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COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION | 2022-2023



Jocelyn Tena Vigil and Kathia Dimas, both members of the CBA Scholars Academy, connect with employers at the Fall 2022 CBA Career Fair.



CONTRIBUTORS

Eva Burklund
Erin Grace
Bethany Hughes
Kelly Jefferson
Elise Langenfeld
Kristi Lynch
A.J. Olnes
Rachael Smith
Ryan Soderlin
Gwen Steele

COMMENTS OR STORY IDEAS

unocbainfo@unomaha.edu

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

It's been another amazing year, and this edition of our magazine shares wonderful stories of success from every corner of Mammel Hall and the classroom that is Omaha! Our biggest treasures are our students, and I love that our college is constantly focused on preparing learners for lifelong learning and success.

As a first-generation college student, I know the life-changing impact that an engaged, high-quality education can make in the life of a learner. In our College of Business Administration, we are fully invested in being THE business school in our region that makes a difference for all our learners. We believe our college should look like our community, and I hope you enjoy the article about our CBA Prep Academy that was piloted earlier this year. The Prep Academy is the brainchild of one of our rock star faculty, Destynie Sewell, and our DEAI Advisory Council. It's just one way we are working hard to

ensure that ALL learners feel welcomed and included so that they can do what they do best – succeed! By setting up all our learners for success, we are developing a skilled, high-demand, professional workforce for Omaha and Nebraska.

Be sure to check out our stories about Destynie, Tej Adidam, and Jennifer Riley, who are doing tremendous work. They, along with over a hundred other full-time faculty and staff, are sharing their expertise and creating partnerships with businesses and nonprofits to develop our learners into successful

professionals and to solve real-world business problems. You won't be disappointed in these stories! With over 13,000 CBA graduates working in the Omaha metro region, we are making a difference!

Later in the magazine, you will read about Chris Decker's Economic Impact report for the college, which found that in 2021, the economic impact of College of Business Administration graduates is estimated to have been \$322 million, supporting an additional 2,786 jobs in the metro. The future of Omaha depends on the workforce we are developing. It depends on our business school.

I enjoy highlighting our faculty, but I also love highlighting our amazing students and graduates. Throughout this issue you will see that our high-quality business education is impactful for learners in a variety of roles, including an architect, lawyer, firefighter, and corporate leader. Pay special attention to these highlights, because these students and alumni will be making our world a better place for many years to come.

Near the end of our magazine, you'll learn about the University of Nebraska's current fundraising campaign and our unprecedented efforts to raise private support for the

University's relentless focus on student access and success; the enhancement of faculty and academic excellence; and transformational research, discovery, and innovation. Throughout the magazine, you will see evidence of the many ways CBA is working in these areas. We are removing barriers to ensure access and a welcoming environment for all. We are providing support and creating opportunities that increase retention and encourage degree attainment. We are cultivating internships and professionalism. We are promoting faculty experiences that transform their classroom teaching and research. We are making an impact!

This magazine only tells a small part of the CBA story. Please give me an opportunity to share even more about our amazing students, faculty, and staff. I'm happy to chat via phone or Zoom, show you around Mammel Hall, or share a coffee or lunch. I can't wait to tell you more about how the CBA is making a difference in the lives of our students and our community.

Michelle W. Trawick, Ph.D.
Dean, UNO College of Business Administration



I AM THE ROI: ADRIENNE CAVILL

“MAVERICK SPIRIT IS ABOUT COMMUNITY PRIDE. WHEN YOU’RE AT UNO, YOU BENEFIT FROM THE GREAT COMMUNITY THAT YOU’RE PART OF.”

ADRIENNE CAVILL
UNO CBA ALUMNA

Growing up in a rural community in central Nebraska, Adrienne Cavill always dreamed that her career would take her places. The first step on her journey: UNO.

UNO enabled her to chase that global dream. Cavill double majored in international studies and business administration while also earning concentrations in marketing management, international business, business leadership, and global strategic studies.

Cavill furthered her international aspirations by immersing herself in everything that touched the global stage, including five study abroad trips, involvement in several foreign language clubs, and the College of Business Administration’s Scholars Academy. She also worked with the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Institute (YSEALI) Initiative at UNO where she helped international students learn the campus, explore the community, and see how UNO serves as a global ambassador.

Mentoring others came naturally for her as she benefited from her mentors at UNO. Phani Tej Adidam, Ph.D., professor of marketing and entrepreneurship, worked with her to ensure she got the most out of her study abroad experiences. She continues to keep in contact and collaboration with Patrick McNamara, Ph.D., director of international studies at UNO, for work which includes serving on the board together for the Nebraska World Affairs Council.

Yet, despite her international focus, there was something about Omaha that kept her staying local while thinking global.

“I thought I was going to have a big international career outside the bounds of the city of Omaha, and I studied abroad a few times. I moved away for work a couple of times and every time that I came back to Omaha, it just felt like home,” she said. “Omaha ended up being that perfect balance of a big city, but a small community.”

Now she thinks of Omaha as UNO’s citywide campus and as her hub for global connections. “In my professional career, when I think about Omaha as my campus, I think about community, economic, and workforce development,” Cavill said. “I think about quality jobs for people of all backgrounds, for all skills sets, and a thriving community that wants you here.”

Today, Cavill works toward making this picture of Omaha into a reality as the manager of business attraction and expansion for the Greater Omaha Chamber. In this role, she uses her international business acumen to recruit new companies and new jobs to Omaha, grow businesses that already call the city home, and work on projects that ultimately make Omaha a place where people want to be, live, work, and play.

Cavill credits UNO for the education she received, but also for developing soft skills related to communication, team building, integrity, and accountability that have helped her succeed in her role. “Now, in my day-to-day job, I really love that I get to impact this community that I’ve learned so much from and I get to give those gifts back to this community.”

“Maverick Spirit is about community pride,” Cavill said. “When you’re at UNO, you benefit from the great community that you’re part of. You benefit from all the new developments happening in Omaha, the companies being brought here, and the job opportunities that are being created every single day for you to stay in Omaha, to love Omaha, and to have a successful career after UNO in Omaha.”

DEZHAUN ARTIS, BSBA STUDENT, PROPELS HIMSELF TO EXCELLENCE

AND FULL-RIDE SCHOLARSHIPS TO LAW SCHOOL

Artis leveraged his business education into a top 25% score on the LSAT and scholarships to several prestigious law schools, where he plans to follow in a family member’s footsteps.



Dezhaun Artis, a BSBA student with the UNO College of Business Administration, has propelled himself to excellence. He grew up in a low-income household with one parent.

IT WAS HIS COUNTLESS HOURS OF STUDYING, COMMITMENT, AND DRIVE THAT PUSHED HIM THROUGH SCHOOL.

Now, Artis is reaching continued success after scoring 158 on the LSAT, placing him in the top 25% of test-takers. This impressive feat has earned Artis full-ride scholarships at Creighton University School of Law, University of Nebraska at Lincoln College of Law, and Memphis University and Belmont University in Tennessee. While a business student jumping into law might seem unexpected, it made perfect sense for Artis, who leveraged his education to follow in a family member’s footsteps.

“My motivation for attending law school has changed a lot over the years. Initially,

it was simply a lofty goal set in mind at the young age of 10. Everyone wanted to be someone great like a doctor, firefighter, or an astronaut. I wanted to be a lawyer,” said Artis.

“WHEN I FOUND OUT MY UNCLE WAS A SUCCESSFUL LAWYER, THAT ONLY MADE ME WANT TO FURTHER PURSUE A CAREER IN LAW.”

“To this day, my uncle is my main source of inspiration for law. Being able to see him do his job and be happy with it, all while raising his beautiful family, makes me happy and hopeful that I will enjoy the same experiences one day.”

Artis always planned on attending law school, but he knew that he first needed a solid educational foundation to take the leap.

He was drawn to the skills he would learn in business at UNO CBA, particularly when he discovered that he could

combine concentrations in Legal Studies and Management.

“I learned skills that are so desperately needed in the courtroom, such as strategy formation, effective communication, persuasiveness, and overall people skills. I even learned how to be confident in myself through years of group work, forming connections, and making friends throughout my time in the School of Business,” said Artis. “I would reach out to professors, advisors, tutors, and even the librarian every once in while if I needed help. They all helped guide me on my path.”

Overcoming all challenges, Artis is now preparing to graduate, attend law school, and aiming for a career as a federal prosecutor like his uncle – an achievement we have no doubt he’ll reach.

“SOMEWHERE DOWN THE LINE, I WANT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL LAWYER THAT MY UNCLE AND THE REST OF MY FAMILY CAN BE PROUD OF,” SAID ARTIS.

ANNOUNCING THE CBA PREP ACADEMY

As part of UNO's efforts in Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion, the CBA Prep Academy is a strategic investment in both the college and Omaha community.

The UNO College of Business Administration is proud to announce the new CBA Prep Academy launched in 2022. The CBA Prep Academy aims to provide K-12 students who aspire to a future in business with the academic skills, exposure, and support necessary to succeed in college and the workplace thereafter.

Headed by Program Director Rebecca Atkins, the Prep Academy achieves its goal through on-campus, fully-funded camps with meals provided. Participating students are eligible to receive a \$500 stipend or scholarship upon camp completion, as well as connections and networking opportunities with Omaha-area industry leaders.

Camp content includes logistics and supply chain management, digital communications and social media marketing, entrepreneurship, and general college prep, including math skills. The program is open to rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors, with 20 spots per camp.

Ultimately, the program aims to uplift marginalized populations within the Omaha community, diversify the student body of UNO CBA, and create a diverse pipeline of CBA graduates who will bolster the Omaha workforce.

"Programs like this can break generational cycles of poverty and provide students the opportunity to be the first in their families to graduate from college," said Atkins. "Whether or not things like investing, the economy, and finance are discussed at home, I want students to know they belong here and that a degree in business is attainable."

Further information on the CBA Prep Academy will be shared on the program's website and on CBA social media channels. The UNO College of Business Administration looks forward to this continued investment in the Omaha community and in forging a better college.



“PROGRAMS LIKE THIS CAN BREAK GENERATIONAL CYCLES OF POVERTY AND PROVIDE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE THE FIRST IN THEIR FAMILIES TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE, I WANT STUDENTS TO KNOW THEY BELONG HERE AND THAT A DEGREE IN BUSINESS IS ATTAINABLE.” **REBECCA ATKINS**, CBA PREP ACADEMY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

To contact the Prep Academy, reach out to:

Rebecca Atkins
ratkins@unomaha.edu



For more information, visit:

[CBA.UNOMAHA.EDU/PREPACADEMY]

DR. JENNIFER RILEY AWARDED BEST PAPER

FROM THE AMERICAN ACCOUNTING ASSOCIATION

Dr. Riley's research was voted Best Paper by more than 6,000 of The American Accounting Association's members.



The UNO College of Business Administration is proud to announce that Dr. Jennifer Riley, Professor in the School of Accounting and Director of the Master of Accounting program, has won the prestigious Best Paper Award from The American Accounting Association (AAA).

Dr. Riley's paper, "Investigating Accountants' Resistance to Move Beyond Excel and Adopt New Data Analytics Technology," was nominated by the editor of AAA's journal, *Accounting Horizons*. After nomination, AAA's global membership of 6,500 professionals voted for Dr. Riley's paper as most valuable to the profession.

"*Accounting Horizons* has a general, not specialized, focus covering all subjects of accounting, and all research methods. Both of these factors indicate that the paper holds impact for more accounting researchers and for the broad accounting literature," said Riley.

"THE SUPPORT I HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTING AND CBA WAS INSTRUMENTAL, AND DEMONSTRATES THAT

RELEVANT AND IMPACTFUL RESEARCH IS VALUED AND FOSTERED. THIS AWARD RECOGNIZES THIS FACT."

Dr. Riley's real-world research emphasis made her paper a particularly strong contender for the award. In her study, Dr. Riley and co-authors Pamela J. Schmidt and Kimberly Swanson Church discuss why accountants strongly favor using Excel despite pressure to switch to more "sophisticated" software. They investigate this preference using a theoretical framework called Status Quo Bias Theory. Ultimately, the research suggests that accountants shouldn't eliminate the use of Excel, but instead pursue an analytics mindset that focuses on objectives and the optimal applications for their goals.

"Rather than pushing one specific technology, we are continuing our research into the psychological factors that keep us attached to one, preventing us from developing the dynamic mindset required of today's challenges," said Dr. Riley.

The accomplishment of this paper and its wide applicability signal further success ahead for Dr. Riley, the School

of Accounting, and the College of Business Administration.

"Jennifer is a scholar in the area of Data Analytics and Accounting Information Systems (AIS). With her extensive knowledge and expertise in AIS and data analytics, she makes significant contributions to this research project, and any project she is a part of. She has developed and maintained relevant and rigorous data analytics and AIS representation in the accounting curricula at the undergraduate and graduate level at UNO," said Dr. Roopa Venkatesh, director, School of Accounting.

"DESPITE HER SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SHE WEARS HER LEARNING LIGHTLY."

"I am honored that Dr. Riley, a true scholar, who is making a significant impact on the accounting profession and accounting education, is a part of our UNO School of Accounting and CBA faculty."

Congratulations on this well-earned honor, Dr. Riley!



RACHELLE MOON (RICE) NAMED CBA STUDENT OF THE YEAR



From earning scholarships to engaging with student organizations, Rachele Moon (Rice) excelled during her time at UNO CBA. A May 2022 Summa Cum Laude graduate with a degree in Business Administration and concentration in Management, Moon was recognized with a plethora of honors during her time at UNO. One of the most significant was being named Outstanding CBA Student of the Year, at which point Moon was also made a CBA Hall of Fame Inductee.

Moon is now employed as a Human Resources Analyst on the Campus and Military Recruitment team with Fiserv, a global fintech company where her duties include recruiting candidates for internships, assisting Fiserv's analyst program, and military fellowships. She credits her immediate professional success to her time at CBA, an alliance begun in her Nebraska City high school years. A Girl Scouts camp her sophomore summer on the UNO campus introduced her to finance classes, piquing her interest in the professional opportunities afforded in the business field.

For Moon, CBA's varied course offerings and flexible curriculum were major draws. Moon became involved with campus organizations and learning communities, naming the CBA Scholars Academy as most influential. The Scholars Academy is a close-knit community of high-achieving students who are selected after an application and interview process, ultimately earning financial support and professional development opportunities for all four years of their undergraduate program.

"The Scholars Academy connected me with high-achieving students, successful community professionals, and empowering UNO staff and faculty who all helped shape me into the person I am today," said Moon. "From the initial interview, I was surrounded with driven peers who made me want to work hard and challenge myself. I was able to learn from the experiences and advice of all these individuals, which helped me develop confidence in my ability to excel academically, professionally, and socially."

While college can be a challenge, Moon found additional avenues for support alongside the Scholars Academy. She recalls that the

availability of scholarships, made possible by CBA donors, were essential to her ability to succeed in school. Using the annual scholarship application, Moon was awarded several scholarships that allowed her to graduate debt-free – a privilege she's grateful for. Moon entered UNO CBA with undeclared concentrations, so Laura Sansoni from the CBA Career Center also aided with personality tests and career outlooks aligned with Moon's skills and interests, solidifying her direction.

The knowledge she gained at CBA has had a lasting impact on Moon's daily work. Her capstone professor, Management Lecturer Edward Cochran, was particularly influential in guiding her to create and recognize a competitive advantage in the business world. Marketing and Entrepreneurship Professor Dr. Phani Tej Adidam, who also served as her study abroad professor, taught her to see tomorrow as a new adventure with unknown plans and to keep a sense of humor when things go awry.

"I apply skills from my human resource courses when recruiting candidates and skills from my marketing courses when promoting the company," said Moon. "Outside of the core course content, though, advice from my professors has been one of the most useful tools as I have begun my career."

In addition to the Scholars Academy, college highlights included the opportunity to reengage the student marketing program and its connections through Zoom during her term as President just as COVID hit, and the 10-day Scholars Academy business tour in the Czech Republic, Austria, and Italy led by Director Bethany Hughes. She was also named Undergraduate Honor Student in Marketing.

"I was able to find success at UNO CBA due to the people who supported me. I attribute my success to the classmates, UNO faculty and staff, community mentors and donors, friends, and family members who impacted me while attending UNO," said Moon. "Being involved in organizations, employed on campus, and engaged in classes helped me to meet so many incredible people. I feel so incredibly honored to receive the accolades I have this year. I'm extremely grateful for the connections I made while at UNO."



The Fall 2022 Scholars Academy cohort.

SCHOLARS ACADEMY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

“MY COACHES HAVE HELPED ME TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO THE ACCOUNTING INDUSTRY THAT I OTHERWISE WOULD NOT HAVE, WHICH, COMBINED WITH MY OWN EXPERIENCES, HAS ALLOWED ME TO SHAPE MY VIEW OF THE CAREER I WANT.”

SAM KENNEDY
MEMBER OF THE 2019 COHORT

In 2014, when the CBA Scholars Academy was first taking shape, the newly hired Director, Bethany Hughes, looked over a list of suggestions. The ideas had come from an undergraduate student summit, where scholars across the United States shared what they found most valuable in their programs.

On the list, sandwiched between “cohort retreats” and “academic courses”, was “mentors.” Hughes highlighted the suggestion and added it to her list of programming options to explore. When the first Scholars Academy cohort came in 2015, she worked with the CBA Career Center to recruit ten business professionals from the Omaha area who would be willing to meet with students on a regular basis.

In fall 2016, the Scholars Academy doubled to 40 students and the mentors doubled to 20. Feedback from students showed that they found one-on-one relationships highly meaningful to their education. Hughes began recruiting as many mentors as she could.

The Scholars Academy, a close-knit community of ambitious students, allows BSBA scholars to gain real-world experience through scholarships, mentorship, community engagement, and international travel. Prospective students apply to the program and, if selected, receive support during all four years of their undergraduate degree - with guidance from professionals being one of the major benefits.



Since 2015, 137 professionals representing 62 different companies have participated in the Scholars Academy mentorship program. Many have returned year after year, and more than 60 business professionals participate annually.

“I honestly had no idea how impactful the program would be. But now it is, without a doubt, the most tangible benefit of the Scholars Academy,” Hughes said. “The biggest lesson I have learned is that amazing growth and opportunities can happen when great people connect.”

By meeting with their mentors, students learn first-hand what many of the day-to-day aspects of their dream career look like.

“My coaches have helped me to gain insight into the accounting industry that I otherwise would not have, which, combined with my own experiences, has allowed me to shape my view of the career I want,” said Sam Kennedy, a member of the 2019 cohort.

The program is beneficial for students looking for internships or jobs, and likewise beneficial for companies looking to hire new talent.

“My mentor during my junior year connected me to a summer internship opportunity at Fiserv, which led to an internship during the school year, and that led to being offered a full-time position after my UNO graduation,” said Rachele (Rice) Moon, a member of the 2018 cohort who graduated in May 2022. “He is now my manager, and he continues to mentor me through my job.”

Moon will serve as a mentor for the Scholars Academy in 2022-2023. Since August 2019, 30 alumni have returned as mentors, paying it forward to the program that helped launch their own success.

Scholarships play an important role in recruiting and retaining the best business students. With this financial support, the Scholars can be vibrant members of the UNO and Omaha communities in real and tangible ways, whether that’s being president of a student organization, volunteering at a nonprofit, or studying abroad.

Each Scholar receives a minimum \$5,000 annual scholarship, awarded over four years, for a total of \$20,000— all of which are provided through private gifts. Our goal is to offer each Scholar \$40,000 in total scholarships, which will only be possible through additional gifts.



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ABOUT THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

We ask mentors to commit to one academic year, which includes a minimum of six meetings between September and April. The meetings may be over lunch or coffee, at a workplace, in Mammel Hall, Zoom, or wherever would be a conducive place for quality discussion. The meetings may be at times convenient for the mentor and mentee(s).

The Scholars are required to submit reflections, three per semester, about their meetings with their mentors, so consistency from mentors is imperative for the success of this program.

HOW DO I APPLY?

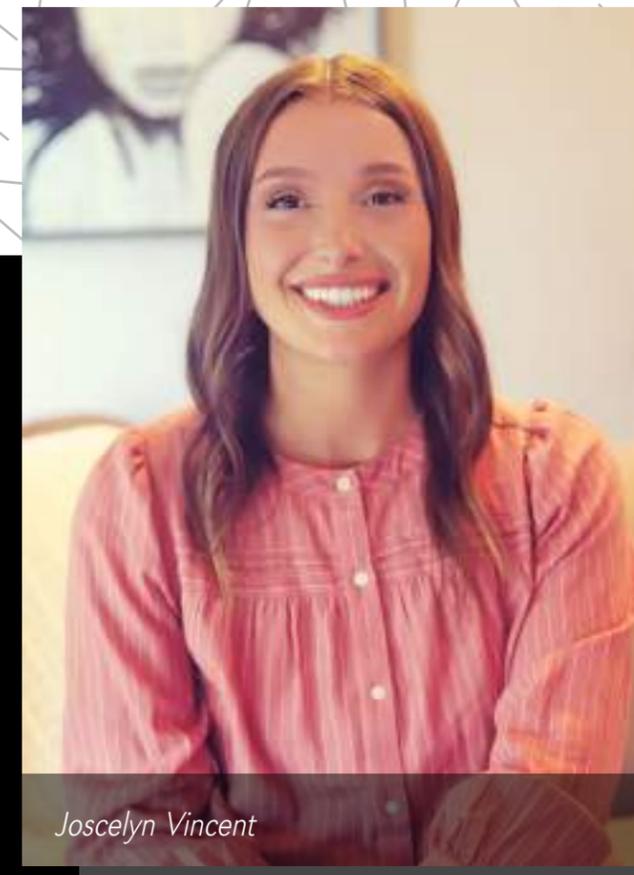
The Scholars Academy will recruit mentors for the 2023-2024 academic year in summer 2023. If you would like to be on the list of potential mentors, please email Bethany Hughes anytime at: bjhughes@unomaha.edu

DANYELL PRICE AND JOSCELYN VINCENT AWARDED THE CREW SCHOLARSHIP

2022 marks the fifth consecutive year that CBA real estate students have been awarded the Prestigious National Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Scholarship, making UNO the only university with five consecutive-year winners.



Danyell Price



Joscelyn Vincent

Danyell Price and Joscelyn Vincent, two students in UNO CBA's Real Estate and Land Use Economics BSBA concentration, are winners of the 2022 National Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Scholarship. Price and Vincent will be given \$5,000 scholarships, as well as attendance at the CREW Convention in Chicago, a paid summer internship, 24-month CREW Network membership, and more. Collectively, the scholarship benefits help boost Price and Vincent's careers in real estate immediately after graduation.

Not only is recognition by CREW significant for Price and Vincent, but also for UNO CBA's program. 2022 is the fifth consecutive year in which CBA students have won the scholarship, and UNO is the only university with five consecutive-year winners. David Beberwyk, UNO Real Estate program director, notes that this also brings UNO to six overall winners – the same number as Harvard.

"Aside from 'counting winners,' there is a larger issue at play here. The commercial real estate (CRE) industry has traditionally been a male-dominated field. The CREW Scholarships – and the fact they highlight our top-performing female students – bring attention to this long-standing disparity and encourage many students to pursue a CRE career," said Beberwyk. "Nationally, the tide is shifting, and I like to think that CBA and the UNO Real Estate Program are doing their parts to help in Nebraska. Personally, I take great pride in watching the 'scales fall from students' eyes' when they learn about – and many times, pursue – careers in CRE."

For Price and Vincent, the scholarship reinforces the career they've chosen and the value of their education. Both students are motivated to continue making an impact in commercial real estate. Price, who is President of the Rho Epsilon Real Estate Club and UNO's Black Excellence organization, hopes to pass on the inspiration by motivating more students of color in the commercial real estate field.

"This scholarship means more to me than just obtaining money. It means that I have succeeded in accomplishing one of my short-term goals of receiving the CREW scholarship and meeting like-minded women like myself," said Price. "The skills and education from UNO CBA have sharpened my skills in communication, problem-solving, management, and adaptability. The influence has made me well-rounded and ready to tackle anything. After graduation, I will start a business, take a deeper dive into commercial real estate, and I am also thinking about graduate school."

Vincent, who works in property management and has started networking with CREW winners from around the U.S., is also excited to work as a positive influence in Omaha real estate.

"Receiving this scholarship makes me feel deeply proud of myself. I am proud of all the hours I spent working and studying over the last three years, working towards my future," said Vincent. "I am so grateful to be a member of the CREW Network foundation, as it is an amazing group of women to work with and look up to. Being a member of this foundation and being welcomed with open arms as

I enter the real estate industry means everything to me. It makes me feel like I belong somewhere outside of college."

While these scholarships indicate the importance of uplifting women in traditionally male-dominated fields, the honors from CREW also emphasize the need for supportive communities, like the one established in UNO CBA.

"What motivated me to work so hard in college and end up achieving this honor is the support I received from UNO. Professor Beberwyk is an amazing professor and genuinely cares about all of his students. There are so many other staff members at UNO who have helped me along the way as well. Knowing that I had these mentors to turn to was comforting while dealing with the busyness and craziness of college," said Vincent.

With successes like this, Beberwyk is excited for the future of CBA's Real Estate program and the continued impact UNO can make in encouraging women to pursue any career they're interested in.

"I am indeed hopeful about the future of UNO Real Estate. The program has experienced unprecedented growth since 2015 due to many factors, one of which is the attention that it has received through student achievements such as CREW. The growth has also enabled us to hire a new faculty member, Jamie Chung, who joined us this fall. She'll also be joining CREW," said Beberwyk. "I truly believe that the ongoing synergy between UNO, CREW, and many other organizations committed to our students' welfare bodes well for UNO Real Estate going forward."

DAVID BEBERWYK'S REFLECTIONS ON DANYELL PRICE AND JOSCELYN VINCENT:

"Danyell and Joscelyn are both what you'd call 'go-getters.' At every juncture, they seek opportunities to grow, pursue challenges, and help others whenever the chance presents itself.

"Danyell is currently the President of Rho Epsilon (student Real Estate club) and is accomplishing things over the years that others have merely talked about. She has had several important CRE internships, and impresses me every time we meet. Last year, Danyell was selected as the recipient of the Omaha Commercial Real Estate Summit Scholarship, which she was awarded in front of 800+ members of the Omaha CRE community.

"Joscelyn is energetic and involved in a multitude of extra-curricular activities at UNO, to include Rho Epsilon. She is doing great things in a high-profile CRE position with a prestigious Omaha company, and like Danyell, was selected as this year's recipient of the Omaha Commercial Real Estate Summit Scholarship; she, too was recognized for this achievement in front of the Omaha CRE community in August."

THOMAS FREY FINDS A PATH TO COLLEGE WITH CAREER CURRENCY

AND UNO'S SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Frey took advantage of his employer's Career Currency partnership with UNO to pursue a degree in Supply Chain Management after three kids and 20+ years away from school.

The journey through college wasn't always direct for Thomas Frey. When he received a scholarship from the University of New Orleans, he tested out different majors, bouncing from engineering, to accounting, to general business. When he started working with an offshore construction company, he left college altogether.

Fast forward more than 20 years, and now Frey not only has three children of his own off at college, but he's back at university too. Through the UNO Career Currency program, which provides educational funding for Omaha-based employer partners, Frey is studying Supply Chain Management with the College of Business Administration. It was a decision he made for his career growth, and to uplift his family.

"I have a son at LA Tech in supply chain management, a daughter on full paid scholarship at Southern Miss for nursing, and a daughter at Pearl River CC for dental hygiene. I wanted to show them it was a mistake that I didn't finish college before, and if I can go back and finish, then they can focus on finishing too," said Frey.

And Frey isn't just working through his degree - he's excelling. He's been nominated for Outstanding Student in Supply Chain Management and is completing the program while working full-time as a welder for Union Pacific. He read about Union Pacific's educational assistance partnership with UNO on his employer's website, where he realized that because of his job, he could earn a fully paid degree. It's been a clearer journey for him ever since, especially due to the program's flexibility.

"The process was simple. Christine Bolas, the UNO-UP concierge, and Lizzie Dement, my advisor, helped me to get signed up and get my transcripts transferred over. It took no time at all," said Frey. "Being able to work completely online was the most beneficial aspect.



Thomas Frey (right) is recognized with Dr. Steve Schulz (left) for his efforts in Supply Chain Management at a UNO honoring ceremony.

First, because I live in New Orleans and work in Houston, attending class in Omaha was not an option. Being able to work on my own time was an immense help also. Working full-time as a welder on the rails, I was able to come home and work on school in the evenings, weekends, or even on breaks."

Frey is nearing the end of his program and is currently progressing through his senior corporate and business strategy class with Dr. Nick Arreola, which he calls "challenging, but very information-packed." He's even found value in classes outside of his core concentration area, such as his professional selling class with Dr. Anne Herman.

"I really enjoyed my professional selling class with Dr. Herman. She interacted with students well and made class fun," said Frey. "It helped me learn to put better presentations together and become more comfortable using Zoom meetings. All of these classes will help me work my way into a job pertaining to Supply Chain Management."

Ultimately, Frey plans to leverage his degree into a Supply Chain Management role with Union Pacific. He's already started submitting his resume for openings and is confident in the knowledge he can bring to the table.

"I really enjoy working with Union Pacific. They're a great employer to work for. I hope to be able to use my degree and experience to work my way into the supply chain side of the business," said Frey. "I hope to be able to travel the country, too. I love exploring new places. With UP operating in 23 states, I would like to be able to work throughout."

Frey is a great example of the life-changing progress one can achieve through partnership, community, and commitment. We're proud to have Thomas as a UNO CBA success story!

FREY'S ROAD TO UNO



SUPPLY CHAIN





DR. PHANI TEJ ADIDAM AWARDED APPOINTMENT AS A FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

PREPARES TO BUILD BRIDGES WITH THE WORLD

Adidam joins the Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) in Austria for four months, where he will teach, conduct research, and connect UNO with the global community.

Dr. Phani Tej Adidam, Professor of Marketing & Entrepreneurship at the UNO College of Business Administration, was recently awarded appointment as a Fulbright Scholar and now represents UNO on a worldwide scale. Adidam was selected for the prestigious honor due to his experience in understanding and engaging with global communities.

Adidam was distinctly poised for this opportunity after becoming the first Excellence in Global Engagement Award winner by UNO in 2019. He was recognized for classes that emphasize overcoming the challenges of cultural immersion in a host nation – something he also experienced first-hand while spending the early years of his life in Australia.

“I was born in India, and thanks to my parents, I lived in Australia for a few years during the early part of my life. Being an Indian in an alien country during the late 1960s and early 1970s exposed me to the importance of building bridges with different cultures and communities – especially those that are vastly different from ours,” said Adidam. “This idea was continuously instilled in me throughout my life as a student, corporate executive, and academic.”

Now, Adidam has mentored more than 500 students in expanding the global footprint of several companies based in more than 25 countries. His reach will only grow as a Fulbright Scholar; as part of his appointment, Adidam teaches and conducts research at the



Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) in Austria. His appointment started in September 2022 and ends in February 2023. Adidam guides students in Sales Management and Marketing of Talent (undergraduate) and Brand Management (graduate).

He’s also responsible for a brand audit of the Tyrol brand in the post-pandemic world, analyzing the Tyrolean region of Austria and Northern Italy while guiding two graduate students in their thesis. He hopes to make a direct economic and marketing impact on the tourism prospects of this key Alpine area in Europe.

“Without hesitation, I can say that this scholarship is perhaps the highlight of my academic career (on par with achieving tenure and

promotion here at UNO). CBA has had the pleasure of having four Fulbright Scholars in the past 50 years, and I am honored to join this select group of CBA Faculty,” said Adidam. “Via this program, I will be able to immerse deeply in the Austrian culture and learn new ideas regarding how to connect and engage with millennials and a diverse group of international students in a better manner.”

Ultimately, Adidam wants to create a legacy of “respecting multiple cultures across national boundaries.” His time in Austria will allow him to build and strengthen relationships with various business schools and programs worldwide, contributing significantly to his mission and bolstering UNO’s contributions upon the global stage.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS RECEIVE REAL-WORLD BUSINESS CONSULTING EXPERIENCE AT NBDC

When Lincoln, Neb. native Bre Johnson applied for a graduate assistant position at the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC), she wasn't sure what she was getting herself into. The position was for a role within NBDC's Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), and while the job description included terms the MBA student was familiar with, like "marketing" and "business consulting," it also included terms like "government contracting."

"WHEN I FIRST SAW THE ROLE, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS, BUT IT HAS BEEN EVEN BETTER THAN I COULD HAVE IMAGINED."

Embedded within the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), NBDC offers no-cost consulting services to business owners and entrepreneurs across Nebraska. Graduate assistants play a critical role at NBDC by serving as consultants, where they receive real-world experience working with clients.

Graduate assistants provide practical advice that helps Nebraska business owners start, grow, or transition their companies. They learn specific business expertise from the program team they join. In Johnson's case, it's helping businesses win government contracts. Others, for example, focus on companies in the technology and innovation sector.

Johnson helps non-profits and municipalities register in the federal System for Award Management (SAM), which can be a difficult process to navigate without her expert guidance. She also has marketing responsibilities like writing newsletters and social media content.

"I LOVE THE COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING SIDE, BUT I ALSO LOVE GETTING TO WORK WITH CLIENTS."

Luis Franco is from Guayaquil, Ecuador, working on his master's degree in economics. His specialty is consulting with small businesses, including restaurants, real estate agencies, transportation companies, and more. "I help them with all kinds of things - creating business plans, doing financial projections, or market research," said Franco.

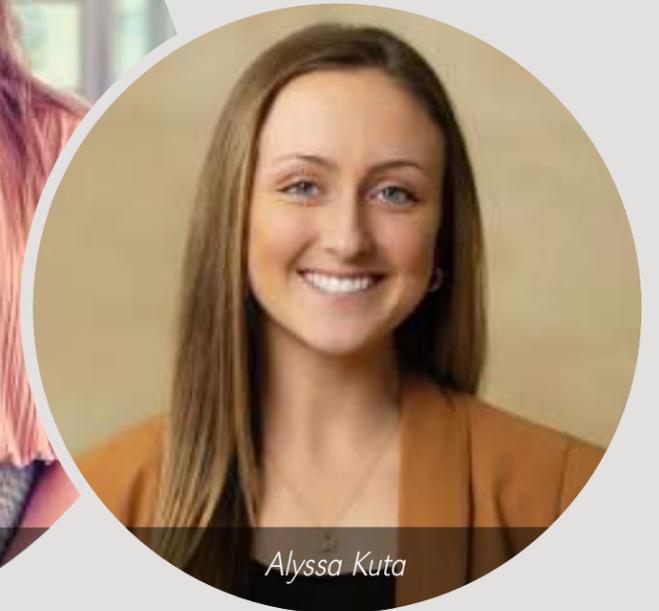
"IT'S SATISFYING TO HELP REAL BUSINESSES. IT'S FUN TO GET EMAILS FROM CLIENTS WHO ARE GETTING RESULTS, HIRING EMPLOYEES, AND INCREASING SALES."

He has especially enjoyed the opportunity to work on an initiative with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development to reach Spanish-speaking business owners. Franco helped craft a survey and conducted focus groups with entrepreneurs in South Omaha to learn what resources they needed and how COVID-19 has impacted their businesses.

"Since then, in the last 8-12 months, we've had more Spanish-speaking clients come to NBDC." The data he helped gather will inform initiatives, funding, and resources provided by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.



Luis Franco and Bre Johnson



Alyssa Kuta

Both Johnson and Franco say their roles at NBDC have impacted their career goals after graduation.

"I WOULD LIKE TO FIND A JOB THAT CONTINUES MY PASSION FOR COMMUNICATIONS WORK IN SOME REGARD, BUT BECAUSE OF WORKING HERE, IT'S OPENED MY EYES TO MY PASSION FOR HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES," SAID JOHNSON.

Franco is hoping to pursue a career in supply chain management but is also interested in looking at business development positions. "It was destiny to be at NBDC, I guess," he said.

Alyssa Kuta, a Columbus, Neb., native and an alumna of the UNO MBA program, knows firsthand how the graduate assistant program can impact a career. Kuta graduated in May and received an analyst position with the Nebraska Angels and Invest Nebraska.

"I liked the independence and the hands-on work that we got to do. It wasn't like case studies, it was working with small businesses in the real world," she reflected. "There are businesses that I worked with at NBDC

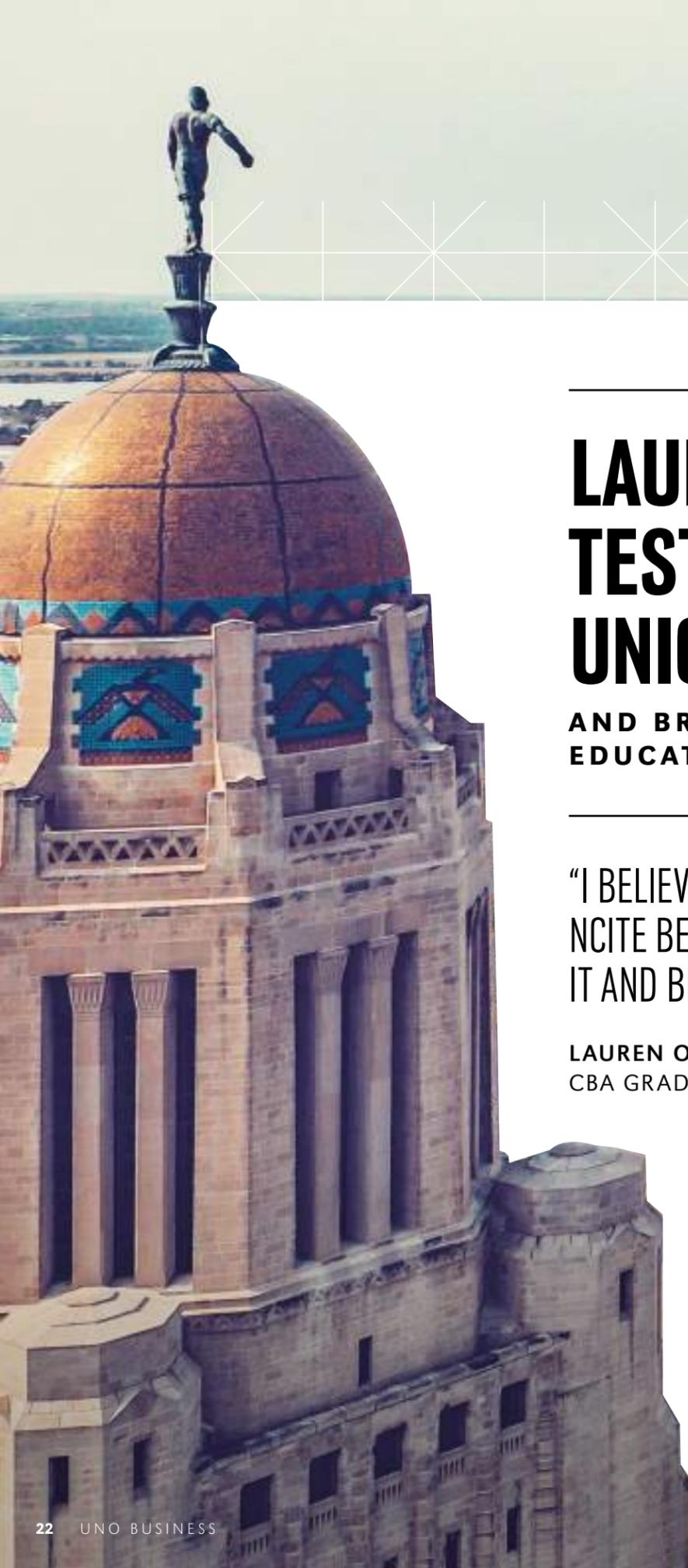
that I still see working in the business ecosystem that are running with our advice and doing great."

"I never would have even known that I had an interest for this work had I not been exposed to the entrepreneurship ecosystem through NBDC. I never would have been introduced to these organizations if not for NBDC."

Catherine Lang, state director, says the program plays an important role in developing talent within the entrepreneurship ecosystem and for supporting Nebraska entrepreneurs and business owners. "We could not help as many businesses as we do without their expertise. It's an honor for us to help support this piece of their career development as they complete their studies."

"You're always being encouraged to expand professionally," said Johnson.

"ALL THE WORK THAT I DO HERE, I STRONGLY BELIEVE WILL TRANSLATE INTO MY FUTURE CAREER."



LAUREN O'MALLEY TESTIFIES AT THE UNICAMERAL

AND BRINGS ATTENTION TO
EDUCATION IN OMAHA

"I BELIEVE IN THE WORK HAPPENING AT
NCITE BECAUSE I'VE BOTH WITNESSED
IT AND BEEN A PART OF IT."

LAUREN O'MALLEY
CBA GRADUATE STUDENT



Earlier this year, the Nebraska State Legislature was deciding how to allocate federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, and Nebraska state Senator Tony Vargas proposed bill LB961. This bill would allocate some of those ARPA funds to NCITE, America's latest terrorism and targeted violence-fighting tool housed in Mammel Hall's Rod Rhoden Business Innovation Center. Each bill only allows three speakers on its behalf - and that's when Lauren O'Malley stepped in at the Nebraska Unicameral.

O'Malley, who graduated with her Master of Business Administration in May 2022, has been growing with NCITE for the last two years. The bill needed a supportive student voice, so she spoke alongside NCITE Director Dr. Gina Ligon and Chancellor Joanne Li, sharing her belief in the work happening at UNO.

"I believe in the work happening at NCITE because I've both witnessed it and been a part of it. I'm proof of the return on investment and believe NCITE is an asset both nationally and locally," said O'Malley.

While LB961 didn't move forward, her 5-minute speech was still a success. Not only did O'Malley's words call attention to NCITE, but also to the broader necessity of educational support within Nebraska and at UNO. O'Malley stressed the importance of continuous funding to retain students and young professionals like herself, who originally believed she would need to leave the state to find greater opportunities.

"As a future business leader, I can say that investing in NCITE is a sound investment decision. It will impact both the state and local economy by creating jobs and bringing in high-caliber talent to Nebraska. It will incentivize local talent to plant roots here by providing world-class opportunities for education and employment. It will create valuable resources for law enforcement, government officials, and even businesses to keep their communities safe," testified O'Malley.

This is a personal concern for O'Malley, who came to UNO for her BSBA and graduated in 2020. She was concerned about choosing UNO because the college was only 20 minutes from her parent's home, but opportunities like being a member of the CBA Scholars Academy and holding leadership roles in various organizations such as Maverick Investment Club, Financial Management Association, and Student Marketing Association kept her here. Despite her success, she still pondered leaving Nebraska - until she was approached about joining NCITE and recognized the immense opportunity in Omaha.

"I think there's a stigma sometimes that comes from staying in your hometown. I'm very future-driven and career-oriented, so finding opportunities to challenge myself and grow is important to me, but I thought I needed to leave Omaha to find those," said O'Malley. "The CBA Scholars Academy and the strength of the College of Business enticed me to stay for my undergraduate, and the opportunity at NCITE did the same for my MBA. I've found so much opportunity here, even more so than many of my peers who went far away have found, and I'm extremely happy with my decisions."

Now that O'Malley has decided to stay in Omaha and be a voice for the city, she's excited for what comes next.

"My goals are to keep learning, growing, and being the best employee, co-worker, and friend that I can be. I recently accepted a job as a Sales Development Analyst at Aviture, a technology consulting firm who does work for both the private sector and government, so my NCITE experience will transition nicely there," said O'Malley. "The process of interviewing and applying for jobs is typically daunting, but I had a positive experience because I felt excited about what I was bringing to the table. Employers were very interested in what I've been up to at NCITE in the past two years and how that experience can add value to their organization."



I AM THE ROI: KILEY ARMITAGE

“WHEN LOOKING AT THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS IN NEBRASKA, I WAS JUST REALLY DRAWN TOWARD UNO AND THE IDEA THAT UNO PULLS IN SO MANY COMMUNITY PARTNERS.”

KYLIE ARMITAGE
UNO CBA ALUMNA

When two-time alumna Kiley Armitage thinks about UNO, she thinks about connections.

Connections with faculty and advisors in the College of Business Administration. Connections with area businesses and organizations. Connections with her fellow classmates. And, importantly, connections with the Omaha community.

It was UNO’s location within the Omaha community that led to her becoming a Maverick. When she was young, her father needed treatment at QLI, a local rehabilitation center and national center of excellence that specializes in diagnoses and treatment of individuals who have sustained a brain, spinal cord, or other neurological injuries.

The proximity to her father, who lives in Nebraska and was a resident at QLI when she was young, led her to take a closer look at UNO. “When looking at the different schools in Nebraska, I was just really drawn toward UNO and the idea that UNO pulls in so many community partners.”

Armitage experienced firsthand the power of connections while at UNO. She became involved in student organizations such as Beta Alpha Psi where she learned about accounting roles within agencies and corporations in town. She also helped with the CBA Scholars Academy where she served as a resource for new and prospective students.

Building relationships through student organizations at UNO led her to explore internship and career opportunities. UNO’s connections with Union Pacific provided an opportunity for her to interview for an internship at a career fair held on campus. With support from the CBA’s Career Center in polishing her resume and preparing for interviews, she landed an internship with the Fortune 500 company.

“Being at Union Pacific helped me really build an interest in the technical side of things,” Armitage said. “There are some really talented people in the accounting and finance team at Union Pacific that helped build my skill sets.”

Armitage earned her undergraduate degree in business administration with a focus in accounting and finance. Before she completed her degree, she found herself launching her career with an organization near to her heart, and the same organization that helped her father regain functionality following a stroke: QLI.

Connections with professionals in community organizations, as well as with faculty and advisers within CBA, helped build her confidence and explore different areas of business for a future career path.

“Today, I’m director of operations [for QLI], and I work mostly in the HR department. I never thought I was going to do that,” she said. “I started off as an accountant before I even graduated. They took a chance on me, and I got promoted pretty quickly to coordinator of financial operations, and now recently director of operations. I love having a company that believes in me and can see in myself what I have the potential to do.”

Armitage mentioned being thankful to QLI for developing her in a way that is not only best for the company, but best for her personally. “Just like the QLI leaders believe in me, the UNO professors believed in me, maybe sooner than I would have in myself.”

Over the years, Armitage has stayed connected to campus through the UNO Young Alumni Academy, a program sponsored by the UNO Alumni Association, and later returned to earn her master’s in business administration from UNO. As a two-time alumna herself, she wants future Mavericks to explore the connections they may be able to build at UNO.

“I would definitely encourage other students to go to UNO because it’s the type of campus where you feel valued as a student, and you know that you’re going to be able to build connections to help you find a career that you really love.”



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA AWARDED COLLABORATION INITIATIVE GRANT FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH USSTRATCOM

The grant funds collaboration between UNO CBA and USSTRATCOM toward a greater understanding of global nuclear deterrence.

Dr. Dustin White, assistant professor of economics with the UNO College of Business Administration, recently spearheaded a grant application focused on strategic nuclear deterrence in partnership with the National Strategic Research Institute (NSRI). The grant, approved in June 2022, provides funding for UNO’s continued partnership with USSTRATCOM.

“UNO is heavily involved in supporting the USSTRATCOM mission of strategic nuclear deterrence through the NSRI, which was created with the goal of streamlining relationships between students, researchers, and USSTRATCOM,” said White. “UNO (and the other NU campuses) have so much expertise to share with respect to nuclear deterrence. Our work has recently focused on the new problems resulting from shifting power at the global level.”

UNO CBA will contribute faculty and student knowledge toward a greater understanding of how the U.S., Russia, and China impact the stability of global nuclear deterrence as “nuclear peers.”

“Are tripolar relations more or less stable? How can we work to prevent nuclear conflict in this environment?,” asks White. “A lot of what UNO researchers are doing with USSTRATCOM focuses on helping stakeholders to better understand the current environment.”

UNO CBA will use this seed grant to pursue the greater ambition of utilizing game theory and simulation to strengthen USSTRATCOM’s

capabilities. White believes the college is uniquely poised to be a partner to USSTRATCOM through the pairing of business acumen with defense knowledge. Both groups benefit from the diversity of perspectives during projects.

“I have been working with USSTRATCOM since the year that I came to UNO. It has been one of the most fulfilling things that I have been able to do here, and it would not have happened anywhere else,” said White. “This grant in particular will help us to expand the types of expertise available to USSTRATCOM, and has already given me a chance to learn about deterrence strategy in a way that I would not have been able to do otherwise.”

White often discusses the importance of these projects in class. When he talks about the partnership, students ask how they can get involved. This has resulted in several UNO CBA students receiving internships with USSTRATCOM via the NSRI.

“As faculty, our job is to find ways to help students learn what they are passionate about, and to create opportunities for them to be involved in those areas,” said White. “I get involved in projects with USSTRATCOM in the hopes that I will be able to help more students find their passion, while also providing valuable work to support the mission of USSTRATCOM.”

“ I HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH USSTRATCOM SINCE THE YEAR THAT I CAME TO UNO. IT HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST FULFILLING THINGS THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO HERE.”

DR. DUSTIN WHITE, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS

UNO CBA BY THE NUMBERS

A RELENTLESS FOCUS ON STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS

We are here, ready and willing, to put in the work that it takes to sustain our positive momentum and build upon necessary areas of improvement. We share a common destiny dependent upon the success of our college and community.

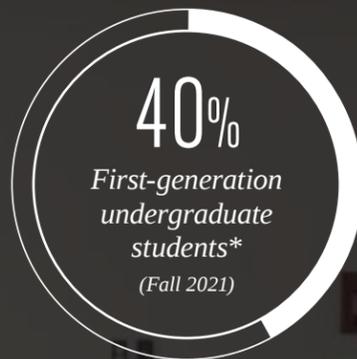
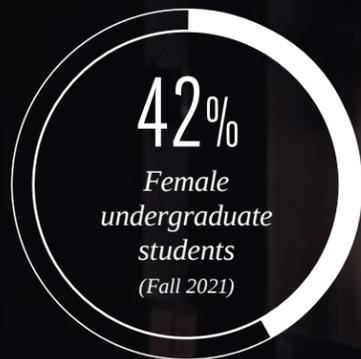
1,756 CBA undergraduate students (Fall 2021)

208 CBA graduate degrees conferred (August 2021 – May 2022)

15 BSBA concentrations available (Fall 2021)

2,321 BSBA concentrations declared (Fall 2021)

4 Graduate degree programs (Fall 2021)



72 Full-time faculty (Fall 2021)

41,535 Student credit hours delivered (Fall 2021 – Spring 2022)

109 Internships for credit (August 2021 – May 2022)

31% Historically underrepresented undergraduate students* (Fall 2021)

19% Historically underrepresented graduate students* (Fall 2021)

80% Retention rate for full-time, first-year students (Fall 2021 enrolled in Fall 2022)

67% 6-year BSBA graduation rate (Fall 2015 cohort)

\$23,668 Cost of attendance for one full-time academic year* (Fall 2022 – Spring 2023)



\$1,028,824 Scholarships awarded* (Fall 2021 – Spring 2022)

29.4% of students are Pell Grant eligible* (Fall 2021)

298 Executive education learners (Fall 2021 – Spring 2022)

48 Executive education certificates awarded (Fall 2021 – Spring 2022)

The strength of UNO's College of Business Administration lies in its ability to provide an exceptional, applied educational experience that prepares all graduates for lasting success in the real world. We commit to continued excellence and our relentless focus on student access and success through the support of DEAI programming and initiatives in our community; recruiting and retaining

diverse students, faculty, and staff; and enhancing accessibility for underrepresented communities by identifying and reducing barriers and ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. We are deeply invested in directly impacting the professional workforce in our region, leading the economy of the future, and improving the human condition.

*These numbers indicate areas of greatest need or desired growth. Historically underrepresented refers to groups who have been denied access and/or suffered past institutional discrimination in the United States and, according to the Census and other federal measuring tools, includes African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islander Americans, Hispanics or Chicanos/Latinos, and Native Americans.



DESTYNIE SEWELL MAKES ROOM FOR CONNECTIONS, CONVERSATIONS, AND INSPIRATION

Professor Destynie Sewell, JD, MBA, shares her perspective on Equity and Inclusion as a mentor, mother, and community change-maker.



I WOULD TELL STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY STUDENTS OF COLOR: DON'T GIVE UP. YOU DESERVE YOUR SPOT. YOU ARE JUST AS BRIGHT AND JUST AS DESERVING AS YOUR COUNTERPARTS TO BE HERE. FIND OR CREATE A COMMUNITY. AND KNOW THAT THERE ARE PROFESSORS ALL OVER CAMPUS, AND IN OUR BUILDING, WHO LOVE TO MENTOR AND SPONSOR."

DESTYNIE SEWELL, JD, MBA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS
LAW AND ETHICS

Destynie Sewell, JD, MBA, and Assistant Professor of Business Law and Ethics, has committed herself to the success of those she calls her "babies." From recently becoming a mother to twins, to the many students she mentors, Sewell is a stalwart advocate and change-maker in all she does.

"In my culture, we take care of each other's children," said Sewell. "If you help pour into and nourish a young person, it's perfectly normal to claim them as your baby. I know my students are grown adults, but no matter how old you get, when one of my 'babies' succeeds, I succeed."

Sewell is nurturing several "babies" – including projects, students, and community initiatives – in pursuit of enhancing Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion (DEAI) efforts on-campus and in Omaha. Personal experience with the importance of having conversations around these topics drive her in this effort. As a new mom, Sewell recalls constantly being asked if she would return to work, while her husband was never once asked the same question. It invigorated her desire to challenge harmful perceptions of what a woman can do at home and at work.

"Within the College of Business, we're not where we want to be when it comes to diversity. We're recognizing that, and we have to be open with ourselves, saying 'Do we represent our community?'" suggested Sewell. "In any initiative related to Diversity, Inclusion, and Access, ask 'Are we making it accessible for the underrepresented? And why are they underrepresented?' We research and try to figure out where the gap is, and then we work to fill it."

Being a mother isn't the only realm in which Sewell is fighting to change perceptions and battle stereotypes. As a Black woman in higher education, she reflected on instances in which her worth and knowledge have been, and continue to be, doubted by others. But, like she would recommend to students, Sewell never diminishes her qualifications, successes, and her right to be where she is.

"I would tell students, especially Students of Color: don't give up. You deserve your spot. You are just as bright and just as deserving as your counterparts to be here. Find or create a community. And know that there are professors all over campus, and in our building, who love to mentor and sponsor," she suggested. "Don't be afraid to approach them. Closed mouths don't get fed. But if you're particularly facing challenges that stem from loneliness or feeling like 'the other' in CBA, make an effort to find a professor you can connect with. If you can't find that professor – come see me."

Sewell constantly considers her students' circumstances in her efforts to make spaces for them to excel, see themselves represented, and find resources for their success. When she heard from a student that in their four years on campus, she was the only Professor of Color they'd ever had, it reinforced for Sewell why she puts in the effort that she does.

"I love being at the front of a room. I hope I'm inspiring others. The Law professor before me, Dr. Darryll Lewis, inspired me to

go to law school. I didn't know any other Black lawyers, and he mentored me throughout undergrad. When he retired, and there was a conversation about me replacing him, I thought 'no one can replace him!'," said Sewell. "I hope to give that back to the students, especially underrepresented students within the college. I hope to make an impact for students who benefit from seeing themselves represented in the classroom."

And Sewell doesn't just hope for change – she acts. Sewell is co-director to the Underserved Laws Opportunity Program (ULOP), an academic and career pipeline program between UNO and UNL's Nebraska College of Law. The program allows participating UNO undergraduate students to be accepted into UNL's law school if they meet certain minimum requirements. Paired with pipeline programming for high school students interested in becoming attorneys – Sewell is part of a summer camp coming up in 2023 – and having served on a task force to provide no-cost legal services to UNO students, her life-changing work reaches across the state.

Sewell also served as Co-Chair of the CBA DEAI Task Force, during which time she wrote the grant that led to funding for the new CBA Prep Academy. She's invigorating and expanding the reach of the Legal Studies program within the College of Business Administration. And she designed and currently teaches a class titled Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion for Risk Managers, which meets both MBA and U.S. Diversity General Elective Requirements. In all her efforts, Sewell emphasizes making space for connections and safe conversations around Equity and Inclusion.

"Diversity in thought is enriching. In my class, we set ground rules: we won't disrespect the speaker, we won't show animus or hostility, what we talk about stays in the classroom, and we can have a vigorous debate and leave here as friends," said Sewell. "I always say in our discussions, we're not going to just be adults, we're going to be better than adults. Students love that. They leave saying they feel like they're more educated and prepared to have those conversations. A lot of people are scared to talk about these topics, but if you set respectful ground rules, those conversations can be fruitful."

For instructors, departments, or community members seeking to encourage conversations around Equity and Inclusion, Sewell recommends creating environments where people are free to ask questions, feel safe in talking about challenging topics, and where the emphasis is on addressing systemic issues, not insulting anyone's worth or emphasizing power dynamics. She believes Omaha will thrive with more attempts to make room for compassionate discussions. At UNO, she's doing everything in her power to make these happen.

"UNO, and the College of Business Administration specifically, recognize the need for safe and productive conversations like this. I serve on the Dean's Advisory Council for DEAI, and it's a goal of the college to take that seriously," shared Sewell. "We're not forgetting any students. You don't leave family behind to take in more, you take everyone with you. We're all moving forward together, so hold on for the ride!"

THE UNO CBA CAREER CENTER DEVELOPS STUDENTS AND THE OMAHA WORKFORCE

CBA is the only college at UNO with a dedicated career services center for students – and this makes a big impact for Nebraska’s workforce development.



“

THE MORE ORGANIZATIONS AND COMPANIES THAT SEEK BUSINESS STUDENTS, OR STUDENTS WITH BUSINESS UNDERSTANDING, THE MORE WE CAN HIGHLIGHT THOSE OPPORTUNITIES AND GET STUDENTS WORKING AT YOUR ORGANIZATION. THIS HELPS COMPANIES SUCCEED AT ALL LEVELS.”

LAURA SANSONI, DIRECTOR OF THE CBA CAREER CENTER

While every college at UNO is committed to supporting their students’ success, the College of Business Administration offers something special – a dedicated career center specifically supporting business students. CBA is the only college on campus with a center of its kind. This makes a big impact on the development of students’ careers and towards UNO’s commitment to state workforce development.

The Career Center preps students for job success, works with and assists employers in connecting with business students, and hosts potentially life-changing events like their fall and spring career fairs. For Laura Sansoni, director of the Career Center, their work is also about highlighting “how awesome CBA students are.” Most students at CBA are working while earning their degree, so the Career Center is committed to linking them

with businesses offering internships and full-time jobs that can grow their success. This is also great for businesses seeking a knowledgeable workforce.

“The more organizations and companies that seek business students, or students with business understanding, the more we can highlight those opportunities and get students working at your organization. This helps companies succeed at all levels,” said Sansoni. It also provides a vital kick-start for young students’ careers. “Our goal is that all CBA students and alumni possess the skills and competence to pursue a dynamic, lifelong career.”

Sansoni and Lizzie Dement, career advisor, act on this goal by offering resume reviews, mock interviews, and career assessments. They also work with students



on Handshake, a free job search platform that allows employers to connect directly with students at UNO. Employers can contact students, invite them to events, or simply post jobs and internships on the platform. The ability for students and employers to connect allows many students to graduate with jobs lined up.

“We talk to employers on a regular basis, learning about their organizations and how we can share their opportunities with students. We also meet to facilitate a deeper connection with business students. For example, we review job descriptions on Handshake, and show employers how they can make the job description more appealing or help them highlight what they have to offer business students,” said Sansoni. “We ultimately showcase them to students and share their values so students can see if they’ll be a good fit. We are the bridge between employers and the knowledge CBA students have to offer.”

The impact doesn’t stop there. CBA Career Fairs bring more than 50 employers to Mammel Hall each semester, with the latest Fall 2022 fair seeing a 50% increase in student attendance from the previous semester. These events are so successful at connecting employers with the right students for their jobs that there’s a waitlist for employer entry.

“The success of the Career Fairs inherently effects workforce development in the

sense that we have our largest group of students entering UNO ever. That will have ripple effects for workforce development in Omaha. It’s that many more students that want to be professionally prepared to work in the companies and organizations in our area,” said Sansoni. “It’s how many students coming through the College of Business will take advantage of the opportunities that we offer to work and stay in Omaha.”

The Career Center is building upon this momentum by teaching 1-credit professional development courses for CBA students available during the first three years of their undergraduate degree program. Students learn everything from professional email etiquette, to intentional career exploration, to teaching students how to network and function in professional settings. It’s all about elevating the success of business students and building a better workforce right at home.

“I am always open to conversations about supporting the UNO business student, elevating them in the community, and showcasing how awesome our students are,” said Sansoni. “Whether you’re an individual, an alum, a small business owner, or you work at a larger company, you’re welcome to reach out to me. I’m happy to learn about you, and how your needs align with the skills and the qualifications that our students have and bring to the table.”

“

THE SUCCESS OF THE CAREER FAIRS INHERENTLY IMPACTS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SENSE THAT WE HAVE OUR LARGEST GROUP OF STUDENTS ENTERING UNO EVER. THAT WILL HAVE RIPPLE EFFECTS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN OMAHA. IT’S THAT MANY MORE STUDENTS THAT WANT TO BE PROFESSIONALLY PREPARED TO WORK IN OUR AREA.”

LAURA SANSONI, DIRECTOR OF THE CBA CAREER CENTER



CONNECT WITH THE CBA CAREER CENTER

ATTEND A CAREER FAIR

Connect with business students studying Accounting, Economics, Banking, Real Estate, Management, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, and more. Fall 2022’s fair saw 300+ students attend seeking employment.

JOIN THE EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Affords a higher level of visibility on campus and a closer connection with our offices and UNO students. Includes priority invitations to attend events like panels and mock interviews, access to resume books, increased brand visibility, and more.

GUEST SPEAK ON WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS

The Career Center hosts Webinar Wednesdays, where employers are invited to speak on career development topics and prep students for the workforce. Showcase why you want a student with a business degree from UNO and why this is a value-add to your organization.

GET STARTED ON HANDSHAKE

This is a portal for posting job and internship openings, scheduling on-campus interviews, and connecting with students on upcoming events and job opportunities. Handshake is the #1 resource to get in touch with knowledgeable business students.

For more information on connecting with the UNO College of Business Administration or to get involved, contact:

Laura Sansoni
lsansoni@unomaha.edu



MBA ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

OMAR AL MULKI SPEAKS THE LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS

“

THE UNO CULTURE WAS VERY OPEN TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS—ITS STRONG INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, AND I MET INDIVIDUALS FROM ALL NATIONALITIES AND CONTINENTS. STUDENTS DIDN'T HAVE TO PAY FEES TO JOIN STUDENT GROUPS, LIKE ON OTHER CAMPUSES, SO I JOINED EVERYTHING.”

OMAR AL MULKI, MBA
CBA ALUMNUS

A native of Syria, MBA alumnus Omar Al Mulki's road to Omaha is inspiring. His story begins as a young college student; his life was upended after war broke out in his home country, forcing his family to flee to Egypt. He continued his education in architecture for a couple of years, but he yearned to explore greater opportunities in education and job prospects in the United States. With many programs to choose from, Omar found his perfect match in Nebraska, first pursuing general education classes at UNO and eventually a degree from the architecture program at UNL. Ultimately, he enhanced his education as an MBA student at UNO.

Omar recounts his first few months in the U.S. and on the UNO campus: “The UNO culture was very open to international students—its strong international programs bring people together, and I met individuals from all nationalities and continents.” He also notes that quick friendships were made through student groups, such as the ballroom dance club and archery club. “Students didn't have to pay fees to join, like on other campuses, so I joined everything!”

Immediately upon graduation, Omar received a job offer and began his career as a design coordinator for an Omaha-based architecture firm. There he got to work on projects with premier healthcare facilities, spurring his passion for behavioral health design. After only six months at his new job, Omar knew it was time to pursue a master's degree.

“I had picked an undergraduate degree in architecture to open more doors, but I'm a businessman at heart. I knew I needed a business education to achieve the goals and objectives for any project I'm hired to do,” he explained. While somewhat short-lived, his positive experience at UNO prompted him to apply to the UNO MBA program. He notes that the MBA structure, with 8-week classes offered in the evenings, was also a big selling point. “I didn't have to give up my day job to pursue the degree, like other master's programs.”

As an MBA student, Omar took advantage of both educational and networking opportunities. He was an active member and leader of the MBAA student association and was involved in the Maverick Venture Fund for three semesters.

“The program isn't just about learning the material, but about networking and building relationships. All the students are professionals, and I didn't look at them just as peers, but also role models. This was a huge value-add for the program,” he said. He also remembers a poignant comment from Dr. Erin Bass early in the program: “I'm not here to teach you, but to facilitate your learning.” This shaped his attitude and approach to the program, noting “the world is always changing -- some of the material may be obsolete in a few years, but the skill I learned is to keep learning.”

Omar praises the amazing faculty he encountered as an MBA student. Some of the highlights include his finance professor Dr. Jeff Bredthauer: “He was a huge support, great teacher, and I learned a lot from him.” He also remarks that, in his opinion, Dr. Brent Clark's strategy course is the greatest class the program has to offer: “His class was the most rewarding.”

Since graduating from the MBA program in May of 2021, Omar has joined HDR, a large engineering and architecture firm, where he continues his design work for healthcare companies across the U.S. When asked about the value of his MBA degree, he said: “The MBA

has helped me understand executives in a hospital, understand their business case, and helped me speak their language.” He further recognizes that “no matter what you do, you work in a business. So, it's important to understand what generates value and try to maximize it for your clients.”

While Omar considers his MBA a great achievement, his journey doesn't stop there. Omar is continuing his professional education, working on becoming a licensed architect. He was also recently elected to the UNO College of Business Administration Recent Alumni Advisory Board and serves as President-elect, playing a key role in shaping the future of CBA for the next generation of students. Alongside his professional accomplishments, Omar and his wife, also a UNO alumna, are proud parents of a new baby girl!

When asked what advice he might give to someone considering the UNO MBA program, Omar shares: “It's for you! I wasn't sure if it was for me because I didn't have a business background. But that's exactly what it's for— to complement your professional background.” And his advice to new students: “Keep an open mind -- it's an opportunity to open your eyes to a new world.”



NCITE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM
INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY,
AND EDUCATION CENTER
A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

COUNTERTERRORISM REQUIRES CREATIVITY

How Tin Nguyen applies his curiosity and passion for business innovation to UNO.

“

WHAT STANDS OUT TO ME ABOUT MY RESEARCH AREA IS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT INNOVATION IS USUALLY NOT AN ISOLATED, INDIVIDUAL EFFORT - IT TAKES A VILLAGE.”

TIN NGUYEN
NCITE RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



If you think the business world doesn't require creativity, Tin Nguyen, Ph.D., would prove you wrong.

Nguyen, in the Management department at UNO CBA, is thrilled by “observing failures, successes, and breakthroughs, and experiencing them.” His openness to stepping outside the box and finding intrigue in new research applications runs in the family. He cites his parents as models of the creativity, resilience, and resourcefulness he brings to his work.

“I come from a family of self-starters. My parents took a major leap of faith to escape Vietnam with the dream of a better life here in America. When they ended up (via much luck) in Minnesota, they sought to build the necessary experiences to eventually start their own businesses,” said Nguyen. “They taught me that calculated risks are worth taking, and that diverse skillsets are valuable if you can be clever about applying those skills in new areas.”

After studying at Creighton on a cross-country scholarship, Nguyen realized he “wanted to try everything.” Going on to earn a degree in organizational psychology with a specialty in innovation from Penn State, he recognized his desire to offer creative problem-solving across domains.

Now, Nguyen applies his education and parents' lessons to many initiatives at UNO. One of the most significant is his involvement in NCITE, a national counterterrorism center housed within Mammel Hall's Rod Rhoden Business Innovation Center. “Not only was I

presented with the opportunity to apply my knowledge of organizational innovation and group creativity to a completely different domain (terrorism), but I also get to continue doing what I love,” said Nguyen. “I get to think about why new ideas succeed or fail, and how people can work to get the most out of their brainstorming and collaboration efforts.”

His work is instrumental in allowing NCITE to run “as a business,” tasked with developing strategic plans for evaluating, selecting, and managing counterterrorism research projects. He also takes NCITE-funded technology inventions and finds ways to commercialize and implement them with local communities, agencies, and companies. Finally, he “puts his researcher hat on” to study how malevolent actors innovate.

“How do they devise problem sets and solutions that cause harm? How do they collaborate within and between groups to produce devastating outcomes? How do they organize and structure their organizations? How do we stop them? It's real cool.”

Nguyen's visionary nature has a far reach at CBA. He's also on the Dean's Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion (DEAI) Council and serves with the STRATCOM Fellows Program, a leader development program for U.S. Strategic Command civilian employees.

“I talk a lot about diversity and collaboration, and these two endeavors fit that bill so well. They are core values of mine. I spent a lot of my life discounted by

others for having immigrant parents, being low SES, for speaking English poorly as a kid, and also for fitting (or breaking from) racial stereotypes,” said Nguyen. “The systemic barriers to professional success are so pervasive and come from the subtlest places, and I firmly believe that people need to acknowledge that.”

Nguyen specifically aims to be a driving force in identifying barriers to equity and discovering how to maximize DEAI efforts when people's experiences and “barriers to entry in professional spaces” are highly unique. He recognizes that diversity initiatives are historically complicated – but it's that candid awareness that opens opportunities for growth. Even with the STRATCOM Fellows, Nguyen keeps accessibility and inclusion top-of-mind.

“For example, the normalizing of hybrid workplaces requires new adaptation of processes - we now need to teach those. How do people solve problems when some folks are co-located and others are remote? How can we build trust, build streamlined communication channels, and coordinate work virtually, so that virtuality is a strength and not a death knell to teamwork?,” asked Nguyen. “I get to play a hand in guiding the STRATCOM Fellows through the latest evidence-based strategies for navigating in-person, hybrid, and remote work through very specific mission sets.”

Combining his passion and curiosity for innovation, diversity, and “drawing new shapes to work within” makes Nguyen a pivotal voice in the future of UNO. Luckily, he's elated by the collaboration and forward-thinking nature that business innovation requires. He hopes to continue amplifying these efforts in Omaha for a long time, where he's thrilled to witness many creative districts and communities forming.

“What stands out to me about my research area is the knowledge that innovation is usually not an isolated, individual effort - it takes a village. As it did for my parents, as it continues to for me, and as it does for many others,” said Nguyen. “What is absolutely key for innovation in many industries is the ability to tap into others' insights and skillsets to produce new ways of thinking and solving problems. We all get by with a little help from our friends, don't we?”



GARRETT UECKER GIVES WILDFIRES THE BUSINESS

Uecker, a BSBA graduate and new CBA donor, isn't in the business you might expect – he's a wildland firefighter.

Garrett Uecker, a BSBA graduate from UNO with a concentration in management and minor in criminal justice, isn't in the business that you might expect. This Summa Cum Laude alum, who graduated in spring 2020, is a wildland firefighter.

A rural Nebraska native, Uecker grew up in Wyoming and South Dakota before finding his path to college in Omaha. While at UNO, his love of all activities outdoors grew, including SCUBA diving, climbing, canyoneering, backpacking, and paddling – all great ways to evade the drone of the city.

Prior to COVID, Uecker was planning to earn a master's degree at UNO, but when the Outdoor Venture Center (OVC) went on hiatus, Garrett became a private contractor after experience with the Minnesota State Parks system. The record-breaking 2020 fire season drew him toward the need for wildland firefighters; consequently, he enrolled in the S-130 fire training course and S-190 introductory fire behavior class. He was hired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where he's currently entering his third season as a Forestry Technician out of the Rainwater Wetland Management District in Funk, NE, southwest of Kearney. He's often called to fight fires not only in Nebraska, but also in multiple western and northwestern states.

So what drew this outdoor enthusiast to a business degree? Uecker identified the overlap of business concepts with nearly every other field.

"Wildland fire, more so than ever in today's unprecedented droughts, demands an enormous number of logistical considerations, as well as in both the professional and personal aspects of agency administration. In the face of these, my education has given me a tremendous advantage in recognizing the best avenues for communication and coordination within a large or decentralized entity," said Uecker.

"I hope to, as I learn more, take these skills to an incident manager role, eventually working behind the scenes, but for now I try to apply my education at whatever level I am working."

Uecker attributes his experience in the CBA Scholars Academy to shaping his personal and professional success. His friendships were forged through the Academy and comprised much of the support group that guided him through the degree process. Academy mentors and Director Bethany Hughes were instrumental to Uecker's navigation toward a career path, even when the road seemed a bit unconventional.

"The Scholars Academy provided a community created in a dynamic environment, sharing a glimpse into what lay ahead. Dr. Bass and Dr. Miles also did a tremendous job in providing a semester-long opportunity for professional education [with the Capstone Cup]," said Uecker.



I THINK THAT WE OWE THE WORLD OUR PERSONAL INVESTMENT IN POSITIVE THINGS."

GARRETT UECKER, UNO ALUMNUS



The Scholars Academy supported his internship with the Minnesota Parks system and embraced his distinctive career goals. The support from UNO CBA, as well as the business insight he earned that can now be extended into any career, inspired Uecker to become a donor for the college. He sees his role as a donor as an inevitable extension of his belief in the value of education.

"I think that we owe the world our personal investment in positive things. I do know that there are many people in the CBA investing tirelessly in students, programs, and experiences that alter people's lives, and if they are willing to demonstrate that tireless resolve, then they have my support," said Uecker. He also recognizes that even the smallest bit of support can make a big difference in the life of a student. "I know my donations are but flakes in the avalanche, but I hope to see further investment in the Scholars Academy, as well as the Capstone Cup."

In working up the ladder with USFWS, Garrett plans to qualify as an engine captain while conducting trips for BattleBuds, a veteran-centric adventure cooperative initiated by fellow UNO alumnus Kyle Keener. He also plans to become more involved in his new community as he enjoys flying his restored Piper Tri-Pacer and tinkering with antique boats. Ultimately, Uecker proves that education is important everywhere, while embodying the Maverick spirit of giving back and being true to yourself that inspired his career today.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF UNO'S COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Chris Decker, professor of economics, reinforces CBA's substantial economic impact on the Omaha metro in 2021.

"BOASTING OVER 13,000-DEGREE HOLDERS IN THE METRO, AND SUPPORTING OVER 3,000 JOBS, UNO CBA'S ECONOMIC REACH IS MASSIVE. IT'S AN IMPACT THAT BENEFITS EVERYONE IN OMAHA."

CHRISTOPHER DECKER, PH.D.
UNO PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "IMPACT"?

This economic impact analysis focuses on measuring the impact of economic activity taking place in an economy that can be linked to a particular entity's activities, such as UNO's CBA. The mobilization of resources (i.e., labor, equipment, etc.), or bringing in untapped resources captures the resulting economic impact.

For example, when a student receives a degree from UNO CBA, their earnings power increases. This increased earnings power (not the entire salary) can be justified as a CBA spending impact.

BY THE NUMBERS

Excluding alumni spending, UNO CBA has an economic impact on Omaha of *\$53.37 million*, contributing a total of *527.3 jobs* to the metropolitan area. However, as a metropolitan university, many CBA alums still live in the city. When alumni spending is included, CBA's total economic impact in 2021 is estimated to be *\$375.42 million*, supporting a total of *3,313 jobs* in the metro.

According to UNO's Alumni Association, there are *13,477 CBA degree holders* currently living in the metro. The largest share of this total are CBA's BSBA degree holders at *10,622*. When the average increase in salary above the next lowest degree is multiplied by the total number of degree holders, this results in

a direct spending impact of *\$171 million*, requiring *1,705 jobs*. When the full multiplier effect of this spending is captured, the result, from alumni alone, is a *\$322 million* impact, supporting *2,786 jobs* in the metro.

With *1,458 full-time undergraduate students and 116 full-time graduate students* in 2021, the weighted average of annual student spending is *\$11,835*, creating a spending impact of *\$31.57 million* on the metro. This figure doesn't include part-time student spending.

With an overall impact of *\$375.42 million*, it is of note that a college that employs *138 faculty and staff* can have such a significant community reach.

"Boasting over 13,000-degree holders in the metro, and supporting over 3,000 jobs, UNO CBA's economic reach is massive," said Decker. "It's an impact that benefits everyone in Omaha, from city government to the largest corporations (such as Union Pacific and Mutual of Omaha), to small neighborhood shops and restaurants. Even if a business doesn't see a direct impact, they most certainly reap the benefits nevertheless."

You can read the full report at:

www.unomaha.edu/college-of-business-administration/economics/files/cba_impact_msa.pdf

CBA WELCOMES NEW FACULTY



MATT ALLEN | Spring 2022

Dr. Matt Allen is an Assistant Professor of Management in the College of Business Administration and the Head of Business Strategy at the National Counterterrorism, Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (NCITE) at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO). He has over 15 years of experience as an industrial and organizational (I/O) psychology consultant, professor, and manager specializing in applied research and implementation of evidence-based solutions to meet organizations' strategic human capital needs. Prior to his current role, Dr. Allen served as the manager of HumRRO's Talent Assessment and Analytics Program and as the manager of a strategic HR function in the Department of Defense. Dr. Allen has also previously served as an adjunct professor at both George Washington and Georgetown Universities. He is an active researcher with multiple publications and presentations at professional conferences in areas ranging from insider threat, cybersecurity, leadership, individual difference assessment, assessment strategy, and organizational research methods.



YUZHOU CHEN | Fall 2022

Yuzhou is an assistant professor in the School of Accounting. He received his Ph.D. in Accounting from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln and M.S. in Accounting from Binghamton University. His research and teaching focus on auditing and financial accounting, and he has teaching experience in both Auditing and Financial Accounting. In his spare time, Yuzhou enjoys exploring nearby cities, watching documentaries and sports games, cleaning his aquarium, listening to rap and classical music, and reading maps.



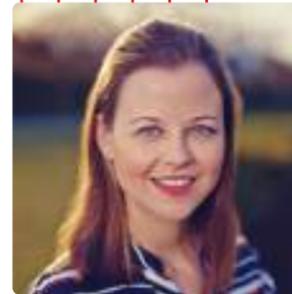
JAMIE CHUNG | Fall 2022

Jamie Chung currently serves as an assistant professor in the Finance, Banking, and Real Estate department. Her research focuses on real estate finance topics associated with technological innovation and demographics. Jamie offers courses in real estate principles and real estate investment.



JENNY HOANG-HOFSTROM | Fall 2022

Jenny Hoang-Hofstrom is an Assistant Professor of Supply Chain Management at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. She earned her Ph.D. in Supply Chain Management from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and an MBA from Texas Christian University. Prior to entering academia, Jenny consulted supply chain process improvement and implementation for Amazon.com (USA), Alibaba (10 countries), and worked as a Senior Director in Operations Strategies for PwC. Jenny also has experience in international relations and defense. Her favorite pastime activities are cooking and skydiving.



SONA KLUCAROVA | Fall 2022

Dr. Sona Klucarova is an assistant professor in the Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship. Her research interests include conspicuous consumption, prosocial behavior, influencer marketing, and societal issues. She was a fellow at the prestigious AMA-Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium in 2019. Sona is a recipient of the 2019 Academic Achievement & Excellence Award and the 2020 College of Business Administration Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching, both of which she received during her time as a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Central Florida. Prior to joining UNO, Sona worked as a postdoctoral researcher at Montpellier Business School in France. She is a native of Slovakia.



LINH LE | Fall 2022

Linh Le is originally from Vietnam. She earned a Ph.D. in Accounting at the University of North Texas, received a Master's degree in Economics at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finland. Before coming to UNO, she worked at Penn State University – Erie campus for two years. She teaches courses in the areas of financial accounting, accounting information systems, and cost management at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Besides teaching, she also loves research. Her primary interests are the impact of information systems and top management characteristics on firm outcomes. During free time, she loves exploring new places, enjoying reading, and listening to music with a cup of tea. She also wants to learn new skills such as coding, painting, and calligraphy.

CBA WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Brandi O'Malley

Network Navigator, Nebraska Business Development Center

Kelly Jefferson

Communications Director, Nebraska Business Development Center

Moraine Davis-Magnuson

Nebraska Business Development Center Director

Shannon Kavish

Undergraduate Advisor

RODRIGO AND MARY LÓPEZ CHAMPION NEBRASKA'S FUTURE

"WE BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN THE INDIVIDUAL, AND A MEASURE OF STRENGTH AND VALUES FOR A COMMUNITY AS WELL. TO THAT END, MUCH OF WHAT WE DO IS FOCUSED ON THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AND, IN PARTICULAR, UNO."

MARY LÓPEZ, UNO CBA DONOR



Rodrigo and Mary López took different paths to the Midwest, but their commitment to supporting the University of Nebraska at Omaha is undeniable. Linked by more than 40 years of marriage and the creation of several endowed funds supporting education in CBA and CPACS, the Lópezes are two of UNO's most significant donors and two of UNO's most significant donors, impacting educational support and access for students across campus.

Rodrigo, a native of Cali, Colombia, arrived to Nebraska as an exchange student in 1971. He enrolled in UNO's Executive MBA (EMBA) program in 1996, founding AmeriSphere, a multifamily rental housing construction and permanent mortgage lender, halfway through his coursework. He ultimately retired as Executive Chairman of Northmarq Capital.

Mary, a Midwesterner by birth, holds MS and MPA degrees from UNO and committed herself to education for her entire professional life. She first served as a K-12 Art Teacher, and then as an Educational Therapist working at the Nebraska Psychiatric Institute. She ended her career with years in higher education at UNO, retiring from UNO's School of Public Administration in 2011 after serving as Career Services Director.

Both Rodrigo and Mary's experiences cultivated a deep appreciation for UNO within their family, prompting them to pay their success forward.

"In my second graduate program, there was a semester where I received a fellowship from the

Spire Family. I was a full-time parent, student, and volunteer at the time, and even a small grant was very helpful with the costs of graduate school," said Mary. "I committed at that time that as our personal resources grew, I would always 'pay it forward' to other students who needed financial support and hoped they would do so as well."

The Lópezes started with modest donations to UNO, worked on some alumni giving campaigns, and, in 2010, endowed two funds to the university. Both focused on professional and leadership development, with one of the funds dedicated to nurturing collaborative community-based work among students from different colleges. They went on to establish funds at the College of Business Administration with a special emphasis on helping students who may be at risk of not completing their studies for financial reasons.

"Generally, our most significant charitable support has centered around education, affordable housing, and pediatric healthcare. We have supported UNO students over many years and plan on continuing doing so," said Rodrigo. "We want to make sure students have the opportunity to participate in learning activities that enhance their classroom curriculum and also provide assistance to those who otherwise would not be able to graduate without financial aid."

This mission is highly personal for Mary and Rodrigo, who witnessed the positive impact of educational opportunities on their children's lives. Family inspires them to provide similar opportunities to UNO students.



Rodrigo (left) and Mary López (middle) receive the 2022 Hubert Locke Distinguished Service Award.

“Offering student support is extremely important for us. We know how difficult it is for students to finance their education, graduate, and become gainfully employed,” said Rodrigo. “We view student support as our way to enhance workforce development in Omaha and Nebraska, which contributes to the economic growth of the community and state that has given so much to us.”

Rodrigo and Mary’s dedication to Nebraska has even extended into the construction of a more vibrant urban core for Omaha. They started a real estate development company in 2016. Mary currently serves as President, and oversees ongoing operations of their first development, Capitol Place, a commercial and residential property in downtown Omaha. All their efforts center around creating opportunity for young people in the state.

“UNO’s CBA is one of the most important and critical economic growth engines for Omaha. Small and large employers view UNO as their talent pipeline,” said Rodrigo. “I am excited about the many ongoing initiatives CBA is implementing to educate the professional workforce of the future.”

Through their ongoing support of CBA’s students, Mary and Rodrigo have enjoyed seeing many success stories over the years, witnessing the direct impact of their donations in allowing students to graduate, attend college for the first time, or make community connections necessary for employment.

“It is hard to narrow it down to one student success story, because they all fill us with hope. We made a point of trying to meet with each of the students who received our scholarships or fellowships for lunch or coffee - or Zoom during the pandemic - to hear their stories,” said Mary. “We love to share with students what we have learned on our paths of professional and community service. Sometimes, we had these discussions in small groups of students. Those conversations were so energizing.”

And they’re energized by the university’s future, too. Mary and Rodrigo will serve on the NU Foundation’s “Only in Nebraska” Capital Campaign Executive Committee over the next five years. This giving campaign – an area they know well – excites them with its potential impact for UNO students.

“In addition to needed facilities support, the campaign will generate substantial funds to support students and faculty,” said Rodrigo.

The UNO College of Business Administration is grateful for Rodrigo and Mary’s continuous support of our students, faculty, and community.

In addition to giving, Mary and Rodrigo extend their impact through a passion for community service. They received the 2022 Hubert Locke Distinguished Service Award from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service and continue to uplift Omaha through giving and volunteerism.

MARY’S PREVIOUS PHILANTHROPIC APPOINTMENTS INCLUDE:

- Board, Omaha Housing Authority
- Board, Catholic Charities
- Board, Omaha Public Library Foundation
- Board, United Way of the Midlands
- Board, Humanities Nebraska
- Founding Chair, Women’s Leadership Council, United Way of the Midlands
- Co-chair, 2014 United Way campaign
- Named 2020 Citizens of the Year by UWM

RODRIGO’S PREVIOUS APPOINTMENTS INCLUDE:

- UNO EMBA Alumni Association
- Finance, Banking & Real Estate Advisory Board
- UNO Chancellor’s Hispanic Advisory Cabinet
- UN Foundation Board of Directors
- UNO’s “Campaign for Nebraska”

MARY’S CURRENT APPOINTMENTS INCLUDE:

- Hattie B. Munroe Foundation
- United Way Tocqueville Women’s Advisory Council
- Omaha Public Library Foundation Advisory Council
- Chancellor’s Internship Advisory Board
- Volunteer, Habitat for Humanity
- UNO School of Public Administration MPA Advisory Council
- Urban Studies Advisory Council
- CPACS Dean’s Advisory Council
- UNMC’s Munroe Meyer Institute Board
- Trustee, University of Nebraska Foundation
- UNO Campaign Committee

RODRIGO’S CURRENT APPOINTMENTS INCLUDE:

- UNO CBA National Advisory Board
- UNO Campaign Committee
- Board of Directors, Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company
- Board of Directors, Lamp Rynearson
- Board of Directors, Omaha Performing Arts
- Board of Directors, The Durham Museum
- Board of Directors, Canopy South



ONLY 
in NEBRASKA

A Campaign for Our University’s Future™

The University of Nebraska’s capital campaign launched on November 18. The campaign, Only in Nebraska: A Campaign for Our University’s Future, builds on our quest to create a brighter future for our state and our world. We recognize that greatness takes all of us, standing together for something better, stepping up to do more for our communities, and starting today to build the future the world needs now.

We’re all for our University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Business Administration students and the promise they hold, for our communities and the challenges we face, for our path forward and the way we’ll lead together.

Like the rest of the University of Nebraska, UNO’s College of Business Administration is committed to:

A relentless focus on student access and success.

Enhancement of faculty and academic excellence.

Transformational research and innovation.

In the College of Business Administration, it’s all possible.

And it’s all happening here.



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For more information on giving, contact Stephen Driscoll at 402-502-4097 or stephen.driscoll@nufoundation.org





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