



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA  
OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT

# ANNUAL REPORT

Together we bridge campus  
and community and drive  
transformative change for the  
public good.

2023-2024

[ENGAGE.UNOMAHA.EDU](https://engage.unomaha.edu)



UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Omaha



# ENGAGEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Community engagement is infused in each of UNO’s strategic pillars and stands alone as a priority—evidence of UNO’s commitment to its metropolitan mission. We realize the benefits of community engagement through partnerships, experiential learning opportunities, and creative activity and research.

The Office of Engagement (OE), established in October 2022, was created to expand this work by providing strategy and direction, and uplifting the work of our campus.

**We are thrilled to share our first official annual report.**

This report provides a high-level overview of the OE, who we are, and the impact of campus-wide community engagement.

Sincerely,

Julie Dierberger, Ph.D.  
Chief Engagement Officer  
Paul Sather Distinguished Director  
of the Service Learning Academy



## CONTENTS

- Campus Impact and Engagement Ecosystem ..... Page 4 and 5
- Educating All Learners ..... Page 6
- Research and Discovery ..... Page 7
- Community Engagement and Partnerships ..... Page 8
- Workforce and Economic Development ..... Page 9
- About the Office of Engagement ..... Page 10 and 11

**THANK YOU** to the campus units, departments, and colleges for contributing stories and impact data that made this report possible.



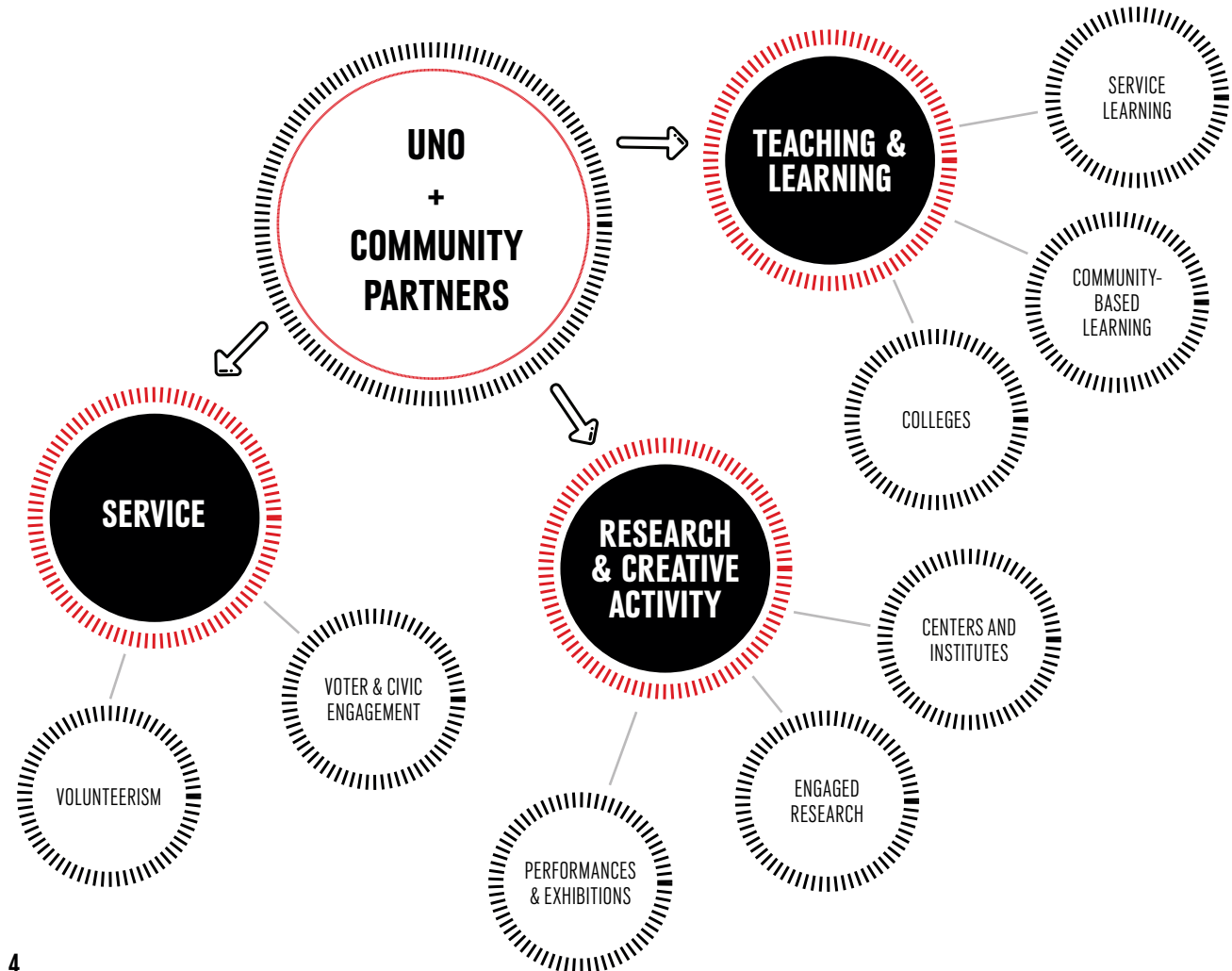
# CAMPUS IMPACT

The following metrics represent community engagement activities co-created with community partners for students inside and outside the classroom. These activities provide learning opportunities, skill building, and increase community capacity.

**THANK YOU** to the nonprofit organizations, government agencies, P-12 schools, and businesses for your collaboration.

## Our Engagement Ecosystem

UNO engages with the community through teaching, research, creative activity, and service. The visual below provides a high-level overview of UNO's community engagement ecosystem.



**433**  
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

*Nonprofit organizations, businesses, government agencies, and K-12 schools that partner with UNO. Partnerships benefit the community and university.*



**9,400+**  
STUDENTS

*UNO students engaging with the community in and outside of the classroom.*

**8,300 +** UNO students in service learning and community-based learning courses.

**25%** Increase of UNO student participation in academic community engagement experiences (Since 2019).

**1,100 +** UNO students engaged in co-curricular service activities.



**585**  
ENGAGED COURSES

*Courses with a service learning or community-based learning component.*



# EDUCATING ALL LEARNERS

As an urban university, UNO prioritizes all learners. Through access to UNO spaces, faculty, and programming (inside and outside the classroom) UNO supports opportunities to educate all learners, while providing unique learning experiences for students and people from different walks of life. **Here are a few examples of how UNO educates all learners through community engagement.**

# RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY

UNO innovates for the public good through community engaged research. UNO and the community come together to learn, understand, and discover new solutions that support teaching, research, learning, and the community. **Here are a few examples of how research and discovery come to life through community engagement.**

## FACULTY FELLOWS (6)

Faculty from each UNO college work with deans to identify college-specific strategies and priorities to increase service learning and community engagement efforts.

Information about the current faculty fellows and the fellowship process is available on our website at [sla.unomaha.edu](http://sla.unomaha.edu).

## REDLINING IN SERVICE LEARNING

Investing in disinvested, redlined spaces through service learning and community engagement has occurred through education, collaborative teaching, and building course connections.

**2,200 +**

Community members who toured the Undesign the Redline Exhibit on display in the CEC (Since 2022).

## A PLACE FOR ALL

The UNO Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (CEC) is a hub that provides office space and free meeting/event spaces for community organizations. Organizations use the building to collaborate with campus to support engaged teaching, learning, and research - educating all learners.

**38**

CEC BUILDING PARTNERS

*Organizations with offices in the CEC.*

**251**

SERVICE LEARNING COURSES

*Applying course content to community-identified opportunities.*

**1,100**

UNO STUDENTS

*Engaged in service learning courses with elementary, middle, and high school learners.*

**1,165**

P-12 STUDENTS

*Elementary, middle, and high school students engaged with UNO students in service learning courses.*

**334**

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING COURSES

*Engaging UNO students in curricular, hands-on learning experiences like internships, capstones, etc.*

## VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteer opportunities allow students to learn and grow with our community. UNO Volunteer and Civic Engagement Programs (VCE), athletics, student organizations, and campus learning communities facilitate co-curricular experiences that support and nurture all learners.

**1,096**

UNO STUDENTS

*Participated in volunteering opportunities facilitated by VCE, Community Engaged Scholars Transcript Designation, Athletics, TRIO, and Goodrich Scholarship Program.*

## AMERICORPS VISTAS

In 2023-24, UNO received a grant to access capacity-building support through AmeriCorps. The focus of the VISTAs is increasing the social mobility of at-promise students. The grant is a partnership between the OE and the Maverick Food Pantry (DASH).

## ENGAGED RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Engaging Experiences Enabling Learning Connections between Curriculum and Career: Making experiential learning clear by customizing an overarching understanding to the needs of both educators and external stakeholders. Maxwell, K., Morrison, L., & Thiele, L. *Experiential Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (2024).
- Engaged Learning in the Public Service Classroom. (In press). Gatti Schafer, J., & McDonald, B. Routledge.
- Community Engagement and Data as the Way Forward. Friend, M., & Dierberger, J. *Campus Compact 2024 Conference*.
- Measuring Service Learning Outcomes: Quantifying Impact to Social Mobility. Krueger, D., Dierberger, J. & Gatti Schafer, J. *Campus Compact 2024 Conference*.
- Greater Nebraska Youth Survey, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research, Nebraska Community Foundation (2023).
- Understanding Threats to Public Officials, UNO National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (2023).
- Housing Availability and Quality in Nebraska, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research, Nebraska Community Foundation (2023).
- Investing in students, community organizations, and building the next generation of philanthropists. Dierberger, J. *Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities 2023 Conference*.

## Community Engaged Research (defined).

Research that applies academic expertise and results to community. This type of research may be in partnership with community.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

### BEST PRACTICES EVALUATION

A UNO doctoral student in Educational Leadership, alongside a faculty advisor, reviewed and analyzed best practices for one of the *Learning For ALL (LFA)* general education development (GED) programs. The partnership resulted in the student's dissertation, including interviews and a final evaluation. The organization used the evaluation and research to support and advance the GED program.

**UNO Partner:** UNO Educational Leadership

**Community Partner:** Learning For ALL

**250 +**

*Community organizations involved in engaged research projects documented in UNO's Community Engagement Partnership Initiative (CEPI) since tool development.*

**22**

*UNO centers and institutes contributing to community engagement and engaged research through partnerships and expertise.*



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Community engagement at UNO is only possible with successful partnerships. UNO shares an appreciation for our community's knowledge, experiences, and assets. Bringing community and university expertise and goals together allows our campus and community to advance. **Here are a few examples that demonstrate partnerships in community engagement.**

Partnerships are at the core of community engagement and contribute to the success of all.

**433**

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Nonprofit organizations, businesses, governmental agencies, and K-12 schools that partner with UNO. Partnerships are mutually beneficial for the community and university (2023-24).

"Our UNO intern was eager to learn and be a part of every project. Her genuine enthusiasm made it easy to include her in new experiences and renewed our team's passion for our work. Because of this experience, we cannot wait to add another intern to our team."

Health Center Association of Nebraska (HCAN)

"We not only had UNO students but a business in the community join us. The UNO students were able to connect with the business and learn more about the field. One of the most underrated parts of volunteering is the connections. I am so glad the students were able to receive the career information during their volunteer experience."

Project Harmony

## PARTNERSHIPS AT A GLANCE

**169**

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS TIED TO SERVICE

Co-creating volunteer opportunities for UNO students.

**370** STUDENTS VOLUNTEERING IN SIGNATURE SERVICE DAYS AND EVENTS

**337** STUDENT ATHLETES VOLUNTEERING IN THE COMMUNITY

**47**

### K-12 SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Schools that play an active role in P-16 Initiative service learning course development and success.

**14** MIDDLE / ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

**24** HIGH SCHOOLS

**9** AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

P-16 Initiative courses include a UNO course (faculty/students) and one or more community partners including a Preschool-12th grade (P-12) course.

**29**

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS AS INTERNSHIP SITES

Providing meaningful internship opportunities through the Student Service and Leadership Collaborative Interns, Marian Ivers Internship, Judy Monaghan Internship, and Stephenson-Harrington Internship.



### PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT: SHARING BOOKS AND STORIES

UNO students collaborated with a licensed speech-language pathologist to devise a comprehensive plan to foster literacy and language development among Hartman Elementary students. The program involved interactive sessions and tailored activities to support the elementary students' emerging literacy skills. After the course, the elementary students demonstrated their progress by showcasing their improved language abilities and confidence.

# WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UNO students graduate as well-rounded professionals joining the workforce, accomplishing this through service learning, community-based learning, and service. We support workforce and economic development by incorporating community into learning and expanding education opportunities for all. **Here are a few examples of workforce and economic development through community engagement.**



## SERVICE LEARNING AND WORKFORCE

Service learning allows exposure to new skills and career opportunities through hands-on experiences. One example can be found in a UNO Data Literacy course taught by instructor Becky Brusky - where students worked with community partners, such as MilkWorks and Raise Me to Read, to provide new ways of visualizing data or the community partners.

**After the course, 52% of students felt better in math, increasing confidence and ability.**

## VOTER ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE

Voter engagement contributes to well-rounded graduates entering the workforce. In 2024, UNO earned the ALL IN Highly Established Action Plan Seal for the 2024 Election Cycle.



## DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION: ENGAGED STUDENTS

"This certificate program has allowed me to expand my horizons by exploring new classes and experiences. Balancing STEM studies with community involvement, such as programming for a homeless shelter, has shown me the real-world impact of academic skills. It has reaffirmed my desire for a career where I can help others."

**UNO Community Engaged Scholar Graduate**

**\$1.8 + MILLION**

Estimated value of contributed space and IT services by organizations using meeting and event spaces in the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (CEC).

**5,200 +** MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN THE CEC  
**67,000 +** CEC MEETING AND EVENT PARTICIPANTS

**\$115,000 +**

Estimated value of community-based learning experiences.

**7,300 +** INTERN HOURS  
**6,600 +** STUDENT SERVICE & LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE INTERN HOURS  
**670 +** STEPHENSON-HARRINGTON INTERN HOURS

**\$13,000**

Funds awarded to community nonprofits while students practice philanthropic giving in Maverick Philanthropy Initiative (MPI) service learning courses.

**403**

**UNO STUDENTS**

Participating in civic and voter engagement programming such as voter registration events, dialogues, and Constitution Week.

**38**

**ENGAGED SCHOLARS**

UNO students who have graduated as engaged scholars (Since 2020).



# ABOUT THE OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT



## BARBARA WEITZ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER (CEC) [ CEC.UNOMAHA.EDU ]

Located on UNO's Dodge Campus, the CEC provides meeting and event space free of charge to nonprofit, community, and governmental organizations. The CEC is also a unique office space for community organizations to be co-located among other nonprofits and campus partners or programs who want to teach, serve, and conduct research together with UNO.

## SERVICE LEARNING ACADEMY (SLA) [ SLA.UNOMAHA.EDU ]

SLA supports UNO faculty members in developing service learning courses in collaboration with community organizations, governmental agencies, businesses, and P-12 faculty.

## VOLUNTEER AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS (VCE) [ SERVE.UNOMAHA.EDU ]

VCE develops consistent and intentional Volunteer and Civic Engagement programming - connecting UNO's campus and diverse student body to meaningful opportunities to serve the Omaha community and engage in its civic life.

BROWSE SERVICE EVENTS CALENDAR



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (CEPI) [ CEPI.UNOMAHA.EDU ]

An online tool that collects and showcases meaningful partnerships through individual projects. The tool is one method UNO uses to collect and identify ongoing partnerships and impact in collaboration with our community.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARS TRANSCRIPT DESIGNATION (CESTD)

This recognition opportunity honors undergraduate students who blend their UNO academic journey with community betterment, creating a positive impact for both the student and the community.

## WHO WE ARE

The Office of Engagement (OE) develops, supports, and facilitates community engaged teaching, research, and service experiences that occur in and outside of the classroom. We serve as a connector and co-creator with community and UNO to support our metropolitan university priorities to improve life locally, nationally, and globally through community engagement.

### RECENT UNO RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

**Excellence in Community Partner Engagement Award** - UNO and Partnership 4 Kids, Engagement Scholarship Consortium Excellence Awards (2024)

**Highly Established Action Plan Seal** - ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge (2024)

**Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting** - ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge (2022)



Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (2006, 2015)



President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll (2005, 2014)

### STUDENT AND FACULTY RECOGNITION

**Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Service Learning**  
Anna Kollmeyer (2023)

**Faculty Excellence in Engagement Award**  
Jon Santo, Ph.D. (2023)

**Faculty Service Learning Award**  
Shannon Cummins, Ph.D. (2023)

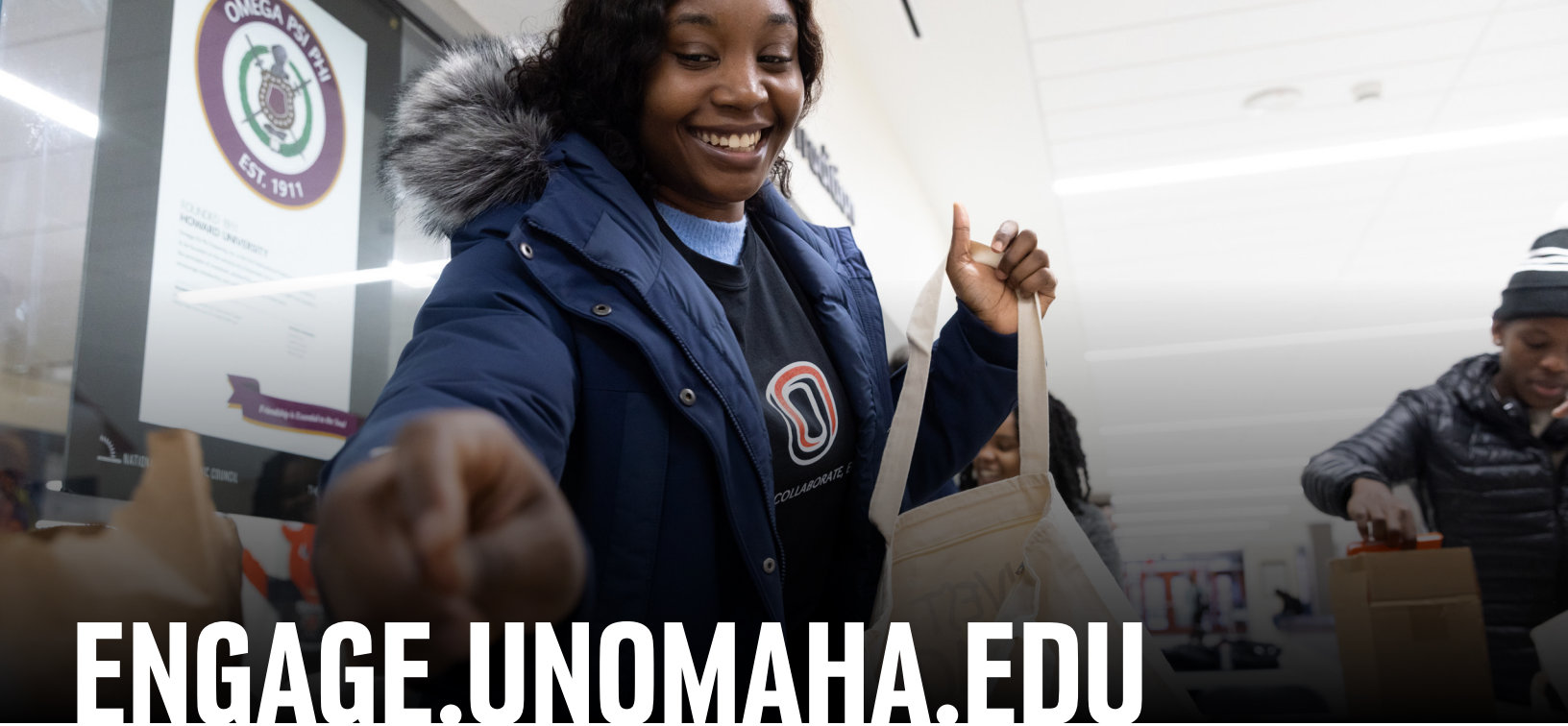
**James R. Schumacher Ethics Chairs**  
Erin Bass, Ph.D. (2023-25)  
Todd Richardson, Ph.D. (2023-25)

**Marian Ivers Community Service Leadership Award**  
Eh-Mo Khaing (2023)

**Newman Civic Fellowship**  
Garrett Connely (2024-25)

Learn more about recognition and awards on our website at [engage.unomaha.edu](https://engage.unomaha.edu).





# ENGAGE.UNOMAHA.EDU

University of Nebraska at Omaha  
Office of Engagement  
6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182

402.554.6000

[unoengagement@unomaha.edu](mailto:unoengagement@unomaha.edu)



Contact Us



@UNOENGAGE



@UNOENGAGE



@UNOENGAGE



UNO Office of Engagement

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Omaha



The University of Nebraska does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its education programs or activities, including admissions and employment. The University prohibits any form of retaliation taken against anyone for reporting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for otherwise engaging in protected activity. The University is committed to ensuring equal opportunity and access for all persons, and providing academic and employment environments free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The University adheres to all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination.