



18TH ANNUAL

STUDENT RESEARCH & CREATIVE ACTIVITY FAIR

REVIEW AND RESULTS
FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026 | BARBARA WEITZ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER

STUDENT RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY FAIR AT A GLANCE

235

Student Projects

137

Graduate Student Presenters

124

Undergraduate Student Presenters

PARTICIPATION FROM ALL SIX UNO COLLEGES AND UNL COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING | 118 FACULTY ADVISORS

COMMUNITY JUDGES REPRESENTED THESE ORGANIZATIONS

- Arch Insurance
- ATT
- Baird Holm LLP
- Boys Town
- City of Omaha Police Department
- College of Saint Mary
- Contrast Security
- Creighton University
- Delta Airlines
- Douglas County Corrections
- Genoma Bioinformatics
- Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals
- National Strategic Research Institute
- Nebraska Arts Council
- Nebraska Business Development Center
- North Risk Partners
- NV5
- Omnicom
- Osaic
- Papillion La Vista Community Schools
- Peru State College
- Physicians Mutual
- Syndicate of Sound Synapse
- Tenaska
- UNeMed
- University of Nebraska
- University of Nebraska at Omaha
- UNMC
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- VA Omaha Caregiver Support

SPONSORS

The Student Research and Creative Activity Fair is grateful to our sponsors, whose generous support brings UNO's students and their groundbreaking work to the Omaha community, and beyond. Please contact unoorca@unomaha.edu if you are interested in being a sponsor for the 2027 Fair.



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2026 FAIR AWARDEES



UNDERGRADUATE

PERFORMANCES

BEST: NICOLE STANDER

"Head Sky, Me Much Snout"

Advised by: Teresa Carmody of Writer's Workshop

OUTSTANDING: SALVADOR BECERRA

"Comprehensive Musical Experience exhibiting synthesis of pedagogical ideas and real-world musical practices on keyboards"

Advised by: Wyndhem Ennaemba of School of Music

MERITORIOUS: LEXI AXIOTES

"Religion and Other Catastrophes: Stories Performance"

Advised by: Teresa Carmody of Writer's Workshop

HONORABLE MENTION: MARCUS KRIENER

"FUSE Student Creative Activity - Senior Piano Recital for May 2026"

Advised by: Kristin J Taylor of School of Music

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

BEST: CLAIRE WING AND JAYDEN SMITH

"Cytotoxic Effects of Ethanol on the OVCAR-8 Ovarian Carcinoma Cell Line"

Advised by: Kristen Johnson of Biology

OUTSTANDING: CHRIS SCHINZEL

"Examining Long Term Effects of Antibiotic Administration in *Callithrix jacchus*"

Advised by: Jonathan Clayton of Biology

MERITORIOUS: CLARA WALLACE

"Do feeding patterns explain greater energy use observed in cold-adapted prairie lizard (*Sceloporus consobrinus*) populations?"

Advised by: Travis Robbins of Biology

HONORABLE MENTION: KAITLYN PARKER

"Effects of dietary protein during zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) development on stress expression and cortisol after exposure to chronic stress during adulthood"

Advised by: Ryan Wong of Biology

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

BEST: WELLS JOHNSON

"IRE1 and Filamentation in *C. albicans*"

Advised by: Jill Blankenship of Biology

OUTSTANDING: DOMINIC KOPERSKI

"Investigation of Antimicrobial PA-12 in Selective Laser Sintered Prosthetic Sockets"

Advised by: Jorge Zuniga of Biomechanics

MERITORIOUS: VICTOR RIVERO

"Validation of a human-specific, multiplex platform for detecting common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*) inflammatory analytes"

Advised by: Paul Denton of Biology

HONORABLE MENTION: KAITLYN OSWALD

"The Impact of Chronic Stress, Cortisol Dysregulation, and Lifestyle Adaptation on Informal Caregivers: A Literature Review"

Advised by: Janelle Beadle of Gerontology

EXHIBITS OR DEMONSTRATIONS

BEST: ANA P. LOPEZ-ZURITA

"Hasta la Piel Collection (Down to My Skin Collection)"

Advised by: Amelia Rosenberg of School of the Arts

OUTSTANDING: RACHEL CLOETER

"Deconstruction: Saint John's Chapel"

Advised by: Neil Griess of School of the Arts

MERITORIOUS: SIMON MILLER

"Charlie Vessel"

Advised by: Neil Griess of School of the Arts

HONORABLE MENTION: MARIE-CLAIRE BROOHN

"Human Nature"

Advised by: Mark Gilbert of School of the Arts

GRADUATE

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

BEST: BRANDON DOEHNE

"The Role Of Physiological Metrics in Baseball Pitching Performance"

Advised by: Brian Knarr of Biomechanics

OUTSTANDING: CHUKWUMA ADINCHEZOR

"Gastrointestinal Transit Time in Captive Common Marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*): Associations with Stool Consistency and Gut Microbiome Structure"

Advised by: Jonathan Clayton of Biology

MERITORIOUS: NAGESH PALUKURU

"Analyzing Trends and District-Level Disparities in Chronic Absenteeism in Douglas County, Nebraska (2019–2020 to 2024–2025)"

Advised by: Ben Smith of Economics

HONORABLE MENTION: BRIAN SCHLATTMANN

"Direction-specific wobble-board instability as a rehabilitation strategy to restore orthogonal postural geometry in older adults"

Advised by: Madhur Mangalam of Biomechanics

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

BEST: DANAE GREIG

"Effects of environmental pollutant exposure on mitochondrial function"

Advised by: Gwenael Layec of School of Health and Kinesiology

OUTSTANDING: JEFFREY ZIMMERLY

"Repurposing FDA-Approved Drugs Against the Pathogenic amoeba *Naegleria fowleri*"

Advised by: Paul Davis of Biology

MERITORIOUS: JOSEPHINE PARKER

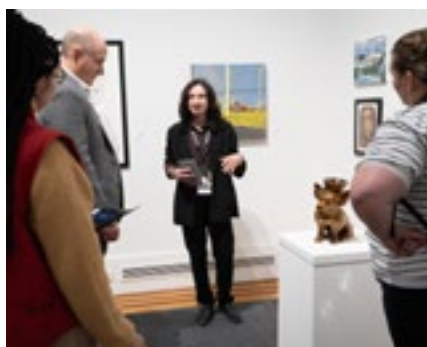
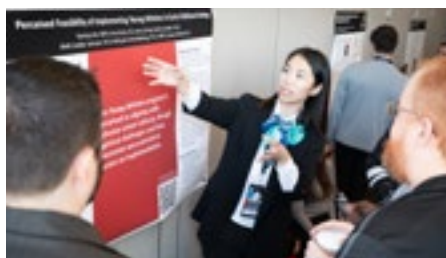
"Creative Arts Impact on Identity Formation within Nebraska Communities"

Advised by: Josie Gatti Schafer of Center for Public Affairs Research

HONORABLE MENTION: EMILIE WHITEHOUSE

"Support for Survivors of Sexual Misconduct: Comparing Accommodations and Student Perceptions Across Institutions of Higher Education"

Advised by: Tara Richards of Criminology & Criminal Justice





NATIONAL ACADEMY MEMBER HEADLINES NEW KEYNOTE AND PANEL FEATURE

One of the major highlights of this year's event was the addition of a featured keynote presentation by internationally recognized neuroscientist Dr. Alex Kolodkin of Johns Hopkins University.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences and a leading researcher in the field of neural development, Kolodkin shared insights from his groundbreaking work studying how the nervous system forms and functions. His presentation brought national-level expertise and visibility to this year's program while creating new opportunities for students, faculty, researchers, and attendees to engage with cutting-edge scientific discovery. Following Kolodkin's presentation, Dr. Sara A. Myers, UNO Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activity, led a panel discussion with Kolodkin, and other esteemed scientists, Dr. Gurpreet Dhillon, Dean of the UNO College of Business Administration, Dr. Lance C. Pérez, Dean of the UNL College of Engineering, and Dr. Joann B. Sweasy, Director of the UNMC Eppley Institute for Research in Cancer and Allied Diseases.

Why it matters: Introducing a nationally prominent keynote speaker marked an exciting expansion of the event's programming and reinforced UNO's commitment to research excellence, discovery, and academic collaboration. Dr. Kolodkin's participation also elevated the event's profile by connecting the university community with one of the country's most respected scientific leaders.

What they're saying: "Having a scientist of Dr. Kolodkin's stature join us this year created an incredible opportunity for attendees to hear directly from a globally recognized leader in neuroscience and biomedical research."

The big picture: Bringing distinguished researchers like Dr. Kolodkin to campus reflects UNO's strategic commitment to pragmatic research, discovery, and meaningful academic partnerships that expand learning opportunities for students and faculty alike.



ALEX KOLODKIN, PH.D.

*Homcy-Margolis Professor of Neuroscience in
the Department of Neuroscience at the Johns
Hopkins University School of Medicine*

Dr. Kolodkin earned his B.A. from Wesleyan University and his Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from the University of Oregon, followed by postdoctoral training at UC Berkeley. He joined the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine faculty in 1995, became a full professor in 2004, and was an HHMI Investigator from 2005–2018. An elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Medicine, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and AAAS, he received the NAS Pradel Research Award in 2016. His laboratory studies the molecular mechanisms that guide neural wiring and synapse formation during development, with a focus on the mammalian visual system and neocortex.

Dear UNO Community and Friends,

The number and scope of student scholarly and creative activities on campus keep growing and this is reflected during our annual Student Research and Creative Activity Fair. This year marked the 18th year of celebrating and showcasing the incredible work our students are doing on campus. In 2026, the Fair showcased 235 student projects representing all six UNO colleges, as well as the UNL College of Engineering from UNO's Scott Campus.

We invite you to join us next year for the:



FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2027

This event is a reflection of the community-university collaboration for which UNO has become known. We are grateful to all community members who serve as judges and to those that attend the fair.

The Office of Research and Creative Activity wishes to sincerely thank all students, faculty mentors, and faculty moderators who made the 2026 Fair a resounding success. As always, we look forward to exhibiting the research, scholarly, and creative activities of UNO's students at the 2027 Fair. We invite you to join us for this exciting annual event.

We look forward to seeing you at the Fair!

Sara A. Myers, Ph.D.

Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activity

2027 GUIDELINES COMING SOON!

Interested in serving as a judge or volunteering for the 19th Annual Student Research and Creative Activity Fair on March 5, 2027? Know someone who might be? Contact us to learn more.

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