



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

CAS STRATEGIC

PLAN

YEAR 1
REPORT





I am pleased to share this “progress report” on the implementation of the College of Arts and Sciences’ (CAS) Strategic Plan. After the first full year of coordinated activity within and across every unit in the college, we have much to be proud of, and even more to look forward to in the months and years ahead. In particular, we are excited to build on the strong record of success that we have achieved so far:

- The college surpassed a key goal, increasing the 6-year graduation rate to 67.2% in AY 2021–2022 (from 55.5%). We will maintain this level of student success and strive for a new goal of 72% by 2025.
- The CAS Cares program – now permanently endowed – has helped hundreds of students stay on track for graduation. The 4-year graduation rate has improved across all student demographics.
- The college achieved a 10-year high in externally funded research awards totaling \$47.2 million (FY '22). New internal grant programs in the college will spur continued growth of interdisciplinary research teams.
- We are launching exciting new interdisciplinary programs like data science in collaboration with the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and the College of Engineering. Forthcoming new programs will help us attract new students to UNL, enable adult learners to return to complete their college degree, and facilitate degree completion fully online.

- With 19 faculty searches underway and BRIDGE training completed by every search committee, we are acting on our commitments to inclusive excellence.
- We have invested in competitive salaries for staff positions across the college and CAS Connections provides regular professional development opportunities for staff.

I encourage you to review this report and learn more about the outstanding progress we are making in the college. For even more details about our progress within each area of our Strategic Plan, see:

cas.unl.edu/strategic-plan

Mark E. Button
DEAN





The Department of Chemistry will offer **graduate certificates in bioanalytical chemistry and chromatography / analytical separations** and continues to be a campus leader in providing **teaching assistantships and mentoring for undergraduates.**

Graduate certificates in **forensic anthropology and museum studies** within the School of Global Integrative Studies (SGIS) pair focused coursework with internships to prepare students for success.



CAS Cares

A NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJOR IN DATA SCIENCE will be available for the 2023-2024 academic year.

74 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND 105 GRADUATE STUDENTS

have stayed the course at Nebraska, thanks to our emergency fund started in 2020.



The Speech and Debate Team won the **national championship** at the National Forensic Associate National Tournament.



The **Digital Legal Research Lab**, led by Katrina Jagodinsky and Will Thomas, offers experiential learning for undergraduate students through National Science Foundation funding.

IN DEVELOPMENT:

OUR NEW MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES MAJOR (BA OR BS)

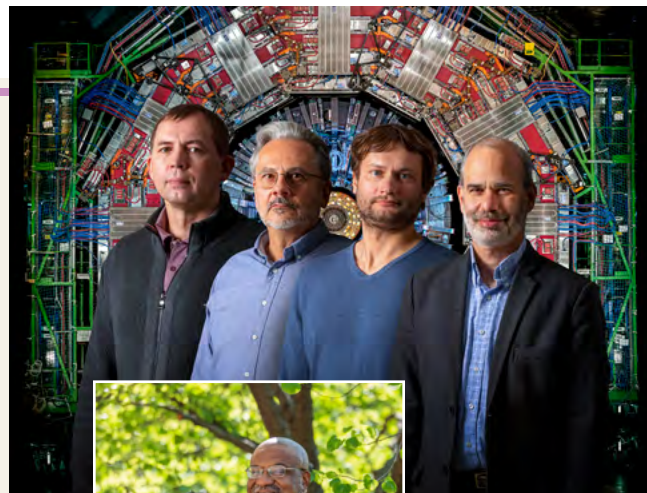
to support flexible degree-completion pathways for students with at least 45 credit hours that do not fit neatly into an existing major.

A new 4+1 accelerated BA/MA offered by the Department of Political Science is national security focused and aims to recruit more students to the graduate program and increase their career opportunities.

CAS achieved a 10-year high in externally funded research of \$47.2M

This included one of the largest grants in UNL history: a five-year grant totaling \$51M from the National Science Foundation to advance subatomic physics research at CERN's Large Hadron Collider, led by Ken Bloom and colleagues Dan Claes, Frank Golf, and Ilya Kravechenko (all physics).

⬡ \$10M of the grant included in the \$47.2M



Kwame Dawes (English) and Lorna Dawes (University Libraries) lead an international team, funded by a 3-year Mellon Foundation Grant, to expand the **African Poetry Digital Portal**, in collaboration with the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities.

Ng'ang'a Muchiri and Adrian Wisnicki (both English) earned Digital Justice Grants from the American Council of Learned Societies for their project, **"Recovering the Histories of Land Treaties in East and Southern Africa."**



Department of History's James Le Sueur's award-winning film **"The Art of Dissent,"** shown at a dozen international film festivals, explores artistic activism during Czechoslovakia's communist takeover and nonviolent transition from communist power.



"The Bell Affair," a film by Will Thomas (history) and Kwakiutl Dreher (English), and Husker colleague Michael Burton (College of Education and Human Sciences) based on Thomas' research, premiered in Washington, D.C. in June.

STUDENT STORIES

CAS is the kind of place where Mimi Yu (English) **created a children's book** for an Honors physics course and Rose Kottwitz (English) **created and published her own literary magazine** to see the process start to finish.



Delainie Johnson (sociology) **gained valuable research experience** through the university's Undergraduate Sociology Teaching and Research (USTARS) program, working alongside faculty and graduate students. She has seen all sides of research—from collecting and organizing data, to coordinating with Institutional Review Boards, to reading and transcribing study interviews.



Julia McQuillan (sociology) and Judy Walker (mathematics) were recently named **fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science**, the world's largest multidisciplinary scientific society, for distinguished achievements.

Nebraska researchers lead the **RURAL DRUG ADDICTION RESEARCH CENTER**, one of only a few major research centers in the country focused on substance use in rural areas. With funding from the National Institutes of Health, the center is identifying important distinctions between urban and rural use to help reduce misuse and overdoses.

Kevin Smith (political science) was **featured in national media for 2020 surveys** which found that about 40% of Americans identified politics as a significant source of stress—mirroring 2017 findings.



Patrice McMahon (political science) earned a **Fulbright Scholars Award to teach and conduct research at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland.** Her team seeks to better understand the role of nonstate actors and how they work with states and governmental actors to respond to transnational security threats.



Alexei Gruverman received a prestigious research award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The honor recognizes **a researcher whose work has significantly impacted their field.** As a recipient, Gruverman (physics) is collaborating with Professor Catherine Dubourdieu at the Helmholtz Berlin Center for Materials and Energy.



The project **"Honoring Indigenous Community Knowledge: Expanding the Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project Beyond the Government Archive,"** led by Liz Lorang (co-PI, University Libraries) and Margaret Jacobs (co-PI, history) and Susana Geliga (PI, UNO) is funded by the American Council of Learned Societies.

The project **"CAREER: Determining the Fundamental Rules of RNA Tertiary Contact Formation"** led by Joseph Yesselman (chemistry) is funded by the National Science Foundation.

The project **"Structural Dynamics of Regulatory RNAs and Ribonucleoproteins"** led by Catherine Eichhorn (chemistry) is funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, part of the National Institutes of Health.

Trey Andrews (Latinx and Latin American Studies, psychology) received a \$2.5M National Institutes of Health grant for a project that will reframe the role of **interpersonal discrimination in driving chronic stress and health inequities among Latinx populations.**

Tierney Lorenz (psychology) and Sarah Reyes (Minority Health Disparities Initiative) are co-investigators.



THE NEW EMERGENT QUANTUM MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES COLLABORATION, OR EQUATE, IS NEBRASKA'S ANSWER TO LEADING A SECOND QUANTUM REVOLUTION

aiming to drastically change information technology, medical technology, and cryptography (impacting security for defense and banking) and prepare the next generation of scientists and engineers. The effort is funded by a \$20M National Science Foundation grant through their Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR).

GRAND CHALLENGES

Kees Uiterwaal (physics) received an inaugural Catalyst award for his project **"Quantum Business, Arts and Science for Society."**

Seven faculty members received Planning awards:

- Mark Griep (chemistry) for his project **"Midwest Science Engagement Consortium."**

- David Harwood (Earth and atmospheric sciences) for his project **"Ice Coring and Education Silo."**

- Anne Schutte and Nicolas Hubbard (both psychology) for their project **"Advancing Cutting-Edge Research and Practices to Increase Access and Use of Green**

Space and Outdoor Play in Early Childhood Settings."

- Trey Andrews (psychology, ethnic studies) is part of an interdisciplinary team for the project **"Nebraska Community Action Research for Equity and Sustainability (NE CARES) Hub."**

- Effie Athanassopoulos and Carrie Heitman (both SGIS) are collaborating with Liz Lorang (PI, University Libraries) and colleagues on **"Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence and Cultural Heritage for Science and Technology Literacy and to Advance Anti-racist Information Systems."**

David Harwood (Earth and atmospheric sciences) is co-leading a multinational team that is **DRILLING INTO ANTARCTICA'S PAST TO GAIN A GLIMPSE AT EARTH'S FUTURE.**



The Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL) provides Child Protection and Safety (CP&S) training for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services, which the two groups developed together. **The training was recognized with the 2021 Quality Program Award** from the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA).

CCFL equips the child welfare workforce with high-quality training to provide strong advocacy to those most vulnerable. In FY 2020-2021, CCFL provided 17,730+ hours of



Child Protection and Safety Training, infused with interdisciplinary expertise and experiential learning opportunities, and prepared 354 participants with Pre-Service Training and 400+ participants with In-Service Training.

CCFL's Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children (NRPVYC) supports

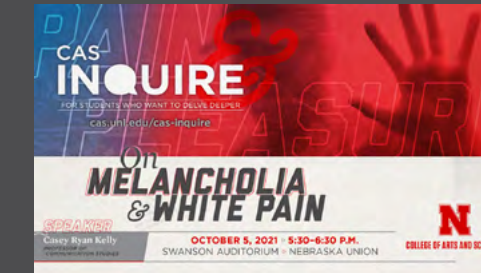
the early childhood mental health of Nebraska's young children by engaging with professionals through Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH), Reflective Practice, and Court Infusion. **NRPVYC trained 2,950 professionals** in Early Childhood Mental Health and Reflective Practice in 2021.



CAS DAY OF SERVICE ENTERED ITS SECOND YEAR WITH THE FOCUS ON FOOD INSECURITY, PARTNERING WITH LINCOLN FOOD BANK AND HUSKER PANTRY.

In partnership with the Nebraska Public Policy Center, CAS has **enhanced community engagement through public forums and panels** around important issues such as COVID-19 and racial-ethnic disparities, 2020 election results, redistricting in Nebraska, and civil dialogue across differences.

CAS INQUIRE IS WIDENING ACCESS TO LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES FOR ALL NEBRASKANS. Free talks across disciplines around an important theme are open to the community.



Our students can expand their professional networks with alumni globally via the college's Husker Connect group, thanks to funding from the college's Alumni Advisory Board.

In summer 2021, the **Nebraska Math and Science Summer Institutes** offered 15 graduate courses in math and science for K-12 teachers via web conferencing, three grant-funded courses in computer science, three online courses for the Master of Arts for Teachers degree, and one in-person course.

The upscaling of the Communication Center, housed in the Department of Communication Studies, is designed to interact with and build partnerships across students, the campus and local communities, and alumni to offer mentoring and workshops to improve public, interpersonal, and team-based communication.

NMSSI courses, grant-supported courses, and courses required for degrees welcomed 165 graduate students in NebraskaMATH and NebraskaSCIENCE for a total of 290 registrations in 23 courses. Fifteen educators from outside of Nebraska joined 135 in-state teachers.

SGIS and the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (HRHA) program are leaders in CAS in **offering global experiences for students.** Emira Ibrahimasic (SGIS) and Kate Aufdenkamp (Global Experiences) earned the 2021 Award for Excellence in Education Abroad Curriculum Design from The Forum on Education Abroad for "Negotiating Peace: From Conflict to Coexistence."



THE UPWARD BOUND MATH-SCIENCE RESEARCH BRIDGE PROGRAM IN THE LIFE SCIENCES

aims to provide research experience for students from underrepresented groups who will be enrolled at UNL. Kristi Montooth and Marianna Burks (both biological sciences) led the development as a partnership with the TRIO office's Upward Bound program.

Funded by the School of Biological Sciences (SBS), the program began in the summer of 2021 by supporting nine students with mentored research activities. Montooth and Burks provided weekly programming on topics aimed at easing the students' move to UNL. The students **experienced lab life and interacted with faculty members.**



The “**Reckoning and Reconciliation on the Great Plains**” series at the Center for Great Plains Studies was designed to increase awareness of past and present racism and find creative solutions.

In 2021, the Digital Ethnic Studies Institute hosted “**New Storytellers: The Research Institute in Digital Ethnic Studies**” for 23 emerging digital humanities scholars from minority-serving institutions. Attendees included guests from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Darrell Meadows from the National Historical Publications and Record Commission. The event was funded by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and co-directed by co-PIs Jeannette Eileen Jones (history, English), Joy Castro (English, ethnic studies), Will Thomas (history), and Ken Price (English).

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF RACIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION AT UNL

INSTITUTE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES SPRING CELEBRATION · MARCH 28 - APRIL 4



Norma Elia Cantú



Daniel Heath Justice



Keshia N. Blain



Renee Tajima-Peña



Virginia Espino

THE INSTITUTE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES CELEBRATED 50 YEARS of transformative teaching about race, ethnicity, and social justice, research in the field, and committed outreach to BIPOC communities in Lincoln and the greater region.

The **Intergroup Dialogue project**, led by Jordan Soliz (communication studies) includes a 1-credit practicum course, COMM 160; the 3-credit COMM 360, “Dialogue Across Difference”; and courses COMM 465 and COMM 930 to train students in intergroup dialogue and involve them in experiential learning and group facilitation.



THE CENTER FOR GREAT PLAINS STUDIES BLACK HOMESTEADER PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO RECOVER THE LITTLE-KNOWN HISTORY OF BLACKS ON THE GREAT PLAINS.

STAFF COUNCIL ADVOCATED FOR AND SUPPORTED STAFF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE TWICE-A-YEAR CAS CONNECTIONS EVENT, REGULAR RE-CONNECT EVENTS ON VARIOUS TOPICS, AND THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM FOR EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES.



The Dean's Office facilitated **Chair and Director Leadership Development Series** for over 30 unit leaders focused on themes such as diverse faculty recruitment and retention; student support; faculty mentoring; and budget and enrollment management.

Multiple CAS faculty have participated in the **UNL Research Development Fellows Program**. In 2021–22, Ross Dixon (meteorology) and Eloísa Grifo (mathematics) were selected, gaining tools and networking for competitive grant funding.

The Graduate Student Career Development Workshop **helps graduate students prepare for professional opportunities**, in partnership with the Office of Graduate Studies, the Center for Entrepreneurship, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, NuTech Ventures, and alumni.

The Microbiology Achievement through Research and Valuable Experiential Learning (MARVEL) Workshop in the Department of Microbiology **aims to develop mentor-mentee relationships** at all career levels.



The college's Budget Advisory Committee, which includes faculty and staff, continues to **advise the Dean's Office on budgetary matters**. Once the incentive-based budget model is implemented, this committee will remain an important consultative body.

Bureau of Sociological Research project staff take part in weekly **professional development** and can also attend conferences, where they often present our research, and receive additional training.

Our Faculty Hiring Advisory Committee (FHAC) **supported inclusiveness and transparency**, especially in relation to resource allocation. Due to its valuable peer-review process, the FHAC will be regularly utilized in ongoing strategic hiring plan development.

The Department of Communication Studies **held faculty retreats** to promote scholarly excellence, community, productivity, and the advancement of their writing and to assess undergraduate curriculum and vision for the future. In the absence of travel due to COVID-19, the department **provided funding** for workshops, online conferences, software, etc. to promote faculty and graduate student development.





COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

1223 Oldfather Hall ◊ **(402) 472-2891** ◊ **cas.unl.edu**

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