Accomplishments, 2014

In 2014, the College continued to grow both in size and quality. Enrollment is the highest in the history of the College, marking a 36% increase since 2008. CPACS is now the second largest college at UNO, behind Arts & Sciences.

Our growth is in part due to our quality. Several programs are ranked very high nationally:

- Emergency Management is ranked #1 in quality and #7 in affordability
- Public Finance and Budgeting is ranked #6
- Information and Technology Management is ranked #6
- Nonprofit Management is ranked #11
- City Management and Urban Policy is ranked #14
- Criminology is ranked #17
- The Bachelors of General Studies is ranked #20 among online bachelor’s programs
- Public Management is ranked #21
- Social Work is ranked #104
- Aviation was awarded the Loening Trophy in 2012 which is awarded to the “most outstanding Collegiate aviation program”
- In the broad category of Public Affairs we are ranked #33

The key accomplishments of the units in the College are listed below:

- The Bachelors of Science in Gerontology was approved in October and within 6 weeks had 21 majors. The cooperative doctoral degree with UNL will be transformed to a free-standing Ph.D. in Gerontology at UNO. To support this growth, an assistant professor focused on the biology of aging will be hired, supported by the University of Nebraska’s Programs of Excellence. Also, Dr. Chris Kelly was named the Leo Missinne Professor of Gerontology.
- In two short years, the Bachelor’s in Emergency Management has grown to over 100 majors and minors. Several new concentrations in the degree have been added, as well as a specialization in the Masters of Public Administration. An agreement with the national Tribal Emergency Management Association was signed and we will offer a certificate in Tribal Emergency Management to all North American Tribes starting next year. We are in the process of hiring a new Assistant Professor to support our program growth.
- The Nebraska Center for Justice Research was established and was allocated $200,000 for each of the next two years by the Nebraska Legislature for applied policy research. Together with the Juvenile Justice Institute, it works with policymakers to find the most effective strategies for law enforcement and corrections.
- The Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) has received funding from both the Nebraska Legislature and the University of Nebraska for the State Policy Initiative, which provides data and briefings on public policy issues affecting Nebraska. CPAR also partnered with the Nebraska Rural Poll to do the Metro Poll on perceptions and concerns of residents of the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas.
• The Goodrich Scholarship Program retained 90% of its students from freshman to sophomore year and graduated 63% in six years. Goodrich continues its service learning classes in rural Nebraska. This summer, Goodrich students visited Bancroft, learning about the life and work of John Neihardt, Nebraska’s Poet Laureate in Perpetuity and also visited the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. The follows a 2013 trip to Red Cloud.

• In October, the Grace Abbott School of Social Work was awarded a $1.3 million grant from the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration to provide social services in rural Nebraska for at-risk youth with behavioral health problems. The School recently gained approval to offer the Bachelors in Social Work on-site at Southeast Community College in Lincoln, and the Masters of Social Work continues to be offered in Kearney. Three new faculty, an advisor, and a new practicum associate were hired to meet this demand.

• The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (SCCJ) and the School of Social Work have created new graduate certificate, “Managing Juvenile and Adult Populations,” in response to a request from the Legislature and the Governor. This complements the joint master’s degree between the two schools. Also, SCCJ faculty were awarded over $2 million in research grants on topics such as violent extremist groups, adolescent substance abuse, and issues facing youth who are simultaneously in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

• The School of Public Administration named Carl Ameringer as the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska Chair of Health Care Administration and Policy and also hired two senior scholars in the nationally ranked areas of public finance & budgeting and information management. The School created the Global Digital Governance Lab with partners in South Korea, China and Taiwan. Also, this year Dr. Ethel Williams served as the President of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration, the national accrediting body and Mary Hamilton was elected Chair of the National Certified Public Manager Consortium.

• The Bachelors of General Studies (BGS) contributes to UNO’s #1 ranking as a military-friendly university. A new concentration in Sustainability was added and plans are underway to add a concentration in Public Policy. Twelve areas of concentration are available fully online. The Division of Continuing Studies established new partnerships with community colleges and businesses in western Nebraska. Also, individual partnerships with Methodist Health System and ConAgra are being explored for the purpose of offering the BGS to their employees.

• The William Brennan Institute of Labor Studies hosted its “Promoting the General Welfare” conference at the opening of the new Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center. Weitz is a retired faculty member in Social Work. In 2014, Brennan Institute faculty taught 44 courses on labor and related issues to a total of 2554 participants.

• The NASA/Nebraska Space Grant program is one of fifteen programs to receive a NASA EPSCoR research grant ($750,000 for three years) and one of the five programs to be awarded a launch opportunity for the deployment on the International Space Station. Other activities included a trip for student members of the Society of Women Engineers to visit Boeing and Blue Origin (Jeff Bezos’s private space flight company) in Seattle, support for a team of students to develop and deliver a rocket payload, and STEM training for 2,419 students and 227 teachers through our Summer of Innovation project.

• The Aviation Institute’s Flight team, the Flying Mavs, earned their sixth consecutive trip to the National Intercollegiate Flying Association tournament after placing third at the regional competition. The Institute has also established “Pipeline Program” agreements with Envoy Air and ExpressJet Airlines. These programs allow students to being the screening process early in their academic careers and provides a clear path to becoming a professional pilot.