

RESILIENCE + *response*





HERE FOR EACH OTHER

As leaders, we all have core values that keep us grounded, focused, and connected to our work. One of my core values as dean of the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences (CEHHS) is to find a positive path forward, to look for opportunity – even when presented with huge challenges.

To say the last eighteen months have been challenging would be an understatement. Our communities are experiencing widespread trauma and grief as well as rapid change. Every single one of us has made adjustments to the ways we live, work, communicate, and learn in order to adapt to these unprecedented times. We've shown great resilience during one of the most difficult stretches in modern history. As we travel this path together, I see so much hope and opportunity here at UNO.

The CEHHS team – our students, faculty, staff, and administrators – have responded to the pandemic and to the needs of our community in many inspiring ways. In this publication, you will read about this incredible work.

For example, over the last year, Health and Kinesiology students helped UNO's Office of Health Security with COVID testing and contact tracing. Not only did these students support the campus and our community by reducing the spread of COVID, they received hands-on, experiential training for their future careers – health careers that are more critical than ever before.

“ Like tiny seeds with potent power to push through tough ground and become mighty trees, we hold innate reserves of unimaginable strength. *We are resilient.* ”

- Catherine DeVrye

Educational Leadership alumni are using the knowledge gained from their doctoral studies, as well as their experience as school district leaders, to manage the pandemic and support their students and teams. You will learn more about the journey of two of these alumni: Dr. Andrea Haynes and Dr. Heather Nebesniak.

CEHHS researchers are working to level the playing field for underrepresented students and community members. Two of Dr. Jorge Zuniga's Biomechanics graduate students, Claudia Cortes Reyes and Chris Copeland, received NIH Supplemental Diversity Grants to support pediatric prosthetics research, which will in turn elevate their future careers. Dr. Ashley Blount from Counseling has built a research team to study and improve healthcare disparities during the pregnant lifecycle.

I'd also like to introduce our new UNO Chancellor, Joanne Li, Ph.D., CFA. Chancellor Li is the former dean of Florida International University's College of Business. Since taking on the role of chancellor in July she has been a well-informed and determined voice on campus and out in the community. As a first-generation college student and the first woman of color to lead UNO, Chancellor Li understands the needs of our students and she is excited about elevating UNO as the nation's leading urban university. The college looks forward to helping her achieve that goal.

Finally, I would like to introduce two members of our CEHHS leadership team, our associate deans: Dr. Kris Swain and Dr. Neal Grandgenett. Dr. Swain was previously the chair of the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders and joined our office in Fall 2019. Dr. Grandgenett joined us this July from the Teacher Education Department. Their talents and expertise range from assessment and accreditation to STEM research and federal funding, and their skills will serve our college well as we plan for the future.

Dr. Swain, Dr. Grandgenett, and I are proud of the resiliency and response from our students and colleagues, and we are excited to support this work in the year ahead. **We also thank you for supporting our college and for being part of our story. We simply couldn't do this work without you.**

Nancy A. Edick, EdD | Lois G. Roskens Dean



@UNOCEHHS



H&K STUDENTS HELP KEEP CAMPUS SAFE

In June 2020, UNO and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) established the Office of Health Security to promote and protect the health and safety of students, faculty and staff on issues related to COVID-19 and other public health topics of concern.

Over the last academic year, the office also provided practical, experiential learning opportunities for Public Health and Kinesiology students from the School of Health and Kinesiology (H&K).

H&K student Nya Khor envisioned making a career out of helping others early on in life. It's why she selected Public Health as a major and became a certified nursing

assistant. That same vision is what led her to become a member of the Office of Health Security's student staff.

Stationed at UNO's COVID testing center in the Scott Conference Center, Nya and a team of H&K students played a role in testing hundreds of UNO students, faculty, and staff every week as part of UNO's Maverick COVID response. The work could be tiring, Nya said, but the experience and the interactions she had with patients each day made it worthwhile.

"Usually when they came in the first scary thought that they had was 'oh my gosh, it's the nasopharyngeal when they go all the way back, and I don't want to be

uncomfortable," she said. "Just telling them that it is a nasal swab, I could see the relief on their face."

Rhea Flowers, a testing center staff member and Public Health student, couldn't picture herself on the sidelines during the pandemic. The responsibilities left her exhausted some nights, but she saw the work as valuable experience and doing her part to make a difference.

"Coming in and getting tested is how you help your community out," she said. "With every test, you help prevent someone else from being exposed to the virus."

Kinesiology alumna and graduate student in the Physical Activity in Health Promotion program, Arissa Bavari, was on the front lines of UNO's contact tracing efforts. Arissa was one of six students who were the calming presence on the other end of a phone, walking individuals through what to do after a potential COVID exposure. Some of the many questions she fielded daily included: "What's going to happen if I miss a test? Where can I quarantine? What happens if I test positive?"

“ Coming in and getting tested is how you help your community out. With every test, you help prevent someone else from being exposed to the virus.”

- Rhea Flowers

While hands-on work was valuable in an academic and career sense, providing students with comfort and relief is what Arissa found most fulfilling.

"Hearing that shift in their voice of 'now I'm calm, now I'm okay,'" Arissa said. "I liked that."

Public Health instructor, Marcia Adler, Ph.D., recruited the students to earn the hands-on experience.

As former director for UNO Health Services, Dr. Adler was a part of the university's H1N1 preparedness efforts and that experience inspired her to better equip her students for future pandemics, which included pandemic scenario planning part of the classroom experience for her Public Health courses.

"We are used to working in the community. The students who work with me understand that's one of my core values - that we are part of the community," Dr. Adler said. "So, when I started talking about this, it was 'How do we get signed up? What do we do next?' We had tons of interest right away."



Arissa Bavari



Nya Khor



Marcia Adler, PhD



Rhea Flowers

\$1.25M GRANT TRAINS SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS FOR BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION CAREERS

Throughout her 20-year career in education, Anne Keith held many roles—from music teacher to reading interventionist to high ability facilitator—but she was always drawn to the kids who were struggling with big emotions.

"Of all the roles I've had, the common thread was the hard kids. They either found me or I found them, and whatever task I had at the time had to go on pause because a child was in crisis. That's the part I've always loved. I've always liked thinking, 'This was

happening in the classroom and this child reacted this way. What can I put into place to help the classroom be a safe place for that child?'"

Anne is one of the first graduates of a select cohort dedicated to helping kids be successful in school. In 2018, UNO in collaboration with UNMC's Munroe-Meyer Institute received a \$1,250,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs to create the Interdisciplinary Behavioral Consultation (IBC) Scholars program.

The five-year grant is training the IBC Scholars to work collaboratively on interdisciplinary teams to address significant behavior problems in schools.

"We have three fields at work here. We have our Department of Special Education, the UNO Department of Psychology, and the Applied Behavior Analysis group at the Munroe-Meyer Institute," explains Dr. Phil Nordness, associate professor in the Department of Special Education & Communication Disorders and co-investigator of the grant.

"Historically these groups work with the same child, but in their own separate environments. The special education teacher works in the classroom. The school psychologist works in their therapeutic room. Applied behavior analysts work in a clinic. The goal of this grant is to bring those three professionals together so they

have an understanding of the different roles, and they will be able to work together with children in a more collaborative sense."

IBC Scholars receive a partial tuition remission and stipend during the two-year program.



Dr. Phil Nordness



Anne's Structured Behavior Skills classroom

Intensive learning experiences are also provided, above and beyond a regular master's degree program: weekly seminars on topics related to interdisciplinary collaboration, implementation science, evidence-based practice, and leadership in educational systems, as well as customized practicums.

"For my practicum, I went to different schools to support individual students—truly as a consultant. I spent time observing, and then setting up and testing ideas and interventions. When the teacher was in a good place and knew what to do, then I backed away, but I was always available by email or phone. So I might have a teacher reach out to say, 'Today was not a great day.' I could then monitor and reassess the approach," Anne explains about her practicum experiences.

"One of my peers stayed at one site and worked with several students, another met with students virtually. My peers and I were able to discuss our practicums and ask questions like, 'What did your experience look like?' or 'I did this, what would you have done?' or even, 'Don't do that—it didn't work!' Those were pretty great, vulnerable conversations, and we were all learning."

This fall, Anne is excited to begin her new role as a teacher in a Structured Behavior Skills classroom in Millard Public Schools' elementary school.

"Through this grant, I was able to have conversations and share knowledge with people from different disciplines, and I learned to bridge gaps in communication. I now have a better understanding of how to leverage relationships to get things done more efficiently and connect to people along the way so that we can get there together. For example, I want everyone sitting at special education meetings to feel valued and to feel welcome, to let parents and caregivers know, we're all here because we care about your child."



I WANT EVERYONE SITTING AT SPECIAL EDUCATION MEETINGS TO FEEL VALUED AND TO FEEL WELCOME, TO LET PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS KNOW, WE'RE ALL HERE BECAUSE WE CARE ABOUT YOUR CHILD."

ANNE KEITH | MS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION, '21 | APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS CONCENTRATION

HIGHLIGHTS

\$1.25M

Interdisciplinary Personnel Preparation Grant from the Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs



Six inaugural students awarded scholarship funding for year one



The Interdisciplinary Behavioral Consultation Scholars program brings together the fields of Special Education, Psychology, and Applied Behavior Analysis



CULTIVATING SCIENTISTS

As part of Dr. Jorge Zuniga’s RO1 grant funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), two graduate students from UNO Biomechanics have been awarded Supplemental Diversity Grants through the NIH’s National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.



The supplemental funding allows students Claudia Cortes Reyes and Chris Copeland to contribute to Zuniga’s project — how a child’s brain adapts to the use of 3D-printed prosthetic limbs — by performing smaller research projects under Zuniga’s mentorship.

"The NIH provides funding to students who work very hard and who have supported successful labs and research projects. Claudia and Chris are now running their own small-cited projects, which is perfect because there's more room for learning. They are learning how to lead and how to develop and manage a project," explained Zuniga.

"When they run their own labs and apply for their own funding, they will be more likely to get it because their names have been associated with a project that's happening. They will also be eligible for higher level NIH grants. And of course they will be more employable because every university in the nation is looking for faculty with previous NIH funding experience. That's the beauty of it."

The funding enhances the diversity of the research workforce by recruiting and supporting students, postdoctorates, and investigators from diverse backgrounds, including those from groups that have been shown to be underrepresented in health-related research.

"I often tell students that no matter whatever background they have, they can go into a program and succeed. They have it in themselves, because I see it. I see it every day," said Zuniga.

"What they may need help with is breaking down their goal to make it reachable, make it something they can grab, but that's where our team comes in. We have about 15 people in the lab, two postdocs, several doctoral, master's, and undergraduate students. We, as a family, work on all the projects, but the responsibility of making sure the progress goes the right direction is for those students who received the funding. But we're always here to support the success of the project and the student."

\$1.5M

RO1 recipients Dr. Jorge Zuniga and Dr. Brian Knarr also received UNO Big Ideas funding for Biomechanical Rehabilitation and Manufacturing

Claudia Cortes Reyes

BS in Biomechanics '18, MS in Biomechanics '20

Current doctoral student:
Doctor of Physical Therapy, UNMC

NIH Project: 3D Printed Prostheses for Children: A Tool to Monitor Upper Limb Movement

Claudia's family emigrated from Mexico when she was 7-years-old, and her three siblings all attended UNO. Claudia followed her older sister to UNO through the Goodrich Scholarship Program.

"The whole family was at UNO, and I'm a huge family person. So it was the natural choice for me," explained Claudia.



Claudia likes to see how things work, so she initially started in IT, switched her major to Kinesiology, but eventually clicked with the field of Biomechanics.

For her NIH-funded project, Claudia is working with children between 7 and 12 years of age — half who use an upper-limb prosthetic device, half in a control group — implementing an 8-week home intervention protocol centered around play activities, developed by an occupational therapist. She hopes to prove that the protocol creates changes in brain activity and help the children develop motor memories.

"We are teaching them how to use their prosthetic so they build memories related to how they move. In the future, they will recall that information, be able to say, 'I remember how to use this. I remember what muscles I need to activate in order to get this to open and close.' That's the idea behind the home interventions and our research."

Chris Copeland

BS in Biomechanics '18, MS in Biomechanics '20

Current doctoral student:
PhD in Biomechanics & Kinesiology

NIH Project: Development and Validation of a Low-Cost 3D Printed Upper Limb Prosthetic Simulator

Chris grew up in Omaha and attended UNO on a Regents Scholarship so he could stay close to his family. He noticed the Biomechanics Research Building when it was being built and during a tour, he met Dr. Zuniga, started volunteering in the department, and switched his major from IT.



"Nothing against computer scientists or data analysts, but Biomechanics resonated with me. It felt more impactful than sitting at a desk coding."

Chris aspires to develop more useful, functional prosthetics that are less likely to be rejected — a recent study found that 45% of children with upper limb deficiencies reject their prosthetic device. For Chris' NIH-funded project, he is using brain imaging to see if a prosthetic simulator tool used during training will emulate the neural and muscular responses of using an actual prosthesis.

"Can I mimic what changes happen in the brain during prosthetic training? If I can, then I can apply this to a large population of people and conduct studies that would be helpful for testing different prosthetic training paradigms," said Chris.



I FOCUS ON HELPING PEOPLE FULLY FUNCTION, NO MATTER THEIR BACKGROUND. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'RE TRADITIONALLY HEALTHY OR IF YOU HAVE ACUTE PAIN, YOU CAN STILL FUNCTION AT YOUR OWN HIGHEST LEVEL."

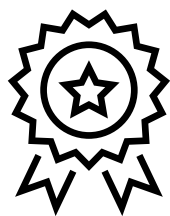
DR. ASHLEY BLOUNT | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, COUNSELING

RESEARCHING HEALTHCARE DISPARITIES IN WOMEN

Dr. Ashley Blount, assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, is a wellness researcher, investigating areas such as Wellness Counseling, Women's Health (Peri/Post Natal), and Athletes and Former Athletes.

Recently, Blount's research is addressing a critical need in our country: healthcare disparities in women during the pregnancy lifecycle. At the beginning of the pandemic, when the U.S. was experiencing racial justice protests, Blount realized that she had the power to make change in this time of stress and unrest.

"With everything going on in our country, I asked myself, 'What are you doing to support people? Are you making any actionable changes through your research?' I saw some small things in my wellness work, but I realized I wanted to change my research life.



Dr. Ashley Blount received a Trailblazer Award from the American Counseling Association (ACA)

Everything I was reading said that women underutilize healthcare services, and I decided to focus my work on women's health issues, specifically healthcare disparities in the pregnancy lifecycle," explained Blount.

"My ultimate purpose is to decrease healthcare disparities for Women of Color, who experience higher inequalities than their White counterparts."

Blount rallied the help of colleague Dr. Charmayne Adams, and in a virtual session about NU Collaboration Initiative Grant funding, they connected with their future research team, colleagues from UNMC: Drs. Ann L. Anderson-Berry, Gurudutt N. Pendyala, and Corrine Hanson.

The team recently published a manuscript, Biopsychosocial Factors during the Perinatal Period: Risks, Preventative Factors, and Implications for Healthcare Professionals.

"This research explored perceptions of the healthcare system. We interviewed women who were somewhere in their pregnancy life cycle using a biopsychosocial model. We wanted to know if their physical, psychological, and social wellness was where it needs to be for functioning. For example, do they have a support system? How is their mental wellness?" said Blount.


"This manuscript will inform our first study, and our goal is to help improve the system so women can have increased access to quality reproductive healthcare, to health insurance, to patient-centered providers and culturally sensitive care."

Blount is also working on placing counselors directly into medical settings to promote prevention-based care and for counselors to work directly with clients within hospital and clinic settings to decrease risk factors.

For their study, the team will use the biopsychosocial model to assess different levels of wellness in women who delivered babies at UNMC using data collected from the Department of Pediatrics.

"We will look at a biological component, and assess nutrition. We will look at a psychological component and assess peri- and postpartum depression. We're also finding themes that arose during COVID, to see if there differences pre- and post-COVID. Are their depression levels higher or lower? Is their nutrition worse or better? And then we'll pull in themes on their psychological wellbeing."

For this emerging area of research, Blount received the Garry R. Walz Trailblazer Award in July.

 **Follow Dr. Ashley Blount on Instagram: @docblount**



RESEARCH COLLABORATORS

Dr. Ashley Blount
Assistant Professor, UNO Department of Counseling

Dr. Abby Bjornsen-Ramig
Associate Professor, UNO Department of Counseling

Dr. Charmayne Adams
Assistant Professor, UNO Department of Counseling

Dr. Ann L. Anderson-Berry
Professor, UNMC Division of Neonatology

Dr. Gurudutt N. Pendyala
Associate Professor, UNMC Department of Anesthesiology

Dr. Corrine Hanson
Professor, UNMC Medical Nutrition Education Division

GRANT FUNDING

\$40,000 | UNO Collaboration Initiative
Omega 3 Fatty Acid: Potential for mitigation of neurodevelopmental outcomes from in utero opioid exposure in a chronic stress rat model

\$10,000 | UCRCA
Healthcare disparities in women: a phenomenological investigation focusing on Women of Color (WOC)

\$7,500 | UNO Collaboration Initiative
Healthcare disparities and experience of stressors in women during their pregnancy lifecycle



Dr. Charmayne Adams honored as Emerging Professional of the Year

Dr. Charmayne Adams was recognized in November with an Emerging Professional Award by the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA). Adams teaches courses in crisis and trauma in addition to working with students gaining their first clinical experience through their practicum. She hopes that her impact stretches beyond research, theories, and practice.

"I went through my entire education, kindergarten to Ph.D., without ever having a professor or counselor that looked like me," she said. "I hope that I can be a model for other multiracial women. There is a place for them in the field of counseling."

CREATING A CULTURE OF MATH READINESS AND SUPPORT

On campus and out in the community, the Teacher Education Department (TED) supports innovative math-related initiatives and partnerships.

PREPARING QUALITY TEACHERS

As an undergraduate student pursuing a math degree at UNO, Dario Gudino grabbed a unique opportunity that guided him into the field of education.

"I assisted with a class at Metropolitan Community College (MCC) where the majority of students were from minority populations and struggled with mathematic content. I really connected with the students and enjoyed what I was doing. I also know they benefited from having someone like me there with them," explained Dario, now a math teacher at Bryan High School and graduate of the NebraskaMATH Omaha Noyce Partnership.

Funded by a \$1.4 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, UNO Noyce Scholars pursue careers as culturally-responsive math teachers in high-need secondary schools while receiving scholarships, research opportunities, internships, and mentorship. The scholars graduate with dual degrees in Math and Education.

"Our program is a student- and community-centered collaboration between MCC and UNO focused on increasing the number of highly-qualified secondary math teachers," said Assistant Professor and Principal Investigator of the grant, Dr. Kelly Gomez Johnson.

"Being successful in college and beyond takes more than coursework. Our program creates a community of learners who support each other, the campus, and our community and have long-lasting networks of faculty and peers to turn to as they start their teaching careers."

CREATING INNOVATIVE COURSES

TED faculty members are developing courses to connect UNO students with real-world application of mathematics and STEM. The new courses benefit both aspiring educators and students fulfilling general education requirements.

In Dr. Derrick Nero's Science Experiments & Engineering Design course, students work together to create near-space

experiments which they launch using a high-altitude balloon.

"In order to teach others, you need to know how to do it yourself, so a class like this is valuable for education students so they can have a solid foundation in STEM practices," said Nero

Through recent NSF grant funding, Dr. Michelle Friend has developed several general education math courses. One new course incorporates Service Learning, pairing UNO students with local nonprofits to solve real-world, organizational problems, while giving students critical workforce skills such as data literacy and collaboration.

"Many students in general education math courses have 'math anxiety' and a history of terrible experiences with math courses," said Friend. "Innovation in these courses at UNO helps people see that math can be fun and interesting, provide applicable valuable skills in many settings, and can lead to great career opportunities."

PROVIDING STATEWIDE SUPPORT

Throughout Nebraska, a new program is strengthening students' understanding and perception of math, and UNO is involved. The Nebraska Math Readiness Project, a program that helps struggling high school students develop stronger math skills before college, is a collaboration between six community colleges, 35 high schools, and UNO. The UNO team, headed by CEHHS Associate Dean Neal Grandgenett, oversees the statewide program evaluation.

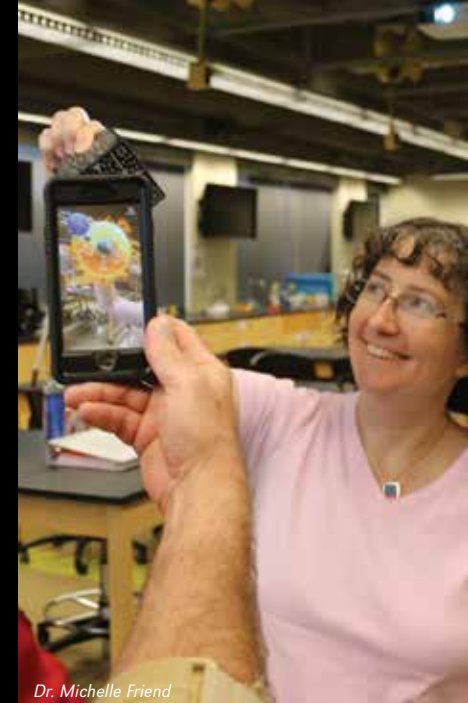
"We're early in the project, but it's showing a good trajectory," said Grandgenett. "For example, only 7.9% of the students passed a fractions test before joining the project, but 83% passed it as the class progressed."

Grandgenett continues, "Math preparedness among many students is a historical and national problem. Math is necessary, not just to get through college, but to perform well in many activities and occupations like cooking, construction, automotive work, and nursing. Developmental Mathematics is everybody's business."

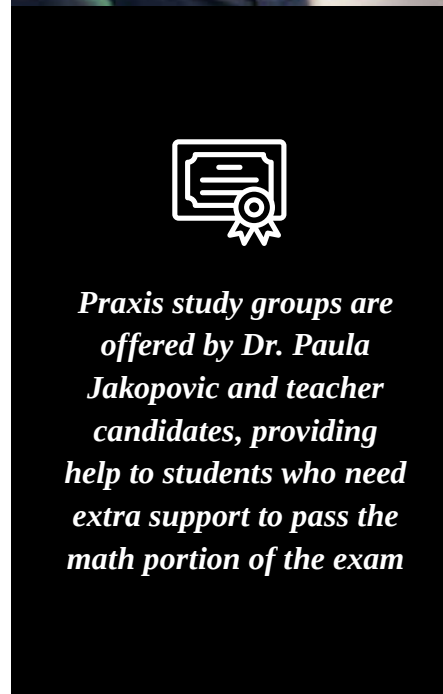



Dr. Derrick Nero


New courses developed by faculty members Dr. Derrick Nero and Dr. Michelle Friend, help UNO students learn workforce skills like data application and collaboration



Dr. Michelle Friend




Praxis study groups are offered by Dr. Paula Jakopovic and teacher candidates, providing help to students who need extra support to pass the math portion of the exam

Dr. Kelly Gomez Johnson



Supported by Dr. Neal Grandgenett, the Math Readiness Project, a collaboration of community colleges and high schools, is helping teens develop stronger math skills before college



Dr. Neal Grandgenett


Partnerships with the Omaha STEM Ecosystem and UNO's STEM TRAIL Center provide professional development for UNO faculty and local educators, and math-specific support for PK-12 families



Dario Gudino



DR. ANDREA HAYNES

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND DISTRICT OPERATIONS, WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



DR. HEATHER NEBESNIAK

SUPERINTENDENT, ORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ALUMNI Q&A LEADING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Dr. Heather Nebesniak and Dr. Andrea Haynes are 2016 graduates of the Department of Educational Leadership's doctoral program and both share a background in Early Childhood.

As leaders in Nebraska school districts – Dr. Haynes in Westside Community Schools, one of Omaha's metro school districts, Dr. Nebesniak in Ord Public Schools, a smaller, rural district – they faced similar challenges during the pandemic: how to respond to and plan around an unprecedented event, while meeting the needs of their staff and students. Both champion the importance of advocacy and support for teachers, as well as the critical need for mental health and other basic services at this time.

"Nearly all students have experienced challenges to their mental health and well-being. Many lost access to school-based services and support for a long time period, with early research showing disparities based on race, ethnicity, LGBTQIA2S+ identities, students living below the poverty threshold, and other factors," explained Dr. Haynes.

"Stakeholders can partner with schools to ensure we have the critical infrastructure for mental health support for all students. This includes access to social workers, outpatient treatment, solid programming for social emotional learning incorporated within the classroom, less academic pressure, and more counseling support."

Dr. Nebesniak implemented two critical services from the ground up in Ord – a food assistance program and mental health support. Early in the pandemic, Dr. Nebesniak's building principals, school nurse, and nutrition services staff implemented a summer meal program. In addition to serving drive through pick-up meals on site, transportation

staff delivered food directly to school families and to a neighboring community pick-up site.

"We drove food around for that whole summer and as a bonus, we could put our eyes on our kids. I equated it to home visits for some families. Our principals and our staff saw our kids' daily life. They saw that interaction," explained Dr. Nebesniak.

"We also started a new assistance plan that provided counseling for our kids. It is fairly common in the Omaha Metro area, but that was unheard of out here, and it took the pandemic and CARES dollars to make that happen for us. The number one sentiment I heard from parents was, 'I know my kids are okay, but I worry about the kids who don't have the home I have.'"

Q: How did the pandemic change you as a leader?

Dr. Haynes: "I have found great value in being able to practice 'intentional calm.' I see this as the ability to detach from a panic-stricken situation and think clearly about how to navigate it. Intentional calm is a focus on humility but not helplessness. I can now better see past challenges as roadblocks and view them as problems to be solved, even learned from. When a leader is calm in a deliberate way, the team and community can face challenges more creatively."

"Within Westside, we continue to focus our daily efforts on supporting our front lines building staff (teachers, admin, and support staff) by arming them with the most up-to-date Covid-19 procedural safety information they need to effectively do their jobs each day and keep our school communities safe. One thing we have learned by slowing down and proceeding calmly is that our building-based school staff have endured the brunt of the negative impacts of this pandemic. Providing for formal ways to listen and gauge their feedback helps us in the central office make more informed decisions each day."

Dr. Nebesniak: "Every day, 700 people come to our two buildings. Nowhere else in our county, in our area, do 700 people gather on a daily basis. We have the responsibility to keep the buildings safe and clean, to keep the students fed, to make sure that paychecks go home to staff, and to make sure that the quality of life that they want to have can happen. That responsibility is huge."

"I've learned through this process to give more grace, and to also be very vocal about giving grace. So many teachers and parents were worried about grades during our closure. I can't say grades don't matter, but I had to be able to express where we were going to land during this pandemic. I learned to be more articulate and purposeful, because I know that as a leader, when I say something, it often instantly means

'do or go.' It took a long time to get to a point where we all could understand, we must have a safe spot to think about ideas, to give ourselves time to think and plan before we act."

Q: How did your UNO leadership degree help you navigate the challenges of the pandemic?

Dr. Haynes: "My UNO education provided me with the needed mindsets that continually help me to look ahead, think critically, and remain agile. Whether as a building leader when this all first started or now, as an Assistant Superintendent, I am prepared to unify teams behind a single purpose and frame questions for our team to investigate and solve. The EDL program at UNO equipped me to embrace action, even in ambiguity. Understanding that often you will not be able to judge your decisions until you have succeeded or failed requires a great deal of courage and a deep self-awareness."

"In addition, my EDL experience taught me that swift action does not involve rushing headfirst into motion. It requires an assessment of what is at the greatest risk and where you need to shift gears, leverage people who can help you see a new angle, and then create a quick plan of action."

“ My UNO education provided me with the mindsets that continually help me to look ahead, think critically, and remain agile.”

- Dr. Andrea Haynes

Dr. Nebesniak: "My networking experience was so important. Early in the pandemic, I could not make decisions alone. There were 18, 19-hour days where I was absolutely exhausted, and my phone was still going off at midnight. When I worked in the Omaha area, I was part of MOEC. I did the UNO Leadership Academy, so I had great resources and contacts from there. I was constantly around other administrators. Out in my rural world, that's not always the case. The Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association (NRCSA) became really important. I worked with other rural superintendents to create a return to school plan that was shared with NDE. That helped our voices be heard. And my superintendent colleagues from Omaha said, 'We want in on this. We're not a member of NRCSA because we're not rural schools, but you are doing great work!' That work helped build a bridge, helped create a standard practice."



STORIES FROM THE

NU FOUNDATION

DR. LAVONNE PLAMBECK: A LEGACY CONTINUES

LaVonne Plambeck, Ph.D., of Omaha, Nebraska passed away on April 28, 2021.

Dr. Plambeck was a trailblazer who advocated for high-quality early childhood education, which was reflected in her philanthropic support. LaVonne supported numerous projects across the University system such as the Plambeck Montessori Scholarship Fund at UNO, the LaVonne Kopecky Plambeck Early Childhood Center at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and funding of the Technology-Supported Early Childhood Professional Development in Nebraska at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute.

LaVonne loved meeting her UNO scholarship recipients at an annual luncheon. She enjoyed hearing the student stories and sharing her experiences and wealth of wisdom with the aspiring educators.

Scholarship recipient Becca Folda shared, "I am grateful to receive the Plambeck Montessori Scholarship because without it, furthering my education would not be an option. Not only is this scholarship helping me financially, but it is deepening my understanding and appreciation for Montessori Education."

LaVonne's incredible legacy will continue to live on through her scholarship and its recipients.



Early Childhood thrives at UNO thanks to legacies like Dr. Plambeck's



Dr. Plambeck & Dr. Deb Wisneski, John T. Langan Professor of Early Childhood Education

UNO COMMUNITY COUNSELING CLINIC THRIVES WITH DONOR SUPPORT

The UNO Community Counseling Clinic at Roskens Hall not only serves graduate students learning to provide mental health services, it is also a key component in providing counseling services to the Omaha area.

Most counseling agencies or private practices in Omaha accept insurance or payment based on a sliding fee scale. The UNO Community Counseling Clinic is unique in that it provides a means to therapy on a pay-as-you-go basis at \$20 or less per session.

Thanks to the gracious gifts of donors to the UNO Counseling Clinic Support Fund, some services are offered at no charge. Clients are students, community members seeking affordable services on their own, and referrals from therapists.

“ Because the Counseling Clinic helps families and individuals with their mental health issues, I chose to financially support this critical need. Thank you, UNO, for this service!"

- Lynn Williams, Donor

Graduate students in the Department of Counseling learn valuable experience as they have their first opportunity to apply counseling skills and theories with real life situations at the clinic, with supervision and guidance of licensed faculty and staff. During the pandemic, the clinic rose to the challenge by switching all services and support to 100% online. While the campus was locked down, graduate students were meeting with clients via TeleHealth (two-way video) and making phone calls to quarantined students. One student counselee had this to say, "I was feeling so isolated and scared with my COVID symptoms and the Counseling Clinic counselor was very supportive and helped me look at my situation from a more positive and rational way. Developing a gratitude journal made me realize that I was lucky to be a student at UNO."

The clinic is dependent on financial gifts in order to provide support staff, software, and training opportunities that are current with best practices in a post-pandemic world. Please consider helping the clinic by spreading the word in the community and by making a donation.

Please contact the University of Nebraska Foundation at 402.502.0300 or visit nufoundation.org to learn more about giving to the UNO Community Counseling Clinic.

The clinic operates independent of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) located in the Health and Kinesiology Building, which is staffed by licensed therapists who provide counseling services exclusively to our UNO Omaha students, faculty, and staff at no charge. The UNO Community Counseling Clinic is in Roskens Hall, within the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. The UNO Community Counseling Clinic can be reached at 402.554.4882 or unocounclinic@unomaha.edu.



HIGHLIGHTS



TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher Education is the recipient of the 2020 UDTA, the University-wide Departmental Teaching Award.

Vanessa Chavez Jurado, education student and 2020 Student Body Vice President, was selected as a 2021 Newman Civic Fellow.

The Teacher Education Dept. Advisory Committee named Dr. Kerry-Ann Escayg as the recipient of the departmental research award.



SPECIAL EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Special Education Career Ladder Cohort #1 graduated 21 students.

Special Education graduate enrollment at 97 students was the highest in program history.

The Speech-Language Pathology program earned continued accreditation through 2028 from the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA).



HEALTH & KINESIOLOGY

The Benson High Magnet School Health Professions Academy, supported by Dr. Adam Rosen and Dr. Marcia Adler, earned Model Status from the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC).

H&K graduate student Elizabeth Pekas received the Helen Hansen Outstanding Graduate Student award.

The first cohort of Huespring, an LGBTQ+ leadership development program from H&K's MSHRC, graduated.



BIOMECHANICS

Dr. Alexey Kamenskiy receives \$2.6M R01 grant funding from the NIH for research on optimized stent design.

Innovative Prosthetics and Orthotics is the first tenant in the Biomechanics Research Building.

Dr. Aaron Likens is working with the NSRI to develop technology for monitoring and analyzing the effects of long bouts of physical stress on U.S. soldiers in real-time.

Arash Gonabadi and Dr. Philippe Malcolm's research published in PLOS Computational Biology.



EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Faculty created a video communications series, the 6C's of Change, that went to all UNO Ed Leadership students and area schools.

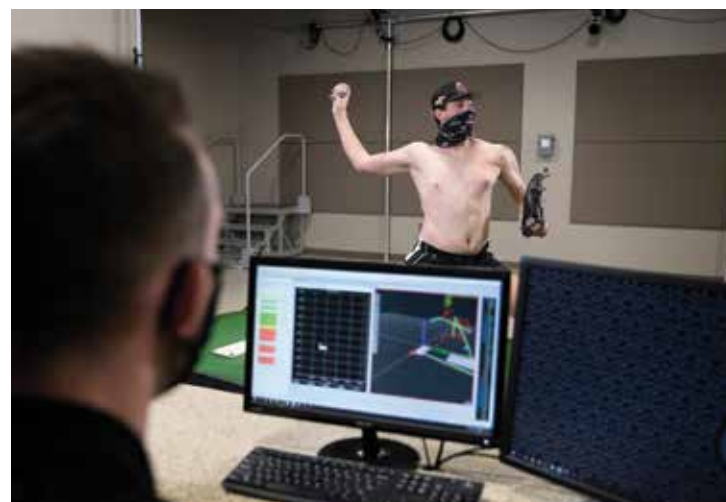
Twenty-one Doctor of Education (EdD) degrees were awarded in 2020, and 280 doctoral degrees in educational leadership completed from 1985-2020. EdD graduates make up about half of the doctoral graduates at UNO.



COUNSELING

Dr. Christine "Tina" Chasek is recruited as the new Department Chairperson.

The Student Affairs in Higher Education Program transitioned to a brand new, fully online program in the Fall of 2021.



2020-2021 HIGHLIGHTS

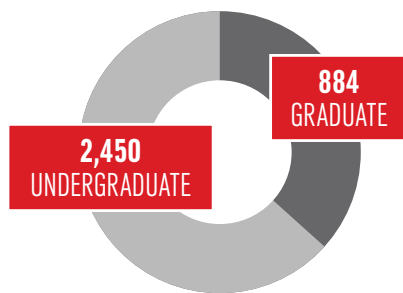


ENROLLMENT

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED PER UNIT | FALL '21

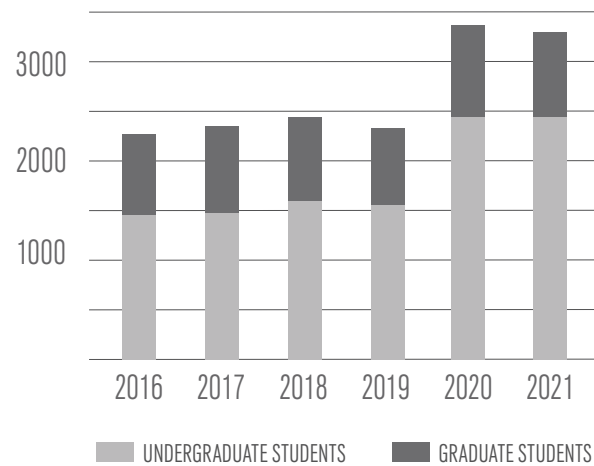
- Biomechanics: **291**
- Counseling: **245**
- Educational Leadership: **187**
- Health and Kinesiology: **1,328**
- Special Education & Comm. Disorders: **630**
- Teacher Education: **1,209**

OUR STUDENTS | FALL '21*

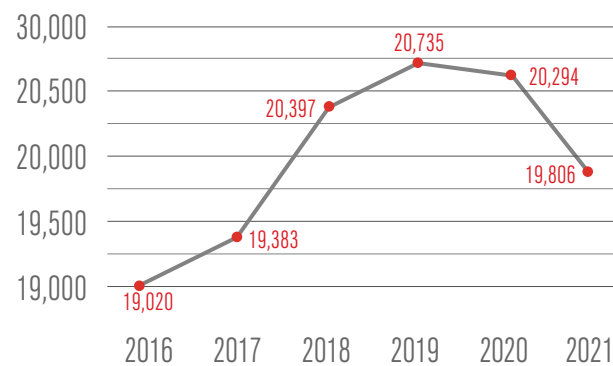


*Note: Removes duplicate counts across units

TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENTS



STUDENT CREDIT HOURS PRODUCED



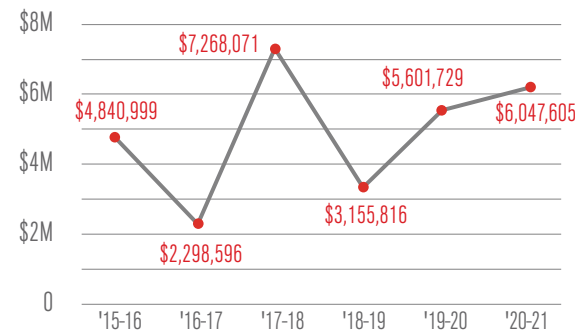
EXTERNAL FUNDING

\$63.3 MILLION

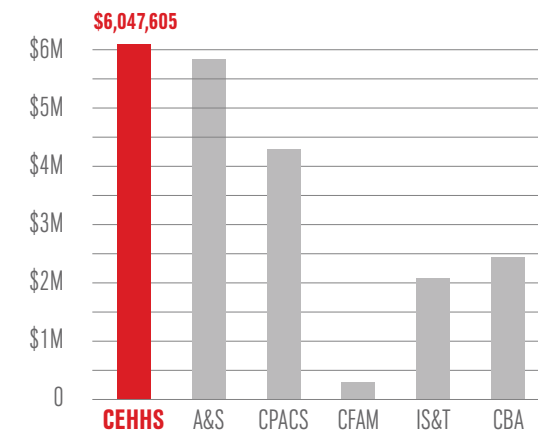
in faculty grant proposals submitted in 2021

GRANTS AWARDED (2015 - AUG. 2021)

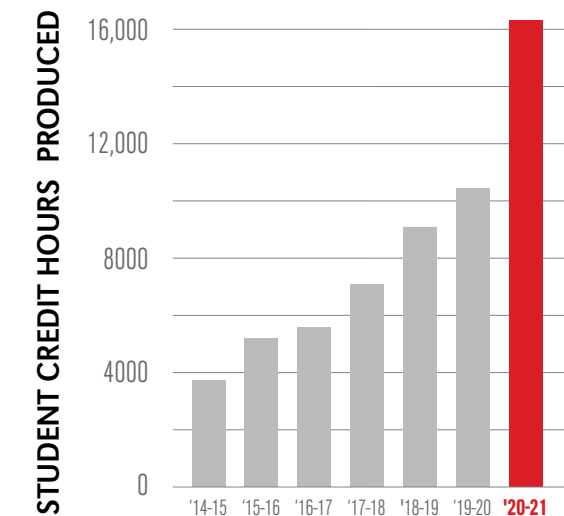
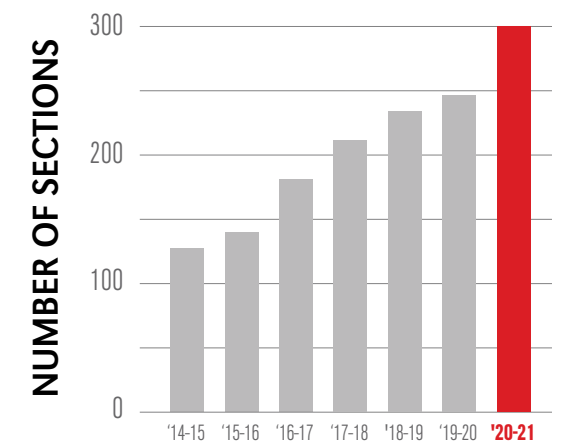
Data now reported by academic year



GRANTS AWARDED BY COLLEGE | 20-21



DISTANCE EDUCATION



AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Dr. Nick Stergiou received a President's Excellence Award: the 2021 Outstanding Research and Creativity Award (ORCA).

Dr. Becky Pasco received a Chancellor's Medal at the May 2021 Commencement Ceremony.

Dr. Melissa Cast-Brede received an Outstanding Innovation in Teaching with Technology Award.

Dr. Kelly Gomez Johnson received a 2020 Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award.

Dr. Charmayne Adams recognized as Emerging Professional of the Year by the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA).

Dr. Ashley Blount received the Garry R. Walz Trailblazer Award from the American Counseling Association (ACA).

The Teacher Education Department received a President's Excellence Award: the 2020 University-wide Departmental Teaching Award (UDTA).

Mr. Jonathan Scherling was the first recipient of the Dr. Frank Turk Excellence in Education Award from the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Metro-Omaha Raise Me To Read, a MOEC program, named to the Bright Spot Community by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.



CEHHS FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS FILM 12 ACCESS THE EXPERTS SEGMENTS

Sam Wilkins, Ph.D. | Richard Stacy, Ph.D. | Sara Myers, Ph.D. | Shari DeVeney, Ph.D., CCC-SLP | Tamara Williams, Ph.D. | Adam Rosen, Ph.D. | Michaela Schenkelberg, Ph.D. | Elizabeth Tolliver, Ph.D. | Danae Dinkel, Ph.D. | Matthew Heesch, Ph.D. | Charmayne Adams, Ph.D. | Nancy Edick, Ed.D.



CEHHS ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

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