

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

# NEW FACULTY DIRECTORY

2024 - 2025





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## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

## BIOLOGY

**ERIC GUISBERT**

Ph.D. in Biochemistry, University of California, San Francisco | B.S. in Biochemistry, University of Michigan

Eric Guisbert is an assistant professor. He has mentored more than 40 students in his research laboratory and taught a variety of courses including developmental biology, molecular genetics, and molecular biology. His research centers around a cellular stress response pathway known as the heat shock response. This pathway becomes dysregulated in breast cancer, and its inhibition could represent a new target for chemotherapeutic development. Eric's research includes exploration of new genes and molecules that influence this pathway and uses cultured human cells and *C. elegans*, a small roundworm.

**KAREN S. KIM GUISBERT**

Ph.D. in Cell Biology, University of California San Francisco | B.S. in Biochemistry, University of Rochester

Karen Kim Guisbert, an assistant professor, is a cell and molecular biologist with a specialization in genomics, RNA biology, and development. Her current research centers on the oocyte-to-embryo transition (OET), a pivotal period with significant implications for infertility in humans. Karen has developed a reporter capable of fluorescently indicating the moment of fertilization within a living organism. Utilizing this innovative tool, she conducts genetic dissections of cell-cell communication and coordination during the OET in the nematode, *C. elegans*.

## ENGLISH

**NICHOLAS J. GOMEZ**

M.A. in English Language and Literature, Saint Louis University | B.A. in English and American Literature, University of Texas at El Paso

Nicholas Gomez is an instructor whose teaching spans ecological rhetoric to fantasy and science fiction literature. His research interests include classical Greek and Latin rhetorics, with a focus on the Roman rhetorics of Cicero, Vitruvius, and Quintilian. His current project traces the genealogy of Roman concepts regarding natural ability as a rhetorical mode of being. In 2023, he participated in the NEH-funded Summer Institute on the Performance of Roman Comedy, which transformed his approach to teaching composition. In his free time, Nicholas enjoys jogging to 80's R&B and reading Marcel Proust.

## GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**DANIEL J. VECELLIO**

Ph.D. in Geography, Texas A&M University | M.S. in Atmospheric Science, Texas Tech University | B.S. in Meteorology, Pennsylvania State University

Daniel Vecellio, an incoming assistant professor, brings a wealth of expertise in applied climatology and biometeorology, with a keen focus on how weather and climate impact human health. His extensive research, particularly on extreme heat and its implications for human adaptability, underscores the urgency of addressing climate-related health challenges. As the North American Councilor of the International Society of Biometeorology, Daniel actively contributes to global conversations on these vital topics. Outside academia, he finds enjoyment in cycling, brewery visits, and supporting his alma mater, Penn State. Daniel also treasures moments of relaxation with his wife and feline companion at home.

HISTORY



DAVID KOROSTYSHEVSKY

Ph.D. in History of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of Minnesota | M.A. in History, University of New Mexico

David Korostyshevsky is a visiting assistant professor. His research ranges from the American quest to define, detect, and discipline the habitual drunkard to the historical linkages between life insurance and modern healthcare systems. This work has been supported by the Consortium for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine; the William Nelson Cromwell Foundation; the American Society for Legal History; and the New York State Archives. In the classroom, David harnesses the power of writing, self-reflection, and collaborative learning to make historical knowledge relevant to empower the next generation of professionals, leaders, and changemakers.

MATHEMATICAL AND STATISTICAL SCIENCES



TARAN H. FUNK

Ph.D. in Mathematics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln | M.S. in Mathematics, DePaul University

Taran Funk is an instructor whose graduate research focuses on commutative algebra, specifically studying the homological properties of rings with characteristic  $\neq p > 0$ . During his postdoc at the USDA, he developed machine learning algorithms to create predictive models assessing the well-being of pigs based on their feeding behavior. At UNO, he aims to enhance his teaching practices by learning more about mathematics education. In his free time, Taran enjoys hiking and bird watching with his two-year-old son.

PHILOSOPHY



MICHAEL R. CARRICK

Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Rochester | M.A. in Philosophy, University of Colorado at Boulder | B.A. in Philosophy and History, University of Vermont

Michael Carrick is a visiting assistant professor whose specialties include applied ethics, particularly animal ethics, environmental ethics, and bioethics. His current research aims to develop a novel theory of animal welfare while exploring how to achieve environmental sustainability in a manner consistent with animal rights. Prior to joining the UNO faculty, Michael taught at the University of Rochester and the State University of New York, Geneseo. Away from academia, he enjoys outdoor pursuits, reading, and serenading his cats with song.



FARHAN R. LAKHANY

Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Iowa | M.A. in Philosophy, King's College London

Farhan Lakhany is an assistant professor whose research focuses on the nature of consciousness, more specifically, he works on questions like: how do we know our own minds? Is it a neuroscientific account of consciousness or does it, as many claim, leave something out? Farhan's main goal is to explain how consciousness fits into the physical world. He has additional interests in epistemology, psychology, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, ethics, and metaphilosophy. When not working on philosophy, Farhan enjoys spending time with his dog, Plato, watching movies and comedies, and listening to podcasts.

PSYCHOLOGY



TIN L. NGUYEN

Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Pennsylvania State University | M.S. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Pennsylvania State University

Tin Nguyen is an assistant professor in psychology and affiliate faculty member of the National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education (NCITE) Center. His research explores the psychology and management of norm-violating behaviors such as creativity, work-related deviance, and violence. Tin has secured over \$1.4 million in external funding through collaborations with federal partners and non-profit research institutes to support initiatives focused on violence prevention, event security, and behavioral threat assessment and management teams. His passion for supporting the violence prevention workforce is rivaled only by his enthusiasm for spoiling his dogs and frequenting the local Film Streams theater.

WORLD LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE



LEAH-VALENTINA HAUT

M.A. in Language Teaching, University of Nebraska at Omaha | B.A. in Translation, Culture and Language Studies, Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz

Leah-Valentina Haut is a visiting instructor whose research and teaching interests encompass second language acquisition, bilingualism, translanguaging in the classroom, and language pedagogy. She has a special focus on English, Spanish, and German. As a graduate assistant, Leah-Valentina has taught intermediate Spanish as well as an advanced German conversation course. Originally from Germany, she arrived in Omaha in August 2022. When not in the classroom, she pursues her passions for fitness, reading, and exploring the great outdoors.



ELENA NIETO

M.A. in Spanish, Purdue University | B.S. in Accounting, Universidad de Buenos Aires

Elena Nieto is an instructor of Spanish. She teaches a variety of courses, including language and reading classes, as well as Spanish for healthcare professionals. Originally from Buenos Aires, where she worked as an accountant, Elena moved to the United States and pursued a career in Spanish with an emphasis on Latin-American literature. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband, three children, and her dog, Bella.



JOSEFA M. SAMPER SUAREZ

Ph.D. in Modern Languages and Literatures, University of Nebraska-Lincoln | M.A. in Linguistics, Universidad del Atlántico

Josefa Samper Suarez joins UNO as a Spanish instructor. Her research interests focus on sociolinguistics, languages in contact, Spanish in the United States, language pedagogy for Spanish heritage speakers, language and identity, and discourse analysis. She has taught in-person and online basic, intermediate, and advanced Spanish courses in the areas of linguistics, discourse analysis, reading and conversation, and writing/reading comprehension for heritage speakers. Josefa enjoys hiking, dancing, and spending time with family and friends. She likes to be involved in community events organized by the Latinx community.



## COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

### ECONOMICS



#### LUKE NOGUEIRA

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Tennessee-Knoxville | M.S. in Computer and Information Technology, University of Pennsylvania

Luke Nogueira is an instructor who focuses on health and demographic economics. His research delves into economic factors shaping health and population dynamics. Beyond his expertise in economics, Luke boasts a background in computer science and considerable experience in data science consulting for government agencies and start-ups. Specializing in using data to assess policy and business strategy outcomes, he has developed analytics solutions to refine data-driven decision-making and performance assessment.

### MANAGEMENT



#### CORRINE K.K. CHEN

Master of Supply Chain Management, Schulich Business School, York University | B.A. in Administrative Studies and Business Management, York University

Corrine Chen is an accomplished instructor with over a decade of industry expertise, predominantly in procurement, who is currently completing her doctorate in business administration with a specialization in leadership and innovation. Corrine has instructed diverse courses at Canadian public colleges, including international purchasing and supplier management, logistics, and supply chain operations management. She finds joy in embarking on extensive road trips and indulging in culinary delights from a range of cultures.



#### ASHLEY VARILEK

M.B.A. in Integrated Marketing Communications and Project Management, University of Denver | B.S. in Marketing and Financial Analysis, Creighton University

Ashley Varilek is serving as an instructor, blending 15 years of industry experience across marketing, operations, and leadership roles in technology and entertainment corporations with a passion for teaching. She brings real-world insights into the classroom, with a focus on preparing young professionals for constructive mentoring relationships and strategic business thinking. Beyond academia, Ashley cherishes family time with her three children, two dogs, and partner. She enjoys outdoor adventures, discovering new reads, savoring culinary delights, and embracing different cultures through travel.

### REAL ESTATE



#### REBECCA MCQUILLEN

J.D., Creighton University | B.A. in Political Science, Truman State University

Rebecca McQuillen serves as an instructor and the director of UNO's Real Estate Center. Her research, career, and teaching focus on creatively leveraging established real estate development tools for public purposes, including affordable housing. With a diverse background as a lawyer, developer, consultant, and adjunct professor, Rebecca brings a wealth of experience to her role. She enjoys traveling and spending time with her family, often combining her passion for real estate with her love for travel by researching comparative real estate laws and development practices.

## COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION, FINE ARTS AND MEDIA

### ARTS



#### KRISTEN M. APPEGATE

Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Iowa State University | M.S. in Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Iowa State University | B.F.A. in Art and Design, Iowa State University

Kristen Applegate is an instructor and coordinator of art education with extensive experience in K-12 teaching and administration, having served in public and international schools in the United States, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Kazakhstan. Her creative research in ceramics focuses on incorporating AI imagery into traditional hand-built work, and she is also interested in experiential learning, Design Thinking, and effective uses of AI in the classroom. Kristen's creative work has been featured in various national and international exhibitions. When not in the studio or classroom, she enjoys planting and tending her garden.



#### ALLYSON D. GIBBS

M.F.A. in Graphic Design, University of Illinois at Chicago | B.F.A. in Studio Art, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Allyson Gibbs, a graphic designer, artist, and educator hailing from the Omaha area, brings a wealth of professional experience to her role. Her background includes dynamic stints in fast-paced advertising agencies, contributing to in-house marketing teams at local software companies, and collaborating with international graduate universities through a small Chicago design studio focused on science communication. She eagerly anticipates joining UNO's faculty this fall as an instructor of graphic design.



#### NEIL GRIESS

M.F.A. in Art Practice, Stanford University | B.F.A. in Studio Art, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Neil Griess serves as an instructor, with an art practice focused on landscape painting and drawing that employs a slightly distorted realist style. He has taught courses in life drawing, advanced drawing, elementary painting, and watercolor. Neil's work has been published in *New American Paintings* and the textbook *Art for Everyone*. An Omaha native, he found early inspiration in the realist art of his late uncle, artist Kent Bellows. In his free time, Neil enjoys walking his Staffordshire Terrier, Curry, and tackling small home renovation projects alongside his wife Emily at their South Omaha residence.



#### MAKENZIE R. RAYMUNDO

M.F.A. in Ceramics, Kansas State University | B.F.A. in Art Education, University of South Dakota

Makenzie Raymundo currently serves as an instructor of ceramics. Her research challenges associations with conventional construction and labor materials by recontextualizing found objects and materials from her surroundings, transforming them from mundane and industrial into exploratory, expressive, and personal artworks. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. She has taught a variety of courses including ceramics, 3D design, and 2D design. In her personal time, Makenzie enjoys the company of her husband as well as her dog, Danny and cat, Agnes.

COMMUNICATION



**EMILY S. SAUTER**

Ph.D. in Rhetoric, Politics, and Culture, University of Wisconsin-Madison | M.A. in Communication Studies, Colorado State University | B.A. in Communication Studies and Political Science, The University of St. Thomas

Emily Sauter is an assistant professor. Originally from Minnesota, she considers herself a global citizen, having lived in South Africa, Ireland, and China, and spent significant time in India, Thailand, and Cambodia. Her research focuses on the intersections of critical rhetoric, digital communication, and sports fandom, exploring how online communities shape and express identity and how organizations leverage these identities for persuasive purposes. Emily is also an avid sports enthusiast, enjoying golf, hockey, and softball.

MUSIC



**MATTHEW A. BARDIN**

Ph.D. in Experimental Music and Digital Media, Louisiana State University | M.M. in Music Composition, The Boston Conservatory at Berklee | B.M. in Music Theory and Composition, Stetson University

Matthew Bardin is currently serving as a visiting instructor. His research concentrates on developing new instrument technologies and creating new music that utilizes that technology, with a specific focus on computer augmentations for the clarinet and how they can impact performance. Matthew has taught courses in audio recording, creative coding, and music composition. When not in the classroom or laboratory, he enjoys exploring nature, sampling new cuisines, reading novels, and playing with his two cats, Bean and Skim. Examples of Matthew's music and lessons can be found on his YouTube channel at [youtube.com/c/MatthewBardin](https://youtube.com/c/MatthewBardin).



**RICHARD A. CARRILLO**

D.M.A. in Choral Conducting, University of Miami | M.M. in Choral Conducting, Missouri State University | B.M. in Music Education, University of Houston

Richard Carrillo is an assistant professor and an accomplished conductor, singer, educator, and researcher. A former member of the GRAMMY® award-winning Houston Chamber Choir, he received the Tinker Field Research Grant to conduct research in Mexico City, leading to his production of Frank La Rocca's *Mass of the Americas*, which included the first known *Ave Maria* in the Nahuatl Aztec language. Before pursuing graduate education, Richard spent nearly a decade teaching at Providence Academy in Plymouth, Minnesota, with his ensembles performing at the 2016 MMEA Convention and the 2018 Midwest ACDA Regional Convention.



**JUSTIN L. PAYNE**

M.M. in Vocal Music Performance, Michigan State University | B.M. in Vocal Music Performance, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Justin Payne serves as an instructor, with research and teaching interests spanning music and the Black experience in American pop culture. He enjoys drawing connections between older genres of music and their contemporary counterparts, such as the relationship between funk and hip hop. After completing his master's degree, Justin returned home to Omaha to start his family. Outside of academia, he finds joy in going to the movies, taking walks in nature, and spending time with his wife and dog, Simba. Additionally, Justin relishes attending Broadway touring shows.



## MUSIC (CONTINUED)



### ALEXANDRIA N. PLUMB

M.M. in Voice Performance, University of Nebraska at Omaha | B.M. in Voice Performance, Wartburg College

Alexandria Plumb serves as an instructor. She has been a UNO adjunct faculty member for the past five semesters. Enthusiastic about expanding her role within the School of Music, she has recently taught applied voice lessons, voice methods, and made her directorial debut leading the opera program last year. Alexandria's primary objective is to guide students in discovering and fulfilling their potential through singing and performance. Beyond her academic commitments, she maintains an active performance career, regularly appearing with Opera Omaha and anticipating her participation in their upcoming Chorus Roster. In her leisure time, Alexandria enjoys taking walks with her dog, Mumford, and pursuing various crafting projects.

## THEATRE



### CURTIS REYNOLDS

M.F.A. in Musical Theater Vocal Pedagogy, The Boston Conservatory at Berklee | B.M. in Vocal Performance, New York University

Curtis Reynolds is an assistant professor with research interests in using asynchronous video software to build community and enhance group learning in the performing arts. He brings a professional background in musical theater as a music director, voice teacher, and actor to his role in higher education. Curtis teaches in both the music and theater departments, including courses in singing, musical theater, music theory, and applied voice. In his free time, he enjoys cooking, baking, and running with his Puerto Rican rescue dog, Charlie.

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES

### COUNSELING



### PRAVEEN KUMAR RUDRA

M.A. in Mental Health Counseling, Lancaster Bible College

Praveen Kumar Rudra is a licensed professional counselor and counselor educator who ardently advocates for mental health and well-being. He specializes in multicultural counseling, clinical supervision, and catering to diverse populations' mental health needs. Praveen's research focuses on understanding the determinants of help-seeking behaviors among diverse communities, and he leverages his extensive counseling experience and research findings by instructing graduate students on topics such as multicultural foundations. He shares his knowledge through conference presentations, emphasizing culturally sensitive counseling interventions and pertinent mental health issues.

## COUNSELING (CONTINUED)



### KARA M. SCHNEIDER

M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, University of Nebraska at Omaha | B.A. in Psychology, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Kara Schneider, an instructor, is known for her dedication to interdisciplinary approaches to trauma-informed care, women's health, and student-athlete wellness. Currently in the final stretch of her doctoral degree journey in counselor education at the University of South Carolina, Kara's passion for research and teaching shines through in her scholarly pursuits and presentations at prestigious national and international conferences. Beyond academia, Kara finds joy in outdoor adventures and the competitive thrill of pickleball matches.

## HEALTH AND KINESIOLOGY



### MEGAN E. CAIN

M.S. in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Emporia State University | B.S. in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Megan Cain, an instructor with a diverse fitness background, specializes in working with youth and CrossFit athletes. Passionate about promoting health and wellness, she utilizes her expertise to help students develop strength and confidence. Megan's energetic teaching style and personalized approach foster an engaging learning environment. Committed to lifelong learning and professional development, she stays abreast of the latest trends in the fitness industry. Outside of teaching, Megan enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and engaging in activities that promote health and vitality.



### DONGWOO HAHN

Ph.D. in Exercise Physiology, University of Florida | M.S. in Exercise Physiology, University of Texas at Austin  
B.S. in Exercise Sciences and Physical Education, Seoul National University

Dongwoo Hahn is an assistant professor who specializes in skeletal muscle physiology within diverse disease contexts such as acute/chronic heart failure and genetic muscular dystrophy, as well as physiological phenomena like aging, menopause, and high-fat/sugar diet effects. With a keen interest in redox biology and mitochondrial physiology, he has instructed a range of courses in exercise physiology and human anatomy. His overarching goal is to advance research in physiology and foster the development of future scientists. Outside academia, he finds joy in various sports such as tennis, snowboarding, golf, and cycling.



### NAOMI A. SCHMECK

M.S. in Global Health and Population, Harvard University | B.A. in Global Studies, University of Minnesota

Naomi Schmeck currently serves as an instructor, with her research focusing on improving child health outcomes, particularly in global infectious disease prevention and management strategies for children. She has collaborated with the WHO to identify diagnostic accuracy of sepsis in young infants worldwide and has worked with Partners in Health to strengthen the physical, nutritional, and emotional health of pregnant mothers and their children in Peru. In her free time, Naomi enjoys outdoor activities such as running, surfing, and camping, as well as playing ice hockey. She is looking forward to returning to the Midwest and meeting her future students!

HEALTH AND KINESIOLOGY (CONTINUED)



**KAILEY SNYDER**

Ph.D. in Exercise Science, University of Nebraska at Omaha | M.S. in Physical Activity in Health Promotion, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Kailey Snyder is an assistant professor. Specializing in perinatal health research, she brings a wealth of expertise in mixed methodologies and program evaluation to her work. Her scholarly pursuits center on the enhancement and application of doula care and pelvic health support, reflecting her dedication to advancing maternal and reproductive health. In addition to her research, Kailey has delivered lectures on various facets of public health, including women's health issues and the intersection of diversity and behavioral social science. Beyond academia, she treasures moments spent with her husband and two children, relishing in travel experiences and culinary explorations.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION DISORDERS



**TERRY P. HOULTON**

Ed.D. in Educational Administration, University of Nebraska at Omaha | M.S. in Educational Leadership, University of Nebraska at Omaha | B.S. in Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara

Terry Houlton, a dedicated educator, brings his passion for empowering students with disabilities to the forefront. With a diverse background encompassing teaching, special education instruction, leadership as a building principal, and directing special education programs, Terry offers a wealth of invaluable experience. Actively engaging with Nebraska's educational community, he significantly contributes to its progress. His research endeavors focus on implementing optimal practices in K-12 learning environments, addressing the special educator shortage, and fostering collaboration among educational institutions. Beyond his professional commitments, Terry finds immense joy in being a proud grandfather. Connect with him on X (Twitter): @thoulton.



**QI WEI**

Ph.D. in Special Education, University of Oregon | M.S. in Human Development and Family Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Qi Wei is an assistant professor. Her research interests and applied experiences focus on developing and adapting intervention programs for young children with autism and developmental delays, as well as exploring bilingual acquisition in Chinese American families raising children on the autism spectrum. Qi is passionate about building partnerships with caregivers and practitioners to promote learning outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse families.



TEACHER EDUCATION



**OLAJIDE COOPER**

M.A. in Language Teaching, University of Nebraska at Omaha | B.S. in Elementary Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Olajide Cooper joins UNO as a new instructor. She brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm, with a focus on fostering community connections through language and culture. As a Fulbright grantee, Olajide has taught a wide range of language courses both domestically and internationally. She is thrilled to now work with pre-service teachers, guiding them as they discover their roles in education. Her teaching philosophy emphasizes creating inclusive spaces for learners of all ages and using experiential education to build meaningful content connections. Outside the classroom, Olajide enjoys spending time outdoors, relaxing with her two pets, or indulging in her passion for sewing.



**JOOWON LEE**

Ph.D. in Reading and Literacy in Early and Middle Childhood, The Ohio State University | M.A. in Reading Education, Otterbein University

Joowon Lee is an assistant professor of elementary literacy, specializing in language and literacy education within diverse educational contexts. Her research centers on how students engage in collaborative knowledge construction and social learning through dialogic pedagogy. She focuses particularly on the literacy development of multilingual students and the preparation of teachers to effectively support these learners. Driven by a passion for inclusivity, her work aims to create environments where all students can thrive and succeed in their unique ways.



**AMBER O'SHEA**

Ed.D. in Educational Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln | M.A. in Educational Psychology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln | B.S. in Elementary Education, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Amber O'Shea, an assistant professor of early childhood literacy, specializes in research areas including early intervention, social-emotional learning, and hope education. With over a decade of teaching experience in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms in Lincoln, Nebraska, she transitioned to academia, serving three years as an assistant professor at North Dakota State University within the teacher preparation program. In 2023-24, Amber served as the program coordinator for the early intervention strand at Trinity College Dublin. Outside academia, she finds solace at her Minnesota cabin and enjoys boating with her family.

## COLLEGE OF INFORMATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## COMPUTER SCIENCE



### DIVIJA SWETHA GADIRAJU

Ph.D. in Computer Engineering, International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad | M.S. in Computer Engineering, International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad

Divija Swetha Gadiraju is a visiting assistant professor. Her research interests are deep reinforcement learning, blockchain, IoT, and structural health monitoring. During her post doctoral research, she worked on AI for bridge health monitoring. She has taught data structures and deep reinforcement learning courses. She is currently teaching computer networks and computer architecture. Divija was awarded an overseas doctoral visiting fellowship to conduct her Ph.D. research as a visiting scholar at Purdue University. She also received the Qualcomm Innovation Fellowship for her research on blockchain. In her free time, Divija enjoys painting and participating in outdoor activities.



### PRASHANTI MANDA

Ph.D. in Computer Science and Engineering, Mississippi State University | B.E. in Computer Science and Engineering, Biju Patnaik Technical University

Prashanti Manda is an associate professor, with research interests in health informatics, data analytics, and natural language processing. She has taught courses in data structures, machine learning, health informatics, and data mining. Before joining UNO, she served as an assistant professor of computer science, associate professor of informatics and analytics, and the Director of Informatics and Analytics at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Outside of academia, Prashanti enjoys hiking with her two dogs and spending time in nature.



### JAYDEB SARKER

Ph.D. in Computer Science, Wayne State University | M.S. in Computer Science, Wayne State University | B.S. in Computer Science and Engineering, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology

Jaydeb Sarker is an assistant professor specializing in human factors software engineering, empirical software engineering, natural language processing, and human-computer interaction. He has developed advanced tools to detect toxicity in software developers' communication, aiming to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion by addressing antisocial behaviors like toxicity, sexism, misogyny, and trolling. With prior teaching experience in software engineering and programming, Jaydeb enjoys outdoor gatherings and playing soccer, badminton, volleyball, and cricket.



### PRAVAL SHARMA

Ph.D. in Computer Science, University of Nebraska-Lincoln | M.S. in Computer Science, Mangalore University

Praval Sharma is a visiting assistant professor. His research interests lie at the intersection of natural language processing and spatial data mining. He specializes in developing data-driven algorithms, particularly for event-specific information extraction, using machine learning, natural language processing, and spatial statistics. Praval's research aims to enhance the accuracy of event-specific information extraction, which is crucial for improving event analysis and natural language understanding. His teaching interests center around data science and machine learning. Outside of academia, Praval enjoys sports, traveling with his family, and music.

COMPUTER SCIENCE (CONTINUED)



**XIN XING**

Ph.D. in Computer Science, University of Kentucky | M.S. in Information Technology, University of Stuttgart

Xin Xing is an assistant professor, who brings a wealth of expertise in computer vision, deep learning, and machine learning. His research focuses on image category, multimodal learning, and medical image analysis. With authorship on 20 peer-reviewed conference papers and journal articles, Xin plans to further explore computer vision in his future research endeavors. Additionally, he harbors a keen interest in applying AI technology to security studies. Outside of academia, Xin, an avid cat lover, finds pleasure in outdoor activities such as hiking.

CYBERSECURITY



**PENG JIANG**

Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Old Dominion University | M.S. in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Old Dominion University | B.E. in Communication Engineering, Chongqing University of Post and Telecommunication

Peng Jiang is an assistant professor. His research interests encompass cybersecurity, AI, autonomous vehicles, and Next-Generation communication. Currently, he is dedicated to bolstering the security of autonomous vehicles and drones by integrating multi-modal sensor systems to ensure robust location security.

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE



**LANE K. GILLESPIE**

Ph.D. in Criminology, University of South Florida | M.A. in Criminology, University of South Florida | B.A. in Criminology, North Carolina State University

Amelia Lane Kirkland Gillespie is an associate professor whose research focuses on intimate partner violence, sexual victimization, victimization in disproportionately affected and special populations, and crime victim services. Her community-focused research often involves collaboration with government and community organizations to address research questions with public policy relevance. Lane has taught a variety of courses, including victimology, gender-based violence, and research methods. Recently, she was honored with a Commitment to Teaching Award for 2023-2024. Lane is looking forward to her new position at UNO and exploring Omaha with her family.



PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



**SOJIN JANG**

Ph.D. in Public Affairs, University of Colorado Denver | M.P.A. in Public Administration, Sungkyunkwan University | B.A. in Business, Indiana University Bloomington

Sojin Jang serves as an assistant professor, specializing in the intersection of emergency management, environmental and energy policy, and policy processes. Her research concentrates on evaluating governmental efforts in achieving equitable public service delivery, thereby informing actions to ensure equity in emergency management and policy outcomes. Additionally, she examines how policies interact with and respond to disasters. Central to her work is the development of an emergency management information provision framework, designed to facilitate comprehensive and user-friendly information dissemination for emergency management and local government planners.



**HONEY MINKOWITZ**

Ph.D. in Public Administration, North Carolina State University | M.P.A. in Public Administration, State University of New York at Albany | M.A. in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education, Michigan State University | B.A. in English, Michigan State University

Honey Minkowitz, an assistant professor, delves into social risk and policy in her research pursuits. She focuses on the policy process and policy communication, exploring aspects such as policy elite communication, its impact on the public, and the role of social risks in shaping policy decisions. Additionally, she investigates public and nonprofit management. With her teaching portfolio spanning introductory courses in American government, research methods, and nonprofits, as well as advanced courses in organizational management and behavior, Honey brings a breadth of expertise to her role. Outside academia, she finds joy in running and attending concerts with her husband.

SOCIAL WORK



**LEQUISHA S. TURNER**

Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln | M.S.W. in Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Lequisha Turner, an assistant professor, focuses her research on enhancing wellbeing for marginalized communities. Her work centers on integrating traditional healing practices with evidence-based approaches to behavioral health. Additionally, she investigates ways to support neurodiversity within the Black community, aiming to foster acceptance, value, support, and encouragement for all youth and young adults. Lequisha has taught diverse classes covering dimensions of diversity, research methodologies, and learning and motivation. Outside academia, she finds solace in nature and cherishes moments with her family.

SOCIAL WORK (CONTINUED)



**ANVAR SADATH VAKKAYIL**

Ph.D. in Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences | M.Phil. in Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences | M.S.W. in Social Work, Adaikalamatha College

Anvar Sadath Vakkayil, presently an associate professor, is deeply engaged in the realm of mental health research where his expertise shines in areas such as self-harm and suicide prevention, first-episode psychosis, family interventions in mental health, and substance use among indigenous populations. He was successful with many competitive research funding applications including the Science Foundation of Ireland and the Irish Research Council Pathway Programme. His teaching portfolio spans a variety of courses in social work, public mental health, and related interdisciplinary programs, with a passion for psycho-social interventions in mental health and research methodology. Beyond academia, Anvar enjoys a variety of outdoor activities.

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ROTC



**CARA M. AVERNA**

M.A. in History, American Military University | B.A. in East Asian Languages and Culture, University of Kansas

Cara Aversa is an assistant professor of aerospace studies, teaching courses on Air and Space Force history, national security affairs, and leadership development. She has traveled extensively in East Asia during her military career. Cara researched PTSD in Ancient Greek warfare while earning her graduate degree. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, running half marathons, and reading.



**JONATHAN E. WILLIAMS**

M.B.A. in Business Administration, University of Nebraska-Lincoln | B.B.A. in International Business, University of Memphis

Jonathan Williams serves as an associate professor of aerospace studies, where he trains, supervises, and develops officer candidates into leaders and commissioned officers in the United States Air and Space Forces. He teaches courses on Air and Space Force history, national security affairs, and leadership development. Previously, Jonathan was an Instructor and Evaluator Electronic Warfare Officer on the RC-135U stationed at Offutt Air Force Base, amassing over 1,900 flight hours and 600 days deployed. He enjoys traveling with his wife, Alexis, hosting family and friends, and spending time with his four children.

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