2023

CPACS Annual Report 2023

College of Public Affairs and Community Service, University of Nebraska at Omaha

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

"Innovate or die."

Change seems to accelerate, and with it the challenges for higher education. At CPACS we believe that we are nothing if we are not relevant. That means we have to keep up with the professions we serve. The best way to do this is to be regularly involved through internships, practica, applied research, and professional training programs. In short, we need to keep updating our curriculum, reaching out to new partners, and try to keep up with the changing world around us. "Innovate or die."

Sometimes I talk to other public affairs deans and they are amazed at how we do so much work with community groups, yet still keep up our high academic credentials. They see these as mutually exclusive choices. My answer is: that is why our academic credentials are so good – because we are relevant. It attracts the right kind of faculty, and in turn students who want to connect with their profession before they graduate. Then this helps the employers who hire our students and creates a virtuous cycle.

One of our recent innovations in our curriculum is new programs in leadership. You tell us that students need better training in leadership, and we are filling that gap. Certainly, we need more people willing to take up the mantle of leadership to make progress at all levels of society. In true CPACS style, we are doing it at the grass roots level, with new programs in urban leadership, applied leadership, collaborative leadership, and more to come.

We need to keep updating our curriculum, reach out to new partners, and try to keep up with the changing world around us. “Innovate or die.”

John Bartle
Dean of College of Public Affairs and Community Service
CPACS - A YEAR IN REVIEW

The UNO College of Public Affairs and Community Service (CPACS) proudly commemorated its 50th Anniversary, marking five decades of addressing community problems, educating students, and actively engaging with the Omaha community. Throughout the year-long celebration, hundreds of CPACS alumni returned to campus, making the 50th Anniversary a resounding success.

CPACS applies UNO’s strategic goals to place students at the center of the educational enterprise, achieve academic excellence, and actively engage with the community. Over the years, the college experienced significant growth, achieving the highest enrollment in its history. CPACS is renowned as a nationally recognized institution, with several of its programs ranking among the top 25 in the nation. The CPACS 50th Anniversary festivities kicked off with a series of events that celebrated the rich history and significant contributions of the College. Each unit within CPACS held its own unique celebration, highlighting their diverse areas of expertise and the impact they had on their respective fields. Alumni and guests were treated to a variety of events, including the CPACS Alumni Awards Event, where outstanding alumni were honored for their remarkable achievements. The celebration culminated with a thrilling Men’s Basketball game against Creighton at Baxter Arena, followed by a joyous reception at O’Leary’s Dugout in Aksarben Village, providing a perfect opportunity for alumni to reconnect and reminisce about their time at CPACS. Throughout the year, CPACS hosted an array of unspecific events. The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice held an Awards Luncheon, recognizing the accomplishments of faculty, staff, and students. The Aviation Institute organized the prestigious Durham Lecture and Honors Convocation, honoring exceptional students in the field. The William Brennan Institute of Labor Studies hosted the Nebraska Workers Conference, fostering discussions on labor-related issues. The Grace Abbott School of Social Work hosted a delightful Wine and Cheese event, allowing alumni, faculty, and students to come together and celebrate the impact of social work. Other unspecific events included the Chuck Powell Memorial Lecture Series by the Department of Gerontology, featuring renowned speaker Dr. Kenneth Rockwood. The School of Public Administration held an Alumni Event, providing a platform for former students to celebrate their accomplishments. The Goodrich Scholarship Program organized an engaging Alumni Weekend, filled with networking opportunities and panel discussions. Lastly, the Juvenile Justice Institute celebrated its 50th anniversary, paying tribute to those instrumental in its creation. As the CPACS 50th Anniversary came to a close, the college reflected on its remarkable accomplishments and the positive impact it had on the Omaha community and beyond. The celebrations served as a testament to the exceptional legacy of CPACS, showcasing its dedication to empowering students, pursuing academic excellence, and actively engaging with communities to address complex social problems. Looking toward the future, CPACS remains committed to its core mission, striving to create an equitable and just society through our students and faculty. As it enters the next chapter, CPACS will continue to build upon its rich history, leveraging its expertise, and making a difference in communities in Nebraska and around the world. The 50th Anniversary celebrations will be remembered as a milestone that highlighted our remarkable achievements and our ongoing commitment to fostering positive change.

On March 9, 2023, the College of Public Affairs and Community Service gathered with UNO Chancellor Joanne Li to celebrate outstanding alumni who have made significant contributions to public service. These remarkable individuals embody the values of integrity, stewardship, volunteerism, leadership, and a commitment to social justice and human dignity. Their achievements are a testament to their profession, their families, and our college.

- Ertha Jean Johnson, President/CEO of Risk Mitigation Worldwide, (Goodrich Scholarship Program)
- Jenna L. Johnson, Retired Counsel, Exxon Mobil Corporation, (Goodrich Scholarship Program)
- Jenna White, Care Manager, Aging Partners, (Gerontology)
- Dr. Lucille Woodard, Physician Lead, Medically Home Group, (Division of Continuing Studies)
- Wes Blake, City Administrator, City of Waynetown, IN (School of Public Administration)
- Alexs Bromley, Executive Director, One Omaha, (Urban Studies)
- Megan Cruickshank, Associate Warden, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, (School of Public Administration)
- Amanda Fox, Emergency Management Specialist, Texas A&M (Emergency Management)
- Dr. Lyn Holley, Dr. Chuck Powell Professor, UNO Department of Gerontology, (School of Public Administration)
- Hon. Susan Rancz, United States Magistrate Judge for the District of Nebraska, (School of Criminology and Criminal Justice)
- James Stobough, Corporate Rift, Kuwait Corporation, (Aviation Institute)
- Chelsea Hunter, Integrated Behavioral Health Specialist, CHI Health (Grace Abbott School of Social Work)
- Brad Ashford (posthumous), former U.S. Congressman, and recipient of the Hubert Luke Distinguished Service Award, accepted by Ann Ferlic Ashford.

2023 ALUMNI AWARDS

Ertha Jean Johnson
Lomie L. Johnson
Jenna White
Dr. Lucille Woodard
Wes Blake
Alexs Bromley
Megan Cruickshank
Amanda Fox
Dr. Lyn Holley
Hon. Susan Rancz
James Stobough
Chelsea Hunter
AVIATION INSTITUTE

UNO's Aviation Institute's achievements in education, research, community engagement, and partnerships have positioned it as a leader in the aviation and transportation industry. With unwavering dedication, the Institute continues to empower students, drive innovation, and shape the future of aviation. As we look ahead, we anticipate even greater success and contributions from the Institute, as it soars towards a brighter future.

The Aviation Institute had a remarkable year, marked by significant achievements in education, research, community engagement, and integrity. Let's explore the Institute's highlights that shaped the aviation and transportation industry.

Education and Faculty Achievements:
The Aviation Institute expanded its educational offerings with a new Boeing 737-800 NG Flight Training Device. Distinguished faculty member Becky Lutte testified before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and received the 2023 UNO Outstanding Innovation in Teaching with Technology Award, leaving behind a notable legacy as she departs UNO.

Research and Industry Impact:
Thaddeus Johnson secured a fellowship with the US Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration, leading workforce development initiatives. The Institute's implementation of an AI Safety Reporting System improved aviation safety practices. These advancements showcased the Institute's dedication to pioneering research.

Community Engagement and Partnerships:
The Institute partnered with Aviate, United Airlines' pilot career development program, offering students a direct path to the United Flight Deck. Notable student achievements, such as Precious Apelom's recognition by the FAA Internal Publication, demonstrated the Institute's commitment to fostering success.

Noteworthy Events:
The Institute hosted the prestigious 2023 Durham Distinguished Lecture Series, featuring industry experts. The UNO Flight Team's participation in the 2023 National SAFECON showcased their skills and secured a commendable seventh-place finish.

BECKY LUTTE RETIRES

Becky Lutte, an esteemed Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Aviation Institute, has announced her retirement, leaving behind a remarkable legacy. With an impressive academic background that includes degrees in Professional Aeronautics, MPA with an Aviation Minor, and a Ph.D. in Public Administration with a specialization in Aviation, Lutte has been a valuable asset to the industry. Her extensive experience as a former regional airline pilot and her commercial pilot ratings have added depth and practical knowledge to her teachings.

Lutte's contributions extended beyond the classroom and into the aviation community. She is a dedicated aircraft owner of a single-engine RV-7 and remains actively involved in general aviation. Her research interests have focused on crucial areas such as aviation safety policy, pilot supply, and the outreach, recruitment, and retention of women in aviation. Lutte has served on the Women in Aviation Advisory Board (WitAAB) since 2010, where she provided recommendations and strategies to promote gender diversity in the aviation industry to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Congress.

During her tenure at UNO, Lutte passionately advocated for expanding diversity in aviation education. She worked diligently to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds felt empowered and confident in pursuing careers in aviation. Lutte's commitment to research, advocacy, and mentorship has made a significant impact in the field, paving the way for more inclusive and representative opportunities in aviation.

As Becky Lutte bids farewell to her role as an associate professor, her dedication and contributions to the Aviation Institute and the broader aviation community will be greatly missed. Her legacy as a researcher, advocate, and mentor will continue to inspire future generations of aviators, particularly women and underrepresented communities, to pursue their dreams in the skies.
The Grace Abbott School of Social Work (GASSW) has concluded another extraordinary year of fulfilling its mission to educate highly qualified social workers, advance knowledge through research, engage with diverse communities, and promote social justice.

Commitment to Social Work Values:
Dr. Sandy Cook-Fong, a dedicated faculty member, exemplified social work values by opening her home to a Ukrainian refugee family, providing support and helping them welcome their new baby into the world. Her actions truly embody the spirit of compassion and service that GASSW instills in its students.

Farewell to Dr. Nancy Kelley:
After 18 years of dedicated service to UNO and GASSW, Dr. Nancy Kelley bid farewell. Her invaluable contributions to social work education and the Omaha community were recognized through prestigious awards such as the David Scott Diamond Professor of Public Affairs and Community Service. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Kelley for her outstanding commitment.

Grants and Research:
GASSW achieved significant milestones in securing grants and advancing research. Social Work received $600,000 in funding from the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska (BHECN), with $500,000 allocated for practicum stipends and an additional $100,000 for supervision training. Dr. Liorr Heerten-Rodriguez's exceptional work was acknowledged with a $75,000 IDEA Research Grant, furthering the school's research impact.

Student Achievements and Engagements:
GASSW students actively participated in Social Work Day at the UN in New York City, gaining invaluable insights and expanding their horizons. Furthermore, 170 BSSW and MSW students engaged in practicum experiences within the community during the summer and fall, putting their knowledge into practice and making a positive impact.

Recognizing Alumini and Training Initiatives:
Alumni achievements were celebrated, with Michoela Mastny, a BSSW and MSW graduate, receiving the CPACS Diversity Alumni Achievement Award. The Grace Abbott Training and Supervision Academy, in collaboration with community partners, provided training to over 3,000 individuals, awarding 7,493 Continuing Education Units (CEUs). This highlights our commitment to ongoing professional development and to build a skilled workforce.

Leadership Transition:
In June 2023, Dr. Susan Reay assumed the role of Director School. Her expertise and visionary leadership will undoubtedly guide GASSW towards continued success and excellence. We express our gratitude to Dr. Von Nebbitt for laying a strong foundation for future success as we move forward.

The accomplishments of faculty, students, and alumni, along with the dedication of leaders, have reinforced GASSW’s reputation as a trailblazer in the field. As we reflect on the past year, we anticipate even greater contributions and positive change in the pursuit of creating a socially just society for all.
GOODRICH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Since its establishment in 1972, the Goodrich Scholarship Program has continued to empower and support students in pursuing a first-class education at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO). Over the past year, the program has once again demonstrated its commitment to excellence, enabling students to thrive academically and develop as future leaders in their respective fields. On September 23, 2022, Goodrich celebrated its 50th anniversary in the UNO Sapp Fieldhouse, hosting almost 700 people that included current and emeritus faculty/staff, campus and community leaders, and current and past students, including members from the very first class in 1972.

Student Highlights:
One of the key indicators of the program’s success is the impressive six-year graduation rate achieved by the 2017 cohort, which stands at an impressive 87%. This speaks to the program’s ability to provide students with the necessary resources and support to complete their education successfully.

Additionally, the freshman/sophomore retention rate remained exceptionally high at 97%. This indicates that Goodrich scholars not only excel academically but also feel a strong sense of belonging and engagement within the UNO community.

The Goodrich Scholarship Program takes pride in its students’ achievements, and several individuals were recognized for their outstanding contributions during the year. Vanessa Chavez’s academic success was rewarded with the prestigious Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Student Leadership, highlighting her exceptional leadership skills and dedication to making a positive impact.

Vanessa Chavez’s exemplary achievements were further acknowledged as she also received the Dean’s Award for the College of Education, Health, and Human Services (CEHH). This recognition affirms her outstanding academic performance and her commitment to the college’s mission.

Sarah Rek Y Vasquez, a graduate student in the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders, was honored with the Outstanding Graduate Student Award (OGSA). This recognition reflects her commitment to scholarship and research in her field of study.

Christine Robinson, an accomplished student, received the Dean’s Award for the College of Communication, Fine Arts, and Media (CFAM). Additionally, she was recognized with the Undergraduate Major Award for Music Education in the School of Music, highlighting her exceptional talent and dedication in her chosen field.

Faculty Highlights:
The Goodrich Scholarship Program takes pride not only in its students’ accomplishments but also in the contributions of its dedicated faculty members. Over the past year, the program’s faculty has been highly active in various academic and community engagements.

The faculty collectively published nine peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, or magazine publications, demonstrating their commitment to advancing knowledge in their respective fields. Furthermore, one faculty member co-authored a book that contributed to scholarly discourse.

In addition to their scholarly pursuits, the faculty members delivered eight peer-reviewed presentations at national or regional academic conferences, showcasing their expertise and further enhancing the program’s reputation.

Beyond academia, the faculty members’ commitment to community engagement is evident, as they served on at least 12 community boards or committees. This involvement highlights their dedication to making a positive impact beyond the university campus, fostering connections between academia and the wider community.

The Goodrich Scholarship Program, once again, celebrates a year of remarkable achievements and the continuous success of its students and faculty. As the program moves forward, it remains steadfast in its mission to provide transformative educational opportunities and shape the future leaders who will carry the Goodrich legacy, ensuring that “once a Goodricher, always a Goodricher.”
The Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) had a remarkable year, producing and disseminating high-quality public scholarship on key issues impacting Nebraskans. Here are the highlights:

**Public Presentations and Reports:**
- 37 Public Presentations: Sharing research findings and policy recommendations.
- Review of Demographics, Workforce, and Housing in Omaha Neighborhoods: Shedding light on Omaha’s communities.
- Infographic on Poverty in Nebraska: Raising awareness through visual representation.
- Simplified Cost-Benefit Analysis of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program: Evaluating program impact for the state.

**Data for Policy and Decision Makers:**
- County and Legislative Districts Dashboard: Crucial data insights for policymakers.
- Data and Research Series for Community Impact: Over 150 participants engaged in this professional development series.
- Policy Briefs for Nebraska State Legislature: Evidence-based insights for policymaking.

**Community and Economic Development:**
- Rural Transit Initiative: Enhancing transportation access in rural areas statewide.
- Community Action Partnership Index: Assessing community action and support programs.
- Evaluation of Technology Park Program: Examining technology initiatives’ effectiveness.
- Rural Youth Survey: Capturing insights into rural youth experiences.

Bill Bivin, statewide mobility manager, presented about many of the transit mobility management projects across the state at the Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers (NATP) Legislative Event April 4, 2023. As a board member for NATP he also attended the signing of the proclamation where Governor Pillen declared April 9-15, 2023, as Nebraska Public Transit Week.

CPAR Director Josie Gatti Schafer spoke at University of Nebraska at Omaha’s December 2, 2022, strategic planning forum on the importance of our contributions to workforce development in Nebraska.

**Workforce Access and Equity:**
- Inclusive Entrepreneurship: Promoting inclusive economic growth in Nebraska.
- Women and the Nebraska Economy: Examining women’s contributions to the state’s economy.
- Nebraska Tech Collaborative Dashboard: Insights into the tech industry and collaboration opportunities.

Morgan Vogel, research associate, presented to faculty, staff, and students in the UNK Chemistry Department March 6, 2023, for their inaugural DEAI Seminar about challenges faced by Nebraska’s women in STEM.

CPAR remains committed to producing valuable public scholarship and facilitating evidence-based decision-making. Visit cpar.unomaha.edu to access data resources and learn more about CPAR’s work. We extend our gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and the community for their support. Together, we strive for a better future for all Nebraskans.
GERONTOLOGY

The past year has been busy for the Gerontology program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. With a focus on aging research, community engagement, and academic excellence, the program and its faculty have achieved significant milestones. Here we highlight the program's accomplishments, including faculty recognition, grants received, community presentations, and notable publications.

Faculty Recognition and Fellows:
The Gerontology program takes great pride in the recognition of three of its faculty members as Gerontological Society of America Fellows. This year, the addition of Dr. Chris Kelly alongside Dr. Julie Boron and Dr. Lyn Holley reinforces their exceptional contributions to the field of gerontology. Their expertise and unwavering dedication have undeniably elevated the program's standing and influence, solidifying its reputation as a leader in the field.

Community Presentations and High School Visits:
The Gerontology faculty and staff have actively engaged with the community, delivering over 40 presentations throughout the year. Dr. Julie Masters, in particular, conducted 15 presentations on topics such as technology and aging, statistics and services in long-term care, and ageism. These efforts demonstrate the program's commitment to knowledge dissemination and community outreach.

Furthermore, UNO and UNL advisors, including Bede Bolin, Heather Ford, and Mark Kazar, visited more than 20 high schools to raise awareness about the field of gerontology and its potential career paths. This proactive approach in reaching out to high school students promotes interest and encourages the next generation to pursue gerontology-related careers.

Live and Learn Program:
Under the guidance of Dr. Julie Masters, the Live and Learn radio program within the Gerontology program facilitated insightful interviews with various individuals. Noteworthy interviews included Renee Pickrell and Michelle Carlson on gerontology practicums, Dr. Beth Daton on Holocaust and World War II survivors, and Dr. Tom Osborne on the Teammates Mentoring Program. These interviews served to provide valuable perspectives and promote understanding within the field of gerontology.

Faculty Publications:
The faculty members of UNO’s Gerontology program have made notable contributions through their recent publications:

- “The long arm of childhood: Does it vary according to health care system quality?”
- “Investigating the neural bases of social comparison in aging.”
- “Amygdala but not hippocampal damage associated with smaller social network size.”
- “A Narrative Review of Loneliness and Brain Health in Older Adults: Implications of COVID-19.”
- “Characteristics of dementia family caregivers who use paid professional in-home respite care.”
- “A profile of the direct care workforce in home and community-based services.”
- “Intergenerational conversations on death and dying during the COVID-19 pandemic: A pedagogical approach.”
- “Adult Lifespan Development and Optimal Mental Health.”
- “Multidimensional environmental factors and sleep health for aging adults: A focused narrative review.”

These publications demonstrate the faculty's diverse research interests and their contributions to the field of gerontology. To access these publications go to...
DIVISION OF CONTINUING STUDIES

Serving the diverse, multigenerational learners who seek the promise of higher education continues to be the guiding principle of the Division of Continuing Studies (DCS). Emphasizing individualized support, cross-campus collaboration, and a flexible Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies (BMS) has provided access and opportunity for thousands of learners. Throughout the year, DCS has achieved numerous accolades and milestones, highlighting the exceptional dedication and commitment of its team. These accomplishments include:

National Awards:
DCS has garnered national recognition for its commitment to excellence in adult education. The division received the prestigious AAACE Malcolm Knowles Outstanding Program Leadership award, showcasing DCS’s exemplary leadership in program development and serving as a model for adult education institutions across the country. Additionally, Kata Sup Rezac was honored with the NACADA Academic Advising Administrator Certificate of Merit, underscoring the division’s dedication to providing exceptional academic advising. These accolades affirm our commitment to delivering high-quality education and personalized support. Acknowledging DCS’s commitment to serving military personnel and veterans, the division was again recognized as one of the top 20 Military Testing Centers on military installations worldwide, further solidifying its dedication to serving those who have served our country.

Dedicated Advisors:
We are proud of the outstanding achievements of our dedicated, professional academic advisors. Kate Barnard was honored as the UNO Advisor of the Month for her exceptional dedication and commitment to guiding and supporting DCS students. A rising star, Kate was also selected for the NACADA Region 6 Advising Mentoring program (RAMP). Kata Sup Rezac was awarded the UNO Above and Beyond Award, celebrating her unwavering commitment to providing exemplary service. Furthermore, Jessica Swisher’s remarkable dedication to helping students navigate their educational paths earned her the prestigious UNO Advisor of the Year award. These accolades reflect the exceptional caliber of advisors within DCS.

Service Expansion:
Building upon its rich history, DCS has expanded its service offerings with the BMS Student Resource Hub, which links learners to campus and community resources as well as access to 24/7 online tutoring providing an even broader range of educational support for our learners. This expansion has ensured that DCS remains at the forefront of meeting the evolving needs of our diverse student population.

Pearson VUE Exams Available:
Through a partnership with Pearson VUE, DCS has made a significant stride in expanding exam options for service members at Offutt AFB. This collaboration enables students to access a wider array of certification exams, further enhancing their career prospects.

The Division of Continuing Studies continues to be a beacon of support, providing high-quality academic programs and unwavering commitment to the success of its students. Looking ahead, DCS will continue to innovate and adapt to the evolving educational landscape, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of adult education and meets the needs of its diverse and dynamic student body.
The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (SCCJ) has had another successful year, solidifying our position as a nationally recognized leader in criminal justice research and education. With a focus on improving the quality of life locally and nationally, we have made significant strides in building knowledge, effective policy, and efficient practice in areas including Violence Intervention and Policing, Victimology, and Corrections. Here is an overview of the achievements and initiatives undertaken by SCCJ in the past year.

**Fast Track Program: Accelerating Academic Careers**
SCCJ introduces the Fast Track Program, an initiative aimed at advancing motivated students’ academic careers. This program allows undergraduate students to take up to nine credit hours of graduate-level courses while completing their bachelor’s degree. Eligible graduate courses completed through the Fast Track Program count towards both a bachelor’s degree and a Master of Arts (M.A.) or Master of Science (M.S.) degree within the School. This approach enables students to complete their degrees in an accelerated timeframe, gaining a competitive edge in the field.

**Collaboration with the American Jail Association (AJA)**
SCCJ joined forces with the American Jail Association (AJA) to offer the Jail Executive Institute (JEI). This initiative serves as a comprehensive leadership training program, equipping professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in correctional institutions. SCCJ’s collaboration with the AJA promotes excellence and innovation in corrections.

**Host of the Nebraska Victim Assistance Academy**
SCCJ hosts the Nebraska Victim Assistance Academy, providing training for victim services professionals. This academy equips professionals with the necessary tools to provide comprehensive and compassionate support to victims of crime. By spearheading this academy, SCCJ plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of victim assistance and strengthening the criminal justice system’s response to victims’ needs.

**Leadership and Scholarly Achievements**
SCCJ’s faculty and students have made significant contributions to the field of criminology and criminal justice through research and academic pursuits. Dr. Anne Hobbs, Director of the Juvenile Justice Institute (JJI) and Ana Cienfuegos Silvera, an MA student at JJI, led a colloquium at the University of San Francisco Law School. Titled “Variations in Victim Presence in Restorative Youth Conferencing,” this colloquium explored the role of victims in restorative justice practices, shedding light on innovative approaches to youth conferencing.

Emily Meinert, a graduate student, received the 2023 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) Victimology Section’s Outstanding Graduate Student award. This recognition highlights her dedication and contributions to victimology, affirming SCCJ’s commitment to nurturing and recognizing talent within its student body.

**Carolin Branscum, a promising researcher, received the 2023 National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Research Assistantship. This award acknowledges her research capabilities and the impact her work on advancing knowledge and practices in criminal justice.**

**As we reflect on our accomplishments of the past year, we remain committed to pushing boundaries and driving positive change in the criminal justice field. With nationally recognized programs, collaborative initiatives, and distinguished faculty and students, SCCJ is poised to continue its mission of improving the quality of life locally and across the nation through cutting-edge research, effective policy development, and efficient practice in criminology and criminal justice.**
In 2023, our school was again nationally recognized as a nationally ranked Public Affairs graduate school, breaking the top ten in the nation for the second year running for our Public Finance & Budgeting (5th) and Local Government Management (7th) programs. We offer a supportive environment including committed faculty and staff, helping students to meet their goals.

Social Equity Leadership Found at All Levels Within UNO’s SPA

Our school’s commitment to social equity is seen within all levels of our programming and is part of our consistently high national rankings among public affairs graduate schools. Here are just some of our recent social equity leadership recognitions from this past year:

- **Jodi Benenson**, Associate Professor, Chancellor’s Commission on the Status of Gender Equity Outstanding Achievement Award.
- **Felix Blanco**, 2023 PA Graduate, Outstanding CU Denver Assistant Professor, Featured at UNO’s Outstanding Graduate Student focusing on equity, identity, and representation.
- **Theodore Johnson, MPA**. Ph.D. Candidate. 2023 AFRA Minority Dissertation Fellowship Award Recipient & CPPSW Diversity Emerging Leader Award.

Showcasing (Just Some!) of Our Students:

The students of the UNO School of Public Administration have shown their exceptional talent and dedication throughout the year, earning prestigious accolades and contributing to their respective fields. Their accomplishments are a testament to their hard work and commitment to academic excellence. Here are some notable achievements by these outstanding individuals:

- **Ph.D. student Reyna Reyes-Nunez**, was awarded a NU Presidential Graduate Fellow award. **Felipe Blanco**, Ph.D. in Public Administration, May, 2023, recognized with a national Emerging Scholar Award, the UNO Helen Hanson Outstanding Graduate Student Award for the 2023 Student Honors Convocation, and was Student Marshal for UNO’s graduation in May.
- **Brenda Jensen**, MPA was chosen as the Student Marshal at the December 2022 ceremonies. Ph.D. students **Shawn Maxwell** and **Theodore Johnson** were named American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Fellows. Theodore also was awarded the Saint Ignatius National Air Grant Fellowship from the Federal Aviation Administration.
- **MFA student Michael Onokoski**, on the winning team 3 at a Forte Wildfire Simulation held recently at the University of Colorado Denver.
- **Emergency Management and Disaster Sciences** Undergrad student **Corin Lieb** won a $10,000 Dreamstarter grant from Indian Youth at their conference in Washington, D.C., for his project focusing on drone certification for tribal emergency work.
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments:
Our faculty and staff are active locally, nationally and internationally. Here are just some of our accomplishments during the 2022/23 school year:

Dean John Bartle: awarded the Aaron B. Wildavsky award from the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management (ABFM), & voted president-elect of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). 
Dr. Jodi Benenson: promoted to Associate Professor with tenure, awarded an upcoming Fulbright in Canada. 
Dr. Yu-Che Chen: was named to the Issacson Professorship.

Dr. Angie Eikenberry: was a featured professor by the Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration, and co-author of the most downloaded article last year in the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly last year. Dr. Jim Harrold: SPA Instructor and Student Services Coordinator, was awarded the 2022 CPACS Jerry and Patricia Deichert Staff Award. Dr. Nuri Heckler: was honored with the CPACS Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award for 2023. Dr. Trang Hoang: earned the 2023 International Research Society for Public Management Rosemary O’Leary award for her published article, and was elected to the Great Plains Government Financial Officers Association (GPGFOA) Board of Directors.

Dr. Victor Huang: was promoted to Associate Professor, and Dr. Jooho Lee: was promoted to Professor in addition to receiving an Award for Excellence in Leadership and Service, Section on Korean Public Administration. Dr. Craig Maher, school director, was granted a Distinguished Professorship, published a book (Understanding Municipal Fiscal Health), and he was also named Co-Editor-in-Chief of the new Public Finance Journal. Edouardo Zendejas: was promoted to Senior Lecturer.

WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL THIS YEAR!

Dr. Choi, Assistant Professor, EMDS; Minsoo Goo, M.S.Ed., Academic & Career Advisor II, EMDS; Logan Krejdl, M.A., EMDS Advisor; Jennifer Knight, Communications Specialist.

Professional Programs:
Our professional programs department, with Ellen Freeman-Wakefield as director, coordinates many associations - sharing our excellent public administration programming and education resources state-wide. This year some top accomplishments include: Hosting the GPGFOA conference on UNO’s campus seeing attendance growth for the government financial officers of the Great Plains area. Celebrating the first graduating class of our Certificate of Financial Management program. The Nebraska Clerks Institute & Academy was our largest ever. We saw more than 300 in attendance, had 47 new clerks, and the clerks earned 22 L8781 Education Hours. This past year, the NE Municipal Clerks Association won the Individual Association Award at the 2022 International Institute of Municipal Clerks’ Association. We are also expanding as we added the administration of projects for the Nebraska City/County Management Association.

Top: Our Ph.D. students and Dr. Chen celebrate Dr. Lee’s promotion. Bottom: Dr. Tara Kalar Bryan, center, was surprised by UNO’s shirts on Masaryk University faculty (including the dean) during a spring trip as a visiting scholar in the Czech Republic where she had recently spent the year on a Fulbright.

SPR Graduate Numbers
47 MPA awarded
10 Certificates earned
6 MSUS degrees awarded
4 Ph.D.s awarded

WILLIAM BRENNAN INSTITUTE FOR LABOR STUDIES

The William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies (WBILS) has had a transformative year, advancing its mission to promote and defend workplace democracy in today’s changing economy. Through education, outreach, and collaboration, the WBILS has made significant strides in advocating for organized labor and empowering workers. Here’s a summary of key achievements:

Education and Empowerment:
The WBILS firmly believes that all workers deserve a meaningful say in shaping their future. Through informative programs and training, the Institute has equipped union leaders and members with essential knowledge and skills. By prioritizing education, the WBILS recognizes the importance of continuous learning in a rapidly evolving economy.

Community Outreach:
Engaging the greater Nebraska community has been a primary focus for the WBILS. By explaining the purpose and significance of labor unions, the Institute has fostered a better understanding of their crucial role in humanizing the employment relationship. From teaching Labor History to trade union apprentices to collaborating on educational initiatives, the WBILS has actively educated Nebraskans about the value of organized labor.

Key Presentations and Collaborations:
The WBILS has delivered impactful presentations throughout the year. Noteworthy engagements include teaching Labor History to Plumbers’ Local 16 apprentices and providing leadership workshops for union leaders. These efforts have strengthened the labor movement by equipping leaders with the necessary tools to navigate a changing landscape.

Nebraska Works! Conference:
The WBILS successfully organized the annual Nebraska Works! Conference, which brought together various stakeholders, including union members, business leaders, elected officials, and community organizations. The conference centered around advancing humane immigration reform, featuring notable speakers who shared their insights on policy and its impact on workers.

“What Does Labor Want?” Podcast:
In August, the WBILS launched the “What Does Labor Want?” podcast, facilitating conversations with influential figures. Each month, the podcast addresses timely issues related to Nebraska wage earners, union members, and the labor movement. The podcast featured interviews with Congressman Don Bacon, union leaders, and other key figures.

Looking ahead, the WBILS remains committed to its core values, driving workplace democracy, promoting labor education, and engaging with the Nebraska community. With a steadfast dedication to workers’ rights, the Institute will continue to shape the future of labor, both locally and beyond.