

FALL 2016

# UNO

MAGAZINE





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FALL 2016

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## Dear Alumni and Friends:

NEARLY 40 YEARS AGO, I started my journey at UNO as a student. Ten years ago, I was blessed to be asked to lead this campus as Chancellor.

Today, I'm writing to let you know I will be stepping down as Chancellor as soon as University of Nebraska President Hank Bounds names my successor.

There's never a perfect time to leave your dream job, but there is a right time. And this is the right time for me.

UNO is in a very strong position. I can proudly say our metropolitan

university mission is at the heart of everything we do, and because of you, our momentum is unstoppable.

I have been a part of this university for a majority of my life. I know I say this a lot, but I truly believe I'm the luckiest guy in the world.

After I leave my post as Chancellor, I will take on a new role working on special projects for the university. Know that I will spend the rest of my life advocating for UNO students, staff, faculty and this city.

Thank you for sharing this incredible journey with me. The incredible progress we made, we made together. The future is bright.

Go Mavs!

Until next time,

Chancellor John E. Christensen



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LET ME BE HONEST for a moment (for once, some would say): A part of me was hoping university photographer Ryan Henriksen would come home from India this summer with some funky GI bug that lingered for a month or two.

Nothing serious, mind you. Just bad enough that he didn't feel like smiling for a while.

I suppose I shouldn't have spent the bulk of July lingering on such thoughts. Those who know Ryan know he's a great guy. Always pleasant and personable, and wicked-talented taking pictures and video.

So why the venom? Ryan went to India, and I did not — and I paid his way there.

Let me explain. Last year, I was fortunate to receive the Andy Award, named in honor of former Omaha World-Herald Publisher Harold Andersen. Issued annually, it funds international reporting projects proposed by Nebraska-based journalists and news organizations.

My original plan was to accompany Dr. Patrick McNamara, director of UNO's International Studies Program, and report on his efforts related to water conflicts and water quality in India.

I stopped in Ryan's office one day to ask for some picture-taking advice while I was on the trip.

"You should take me," Ryan said.

He was joking. But it got the wheels turning. I crunched some numbers and made it happen.

Ryan and I booked our flights (Omaha-Detroit-Amsterdam-Delhi), got our shots and planned the great fun we'd have on our great adventure. We applied for our visas together, sending them off the same day, to the same place in the same envelope. Ryan got the green light in 10 days.

Not me, though. I waited. And waited. And waited. I called the third party that dealt with the Indian consulate in Houston that issues visas to applicants from Nebraska. All I could do, they said, was wait some more.

My departure date got closer and closer — 1 month out. Two weeks. A week. A day.

No word, no visa.

So Ryan, Patrick and UNO student Brandon Sibbel left without me.

Ryan blogged about their travels, filling it with his stupid, beautiful pictures. I checked it compulsively each day to see what I was missing: beers on an Indian Ocean beach; a visit to the Taj Mahal; the awesome generosity of the Indian peoples (See a recap of their visit beginning on Page 40).

On Ryan's 10th day there, my visa came — approved. Great.

I don't really hate Ryan, of course (it helped that he brought me a gift from the Taj). But it helps to vent — and to let you know how this issue's theme of "Journeys" came to be.

Even if I had to stay home.



*Anthony Flott*  
Anthony Flott, Managing Editor



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# the first step toward Making a Difference

Philanthropy is a journey, but just a single step can make an immediate and lasting difference for UNO students

IF YOU STUDY SOME of the great women and men who have transformed higher education, often you'll find their philanthropy started with just a few dollars. With a small first step, they started down a path that led to thousands of student dreams coming true.

Are you UNO's next dream maker?

We can't all put our name on campus buildings (yet), but for less than the price of a movie ticket each month, you can help a UNO student earn her degree. By setting up a monthly credit card gift to the UNO Fund, you can give a small amount each month that adds up to a great amount over the course of the year.

A gift of \$8.34 monthly becomes a yearly gift of \$100, and just \$20.85 per month will qualify you for recognition in the UNO Century Club, which honors UNO Annual Fund donors of \$250 or more every summer in *UNO Magazine*.

Recurring monthly giving can be a great option for young alumni who don't think they can make a big difference (they can!), or busy professionals who might not have time to respond to a mailing or student phone call.

Even better, the new UNO Fund lets you choose how your monthly donation is best spent at UNO.

Through the UNO Fund, you can choose to directly support whatever you think is most important, including:

- **Student scholarships** that ease the cost of education for deserving UNO students.
- **Faculty recruitment and retention** to recruit the state's best educators and produce the most cutting-edge research
- **Your college's academic priorities**, whether it be new courses, student support programs, special guest lectures, or more.
- **The most pressing needs of the university**, immediately benefitting student goals and dreams.
- **The UNO Alumni Association**, which continues to produce award-winning alumni programming and communications for the benefit of UNO's students.

In addition, each donor to any area of the UNO Fund will now receive a UNO Alumni Card with a gift of \$25 or more. The alumni card entitles carriers to exclusive perks on and around campus, including access to Criss Library, HPER membership access, bookstore discounts, athletic and performance ticket deals, and much more.

Giving feels good, and it's a journey worth taking.

Please consider a gift today to the UNO Fund. For more information, or to make your gift, visit [nufoundation.org/UNOFund](http://nufoundation.org/UNOFund).



2016-17 inaugural UNO Alumni Association Scholarship recipients, from left: Micah Klassen, South Sioux City High School (Sioux City, Nebraska); Brenda Le Nguyen, South Sioux City High School; and, Mitchael Sieh, Stanton High School (Stanton, Nebraska).

## UNO Alumni Scholars begin Maverick careers

THE UNO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION welcomed its ninth class of UNO Alumni Scholars at the start of the fall semester. Three students received UNO Alumni Association Scholarships, awarded to graduating high school seniors who have demonstrated leadership and involvement during high school.

Recipients also must have a minimum ACT composite score of 24 and either rank in the top 25 percent of their class or have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. The \$2,500 annual scholarships are renewable for up to four years.

The association now is supporting 14 UNO students with UNO Alumni Association Scholarships.

Bios of the three recipients and other UNO Alumni Scholars are available at [unoalumni.org/scholarships](http://unoalumni.org/scholarships).

### Insurance

Are you in need of home, life, auto, health or life insurance? The UNO Alumni Association offers graduates insurance for these and other needs at discounted rates. See all the coverage available at [www.unoalumni.org/insurance](http://www.unoalumni.org/insurance).

### Travel

The UNO Alumni Association is pleased to offer alumni discounted travel opportunities through a partnership with travel provider Go Next! Join fellow graduates on one of these upcoming cruises!

- **April 30-May 8, 2017** — Southern Grandeur
- **May 15-24, 2017** — Salute to Spain
- **Aug. 17-28, 2017** — Baltic & Scandinavian Treasures
- **Oct. 7-17, 2017** — Mediterranean Radiance

For more information, including detailed brochures for each trip, visit [www.unoalumni.org/travel](http://www.unoalumni.org/travel). Additional cruises are added periodically, so check the site frequently. To receive a brochure for any of our trips by mail, call the association toll-free at 800-432-3216.



# Alumni Night of Honor

THE UNO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION hosted the third Alumni Night of Honor Wednesday, Nov. 3., at the Thompson Alumni Center.

Sponsored by First Data Resources, Alumni Night of Honor highlights achievements by members of the worldwide UNO alumni network. Among the individuals honored were Young Alumni Achievement Award recipients Andres Torres and Wendy Townley and 2016 UNO Athletics Hall of Fame inductees Fred Abboud (multi-sport), Justin Kammrad (football) and Scott Parse (hockey).

Alumni Achievement Award recipients and other distinguished graduates who have earned special recognition for service or professional accomplishments also will be recognized during the ceremony.

## YOUNG ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Established in 2014, Young Alumni Achievement Awards recognize outstanding career achievement, active community involvement or exceptional service to the university by graduates 40 or younger.

### ANDRES TORRES

Torres is business director for the Global Utility Division at Valmont Industries. He is responsible for sales, project management and engineering of tubular steel structures used to support transmission lines, highway lighting and traffic lights for customers in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Born and raised in Bogota, Colombia, he earned an MBA from UNO in 2013. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, including stints as president of the Nebraska Section and co-chair of

the Younger Members Group. He also is a council member for the Greater Omaha Young Professionals and one of the founders of the Valmont Professional Network.

Since 2015, Torres has served as a member of the UNO Alumni Scholarship Swing Committee. He also volunteers his time at St. Andrew's United Methodist Church.

Torres received the Greater Omaha 40 under 40 Award in 2012 from the Midlands Business Journal and was named one of Ten Outstanding Young Omahans in 2016 by the Omaha Jaycees.

He is married with two sons.

### WENDY TOWNLEY

Townley is development director of the Omaha Public Library Foundation. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism (2002) and a master's in communication (2011), both from UNO.

Townley previously worked as a campaign manager for the Steier Group and was assistant director of media relations at UNO. She also has worked for Cox Communications, Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates, and elsewhere. Since 2008 she has been an adjunct faculty member in UNO's School of Communication.

Townley also has written for numerous publications, including *UNO Magazine*, and in 2010 authored "Nerdy Thirty," a collection of 13 humorous essays.

Her professional affiliations include membership with the Greater Omaha Young Professionals Council (chair in 2016), Leadership Omaha, Women's Fund Circles, Optimist Club of Omaha and the Omaha Press Club.

UNO's School of Communication presented her its Rising Star Alumni Achievement Award in 2006 and the Nebraska chapter of the Public Relations Society of America named her Newcomer of the Year in 2005.

She is married to fellow UNO alum Matt Tompkins (2007).

## HALL OF FAME

With the induction of Abboud, Kammrad and Parse, the UNO Athletics Hall of Fame grows to 114 members. For information on each 2016 inductee, see Page 23.

The Night of Honor also featured recognition of the 15th anniversary of the UNO softball team's 2001 national championship. Former head coach Jeanne Scarpello and many of her former players attended.

### DAVID CRAFT

Night of Honor also included presentation of an Outstanding Service Award to David Craft.

Established in 1974, Outstanding Service Awards honor faculty, staff, alumni or friends who have shown long, outstanding service to the Alumni Association and/or University. Since then, 110 individuals have received the award.

Craft served the UNO Alumni Association Board of Directors from 2008 until 2016. He was chairman of the board in 2014-15. During his tenure he was instrumental in getting Maverick Monument installed on UNO's campus. He also served on the association's Scholarship Swing Committee for six years, including four years as co-chair. He also speaks to and mentors CBA students.

Craft is senior investment strategist and vice president at Wells Fargo Private Bank in Omaha. He earned a BA from UNO in 1990 and an MBA in 1992. He was the 91st graduate to chair the board.

Alumni who have been honored in the past year by UNO colleges, schools and departments also will be recognized at the ceremony.







THE UNO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION in September welcomed more than 40 graduates to the seventh class of its UNO Young Alumni Academy, a nationally recognized and award-winning leadership development program designed for alumni 35 and younger to facilitate networking and professional growth. To date, more than 250 young alumni have completed the program since the academy was founded in 2010.

Members attend sessions held at unique locations on and off campus and this year will include a behind-the-scenes tour of Baxter Arena. UNO leaders also address members on topics such as athletics management, student focus and community engagement.

Members in the 2016-17 class and their employers:

**Eric Anderson**, Dundee Digital; **Gokhan Arik**, Client Resources Inc.; **Mackenzie Bald**, CHI Health; **Paul Banninga**, Cox Communications; **Caleb Beasley**, E & A Consulting Group, Inc.; **Ashley Belmudez-Frakes**, CA Home & Business, LLC; **Kiley Bierman**, QLI; **Adam Denney**, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig; **Ashia Dunn**, Methodist Women's Hospital; **Krystal Fessler**, Northern Natural Gas; **Rae'Van Gamble**, Douglas County Youth Center; **Yanira Garcia**, University of Nebraska at Omaha; **Spencer Gaskell**, Miller Electric; **Ashley Hall**, Renaissance Financial; **Chris Hanna**, University of Nebraska at Omaha; **Josh Hick**, Union Pacific; **Michael Howick**, David Wood Floors; **Neil Humphrey**, Sojern; **Martin Jensen, Jr.**, NEI Global Relocation; **Beth Kucirek**, Lozier Corporation;

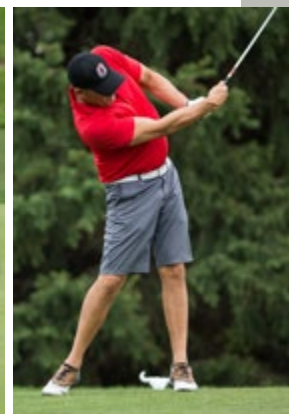
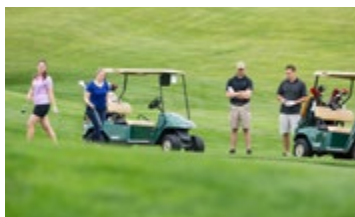
**Michael Marron**, JD Heiskell; **Michael Mason**, Hancock & Dana PC; **Michelle Meisinger**, The Durham Museum; **Jacklyn Miller**, Kugler Vision; **Ashley Morales**, University of Nebraska Foundation; **Christopher Munro**, Curzon Promotional Graphics; **Kristin Neemann**, Emspace; **Katie Past**, State of Nebraska — DHHS; **Christina Peatrowsky**, Nebraska Furniture Mart; **Kayleigh Quintero**, Berkshire Hathaway Homestate Companies; **Zach Reinhardt**, First Westroads Bank; **Rakshit Rekhi**, Gallup; **Megan Rieder**, E.W. Scripps Company - Omaha Radio; **Mark Rodgers**, Core Bank; **Andrew Ryba**, DMSi; **Jessica Scheuerman**, Animorum LLC; Partners for Livable Communities; **Jeff Skalberg**, United Way of the Midlands; **Briana Smith**, Big Brothers Big Sisters; **Sara Sommerer**, First National Bank of Omaha; **Keelan Stewart**, Boys Town; **Joshua Versaw**, ACI Worldwide; **Ines Vodonou**, Heritage Pointe Community; **Jessica Warren-Teamer**, Mutual of Omaha; **D'Mario Williams**, USAF; **Suzanne Withem**, University of Nebraska at Omaha

## SLOPPY START TO FALL SEMESTER



Learn more at [unoalumni.org/unoyoungalumni](http://unoalumni.org/unoyoungalumni)

UNO Alumni Engagement staff for a seventh consecutive year welcomed students back to campus during Durango Days in late August, serving approximately 1,800 free sloppy joes with chips, fruit, vegetables and beverage. Other University of Nebraska Foundation staff also joined the effort during the first day of the fall 2016 semester.



## SWINGING AWAY Association raises \$30,000 for student scholarships at the 36th annual UNO Alumni Scholarship Swing

THE UNO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION hosted the 36th annual UNO Alumni Scholarship Swing Aug. 29 at Indian Creek Golf Course, netting \$30,000 in support of students.

The association now has raised nearly \$900,000 since it began hosting the swing in 1999.

More than 100 golfers and nearly 50 sponsors participated in the tournament.

The money raised supports various association-sponsored student scholarships. That includes UNO Alumni Association Scholarships, \$2,500/year grants to graduating high school seniors who have demonstrated leadership and involvement during high school. The scholarships are renewable for up to four years and a new class of scholars is introduced each year.

UNO Alumni Scholars were at the tournament to thank Swing sponsors and participants.

UNO graduate and association board member Chris Denney chaired the committee that oversees the tournament. Other committee members were Ben Burton, Andres Torres and Tiffany Wade.

The Association thanks the following sponsors for their support of the Swing:

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**RAFFLE SPONSOR:** UNO Chancellor's Office; Beverage Cart Sponsor, Liberty Mutual; Golf Prize Sponsor, America First Investment Advisors; Beverage Sponsors, Pepsi Bottling Group; Hole-in-One Sponsor, Baxter Chrysler Jeep & Dodge; Prize Sponsors: Applebee's, Dave & Buster's, Gloss Salon & Day Spa, Hilton Omaha, LeMar's Donuts, Liberty Mutual, Luxury Nails, Martini Nails & Spa, Palm Beach Tan, Pie Five, Sgt Pepper's Café Italian, Spaghetti Works, Ted & Wally's, UNO Bookstore, Upstream Brewing, V Salon; Other Sponsors: Andres Torres, Curzon Promotional Graphics, UNO College of Business, UNO College of Education, Valmont Industries.

## 'Go Everywhere, Man'

### Show the O

Johnny Cash sang that he'd been "Everywhere, Man."

So have UNO alumni — just take a look at ShowtheO.com for proof.

Since the UNO Alumni Association's Show the O campaign launched in 2013, Mavericks have taken photos of themselves with "O" flags in nearly 100 countries and all 50 states, including most of the spots The Man in Black sang about.

Minnesota, Buffalo, Toronto? Yep, Yep and yep. Oklahoma, Tampa, Panama? Those, too.

How can YOU Show the O? Request a flag at showtheo.com — we'll send you one for free that you get to keep! Then, take a photo with the flag wherever you live or travel. Send the pictures our way and we'll post them at showtheo.com, which features an interactive world map showing all the places the "O" has been shown.



Elizabeth Ferzley, Northern Ireland

Graduate student Elizabeth Ferzley Shows the O on Carrick-a-Rede Island in Northern Ireland. She got to the island crossing Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge, first erected by salmon fishermen in 1755 and connecting nearby cliffs to the Island. The bridge is suspended nearly 100 feet above sea level.



# EYES *on* ISIS

*By Colleen Kenney Fleischer*

## *UNO student unearths terrorism secrets via data mining*

How do you join ISIS?

A young man in Omaha wanted to know. So he searched in every corner of cyberspace he thought they might be. He watched their videos, read their words, listened to their audio, downloaded their apps and followed their tweets to their pages.

He found that ISIS had a much bigger presence online than he expected. Its people were experts in social media. They especially liked Twitter, and through its use of hashtags were easily able to funnel their message out — their magnetic, lethal ISIS brand.

As soon as those tweets were taken down, they threw new ones up.

He found that ISIS was flooding the internet, any way it could, to attract money and capture the attention of young, social media-savvy followers.

Like him.





## I went down the rabbit hole.

"I basically went out and acted as if I was someone who didn't know anything but wanted to learn about ISIS," says Sam Church, an Information Innovation student in UNO's College of Information Science and Technology.

But it wasn't enough to just hunt for ISIS in cyberspace. He also built a software tool to capture all its tweets so experts could analyze the linked information.

"It just kind of fell together. I didn't really realize what I was doing."

His tool — whose dashboard bears the red and black UNO "O" brand — has captured the attention of the Pentagon.

"Sam is modest," says Gina Ligon, a professor in UNO's College of Business Administration. "We took Sam up to a Pentagon conference with us and he presented this in a poster session. He was the (beau) of the ball! He had a line of people — both from the Department of Defense as well as other researchers — asking him how to get his data."

Thanks to Sam's tool — which he made using computers on the third floor of the Peter Kiewit Institute — research that used to take a month or so to do now takes an hour.

His tool captures the information in real time, so it's especially useful to Marines and others with boots on the ground in the battle against ISIS.

Sam's work is just one part of a campus-wide effort — based in the Center for Collaboration Science (CCS) in the College of Business Administration (CBA) — that has put UNO on the map when it comes to the research into extremist terrorist groups.

Headquartered in CBA's Mammel Hall, CCS identified the group that evolved into ISIS before others even saw it as a major threat — before ISIS was ISIS.

CCS is composed of faculty and students from various backgrounds across the campus, including criminal justice, psychology, Arabic studies, computer science and innovation.

The UNO team is investigating the social media, leadership structure and organizational strategy of ISIS. The team began studying the group that would become ISIS in 2006 as part of a Department of Homeland Security project. Looking at ISIS as if it were a business, the UNO team identified how ISIS differentiated itself in the "global jihad industry."

Ligon, director of CCS' Organizational Collaboration Research, came to UNO from Villanova University four years ago. Her approach to studying extreme terrorism groups has been unique: While others were studying terrorist groups using political science models or sociology models, she chose to examine them through a business lens — as you would study a business in which you might invest.



*Members of the UNO Center for Collaboration Science's division of radicalization and violent extremism present to former U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel on ISIS social media.*

What is its leadership like? What is its structure? Strengths? Weaknesses? (One example: She found is that if you can cut off the financing and the leadership of these organizations, then you have a strong chance of degrading them.)

UNO's expertise is part of a broad effort by the University of Nebraska to lead the way in conducting research and development related to national security and defense. NU's National Strategic Research Institute (NSRI), established in 2012, draws on the talents of a diverse range of faculty from across the campuses to support United States Strategic Command, the Department of Defense and other federal agencies in combating weapons of mass destruction. NSRI is one of just 13 university-affiliated research centers in the nation, putting NU in the company of institutions like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Johns Hopkins University and Penn State University.

### Finding a Purpose

So how did Sam join the center's cyber-terrorism team?

Luck, he says.

He transferred to UNO from Drake University a few years ago.

"I wasn't doing very well in school. I really didn't have a purpose."

He didn't like actuarial science, his major. He moved to Omaha mainly because it had an Apple retail store, and he wanted to keep working for Apple. He also had heard that UNO had a pretty good computer science program.

His transformation began, he says, the day he walked into his first advising appointment at UNO and learned about its IT innovation major. It sounded right up his alley, because it allowed him to design his own coursework. He says the program is one of a kind in the nation.

"A lot of the IT classes here are whatever you want to make of them. The first class is like pitching ideas. The second class is you pitch an idea in the first week, and then you work on that idea for the next 15 weeks building it — you get whatever you want out of it. There's not a ceiling. So if you're really motivated ... I don't know, I thrive in that environment."

And it was his good luck, he says, to meet Professor Doug Derrick.



"He's very inspiring," Sam says. "He's just on your side. He's extremely student-focused while at the same time, conducting all this research."

Sam joined the CCS terrorism team through his work as an undergraduate assistant to Derrick, an associate professor of IT innovation who came to UNO almost five years ago, specifically to work in UNO's IT Innovation program.

Sam wanted to work for him so much that he quit the Apple job he loved and took a big pay cut.

"My first week on the job, we started talking about researching leadership profiles of ISIS and what they call a cyber-profile — two avenues we were directed to research in. Cyber-profile was a new term — we had to actually define that what meant.

"That was daunting. It still is daunting."

Sam says he wasn't considered a good student anywhere until he came to UNO — not in Lincoln, where he spent most of his childhood. Not in Crofton, Nebraska, a small town in the northeast part of the state, where he spent his last two years of high school. Not at Drake.

But he thrived, he says, in the UNO environment, and Derrick helped him find his way.

And find ISIS.

"My passion now lies in social media, and its influence on people," Sam says. "The connection between people

and computers. That's really vague, but that's where my passion lies."

Sam graduated in May with a degree in IT innovation. He's continuing his research at UNO as a graduate student for Derrick.

Derrick is proud of Sam and his database.

"The tool came directly from Sam's brain," he says. "He thought of it. He built it and started collecting the data as he thought about it, and it has a unique capability."

So what makes ISIS so magnetic to young people?

That's the question the Pentagon is now asking the UNO team to help it figure out. UNO was asked to do this along with just a handful of other top universities including Johns Hopkins and Harvard.

The ISIS brand, Sam says, is powerful.

"It's a little scary," he says. "You see their power. You see how they skew things. But then you get in the research mode, and it becomes fascinating."

Supporting students like Sam Church is one of the priorities for *Our Students, Our Future*, a two-year fundraising effort to secure \$200 million to benefit University of Nebraska students. It runs through 2017.

Learn more at [nufoundation.org/ourstudentsourfuture](http://nufoundation.org/ourstudentsourfuture) or call 800-432-3216.

## OUR STUDENTS OUR FUTURE

Nebraska's future begins now — with every current and future student on a University of Nebraska campus. *Our Students, Our Future* — an initiative to raise \$200 million by the end of 2017 — aims to positively impact those students and our state's future by providing scholarships and programs. Your generous gifts today will touch the lives of students now and long into the future — students who may otherwise be unable to afford an excellent education. Please help us transform young lives and invest in our state's future today.

Visit [nufoundation.org/ourstudentsourfuture](http://nufoundation.org/ourstudentsourfuture) to learn more.

## GOAL

**\$200 MILLION**  
BY DEC. 31, 2017

## YTD

**\$100.8 MILLION**  
AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2016





Just as much as UNO has changed Christensen, there is no question that Christensen has left his mark on UNO. There has arguably been no more successful period in UNO's history than during his tenure as chancellor.

Just in the past decade, UNO has:

- Celebrated back-to-back records for the largest and most diverse incoming classes in UNO history.
- Seen overall enrollment jump more than 12 percent, with 15,627 students enrolled this past fall.
- Completed more than \$480 million of capital projects, including first-of-their kind facilities like the Biomechanics Research Building, Community Engagement Center and Baxter Arena.
- Been recognized nationally with the President's Award for Economic Opportunity as part of the President's Higher Education Honor Roll.
- Been named the No. 1 Military Friendly University in the nation by Military Times two years running.
- Hosted national conferences such as the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) Conference, Human Movement Variability Conference, Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance Conference and the Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference.
- Won the NCAA Midwest Regional in Men's Hockey and competed in the 2015 Frozen Four.
- Hosted U.S. and foreign dignitaries such as President Barack Obama, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Japanese Minister of Defense Itsunori Onodera and Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command Admiral Cecil D. Haney.

## Stepping Down after 10 years Stepping Up

### Chancellor Christensen announces his retirement

AFTER 10 YEARS OF SERVICE as the head of UNO, John Christensen has announced Sept. 26 that he will be stepping down from his role as chancellor. At an announcement made on campus, Christensen, the first UNO alumnus to serve as chancellor, stated that he will remain in his office until his successor has been named by University of Nebraska President Hank Bounds and the new appointee is ready to lead the campus.

Christensen called it a difficult decision, but said it is important to do what is right for both his family and the university.

"There's never a perfect time to leave your dream job, but there is a right time," Christensen said. "UNO is in a very strong position. I can proudly say that our metropolitan university mission is at the heart of everything we do, and our momentum is unstoppable."

Christensen made the announcement inside the atrium of Roskens Hall, home to the same College of Education where he was a student and later served as a faculty member and dean.

President Bounds said he will immediately begin developing plans for a national search for Christensen's successor.

"It's difficult to find someone who cares more about the success and well-being of our students and the quality of the institution than John," Bounds said. "The results are clear: Expanded access for students, including many who are the first in their families to attend college. Nationally recognized engagement with the community. Exciting momentum in research, particularly in areas where UNO can lead the way. A significantly wider campus footprint that has opened new opportunities for teaching and research and recruitment and retention of talent."





“ People pushed and pulled me. They supported me. It changed my life as a human being. That’s the impact UNO can have on you. People may be tired of hearing this, but I’m the luckiest guy in the world.”

“And, tremendous success in private fundraising that has made college more affordable for students, provided valuable support for our faculty and academic programs, and allowed for new facilities that enrich the educational experience.”

Christensen was named interim chancellor Sept. 12, 2006. He was officially named UNO’s 14th chancellor May 8, 2007. In the 10 years Christensen has led the university, UNO has celebrated its centennial, moved its athletics to Division I, become classified as a doctoral-research university by the Carnegie Foundation and positioned itself as a standard bearer for metropolitan universities across the country.

Christensen said none of those accomplishments were his alone; rather, it was the UNO community in collaboration with the city of Omaha that helped achieve them.

“This campus has transformed because of the faculty and staff and the community’s support for our kids,” he said. “It influenced my life and it is influencing the lives of so many others each and every day.”

An Omaha native, Christensen earned a Bachelor of Science in Speech Communications and Drama at Dana College in Blair. Soon after, he discovered a passion for special education and sought a program that would nurture that desire.

He found a home at UNO, beginning his career as a master’s student in 1971 studying speech-language pathology. He would go on to earn his Ph.D. and return to UNO as a professor.

For nearly 40 years, UNO has been at the center of Christensen’s life. He became chair of the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders, then dean of the College of Education, then vice chancellor, and eventually chancellor.

Christensen received the UNO Alumni Association’s highest honor, the Citation for Alumni Achievement, in 2008.

UNO Student Body President and Student Regent Patrick Davlin said Christensen’s leadership and service is inspirational.

“Chancellor Christensen’s dedication to creating a valuable and memorable experience for every UNO student sets him apart as a leader,” Davlin said. “His passion for this mission is reflected in every part of the UNO community he’s touched in the last ten years.”

Christensen’s impact will be felt even after his tenure as chancellor ends. He will continue to serve as a leader on a host of special projects that support UNO students.

University of Nebraska Regent Kent A. Schroeder said UNO has been fortunate to have Christensen at the helm for the past decade.

“His focus on UNO’s most important strategic priorities – starting with our students – has put the campus on an impressive trajectory. I feel the excitement and sense of momentum every time I’m at UNO,” Schroeder said. “That is a credit to the leadership and commitment of the Chancellor, his team and all of the talented faculty, staff and students who are part of the UNO community. The Board of Regents is grateful for all that Chancellor Christensen has done for UNO and the University of Nebraska.”

Christensen said he is looking forward to spending more time with his family after transitioning out of his current role. He has been married to his wife, Jan, for 44 years. The Christensens have three sons, all of whom are UNO graduates. They also have six grandchildren.



# Maverick Missions

For two grads and a dozen other Mavs, Global outreaches get their start at Clinton Global Initiative University

SISTER ROSEMARY ARRAH'S MISSION took her to Cameroon. Angeela Shrestha's to Nepal.

Both journeys began at UNO with a trip to the Clinton Global Initiative University.

Launched by President Bill Clinton in 2007, the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) each year hosts a meeting where students, university representatives, topic experts and celebrities discuss and develop innovative solutions to pressing global challenges. Students create "Commitments to Action" that address issues on campus, in local communities or around the world. Since 2008, students have made more than 6,250 commitments, supported by nearly \$3 million in CGI U funding.

## Reading Drive for Africa

Sister Arrah, Larisah Akah Che and Benadette Ngamelue were the first three UNO students to attend CGI U, in 2013. The trio's pitch was to turn an empty classroom into a library at a primary school in Mamfe, Cameroon.

"The most exciting part of the experience was the enthusiasm," says Arrah, who graduated in 2013 and now is a principal of Ancilla Catholic Comprehensive College in Wosing-Bali, Cameroon.

Adds Che, also a 2013 grad, "The energy was mind-blowing. It's a bunch of people from all over the world with big ideas in one room."

The conference spurred the trio work with Cameroon students and teachers to clean, paint and prepare space for the library. A series of book drives brought in more than 8,000 books.

But they didn't stop there. Since 2013 the group has collected 16,000 books and established five new libraries in Cameroon schools.

In 2014 Arrah founded Reading Drive for Africa, a nonprofit organization that encourages children there to read for leisure as part of its mission to "build bridges of literacy in Africa."

Che, now a student at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, returned to CGI U in 2015, joined by conference newcomers Ryan Nielsen and Amissabah Johnson. That trio presented an initiative called Bring Science Alive, a sub-project of Reading Drive.

"It's coming up with fun and simple kitchen-type experiences for sixth to 12th graders so they can learn what science is about," Che says.

The idea is to eventually incorporate those experiments in Cameroon schools' curricula. Che hopes to kick-start the effort with an idea proposed by Arrah: a summer science camp at Arrah's college.

To do that, they'll need resources and expertise. "We are really open to anyone who wants to help," Che says. She's particularly hoping to recruit volunteers with a background in science.



From left: Sister Arrah, Larisah Akah Che and Benadette Ngamelue, the first three UNO students to attend CGI U, in 2013

## Project Humane Nepal

Shrestha is another one of the 14 UNO students who have traveled to CGI U since 2013. Her initiative is being fulfilled nearly 5,000 miles east from Cameroon as she works to save the lives of stray dogs in Nepal.

Shrestha founded "Project Humane Nepal," an organization dedicated to changing attitudes toward the thousands of street dogs that live in miserable conditions across her home country.



Returning to the conference in 2016, Shrestha proposed a related project: Project Thecho, named after a village outside of Kathmandu. Shrestha says the village is home to hundreds of strays, many of which often are mistreated, afraid or sick.

"Residents complain about barking dogs at night and dogs chasing kids," she says. "They often resort to inhumane killing of these dogs by poisoning, beating them, drowning them in ponds or stoning them."

Made up of a handful of volunteers, Shrestha's group focuses its efforts on spaying, vaccination and community awareness. The group also feeds dogs and de-worms them.

By speaking in schools, Shrestha hopes to change perceptions. Worksheets collected after classes indicate it's working.

"Before this extra class, I used to think that the lives of street dogs are very easy," one child wrote. "I was wrong." Another student wrote that changing behavior in their village could change behavior on a wider scale.

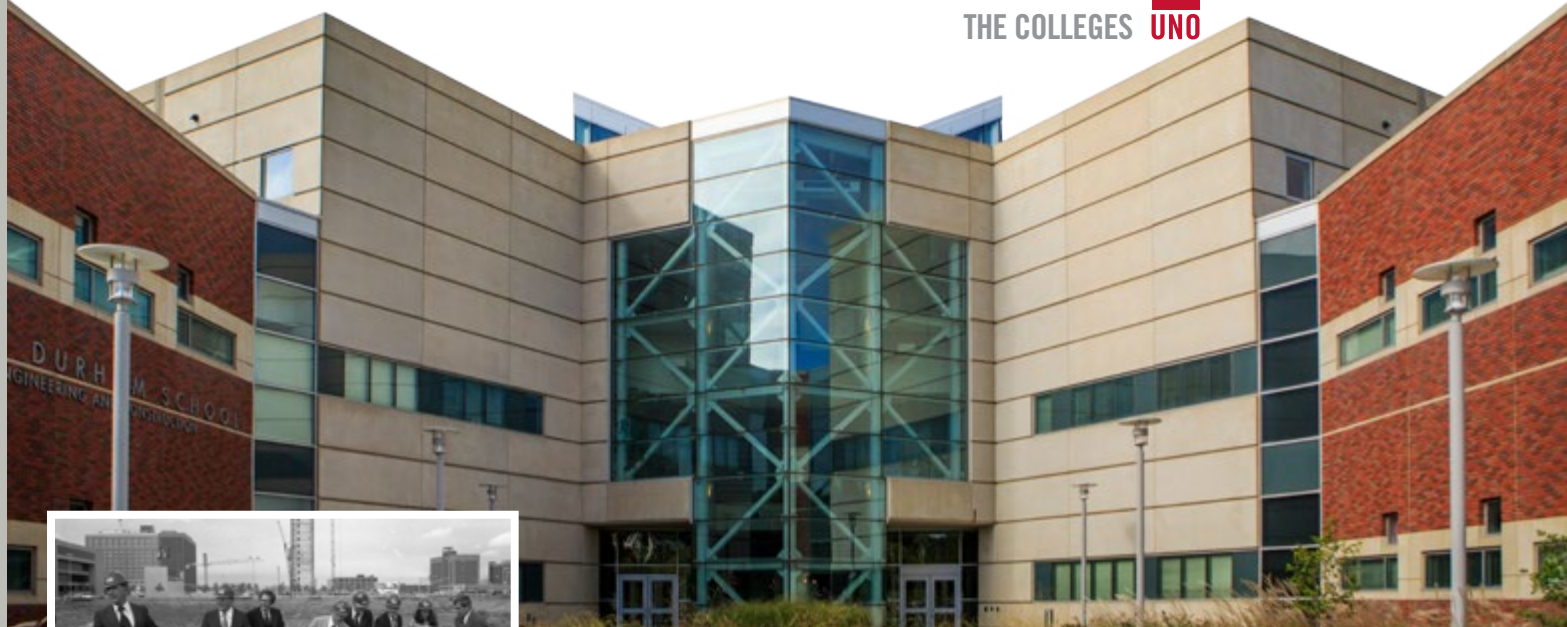
That, says Shrestha, is the plan.

— Sam Petto, University Communications

To support these efforts:

- Email [larisa.akah@gmail.com](mailto:larisa.akah@gmail.com) for Bring Science Alive
- Visit [projecthumanenepal.org](http://projecthumanenepal.org) or [facebook.com/projecthumanenepal](https://facebook.com/projecthumanenepal)
- Visit [readingdrive.org](http://readingdrive.org)





*The Peter Kiewit Institute  
groundbreaking, September 1997*

## Twenty Years of Innovation at the College of IS&T

Some journeys can only be truly appreciated in retrospect.

LIKE THE ONE THAT led to the founding of the College of Information Science and Technology (IS&T), which this year celebrates its 20-year anniversary.

When the college was founded in 1996, the technological advances we take for granted today were only then being developed — albeit, rapidly. Facebook and Twitter had not been invented, but the '90s marked the internet most definitely was beginning to impact our daily lives.

Fortunately, UNO leadership saw the potential in what has become one of the world's most in-demand fields: Information Technology (IT).

"When the college started, there was only a handful of universities that had an integrated college that included both computer science and management information systems," IS&T Dean Hesham Ali says.

"Having both main IT disciplines under one roof in addition to offering new interdisciplinary degrees such as cybersecurity and bioinformatics, was a pioneering idea and laid an innovative and educationally groundbreaking model for the college."

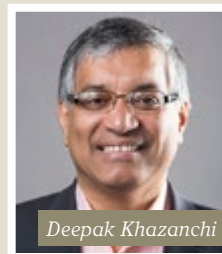
What began with four degrees — two undergraduate and two master's degrees — has grown into 13, including six graduate and two doctoral programs. And IS&T enrollment has exploded from just more than 400 students that first year to nearly 1,400 today, all housed in the Peter Kiewit Institute.

It's not just growth for growth's sake, either.

The college attracts some of the top students from Nebraska and neighboring states, as well as others from all over the world. That's a direct result of the college's expanding research and development activities, industry partnerships, community engagement and emphasis on putting student education support.



*Hesham Ali*



*Deepak Khazanchi*

**The focus is not just on growth in terms of numbers. The new degrees offered by the college focus on innovation and current needs of IT industries.**

"The growth of the college has coincided with a complete transformation for UNO in the last 20 years, Ali says. "UNO has grown tremendously and I feel our college has been a big part of that."

More growth is ahead. The college currently is seeking to establish a Computer Science for Teacher Education (CSTE) master's degree to train more effective CS middle and high school teachers — a first of its kind in Nebraska.

It's typical of how the college has responded quickly to the rapidly changing IT landscape, akin to other innovative degree programs like the executive master's in IT and undergraduate degree in IT innovation that IS&T recently has developed.

Ali stresses that as the college grows, its goals are more than just adding degrees and filling classrooms.

"Now we have the infrastructure in place. How can we optimize, modernize some of the classes we have, and integrate research and educational programs?"

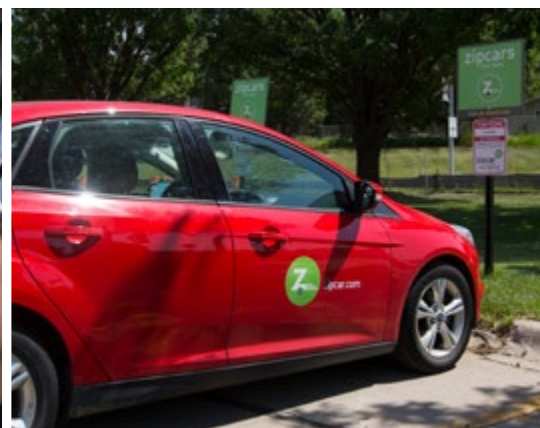
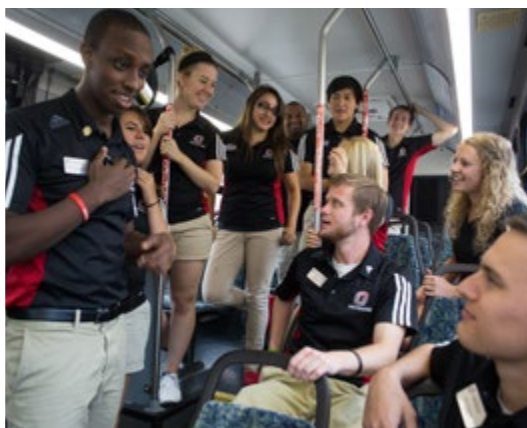
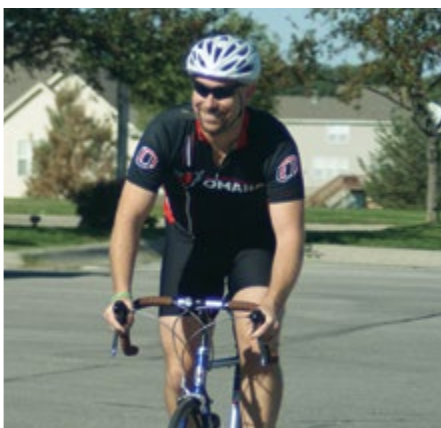
To answer these questions, the college is building upon the college's partnerships across a global IT community, strengthening research efforts and focusing on preschool through high school engagement.

From USSTRATCOM to Mutual of Omaha, First Data and Gallup, UNO has graduates across the globe. The large presence of UNO alumni in Omaha's IT community has led to strategic partnerships, research opportunities and employment pipelines.

"The relationship is very strong between us and our industry partners," says Deepak Khazanchi, IS&T associate dean and outreach coordinator. "Through utilizing our research labs and students, we're able to accomplish incredible research advancements with our partners. We are interested in each other's success and pushing the IT landscape forward."

The journey continues.

— Nolan Searl, *University Communications*



## Getting to — and around — campus

IT'S A COMPLAINT PATRICK Wheeler hears all the time.

"People say we don't have enough parking, but what they mean is, if it's not right by a particular building, then there isn't enough," he says with a laugh.

Wheeler, an environmental health and safety specialist at UNO, has served on a chancellor-appointed sustainability committee since 2006. He says while UNO's parking is no different than other campuses across the country, views otherwise have provided certain opportunities.

"What the negative perception has done is make us develop options," Wheeler says. "It's less expensive to promote ridership instead of building more parking for everyone."

One of those options is MavRide. Since January 2016, active students, faculty and staff have been able to use their MavCard as a bus pass, no special activation needed.

Wheeler uses MavRide to get to work.

"It saves money and it saves wear and tear on my vehicle," he says. "And if you're not driving, you're free to do other things on the way into work."

**“People say we don't have enough parking, but what they mean is, if it's not right by a particular building...”**

Biking to campus is another popular option.

Bruce Johansen, a professor in the School of Communication and Native American Studies Department, pedals to campus most days.

"I ride for exercise, to save money, and for environmental reasons," he says.

Johansen, an author of numerous books on global warming, has been riding since 1982. He says most of the older parts of town generally are bike-friendly, including the area around UNO.

Bike racks are conveniently placed in close proximity to every university building. Bike fix-it stations are located on both Dodge and Scott campus.

For those who don't own a bike, there are several

B-cycle stations located on or near campus. Heartland B-cycle is a bike-sharing system that allows riders to borrow a bicycle when they need one, then return it safely to another location.

Once on campus, students have several other sustainable options for getting around.

There's the shuttle service that's routes connect Baxter Arena, Dodge Campus and Scott Campus.

Zipcar, a car sharing program, has two cars on Dodge Campus and two on Scott Campus. Reserving

## Be crafty, *not crazy* with holiday travel

Faculty advice for  
finding good deals  
on flights, rooms

FEW FILMS BETTER ILLUSTRATE the sometimes zaniness of holiday travel better than "Planes, Trains and Automobiles."

Problem after problem arises as Neal Page tries to get home for Thanksgiving, problems exacerbated by a stranger he meets, Del Griffith. At one point, Page calls his wife to say he's sharing a motel room with Griffith.

"Are you crazy?" she asks.

"Not yet," Page replies. "But I'm getting there."

Anyone who has traveled during the holiday season can empathize. Holiday

travel elevates stress levels, not to mention expenses, especially when going by plane.

But two UNO professors say travelers can save — if they're willing to do some homework and be flexible.

Scott Tarry, director of UNO's Aviation Institute, says one strategy is simple: look for days when other people aren't flying.

"Leave a little earlier than the holiday period or fly on the holiday itself," Tarry says. "You can actually fly on Christmas Day and oftentimes get decent fares."

Flight times also matter.

"Leave at the crazy hour in the morning or the late flight," Tarry says. "You have to





one of the cars is as easy as downloading an app and registering as a member.

"It's a great option for students who live on campus, or someone who needs to make a short trip once in a while but doesn't drive to campus," says Sarah Burke, sustainability coordinator at UNO. "It's all the convenience of a car, without the hassle of owning one, with gas and insurance included in the rental, plus you get a guaranteed parking spot."

This fall, UNO implemented a new ride-sharing program, offering faculty, staff and students a safe, convenient way to arrange carpooling.

Even with these high tech options, the oldest form of transportation remains popular. Some members of the UNO community get to campus on foot.

If the weather permits, UNO photographer Ryan Henriksen walks from his home in Dundee. He says it only takes about 20 minutes.

"I do it purely for the exercise," Henriksen says.

And he always has a parking spot — his office chair.

— Nolan Searl, University Communications

## Campus Tour? There's an App for that

Technology is providing a completely new experience for those visiting UNO — tours that start wherever the visitor wants, whenever they want.

EXPLORE UNO, a new self-guided campus tour app, will be available in November via the Apple App Store and Google Play.

It's not a replacement for student ambassador-guided tours, says Kristina Cammarano, senior director of Student Success, but it does fill a gap.

"We have folks coming on to campus on the weekends, in the evenings or when special events are happening and there are only so many hours that we can have students working and offering tours," she says.

"Our real hope is that this app is going to get people information they want when they want it."

To get started, visitors just need to download the app then step onto any part of campus. The app will direct users to the nearest point on the tour.

Once they arrive, they'll hear a student's voice talking about that building or interest point. Student ambassadors recorded each audio clip.

"It's meant to mirror a campus visit," Cammarano says.

"We've got about two minutes of audio per stop and then we've also got text, bulleted-out information for the screen."

Like a traditional tour, the content is a mix of useful information and fun facts. Visitors will learn what student support offices are in the Milo Bail Student Center, which floor of the library is the quiet study area, what makes Caniglia Field's turf special and how Warren Buffett made headlines in Mammel Hall by sending his first tweet from the building.

Users can submit questions or request more information through the app. They also can skip stops if they're not interested.

The self-guided tour takes about an hour on Dodge Campus, 15 minutes on Scott Campus (with optional content for housing), and five minutes at Baxter Arena.

Cammarano says her team is interested in exploring opportunities for custom routes. They've discussed creating content for adult learners, visiting conference attendees and even elementary and middle school children (perhaps related to a scavenger hunt).

The app dashboard comes with another useful capability: nearly instant updates for things like road closures.

"Say we have a big speaker come to campus and we know there will be road closures, we can modify the routes to reflect that and direct people in different ways," Cammarano says.

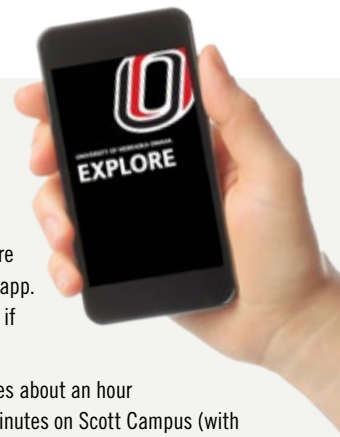
Building images and information can be tweaked with little effort. Photos can reflect the current season.

"That way when people are on campus, it's actually going to look how it looks at that time."

Roughly the same cost as producing print guides, [INSERT APP NAME HERE] is at the start of a two-year pilot and evaluation period. Cammarano says the app is a great resource and she hopes community members take advantage of it.

"We're really excited about this."

— Sam Petto, University Communications



be willing to trade off between the money you're going to save and the inconvenience."

Phani Tej Adidam, director of the Center for International Business Initiatives in UNO's College of Business Administration, says researching price options also pays dividends.

"Track the prices four times a day, 10 days continuously. That's the way to find the best price. There's no shortcut."

Adidam, a longtime traveler, says he's been doing that for years and always buys his tickets on the 11th day. Websites like Kayak.com, Orbitz.com and Hotels.com make it easy to see what options are available.

Tarry agrees there's no perfect day or time of day to book a ticket. Airlines use algorithms that constantly change prices based on traveler activity.

"They track this in real time," Tarry says. "What are people willing to spend to fly at certain times to certain destinations? The consumer has a lot more information than he or she used to have, but the airlines also have a lot more information."

When it comes to lodging, Adidam says travelers should find deals on third-party sites, then book the room directly with the hotel.

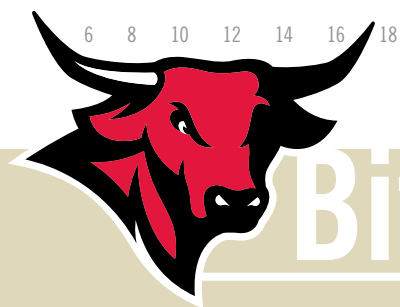
"They might give you another 10 percent discount on their rates," Adidam says.

"Because those guys definitely pay a commission to these websites when their rooms get booked, they might be willing to pass it on to you."

Once flight and hotels are booked, Tarry says travelers should give themselves plenty of time at the airport, keeping in mind that airports aren't built to handle the peak demand holidays bring. Employees are doing the best they can.

"I always say, if you're going to travel during the holidays, you just need to be patient."

— Sam Petto, University Communications



# Bits of the Bull

## Things are Heating Up for Winter Sports

A year ago, the winter sports season began with great excitement as the UNO hockey and men's and women's basketball teams were looking forward to playing their first seasons at Baxter Arena. The building lived up to the anticipation, providing a fan-friendly atmosphere in which UNO fans could watch their teams.

Entering the 2016-17 winter season, the newness has worn off for student-athletes and coaches, and the more serious work of playing for NCHC and Summit League championships becomes the sole focus.

Following is a team-by-team breakdown of UNO's winter sports teams.



### Hockey

The Mavericks' second year in Baxter Arena is also their 20th year as a program, and their first goal of this anniversary season is to get to the NCHC's Frozen Faceoff in Minneapolis come March. Through three years in college hockey's toughest conference, the Mavericks have been unable to advance beyond the first round of the playoffs.

Last season, UNO finished 18-17-1 overall and 8-15-1-0/0 in the NCHC, good for sixth place. The Mavericks then lost a hard-fought playoff series to a surging

Denver team that later earned a berth in the NCAA Frozen Four.

Senior Austin Ortega will return to lead the Mavericks offense. Ortega last season had 21 goals and was UNO's second-leading scorer with 36 points. He'll begin the season needing three game-winning goals to tie the NCAA record (23). Last season, he led NCAA hockey in game-winning goals for a second straight campaign.

"Austin is a proven goal scorer who has scored a lot of important goals for us," says Dean Blais, now in his eighth season as head coach. "With Jake Guentzel signing a pro contract after last season, Austin will be the leader of our offense, and he'll also have to cope with the extra attention from opposing teams."

The Mavericks would seem to have a solid supporting cast. Ortega's fellow senior Justin Parizek was third in team scoring in 2015-16 with 28 points. He and juniors Jake Randolph and Tyler Vesel will play prominent roles in the offense, particularly in the early part of the season as the Mavericks integrate seven freshmen into their ranks.

"We are going to lean very heavily on our seniors and juniors at the start of the season," Blais says. "We've got some challenging road trips and some tough conference series in the first half of the season, and our most experienced players are going to have to carry us through while our freshmen get acclimated to college hockey."

Among the newcomers, defensemen Ryan Jones and Dean Stewart could have an immediate impact. Both were selected in the 2016 NHL Entry Draft in June, Jones by Pittsburgh and Stewart by Arizona. They'll work alongside veterans like senior Ian Brady and junior Luc Snuggerud to create problems for opposing forwards.

UNO's goal would seem to be in good, albeit young hands. Evan Weninger returns following his first season in which he



led the Mavericks with 13 wins and team bests in goals-against average and save percentage. He also was named to the NCHC All-Rookie Team. Freshman Kris Oldham could be a good candidate for this season's all-rookie team. The 6-foot-3 native of Anchorage, Alaska, joins the Mavericks after a standout career with the Omaha Lancers.

To say that the Mavericks' conference schedule is challenging is redundant. No college team outside the NCHC faces so many quality opponents week in and week out. The Mavericks will face a grueling conference schedule in the second half of the year with home-and-home series against defending NCAA Champion North Dakota and Denver, a team that beat them six times last season.

UNO has a non-conference schedule filled with familiar opponents and infrequent foes. Following a season-opening trip to Fairbanks for Alaska's tournament, the Mavericks will host Vermont for the first time in UNO (Oct. 21-22) then welcome 2016 NCAA participant UMass Lowell the following week. The Mavericks also host former CCHA opponent Lake Superior State Dec. 30-31 and play non-conference road series at Northern Michigan (Nov. 25-26), another former CCHA opponent, and Wisconsin (Dec. 2-3), a former neighbor in the WCHA.

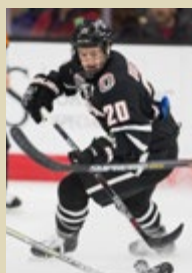
### Men's Basketball

The UNO men's basketball team takes on a challenging schedule in 2016-17, playing 17 games on the road and facing five opponents that competed in the 2016 NCAA Tournament, the most since beginning the Division I era six years ago. With contests against USC, Kansas State, Iowa, Iowa State and Pittsburgh, as well as notable home tilts with Rice and Cal State Fullerton, the Mavericks aim to position themselves for success when conference play begins in late December.

"We're starting with some tough road games, and they'll do nothing but make us better," 12th-year head coach Derrin Hansen says. "Our goal is always to be as healthy and ready as we can be starting the league schedule. Those early challenges ultimately help us down the stretch, and with a lot of home games on the back end, we want to hit March ready to compete in the postseason."

UNO returns nine letterwinners from its 2015-16 squad, which earned a spot in the College Basketball Invitational postseason tournament.

Among the leaders of this year's crop of Mavericks is senior guard Tra-Deon Hollins, who earned first-team





All-Summit and All-Newcomer recognition last season and was named Summit League Defensive Player of the Year and Transfer of the Year. The nation's leader in steals, he claimed the single-season steals records for both UNO and the Summit League, and he already ranks 12th in school history for career thefts.

Senior guard Marcus Tyus also is back, having redshirted in 2015-16 after suffering a season-ending injury in 2014-15. In his junior year, Tyus averaged 13.0 points per game, second-most on the team.

Senior guard Kyler Erickson was granted a sixth year of eligibility by the NCAA for 2016-17 with a waiver that allows him to play beyond his five-year eligibility window. The Omaha native moved into a starting role with seven games left in 2015-16.

"Tra-Deon's coming off a very good junior year, and his accolades speak for themselves," Hansen says. "Then we have Marcus and Kyler coming back, which gives us a senior, a fifth-year senior and a sixth-year senior. We have a lot of experience with that core senior group, and we hope that resonates down through our roster."

Additionally, junior forward Tre'Shawn Thurman, a two-year starter who averaged 13.9 points and 6.7 rebounds as a sophomore, is back, as is sophomore guard Zach Jackson, who started 24 games in his freshman campaign.

UNO will find depth in its returning letterwinners with guards J.T. Gibson and Alex Allbery and junior forward Daniel Meyer, as well as redshirt freshman forward Ben Kositzke. Two transfers are eligible to play this year, with sophomore forward Mitchell Hahn from Holy Cross and junior guard Daniel Norl from Mineral Area CC and Eastern Kentucky. Freshman guard K.J. Robinson out of Blue Springs South High School carries a three-star rating from Rivals.



"We have a sense of calmness with our roster in that we have guys who have played a Division I schedule before, had success and are stepping in to play roles for us," Hansen says. "We've lost some scoring and talent from last year's team, but we have a lot of depth this season."

"Last year, our league ranked 11th out of 32 leagues in the conference RPI standings, which was an all-time high and something that stands out to recruits. To finish third by ourselves and have three all-league performers was an outstanding achievement for last year's squad, and we look forward to building upon that success in 2016-17."

## Women's Basketball

The UNO women's basketball team looks to build on last year's solid season. The Mavericks finished 15-15 overall and 7-9 in the Summit League, taking sixth place. In its first Division I postseason tournament, UNO defeated third-seeded IUPUI 62-51 at the Summit League tournament.

All-Summit forward Mikaela Shaw returns for her senior season after averaging a league-leading 18.3 points alongside 7.9 rebounds and 3.1 assists per game in 2015-16. She leads a corps of three returning starters, joined by junior guard Remy Davenport (10.3 ppg, 3.4 rpg) and senior guard Abi Lujan (4.0 ppg and 5.9 rpg).

"It will be interesting to see where our lineup settles and who has made the biggest jump for us since last year," Head Coach Brittany Lange says. "Mikaela Shaw is undeniably someone we look to have her best year yet in all categories of the game."

Senior guard Marissa Preston, sophomore guard Ellie Brecht and sophomore guard Amber Vidal each saw significant time last season. In addition, UNO's four redshirts — Jay Bridgeman, Michaela Dapprich, Moriah Dapprich

and Courtney Vaccher — are ready to step in for court time this season. Bridgeman was a product of Westside High School where she was the Nebraska All-State captain her senior year. The Dapprich sisters came to UNO from Wichita State while Vaccher joins the Mavericks from Texas Tech.

"Michaela Dapprich is a tough matchup and has a ton of high-level experience under her belt being a starter at Wichita State," says Lange. "She can play either forward spot or in the post for us and is a tough competitor. Courtney Vaccher provides great strength and skill at center. She will be a force inside as she continues to develop in our system."

The Mavericks also welcome two newcomers in junior transfer Jess Walter from Indiana and freshman Alexa Fischer from Powell, Ohio. Walter will sit out this season due to NCAA transfer rules.

UNO has a solid non-conference schedule in addition to another tough Summit League campaign. Lange is enthusiastic about what 2016-17 has in store.

"This year's schedule will be by far the most challenging and competitive schedule in our program's history," Lange says. "We will play one of the hardest schedules in the Summit League by being in the pre-season WNIT tournament, playing eight games on the road, and taking on opponents such as Nebraska, Creighton, Kansas State, Colorado State and Central Florida."

"Our goal is to raise the bar and test ourselves to the utmost to prepare for conference play. I am excited, and a proud coach. Our seniors and players wanted this difficult schedule to get better, and we honored that."

## Swimming & Diving



The UNO swimming and diving team is ready to challenge for Summit League success in 2016-17, led by Head Coach Todd Samland, who enters his 20th year at the helm.

Twenty-nine Mavericks return from the 2015-16 squad, led by three student-athletes who earned All-Summit honors a year ago: senior Morgan Stepp (200 butterfly, 800 freestyle relay), junior Cassandra Jahn (800



# Bits of the Bull

freestyle relay) and sophomore Kylie Vermeire (800 free relay).

"Our 800 free relay will be very strong this year," Samland says. "We won't miss a beat because Kylie Vermeire, Morgan Stepp and Cassandra Jahn have all returned after earning All-Summit recognition last season."



UNO's schedule is highlighted by meets with Iowa State and Nebraska and trips to Colorado State and Northern Colorado. The Mutual of Omaha Invite, an annual highlight on the home slate, has a new format in 2016 as a four-team, three-day, all-women's meet.

"We've changed the Mutual of Omaha Invite to a smaller meet," Samland says. "With us, Nebraska-Kearney, Northern Colorado and Northern Iowa, it's a great mix of quality, comparable competition."

"As a whole, our schedule is intended to prepare us for the Summit League Championship at the end of the season," Samland says. "We're achieving that by competing with peers who are right in step with us or teams that are just a step ahead to create the competitive challenges we need. Meets like those are sending us in the right direction as a team."

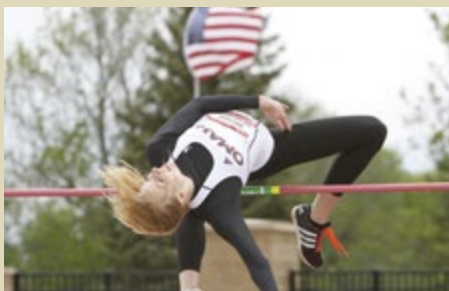
Despite losing five experienced seniors — including eight-time All-Summit honoree Natalie Renshaw — Samland expects his returners to step into point-scoring roles vacated by last year's senior class.

"We're always aiming to finish in the top three in the Summit League," Samland says. "With the good leadership on our roster, the sound staff we have in and the recruiting efforts we've made, this is a bright year ahead for us."

## Track & Field

The Mavericks enter the indoor season after placing fifth in the Summit League Championship both indoors and outdoors last season.

Junior Stephanie Ahrens is a dual threat indoors, earning All-Summit honors during the 2016 indoor season in both the high jump and the 60-meter hurdles. In fact, Ahrens had the Summit League's top mark in the high jump both indoors and outdoors last season and became the first Maverick in the Division I era to represent UNO at the NCAA Preliminaries.



"Stephanie has been an All-Summit performer in each of her first two years and owns the school record in the high jump indoors (5-10 3/4)," says Head Coach Chris Richardson. "She is clearly the person to beat in the Summit in that event, and her ability in the 60-meter hurdles makes her our top scoring threat."

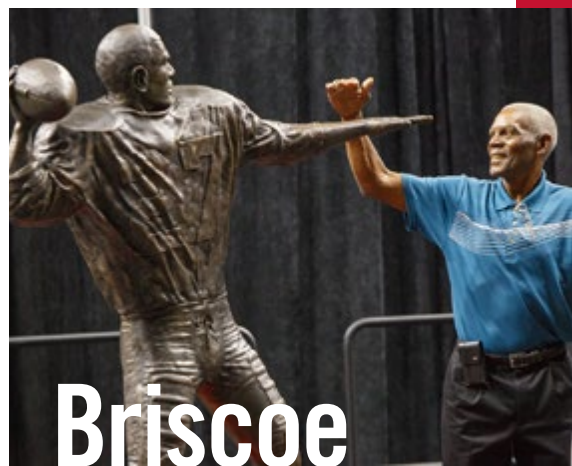
"Her experience in the NCAA preliminaries outdoors showed her what it takes to reach the next level, and I think she will begin this season with her sights set on more trips to the NCAA's."

On the track, Lauren Houston will be another threat to score following a solid freshman campaign during which she was All-Summit in the 800 meters, running the third-best time in the event in the league. She and senior Alyssa Thavenet give the Mavericks two strong performers in 800. Thavenet had the Summit's sixth-best time at that distance last season.

Twelve freshmen will make their collegiate debuts during the indoor season, including four distance runners who will have already competed for the Mavericks in cross country. In addition, the Mavericks will feature Nebraskans Sasha Quattlebaum (Millard North) and Nyakuome Thichiot (Burke) in the jumps and Sydney McAlister (Lincoln High School) in the sprints.

The Mavericks' indoor schedule had not been finalized as of press time.

*By Dave Ahlers, Bonnie Ryan and Shad Beam*



## Briscoe Statue Unveiled

On Sept. 23, UNO invited the Omaha community to Baxter Arena to celebrate the life and career of an alumnus who made waves locally and nationally as a record-breaking high-school and collegiate quarterback before going on to break the color barrier at the same position in the NFL.

A life-sized statue of Marlin Briscoe was unveiled before a crowd of friends, family, and community members. Included in the crowd were Briscoe's wife and daughter, as well as former teammates from his playing days at Omaha University.

Just the night before, Briscoe was honored at a dinner where current and future NFL Hall-of-Famers like Don Shula, Warren Moon and Peyton Manning praised Briscoe for his tenacity and groundbreaking efforts on the field and in his private life. More than 200 student from local K-12 schools attended the event, which also featured the naming of two new scholarships in Briscoe's honor.

At the statue unveiling, Briscoe spoke mostly about his teammates, his family and his community, rather than himself.

"This isn't about Marlin Briscoe," he said. "This is about Omaha. I learned from my upbringing here in Omaha that you give out, but you don't give up. That is something I've subscribed to all my life."



# Trio of former athletes enter UNO Hall of Fame

THREE FORMER UNO GREATS were to be inducted into the UNO Athletics Hall of Fame during the UNO Alumni Association's Night of Honor held at the Thompson Alumni Center Nov. 3.

Entering the hall as the Class of 2016 were multi-sport athlete Fred Abboud, former football player Justin Kammrad and former hockey player Scott Parse.

"Their athletic endeavors place them among some of the finest student-athletes to have played their respective sports, both regionally and nationally, and all are deserving of a place in our Hall of Fame," said Trev Alberts, vice chancellor of athletics.

The 2001 UNO softball team also was recognized at the Night of Honor ceremony in celebration of the 15th anniversary of its national championship. Former head coach Jeanne Scarpello and many of her former players were present.

With the Class of 2016 the UNO Athletic Hall of Fame grows to 114 members.

“These three gentlemen represented Omaha University and UNO with great distinction during their time on campus.”



FRED ABBOUD

A three-sport letterman at Omaha Central High School, Abboud served in the U.S. Army before coming to Omaha University, where he was the starting fullback for four years and leading scorer for three seasons. He also played defensive back, returned kicks and was second in total offense on the team for two years. He also played baseball and had a career batting average topping .300.

Abboud also was a member of the Omaha University club hockey team, played on the freshman basketball team and briefly ran track. He also was the school's light heavyweight boxing champion. He graduated in 1951 and is a member of the Nebraska Football Hall of Fame.



JUSTIN KAMMRAD

A first-team All-American in 2003 and UNO's first-ever Harlon Hill Award finalist top 3 after leading the nation in rushing, Kammrad set several school rushing records during his 2000-03 career. He set the single-game and season records, running for 308 yards in his final game to give him 1,866 yards in 2003.

Kammrad is No. 6 in career rushing among Mavericks with 2,353 yards. The Council Bluffs, Iowa, native set the single-game record in his first collegiate start and broke it in his final game. He was hampered by knee injuries, which held him to just one game in 2001 and nine games in 2002.



SCOTT PARSE

Parse is Omaha's all-time career points leader for hockey, amassing 197 between 2003 and 2007. He also owns the school record for goals (79) and assists (118). A two-time AHCA All-American, including a first-team selection in 2006, the native of Portage, Michigan, set the school record for points (61) and assists (41) in a season as a junior.

That year, he became the first Maverick nominated for the Hobey Baker Award, and he was nominated again the following year. A model of durability, he is one of three players to hold the school record for games played (159).



# CALLED *for* TRAVELI

New breed of Mavericks continuing their playing



Mike Rostampour



Devin Patterson

Like any kid who loves basketball, Mike Rostampour grew up with dreams of NBA stardom.

But the 6-foot-8-inch power forward didn't find himself alongside LeBron James after he graduated from UNO in 2015.

Instead, he lined up with Svetozar Stamenkovic in Prievidza, a coal-mining city of 50,000 people in Slovakia.

"It's a blue-collar area where people work hard," Rostampour says. "Outside of the city, there is nothing but land. Mountains. Grass."

The NBA might have seemed far off the first time Rostampour, known for his intensity at UNO, stepped onto the court for BC Prievidza. He was told, seemingly every time he had the ball, that he was traveling.

"It's different," he says. "You can't even take a step. You can't move your non-pivot foot. I traveled for about half the season."

But a funny thing happened as Rostampour and former Maverick C.J. Carter (*pictured above*) launched pro careers in Europe. They grew comfortable in their adopted cities and learned to adapt to a playing style focused on passing and footwork more than one-on-one playmaking.

They also came to appreciate fans who loved the game, even if basketball remains a distant second to soccer, Rostampour says. Up to 3,000 people packed the arena to watch BC Prievidza.

"We were filled to capacity every night," Rostampour says. "We had to put on a show. This team already had a tradition of winning. We were pretty much like rock stars."

Carter, who played in Macedonia, recalls the crowd reaction the time players got into a fight during a playoff game. "It was almost a full-on riot," he says.

## From Omaha to Overseas

Rostampour and Devin Patterson were among the first Mavericks that played during UNO's journey to Division I basketball. Now they're among a group that is journeying overseas to continue their playing days.

Though Carter recently landed a new gig close to him, Rostampour will play in Europe once more. And this coming season he'll be joined by recent grads Patterson and Tim Smallwood. Patterson, a 1,000-point scorer as a guard for the Mavericks, will play in Lithuania. Smallwood, also a guard, is poised to sign with a team in Italy.

For UNO to boast four players with a professional resume speaks volumes for a program that only recently made the jump to Division I.

"It's great to be able to tell recruits you can develop them," says UNO basketball coach Derrin Hansen.

"A lot of guys, their dream is playing in a pro league somewhere. It's great for them, but it helps us, too."

It wasn't an easy transition. For starters, Hansen says, UNO's program isn't at the level of bringing in players who are ready to turn pro. All four Mavericks spent their college years lifting weights and improving so they could jump to the next level.

"They took advantage when they were here," Hansen says. "They took coaching very well."

After college, the players plunged into a culture far removed from the Midwest.

Carter remembers getting a call from his agent, who told him to get on a plane as soon as possible. Two days later, he was in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia. The Omaha native, who played for the Mavericks from 2011 to 2015,



# NG

## days overseas

By Greg Kozol

looked around and saw narrow streets and coffee shops in a Balkan city that once was part of Yugoslavia.

"There's no McDonald's, no Burger King," he says. "I thought, 'What am I going to eat?' I had to walk everywhere. It seems like I was the only American in the town. I might have been the only black guy, too."

He also encountered the different style of play, with constant whistles for traveling. "Over here in the U.S., it's more athletic," he says. "Over there, they don't force anything."

Both Carter and Rostampour persevered. Carter helped MZT Skopje Aerodrom compile a 24-4 record with an 11th league title. He averaged 5.9 points and 2.4 assists a game.

Rostampour averaged 8.1 points and 5.9 rebounds as BC Prievdza went 26-6 and also won a league title.

Both players says team communication was primarily in English. Carter did pick up some swear words and learned to ask about practice times in Macedonian.

Rostampour says he tried to embrace the language and culture. He enjoyed spending time at coffee shops during road trips to Zagreb, Budapest and other Eastern European capitals "Everyone dresses up," he says.

The fans returned that respect, asking Rostampour to autograph everything from soccer balls to dirty shirts. While many European fans wear Ronaldo and Messi jerseys, Rostampour spotted a few wearing his BC Prievdza attire by the end of the season.

"That was something to see," he says. "It's kind of surreal."

### Next

Carter, who made about \$1,200 a month with MZT Skopje, next will play for the new Omaha Chargers of the

National Basketball League of America. The team will play at Ralston Arena, one-time home of the Mavericks, in a season that runs from September to late November. After that, he might be back in Europe — which is fine by him.

"Growing up, everyone wants to play for the NBA. Once you get to high school and college, you realize that's not in the picture," he says. "The goal is to play overseas. I was pretty happy about it."

Patterson has similar goals when he begins play in the fall of 2016 for BC Šiauliai in Lithuania. Patterson got a taste of European basketball when the Mavericks toured Italy prior to the 2015-16 season.

"Basketball is going to be basketball," says Patterson. "My feet will help me. Everything else is different. I'm still pretty nervous."

He says he's looking forward to playing in a country that produced NBA players like center Arvydas Sabonis. The goal, Patterson says, is to eventually make it to the NBA developmental league.

"I'm going to have a long road," he says.

Rostampour may sign with another European team for 2016-17. He, too, hopes to get a chance in the NBA, but he insists his European experience was more than an opportunity to jump-start a pro career.

"When you think of Slovakia, you think of the ugly brother of the Czech Republic," he says. "At the end of the season, the place felt like home to me. It felt comfortable. I would call it a Denver, Colorado. Nature-wise, it was very pretty."

For at least four Mavericks, playing basketball after their Maverick days is beautiful.



## de Voleibol

*Mav cagers aren't the only former UNO athletes racking up frequent flyer miles to get to overseas gigs.*

*UNO volleyball standout Megan Schmale, a 2016 graduate, in September began professional play with Haro Rioja Voley in Haro, Spain. The team plays in Spain's top volleyball league, Superliga Femenina de Voleibol.*

*Schmale, a middle blocker from Murdock, Nebraska, was a four-year starter at UNO from 2012 to 2015. She earned All-Summit recognition after leading the Summit League in total blocks (159), block assists (146) and blocks per set (1.28) last season and was third in the conference for hitting percentage (.336). She capped her career as UNO's all-time leader for career block assists (460), breaking a 27-year-old school record in the final week of the 2015 regular season.*

*"I can't wait to meet new people and experience a different culture," Schmale said shortly after signing her contract. "I'm excited to continue playing the game on a professional level and keep growing as a volleyball player. Reaching this goal has been a dream of mine for a while, and I couldn't have done it without the support I've had throughout my years at UNO."*



by Therese Vaughn

Green-winged beetles  
that bore death into  
generations-old ash trees.

Carp that fly out of the  
water and devastate local  
fish populations.

Deep-rooted Wolf's Milk  
that chokes off native  
grasses.

Some journeys wreak  
havoc in their wake.

A look at how UNO  
responds to several  
unwelcome guests

## Here Be Dragons: The Asian Carp in America

An old Chinese adage says, "The carp has leaped through the dragon's gate." Extended today as congratulations to successful students, the proverb comes from the myth of the Great Carp that swam against the river's primordial tug, leaping up through the waterfall to breaching the threshold beyond and transform into a fearsome dragon.

Across the globe, mapmakers in the West were marking waters unknown to them with the Latin phrase, "HC SVNT DRACONES" or "Here be Dragons."

Times changed. The world got smaller.

But the carp remains a dragon of sorts.

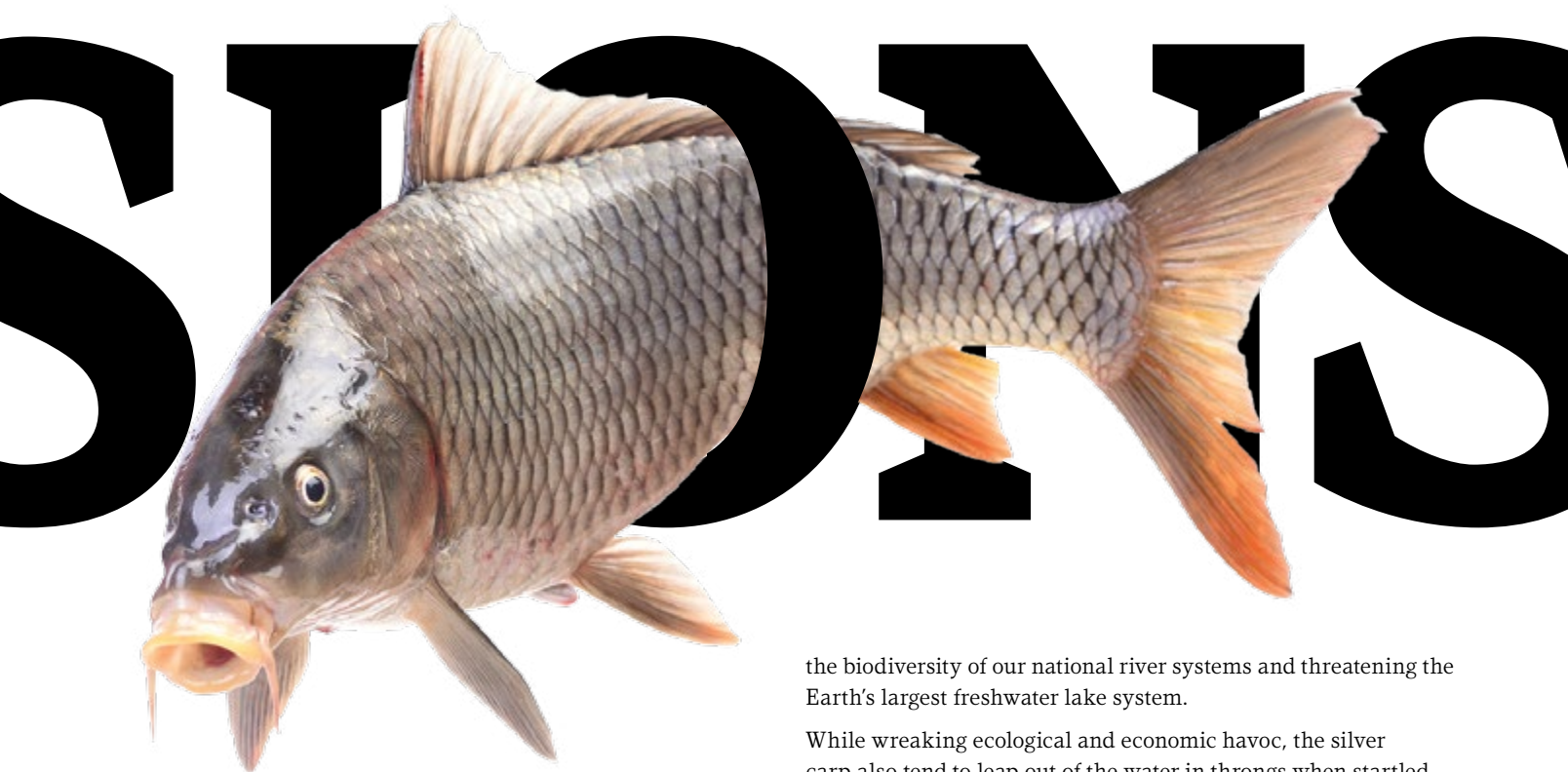
For the menace its "invasion" poses to a \$7 billion fishing industry in America's Great Lakes, it may as well be a sea serpent.

## Carp: Epic Voyagers

Native to Asia, the carp is an epic voyager with a heavily stamped passport, according to UNO Biology Professor Guoqing Lu.

More than 5,500 years ago in China, the freshwater fish were domesticated in ponds on silk farms. Today they make up between 60 to 70 percent of the nation's aquaculture. Several species of Asian carp — bighead, silver, grass and black — have been introduced in more than 70 countries across the world as a significant food resource.





"They grow very fast, up to 100 pounds," Lu says, "Their production capability is huge, they can generate millions of eggs and, more importantly, the bighead and silver carp can interbreed here. This hybridization is rarely seen in their native range."

Here be the dragon. Though wild carp in their home waters are scarce — protected as a vulnerable species in some parts of Asia — in the United States they are practically raining up on us.

"If you go fishing in the Missouri River and catch 10 fish, nine of them will be carp," Lu says. "The ecological environment is so rich in food and space. Also, they don't have any predators here so the carp can grow very comfortably."

Lu was a graduate student in China when he began studying the species from the perspective of conservation and through the lens of genetics.

"In China, we want to protect the Asian carp. Because of over-fishing and pollution, they had decreased significantly," he says. "It is a big contrast to the United States."

Here, carp are plentiful, to say the least, but not so popular. There's a "Carp are Crap" Facebook page, and the U.S. government has spent more than \$300 million over the last few years to curb the tidal wave of the invasive fish. The problem is real: Asian carp are crowding out native fish nine-to-one, severely compromising

the biodiversity of our national river systems and threatening the Earth's largest freshwater lake system.

While wreaking ecological and economic havoc, the silver carp also tend to leap out of the water in throngs when startled. YouTube videos of boaters being assailed by the flying fish abound. Labeled "aggressive," they're actually anxious, likely because of overcrowding.

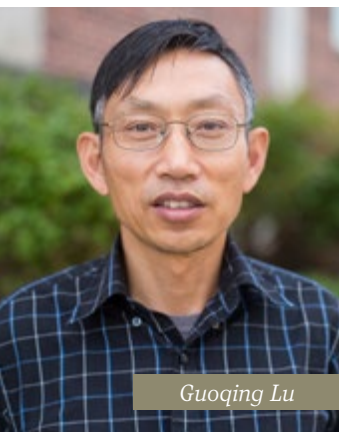
How did Asian carp land here in the first place?

Lu explains that in the 1970s, after the U.S. passed the Clean Water Act, carp were imported to Southern fish farms to filter the retention ponds and wastewater facilities. The fish eat weedy vegetation, algae and parasites, basically the green slime. Able to gulp down 10-40 percent of their body weight in sewage every day, the carp reportedly made the water almost potable, a rumored "bathtub clear."

"American scientists saw the value of this fish in terms of water quality and aquaculture. It was a good success at the experimental stage, but unfortunately there was flooding, and they soon escaped into the Mississippi," Lu says.

From there, Asian carp radiated up through the Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois and Ohio Rivers, cruising 1,000 miles within just 20 years. Today they can be found in every Nebraska river and tributary.

"The intention was good, but there are unintended consequences to manipulating nature, and now we're suffering," Lu says.



Guoqing Lu

Rigorous efforts are underway by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Army Corps of Engineers to prevent the carp from populating the Great Lakes. Aquatic gateways to this national resource are rigged with \$200 million in electrical barriers, underwater sonar-guns and poisoned food pellets. New laws prohibit the transfer of carp as live bait or to live food markets within the Great Lakes basin. Additionally, the agency conducts extensive environmental-DNA sampling to closely monitor the migratory and breeding patterns of the invasive species.



Lifeng Zhu

## Coding Carp

But, when that intricate net of co-evolved and interdependent life forms is ruptured, can it ever be restored? Is there a way to uncross the “dragon’s gate?”

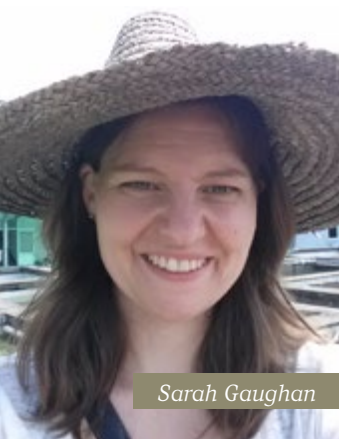
Lu works with a global consortium of government, science, nonprofit and business leaders to answer this question. Internationally-esteemed for his research in genomics and bioinformatics, he looks at the process of hybridization, investigating why the closely-related bighead and silver carp produce offspring here in the U.S. but nowhere else in the world. That these progeny can outperform their parents is disturbing on a macro-level.

Deciphering the problem at its genetics — a gene’s DNA tells an organism what it is, how to grow, function, reproduce and die — may offer the breakthrough necessary to solving it.

“We need to tune into nature on a fine level,” Lu says.

As microscopic as the research is at UNO’s Lu Lab, his far-reaching work spans systems-level biological interactions. This requires partnership across nations.

In that collaborative spirit, 2016 UNO graduate Sarah Gaughan, now a doctoral advisee of Lu’s, traveled to China this summer on a National Science Foundation fellowship to join university and government researchers in studying carp in their native waters.



Sarah Gaughan

Colleague Lifeng Zhu, a visiting scholar from China, also has assisted Lu, even helping land bighead carp during a field trip in the Mississippi River (see photo).

Lu, who won the first Excellence in Research Award at UNO’s College of Arts and Sciences, lauds the support he’s received from the Office of Research and Creative Activity (OCRA) and the Faculty Research International program. “Without team efforts, nothing can be done with the research,” he says.

## If Life Gives you Carp ...

While Lu, Gaughan and their colleagues work on breaking the genetic code to the carp invasion, Lu suggests as Americans, we take advantage of the abundance, find ways to capitalize on this surplus protein.

“I am surprised there is such a gap in applied research to use the fish as a food source,” he says, adding, “For substantial profit.”

Maybe, it’s time to quit carping about the carp and start consuming them? If we can’t beat them, eat them for supper?

Most of the world does — from China, where the heads are a delicacy, to Eastern Europe, where it’s a holiday favorite — carp is on the global menu (See sidebar recipe for Asian Carp Street Tacos from Catering Creations Chef Jeff Snow).

The cod-like, flaky white fish can be grilled, fried, smoked, baked, put into casseroles, sushi rolls or freezer-aisle fish-sticks. It’s versatile, like chicken — if a little bony — and could be processed in the U.S., which translates into jobs.

Until there’s a demand from American eaters, however, commercial fishermen here cannot make a living on the mere 10 cents a pound the fish commands, Lu notes. In the meantime, some Asian carp are actually making the journey back to Asia, shipped to market there.





Chef Jeff Snow

## Asian Carp Street Tacos

Courtesy Chef Jeff Snow of Catering Creations, exclusive caterer at the Thompson Center and winner of the Best of Omaha Best Catering award six consecutive years.

### INGREDIENTS:

*Yields 12-15*

#### FISH

- 2 lb. Boneless Carp Filets cut in strips
- 1 cup Buttermilk
- 2 TB Sriracha
- ½ TB Garlic Powder
- ½ TB Onion Powder
- 2-3 cups Fine White Corn Meal
- Pinch Salt & Pepper
- 12-15 Corn or Flour Tortillas

Mix buttermilk, Sriracha, garlic & onion powder in bowl with a few pinches of salt and pepper.

Cut the Asian Carp into strips and marinate in buttermilk for at least 4 hours or even overnight.

Once done marinating, strain fish of any excess marinate and roll in corn meal. Deep-fry the fish in batches at 350 degrees for 2-3 minutes until golden brown.

Drain on a rack and season with a touch more salt & pepper.

#### SLAW

- 2 Green Tomato (cut into Strips)
- 2 cups Shredded Cabbage
- 1 cup Fresh Corn off the Cobb (3-4 cobs)
- 1 TB Corn oil
- ¼ cup Chopped Cilantro
- ½ cup Grilled & Diced Red Onions

Cut fresh corn off the cob and sautéing the corn over medium high heat in corn oil for 3-5 minutes to soften and cook the corn slightly. Let the corn cool for 10 minutes or so.

Cut the red onion in large slices and brush with a little oil and grill for 3-5 minutes also. Once the onion is done and cooled dice the onion into a small dice.

Julienne the green tomatoes.

Mix all the ingredients together and set aside for later.

#### POBLANO MAYO

- 1 each Poblano Pepper Roasted, Peeled, Seeded, & Pureed
- 1 cup Mayonnaise
- 1 Lime Juice & Zest
- Salt & Pepper to taste

Mix all together and season with salt & pepper

#### SRIRACHA HONEY

- 1 cup Honey
- ¼ cup Sriracha

Mix together and cook on low heat for about 20 minutes

#### ASSEMBLE

To assemble the tacos, grill or pan-sear the tortillas. To each warm tortilla add a teaspoon of the Poblano Mayo, then the Slaw, then the Fish. Top with a drizzle of the Sriracha Honey.



Steve Rodie

## Battling the Beetle

### Campus readies itself for the Emerald Ash Borer

While it's unknown exactly how they landed in North America from their native habitat in Asia, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) beetles may likely have been shipped here in a box — literally, a crate made from infected ash wood — and spread through firewood.

However it journeyed here, the devastating green jewel of an insect has obliterated hundreds of millions of ash trees across the country. Nebraska became one of 27 afflicted states when the beetle's arrival was confirmed in Omaha last June. The news was most unwelcome; with 44 million ash trees in the region, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) projects a \$961 million cost.

UNO Biology and Environmental Studies Professor Steve Rodie defines the scope of the EBA threat to campus and its distinguished tree canopies.

While not significant in number, "there are a variety of mature, reasonably healthy ash trees on campus," Rodie says. "They would be missed for their shade production, landscape presence and location (including the area between Roskens and Kayser Halls and north of Milo Bail Student Center).

UNO's campus tree program is state-of-the-art in forestry management. Fostering a diverse and thriving tree canopy as well as engaging the university community in the spirit of conservation, UNO has been recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation for many years. The outstanding work by the campus arborist and landscape services team makes this possible, as well as rigorous planning.

According to Rodie, who directs the Center for Urban Sustainability at UNO, strategies for prevention and treatment of EBA are already in progress. Factors

such as relative health, size, location and environmental benefits for shade and storm-water management are all configured in the effort to protect the ash trees' graceful presence on campus.

"UNO Facilities has contracted for treatment of the ash trees to save the healthiest and most important," Rodie says.

Tree care is a noble art and science at UNO, and so is service-learning. Months before the invasive species was detected in Omaha, a corps of students, faculty and staff volunteers were in gear and mobilized. To raise awareness of EAB, they tied ribbons around ash trees on campus and throughout Elmwood Park.

What can readers do to safeguard their own ash trees from the beetle?

"The effective use of chemical treatment and its potential hazards to the trees should be considered," Rodie recommends. "Also, plant a diversity of quality trees for the future. This minimizes the catastrophic loss of a single species."

The most vulnerable trees to EAB are the ones already stressed because of drought, poor planting techniques, abuse by landscape equipment and competition with turf. Planting the healthiest trees available and keeping them healthy is crucial, Rodie notes.

The annual Midtown Historic Neighborhood Garden Walk and Trolley Tree Tour, offered in the spring through UNO's Welcome Center, is also a resource for the community to learn about area tree care.





## Little Pests on the Prairie

Controlled burns and other methods help control invasive species at UNO’s Glacier Creek Preserve

UNO’s Glacier Creek Preserve is no stranger to invasive species.

From garlic mustard to leafy spurge — both originally from Europe — pest plants can choke out native vegetation in prairie habitats by raiding available nutrients, light and water.

“We have several invasive species at the preserves that require our control,” says UNO Professor of Biology Tom Bragg, who directs the 424-acre preserve in northwest Omaha.

The preserve, centerpiece of UNO’s acclaimed Environmental Education and Research program, features a restored native tall-grass prairie with stream, wood and wetland

ecosystems. It provides critical habitat for prairie flora and fauna with opportunities for education, research and appreciation of prairie ecology and management.

To safeguard it from the effects of noxious weeds, Juan Felix, the land management specialist at the preserve, coordinates activities that involve faculty, students and volunteers to implement strategies that include mechanical and chemical measures, over-seeding areas with seeds from local prairies to increase plant diversity, restoring disturbed areas, tree and shrub removal and occasional haying.

Most effective, though, is prescribed burning. Re-established native landscapes like Glacier Creek Preserve thrive by recreating ecological processes of the past. Historically, fire was a natural force of life on the prairie. Sparked by hand or by nature, grassland fires help to prevent invasion by woody plants and exotics, support plant diversity, promote new growth and enrich wildlife habitat. The planned and controlled burns at Glacier Creek Preserve are conducted in the spring and can include up to 60 acres. Summer and fall burns are also used in long-term research plots at the site.

# One Step at a Time

Spinal injury doesn't stop 2016 UNO graduate  
Taryn Schaaf from moving forward



*"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."*

Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu wrote those words back in the 6th century.

Recent graduate Taryn Schaaf is living the quote on her own terms — and in a pretty big way.



*By Susan Houston Klaus*

At commencement this past May, Schaaf brought the audience in Baxter Arena to its feet.

Schaaf, who has a spinal cord injury that left her unable to walk, used a robotic exoskeleton to make her way across the stage to accept her diploma.

Those few dozen steps represented the culmination of years of work — not only putting in the hours to earn her degree, but also practicing with the "Ekso."

## **'On the go non-stop'**

To realize how far she's come, you first need to understand where's she come from.

Seven years ago, Schaaf says, she was "a busy, busy person, on the go non-stop."

The Altoona, Iowa, native had been working in Des Moines in marketing and sales for Peel's and Matrix for three years. Travel made up about three-quarters of her work time.

When she wasn't on the job, she went home to spend time with her family — especially with her younger brother Trent, who had been in a car accident. He sustained a traumatic brain injury and uses a wheelchair.

Schaaf also liked to hang out at local rodeos with her friends. One night in September 2009, she visited the Tri-State Rodeo in Fort Madison. She was riding with several others in an ATV, the kind that looks like an oversized golf cart.

After that, she only remembers bits and pieces.

"The driver thought he was making a short-cut to a ditch and it was an 80-foot ravine," she says.

Schaaf was thrown from the vehicle. Her C-6 and C-7 vertebrae were permanently damaged.



## No room for 'I can't'

After the initial trauma, the recovery and the rehab, she began looking for her new normal.

The funny thing is, Schaaf says, she wasn't ever that focused on feeling sorry for herself.

"I was emotionally a wreck with my brother's accident. I'd been through all the emotions. So I realized after my accident that I needed to step up to the plate now."

Part of that resilience comes from growing up in a family where she says "I can't" and giving up weren't part of the program.

"Playing sports, there were a lot of times not everything was easy but there was never an 'I can't.'"

In time, she would learn how to use a wheelchair to get around. She would discover how to write again, how to drive again, how to live on her own.

## 'There's still life to live'

During her recovery, she also discovered a new career path.

Schaaf says she was inspired by an "amazing" social worker who worked with her while she was in rehab.

"I wanted to do what she did," she says. "She made a huge impact on my life and helped find resources for me and my future."

She started studies at UNO, pursuing a bachelor's in social work.

Today, Schaaf works with gerontology patients at an area rehab center. She can offer them a unique understanding of what's it like to be a patient unsure of what lies ahead.

"I want to help people find the resources they'll need after rehab and to realize that there's still life to live."

This fall, Schaaf has returned to UNO to earn her master's in social work.

Since graduation, she continues to practice walking with the Ekso.

"It helps with mobility, helps keep my bones strong, keeps my muscles from atrophying — and it's good exercise."

There's also an emotional benefit, she says: Being able to stand and look another person in the eye instead of looking up from wheelchair level.

She can envision a future where she can use an Ekso at home to stand at the sink to do dishes and other tasks, and simply to walk around.

## Looking to the future

What surprises her about what she's been able to do since her accident?

"Oh, my gosh — everything," Schaaf says.

"My family is a big boating family, and I never thought I'd be able to jet ski again. But I've tried a lot of recreational things. I've tried jet skiing."

She's also racked up a couple of firsts, including going kayaking and playing tennis. While in rehab at Omaha's QLI, she flew to Phoenix to be a wedding.

That's just the beginning of the new things Schaaf is ready to try.

She'd like to fly again, go on a cruise, maybe even someday move to a different city — "just to be able to try it and say I can do it," she says.

She has an ease and matter-of-factness about how she talks about her life and what's happened.

It doesn't define who she is. Instead, it gives her a way to help others — both disabled and able-bodied people alike.

Yes, there are days when she needs some extra motivation.

"But walking across the stage at graduation," she says, "kind of changed my whole perspective. If I can inspire someone else..."

## At UNO: Research with Exoskeletons

Faculty in the UNO Center for Human Movement Variability are conducting research with another type of exoskeleton.

Assistant Professor Kota Takahashi's work has focused on a device to help strengthen ankle muscles of stroke survivors.



An electrode or sensor is placed on the person's muscle to quantify the muscle's intent in terms of muscle activity. That activity is turned into a control signal that the exoskeleton can interpret.

Takahashi says that work based on that same principle is being planned by the center to provide rehabilitation to help people with prosthetic legs.

The goal is to help these individuals resume a more natural gait or even improve their ability to walk and run.

It's an exciting time to be involved in the research, Takahashi says.

"The engineering and technology of these devices has really taken off in the last 10 years. More and more engineers are collaborating with physiologists and movement scientists."

At the same time, he says, a lot of the work has become more basic.

"We're looking at what is the functional role of muscles and tendons and how our bodies actually control movement."

That knowledge, he says, will give researchers better ideas of how to diagnose pathologies, how to enhance somebody's weakened muscles and how to build devices that are more intelligent.

"If technology can help patients achieve mobility they couldn't ordinarily have, that would be a huge goal."

# THE JOURNAL

*The horror began one night with a knock on her bedroom window.*

*Outside, says Rachel Pointer, stood a 19- or 20-year-old man, the boyfriend of a neighbor, with a gun pointed at one of her friends. He demanded she come outside and follow his orders, she says.*

*Pointer says the man sold her for sex.*

*She was 6 years old.*

*Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell was 27 years old, living on her own for the first time, when she says a controlling, abusive boyfriend turned her life upside-down.*

*She says he coerced her into setting up a joint bank account, drained her funds then forced her to engage in sexual acts in the back rooms of strip clubs to make extra money.*

*Both women say, at the time, they couldn't find the right term to describe their horrific experiences.*

*Now they can: sex trafficking.*

## UNO graduates, students, faculty work to shed light on sex trafficking

*By Rick Davis*

The two Omaha women have joined other survivors in speaking out against this illegal, exploitive practice that lurks in the shadows but is part of a worldwide human trafficking and forced labor industry that, according to a 2014 International Labor Organization report, generates \$150 billion in annual profits.

Rochelle Dalla, who earned her Ph.D. from the University of Arizona and a master's degree in community counseling from UNO, is a professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies and is the founding editor of the recently established Journal of Human Trafficking. She says it is difficult to quantify the extent of sex trafficking locally, nationally or abroad.

"It's really, really hard to get accurate estimates," Dalla says, but in terms of what she's seen in small pockets of the world and extrapolating that out, "the number of people affected by trafficking is mindboggling."

And it's not just faraway places.

Pointer was born and raised in Omaha, one of 13 children in her family. Pointer, who was homeschooled and feared for the safety of her siblings, says she was sold for sex as often as every night during a week. She would be returned home before morning.



# DARK RNEY

After moving away from family in Nebraska to accept a job in Topeka, Kansas, Yodogawa-Campbell became friends with a man she met at the mall where both worked. The relationship quickly became abusive. (Ironically, Yodogawa-Campbell had assisted with sexual assault victims as a volunteer with the YWCA in Omaha.) Within a year, she says, her boyfriend had her frequenting every strip club between Topeka, Kan. and Independence, Mo.

"We're only just beginning to understand the scope of the problem," says Ann Coyne, a professor in UNO's Grace Abbott School of Social Work for the past 41 years. "We know that this is going on in Third World countries because of reports from the United Nations. But in Nebraska? It's not going to happen here. But it does."

Deborah Gilg, United States attorney for the District of Nebraska, wrote in a 2013 report: "There is no question that human trafficking is present in Nebraska. We have actively investigated cases involving adults, minors and immigrants."

Douglas County (Nebraska) Sheriff Tim Dunning, a 1990 UNO graduate, serves on the Nebraska Governor's Task Force on Human Trafficking, which, in 2015, published the first significant study of sex trafficking against minors in Nebraska. The study involved an anonymous questionnaire mailed to a random sample of 18- to 22-year-old women living in Nebraska.

The study calculated that at least 47 female high school students in Nebraska are the victims of sex trafficking every year, and that "the true number is probably double this or greater."

## What is Sex Trafficking?

So what defines sex trafficking, and how is it different from prostitution?

The federal Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 defines sex trafficking as a commercial sex act that is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or when there is a commercial sex act involving a person younger than 18 years of age.

"Suppose I am a young adult who is told that if I don't engage in sex for money, then harm will

come to me or my family. That's an example of sex trafficking," says Kerry Beldin, an associate professor of social work at UNO and coordinator of the Master of Social Work degree program.

But not all sex trafficking involves threats of violence. Sometimes, traffickers take the opposite approach to manipulate potential victims.

"Using love, or the appearance of love, is a form of coercion and a form of manipulation to somebody who is vulnerable," says John Focht, a current UNO student and a detective with the Council Bluffs, Iowa, Police Department who has been involved in investigating sex-trafficking cases.

"Most sexual abusers get the kids to like them," adds Coyne. "Most women are trafficked by someone they know. It's not someone jumping out of the bushes and grabbing them."

"Oftentimes, traffickers convince their victims that they want to marry them or they are going to make stars out of them," perhaps through a modeling career or other lucrative, public profession, says Beldin.

Traffickers look to exploit the vulnerabilities of potential victims — whether it be financial problems, an unstable home life, mental health issues or a combination of these and other problems.

### About the Victims

Beldin and other experts are quick to point out that each victim's story is unique. "It's not just certain people who are trafficked," she says. "It's not that certain individuals are prone to this and others are immune. But there certainly are risk factors." Runaways and foster children are particular targets.

Coyne cites a recent study, commissioned by the Women's Fund of Omaha, in which 22 survivors of sex trafficking in Nebraska were interviewed. Twelve reported growing up in foster care, and one in a group home. "It's a major problem for those of us who are involved in child welfare," Coyne says. "Children who are in foster care are at a very high risk."

Dalla's research with local women enrolled in the Salvation Army's Wellspring program can also be informative. The program assists people trying to get out of the life of prostitution.

"A lot of these people just fell through the gaps growing up," Dalla says. "They just didn't get the direction or care or nurturing, and they just continued to fall through the cracks." Some were abused, while others were neglected or abandoned.

The most common ages for victims to enter sex trafficking are between 14 and 16, according to Shared Hope International, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Vancouver, Washington, dedicated to eradicating sex trafficking.

### The Problem in Nebraska

Nebraska received a "C" grade in the Protective Innocence Challenge, a state-by-state report, funded by Shared Hope International, that examines 41 key legislative components related to sex trafficking. That's up from the "D" the state received in 2014 and the "F" in 2011.

The grade comes as no surprise to Anne Hobbs, director of UNO's Juvenile Justice System, who helped write Nebraska's Victim Assistance Strategic Plan, released last year.

According to the report, Nebraska is lacking in specialized services for sex trafficking victims,



## There is no question that human trafficking is present in Nebraska.

and does not have clearly defined processes for connecting victims to needed services. Law enforcement and social agencies are in need of additional training so that they can identify signs of human trafficking. And while the courts allow younger victims to give videotaped depositions, youths over age 11 must testify in person.

There are also issues surrounding the age of majority in Nebraska, which is 19. Sex trafficking victims who are 18 are in a state of limbo — not old enough to be legally considered an adult and not young enough to be a minor.

"In the state of Nebraska, an 18-year-old can be abused, abandoned or sold, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Children and Family Services does not have jurisdiction to respond if a citizen calls a hotline," the report states. Because they are not of legal age, they also may have trouble renting an apartment — often requiring them to "rely on couch surfing and engaging in survival sex."

In addition, the Women's Fund of Omaha surveyed nearly 700 service providers statewide, working in fields such as social services, law enforcement, education and government. According to the report, released last year, 84 percent of respondents felt like they were not adequately meeting the needs of trafficking victims.

"That was really an 'aha' moment," says Meghan Malik, who holds a master's degree in public administration from UNO, and last February joined the Women's Fund as its first trafficking response coordinator.

"It really painted a bleak landscape of the fact that we don't have enough services

across the state of Nebraska to combat this issue," Malik says. "Service providers and law enforcement are really in dire need of training and education around this issue."

There is also a disparity between the services needed by trafficking victims and

the services Nebraska agencies currently provide. According to the report, fewer than 30 percent of Nebraska providers can adequately meet victims' top needs, which include mental health, emergency shelter and crisis intervention services.

### The I-80 Connection

Sheriff Dunning says that an ongoing study at Creighton University, examining a popular sex-for-hire website, is shedding light on human trafficking routes across the United States — and Interstate 80, which cuts across Nebraska, is a primary route.

"It's a pipeline," says Dunning. "You've got truck stops along the way; you've got hotels along the way."

Focht, the Council Bluffs detective, describes I-80 as part of a sex trafficking "circuit."

"They (sex traffickers) want to move around because they don't want to be detected by law enforcement," Focht explains. "Also, they want to go to where there is money. The Midwest is popular for prostitution, in the sense that they run these circuits. They'll go from Sioux City (Iowa) to Omaha to Lincoln, stop in Grand Island, go to Denver and back to Des Moines."

"They run these huge circles in the middle of the nation. They keep moving. They just go to the next town and set up shop for three or four days."

The volume of traffic along I-80 also makes it a lucrative corridor for sex traffickers — with reports of victims being exploited at truck stops and hotels and motels along the route.

But in the larger scope, it's also simply a road to major events — where sex traffickers look to cash in on large gatherings of people with money to spend. "If you have a big event, there



are going to be more girls and traffickers who come into your area,” Focht says. That includes such high-profile local events as the College World Series and the Berkshire Hathaway shareholders’ meeting.

## Searching for Solutions

The issue of sex trafficking is complex and there is no one easy answer, according to the UNO experts interviewed. Any solution will require a multilevel approach, involving law enforcement, the courts, social service agencies, business and industry, schools and more.

Sheriff Dunning says the Omaha Area Coalition on Human Trafficking is working with local hotels and motels to help identify sex traffickers.

“We work with their registration staff, as well as the housekeeping staff, as far as what they should look for,” Dunning explains.

Red flags can include women and girls who don’t have their own identification; claim to be “just passing through”; appear deprived of food, sleep or other basic necessities; don’t speak, socialize or make eye contact; appear fearful or anxious; and have few personal possessions.

“When we are looking at the trafficker, that individual usually carries multiple cell phones, and appears to be of some wealth, but it’s flashy wealth,” Dunning says. “Generally, the pimp is the only male in a group of women and only pays cash for rooms.”

Dunning says they have trained the staff at about 25 to 30 hotels, and the program has been met with great acceptance. “We’ve had great cooperation with the hospitality association,” Dunning says. “It’s amazing once they have completed the training, they become more aware of, ‘Hey, I’ve seen that; I didn’t realize that’s what it was.’”

Law enforcement and other agencies are finding similar cooperation from the commercial trucking industry.

When the Council Bluffs Police Department began working with the FBI in 2009 to combat sex trafficking, Focht says they started looking at the girls and women more as victims than as criminals. “Our focus changed from just locking the girls up to finding the people who are profiting off the sex trade,” says Focht.

Over the last few years, Nebraska has enacted legislation to better define sex trafficking, ensure that those under the age of 18 won’t be charged with prostitution, increase penalties for those trying to buy sex, create a task force to further study trafficking in Nebraska, and require training for law enforcement and others to more effectively identify sex traffickers and victims.

In 2015, the Nebraska Attorney General’s Office hired its first human trafficking task force coordinator, and received a federal grant, in cooperation with the Salvation Army, to establish the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force.

In October, the task force will roll out statewide training sessions for first responders — law

enforcement, social service providers, medical staff, child welfare workers and others — covering everything from how to investigate and prosecute sex trafficking cases to how to recognize, identify and provide service for victims.

In addition to these steps, increasing public awareness is critical, the experts say.

“This public reluctance to discuss the issue has really fueled the hidden nature of the problem,” says Malik. “This is not *Pretty Woman*. That’s not what this looks like. It’s much darker.”

## Walking Away, Taking a Stand

When Pointer told her pimp “no more” — and didn’t “give a crap what they did to me” — she tells the story about the pimp taking her down a deserted alley, a place all too familiar, where she had been forced to perform sex acts before. She feared for her life. Would he kill her?

He warned her to keep her mouth shut, or else. He then let her go; she was 16.

“I’m going to keep preaching about it,” she says, now 34 and free of the drugs and alcohol that numbed her. “It’s not OK to buy and sell people.”

## Get Help

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888. The confidential hotline is available 24/7.



## RESTORED WINGS

UNO art major Elisa Wolcott is looking to make a difference and save the lives of women who are the victims of sex trafficking — all through the power of sculpture.

From January through May this year, her public artwork project, “2,000 Souls,” was on display on the second level of Eppley Airfield.

The display featured 2,000 ceramic birds, all sculpted, fired and sanded by Wolcott. Each bird represents the life of someone who was forced into prostitution in Nebraska.

“I refuse not to care,” Wolcott said in a December 2015 Omaha World-Herald article. “This shouldn’t happen. This is not OK.”

Wolcott is selling the birds to raise funds for Rejuvenating Women, a local nonprofit organization that is raising money to open a restoration home for victims of sex trafficking in Omaha. More information about the project and how to donate is available at [restoredwings.com](http://restoredwings.com).

# a THIN PLACE

UNO PROFESSOR PATRICK MCNAMARA KEEPS TAPPING INTO THE SPIRITUAL FONT THAT IS INDIA

*By Anthony Flott*

*Photos by Ryan Henriksen*

It's been 25 years since Patrick McNamara's first trip to India. But the enchantment cast on him then is as strong as ever, pulling him back time and again.

Director of UNO's International Studies & Programs, McNamara has made nearly a dozen trips to India since 1991 and spent more than two years of his life there.

Though the journey can be daunting, the stay is reinvigorating.

"As important as the geographic journey is, I return to India because of a spiritual energy that I have tapped into each time," McNamara says. "We in the Irish tradition call places where heaven and earth touch, 'Thin Places.'

"I believe India is one of those thin places where one's spirit is touched by God anew."

McNamara was back in India in July, taking with him University Communications photographer Ryan Henriksen and student Brandon Sibbel. Henriksen went along to document McNamara's work related to water quality, his lectures at various schools and universities, and his seemingly never-ending relationship building, handshake by handshake. Sibbel, a sociology major with a cognate in East Asian Cultural Anthropology, was working on an independent study project.

The trio spent two weeks in India, first flying 18 hours to New Delhi immediately followed by a six-hour car ride to Jaipur, the "Pink City." Later, they flew 1,000 miles south to Visakhapatnam, a coastal city along the Indian Ocean, before ending their stay back in New Delhi. They visited with university faculty, city administrators, college students, news reporters, school children, coffee plantation workers, villagers and many others. They watched cricket being played on a beach, walked through a rodent-infested "Rat Temple," and learned to negotiate India's pinball streets.

"Visiting India was an intense whirlwind of experiences that I am still processing months later," Sibbel says.

A junior, Sibbel was making his first trip outside the United States. He understands the metaphysical pull the "Land of Prayers" has on McNamara. India, he says, is "a richly spiritual, beautiful place."

But also a land of paradox.

"India was tremendously welcoming and completely foreign, a place of deep poverty and astounding wealth," he says.

Following is a recount of their visit.











## COME ON DOWN!

Indian students are hungry for instruction, even if they might not be used to American styles of teaching — or to McNamara's style, for that matter. At Gitam Institute of Management in Visakhapatnam, McNamara spoke to more than 200 MBA students. "His teaching style is totally different," Henriksen says. "He walks around and engages students, asks them to stand up and answer questions. His style is kind of like a game show host. He puts a microphone in their face and gets them to answer questions. It took a second for them to warm up to him, but they loved it."



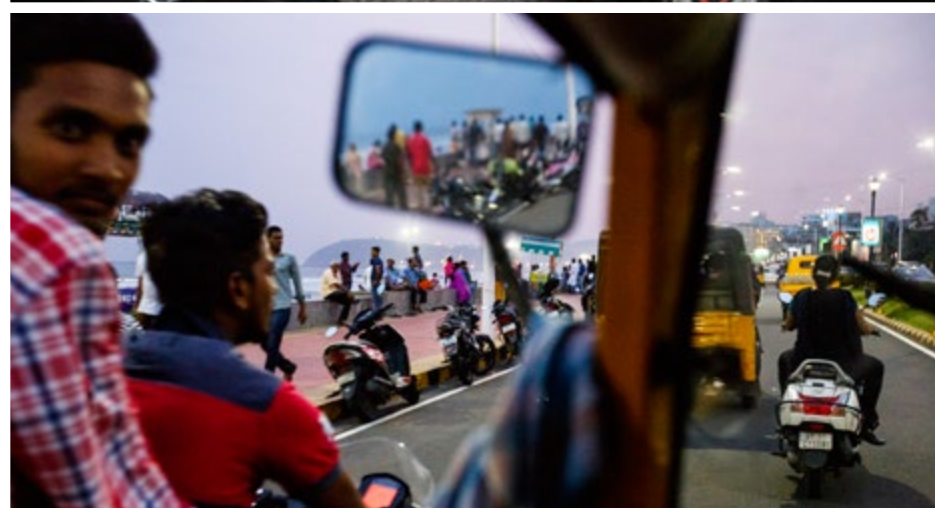
## HOSPITALITY/GENEROSITY

The UNO trio gushed over how well received they were in India — wherever they went. McNamara references a Hindi saying to explain such hospitality: "Guest is God." The warm welcome ranged from tea and fresh mango in the homes of an Indian tribal family to a professor paying their tickets for an overnight train ride from Jaipur back to New Delhi. "The spirit, the value of hospitality is one of the greatest things about Indian culture," McNamara says. "Whether it is a maharishi living in his palace or a poor rural villager, Indians have bent over backward to make me feel welcome in every place. The honor of having a guest in your house has been true for many generations."

Sibbel experienced it when at Gitam University. The university did not have an expert in his field of study, so they contacted one from another university who came to Sibbel's hotel and chatted with him for an hour over tea.

"Everyone, regardless of apparent station, offered drinks, snacks and sometimes even gifts to us when we visited with them," Sibbel says. "It was an intensely welcoming experience,"





## WATER AND WORKSHOPS

Among the work the group did while in India was tour a village's water treatment facility. Henriksen, meanwhile, gave a half-day workshop on photography at Gitam University.

He showed up to find 20-plus students and a large banner featuring his own picture, plus premade certificates of completion he signed. Later, he spoke with university marketers about lessons learned from UNO's branding overhaul. McNamara stayed another five days, teaching at Noida's Jaypee Business School on behalf of UNO's College of Business Administration.



## ROADSIDE MANNERS

Looking for travel excitement? Look no further than the streets of India. "Traveling from place to place was an adventure," Sibbel says. "Chaotic and noisy, roads were shared by large trucks, motorcycles, cars and autos (small, open taxis) with the occasional cattle or camel for good measure." All sharing the road with seemingly little rhyme or reason. "Traffic rules are only a suggestion in India," McNamara says. "Lanes and lights don't matter to the Indian driver." Some of that is out of necessity, though, and reflective of the ancient roots of cities. "Omaha, like many cities in America, was built for cars," McNamara points out. "India has multi-modal transportation by necessity. There are places you can not go to as easily with cars or motorized vehicles; otherwise you'd never get to where you're going."

The UNO contingent's first experience of Indian travel after landing in New Delhi was a six-hour drive to Jaipur in a minivan with no seat belts and — far worse — no air conditioning. "Traffic was nuts," Henriksen says. "There were no lane lines, cars were broken down on the side of the road, people were fixing tires. We swerved around them at the last second."

He, McNamara and Sibbel also traveled by taxis, train, motorcycles, cars and planes.





## MONKEYS AND MORE

Taking off one's shoes in India temples is customary. Given that custom, though, some visitors might opt to pass on entering Rajasthan's Karni Mata Temple — the Temple of Rats — given the 20,000 or so rodents scurrying to and fro there. "I had been to the rat temple in 1991 when I visited," McNamara says, "but it still freaks me out." McNamara, Henriksen and Sibbel put aside any queasiness they might have been experiencing, ditched their shoes and entered anyway. It was just one of many experiences the trio had in India that involved animals. Henriksen saw camels helping farmers plow fields, for instance. They also spotted cows, monkeys and more. "They are sometimes treated with reverence, as is the case with cattle and the rats dwelling in the temple, and sometimes they are a normal part of life, such as monkeys snatching scraps or hopping across the roofs of cars," Sibbel says. "There are also many stray dogs, in part because it is illegal to kill them." Sometimes, the reverence is taken to an extreme. "The tradition of live and let live and reverence for all creation is a huge part of Indian society," McNamara says. "There is one religion, Jainism, that actually wear a mouth and nose cover so they don't accidentally kill a bug by breathing it in."







## ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW

Having spent more than two years of his life there since 1991, India is nothing new to Patrick McNamara. But each trip is. “Every time I got to India there is some unique and surprising experience,” he says. For instance, though he’d seen urban poverty in India numerous times, he got a different perspective of it while visiting a village in southern India, “and so thought much more about the dire poverty that exists in the tribal regions.” While there he, Henriksen and Sibbel visited a coffee plantation on tribal land, were interviewed about their visit by a local newspaper reporter, and enjoyed tea and fresh mango in the homes of villagers. The need of Indians wasn’t lost on Sibbel. “The dichotomy of extreme wealth and deep poverty was easily apparent. Large, elaborate buildings and houses were surrounded by walls, against the outside of which were dilapidated buildings or rough structures of plywood and metal sheeting. The sides of some highways were taken up by tent villages where itinerant workers lived, and women and children begging for money was a common sight near markets and busy intersections.”



## MCNAMARA AS AMBASSADOR

McNamara certainly enjoys his trips to India, but it’s not exactly a vacation. Rather, he’s working almost full time. “The whole time he was representing UNO,” Henriksen says. “He’s the best kind of ambassador a university could hope for.” That includes handing out his business card wherever he went and to whomever he met. Recipients included students at Visakhapatnam’s Gitam Institute of Management, which has a well-established partnership with UNO’s College of Business Administration through its MBA program. McNamara also gave his card to young children during an impromptu stop at an elementary school. “It is clear that he is not just a representative of the university, but a friend to his Indian counterparts and someone who is dedicated to strengthening our academic partnerships,” Sibbel says. His appeal there is part status, part personality. “Being a professor in Indian society is a high-status career,” McNamara says. And, he adds, “Having a title like director of International Studies & Programs gives me legitimacy or cache in India because people are always looking for those partnership possibilities.” Henriksen, though, adds that Indians responded well to McNamara because “he is kindhearted,” used a lot of humor and willingly embraced people — figuratively and literally. With such a recruiter, no wonder there are more than 250 students from India at UNO. “If you meet others with an open mind, generous spirit and smile, they will meet you the same way,” McNamara says.

UNO's Executive MBA program  
Includes international excursions  
At the service of client firms

# Executive



*By Chelsea Bailey  
Director of Marketing and Social Media, CBA*

When Michelle Foley landed in London on a Sunday morning this summer, she and her classmates headed straight to a craft beer pub near their hotel.

And they were just getting started.

In fact, her team's 12-day European excursion revolved exclusively around beer — pubs, breweries, bottle shops, even a beer and cider conference.

But it's not because they're big drinkers or beer buffs. Rather, the team was conducting in-country research for Zipline Brewing Co., a microbrewery headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Foley and her four team members are enrolled in UNO's Executive Master of Business Administration program, housed in the College of Business Administration. It has been sending students overseas since 1989 as part of an international consulting capstone project.

Along with supervising Associate Professor David Volkman, Foley's team visited 11 cities throughout the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland in June to explore business

conditions in those international markets. Yes, they had fun, taking in historical sites like Big Ben and Buckingham Palace while watching firsthand the fallout following the Brexit vote.

But mostly, it was all business.

There was exhaustive research, numerous meetings, surveys and, of course, some taste testing. While in Ireland, the team split in half to embark on a business pub crawl of sorts, visiting with wholesalers and distributors, bar owners, managers and patrons.

"We really worked hard, but it was fun, too," says Foley, vice president of operations at OTTR Inc., a software company that designs products for the healthcare industry. "I would go back in a heartbeat."

The team's hard work will be on display in November when they present their comprehensive report to the client, delivering an extensive analysis, business plan and recommendations.





## One of Many Journeys

Tailored to busy executives like Foley, UNO's EMBA program has worked with 75 clients over the years, accounting for more than 100 projects in 41 countries.

"Executives in today's business environment must be able to understand what it takes to be successful in the international marketplace," says Bill Swanson, program director and a 1973 UNO graduate.

For Foley and many others, the capstone component is a difference-maker, setting UNO's cohort-based program apart from other options in the area.

"I have lots of business experience, but I didn't have that international piece," she says.

A typical UNO Executive MBA student has 15 years of professional experience, including seven-plus years in a managerial role.

Occupations and industries are diverse, ranging from doctors and entrepreneurs to nonprofit managers and military personnel.

As a result, these seasoned professionals are able to synthesize and apply their coursework

to a real business opportunity. The client, meanwhile, receives a comprehensive report for a fraction of the cost of hiring a consulting company.

"These projects have delivered millions of dollars in financial impact," Swanson says.

Clients are new each year. Swanson scouts potential projects using resources such as chambers of commerce and departments of economic development. Students, alumni and faculty also make recommendations.

Though virtually all Executive MBA programs now have an international component, UNO's is one of the few that finds projects without the help of a third-party company.

"It consumes a tremendous amount of time," Swanson says.

But there are advantages.

"We become more familiar with the client," Swanson says, explaining that teams of four to six students get to work directly with the sponsor to determine a statement of work, budget and deadline. "Everybody has skin in the game."



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1. Michelle Foley, Elizabeth Hofer, and Emilee Harvey take some time to sightsee at the Queen Victoria Memorial in London.

2. The team met with Deputy Darragh O'Brien of Foreign Affairs and Trade at Leinster House in Dublin.

3. After a long day of research, the team enjoys a meal at The Old Mill Restaurant in Temple Bar Dublin. (L to R) Hofer, Dr. David Volkman, Josh Hansen, Harvey, Foley, and Brent Shanholtz

While many of the sponsoring companies are large, for-profit firms that foot the bill, the client list recently has expanded to include nonprofit organizations. In 2013, for instance, the program partnered with Omaha-based nonprofit Mosaic for a project that was in many ways unprecedented. This time, the university partially funded the trip. One of the first projects to include a "social responsibility" focus, the program was tasked with helping Mosaic's partner organization in Moshi, Tanzania, that supports children with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Students usually are assigned their projects and teams, but this one was offered to volunteers. James Bowen jumped at the opportunity.

"We were going to rural Africa and sleeping under mosquito nets," says Bowen, co-founder of IT services company Five Nines. "It was going to be very different."

Despite the unusual conditions, five students volunteered immediately, two whose own children have special needs. Bowen's son lives with cerebral palsy. "We all cared a lot about the purpose," he says.

On the ground in Moshi, a high-poverty town that sits on Mt. Kilimanjaro's lower slopes, the team soon found out that the organization they were to help had unforeseen challenges. The

UNO team was originally asked to investigate how to increase profits in the organization's social business cooperatives, where caregivers and parents sell handmade goods in the United States to subsidize care for their disabled children.

The root issue, however, was a lack of organization and, as a result, inventory. "We ended up changing course and identifying the new project that we really needed to do for them, and that was a little risky on our part," Bowen says.

The risk paid off, and the team made recommendations that would allow the organization to scale their operations.

Bowen, who now serves on Mosaic's board of directors, says the trip and program were life-changing in many ways, leaving him with lifelong friendships, better business practices and a new perspective.

Foley, too, feels thankful for the friendships she forged this summer, calling her trip "eye-opening" and "enlightening" both personally and professionally.

Students pursue an Executive MBA for different reasons: career changes, pay raises or personal fulfillment.





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2



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4

## Leap Forward

Chris Tonniges, a sales manager at First National Bank, says he experienced a series of “rapid fire” promotions during and after the program.

“I knew that if I wanted to take the next leap forward in my career, I needed to do something to better myself,” he says.

Classmates with Bowen, Tonniges’ team traveled to India in 2013 to conduct market research for Lindsay Corporation.

“We got to see India in a way that most tourists don’t get to see,” he says.

His team traveled by train to remote parts of the country for field research. “We got to experience real bits and pieces of what life was like,” he says, “as opposed to sitting at a five-star resort.”

While Tonniges’ clients are domestic, he says the skills he learned abroad through site visits and interviews still are applicable to his role. Likewise, Bowen and Foley praise the program for its practicality.

“Because I’m working and going to school at the same time, I have brought many ideas back to my company,” Foley says. “It’s helped me be a better executive.”

All three continued their education to gain something they were missing. What lingers long after graduation, however, is that deep immersion into a different culture that only their international projects could provide.

As a result, each gained much more than they anticipated.

“You can’t get through these things and go see different countries and not come back in many ways a better person than you were when you left,” Bowen says. “It was 18 of the best months of my entire life. That was unexpected.”

## ABOUT UNO EMBA

Founded in 1975, UNO’s Executive Master of Business Administration program is the 13th oldest such program in the United States and the only one of its kind in Nebraska. It features:

- 17 months of study on alternating weekends
- AACSB accredited
- 33 hours of core business courses, six hours of electives
- 100+ international capstone projects to date
- 41 countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, Australia and Asia

Learn more at [emba.unomaha.edu](http://emba.unomaha.edu)

*1. The team visits with children and tours business operations at a center for disabled and other children in Moshi.*

*Pictured are Tyler Davis, James Bowen, and Lilianna Bronner.*

*2. Visiting with a native Maasai tribe in Tanzania.*

*3. Local micro-loan recipients in Moshi give tours of their small-business operations and share success stories with the team. Pictured are Jayasri Venkataraman, Phil Taylor, and Davis.*

*4. Bowen, Davis, and Venkataraman explore the handicraft industry in Dar Es Salaam.*

Ashley Eisert will be the first to tell you she relishes her new job.

That she considers herself a lucky dog.

That her days are utterly “Bun-derful!”

The puns are just part of the fun getting to drive one of America’s most iconic vehicles — the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile.

# Hot Doggin’ It

*By Sam Petto, University Communications*

2016 UNO graduate Ashley Eisert tours America behind the wheel of an iconic American vehicle

## 27 Feet of Hot Dog

Eisert got behind the wheel of the Wienermobile shortly after graduating from UNO in May. Now she’s traveling across the United States in one of six Wienermobiles, a coworker at her side to trade shifts piloting the 27-foot-long frankfurter.

“Our fun title is Hotdogger,” Eisert says with a laugh.

Eisert knew she wanted this job eight years ago when she first saw the Wienermobile during its stop in Omaha. The driver she spoke with told her the position was for college graduates who had majored in marketing, communications or business-related field.

“Business was my passion,” Eisert says, “so it kind of fit right into play.”

She began following the Wienermobile the same way a sports fan follows a favorite team. “Some people might call it stalking,” Eisert jokes. She prefers to think of herself as a groupie.

Before graduating in May, she applied for the job. So did 1,500 others — all seeking one of 12 openings.

Eisert hand-delivered her application to Oscar Mayer headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. She got the job, trained, then hit the road in June. By September she’d already been to 18 states and to Washington, D.C.

“As Hotdoggers, my teammate and I help oversee the Wienermobile as a mobile PR firm,” she says. “Each time we travel to a new city, we send out press releases, reach out to media and contribute to the memories people have with the Wienermobile.”

It’s invaluable career training.

“I have already seen myself developing stronger skill sets I can apply in a future career,” Eisert says. “Within any given week, I speak with thousands of individuals and work to make a connection with each one. By working with various media outlets,







I am learning the value of flexibility and how to represent a company as a brand ambassador. By reaching out to event contacts, I am developing logistical skills and enhancing my attention to details."

### From Degree to Dog

Eisert said her experience at UNO proved invaluable in preparing her to represent Oscar Mayer.

"With this job, it's all about interacting, making experiences, being very outgoing," she says. "I built a lot of that through UNO."

An honors student, Eisert earned a BS in business administration with concentrations in marketing, business finance, and investment science & portfolio management. She praised the College of Business Administration and Honors Program for getting students out into the community.

"They want you to apply your classroom knowledge to real-world experiences," Eisert

said. "I took a lot of marketing classes that allowed us to do that."

She was active outside the classroom, too, as president of the Spanish Club, co-president of Beta Gamma Sigma, vice president of Phi Kappa Phi and a member of Sigma Delta Pi and Delta Sigma Pi. She had internships at Union Pacific Distribution Services and Gordmans and was a member of the board of directors for Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska.

Now, she's spending a full year on the road. Her schedule typically calls for a day of travel followed by two days off, then events the remainder of the week. Drivers sleep in hotels — not in the Wienermobile.

"A lot of people think it's an RV, but really it's a large vehicle, like a minivan or an SUV," Eisert says. It features six seats and lots of storage, holding gear for site visits.

At events, fans can take photos in front of the vehicle, ride "shotbun" in the Virtual Reality Ride and receive the iconic Wiener Whistle that Oscar Mayer has been passing out since 1952.

She and her coworker generally stay at an event for a few hours. It depends on the venue.

"We interact with people. A lot of them have never seen the Wienermobile — they're like me eight years ago. We try to give them a great time."

So far, Omaha isn't on Eisert's list of upcoming stops. She'll be back before long, though — with or without the Wienermobile. When her time behind the wheel is done, she plans to return to Omaha and pursue an MBA at UNO with an emphasis in corporate strategy or management.

For now, though, she's enjoying her time on the road.

"It's amazing to see how much happiness the Wienermobile can bring to people. The memories from this journey, and the friends I make, will stay with me for a lifetime, and I cannot wait to share my 'I remember when' stories with others in the future."

# CLASS NOTES

Send your classnotes to [www.unoalumni.org/classnotes](http://www.unoalumni.org/classnotes).  
Or, post your note on the UNO Alumni Association Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/UNOAlumni](http://www.facebook.com/UNOAlumni)

55

**ODEAN CHASTAIN**

(BBA) got his degree in bio-chemistry and has been living in Pura Vida, Costa Rica, for 20 years.

61

**GEORGE PARKERSON**

(BA) is a volunteer for a nonprofit company on the UNO campus. [gcparkerson@cox.net](mailto:gcparkerson@cox.net)

**LONNIE PIERSON DUNBIER**

(BA) is co-founder of the fine art website AskART.com. Dunbier also researches and writes artist biographies. He is widowed with two children and four grandchildren.

63

**RALPH AMBRUSTER**

(BGS) writes: "The doors opened



for me by my UNO degree have been incredible, starting with a career at IBM. Thank you, UNO!"

66

**DAVID AUSTIN**

(BGE) used his degree to be accepted into the U.S. Air Force Officer Training School in 1966. Austin received an MBA from the



University of Dayton in 1974. In 1978 Austin was assigned to NASA to assist in flying the first shuttle flight. He

retired in 2003 and now volunteers with some substitute teaching. [djaustin.ehs55@verizon.net](mailto:djaustin.ehs55@verizon.net)

68

**TERRY DUFFY**

(BA) lives in Grand Blanc, Michigan, and points out that he is a "proud graduate of the last class of the University of Omaha. I was

in the Air Force and part of their degree completion program. Always wondered what happened to other classmates. I was in training to become a pilot but failed an eye test. Got out of the



service in 1970 and had a career in air traffic control with the Federal Aviation Agency. Now retired and doing the grandpa thing. Love sports cars, video

editing of family events and traveling in our Winnebago. Can't believe the campus today." [tdsd@att.net](mailto:tdsd@att.net)

71

**PHILIP ADELMAN**

(BGS) spent 23 years in the U.S. Air Force as a B-52 navigator then as an HC-130 rescue pilot. Adelman has been teaching at DeVry University in Phoenix for 32 years. He has a textbook called "Entrepreneurial Finance" published by Pearson. Adelman married his high school sweetheart, Hannah, and they have three children and seven grandchildren. [adelman@cox.net](mailto:adelman@cox.net)

**LYOYD ROITSTEIN**

(BS) recently was inducted into the Omaha Central High School Hall of Fame.

72

**ROBERT BLUNT JR.**

(BA) worked full time while attending UNO to earn his degree in criminal justice. "Thanks to UNO criminal justice profs for not tossing me out when I fell asleep." He worked for the FBI, U.S. Marshals and other law enforcement agencies. He lives in Golden, Colorado.

73

**THERESE MCGRATH**

(BA) has been assistant director of financial aid at Creighton University for 30 years.

**AUDREY PAULMAN**

**ARMFIELD** (BA) lives in Omaha and was an associate editor of the recently published textbook "Family Medicine: Principles and Practice"

74

**WALTER NOORDAM**

(BA) earned a law degree at the University of Nebraska College of Law. He says, though, that he had better luck in the job market with a background in economics and business than with his legal qualifications. He lives in Omaha. [mrsonnyusa2@hotmail.com](mailto:mrsonnyusa2@hotmail.com)

**PEGGY O'DEA LIPPERT**

(MSW) retired 10 years ago. Lippert was elected female delegate to the Democratic

National Convention and worked for Congressman Brad Ashford in the finance department. Lippert, who lives in Papillion, Nebraska, writes: "I am the proud mother of Erinn Tighe (MSW), a UNO graduate, who works in the PTSD Clinic at the Omaha VA."

**JOHN ALLEY**

(BGS) retired Aug. 31 after 50 years of public service at the federal, state, county and city level. He was inducted into the Public Fleet Manager's Hall of Fame this year during a ceremony in Nashville, Tennessee.

75

**JOAN BAKER STANDIFER**

(MS) ended her teaching career as an elementary school principal for Omaha Public Schools. Standifer has a love for gardening, decorating, reading and traveling. She writes: "My husband,



Stan, and I travel nationally and internationally. I am a board member of the Joslyn Castle Trust, Alliance Francaise, and a member of the

Assistance League. I am also a consultant with Minnesota Humanities providing services to Omaha Public Schools."

[jaybess2002@yahoo.com](mailto:jaybess2002@yahoo.com)

76

**JIM HAVELKA**

(MS) is a superintendent search consultant for the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association and a consultant for the Nebraska Department of Education. Havelka served 27 years as a Nebraska superintendent before retiring in 2010. He lives in North Bend, Nebraska. [jhavelka@gpcom.net](mailto:jhavelka@gpcom.net)

**PATRICK CONNELL**

(BS) lives in Peoria, Arizona. In June 2016, Connell was elected commandant of the department of the Arizona Marine Corps League, equivalent to CEO of a major state corporation. [C2674751@yahoo.com](mailto:C2674751@yahoo.com)

77

**MARIE HESSER**

(MS) lives in Stillwater, Oklahoma. She is married with two children and five grandchildren. Hesser taught primary grades and ESL to adults during her career. She founded a nonprofit resale shop in 2002. To date, they have raised \$2.8 million and given all proceeds to those in need in the community.

[Mariehesser5@gmail.com](mailto:Mariehesser5@gmail.com)

79

**STEPHANIE ANDERSON**

(BS) recently turned 60 years old. Anderson finished her master's degree in 2009 and at one point she held four



different educational positions. She now teaches at one of Omaha's largest preschools. Anderson was expecting her fifth grandchild at the end of August. [sgandersen17@gmail.com](mailto:sgandersen17@gmail.com)

**80 PAUL YOCHUM (MS)** retired at age 70 from the Arc, an organization for intellectually and developmentally



disabled individuals in Cross Plains, Wisconsin. He plans on spending more time with his granddaughters and family. He still

volunteers at the Arc. Yochum is president of the Capital Times Kids Fund.

**WILLIAM HAYWOOD (BGS)** retired from Qwest and lives in Tucson, Ariz. [wchaywood@comcast.net](mailto:wchaywood@comcast.net)

**81 THOMAS ANDAHL (BA)** retired from the Central Intelligence Agency in December 2015 after 31 years of service. Andahl now works for Liedos Corporation in Reston, Virginia. [tja1959@hotmail.com](mailto:tja1959@hotmail.com)

**MIKE PENCE (BS)** is co-owner and operator of Control Air North in Danville, California. The company earlier this year was awarded California Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association's (SMACNA) Contractor of the Year Award and was earned California's top HVAC project of the year for the recently completed Samsung U.S. Headquarter building in San Jose, California.

**82 DAVID MARTIN (MA)** works with Fine Lines, a creative writing nonprofit in Omaha. To see examples of their books, visit [finelines.org](http://finelines.org). [fine-lines@cox.net](mailto:fine-lines@cox.net)



**DEB THOMAS (MPA)** in July was named vice chancellor for business and finance for the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She had been interim vice chancellor since June

2015. She is responsible for all campus facilities, budget, human resources, information technology, finance/business services, security and legal service. More than 600 people are included in these departments. She has been with UNMC since 2006, when she joined as associate vice chancellor for finance and business services.

**MARY KATHERINE HAMILTON SMITH (BA)** was promoted to director of public affairs and development for the Lake County Forest Preserve District in Illinois. The LCFPD manages 31,000 acres of public land in 68 individual parks, four golf courses, an accredited museum, nature centers, 250 miles of trail and two national historic landmarks. [hamilton-smith@LCFPD.org](mailto:hamilton-smith@LCFPD.org)

**83 JUDY SEALER (MPA)** is executive director of Golden Living Omaha, a skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility. After many years of suburban and lake living, she moved to a downtown apartment and is enjoying this new chapter of her life in urbania.

**84 RICHARD EVANS (BSBA)** was assigned active duty commander of U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base in July. [ricke1424@aol.com](mailto:ricke1424@aol.com)

**86 INGRA ANDERSON (BS)** began working as the first executive director of Bellevue Public Schools Foundation in early 2016. A 16-member board of



directors helps run the largely volunteer-based organization. She says she is glad that her father, Dr. Larry D. Winkler, was able

to see her reach her goal of serving an educational institution before he passed away earlier this year.

[Ingra.Anderson@BellevuePublicSchoolsFoundation.org](mailto:Ingra.Anderson@BellevuePublicSchoolsFoundation.org)

WE KNOW WHEN THAT OLE WHISTLE BLOWS  
WE WILL SCREAM - GO MAVS  
WE WILL FIGHT, FIGHT FOR OUR MAVERICKS  
WE WILL CHEER SO ALL FANS WILL KNOW  
BE IT WIN OR LOSE OR DRAW  
**EVERYONE FOR OMAHA**  
WE WILL FIGHT FOR UNO

 **UNO FUND**  
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WHEN EVERYONE CHIPS IN, UNO STUDENT DREAMS WIN.  
MAKE YOUR \$25 GIFT TODAY AT [NUFOUNDATION.ORG/UNOFUND](http://NUFOUNDATION.ORG/UNOFUND)

**88**

**ELIAS RUIZ** (BFA) is retired and lives in Coachella Valley, California.

Ruiz writes: "Being a biker, I get to ride into the mountains often. I love living in Coachella Valley. God is awesome!" [wrencher52@gmail.com](mailto:wrencher52@gmail.com)

**CAROLYN VANNIER** (BGS) started a new business with her sons called Omaha Brew Bus. The brew bus takes customers around town to Omaha's craft breweries. [cvannier11@gmail.com](mailto:cvannier11@gmail.com)

**89**

**TISA M. ANDERS** (MS) wrote the first of three blog articles for the

Swedenborg Foundation's Scholars of Swedenborg series. One of the articles



was posted in April 2016. The articles can be found at <http://www.swedenborg.com/tag/tisa-anders/>.

Anders also has regular monthly postings on hope and inspiration from history on her blog, <http://writingtheworld.com/blog>. [TisaAnders@writingtheworld.com](mailto:TisaAnders@writingtheworld.com)

**90**

**MARK MATUZA** (BS)

writes: "Without my degree from UNO I would not have been able to land a job with the State of Nebraska as a juvenile probation



officer in 1991." That position ultimately led him to a job with the Omaha Police Department in 1992. [mark.matuza@cityofomaha.org](mailto:mark.matuza@cityofomaha.org)



**DEDA MYHRE** (BS) has been a realtor for 15 years. Myhre is currently a managing broker at Nebraska Realty and recently was named

2016 Relator of the Year by the Omaha Area Board of Realtors.

[deda.myhre@gmail.com](mailto:deda.myhre@gmail.com)

**92**

**CARLA HANSON**

(MS) retired in 2013 and moved to North Carolina.

She enjoys gardening and traveling in retirement. Hanson says hello to all her Dundee friends.

[hanson1610@gmail.com](mailto:hanson1610@gmail.com)

**PAMELA EHLINGER** (MS)

is in private practice with Alliance Counseling Center in Omaha. Ehlinger enjoys working with individuals, couples and families.

**93**

**JOEL WILSON** (MBA)

lives in his hometown, Ceresco, Nebraska. Wilson

has been working at Cabela's in Lincoln, Nebraska, in the World Foremost Bank credit card division for eight years.

[joel.wilson102761@gmail.com](mailto:joel.wilson102761@gmail.com)

**NELLA TAYLOR** (MA) is

enjoying retirement in Florida. Taylor writes: "My days are filled with classes and volunteer work at the small animal clinic and our local museum."

**STEPHEN SCHWIESOW**

retired in May 2015 after serving 36 years in education. Schwiesow now owns a photography business called Steven's Photos in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

**94**

**ED CARLSON** (BS)

has worked for the Council Bluffs, Iowa, police department in the special operations traffic unit as an accident investigator

for 19 years. Carlson was promoted to sergeant in August 2016. Carlson also is an active professional photographer with a specialization in sports photography.

[ercarlson@councilbluffs-ia.gov](mailto:ercarlson@councilbluffs-ia.gov)

**JEFF ROBY** (BS) just celebrated his 20th anniversary with Allergan.

[jlptybor@yahoo.com](mailto:jlptybor@yahoo.com)

**96**

**VIVIAN YOUNG**

(BGS) writes: "My daughter Alexandria Johnson,



(pictured) graduated from UNO in December 2015. I am still smiling."

**97**

**DANNY GARCIA**

(BGS) is lead singer, manager and owner of

Omaha-based cover band Lemon Fresh Day, formed in 1998. He has been a self-employed musician and manager since 2007. He previously worked as a quality service analyst with Pioneer Investments.

[lemonfreshday@cox.net](mailto:lemonfreshday@cox.net)

## IN MEMORIAM

A listing of alumni whose death the UNO Alumni Association has received notice of since May 8, 2016. Years indicate graduation from UNO.

1936 Dorothy L. Moudy  
1942 John W. Peterson  
1946 William F. Ginn  
1948 Hugh M. Cooke  
Richard D. Holland  
Dorothy D. Brown  
1949 Loren W. Grisinger  
1951 Chester J. Plewa  
1952 Margaret Zubrick  
1953 Robert L. Bass  
Bill R. Clark  
Michael J. Hogan  
1954 Wendell S. Peterson  
Pauline Skinner  
1956 L. Gordon Jensen  
1957 Marvin D. Chesley  
James L. Fishback  
Richard E. O'Connor  
1958 Charles M. Godwin  
Doris L. Hutchison  
Maurice R. Vandewalle  
1959 Anton Jadowski

1960 John A. Ballweg  
Paul Bankit  
1961 Richard R. Miller  
Jimmy N. Moore  
1962 Cathryn F. Bernhagen  
Wilma P. Stutheit  
1963 Ann K. Cavaleri  
1964 Joseph K. Bell  
James N. Demoss  
William R. Crowell  
Leroy D. Pieper  
1966 George E. Thayer  
Edward G. Hammer  
Kenneth A. Lafon  
Wayne A. Rasmuss  
1967 John E. Schuck  
Richard M. Scott  
1969 Luella A. Hahn  
Virginia R. Inclan  
Marilyn Warner  
O'Dell J. Galvin

1970 Betty L. Rundlett  
Margaret A. McMahon  
Marc R. Sherman  
James Burress  
Manuel G. Williams  
1971 Jerry D. Lunsford  
Charles J. Marino  
Chriss A. Lloyd  
David R. Newell  
Linda S. Smith  
Edward L. Stephens  
William L. Lupant  
1972 Michael E. London  
1973 Judith C. Amber  
Patrick Bostwick  
Dan R. Lohmeier  
1974 Darlene C. Marlow  
Steven A. Pivovar  
Luella L. Corliss-Sphon  
1975 Rosemary Whelton  
1976 Maurice T. Matthews  
1977 Josephine R. Macias

1978 John T. Spaustat  
Scott Frohm  
1979 Joseph A. Miloni  
1982 Kristen M. Lienemann  
1983 Jane P. Batt  
Rosemary J. Maynard  
1984 Beverly F. DiMauro  
Mary P. McGeorge  
1986 Janice E. Freeburg  
1987 Merle R. Rost  
1988 Mary J. Dethlefs  
1990 Herman P. Jones  
1991 Lawrence A. Sekyra  
Joyce Squires  
1992 Virginia V. Waters  
1993 Mark D. Austin  
1994 Maria V. Meares  
1995 Burke E. Allgood  
Colleen Rosso  
2000 Christopher G. Kelley  
Shawn M. Simon  
2006 Marion K. Burns  
2007 Jerome E. Bownes



98

**LYNETTE MCCOWEN** (BA) joined a writer's group this summer. As a result, she is writing a book of short stories about the life of her mother. McCowen lives in Omaha. lynn37lake@hotmail.com

**ERIC SHANKS** (MPA) returned to Lincoln, Nebraska, after working for the Urban Area Security Initiative of San Francisco. Shanks worked previously as a senior planner with the Alameda County Sheriff and Medical Public Health liaison. This fall, Shanks is teaching political science at Nebraska Wesleyan University and American Government at Southeast Community College. Shanks will also coach at Nebraska Aquatics. eshanks@nebrwesleyan.edu

01

**LATOSHA BRUCE** (MA) is proud to be a UNO alum.

drlzbruce@yahoo.com

**CAROL TSCHAMPL DIESING** (MS) just completed her elected year as state commander of the American Veterans (AMVETS) for the department of Nebraska. As an army veteran, Diesing worked in this leadership position in support of her fellow veterans and their families. She now is in her second year as a Ph.D. candidate in the communications studies program at UNL. c.tschampl\_diesing@yahoo.com

05

**RYAN STOWE** (MBA) was one of several UNO grads who helped International Logistics receive the President's "E" Star Award for Export Service at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. The award is the highest recognition any U.S. entity can receive for making a significant contribution to the expansion of U.S. exports and is awarded to companies for superior performance in increasing or promoting exports.

Based in Omaha, International Logistics has more than 100 offices worldwide and provides cost-effective distribution solutions between more than 85 countries. Stowe is general manager of imports. He works with fellow UNO grads Bruce Louthan (2006), general manager, and Travis Stolpe (2011), operations account manager.

**PORSCHA JACKSON** (BSBA) recently wrote a personal and career development book called "Pursuing Legacy," available on amazon.com. Jackson writes: "This is a major accomplishment for me on my new career quest as an author and consultant." For more



information, visit pursuinglegacy.webs.com. She lives in Houston. pursuinglegacy@gmail.com

03

**SHANNON VONDRA** (MSW) lives in Bennington, Nebraska, with

her husband and three children. She has worked at the Department of Veterans Affairs for the past seven years. Vondra is currently a social work case manager working with returning combat veterans.

04

**DAVID ANDERSON** (BA) is a teacher with Omaha Public Schools.

Anderson writes: "This is the job I wanted since I started my music education courses."

05

**ANGELA EIKENBERRY** (PH.D.) became a full-time professor in the UNO School of Public Administration in fall 2015. Eikenberry also received the University of Nebraska at Omaha Award for Distinguished Research or Creative

Activity in spring 2016.

aeikenberry@unomaha.edu

06

**HEATHER HOLMES** (BS) joined the AIM team as director of community

development. She is thrilled to be a participant in attracting and recruiting tech talent in Omaha.

msheatherholmes@gmail.com

08

**NICK GERMAN** (BSBA) left a retail job at Sports Authority to become



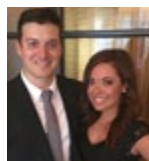
a buyer at the Dish corporate office in Englewood, Colorado. nick.james.german@gmail.com

**AMBER NORTHUP** (BS) is a kindergarten teacher at Engleman Elementary. She lives in Grand Island, Nebraska, with her husband, Nick, their 21-month-old daughter Ellie and their dog Claxton.

aahorky4@hotmail.com

09

**ELSA COTTO** (BS) has worked in human resources and corporate recruiting for Kiewit, Mutual of Omaha, Valmont and CSG International for the past five



years. Cotto recently relocated from Nebraska to New York City as a talent acquisition specialist for the YMCA of Greater New York.

**KRYSTAL MILLER** (BS) graduated from Kansas State in 2013 with a veterinarian degree. She works in Belton, Missouri, as an associate veterinarian. Miller recently gave birth to her first child, Easton, in June. Miller writes: "Omaha will always be my home away from home. Go Mavericks!"

10

**RYAN RISKOWSKI** (BS) completed his Ph. D. in molecular biophysics at

Florida State University after graduating from UNO. Riskowski recently accepted a postdoctoral appointment at Colorado State University. Riskowski writes: "I hope to someday be able to bring my experience and skills back into UNO, where I first was given the opportunity and ability to undertake my chosen career path."

12

**MATT COAN** (BS) is a geologist at a global engineering and consulting firm, AECOM. AECOM was ranked No. 1 Engineering News Records for top 500



design firms and environmental firms for 2016. Coan works on federal environmental remediation projects around the country.

He also is president of the Habitat for Humanity-Omaha, a young professional group. Coan writes: "I'm proud to be a UNO alum because of innovative ideas such as the CEC at UNO."

matt.coan@aecom.com

**JOHN DEFOREST HASKELL**

(BA) has worked in the marketing industry for the past three years. Haskell did marketing for the Asthma and Allergy Center in Bellevue, Nebraska, for nearly two years. Haskell now works at Redstone Advertising in Omaha as an account executive and a media buyer.

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**SHERYL CUMMINGS** (BS) has received several promotions, led and

spear-headed IT projects and gained experience in the IT field since graduating. Cummings writes: "UNO is one of the best colleges, and the education really does pay off!"





## FUTURE ALUMS

Since 1991, the UNO Alumni Association has given more than 2,000 free shirts and bibs to the children and grandchildren of UNO graduates! Get YOUR child a new O baby! shirt today! Submit a birth announcement within 1 year of birth by completing the form at [www.unoalumni.org/futurealums](http://www.unoalumni.org/futurealums)

**MAVERICK JAMES GARDNER**, son of Michael Ives and **Abigail ('12) Gardner** of Council Bluffs, Iowa

**CECILIA KELLY PEASE**, daughter of **Karen (Andreasen, '09)** and **Andrew ('09) Pease** of Lincoln, Nebraska

**RYLEN JOSEPH BRANDON**, son of Lisa and **Mike ('02) Brandon** of Bellevue, Nebraska, and grandson of **Herman Weber ('71)** of Nebraska City, Nebraska

**YUGESHAN SUTHAKARAN**, son of Bhairavi and **Suthakaran Ratnasingam ('15)** of Bowling Green, Ohio

**ADDELYN JASMIE CHANG**, daughter of Jennifer and **Jack ('04) Chang** of Bellevue, Nebraska

**REAGAN MAE TALAMANTES**, granddaughter of **Kimberly Talamantes ('10)** of Omaha

**CHARLES WESTON ROUNSBORG**, son of Benjamin and **Felicia (Synowicki, '10) Rounsborg** of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and grandson of John Synowicki ('60) of Omaha.

**RORY JAMES DAVIS**, son of **Alexa (Porter, '09)** and **Jared ('09) Davis** of Bellevue, Neb., and grandson of **Laura ('78)** and **Patrick ('80) Porter** of Columbus, Nebraska

**PHINEAS JUDE HUBER**, son of Nick and **Jessica (Laughlin, '12) Huber** of Denton, Texas

**KYLER JACKSON AND BRAYDEN LEE BOUNDS**, sons of **Rebecca (Puett, '06)** and **Kennith ('07) Bounds** of Cape Coral, Florida

**CARTER JAMES MCNAMARA**, son of Courtney and **Kyle McNamara ('13)** of Omaha

**CHARLIE J. LASKOWSKY**, son of **Dan Laskowsky ('08)** and **Jessica Watts** of Omaha

**ISABELLE KATHLEEN MIRANDA CARRETO**, daughter of Silvestre and **Abbi (McLaren, '09) Miranda Carreto** of Omaha.

**MAXIMILIAN JAMES SCHNEIDER**, son of Todd and **Susanna ('02) Schneider** of Omaha.

**PATRICK LIEWYN WOOD**, son of Matt and **Mandy (Wu, '08) Wood** of Omaha.

**JAMES JOSEPH NOVOTNY**, son of **Tanya (Massey, '14)** and **Joseph Novotny** of Omaha.

**CALVIN KARTER STANGE**, son of Jessica and **Jordan ('16) Stange** of Omaha.

**ELI MADDOX SALTZGABER**, son of Lily and **Nathan ('15) Saltzgaber** of Bellevue, Nebraska.

**LYDIA MARIE MEYER**, daughter of **Nicole (Hernandez, '08)** and **Phillip ('12) Meyer** of Omaha and granddaughter of **Ricardo Hernandez, ('98)** of Omaha.

**LUCAS COY LOWDER**, son of Mollie and **Adam ('14) Lowder** of Omaha and grandson of **Pete Lowder ('94)** of Gretna, Neb.

**ARTHUR JAMES ARMES AND ROBERT JOEL ARMES JR.**, sons of Robert and **Kristine (Cimino, '09, '14) Armes** of Omaha.

**ELLIOTT DOUGLAS HANSHAW**, son of Alisha and **Josh ('14) Hanshaw** of Lincoln, Nebraska

**LANDY SOFIA SANDQUIST**, daughter of Teresa and **Johnny ('09) Sandquist** of Omaha

**NOAH DANIEL JOHNSEN**, son of **Mandy (Zittritsch, '11)** and **Nathan ('11) Johnsen** of Omaha

**ANDERSON HENRY MORITZ**, son of Lisa and **Bruce ('04) Moritz** of Omaha

**HAZEL ROSE AND HENRY ANDREW BEHNE**, twin daughter and son of Crystal and **Andrew ('07) Behne** of Papillion, Nebraska

**WARREN ALLAN-DAVID ASHBY**, son of Samantha and **David ('14) Ashby** of Papillion and grandson of **Allan Hull ('80)** of Papillion.

**ZOIEY MAI LEMCKE**, daughter of Kyle and **Eryn (Mertins, '12) Lemcke** of Fremont, Nebraska

**PHILIP LEE FIELDS III**, son of Flip and **Philip ('12) Fields** of Omaha

**ADAM AARON KOZIOL**, son of **Megan (Parks, '11)** and **Josh ('09) Koziol** of Omaha and grandson of **Rela Parks ('77)** of Omaha.

**EDISON ROBERT GALDE**, son of Sarah and **Michael ('13) Galde** of Omaha.

**EVELYN ANNE SHEELEY**, daughter of Wesley and **Elizabeth (Belew, '08) Sheeley** of Omaha.

**LOGAN LEE HOFFMAN**, son of Michele and **Eric ('08) Hoffman** of Elkhorn, Nebraska.

**RUBY SOFIA BOSCHULT**, granddaughter of **Steven Thorson ('74)** of Omaha.

**LOLA SUE FREY**, daughter of Thad and **Marcy (Lodes, '10) Frey** of Hooper, Nebraska, and granddaughter of **Marvin Lodes ('71, '75, '80)** of Omaha.

**HENRY JAMES AND ALICE MAE WILSON**, son and daughter of Jennifer and **Ryan ('15) Wilson** of Omaha

**EVERETT JACK STOLL**, son of **Alexandra (Anderson, '14)** and **Jeremy ('14) Stoll** of Omaha

**THEODORE WILLIAM RAYMENT**, son of **Jessica (Simons, '07)** and **Derek ('10) Rayment** of Bellevue, Nebraska

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**AMANDA RYAN** (BA) continued to be a Maverick after graduation by entering a master's program. Ryan is now working within her field of study and running for Omaha Public School's board of education. Ryan writes: "Thank you, UNO, for being the place where I discovered my passions for learning, community service and social justice." Amanda.ryan.09@gmail.com

**14 SCOTT HAYS STROM** (BGS) accepted a Pathways internship with the Lincoln National Forest in Alamogordo, New Mexico, as an archaeologist. skhays@nmsu.edu

**ANGELA RITCHEY** (MA) was promoted to implant and instrument coordinator at Nebraska Medicine and has accepted an adjunct position at Iowa Western Community College teaching English. aritchey@unomaha.edu



**TAMI BURKE** (MS) has expanded her counseling service to include matchmaking and relationship coaching. Her

business is geared toward professionals and busy individuals looking for a lasting relationship. Find more information at mywingman.us. ami@guardiancounseling.com

**ANDREW PETERS** (MA) is a research and development scientist at IQ Formulations in Florida. abpetersjr@gmail.com

**15 BETHANY STEADMAN** (BGS) moved to Anchorage, Alaska, earlier this year to work for Delta Airlines and was to get married in September.

**MAEGEN PRUITT** (BS) is a graduate assistant and dance team coach at Midland University. Pruitt's dance experience on the UNO dance team prepared her for her position, she said. In May Pruitt will graduate with a master's of education in adult and organizational learning. Pruitt writes: "I wouldn't be where I am today without UNO!"



**RICHARD LARSON** (BA) recently accepted a position with University Communications at UNO. Larson writes: "I

look forward to crafting and delivering exciting news about what it means to be a Maverick!"

**MICHELLE LYLES** (MS) has participated in several local poetry readings since graduating with her master's in writing. She is also working on a poetry collection to submit for publication. mlplyles@cox.net

**GREG KNIGHT** (MS) managed the successful campaign to pass an \$80 million school bond for Westside Community Schools in Omaha. Knight also served hundreds of young men and women at the Omaha Outward Bound School and North Star Foundation in North Omaha. Knight is currently working at a political consulting firm in Seattle.



**VICTORIA LLOORT** (MS) is a candidate for La Quinta City Council in California.

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**CALEB BYERS** (BA) has a website (wearenotpowerless.com) that is dedicated to providing education and advocacy for survivors of sexual assault.



Opportunities include contributing to the International Summit to End Sexual Assault, a benefit for Byer's

cause in Tennessee, and gaining contacts with the sexual harassment and rape prevention coordinators at Offutt Air Force Base. He is at far left in the picture with his mother, Linda, and twin brother Lukas, a student in the Masters of Social Work program at UNO. calebbyers@unomaha.edu



**LEAH WHITNEY** (BA) started a nonprofit that offers affordable language learning to the community called World Speaks. Worlds Speaks offers classes and tutoring in the languages of American Sign Language, Hindi, French and Spanish. www.worldspeaksomaha.com lwhitney24@cox.net

**LACEY STORTMAN** (MSUS) lives in Oregon and works as a Hatfield resident fellow with Portland State University's Hatfield School of Government Center for Public Services. She recently married Nate Stortman, a currently enrolled UNO student. He proposed to her on a road trip throughout all 50 states.



**CHAD GIBBS** (MA) started Ph.D. studies in history as a George L. Mosse distinguished graduate fellow in Modern Jewish History

at the University of Wisconsin-Madison this fall.

**BROOKE CRISWELL** (BS) moved to Denver three days after graduation. A week later she began her job as a marketing and admissions director at Westlake Care Community, a skilled rehab facility. Criswell also started her master's program at the University of Colorado Denver. Criswell writes: "UNO and Omaha will always have my heart."

**LUKE HOFFMAN** (MPA) began a new job at the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. Hoffman writes: "Thanks in large part to the wonderful MPA program at UNO that provided me with an excellent education to get a new gig!" lahoffman@unomaha.edu

## SEND A CLASS NOTE

### WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING SINCE GRADUATING FROM UNO?

Send us an update online at [unoalumni.org/unoclassnote](http://unoalumni.org/unoclassnote)

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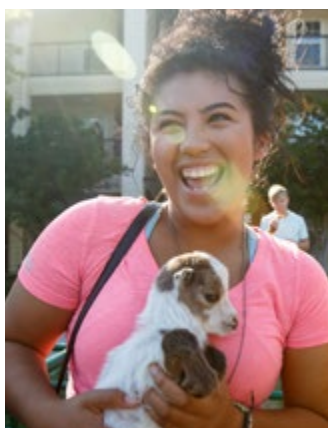





## SIGHTS & SOUNDS

### Food. Fun. Free.

No other time of year can match the buzz of Durango Days, the annual fall welcoming back to campus of UNO students. For one thing, there's free food for the entire UNO family. When UNO Alumni Association and University of Nebraska Foundation staff got to serving on Durango Days Day 1, that meant 1,800 Mavwiches (sloppy Joes). Students also enjoyed walking tacos, corn dogs and pizza. There was plenty of free fun, too — laser tag, rock climbing, video games, massages, a movie, dancing, dodgeball and more. Oh, yeah, classes started, too ...



### A Fair to Remember

Not all the fun to start the academic year was on the Dodge campus. Students on the Pacific campus that week were treated to the Scott County Fair, which featured a pie-eating contest, cow roping, bull riding and line dancing. You know, Maverick kind of fun.

### Village Sounds

UNO on Aug. 20 sponsored the Maha Music Festival, a nonprofit gig that brings together national, regional and local indie and rock artists for a day of food, community and music. Held at Aksarben Village adjacent to the UNO campus, the festival drew hundreds of UNO students.







## Connecting at the Convocation

The Maverick Maniacs were in full force early in the semester, helping welcome more than 1,200 students and parents to campus during the annual New Student Convocation at Baxter Arena Aug. 21.



## St. John Paul II Newman Center BBQ

The St. John Paul II Newman Center opened its doors to UNO students, getting started with a ribbon cutting and free BBQ hosted by the Omaha Archdiocese and Fellowship of Catholic University Students.



## Still Flying High at 69

What's a birthday without cake? UNO's AFROTC Detachment 470 & the AFROTC Alumni Chapter celebrated 69 years of the U.S. Air Force in September.



## From the Archives

How about a few Sights & Sounds from yesteryear, you ask? You got it! How about installation of the first parking stall in 1955, registration in 1965 and record buying at the bookstore in 1972.

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University of Nebraska at Omaha

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## A Thin Place

UNO Professor Patrick McNamara keeps tapping into the spiritual not that is India

# Journeys

