Celebrating the 25th year of our award-winning building

Weber Fine Arts Building • School of the Arts
6505 University Drive South • Omaha, NE 68182 • cfam.unomaha.edu/school-of-the-arts
Welcome to the School of the Arts

The College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media (CFAM) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha is dedicated to inspiring the creative expression and cultural growth of all of our students. We are comprised of three distinct schools in three unique facilities, the School of the Arts, the School of Communication and the School of Music, each built on a rich tradition and a diverse array of courses led by a nationally-known faculty of artists, performers, writers, and scholars.

We are committed to creating an environment that is inclusive and welcoming for all students. We offer a variety of majors and minors, as well as opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities and competitions. We are proud to be part of a vibrant community of scholars and artists who are dedicated to pushing the boundaries of knowledge and creative expression.

Our faculty members are dedicated to providing our students with the highest level of education and training. They work closely with students to help them achieve their goals and develop into successful professionals. We are committed to providing our students with the resources they need to succeed in their chosen fields.

In addition to academic programs, we also offer a variety of performance opportunities for our students. We are proud to present a wide range of events throughout the year, including concerts, plays, and exhibitions. These events provide students with opportunities to showcase their talents and gain valuable experience.

We are committed to providing our students with the best possible education and training. We believe that a degree from the School of the Arts is a valuable asset for any student, whether they are pursuing a career in the arts or in a related field. We are proud to be a part of the UNO family and look forward to continuing our efforts to provide our students with a world-class education.
Starting in 1911, the university offered a robust program of 12 studio art classes under the tutelage of Augusta Knight. With studio art as the continuing core, the program has dramatically expanded since its founding.

**AREAS OF STUDY**
- Art Education
- Art History
- Book Arts
- Ceramics
- Drawing
- Game Design
- Graphic Design
- Painting
- Printmaking
- Sculpture
- Video Arts

**ART & ART HISTORY MISSION**
To educate artists, scholars and teachers by fostering visual literacy, creative expression and critical thinking through practice and research. In developing mastery of various disciplines in art, students are prepared to become leaders in their chosen careers and to make positive contributions to the world.

**DEGREES**
- Bachelor of Arts, Art History
- Bachelor of Arts, Studio Art
- Bachelor of Fine Arts, Studio Art

**CERTIFICATES**
- Bachelor of Arts, Studio Art with K-12 Certification
- Bachelor of Fine Arts, Studio Art with K-12 Certification

**MINORS**
- Art History
- Studio Art

**FACILITIES**
Our Weber facilities include:
- art gallery
- 2 computer labs
- seminar and lecture rooms
- Studio spaces for:
  - painting
  - art education
  - graphic design
  - electronic imaging
  - drawing
  - printmaking
  - papermaking
  - book arts
  - Ceramics and sculpture
  - Studios are located just across the street.

**DEGREES**
- Bachelor of Arts, Art History
- Bachelor of Arts, Studio Art
- Bachelor of Fine Arts, Studio Art

**CERTIFICATES**
- Bachelor of Arts, Studio Art with K-12 Certification
- Bachelor of Fine Arts, Studio Art with K-12 Certification

**MINORS**
- Art History
- Studio Art

**ACCREDITED BY NASAD** / The National Association of Schools of Art and Design

UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVE SPIRIT
THEATRE

HISTORY
Theatre at the university started as an extracurricular activity sponsored by a dramatics club. The first production, "Hicks at College," was in 1913 on a makeshift stage in the Jacobs Gymnasium. Classes were first offered through the Speech department, and greatly expanded in the 1950s under the leadership of Dr. Edwin Clark with performances occurring in Arts and Sciences Hall’s dual purpose gymnasium-auditorium. A free-standing dramatic arts department was launched in the early 80s, and renamed Theatre in 2001.

AREAS OF STUDY
- Acting
- Directing
- Design
- Stage Management
- Technology
- Theatre History & Scholarship

THEATRE MISSION
To offer a rigorous education and disciplined professional training that focuses on the intersection of academics and theatrical practice with collaboration as a common thread. The program ignites critical thinking, compassionate feeling and the skills required to create theatre that has the capacity to delight and engage the community.

DEGREES
- Bachelor of Arts
- Master of Arts

MINOR
- Theatre

OUR SEASONS
Four fully-mounted productions plus assorted studio work. Selections are deliberately diverse to give students the experience of working on different periods and styles of theatre.

#1 THEATRE PROGRAM IN OMAHA.
20% RANKED PROGRAM IN NATION.
- theatre-schools.com

FACILITIES
Our Weber facilities include:
- state-of-the-art multi-form Black Box Theatre
- Studio spaces for:
  - acting
  - directing
- Design
- Seminar rooms
- Scene and costume shops
- Dressing rooms

THEATRE SCHOOL UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVE SPIRIT
MFA IN WRITING
An innovative low-residency program distance learning with a professional mentor for four 16-week semesters and five 10-day face-to-face symposium style residencies at the renowned Lied Lodge and Conference Center in Nebraska City.

AREAS OF STUDY
Creative Non-Fiction
Fiction
Poetry
Playwriting (Graduate)
Screenwriting

MEMBER OF AWP
The National Association of Writers and Writing Programs

cfm.unomaha.edu/writersworkshop
BEFORE WEBER

Since its birth in 1909 as the University of Omaha, the academic program at UNO has included an abiding interest in arts education. 

Given the manner in which the university was founded, changed locations, and expanded, for many years those programs’ facilities were shoe-horned into structures originally designed for other purposes and scattered across campus, with some disciplines housed in multiple buildings. Long-time Professor of Theatre Doug Paterson remembers that “the physical program was perhaps a dream only Rube Goldberg could conceive.”

BIRTH OF AN IDEA

Faculty and the administration had been musing over a new arts building with real teaching spaces since the early 1970s. The dream took a quantum leap in 1988 when during his final term State Senator Vard Johnson approached two theatre faculty members. On one occasion, he connected with Bob Welk, head of design and technology, for what was then called “Dramatic Arts,” during intermission of “Two Gentlemen of Verona” in the gymnasium/theatre at Arts and Sciences Hall. He praised the performance, while saying of the venue, “This place is a dump. I want to help you with a new building.” A second encounter took place at a Sunday morning Unitarian Church coffee hour, during which Johnson approached then-Chair of Dramatic Arts Doug Paterson, and, after a few pleasantries, declared his desire to sponsor legislation to fund a new fine arts building.

The administration eagerly accepted Johnson’s support and made what was perhaps the most critical decision in the project’s history: to pursue a building that would house a community of creatives—art historians, studio artists and bookmakers, creative writers and theatre people of every stripe. A committee of interested parties was formed including representatives from those programs and the College of Fine Arts Dean’s office. After visiting a regional fine arts building, the administration offered $6 million as the proposed budget, while the faculty representatives presented a list of needs that totaled $24 million. In the end, a compromise was reached at $11.4 million. Ironically, in downsizing the vision, one of the first things to go was a proscenium theatre, the original raison d’être for the building. This was not going to be an extravagant structure, but one that focused entirely on student learning, and so, for a time, the committee named the proposed facility the UNO Fine Arts Educational Building.

Creating a Vision

A call for proposals from architectural firms yielded 15-20 submissions, and from a list of four finalists, Hardy, Holzman, and Pfeiffer of New York City was selected with Malcolm Holzman, who had designed some of the most innovative arts facilities in the country, as the chief architect. Omaha’s own architectural firm, Schemmer Associates, was chosen as the onsite associate architect.

In navigating the smaller vision necessitated by reduced funding, the primary goal was to create a building that declared something interesting was going on inside of it. For this project, Holzman imagined a structure of different angles and many skins—standard as well as “clinker” bricks manufactured in local bee hive kilns, Minnesota limestone, South Dakota granite, plus metal and poured concrete. The resulting conceptual plan was designed to meet the various needs of practicing artists in an adventurous structure that harmonized with existing materials and design elements across campus—something quite different from the usual uniform rectangular brick architecture at the university and in the city.
that focused on the approximately 200-foot-long undulating walls, which were derisively referred to as "wiggle walls." In response to one regent asking, "Who designs a building with curved walls?" architect Holzman reportedly responded, "Thomas Jefferson." The project was approved 5-2.

The chosen site southeast of Criss Library necessitated moving the one-story Japanese style Myron Milder home, which had served as the site of the Dean's office for the College of Fine Arts and the UNO Gallery since 1976, and boldly re-landscaping the hill area down to the library parking lot, resulting in a 60-foot pile of dirt that was referred to as "Mt. Weber" in an affectionate tribute to then-Chancellor Del Weber.

REALIZATION AND RECEPTION

It took two years to complete the building, which exudes creativity and invites one to explore the arts. It has an almost medieval quality to it with its pinnacled towers, the caps of which mirror the campus campanile, rusticated stone walls and curved brick spines. Like most classroom buildings, a central corridor runs down the middle, but here it is lined with windows that look into classrooms and offices that help build a sense of community, a feeling of sharing and fellowship. This allows one, upon entry, to have some sense of the life of the building and what is happening in it.

David Shrader, Dean of the College of Fine Arts from 1982-92, noted that, "The arts are out of the ordinary. At least a major component of the arts is that you use your imagination and that you don’t limit yourself to past approaches. So, it would be unusual if the arts decided to be involved in the design of a building that didn’t embody the same approach. The final distinctive character was precisely what officials from the university and the College of Fine Arts were seeking when they chose the designer. Nothing about the structure could be considered anything but extraordinary.

In analyzing the building for faculty member Nick Newman's Modern Architectural History class, students invariably claim it is "post-modern," noting a slew of visual references from the medieval period all the way up to iconic modernists, and admiring the fit between the quirky design and its function as a site for creative artists. Newman himself observes appreciatively, "the structure’s lack of a single stylistic unity and its pastiche of competing aesthetics not only reflects the many creative activities inside, but radically problems it as a home for the arts."

Upon the announcement of Chancellor Del Weber's retirement in 1997 after twenty years of service, the decision was made to name the Fine Arts Building in honor of him and his wife Lou Ann. During his tenure, the Webers were regular attendees at arts events, but more importantly, he played a significant role in campus expansion and improvement, including the Henningson Memorial Campanile, the Durham Science Center, JHEB, acquisition and development of the land west of Criss Library, which paved the way for the Weber Fine Arts Building and finally, securing the gift of seventy acres in Ak-sar-ben to make the Scott campus possible. Not surprisingly, faculty in general, and specifically in the College of Fine Arts, had a deep appreciation for Weber’s years of distinguished service.

LASTING LEGACY

Twenty-five years after its debut in 1992, the Weber Fine Arts Building continues to stand as one of the region’s most intriguing structures, made of which interesting things continue to happen. The design was modular in its approach, which helped earn it the post-modern appellation, but more importantly, allows for future wings without harming the overall look. Current occupants dream of additional classroom space, expanding the gallery, creating a formal sculpture garden and even adding the Turrell project which inspired the project in the first place. The university’s vision has ensured that the structure will readily accept these additions should an angel one day step forward with funding.

When asked about his feelings on this exquisite structure so long after its creation, Holzman said, "I’m so pleased that the building is being well-used. In creating public buildings, longevity is an important part of the design. I think about it as a hundred-year project."

What will the next 75 years hold? One can only imagine...