



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA GERONTOLOGY

Do You Have The Cour**AGE** to Care?



Dennis Loose shared, "Dennis currently serves as Executive Director of the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging (ENOA) located in Omaha, Nebraska. ENOA is one of eight Area Agencies on Aging in Nebraska. He has considerable experience in Aging and human services at the state and local levels. After receiving a BS degree in Education from Chadron State College, he worked in Developmental Disability services in the panhandle of Nebraska in various capacities. In 1978 he became the Executive Director of South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging located in Kearney, Nebraska and served in that position until 1991 when he was appointed Deputy Director of the Nebraska Department on Aging. In 1994 Dennis was appointed Director of the Department on Aging. In 1996 the Governor appointed

Dennis as Director of Nebraska's four State Veterans Homes and he held that position along with the appointment in 1997 as Chief Deputy Director of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services until 2007. In 2007 he left state government and joined a Management Consulting firm, Quality Governmental Service, LLC, which specializes in management and consulting with state and local governmental units. It was through that firm that in 2010 he connected with the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director of the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging.

I was thrilled with the opportunity to lead ENOA due to the number of effective programs and services I knew they offered in the counties of Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, Washington and Cass, and my desire to get back into community aging services. When I was Director of the Nebraska Department on Aging I worked with UNO representatives to conduct a state wide survey on what Nebraska's elderly identified as priority needs. The survey results were very helpful in planning service development and expansion. I was very pleased after I got here to find out that ENOA had a wonderful relationship with the Gerontology Department at UNO and employed several of their graduates. We have had the opportunity to hire more of the UNO graduates since I have been here. They are employed in our Case Management programs, our Information and Assistance division, our Volunteer Services division, our In-Home Community Services Division and our Home Delivered Meals Division. A few of graduates have achieved leadership positions in the agency. Due to the comprehensive programming and experiences the UNO Gerontology students receive, they come to us very well prepared with a desire to work in and succeed in this field. Organizations that provide programs and services to our older population are very fortunate to have the UNO Gerontology Department producing such well-rounded and prepared graduates."



Janelle Cox shared, "Janelle Cox, CHOICES Division Director at the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging. As the CHOICES Division Director, Janelle oversees Care Management, Caregiver Support, Aged and Disabled Medicaid Waiver, and Senior Care Options/Level of Care programs. These programs provide in-home or community services to thousands of older adults residing in ENOA's five county service area including Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, Washington counties. Prior to coming to the Office on Aging, Janelle spent several years working as the primary social worker at Saint Joseph Center for Mental Health for the Geriatrics and Adult Intensive Care units.

Janelle earned her Bachelors of Science in Social Work and Criminal Justice in 1990 from Kearney State College. She earned her Aging and Disability Resource Center certificate in 2017 from Boston University's Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research.

Janelle's recent professional presentations include: "Navigating Programs and Services in Nebraska"; "Barriers to Optimal Health for Older Adults"; and "The Emerging Market of Participant Driven Long Term Care Services and Supports".

Currently, I have the pleasure of working with five UNO Gerontology graduates and they make-up just a little more than 10% of the staff in the CHOICES Division. The State of Nebraska puts an emphasis on required work experience in aging or long-term care settings for both Care Managers and Services Coordinators working in our Division. However, I have found that having the aging expertise that is developed in students through the UNO Gerontology Department in many cases has better prepared those applicants I have interviewed and subsequently hired. During the interview process, it never ceases to amaze me the articulate way in which these graduates incorporate their knowledge of the aging process which is a fundamental to our work. It is so exciting to see the passion and desire the graduates have to work and advocate for older adults and caregivers to ensure they have the choice to live in the environments they desire and remain as independent as safely possible.

When I was interviewing our most recent new hire, I asked the applicant, "Have we met?" ... "Your name is so familiar". The applicant then reminded me we met when she interviewed me for one of her graduate classes. To which I replied – "well

today the shoe is on the other foot." Little did I know that before this applicant would leave that day not only was a job offer made but I was so impressed she was offered her choice of two open positions I had in different programs. The quality of applicants being molded through their education at the UNO Gerontology Department and the experience and connections the students have the opportunities to make set them up to be very successful in the professional market."