was left with two swollen feet for days from all the walking she did. It was the wake-up call she needed.

"I thought, this can't be my life. Both sides of my family have diabetes in them. I realized that I had to change my lifestyle," she said.

Valdez began going to the gym and started looking for diabetic-friendly healthy recipes that she could cook. As she began learning more about food, she began cooking and eating differently; choosing foods that nourished her body, and had macros that were balanced. As a result, in 18 months she lost 70 pounds.

"I felt great, I had energy and confidence, but I knew if I wanted to continue to be successful, then I had to do meal preparation."

"SO, A FRIEND AND I DECIDED TO START A BUSINESS MAKING AND SELLING PRE-PACKAGED, MACRO-FRIENDLY HEALTHY MEALS," SHE SAID.

The two began crafting recipes, working on their business plan, and getting everything ready to launch, when the friendship and the business fell apart. Valdez did not let that deter her. She took the recipes she owned and reworked her business plan.

"I was brainstorming business names with friends and came up with 'Viva Fit Kitchen' from that. Viva means 'live' in Spanish and I like the double meaning of 'live fit,'" she said. "Food is a big part of my culture, but I had to learn how to make it healthy. I had to balance a plate. We only use lean meats and no added salts."

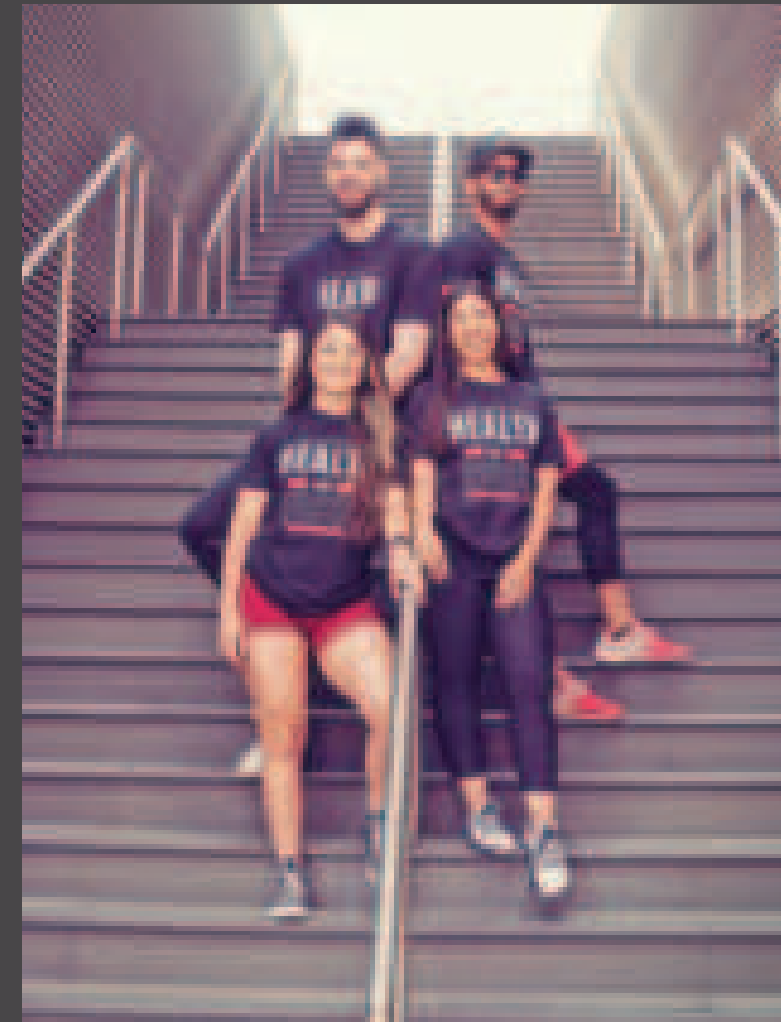
Viva Fit Kitchen had humble beginnings, with Valdez taking orders on Facebook and fulfilling them from her mother's kitchen. Little by little, her dream kept growing. Her mother started helping her, then her sister lent a hand. After a year in her mother's kitchen, she moved the business into a commercial kitchen space. Today, she has a team of five, and the business did its first six-figure year in 2022. Her goal is to move out of her current kitchen space by the end of 2023.

"You don't want to stay a small business forever; you want to scale and grow. I learned that from my professors at CBA," Valdez said.

"AND BECAUSE I GOT MY DEGREE FROM UNO, IT GAVE ME A STEP UP AS AN ENTREPRENEUR."

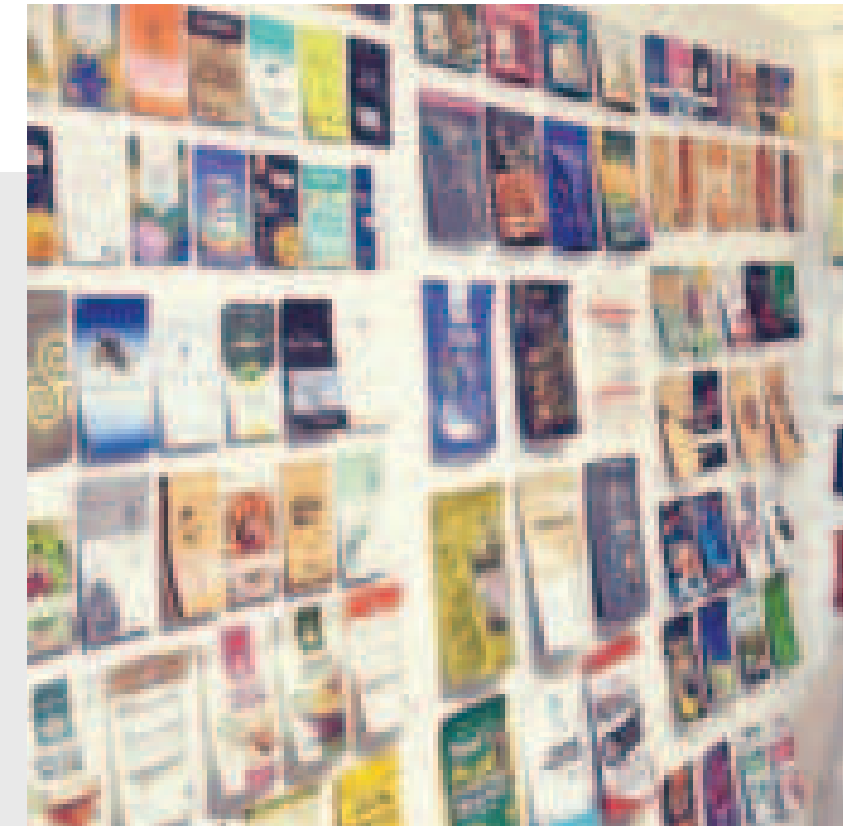
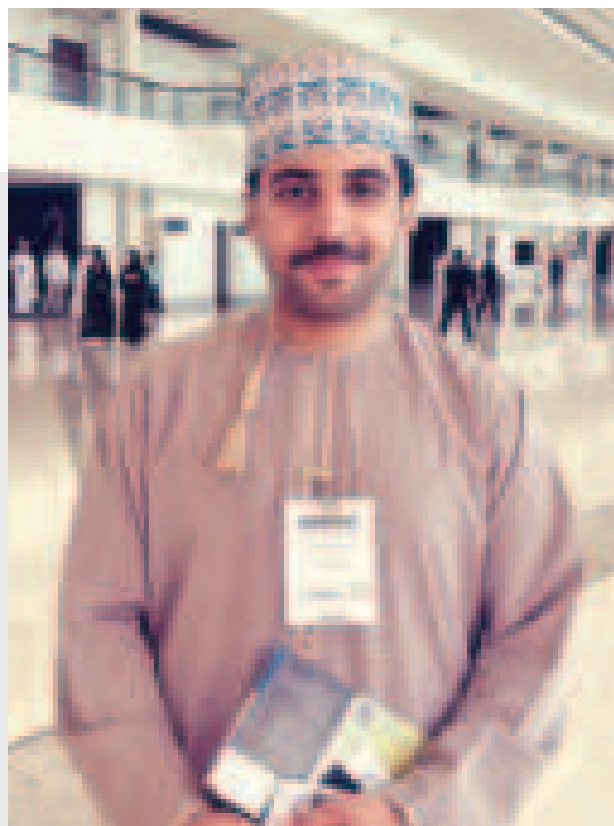
So, Valdez wants to give others that same opportunity. She started the entrepreneurship network Embolden, which is designed to connect other small business owners with the resources they need to grow. The group hosts monthly events where entrepreneurs can get together and exchange ideas, and even barter for services. She also created 'Partners in Health,' which are fitness and nutrition coaches who are available to work with clients to help them reach their goals.

"I have big dreams for myself and my business. But I know I will get there, through patience and discipline."



YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY A SMALL BUSINESS FOREVER; YOU WANT TO SCALE AND GROW. I LEARNED THAT FROM MY PROFESSORS AT CBA."

**ALEJANDRA VALDEZ
UNO CBA ALUM**



STEDMAN'S CAFÉ SURVIVES PANDEMIC, CONTINUES TO GROW

Stedman's Café, a student-operated store that doubles as a learning lab for business students, has continued to grow in the seven years it has been open in Mammel Hall, despite a worldwide pandemic that shuttered its doors for a time in 2020.

"Like many establishments, Stedman's Café faced significant challenges during the pandemic and had to temporarily close its doors. However, upon reopening, we encountered hurdles while adapting to the new normal. Complying with the mandated policies and regulations required a concerted effort. Nevertheless, through consistent and strategic actions, we were able to overcome these obstacles and started witnessing positive results," said Stedman's Café Manager and CBA student Ahmed Al Waili.

Supported by UNO's Center for Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Franchising (CIEF), Stedman's serves locally sourced, high-quality coffee, espresso, smoothies, fountain sodas, snacks and more. In addition to fueling patrons in Mammel Hall, the café offers student

employment opportunities and partners with various classes to help students apply course concepts to a functioning business. The café is named after Robert C. Stedman, who graduated from UNO (then Omaha University) in 1951 with a business degree.

The cafe operates under the complete management and responsibility of students, but there are faculty members who play a crucial role in overseeing legal and financial matters. Dr. Dale Easley is the founding Director of CIEF and is the John Morgan Community Chair in Entrepreneurship and an associate professor of entrepreneurship and strategy. Professor Easley oversees Stedman's and ensures the Café complies with regulations and gives students guidance when needed.

Al Waili says working at Stedman's is a truly rewarding experience, and has a dream of one day owning his own coffee shop! He is putting his work experience to good use.

"I consider this opportunity as a crucial steppingstone toward realizing my dream. With an unwavering commitment to quality, my team and I have diligently enhanced the overall customer experience while ensuring that every penny spent at the café is worthwhile. We have achieved this by sourcing the finest quality ingredients from our trusted suppliers and conducting thorough market research to stay competitive with surrounding coffee shops," Al Waili said. "Our dedication to excellence is reflected in our updated pricing structure, which strikes a balance between affordability for students and maintaining the highest standards of quality. In addition, we have successfully executed multiple marketing campaigns, introduced seasonal drinks, and capitalized on campus events, which have all contributed to significant growth in our numbers."

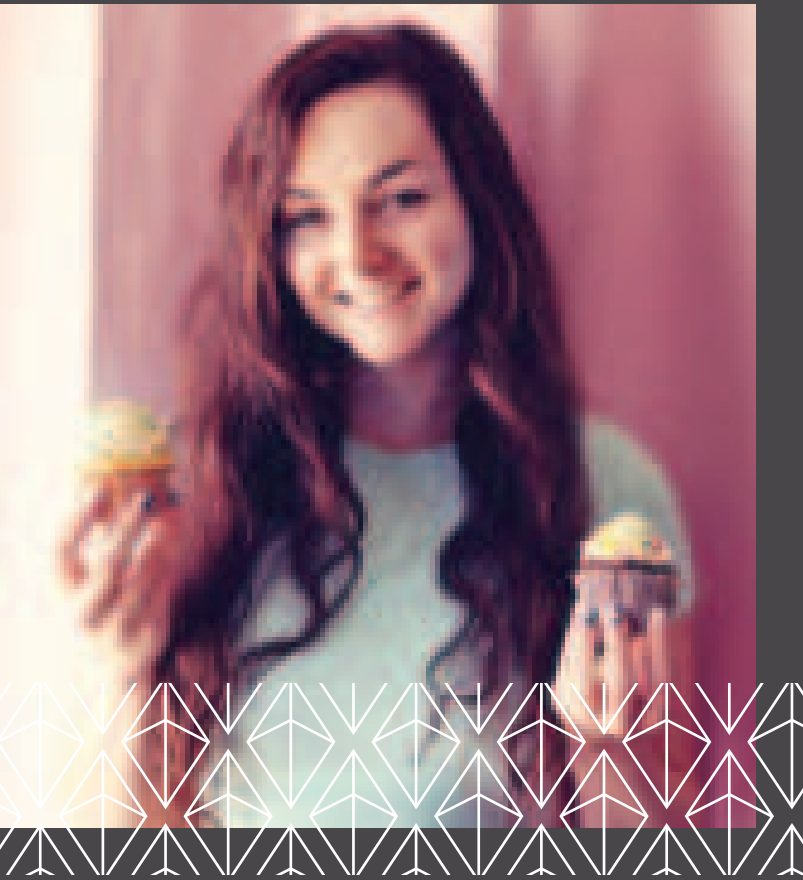
Al Waili, a native of Oman, has spent the summer in his home country. He was fortunate to be able to represent Stedman's at the 'HORECA

OMAN' conference, one of the largest hospitality and food service exhibitions in the Middle East. The conference attracts companies from across the world. For Al Waili, it was an incredible experience.

"Participating in this conference offered invaluable insights into the coffee market, both locally and globally. It provided a unique opportunity for me to observe industry trends, gain inspiration, and gather ideas to enhance our café. The Middle East's focus on high-quality products and innovative concepts presented an excellent learning experience for me," he said. "Working at Stedman's Café has been a truly rewarding experience. I appreciate the freedom we are given to explore our ideas and the support we receive from the management team. The environment fosters creativity, making Stedman's Café akin to a learning laboratory where we can continually develop our skills."

"I CONSIDER THIS OPPORTUNITY AS A CRUCIAL STEPPINGSTONE TOWARD REALIZING MY DREAM."

AHMED AL WAILI, CBA STUDENT AND STEDMAN'S CAFÉ MANAGER



THE SWEET TASTE OF SUCCESS

“I THRIVE IN CHAOS AND LOVE HAVING A MILLION DIFFERENT THINGS TO OCCUPY MY TIME”

When Samantha “Sami” Parr receives her undergraduate diploma from CBA this December, she will not only graduate one semester early, but she will also have nearly two-and-a-half years of owning and running her own small business under her belt.

“I have always been passionate about becoming my own boss and starting a business. I decided that it would be fun to test the waters on a small scale, so in June of 2021, I started my cake business, Sweet Serotonin. My mom passed down her love for baking, but I really took it and ran with it. I figured that starting a cottage bakery would be a relatively easy and small-scale way for me to get real-

world experience with managing customers, pricing, finances, and every other aspect of being an entrepreneur. I have always been one with the mindset that if I decide I want to do something, I will figure it out,” Parr said.

And she has figured it out. Parr’s business has taken off; she stays very busy, especially around the holidays, making cakes, cupcakes, and other special-order treats for clients across the Omaha metro and southwestern Iowa areas. But the senior from Glenwood, IA is not just limiting herself to sweet treats.

“I also do wedding alterations and work with a custom gown designer. I’m looking to add embroidery to my sewing repertoire as soon as I’m financially able to invest in a machine. I thrive in chaos and love having a million different things to occupy my time,” Parr said.

She does all of this while still finding time to maintain a nearly perfect 3.989 GPA in her concentrations in entrepreneurship and marketing. She is a part of the CBA Scholars Academy, the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community, the College Entrepreneur’s Organization (CEO), Student Marketing Association (SMA), and the Creative Writing Club.

“Being in the Scholars Academy has probably been the biggest perk for me being a business student at UNO. I have received knowledge and experiences I never would have dreamed of otherwise. The mentorship program has been huge in my academic and personal career. Over the last three years, I have had three mentors from different backgrounds and experiences. I have been able to learn and ask questions in a setting other than the classroom. I have also been encouraged by those mentors to work on projects for school and my career that I wouldn’t have had the confidence to do otherwise,” Parr said.

Coming to UNO wasn’t initially financially possible for Parr.

“In high school, I had heard great things about The College of Business Administration at UNO. The Scholars Academy program as well as the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community were really the major reasons that I decided to enroll with UNO. One of the things that slightly swayed me away from UNO was the fact that even though I only lived about 25 minutes from campus, I was an out-of-state student. I could go to Iowa State University or the University of Iowa for far less tuition, then I learned about the MAP program,” Parr said.

The MAP or Metropolitan Advantage Program offered residents or high school graduates of several southwestern Iowa counties the opportunity to attend UNO at significantly reduced tuition rates. That program has now been replaced by the OUR (Omaha Urban Rate) Tuition which significantly reduces rates for students from 11 states that surround Nebraska, including Iowa.

Parr has big plans after graduation. She plans to continue with Sweet Serotonin and her wedding alterations, but wants to find a way to combine them into a functioning business.

“Clearly, I am creative in a lot of different ways, so I would like to open a cafe that also offers a space for small artists (and myself) to display products for sale,” she said.

LIZBETH HERMOSILLO AWARDED PREMIER SALES SCHOLARSHIP

Hermosillo is one of two scholarship winners across the country.

Lizbeth Hermosillo, a business administration student with a concentration in marketing and a minor in Spanish, has been awarded a 2022 Premier Roofing Sales Scholarship. Premier is a partner of the Center for Professional Sales and offers a competitive scholarship program each year. Students had to “pitch” themselves as part of the scholarship application.

Lizbeth took part in Gary Domet’s Spring 2022 Professional Selling Course. All of his students create a pitch about themselves and then present it to professionals from various partner companies of the Center. Students were then offered the opportunity to compete for the scholarship if they wanted to leverage that pitch experience. Lizbeth did, and she won. Winners were based on their excitement about a career in sales and their willingness to learn something new.

“Congratulations to Lizbeth on receiving her scholarship. She was in my MKTG 3100 professional sales class in the Spring of 2022. During my time as an adjunct with UNO I have had the pleasure of working with some of the best and brightest students, and Lizbeth is at the top of the list. She and students like her are the reasons why I continue my second career as a member of the CBA part-time faculty. Again, congratulations Lizbeth...an award so well deserved,” Domet said.

“In our professional selling class, we have a project where students develop a pitch about themselves and present it to professionals. This is great practice for job fairs, life, and scholarships like this one!” said Shannon Cummins, Director of the Center for Professional Sales at UNO.

The UNO CBA Center for Professional Sales program focuses on a hands-on approach to the discipline of sales. The sales program partners with local businesses to present students with real business scenarios, giving them insight into what it’s like to work in the field.



COMMUNITY SERVICE COMES NATURALLY TO CBA STUDENT

Chosen to represent UNO at the inaugural NextGen Service Leadership Corps Summit at Montclair University, Johnnah Bailey networked with state officials from New York and New Jersey, toured the Federal Reserve of New York, served at a local food pantry, and participated in collaborative civics projects focusing on creating preferred futures and re-imagining civics programs. All in the span of a week.

One of the most impactful moments of her trip was interacting with a young, New York State official whose experiences with participating in civics programs mirrored her own. His story resonated with her. She found that her desire to continue exploring different facets of public service, including advocacy and sustainability, had deepened. "It was incredible to immerse myself in the world of public service in this way. I am excited to bring back what I've learned from this experience and contribute to positive change not just on the UNO campus, but beyond," she said.

For Johnnah, being active and involved in her community is something that comes naturally. "I've just always helped when there's been someone in need," she says, shrugging. "It's just who I am."

Currently, Johnnah is a third-year student pursuing her bachelor's degree in business

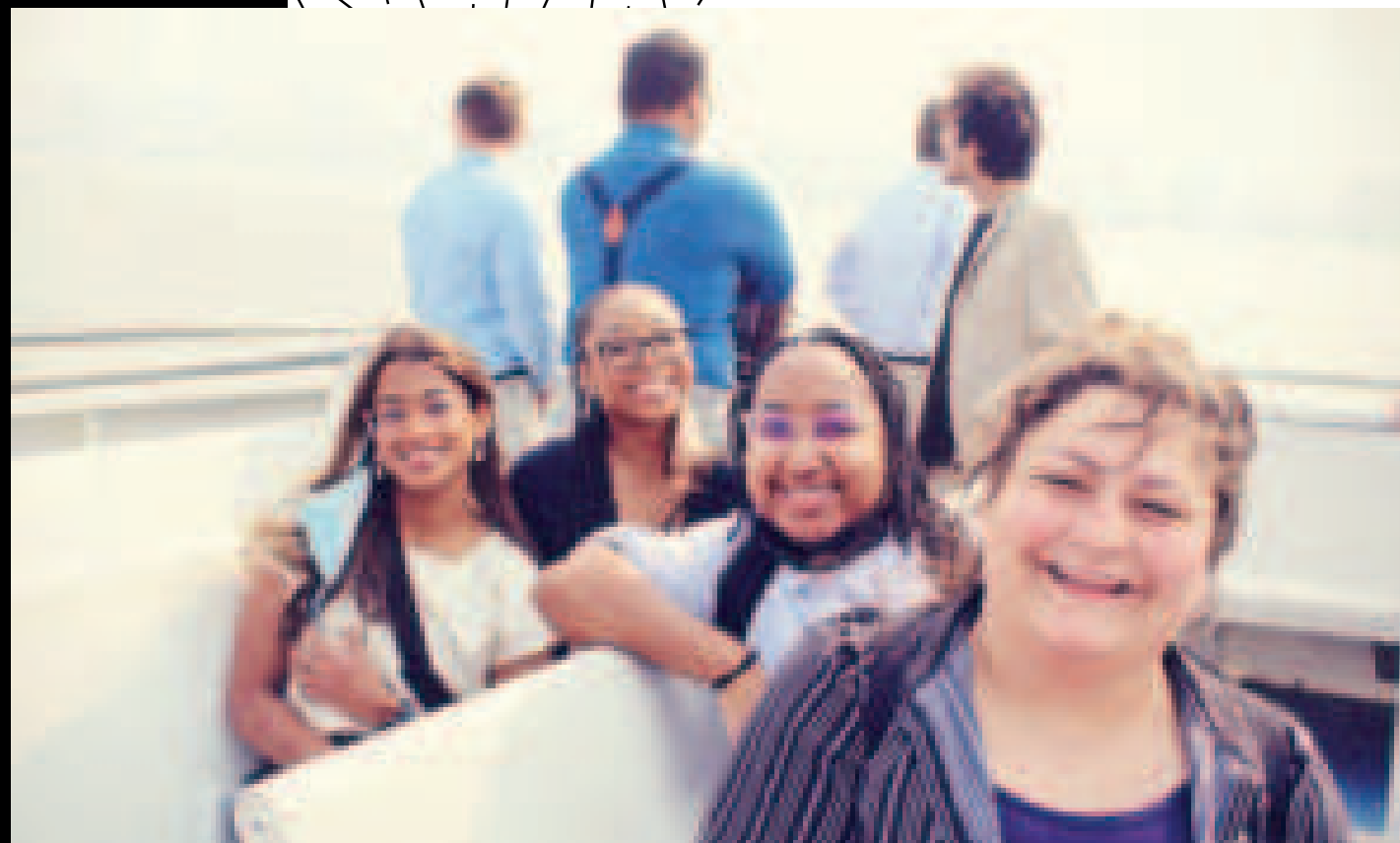
administration with a concentration in management and minors in nonprofit management and cross-sector collaborative leadership. She is the former president and current VP of Black Excellence, a co-director of the American Multicultural Student Agency, a member of the CBA Scholars Academy and Next Generation Leadership Corp. Johnnah also serves her community as an Initiatives Coordinator through MENTOR Nebraska.

The self-described "military brat" spent most of her childhood in Alabama, but calls Omaha home. "Omaha has really poured a lot into me. It usually takes me a long time to warm up to people and places, but with Omaha, it was different. I felt at home and that sense of community right away," said Johnnah. Omaha continues to be a place of personal growth for her, offering mentor-ships, supportive teachers, numerous learning and development opportunities, and connections with nonprofit organizations.

Johnnah aspires to work for a nonprofit organization where she can advocate for affordable and safe housing and build sustainable ecosystems to benefit people in need. She also plans to develop a skincare brand for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) women. And that, of course, is just the beginning.

"I AM EXCITED TO BRING BACK WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM THIS EXPERIENCE AND CONTRIBUTE TO POSITIVE CHANGE NOT JUST ON THE UNO CAMPUS, BUT BEYOND."

JOHNNAH BAILEY, CBA STUDENT





SPANISH-SPEAKING GRADUATE ASSISTANTS EASE LANGUAGE BARRIERS FOR NEW BUSINESS HOPEFULS

Helping the state's Latino entrepreneurs and new business hopefuls overcome language barriers is professionally and personally rewarding for the Spanish-speaking Graduate Assistants (GAs) at the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC).

Helping the state's Latino entrepreneurs and new business hopefuls overcome language barriers is professionally and personally rewarding for the Spanish-speaking Graduate Assistants (GAs) at the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC).

Jonathan Camacho and Luis Franco are GAs who are based in Omaha and work as business consultants with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program of the NBDC.

Additionally, Consultant Alan Martinez serves NBDC clients and potential clients statewide. Martinez is a UNO alum and a former graduate assistant at NBDC.

"The addition of our Spanish-speaking GAs allows us to grow our client base and reach untapped communities for small business development," says Tony Schultz, State Director of America's SBDC-Nebraska. "Anytime we can

connect to entrepreneurs to support their business creation or expansion, it creates a ripple effect in the communities we serve, resulting in job creation and wealth building."

Camacho came to the United States in 2015 from Juarez, Mexico to further his education. In 2021, he earned a bachelor's degree from Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, with a major in global management and double minor in French and marketing. At Simpson, he received the Outstanding Senior in Global Management award. Currently, he is working toward his MBA with a concentration in international business at UNO's College of Business Administration (CBA), and is expected to graduate in the fall of 2023.

The opportunity to work as a GA at the NBDC presented itself in August 2022.

"BUSINESS CONSULTING IS SOMETHING I ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY," HE SAYS.

His duties include meeting with potential small business owners and assisting them through the initial processes, from developing a business plan, financial projections and marketing strategies, to connecting them to the proper resources for funding. He says the work has been rewarding, both professionally and personally. "I have found great value in consulting. It is exciting to see the effort our clients are willing to make to help their dreams come true," he says.

He says his Latino clients often face challenges beyond those of other business hopefuls. "There are so many resources out there for starting a business, but a lot of people in the Hispanic community don't know they exist," he says. "Many are new to the U.S. and face a language barrier, but they still have a strong desire to start a business of their own. They want to do it, but they don't know how."

The national SBDC program is the largest matching grant-funded program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The Nebraska SBDC program provides confidential consulting services to entrepreneurs and small business

owners looking to start and grow their enterprises or to transition companies to the next generation of ownership. The services are offered at no or low cost to those interested in operating a for-profit business in the state.

Schultz says the program helps entrepreneurs, potential small business owners and bank clients in a number of ways, from the development of business plans, to creating a three-year financial projection model, to market research that includes benchmarking financials as compared to peers.

Through workshops, community outreach and events such as the annual Latino Small Business Conference each summer, NBDC and its consultants are raising awareness and easing access to those resources. Camacho and the other consultants also are translating NBDC materials and other documentation into Spanish to assist clients.

"We are working very hard to change the mindset and let them know we are here to help," Camacho says.

"WE WANT THEM TO KNOW THEY HAVE SOMEONE THEY CAN REACH OUT TO WHO WILL CONNECT THEM WITH OTHER RESOURCE PARTNERS WHEN NECESSARY."

Franco is a native of Ecuador who in 2017 earned a bachelor of economics degree from Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL) in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and his MBA from UNO in 2021. He is currently working toward an additional master's degree in economics at UNO's CBA, with completion in May. Prior to becoming a GA at the NBDC, Franco served in accounting, payroll and finance roles within the retail industry.

He, too, says the experience as a business consultant has been rewarding and has helped to build upon his background in finance and accounting.

He says some of the most difficult challenges have been convincing his clients to accept his professional advice when it differs from their preconceptions. "I had a client who was starting a business and had prepared some numbers to take to a lender, but their financials were not making sense to me," he recalls.

"The client insisted and went off to the lender, but got rejected," he says. "She came back to me and we worked together to develop new projections. She went back to the lender and this time got the loan."

Franco says the opportunity to work one-on-one with clients will be put to good use going forward.

"WHEN I COMPARE MY EXPERIENCE BEFORE AND AFTER BEING HERE AT THE NBDC, I HAVE GAINED SO MANY SKILLS, FROM PROBLEM SOLVING TO PUBLIC SPEAKING, AND IT'S ALL BOOSTED MY CONFIDENCE."

Schultz says the GA program at NBDC is fortunate to have a diverse staff from all over the world. "It's fun to get everyone together to share experiences and learn about each other's cultures," he says. "It's a unique pool of talent that enriches the program and benefits all our clients."

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BORN CURIOUS: JANE LIU'S PATH TO A CAREER IN ECONOMICS

"I GUESS YOU CAN SAY I'M A MATH PERSON. I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD BE."

JANE LIU
CBA ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Assistant Professor of Economics Dr. Jane Liu jokes that she was born curious. That natural curiosity was spurred by her parents who encouraged her to constantly seek out knowledge and figure some things out for herself. Her path to economics began seemingly at birth.

"I grew up in China during the time that the Chinese economy was really opening up and taking off. I was able to witness drastic change. I wanted to understand why the economy would go up and down, what was causing it?" Liu said.

That curiosity soon became Liu's passion and the focus of her career research. She is passionate about macroeconomics, cryptocurrency, and quantitative applications in economics and business. She wants to do something big with her life, and the research she is doing is just that.

"The fields I am conducting my research in are growing very fast, especially cryptocurrencies. We are seeing new ones coming out weekly. My dissertation is about how to include credit card transaction services into monetary aggregate. Which sounds complicated, but it's very intuitive. Using index numbers theory, we developed this new monetary aggregate measure that can better forecast inflation, economic growth, and the business cycle. I guess you can say I'm a math person," Liu says, laughing. "I never thought I would be. But my passion for solving those significant economic questions drove me to create a math model and become a math person."

And people are taking notice of her work and what she has created. She has been selected as an Associate Editor for the journal, *Open Economics Review*. She has made nearly 20 presentations at conferences, universities, and other institutions, has 11 published papers, and has three papers submitted for publication, two working papers, and five other "works in progress." Impressive for anyone, but even more so for someone who only earned her Ph.D. two years ago!

"Jane is one of the first researchers working on the credit card-augmented monetary aggregates and cryptocurrencies. Her research is cutting-edge and has profound policy implications," said Dr. William A. Barnett, distinguished professor at the University of Kansas, Director of the Center for Financial Stability, and editor of the Cambridge University Press journal, *Macroeconomic Dynamics*.

"Jane is an amazing researcher and teacher. The students find her classes interactive and engaging even when she is teaching math! She is an equally committed researcher having published in top journals and now an editor for *Open Economics Review*. UNO is lucky to have her," said Professor and Chair of Economics Dr. Ben Smith.

"Dr. Liu's approach to teaching is a model for new faculty members. She's always seeking new teaching strategies to incorporate into her classes. She seeks out and acts on input from her colleagues and students. Watching her teach is a joy. I've observed Dr. Liu on numerous occasions, and it's obvious that she builds strong relationships with her students and creates learning environments that encourage them to take risks, work collaboratively, and deeply engage with the content at hand," said Dr. Connie Schaffer, Director of the UNO Center for Faculty Excellence.

By doing what she loves, Liu is having a direct impact on her students. "This past semester, a student told me that I was inspiring and a role model---I didn't realize that simply by doing what I was passionate about that I could make a difference in

a student's life like that. But that is the power of education. It can change lives. It certainly changed mine," Liu said.

"Professor Liu is always ready to help students when it comes to class work and creating connections outside of the classroom in the business world," said James Hamlette, UNO Graduate student.

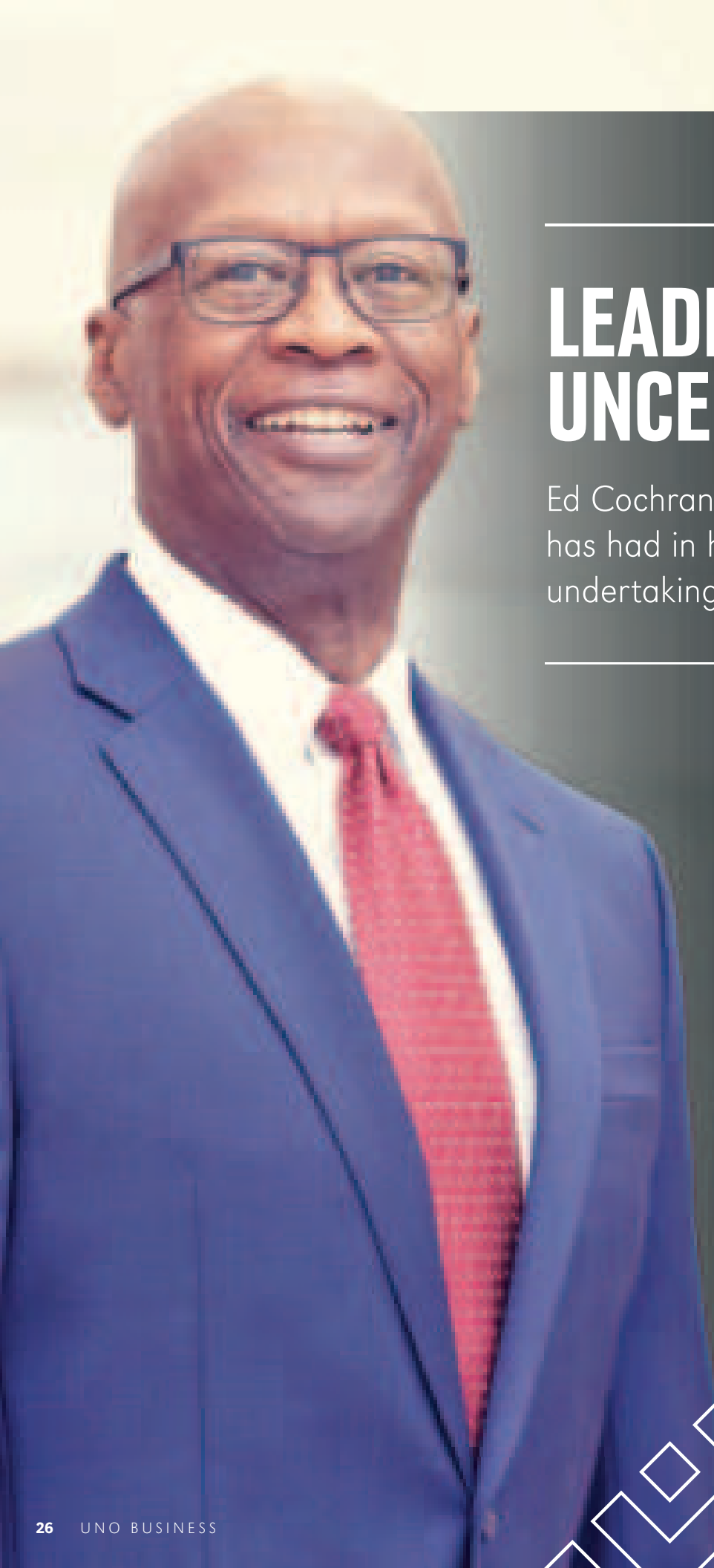
"Our students are motivated and hardworking. We also have a strong group of faculty with diverse research interests. Working with these talented and dedicated researchers and students inspires me to be a better professor and researcher every day," Liu said.

"Being a new assistant professor having received her Ph.D. two years ago, her established track record of astonishing 11 breakthrough publications in top journals puts her in a league by herself," Dr. Barnett said.

Liu comes from a long line of hard workers. Her family showed her the good things that can come from working hard and being disciplined. "I learned from my parents and grandmother to work hard, be determined, have perseverance, and never give up. They all had a much harder life than I do, and I thank them for doing so much for me," she said.

Outside of academia, Liu is passionate about fashion. She appeared in *VOGUE* magazine's 2023 The Best Moments From the 2023 Tonys Red Carpet. In her free time, Liu enjoys doing yoga, barre, dancing, playing golf, skiing, and mountain biking. She also loves traveling, exploring the outdoors, and tasting new foods with her friends.





LEADING THROUGH UNCERTAIN TIMES

Ed Cochran shares the role education has had in his life, and his newest undertaking: a microcredentials course.

Growing up in a close-knit Chicago neighborhood, Ed Cochran's childhood was marked by the loving support of his community. He fondly recalls how, "Before the phrase, 'It takes a village to raise a child' became popular, I didn't know it yet, but the block on which I grew up was a village. Every dad living on that block played a role in raising me, guiding me, and ensuring my success." This nurturing environment left a profound impact on Cochran, shaping him into the person he is today. "I could not have been more blessed", he says.

Cochran's parents were instrumental in instilling the value of education within him and his sisters. His father's pursuit of undergraduate and graduate degrees simultaneously alongside his own journey inspired him. And one of his proudest moments was watching his mother as she showcased her lifelong pursuit of knowledge as she became a summa cum laude college graduate at the age of 52. Education became the cornerstone of Cochran's identity, driving his calling to inspire others.

As exhibited by his parents, at the core of Cochran's philosophy is the belief in lifelong learning and the power of knowledge to drive positive change. And to give back, Cochran was drawn to teaching. After stints at several colleges in Chicago, Cochran has been affiliated with UNO since 2006, first as an adjunct, then later as a full-time member of the faculty and is currently a lecturer in the Department of Management in the College of Business Administration.

It was last year that Cochran was drawn into the realm of microcredentials, developing the 'Leading Through Uncertain Times' course at CBA. Cochran believes microcredentials help quickly bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world business challenges and allows learners to quickly demonstrate new skills. He finds immense satisfaction in seeing participants quickly grasp and apply the knowledge, behaviors, and techniques to make an impact in their respective areas of influence.

When talking about microcredentials, Cochran seems to light up. "I view microcredentials as a vehicle for taking an approach from the academic arena in specific areas and applying it to solve real-world business problems. This concept seemed like the perfect fit for me. I love the format where someone can digest a topic in a relatively short period of time and become proficient in that area," Cochran said. "Then the course participants can take this demonstrated

skill back to their companies, teams, employees, and their families and magnify the impact we make at the college."

The 'Leading Through Uncertain Times' microcredentials course, set to launch later this year, could not be more timely. In an era marked by armed conflicts, emerging technology, political strife, pandemics, and economic volatility, Cochran poses the essential question: How can leaders effectively navigate this uncertain landscape and not just survive but thrive? The course addresses these challenges by delving into the roles that leaders undertake by offering practical and actionable insights, tools, and techniques for current and aspiring leaders.

In a world rapidly transforming before our eyes, Cochran encourages individuals not to shy away from potentially disruptive innovations like artificial intelligence. Instead, he advocates embracing these advancements to harness their potential for positive change.

With a wealth of professional experience at renowned companies like IBM, American Express, Allstate Insurance, and First Data Resources, Cochran brings a unique perspective to his classroom. His real-world stories captivate students, enabling them to connect theoretical concepts to practical applications. "This approach tends to foster a deeper engagement with the material and a more profound understanding of its relevance in their worlds," Cochran says.

Cochran perceives this engagement as a sign of a promising future for CBA students, alumni, and new learners. "We aim to equip all learners with a competitive advantage in their pursuit of careers," he says. Recognizing the brilliance of his students, he believes it is essential for them to acknowledge their own potential. Cochran and his colleagues are driven to remain at the forefront of education, and microcredential courses are a crucial aspect of achieving this goal.

At its core, Cochran's mission is to empower learners to become exceptional leaders who can drive positive change in their organizations, teams, families, and beyond. He envisions a world where knowledge and practical wisdom are combined to create transformative solutions to the challenges of our time. Through their work, Cochran and his colleagues are preparing a new generation of leaders to embrace the ever-evolving landscape of the business world and make a lasting impact.

UNO NAMED A NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION INNOVATION CORPS SITE

The new partnership will connect scientists and engineers with the resources they need to commercialize their innovative ideas.



The University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Business Administration (CBA) has joined a five-year partnership with National Science Foundation (NSF) to serve as an Innovation Corps (I-Corps) Site as part of the Great Plains Hub. The UNO site will provide immersive, entrepreneurial training for scientists and engineers with the goal of moving ideas to commercialization.

The NSF's I-Corps program began in 2011 with the goal to successfully train an entrepreneurial workforce while bringing cutting-edge technologies quickly to market and nurturing an innovation ecosystem. The program's two-month training is experiential and immersive and helps prepare scientists to extend their focus beyond the university laboratory and accelerate the economic and societal benefits of their research projects.

CBA, home to the Center for Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Franchising (CIEF), was invited to join the program due to CIEF's strong commitment to entrepreneurial education. CBA is the only college of business serving as an I-Corps Site within the Great Plains Hub, and one of only a few nationally. As such, they are expected to provide essential leadership in this key area of entrepreneurial education.

NSF I-Corps consists of five regional Hubs across the nation. Each Hub consists of a lead institution and seven or more partner institutions. The Hubs bring together universities, researchers, entrepreneurs, local and regional entrepreneurial communities, and federal agencies.

Michelle Trawick, John Becker dean of UNO CBA, attests to the importance of Omaha's place in the program. "Omaha has a vibrant and growing start-up community, and this program will further strengthen that entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem. CBA's Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Franchising is highly regarded for programs like the Maverick Venture Fund and the Maverick Technology Venture Alliance. Leveraging CBA's expertise and reputation in a community that fosters new technology and innovation makes perfect sense."

I-Corps provides training to research teams to help them bring their ideas from the laboratory to the marketplace. Each I-Corps team has an Entrepreneurial Lead (EL), an Industry Mentor (IM), and a Technical Lead (TL). Over the course of five to eight weeks, the teams receive entrepreneurial education, mentoring, and funding to accelerate their fundamental research into emerging products and services that can attract follow-on funding.

Brent Clark, professor of management and director of the UNO Site, envisions CBA playing a significant role in connecting entrepreneurs with the resources they need to succeed. "CBA's role in the Great Plains I-Corps Hub will be to provide those with great startup ideas the opportunity to take initial steps in making their ideas a reality. These early steps in the entrepreneurial journey are often incredibly difficult and intimidating for many founders that lack startup experience. Our Site will provide I-Corps certified instructors that can show participants how to perform customer discovery, lean startup methodologies, and other critical early steps. We will also host and support programming, as well as financially support program participants."

The Hub will consist of seven partner programs, each bringing unique strengths and benefits. Partner institutions are The University of North Dakota, South Dakota State University, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Dakota State University, The University of South Dakota, The University of Wyoming and The University of Montana.

Clark sees potential in the UNO Site to change the face of Omaha-area entrepreneurship, especially through UNO's commitment to elevating those in the earliest stages of their startup journeys or who may lack access to entrepreneurial resources. "Omaha has a lot of momentum in the tech startup space right now, but still lags behind many peer cities in key areas. For example, while we already have a number of excellent resources for accelerating existing startups, there is a real need for earlier stage help - from idea to startup. I-Corps will help fill this gap and make it easier get something started. I envision I-Corps as a way to serve university inventors by providing help at the earliest stages of the entrepreneurial journey. It's also a way to create downstream momentum and increased deal flow for accelerators like NMotion, startup studios like Beeso Studios, and risk capital providers like Dundee Venture Capital, Proven Ventures, and Invest Nebraska. I-Corps graduates will be strong candidates for those offerings."

CBA's participation in this program reinforces UNO's vital presence as a research institution committed to local workforce development. Trawick is confident that UNO will play a pivotal role in bringing the I-Corps mission to fruition. "UNO is well-positioned to ensure this region of the Great Plains Innovation Corps Hub succeeds."

IRAQI REFUGEE FINDS HER CALLING IN BUSINESS AT UNO

From escaping hardship and loss in northern Iraq to starting a new life in Nebraska, this Maverick's remarkable journey led her to achieve new heights and discover a passion for a future in business.

It wasn't long ago that Maysaa Kalei saw a very different future for herself.

Growing up in northern Iraq, she never expected to graduate from college despite her strong academic performance. Now in her seventh year in America, she finds herself preparing to earn her degree in business administration with concentrations in economics and international business from the University of Nebraska at Omaha's (UNO) College of Business Administration (CBA).

But Kalei's journey to UNO, let alone a college degree, has been full of hardship and loss.

Her senior year of high school in Iraq was upended by violence. ISIS extremists attacked her hometown of Sinjar in August 2014. Thousands of Yazidi people were killed and children were abducted. Suddenly, Kalei's family was forced to leave everything behind and leave Iraq.

"Seeing how hard [my parents] were working toward building the house for us and making a living for us, and then, it's gone overnight, just seeing that was really upsetting," Kalei said. "Living that experience, you really feel a lot in those

moments, but you also feel like your pain is nothing compared to what other people had been through back in Sinjar."

Over the next 22 months, Kalei and her family found their way to Turkey and then to Jordan to complete the process of migrating to the United States. After lacking stability for nearly two years, the International Organization for Migration helped her family make their way to Lincoln, Nebraska, joining her brother there, in June 2016.

Now in a new culture and learning a new language, Kalei had to restart high school despite having nearly graduated back home in Iraq. While she worked toward her diploma, she dedicated herself to not only learning English but also seeking out opportunities to surround herself in American culture, practice the English language, and realize her dream of earning a college degree.

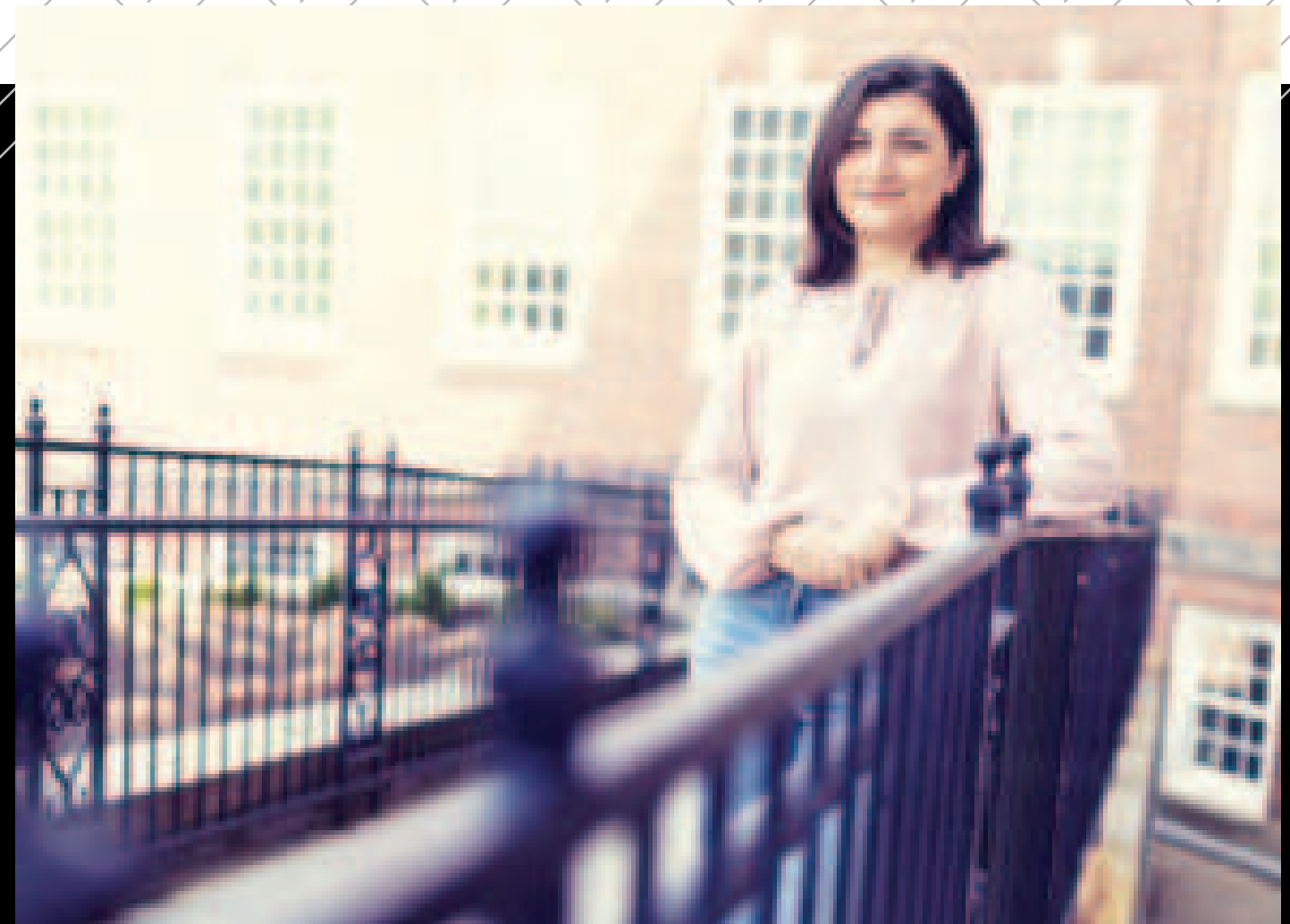
Her after school research led her to apply for the Susan T. Buffett Scholarship and admission at UNO. Drawn by the city of Omaha and its potential for job and internship opportunities, Kalei became a Maverick. She received the full-ride scholarship and joined the Thompson

Learning Community (TLC). As a Buffett Scholar and a first-generation student, Kalei greatly benefited from the structure, guidance, and social connectivity of the Thompson Learning Community.

"I really can't tell you how much I appreciate that because it really made college so much easier on me," she said.

No longer burdened by the cost of her education, Kalei could focus on choosing her path for the future. She originally envisioned her college journey leading toward a career in medicine. After looking through majors on the UNO website, she tried some business classes and started to find her passion. So, she wondered: How could she match her newfound passion for business with her life experiences?

"I wanted to do something more that involves communication, relations, and also travel because I've lived in different countries," she said. "Although it wasn't necessarily by choice, it gave me a lot of perspective about other cultures and peoples and how they interact with one another. I really liked seeing the differences in people and in society, so I wanted to make sure that was part of my future career."



Kalei supplemented her studies with getting engaged in student organizations. She joined Delta Sigma Pi and served as president of the Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization – both student organizations housed in UNO's College of Business Administration.

Ultimately, UNO and, more broadly, Nebraska, made such an impact on her personal life and career trajectory that she wants to find ways to give back. She's already started to work toward boosting the state's workforce through an internship with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. As part of her capstone project, she's worked on a project to keep international talent here in Nebraska after they earn their college degree.

"Some international students are my friends, and I noticed some of them are

looking for jobs after graduating. If the company doesn't offer a work visa, they can't stay, so they either have to go back or earn another degree to make it work," Kalei said. "I'm trying to work on a program to connect these students to companies that are looking for international talent to help them stay here and continue their future in Nebraska."

Kalei graduated in August 2023. She participated in the May 2023 commencement ceremonies. She's been brushing up on another new language, Japanese, as she prepares for a trip to Japan to work with a partner company through her internship with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. While she hopes international travel remains in her future, she plans to return to Nebraska and start her career here, ideally as a trade specialist, later this summer.

“

I REALLY CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH I APPRECIATE TLC BECAUSE IT REALLY MADE COLLEGE SO MUCH EASIER ON ME.”

MAYSAA KALEI
UNO CBA STUDENT

MBA STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

UNO MBA PROGRAM CONNECTS A MISSING LINK FOR CHIRSTEN BROZ

“I HAVE LEARNED SO MUCH FROM EACH CLASS I HAVE TAKEN, AND IT REALLY HAS OPENED A WHOLE NEW WORLD FOR ME.”



When Chirsten Broz graduated from UNMC with a bachelor's degree in diagnostic medical sonography, getting an MBA was the furthest thing from her mind. The Fremont native began a career working in sonography in hospitals and clinics in the Omaha metro area. But as Broz steadily worked her way up the career ladder and landed her current position as the Chief Operating Officer at MD West One, she soon felt like something was lacking from her resume.

“When I got this job here at MD West One, I felt like business knowledge was missing because I come from a healthcare background, so I needed finance and accounting and all of that,” Broz said.

“I FELT THAT UNO'S COLLEGE OF BUSINESS HAD THE BEST DEGREE THAT WOULD FIT ALL OF MY NEEDS FOR THIS POSITION AND THIS ORGANIZATION.”

In Broz's current position as Chief Operating Officer, her day is spent doing a variety of management activities, from strategic planning and growth to day-to-day operations to recruiting new doctors to helping project manage the brand-new building that MD West One occupies in West Omaha. She found that she wanted to better understand the business side of her job.

So, Broz enrolled in the MBA program at the College of Business Administration at UNO and is working on earning her graduate degree while taking all online classes.

“My schedule is so busy, with work, and my husband and four kids, so it is nice to be able to do it at my own pace. I like the independence of it, but I also like that I have classes where I can collaborate over Zoom and have a lot of teamwork with my classmates,” Broz said.

Broz is currently about halfway through her MBA program and has found that each course has been incredibly beneficial for her in her role.

“It was initially intimidating to go back to school,” Broz said, “but I have learned so much from each class I have taken, and it really has opened a whole new world for me. When I was working at CHI Health as the Clinic Administrator for four Women's Health practices, I would receive monthly financial statements that I would have to read through. Now that I have taken accounting courses, I really understand those reports!”

Broz has one piece of advice for those who are considering getting their MBA degree: just do it. “My former sonography student asked me about my experience, and if I thought she should go back for her MBA, and I encouraged her to do so. She has now gone ahead of me in the program! It has been fun to work together in some classes.”

“I also enjoy seeing the variety of students in each class, from new grads to people who are more advanced in their careers, everyone brings value to the program.”

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MBA PROGRAM:

mba.unomaha.edu or
email mba@unomaha.edu

CAPSTONE CUP

The Capstone Cup is a semester-long competition comprised of a kickoff event and two rounds of competition. The Capstone Cup was born at the UNO College of Business Administration in 2014 and is unique to CBA. The goal is to provide students with a unique and valuable educational experience.

During the Capstone Cup, teams of undergraduate business students must digest a complex business situation, develop a creative and practical solution, and build a presentation that communicates their analyses and recommendations to a panel of judges comprised of faculty, business community members, and alumni.

Every CBA student enrolled in an on-campus section of the undergraduate capstone strategy course (Corporate & Business Strategy) participates in this competition, impacting more than 125 students each semester.

Round One took place as a poster competition (very similar to a science fair). Teams designed research posters that would effectively display their research, analyses, and recommendations as they verbally presented their findings to a series of different groups of judges. Each team was given 15 minutes to present and answer judges' questions, presenting four times throughout the event. At the end of Round One, students and judges were provided a free lunch from a food truck paid for by the 2022-2023 Capstone Cup sponsors.

Five or six teams from Round One were selected to showcase their strategic recommendations in a formal slide deck presentation that took place in the Mammel Hall auditorium. Teams were given 12 minutes to present, followed by a Q&A session from the panel of judges made up of employees from the 2022-2023 Capstone Cup sponsors.

To recognize students' efforts, sponsors furnished a variety of prizes for the first, second, and third-place teams, as well as the finalist teams. Prizes included Yeti coolers, Bluetooth speakers, soundbars, massage guns, Amazon and Spotify gift cards, and a variety of strategy board games including Risk, Ticket to Ride, and Battleship.

“The Capstone Cup is applied business education at its finest,” says CBA Dean Michelle W. Trawick. “It is a perfect example of what a culminating experience should look like for graduating business students and distinguishes our College of Business Administration from others in the area because of the real-world experience students have. At UNO CBA, we don't just focus on textbooks and tests—we encourage students to participate in internships, we bring experts from the community into our classrooms, and we cap everything off with a real-world business case for students to explore.”

The Fall 2022 Business Case was Quantum Workplace. Headquartered in Omaha, Quantum Workplace is a human resources technology provider intent on helping organizations



grow by providing them with the smartest employee engagement, performance software, and talent solutions. For Quantum Workplace as it works to achieve its goals for growth for the future. For the Capstone Cup, consultants were tasked with developing a strategic recommendation for Quantum Workplace as it works to achieve its goals for growth in the future.

The Spring 2023 Business Case was Rocket Carwash. Headquartered in Omaha, Rocket Carwash is an express car wash company that boasts a quick and quality clean for every customer. Beyond offering one-time car washes, Rocket Carwash offers an unlimited wash membership service for which members pay a monthly fee in exchange for unlimited washes and additional exclusive perks. For the Capstone Cup, consultants were tasked with developing a strategic recommendation for Rocket Carwash as it works to achieve its goals for growth in the future.

“One of the things that I believe makes our CBA stand apart from so many others is the complete investment we have from the Omaha business community. By sponsoring this competition, local employers show that they value the business education we are providing because it shows up in the students they hire. This competition is a difference-maker in our community, and it could not happen without the generous support of our sponsors,” Dean Trawick said. “I also want to thank our strategy faculty for all the effort they put in to create this experience for our students. The Capstone Cup is one of my favorite things we do here at UNO CBA—it's an amazing thing to see and is a milestone to celebrate for our students.”

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The following honorees join an exclusive list that now totals more than 100 distinguished UNO business alumni from a network of more than 20,000.



PAM MORTENSON
BSBA 1984

Vice President & Strategic Planning Officer, at WoodmenLife

Pam Mortenson currently serves as Vice President & Strategic Planning Officer, at WoodmenLife. She is responsible for facilitating business strategy and leads critical strategic initiatives.

Before taking her WoodmenLife position, Mortenson worked at Creighton University leading key strategic initiatives and was named the interim leader of the Communication and Marketing division.

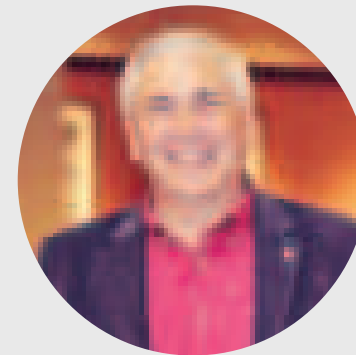
Prior to joining Creighton, she held several leadership roles during her 15-year tenure with West Corp. While there, she led integrations of newly acquired companies, was named President of West Interactive and was an executive leader in the West Healthcare Practice which focused on patient engagement solutions.

Prior to her tenure with West Corp., Mortenson operated her own management consulting business, where she specialized in the electronics payment industry and worked with a variety of Fortune 500 companies in strategic management and product planning. Prior to starting her consulting business, she spent many years with First Data Corporation where she held positions in sales, client management, process improvement, and product management.

Mortenson is originally from Oklahoma and lived in Texas during her early years and then moved to Omaha where she graduated from Westside High School. She holds a BSBA in Finance and Management from UNO.

Outside of work, Mortenson is active in the community. She has been involved in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life fundraising, led the financial planning committee for her church, participates in the Heart Association, has served as Chair of the Board at Marian High School and currently is a board member and Vice Chair for the Jesuit Academy School. She loves to cook and entertain, bike ride, paddle board, and run half marathons.

Mortenson lost her husband, Tim, (also a UNO graduate) in 2017 after 32 years of marriage. She has two sons, Matt and Mike, a daughter in law, Gemma, who all live in Omaha and a daughter, Grace, who lives in Dallas, Texas.



MICHAEL BOJANSKI
BSBA 1977

Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer at Finley Engineering Company, Inc., Retired

Mike Bojanski recently retired as Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer at Finley Engineering Company, Inc. In that role he was also Dean of Finley's corporate university, Finley Academy. In his 40+ year career in human resources Mike held similar executive level positions at Huntel Systems, Physicians Mutual Insurance Company, Cox Communications and First Data Resources. For the past nine years Mike has been an adjunct professor at UNO teaching on-campus and online courses in human resources. He has also been adjunct faculty at Methodist College, Midland, Doane and Creighton Universities.

Bojanski graduated from UNO with a BSBA in Management and Marketing in 1977. At UNO he was a charter member of the UNO Student Human Resource Association led by his long-time mentor Dr. Robert Mathis, Professor Emeritus of Management. Bojanski earned his Senior Certified Professional In Human Resources from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in 2002. In 2006 Bojanski earned his master's in human relations from the University of Oklahoma.

Bojanski has held a number of leadership roles at the local, state and national level for SHRM. In 2019 he was president of the board of directors for the Human Resource Association of the Midlands. He also served as district director for HRNebraska, the state human resource affiliate for SHRM. Bojanski also served on the boards and advisory committees for Partnerships In Aging, Ser de Amigos, OOIC, Metro Community College, and Bethlehem House.

Mike and his wife Cindy enjoy gardening, travel and spending time with their children and grandchildren.



COL LLOYD BUZZELL
Executive MBA 2015

US Strategic Command--United States Air Force

Lloyd "Buzz" Buzzell has served in the United States Air Force for more than 36 years. He is currently stationed at Offutt Air Force Base serving at U.S. Strategic Command the Nuclear Combatant Command. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1984 and attended Basic Training at Lackland AFB, Texas. He then was assigned to Pease Air Force Base, New Hampshire and subsequently was appointed as a Non-Commissioned officer. In 1990 he was commissioned as an officer in the Air Force after graduating from the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Program at the University of New Hampshire.

After commissioning he was assigned as an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) officer and was sent to Great Falls, Montana where he performed nuclear alert duty. Over the next 32 years he has served in the nuclear forces as an instructor and many leadership positions to include Command of an ICBM unit. He has stood over 300 ICBM nuclear alerts, flew over 700 hours of alert time in the Looking Glass jet and stood over 1,000 shifts in strategic missile warning and nuclear command and control operations centers throughout the country.

Currently he holds the rank of Colonel and is assigned as a Battle Watch Commander (BWC) in the Global Operations Center at U.S. Strategic Command. As the BWC he is the Commander's operations lead for strategic deterrence and is certified in leading national level emergency conferences with senior military and civilian leaders including the President of the United States.

Buzz holds a Masters Degree in Education in Guidance and Counseling from Northern Montana College, a Masters in Strategic Studies from the United States Air Force Air War College and an Executive MBA from the University of Nebraska Omaha. Buzz is an avid hockey fan and is a USA certified hockey referee in Omaha. He has raised money for the Ronald McDonald House by running the Chicago Marathon twice. He lives in Bellevue, Nebraska with his wife and has been married for over 46 years while they have one son and two grandchildren. Finally, his retirement has been approved by the United State Air Force for 1 March 2024 after more than 37 years of active duty spanning almost 40 years.



CHANDRAKANTH ARE

Executive MBA 2013

Jerald L and Carolynn J Varner Professor of Surgical Oncology and Global Health, Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education for the College of Medicine and Vice-Chair for Education in the Department of Surgery, Surgical Director for the Davis Global Center, the simulation center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Chandra Are is a Surgical Oncologist and holds the title of Jerald L and Carolynn J Varner Professor of Surgical Oncology and Global Health. He is the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education for the College of Medicine and Vice-Chair for Education in the Department of Surgery. He also serves as the Surgical Director for the Davis Global Center, the simulation center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Dr. Are has lived, trained and worked in various health care systems across the world. Dr. Are obtained his medical degree from Osmania Medical College in Hyderabad, India. He then obtained his Fellowship from The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (FRSCI). Following which, Dr. Are completed his general surgery residency at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore and fellowship in Surgical Oncology at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. More recently, Dr. Are obtained his Executive MBA degree from University of Omaha.

Dr. Are's clinical area of expertise focuses on hepatopancreatobiliary surgery. His interests extend across a wide spectrum from education, research, simulation, humanities and global health. He is the recipient of multiple awards including induction into the Alpha Omega Alpha (ΑΩΑ) Honor Medical Society from The Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creativity Award (OTICA) from the University of Nebraska, Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Nebraska, Omaha, Award of Excellence for Community Service from the India Association of Nebraska and the Most Valuable Program (MVP) Director award.

Dr. Are is extensively involved in research with multiple publications and presentations. He initiated and serves as the Director of two National and 4 International Research Collaboratives and is the Founding Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed journal, Graduate Medical Education Research Journal (GMERJ). He serves on the Editorial Board (Global sections) of several journals. He also serves on the Residency Review Committee (RRC) for Surgery at the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

Dr. Are serves on the International Committee of the American College of Surgeons and has served on the International Committee's of other national surgical organizations. Dr. Are has been integrally involved in the surgical global outreach efforts of the Society of Surgical Oncology. He served as the Chair of the International Outreach Committee for two terms and is the Founding Director of The Global Forum of Cancer Surgeons. Dr. Are has also been appointed as the Lead Commissioner for The Lancet Oncology Commission on Global Cancer Surgery-Part II. Dr. Are also serves on Board of Scientific Advisors for the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Through these efforts, he plays a vital role on the global stage to address disparities in surgical care for cancer patients and inequities in access to cancer surgery globally.

CBA WELCOMES NEW FACULTY

JOSE MANUEL MOTA AQUINO | Assistant Professor of Economics

Dr. Jose M. Mota is an assistant professor of economics at the University of Houston. He received his Ph.D. in economics from the same university in 2023. His main research interests are macroeconomics and development macroeconomics. He studies issues related to international migration, remittances, and inequality using heterogeneous household models informed by micro-data. During his doctoral studies, Dr. Mota spent a summer as a visiting scholar in the research department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. He also has experience working as a researcher at several government institutions in his home country, the Dominican Republic. He is committed to teaching and mentoring students.

MIKE YUAN | Assistant Professor of Accounting

Dr. Ming (Mike) Yuan is an assistant professor of Accounting at UNO. Prior to joining the UNO School of Accounting, Dr. Yuan taught as an assistant professor of accounting at South Dakota State University. He earned his Ph.D. in accounting from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. He has taught courses in financial accounting and managerial accounting. His research interests include auditing, tax, and financial accounting. Dr. Yuan lives in Lincoln and has a 14-year-old daughter who loves math and a 9-year-old son who enjoys playing soccer in his Gladiators team.

CBA WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Matt Burke
Digital Learning Specialist

Kaitlin Carlson
Academic Advisor

Baylee Eberhart
Dean's Office Associate

Amber Evenson
Program Manager, EMBA

Melissa Lindell Kozak
Sr. Director of Marketing and Communications

Alan Martinez
Bilingual Consultant for the SBDC

Nia Martinez
Academic Advisor

Kiley Phelps
Omaha Center Director for the SBDC Program

Alexandraewel
CIEF Assistant Director

IN MEMORIAM

STEVEN L. NATH

May 10, 1961 - December 17, 2022

Steve Nath graduated from UNO with a bachelor's degree in 1985 and a Master of Business Administration in 2003. He spent more than 25 years as an accountant for various corporations before returning to UNO once more in 2014, this time as a lecturer in the School of Accounting, teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses. In 2016, he was named MBA Professor of the Year.

He is survived by siblings Michael (Kimberly) Nath and Carrie Nath; children Katie (Dan) Culbertson and Samuel Nath; grandsons Grant and Vincent Culbertson; former wife Kelly Nath; and his extended family and friends. He was preceded in death by father, Louis Nath, and mother, Marise Nath.

Steve's interests included Husker football, Cubs baseball, music, fishing, and golf. He loved spending time with his children and grandchildren while sipping a cup of scalding hot coffee (preferably a Flat White from Starbucks). Steve had a deep love of music, and it is one of the many significant contributions to his children's lives. It was always clear that Steve was nearby with his booming voice (usually singing a random classic rock hit), loud laugh, and the laughter he brought to others. Teaching was his passion, and he thoroughly enjoyed educating (and entertaining) his students. Steve will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

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A relentless focus on student access and success.

Enhancement of faculty and academic excellence.

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A top-down photograph of a wooden desk. In the upper left, there is a small white pot with green succulents. In the lower left, a white mug filled with brown coffee sits on the desk. Below the mug is a spiral-bound notebook and a black pen. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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