

# ***UNI*** // Alumni Magazine







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4.6.21 | UNI

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# // contents

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## featured stories



04

### The courage to confront “education debt”

Sixty years after MLK dreamed of equality, there is still much work to do. Can UNI confront and overcome centuries of racial injustice?



14

### Forward together

Having risen to the challenges 2020 ushered in, Panthers welcome 2021 and face a new semester with renewed hope.



#### on campus

**22** Branding + higher ed  
**24** A dream reimagined

#### UNI impact

**32** UNI leading the federal reform agenda on educator preparation  
**34** New beginnings bring new hope  
**40** Diversity is our strength

#### alumni highlights

**44** A winning legacy continues  
**46** Designing for change

#### campus news

**52** Notable happenings at UNI

#### class notes

**56** The latest on Panthers around the globe





## Dear alumni and friends of the university,

There was a collective sigh of relief when midnight rang in the New Year. Each of us struggled in our own ways throughout this past year just to survive each day's set of new challenges. The struggle is real but so is our strength. As the calendar page turned, 2021 gave us hope for a better tomorrow.

UNI is making better tomorrows possible. Students arrive on campus with ideas of who they want to become and how they want to leave their mark in the world. UNI faculty and staff are there ready with the challenges and supports necessary for each individual to grow in the ways they seek. With each student, potential is kindled. UNI graduates leave the institution transformed and ready to positively impact the world.

This sculpture aptly named, **Culminata**, is a visual representation of how UNI supports students through their academic journey. The bottom form of an open book provides that foundation for growth as individuals embark on a quest for knowledge. The columnar form of the sculpture signifies the library as the backbone for the university by which to grow. The stair-stepped book forms hint at challenges one may face on their way to flourish at the top "flame" element.

We meet each challenge with adaptability and ingenuity ensuring a path to a brighter future. This issue will highlight the critical challenges we continue to face. COVID-19 persists, pushing us to rethink how we teach, learn and engage. Social justice and inequities continue, yet are slowly dismantled through intentional work to combat educational debts.

Persistence. Adaptability. Achievement. We will continue to build our better tomorrows together.

Purple for life!

*Leslie Prideaux*

Leslie Prideaux  
Assistant Vice President of Alumni Relations  
President, University of Northern Iowa Alumni Association



## Culminata

**Commissioned by:** University of Northern Iowa, Rod Library renovation

**Produced by:** UNI Public Art Incubator

**Donors:** Satch and Karen Mukai



## The Courage to Confront

# “Education Debt”

*UNI Office of the President*

On November 11, 1959, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed a full house in UNI's Lang Hall Auditorium. King spoke about the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott, and described his philosophy of nonviolent resistance. Four years later, King delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech, offering his vision of a nation “that lives out the true meaning of its creed,” where all are equal and interwoven in community; King’s dream continues to serve as a powerful guidepost in our nation’s long arc toward justice.

More than six decades after *Brown v. Board of Education* legally desegregated America’s schools, our nation has made progress in confronting racial inequality. High school completion and college enrollment rates are on the rise for minoritized students. The number of minoritized students completing baccalaureate degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields also continues on an upward trend.

But let’s be clear — we still have so much work to do. High school completion and college enrollment rates, along with a litany of research and news

headlines, continue to show that our nation has not yet achieved the dream of equality King pronounced at the footsteps of the Lincoln Memorial nearly 60 years ago.

When lifelong educator Gloria Ladson-Billings framed the concept of “education debts,” she had King’s

dream in mind. The central idea of Ladson-Billings’ “education debt” is the need to confront and overcome centuries of racial injustice in our nation. Education debts require us to shift from deficit thinking (“Why are students not succeeding?”) to accountability (“How can we strengthen practice to better help students navigate the societal barriers to success?”). **We know all students can be successful. It is our charge to ensure they are.**

**“Do we have the courage to face the social issues and challenges that are in front of our country?”**

UNI President **Mark A. Nook** posed this question during the 2020 University Address in the opening days of the fall semester. Underlying the question is the recognition that America’s longstanding struggle with inequality affects the lives of those who aspire to pursue and attain degrees at UNI. Our mission is to act with **courage** — to take an honest look at ourselves — to recognize the part of our nation’s education debt we own in service to broad opportunity.

We know our faculty, staff and students have the courage to confront education debts. Several key initiatives help to tell the story of the work we are doing to own our part in fulfilling King’s Dream.



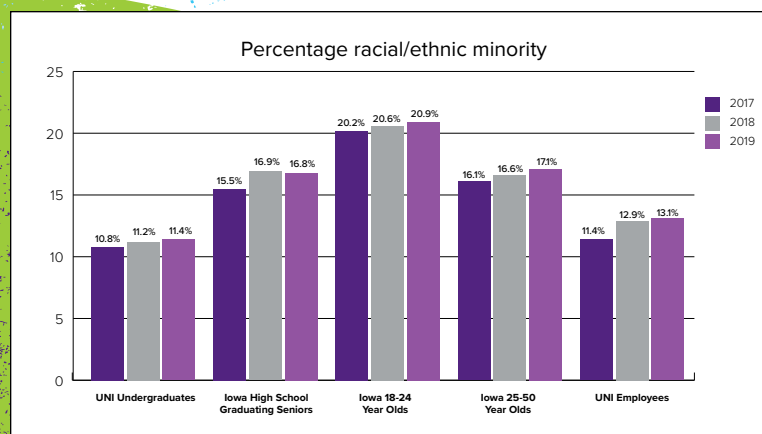
## Owning the debt of access

This past fall, UNI was proud to welcome the most racially and ethnically diverse class in its history. Twelve percent of this year's first-year students and 18% of transfers are racial/ethnic minorities, an increase of three percentage points from the year prior. While we have made gains in diversifying our student body, UNI remains more than five percentage points below the proportion of Iowa high school graduates who identify as a racial/ethnic minority.

A key way to attract a diverse student body is for the university to recruit and retain a richly diverse workforce. UNI's employee demographic make-up lags behind the percentage of racial/ethnic minorities aged 25-50 year olds in Iowa. Although we are making gains over time, our work must continue.

Additionally, as Iowa's leading educator preparation institution, we need to help our state's K-12 schools remove barriers to success that are apparent in high school graduation rates. We have critical work to do to bring our demographics in line with the state of Iowa and the communities we serve.

**CHART 1.**  
Iowa Demographics by Age Group



## Doing the work

To support our work in strengthening access for today's college students, the university has launched the UNITED Scholarship for Iowa residents. This is a supplemental scholarship of up to \$2,000 per year for up to four years for in-state students who are part of a traditionally underrepresented population and meet academic eligibility requirements.

**“Our students deserve an affordable education, and we know that one of the biggest barriers for low-income, first generation, and minoritized students is net price,”**

said **Kristin Woods**, '98, senior associate vice president of enrollment management and student success, “but if we can help students navigate this barrier, we know our UNITED recipients can thrive on this campus with our personalized focus on student success.”

In addition to promoting access and affordability, faculty and staff across the university are working together to continue improving the university's living, learning and working environment to promote a truly welcoming and inclusive

community. For example, faculty who serve on search committees undergo implicit bias training to help them understand ways unconscious thoughts or feelings affect our decision-making.

Another example is the work being done by the Office of the Provost and faculty leaders to examine academic policies to further protect against bias and promote diversity and inclusion in teaching, learning and scholarship. This past fall, academic leaders participated in a training to learn how policies can unintentionally create bias; these leaders are putting their training to work in reviewing and revising academic policies and procedures.

“With the passing of time, and the resulting change to the broader social contexts in which we work and serve, we need to periodically review our policies to avoid problems that can sometimes be inadvertently created when the words on paper do not reflect the needs of our students, faculty and staff,” said **Jim Wohlpart**, executive vice president and provost. “Our faculty are hard at work to ensure our policies continue to align with the needs of our students and the mission, vision and values of the university.”

The university launched the President's Council on Inclusion, Transformative Social Justice and Advocacy (CITSJA) after an open, campus-wide call for nominees to serve on this groundbreaking effort to steward change for diversity, equity and inclusion on campus.

Led by **Jamie Butler Chidozie**, director of diversity, inclusion and social justice, this 15-member committee comprised of a broadly representative group of faculty, staff, students and a community member, is facilitating a deep dive inventory of faculty and staff who are officially charged with diversity work in their roles, as well as identify other employees who are stepping up to advance diversity, equity and inclusion work on campus.

And this past spring, a team of faculty and staff participated in the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Virtual Conference on Diversity, Equity and Student Success to gather best practices and feed the CITSJA in developing its work plan.

Though just a few examples of the university's work to address education debt, these illustrate the campus-wide effort underway to promote broad diversity, equity and inclusion on campus.

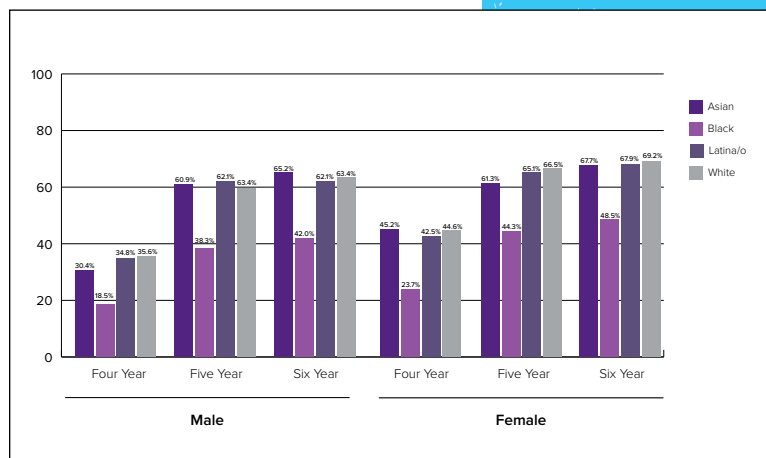
“We are owning the work we must do to ensure our university is a destination for bright and talented students, faculty and staff who are looking to become part of the Panther family,” said Nook. “This is only part of how we confront our society's education debt on this campus, but it is an essential part to addressing present needs and opportunities while laying the foundation for our future.”



# Owning the debt of student success

UNI's six-year graduation rate for minoritized students is more than 15 percentage points above the average of institutions similar to UNI (according to data provided to the United States Department of Education). Though this benchmark is positive, it is no basis for pause. UNI is less likely to graduate Black students in four, five or six years compared to other students on campus. The success of every student remains critical; however, ensuring the very success of every student requires us to take a deeper look at the barriers and needs that affect the outcomes of our diverse student populations on campus.

**CHART 2.**  
Graduation Rates by Race/  
Ethnicity (2010-13 Cohorts)



## Doing the work

When **De'Carlos Anderson**, assistant director of student success and retention, envisioned how the university could enhance its support for students of color, he saw an opportunity to blend leadership, mentorship and student development into seamless and intentional learning opportunities that empower students. That vision has led to the Panther Promise Academy, a multicultural leadership program that launched in the fall and provides personal, professional and academic development opportunities during the first and second year of college.

"We know that keeping students enrolled and making steady progress in their first and second years of college is critical for their ultimate success in completing an undergraduate degree," said Anderson. "The Panther Promise Academy is designed to help minoritized students deepen their involvement in the campus community, facilitating connections to faculty, staff and peers, while teaching them academic and leadership skills. This program is not only helping students be successful, but the academy also empowers participants to engage in and promote the growth of multiculturalism on campus and throughout the community."

The academy launched in the fall by offering students a series of

seminars, workshops and events focused on community engagement, professional development and academic success. This academy builds on the efforts Anderson and the Office of Student Success and Retention are leading to support the retention and success of minoritized students on campus.

The Panther Promise Academy builds on a longstanding history of support for the success of underrepresented students at the university. UNI's Center for Urban Education is home to three federally-funded TRIO programs designed to support disadvantaged students at the university while serving a clientele that extends beyond the borders of campus.

"We have helped thousands of individuals in the Cedar Valley and throughout Northeast Iowa take the next step in their educational and professional journeys," said **Robert Smith**, executive director of educational opportunity programs and special community services. "We empower people of all ages to set goals and make a plan, and then our team relentlessly advocates for each client to put their plan into action and reach their goals, often working side by side to provide the resources and guidance to be successful."

Across the three programs — Educational Opportunity Center, Educational Talent Search and Classic Upward Bound — the Center for Urban Education team serves more than 3,000 individuals from underrepresented and minoritized backgrounds each year.



# Owning the debt of community growth

Two recent reports by 24/7 Wall Street have cultivated a social movement across the Cedar Valley. Designated as one of the worst places for Black individuals to live in America, a growing coalition of citizens, elected and appointed officials, and employers are mobilizing to improve education, workforce and health outcomes for Black individuals living in the Cedar Valley. The latest

report, which designated the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area as third, showcased the linkage between educational attainment, employment and wealth outcomes. Central to the Cedar Valley's growth, UNI is playing a critical role in confronting the debt of our community's growth in educational and employment opportunity and the health and well-being of Black individuals in our community.

## Doing the work

Toward this end, UNI's Center for Educational Transformation (CET) — the State of Iowa's PK-20 education and research development center — has supported initiatives by working across boundaries and with diverse sectors. The CET focuses on the intersection of education, health, culture and equity-related critical issues relevant to Iowa and beyond. For example, the CET has established a collaboration with the Black Hawk County Department of Public Health to address racial inequities in health, employment, income, home ownership and education. Through an inclusive process, the CET co-facilitated a series of equity systems workshops focused on cocreating building blocks of a systems map that helped the Black Hawk County community *begin* to answer the question: *What accounts for the level of equity in our community?* From these workshops, the resulting provisional map has led to rich discussions in the community and the next phase of the systems analysis, which is “finding leverage” evidenced in the system to produce intervention points for a positive, equitable, sustainable culture of health for the community.

“In partnership with Black Hawk County Department of Public Health — along with diverse community members — the Center for Educational Transformation has aided in the mapping of the long established covert operations evidenced in the

system. The systems map outlines the forces of inequity and the forces of change specific to our community,” said **Lisa Hooper**, director for the center for educational transformation.

Following the systems mapping exercise, the Black Hawk County Department of Public Health convened a Systems Thinking Task Team to leverage the map, which includes 20 loops that range from deep structural barriers such as inequality to access and participation, resistance to change, and a perceived diffusion of responsibility, among other factors.

“The exercise also affirmed what we know about the Cedar Valley,” says **Andrew Morse**, '09, assistant to the president for board and governmental relations, who serves on the task team.

**“We have the ‘seeds of resilience’ in our region to confront our challenges head on.”**

- ANDREW MORSE

That's just what the task team, in partnership with a host of elected and appointed officials, business leaders and the nonprofit community, is doing. The task team is moving into its “leverage” phase in which stakeholders are helping to identify concrete steps to move health, education, employment, income and home ownership equity forward.

In addition, university leaders, faculty and staff are engaged in broadening opportunities to gainful employment for minoritized residents in the Cedar Valley. This past fall, Future Ready Cedar Valley — a regional spoke of the statewide Future Ready Iowa initiative to produce more Iowans with education and training beyond high school — launched ONE Cedar Valley. This initiative is designed to provide resources that enable minoritized individuals living in the Cedar Valley who are unemployed or underemployed to gain successful employment within the region while advocating for the reconstruction of equitable and inclusive policies, practices and programs among employers, government entities and nonprofit organizations.

Our nation's colleges and universities have played an important role in challenging the status quo, in being places that have led the charge in the fight against injustice and advancing ideas that promote equality, justice and a rich quality of life for all. Not only have our nation's colleges and universities served as forums for discussion on critical issues of our time, but institutions have also sent into society generations of educated citizens to make a positive difference in their homes, workplaces and communities. The University of Northern Iowa is intertwined in this important work in the lives of students and society. The work that we are doing now — and will continue to do into our future — will own our part in overcoming inequality in pursuit of Rev. King's Dream. **UNI**



# FORWARD TOGETHER

## Challenges brought by pandemic foster creativity on campus

Each new semester brings a sense of anticipation and a promise of new knowledge — wondering where the next few months might lead. The spring semester at the University of Northern Iowa ushered in this same sense of hope. Only in 2021, the hope seems to carry more possibility — the prospect of an end to the pandemic that has changed life as we know it.

With vaccines for COVID-19 being administered around the globe, experts anticipate a decline in the spread of the disease. Will we return to normal? Perhaps. But maybe our new reality will be informed by the generation-defining experience we've lived through.





**FORWARD TOGETHER**

When the fall semester started in August 2020, no one could predict exactly what the result would be of bringing students, faculty and staff back to campus. The university proceeded cautiously. With a variety of class delivery methods — in person, online and hybrid — students began their studies a week early and wrapped up finals before Thanksgiving.

“We successfully navigated a largely in-person semester because of the hard work and dedication of our students, faculty and staff. For that, we can all be thankful,” said UNI President **Mark A. Nook**.

For most of the fall semester, UNI’s infection rate stayed below the rate for Black Hawk County and the State of Iowa. Face coverings were required on campus. Staff who could telework work were encouraged to do so. Nontraditional spaces across campus were turned into classrooms and existing classrooms had seating redesigned to allow for increased physical distancing. Residence halls put rules in place limiting visitors.



**Danielle McGeough**, ‘04, ‘07, associate professor in the department of communication and media, teaches in the area of performance studies, in the UNI Interpreters Theatre. A normal class would have students up on their feet, moving around and practicing communication through movement and performance.

McGeough taught classes on Zoom, spending a lot of time in the service’s breakout rooms and engaged in discussion.

**“Whether classes were held in-person or online, students really missed all the opportunities for small talk and connection classes usually afford. I tried to find little spaces for students to connect with each other and for me to connect with them.”**

- DANIELLE MCGEOUGH



## BRINGING NORMALCY TO UNPRECEDENTED YEAR

Although COVID-19 has forced students to keep the residence hall doors of Lawther Hall closed, there are still signs of life taped to hallways in the form of small, origami creations of Baby Yoda.

The characters, from the television series “The Mandalorian,” were created during an origami-folding grab-and-go event, one of several efforts of the dorm’s nine resident assistants to bring students together during a global pandemic that is forcing everyone to stay apart.

“I think just seeing other people’s creations creates that sense of community,” said **Dylan Haase**, a senior strategic public relations major who is one of Lawther Hall’s resident assistants (RAs). “It shows that we have shared experiences, even if we’re all in our own individual rooms and behind masks all the time.”

“Meeting people, especially residents meeting each other, is a lot more difficult this year,” said **Laura Stanish**, a senior leisure, youth and human services major who is an RA in Campbell Hall. “And so the kind

of camaraderie you’d normally have has definitely gone down.”

“As students continue to adjust to the new normals created by COVID-19, we are thrilled with the innovative efforts of our Resident Assistant Team to engage our students and create a sense of community in our residence halls,” said **Nick Rafanello**, UNI director of residence life.

Beyond creatively building community, RAs have assumed an important role in students’ mental health. With COVID-19 sparking an uptick of students reporting concerns related to their mental health, RAs have found that sometimes the most valuable thing they can offer students is a simple daily greeting.

“A big thing is just saying hello to people, and acknowledging that they’re there,” Haase said. “Even just having a simple conversation about something like a TV show can mean a lot to a person who’s had several Zoom classes in their room throughout the day and hasn’t really spoken to a person one-on-one.”

And although the situation has been challenging, both RAs agreed that students are mostly happy

complying with the new rules in order to stay on campus.

“I think it’s pretty frustrating for everyone, but I think students are taking it very well and being very respectful of those boundaries and new rules,” Stanish said. “In my circles, we’ve all been able to adapt, and so it’s been really good for building skills in adaptability and flexibility.”

## FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER:

**74%** OF CLASSES PLAN TO USE IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

**17%** WILL BE DELIVERED ONLINE

**7%** WILL USE A HYBRID OF METHODS

**ADDITIONAL 2% ARE INDEPENDENT STUDY**

“Since the pandemic, we have sold over 43,500 masks. So we have the UNI logo going out all across the country.”

- DOUG JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF THE UNI BOOKSTORE



## Despite pandemic, UNI's Glee Club sings on

They stood 10-feet apart, masked, in the parking garage on 23rd Street. And they sang.

The harmonies of the 1883 glee club classic “Brothers, Sing On!” bounced across the concrete walls of the Multimodal Transportation Center. The song was a fitting choice for the performance, which was posted in part on Facebook, by the University of Northern Iowa Varsity Glee Club. Despite a global pandemic that has ushered in sweeping changes to the campus, the club is indeed singing on.

Performances by the Varsity Glee Club are a staple of campus life at UNI, but the group had to get creative to continue this trend in the fall.

As the school year approached, the club realized practicing as a full group in person wasn’t going to be feasible, so they began exploring other options. The group decided the safest way to continue making music together would be through a hybrid rehearsal procedure. Students were split into six cohorts at the beginning of the fall semester and took turns alternating between virtual work or in-person sectionals with **John Wiles**, associate professor in the School of Music and director of the club.



“Over the summer, I talked with colleagues around the world, with university administrators, and with my colleagues here at home and became convinced that the glee club would be able to function in a hybrid model. It’s not perfect. But we get shades of the glee club’s magic every now and then — and we are grateful for those moments.” Wiles said. “I’ve been incredibly humbled by the glee clubbers ability to adapt to the many changes. The logistics alone are staggering, yet the students have adjusted with very few problems. There are times when we are able to come together as a full group and in those moments we still feel like the glee club.”

Like many ensembles on campus, the glee club has had to get creative when it comes to how and where they perform. A recent video from the parking garage provided a glimpse of the ensemble’s vocal magic, and they hope to be able to schedule a short performance for friends, family and fans to safely join them.

The Varsity Glee club has also begun work on virtual projects as well. With COVID-19 making it impossible to pack Gallagher Bluedorn with people for the traditional Christmas Variety Show, they have released a CD version with recordings from years past. The CD is available at **unigleeclub.com**. All proceeds will benefit the Northeast Iowa Food Bank.

Despite the uncertain times, Wiles is looking forward to what’s to come for the group.

“I’m really excited about what this semester will mean for the glee club moving forward. The students who are currently in the glee club are going through a shared experience unlike anything the glee club has ever experienced.” Wiles said. “I’m convinced that this shared experience will bond the group together in a new and fresh way. I’m incredibly grateful for the glee clubbers, their work, their attitude and their music.”



## CREATIVITY EMERGES FROM NECESSITY

Based on the success the university achieved in keeping the campus community safe during the fall semester, the spring 2021 calendar was modified. Classes began January 25, later than originally scheduled. There will be no spring break, and classes will conclude May 7.

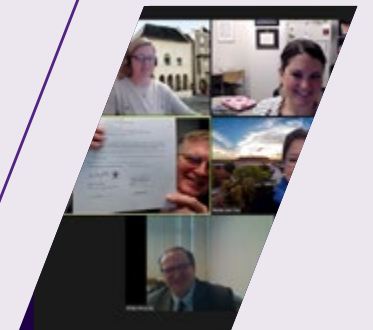
The adjustment to the calendar allowed the university to offer select classes during 3-week and 6-week winter terms through distance learning. The move was popular with students.

According to **Joyce Morrow**, '90, university registrar, preliminary enrollment for the winter term is 1,394 students. "This is the first time in recent history that UNI has offered winter term courses, and we're pleased with the response from students who want to further their education."

UNI is preparing for COVID-19 vaccines to become more widely available, making plans for inoculations for the campus community.

"This is not the first time the UNI community has experienced challenges, and we will again, but our history shows that Panthers are resilient," said Nook.

"I hope we can all hold on just a little longer," says McGeough. "The pandemic has been challenging, but it has also given me the opportunity to learn new skills and to adopt new practices as a teacher. In my courses, I explain that creativity emerges from necessity. It is hard at times because the challenges the pandemic has brought are real, but I think it is important to seek spaces of opportunity for growth and learning, to find connection even in separation, abundance amongst scarcity." **UNI**



## Archiving our pandemic experience

UNI's Special Collections & University Archives at Rod Library launched a community archive project to enable future researchers to look back on the challenges, creative efforts and virtual togetherness experienced during the pandemic. With a goal of documenting experiences of the UNI and broader Cedar Valley communities during COVID-19, a call was put out for submissions — stories, reflections, links, photographs, videos and other files that capture individuals' experiences relating to the pandemic. Submissions to the project are still welcome, particularly to document these later stages of the pandemic experience including remote learning, required masks, etc. Find the submission form at: [alumni.uni.edu/CommunityArchive](https://alumni.uni.edu/CommunityArchive).



## BRANDING + HIGHER ED:

# It's time for UNI to make some changes

// A tagline. A name or a logo. A specific set of colors. What do they have in common? They're all elements of a brand, often mistaken *for* the brand.



So what, then, is a brand? And why should we care about ours?

Most plainly stated, a brand is a perception. Powerhouse creative agency 160over90 defines a brand as “A perception that is shaped by every single experience a person has with your organization. A brand is a story ... and it has to ring true.”

Let's break that down.

If a brand is a perception, then it must live in the mind. In our case, in the minds of every person who's had an experience with the University of Northern Iowa. Alumni, current students, employees, future students and their families, legislators, businesses, the media — the list goes on and on.

And the types of touch points with UNI that help form perceptions are just as varied. A short list could include advertising, website visits, print material, events on campus, interactions with faculty or staff, emails, news coverage and word of mouth in everyday conversation.

Basically, anything a person sees or hears about or experiences with an organization contributes to their perception.

So why is it so important that we define our brand now, and then make strategic decisions to cultivate, shape and grow it?

In one word: competition. In today's higher education landscape with its myriad options for prospective students, it's never been more important to understand who we are as an institution, what we stand for, and how our audiences can benefit from what we offer. But how do we do that?

While a logo isn't the brand, its purpose is to embody and symbolize meaning for people. Over time, a logo becomes infused with emotion and meaning. If you think of every great brand you admire, respect or love, when you see their logo, the symbol conjures a sense of meaning for you.

This is our goal with a refreshed, modern and forward-leaning brand identity. The design intent is to not only unify UNI and University of Northern Iowa, but also reflect a dynamic energy, one that captures the momentum of UNI students' growth, success and their upward-rising trajectories.

And, by creating new synergy between the institutional and athletics logos, we bring the university, as a whole, into greater alignment with meaning and a future focus for all.

**UNI** / University of Northern Iowa



## UNI + UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA



Successful brands have at least one thing in common: they've done the work to understand not just who they think they are but more importantly, who their audiences think they are.

UNI collected perceptions from 14 constituent groups — some internal, most external — over the better part of a year. Collectively, those responses helped form the foundation of our brand, a true and authentic representation of who we are.

This shouldn't come as much of a surprise. These ideas, after all, are born from real experiences and real perceptions from our audiences, including alumni. The important thing is that now we *know* — and we can use that knowledge to both build upon and unite.

In the coming months and beyond, you'll begin to see these ideas reflected in UNI's messaging and visuals. The same ideas will also influence our daily communication

and interactions, as well as other experiences we create for our audiences. Through it all, we'll always have one goal top of mind: developing authentic, consistent touch points that elevate perceptions of and support for UNI.

So how can you help?

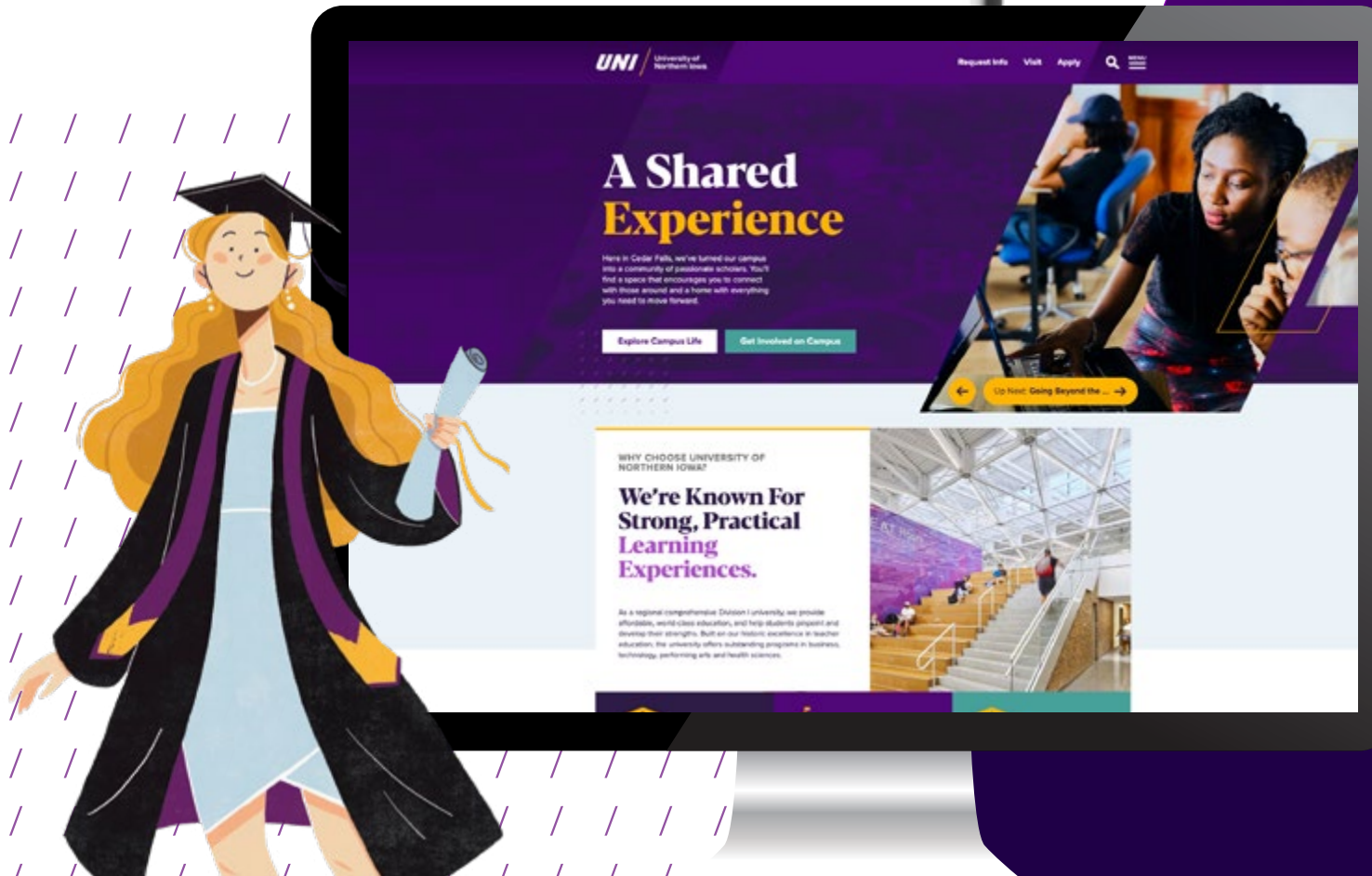
As a member of the Panther family, having experienced firsthand what UNI has to offer, you're among the most valuable of brand ambassadors. You can strengthen the university's brand by sharing with others your positive experiences as a student, especially as it relates to support you received and how that support helped enable you to accomplish the unexpected.

You can also learn more about UNI's brand at **brand.uni.edu** and use the expanded information there to help inform your conversations with others.

Now that you know where we're going and why, there's really only one thing left to say — thank you.

Thanks for your loyalty, your pride in UNI and for playing such an important role in helping us grow the University of Northern Iowa brand.

Today is a good day for UNI. And we're so happy to be sharing it with you. **UNI**



**At UNI, we are a welcoming community that genuinely cares for and serves our students — as learners, but also whole individuals with distinctive passions, perspectives, hopes, fears and dreams. We offer support and guidance, wherever and however needed, knowing that our students are capable of achieving more than they've even yet imagined.**

## QUESTIONS + ANSWERS

### When will branding changes start happening and how long will they take?

Mixed answer. Some changes will begin immediately. Others will take longer to implement, over the next year and beyond. Of special note is the university website which will be undergoing a complete overhaul from visuals to messaging to user experience, with the first phase of pages going live in February and others following as they are completed.

### Are the UNI colors changing?

Rest assured, purple and gold are here to stay, although a new secondary color palette was developed to complement our primary colors.

### Is the athletics logo changing?

No, the athletics logo is not changing at this time.

### When will the university be “done” with the brand work?

Never. An invaluable part of the brand process is the continuous loop of measurement, reflection and adjustment.

### Love the new logo. Where can I buy some merch?

Check out the UNI Bookstore, now carrying a small selection of apparel and other items with the new university logo. Shop online at **unibookstore.com**.



# A DREAM **re** **imagined**

Celebrating 20 years of inspiration,  
the Gallagher Bluedorn looks towards  
a future that's even brighter



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN to be inspired?

It's the feeling of realizing your own potential and questioning the boundaries of what you thought was possible. It's the moments of transformation that change you forever.

In the performing arts, inspiration takes many forms — it's seeing your first Broadway show, performing for a crowd of a thousand people, working backstage at "Miss Saigon," meeting YoYo Ma, hearing Maya Angelou read her poem "Rise" or having the opportunity to shake hands with the Dalai Lama.

At its heart, this is exactly what the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center was created to do — to inspire and transform the community through the power of art.

Twenty years later, the Gallagher Bluedorn continues to do just that, and now, its leaders are envisioning an even bigger, brighter future for the space.

When the Gallagher Bluedorn first opened its doors in 2000, it was a dream come true for the community.

"At the time, we did what nobody thought was possible — we brought a world-class performing arts center to the middle of Iowa," said **Steve Carignan**, executive director of the Gallagher Bluedorn. "More than that, we created a space that really is the heart of the community, where anyone can come to be inspired, amazed and transformed."

Carignan, who's been with the center from day one, says the 20th anniversary is just as much about celebrating the past as it is about envisioning the future.

"We wouldn't be what we are today without the support of our patrons, donors, artists, students and everyone who bought into this dream," he said. "This anniversary is of course about celebrating everyone involved, but it's also about looking towards the future. We recognize we aren't a static creature. We are constantly evolving and reinventing ourselves to better serve the community. Now, we have to look forward and start planning for how we can serve the next generation, because they will be the ones to carry this dream on."

## BUILDING on success

A strong vision and enormous support from the community brought the dream to life 20 years ago, and now, that same support and vision is needed to reimagine a Gallagher Bluedorn for the future.

That vision centers around an estimated \$14.9 million renovation and expansion project to modernize the space and bring a world-class patron experience to match the world-class performance experience that Gallagher Bluedorn offers.

Originally built to host 140 events and serve up to 14,000 guests annually, the center currently hosts nearly 600 events and more than 115,000 guests each year — operating at ten times its expected capacity.

After 20 years of being so well-loved and well-utilized by the community, the space is in need of modernization, updates and repairs.

The renovation plan includes the addition of much-needed facilities, including additional restrooms, a secured coat room, modern box office and service counters, a new patron lounge, a multipurpose event space for private dinners, rehearsals, small performances and more, as well as seating improvements in the Catherine Cassidy Gallagher Great Hall, a new dynamic entry plaza and an added drive lane for drop-off.

"Every single component of this project is about better serving our patrons," Carignan said. "Because of how much use we get out of Gallagher Bluedorn, we've long outgrown the space we're in. We need more restrooms, we need more areas for guests to visit with each other before and after the shows, we need better parking and drop-off areas, and we need better vendor and catering spaces for our events. Right now, we offer a world-class performance experience, and we want our patron experience to match that."



A rendering of the proposed south end expansion to the Gallagher Bluedorn includes a new dynamic entry plaza, multipurpose event space, heightened patron amenities and adds a drive lane for drop-off.





The university recently announced the launch of a new capital campaign, which will raise funds for the renovation and expansion project.

**Gale Bonsall**, '78, a *Friends of the Gallagher Bluedorn* board member and longtime seat sponsor, says he hopes the community will once again find value in supporting the Gallagher Bluedorn.

"I made a gift when they first started the campaign to build the Gallagher Bluedorn, and I'm making a gift again because I want to see that it lives on," he said. "I want my grandchildren, and their grandchildren, to be able to enjoy the Gallagher Bluedorn like I did. If we don't step up and support causes that benefit the community, then we may lose out on having this place for future generations."

**"I brought my kids here all the time when they were growing up, and we had so many great memories here as a family."**

- GALE BONSTALL

Bonsall, like so many others who have been impacted by the Gallagher Bluedorn, says the place is filled with memories, and special moments, for him and his family.

"Over the last 20 years, I've seen countless shows, including performances at places like the Sydney Opera House or the Kennedy Center. Ironically, sitting there at the Sydney Opera House, I'd just as soon be at the Gallagher Bluedorn. One of the best shows I've ever seen was at the Gallagher Bluedorn, back in the third or fourth season when the Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra visited from Russia. I had never heard anything quite like that. The combination of the incredibly talented musicians and the acoustics in the Great Hall; it was something I'll never forget. It's pretty great to have something like this right in our backyard," said Bonsall.



## A PLACE TO INSPIRE, and be inspired

Over the years, the Gallagher Bluedorn has been exactly what it was meant to be and so much more.

It's been a home for the wfsymphony, where local musicians can perform in a space with nationally-renowned acoustics. It's a space for the Kaleidoscope Series for Youth program, a leading theatre education program that's reached more than half a million children across the state.

It's a place where students in the UNI School of Music and UNI Department of Theatre can perform on a professional level in front of an audience of over a thousand people or cut their teeth working backstage for big-name performances.

"We truly are a launching pad for greatness," Carignan said. "The students who perform here, and work behind the scenes here, go on to do amazing things. We have

former students working all over the world, in Times Square, Broadway and Hollywood, and they all got their start here."

A big part of the center's mission is not just creating world-class performance opportunities, but world-class learning experiences, too.

As the second biggest employer on campus, Gallagher Bluedorn employs students in all aspects of performing



arts management — whether it's marketing, customer service and ticketing, fundraising, lighting, sound or stage setup and teardown.

**“Something that makes us really unique is that our students help with every aspect of our operations.”**

- STEVE CARIGNAN

“While ISU and Iowa have unions working backstage, our crew is completely made up of students,” said Carignan. “When they work for us, our standards are very high and it's real world risks here. They have no choice but to be successful, and that's what makes our students stand out in the field. When Wynton Marsalis performs here and compliments a student's sound work, that's huge on their resume — that's something nobody else has. And that's why our former students get hired around the world — because employers know our reputation, and they can trust that our students do great work.”

**Karissa Riehl**, '06, a UNI Department of Theatre alumna, is one of many students employed by the Gallagher Bluedorn over the years. During her time at UNI, Riehl spent two years working backstage at the center. Now, she works as a union electrician in New York City, doing lighting work for “SNL” and “Jimmy Kimmel Live!”.

“Working backstage was such a great opportunity because it gave me the chance to connect with



touring shows,” she said. “[When Broadway shows would come to the Gallagher Bluedorn] I was always asking the road crew questions about what their jobs were like. One person I met when I was part of the ‘Miss Saigon’ crew ended up being someone I now know in New York.”

Another former crew member, **Jake Barnwell**, '18, who graduated with a degree in theatre design and production, now works for an event production company in Nashville, Tennessee.



Barnwell says his time at the Gallagher Bluedorn was a defining experience in his career — allowing him to gain a breadth of technical skills in production, but also to see some of his favorite shows and to meet people from the industry.

“My time working at the Gallagher Bluedorn afforded me opportunities that most people don't get to have. I got to see and work with ‘Rent,’ ‘Camelot,’ ‘Pippin’ and other big concert artists and comedians,” he said. “Working with big productions and top level professionals is such a unique experience that's difficult to get in most college performing arts jobs. As staff, we were supposed to respect the privacy of visiting artists and not ask them for autographs or to take selfies with them, so I was pretty impressed this one time when Jay Leno reached out and engaged with us. Crew members from the tour used to notice how hard we were working or how well we were doing, and they'd give us business cards and tell us to contact them when we got done with school.”

Carignan confirms this is a pretty common occurrence at the Gallagher Bluedorn, and a testament to the work being done by students.

Beyond student employees, the center's impact can be felt by so many others from around the community and the state.

**Christine Moad**, who goes by her stage name “Miss Christine,” is one of the many musicians touched by the Gallagher Bluedorn over the years.

“I grew up thirty minutes north of here in the small town of Allison,” she said. “As a young child, my school would take field trips to the Gallagher Bluedorn, and I'd stare down at that stage, dreaming big. I've seen many, many shows here. Now, it's so surreal to be here on this stage, looking up at where I used to sit. I'm so grateful to be able to perform here.”

Although not an alum, Moad remembers taking bass lessons at Gallagher Bluedorn with **Sandy Nordahl**, '90, longtime staff technical director.

“Sandy helped me get ready for my audition for Berklee [College of Music],” she said. “I got accepted, and after graduating from Berklee, I went to Nashville and toured with a lot of different acts all over the country and Europe. Eventually I decided I wanted to do my own music, so I moved back to Iowa about three years ago now and wrote my first album, which was released last year.”

Moad returned to GBPAC in the summer of 2020 to perform in the “Local Legends” virtual performance series, which celebrates local talent on stage at Gallagher Bluedorn with live-streamed performances.

The “Local Legends” series is just one of the many ways the Gallagher Bluedorn continues to inspire through art and music — even in the time of COVID-19.



## AN EVEN brighter future

Though many of this year's 20th anniversary festivities were upended due to the pandemic, for those who know and love Gallagher Bluedorn, there's still plenty to celebrate and even more to look forward to in the next 20 years and beyond.

"We've now had a generation of kids who've grown up with Gallagher Bluedorn, and we're starting to see the ripples through the community," said Carignan. "That's a pretty amazing thing and something to celebrate. We're standing on the shoulders of the people with the vision and commitment to make this place a reality. Now, it's our job to take Gallagher Bluedorn to the next level so we can make sure that future generations enjoy it just as much as we have."

Carignan is looking forward to a front row seat to experience the creativity, imagination and inspiration in store for the Gallagher Bluedorn's future.

"The future generation, they're our rocket ships," Carignan said. "They are the ones who will carry us into the future. The kids who come here for our Kaleidoscope program, the theatre and music students who perform on our stage and the crew of students who work behind the scenes here at Gallagher Bluedorn — they all go on to do great things. That's why it's so important for us to be able to serve them well, give them opportunities, inspire them and make sure they have what they need to be successful when it comes time for them to take off."

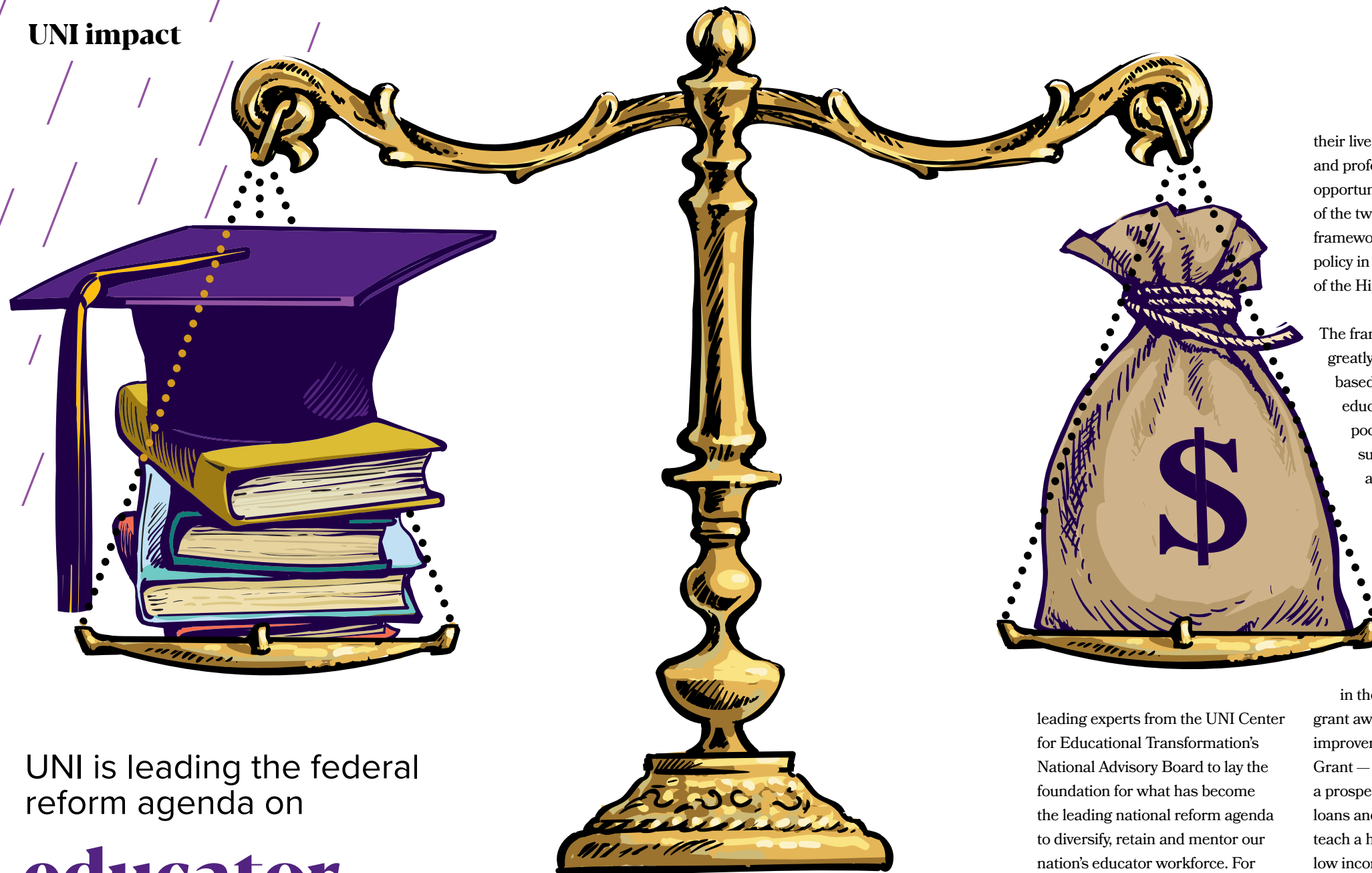
All that's left to do now is get ready for the launch. **UNI**

**"Right now, we're standing on the shoulders of the people with the vision and commitment to make this place a reality. Now, it's our job to take Gallagher Bluedorn to the next level so we can make sure that future generations enjoy it just as much as we have."**

- STEVE CARIGNAN







## UNI is leading the federal reform agenda on educator preparation

// How do we increase representation in the teaching profession? How do we address educator shortages? How do we promote mentorship opportunities, and help our best educators stay in the teaching profession?

These are huge questions. But they are the right questions for the University of Northern Iowa to be asking and addressing. For the past year, the University of Northern Iowa has played a leading role in revitalizing the reform agenda for educator preparation in the United States Congress.

It started with a convening co-hosted by the University of Northern Iowa and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in the summer of 2019. UNI faculty from a variety of educator preparation disciplines were joined by

leading experts from the UNI Center for Educational Transformation's National Advisory Board to lay the foundation for what has become the leading national reform agenda to diversify, retain and mentor our nation's educator workforce. For two days, participants of the UNI American Association of State Colleges and Universities convening unpacked and defined key challenges, opportunities and needs affecting the preparation and retention of educators in our nation's schools. Some of the topics discussed included the high cost to become an educator, needed improvements to existing federal grant programs for teachers, opportunities for growing the demographic representation of educators serving America's schools, the role of technology in preparing today's youth for success throughout

their lives, and better compensation and professional development opportunities for educators. The result of the two-day gathering was a new framework for educator preparation policy in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The framework outlines proposals to greatly enhance access to need-based federal student aid for educators to reduce their out-of-pocket costs for student teaching supplies, licensing exam fees and other necessary expenses that are currently excluded from the provisions of federal law that provide for such aid to be used for textbooks, computers and other supplies. The framework also proposes an increase

in the maximum allowable grant award for and make necessary improvements to the federal TEACH Grant — a program designed to reduce a prospective teacher's reliance on loans and requires the recipient to teach a high need subject area in a low income school for five of the eight years following graduation. However, poor design and implementation have caused many TEACH Grant recipients nationwide to not meet their service obligation, which triggers the grant dollars to be repaid with interest backdated from the date the grant was initially disbursed. Our framework adds necessary protections so TEACH Grant recipients are able to fulfill their five years of service and avoid paying the dollars back. The proposal also calls for new grant programs to support the diversification of the educator profession, the implementation of technology in

schools, and a host of forward-thinking policy changes that support our nation's educators and the schools and children they serve.

This work has caught the attention of scholars, institutional leaders and government relations professionals in more than 30 states, as well as prominent national organizations who advocate for education policy in Washington, D.C. After the draft was created, UNI's Office of Governmental Relations headed to audiences in Texas, Louisiana, Georgia and Washington, D.C., to enlist a network of advocates on the framework. Two prominent partners — the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education and the Teacher Education Council for State Colleges and Universities — have also partnered on this work.

The coalition UNI has helped to build is laying the groundwork with key members of Congress who are writing our nation's policy on educator preparation. Though the Higher Education Act was last reauthorized in 2008, this broad law governing colleges and universities at the federal level is set to reauthorize every decade. Recognizing the moment to shape the contours of a critical section of law that impacts a signature program for the University of Northern Iowa in its rich legacy of preparing educators, we are hard at work leading the national conversation on the future of the federal government's role in helping colleges and universities prepare those who serve our nation's children and schools so well. **UNI**





NEW BEGINNINGS BRING

# new hope

Through a three-way partnership, Teach Waterloo shows signs of change with its first graduating class.

**Dawn Boone**, '05, is about to become a University of Northern Iowa alum, again. This time she's joined by first-timers **Pam Palmer** and **Benjamin Smith**.

Together, they represent new chapters and new beginnings. And hope. The three constitute the first graduating class of Teach Waterloo, offered by the University of Northern Iowa College of Education in conjunction with the Waterloo Community School District (WCSD) and funded in partnership with the R.J. McElroy Trust. The program has a simple goal: to increase the number of minority teachers to support student success. Students completing the program are eligible for Iowa licensure to teach elementary education and, if successful, have a three-year agreement for continued employment with the WCSD.

Studies have shown that having a teacher in a classroom who looks like you can increase the likelihood that students complete high school and aspire to attend college. With changing demographics, "minority" and underrepresented students will become the majority in many schools of the future. But while the population of Black and Latinx students continues to grow, the diversity of the workforce remains mismatched in public schools.

"Teach Waterloo moves systemic change forward across educational systems in a transformative way," says **Megan McKenzie**, '12, executive director of the McElroy Trust. "The research supporting positive outcomes for students of color graduating from high school and attending college points to

## WHAT IS DRIVING TEACH WATERLOO?

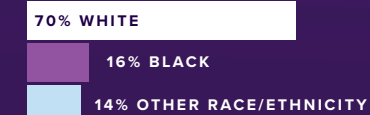
Driving Teach Waterloo are the local needs of a community that is part of UNI's home and a school district that is a strong partner in providing field experience for UNI Teacher Education.

### THE BREAKDOWN

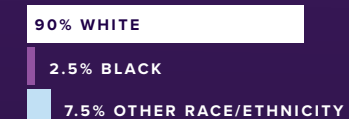
#### IOWA:



#### WATERLOO:



#### CEDAR FALLS:



the importance of diversifying the teacher workforce. Teachers who mirror the race of their students are incredibly important role models for their success."

"The rich diversity of the Cedar Valley is a treasure for us, as this provides varied experience and exposure for our teacher education students," says **Colleen Mulholland**, dean of the College of Education. "But the imbalance within the teaching workforce is striking. We know what the research tells us, and collectively, we must be intentional in our commitment to diversifying the teaching workforce."

**Kingsley Botchway II**, chief officer of human resources and equity for WCSD, says alignment and mutual respect of the three partners drives each partner's commitment and the program's sustainability. "Everyone is aligned knowing that this is necessary; that, in itself, is transformative, and doesn't always happen."

"The McElroy Trust previously supported similar successful programs at Wartburg College that increased the number of minority educators within the Waterloo Community School District. We knew the model could be replicated and fit with R.J. McElroy's purpose of supporting deserving young people in northeast Iowa," McKenzie says.

### THE FIRST COHORT

Students in the program are drawn from current paraeducators whom the district has recommended, who then apply with the assistance of





## The first graduating class includes:

### DAWN BOONE

**Dawn Boone**, 46, most recently a family support worker with Irving Elementary. She initially enrolled at UNI in teacher education in 1992 but later withdrew. She returned and gained her bachelor's degree in 2005 in leisure, youth and human services. She's been a secretary for the district, a behavior intervention specialist and paraeducator as well.

### BENJAMIN SMITH

**Benjamin Smith**, 28, a behavioral intervention specialist with the district. He earned his associate degree from Hawkeye Community College, and is also known as an artist in the community, most recently creating "The Last Diaspora Show," a free public art event held in February 2020 with his local business Eyeodine.

### PAM PALMER

**Pam Palmer**, 42, a special education paraeducator for 22 years, eight with WCSD. She also has an associate's degree from Hawkeye, as well as child development associate certification in early childhood.

College of Education advisers, UNI admissions specialists and student success coaches. The college provides the coursework and guidance toward degree completion and licensure. Waterloo contributes textbooks, a district liaison for the students and the flexibility and support which allows the students to attend class while remaining employed. McElroy Trust supports student tuition and fees.

The students are considered "fellows" in the program, recognizing the experience each already brings to the program and the classroom. Teach Waterloo gives WCSD employees an opportunity to go that next step — for some, sooner or later in their careers.

Boone, Smith and Palmer can easily identify with the program's objectives.

"I've often felt like I'm playing the role of a teacher. I was a para for 11 years. I always wanted to be a teacher," Boone says. "I felt like Teach Waterloo is a great choice."

"I was drawn to the Teach Waterloo program by the immense need for diversity amongst educators. I can count on one hand the number of teachers of color I had as role models. These teachers were amazing and yet so few and far between that I never gave much thought towards myself being a teacher," says Palmer. "I feel this program serves as

a solution to bringing qualified teachers of color into education, which will benefit all students. I am thankful everyday for the opportunity to be part of this amazing program."

"I loved the idea of getting more teachers of color into the school system. I think this is an idea that we all understand, because it is rare to have an African American teacher, and a male is even more rare," adds Smith.

## SECOND-YEAR ADJUSTMENTS

Teach Waterloo has evolved since its launch in summer 2018. Intended as a two-year program, plus student teaching, it kicked off with a special introductory summer course. That first year all regular courses were held on the UNI campus. The fellows worked full-time while taking a full load of classes.

It was not easy, and the numbers in the program dwindled. Entering this second fall, college and district representatives reaffirmed a shared commitment to making the program work and refined the path forward. A big part of its evolution has been a push for greater flexibility in location and timing of courses and workload options.

While WCSD allowed Teach Waterloo students to leave the district to attend classes, the fellows found it difficult juggling both classes and work, including travel time back and



## A shared dream

**Shakari Baker-Bruce** is part of a class of 12 fellows in the second cohort for Teach Waterloo and a UNI alumna graduating with a B.A. in social work in 2017. She currently works as a behavioral intervention specialist at Irving Elementary in Waterloo. The Waterloo native has always had a passion for working with youth, and chose to seek her second degree to become an elementary teacher. She is also Dawn Boone's daughter.

### How did you hear about the program and what drew you to it?

I heard about the program through my mother. She has motivated me my whole life and she is a big reason why I have my first degree. She has set the example for me, and on top of that, I love working with children. I didn't want to pass up the opportunity of having my own class someday and being able to continue to have a positive impact on youth — just in a different light.

### What's different about your current role and your future role as a teacher?

Instead of interacting with one student at a time, I will be able to interact with a full classroom. I also will be able to incorporate some of my knowledge from working with behaviors into my own classroom.

### What influence has your mother had on you in choosing to apply to Teach Waterloo?

I watched her give it her all, as she has always done since I was a child and that is what has influenced me. She has always taught me to work hard for what you want in life and she is a shining example of what that looks like.



forth. Moving some classes to WCSD's Education Service Center in Waterloo made a difference, with students applauding UNI professors, Botchway and WCSD liaison **Joy Briscoe** for making it happen.

"I love that we're really trying to understand and meet our participants where they're at. It's not a one-size-fits-all program, but it's being responsive to the needs of the program," says Briscoe.

"Looking ahead, we're trying to do more with putting classes either in Waterloo or offering a hybrid course, so there is some time on campus or some time when the fellows could just pull up the course online," says **Robin Dada**, head of curriculum and instruction at the college. "Or we could hold classes later in the day. We're trying to work with them to give more options for study and employment at the same time."

Flexibility remains paramount as the second cohort of students began in summer 2020 with a lighter load of nine to 10 hours a semester. "Our intent is to look at some alternative course timings, and we'll be looking at accelerated classes where they go more hours and finish faster. We're open to experimenting to support their progress," Dada says.

"UNI has done a tremendous job looking at evaluating challenges from before and providing a plethora of options which has been great," Botchway says. "On our end, we tried to do a good job of finding people who were passionate about teaching or saw the benefit of the program. We were clear about seeking who has risen to the top of our district as a person of color, who has shown leadership qualities — not only as a teacher of color, but as any teacher."

## A GOAL WITHIN SIGHT

Boone, Palmer and Smith acknowledge some rough patches along the way. Palmer faced the difficult task of balancing work, family and school as a single parent. Smith called the journey,

# Each knows what kind of teacher they want to be.

"I am going to be a teacher that my students can look up to. We find ourselves faced with issues regarding acceptance and diversity as a nation. It is imperative for me to create an atmosphere in the classroom where all students have a great sense of self, efficacy, representation and pride. I plan to teach students how to push themselves past discouragement and adversities. I am a living testament to what you can achieve when you keep striving for better, no matter what obstacles life may throw your way."

- PAM PALMER

"I hope to be a real teacher, realistic. I felt that when I was younger: How are we going to use this? I want to be a realistic teacher tying everything we can learn to reality, I also want to be a passionate teacher. I want kids to know that yes, I care about your well-being. I want to make sure that kids know that I'm there, I have a passion."

- DAWN BOONE

“

I hope to be a teacher who inspires my students to become great at whatever they choose to do — to become resilient and to prosper and grow a love for their chosen field and install a passion for not just learning, but to bring the learning to higher levels and peaks, and to simply succeed at what they set out to do."

- BENJAMIN SMITH

"interesting, fun, exciting, hard and challenging," with a pandemic adding another level of disruption. While student teaching last fall, Boone grappled with the realities of time management on a teacher's day.

"Saying that things were stressful and could make you lose your head would be an understatement. With that being said, there is success at the end. You have to want to succeed more than anything else and truly want to make a difference in the world," Smith says.

With graduation upon them, the three now have their sights set on their holy grail — their first classrooms as lead teacher. They welcome the responsibility and potential impact of this larger role.

"While I have worked in education for many years as a para, I'm aware there is a greater responsibility in going from an assistant to lead teacher," Palmer adds. "Being a teacher takes a lot of work and dedication and everything you do needs to have the best interest of all your students in mind."

## A LASTING IMPACT

Many involved with Teach Waterloo see benefits that go beyond helping students achieve their individual dreams.

"Sometimes people are reluctant to try something. People know me in the community, growing up as a young adult, being able to see, she did it, she was a single mom, she worked all these jobs," Boone says. "They see that it's possible, and if you put your best forward, you can do it, too. If I can do it, they can do it."

"We have to create a teaching workforce that is diverse, and this contributes to that goal," says Dada. "At the same time, we have to work with more white teachers to be more culturally responsive and culturally sustaining in their work, so the more students they interact and engage with, the broader the students' perspectives become."

"It's a big deal. We've been talking about it as a team," Botchway says. "Especially now, especially in context of what's happening nationally, and looking at organizations that are trying to do work around ending systemic inequality. This means a lot." **UNI**



# DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH

## Collaborative project highlights diversity in Cedar Valley

A new student-led project, “Diversity is our Strength,” aims to challenge racism and uplift underrepresented voices throughout the Cedar Valley.

The project is a collaboration between students in Professor **Bettina Fabos**’ interactive digital studies class, and **Shuaib Meacham**, associate professor of literacy and education who has helped guide the students’ work.

As part of this project, students created and installed an 80 by 20 foot wheat paste mural in downtown Waterloo, and built an interactive website to share the stories of persons of color from around the Cedar Valley. A number of community members were photographed and interviewed for the web project, including local public school students and area leaders — like Waterloo Mayor **Quentin Hart**, ‘03; **Beverly Smith**, ‘83, former regent and associate superintendent for Waterloo Schools; and **Mickye Johnson**, ‘77, former director of UNI’s Upward Bound program. In addition to sharing information about their background, each participant shared their thoughts on diversity and what it means to them.

“When multiple perspectives come together, it forces us to challenge our thinking and belief systems,” said Smith in her interview on the website. “When diversity is valued, problems can be better understood and more effectively resolved.”

By creating this platform and uplifting diverse voices, the group hopes this project will be a part of a more lasting change.

To see the “Diversity is Our Strength” website, visit [dios.uni.edu](https://dios.uni.edu). **UNI**





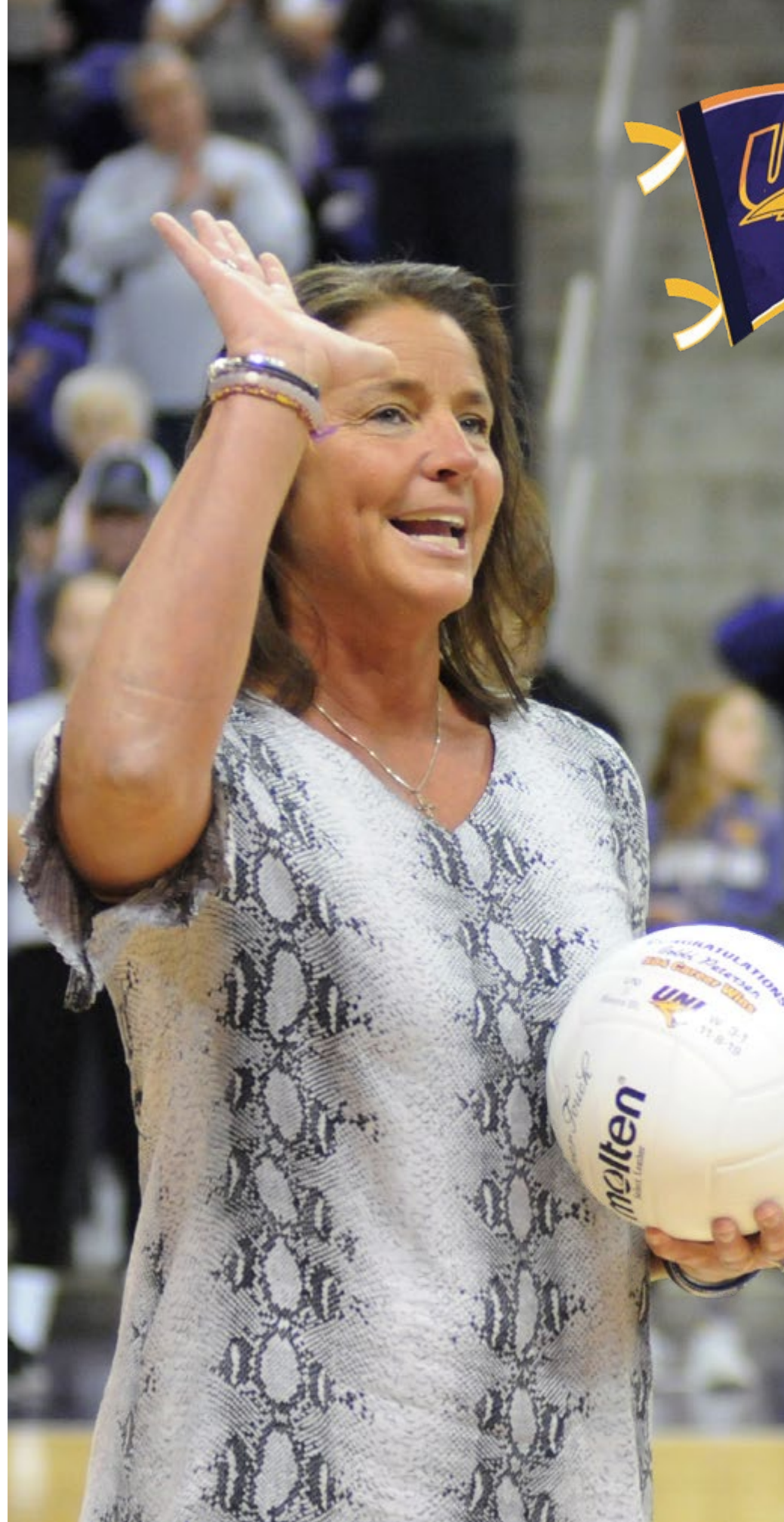




# A+

## A Winning Legacy Continues

Coach **Bobbi Petersen**, '90, '92, has been a part of the UNI Volleyball program since 1986 as a player, assistant coach or head coach. She took over as the head coach in 2001 and has amassed 509 wins, was named the 2002 AVCA National Coach of the Year and has led the Panthers to the Sweet 16 multiple times. Despite opportunities to move on to higher-profile jobs, she remains at UNI and lives in the same house that she was raised in just down the road from the McLeod Center in Dike.



### Did you ever imagine yourself staying here this long?

I probably didn't. So many coaches move around to get different experiences. But a lot of it comes down to timing and the way things worked out in the end. There is a feeling of an awesome responsibility to try to hold up a tradition that so many people have been a part of that has been intriguing for me. It has always motivated me. There is still more that I want to do here. It has been pretty easy to stay for those reasons.

### You grew up in Dike, you played just down the road and you now live in the house that you grew up in. What does that generational connection to the Cedar Valley mean to you and your family?

It has been such an incredible experience. I tell people that it isn't because I am afraid of going anywhere. I have had a lot of awesome experiences and had the chance to travel to a lot of places in my career. I am a big small-town person. I love the opportunity to raise my kids in a small-town atmosphere. They have a whole community that cares about you and roots for you no matter what and that is a cool experience.

### What was it like playing in the West Gym and how does it compare to a full McLeod Center?

In the West Gym, the crowd was right there, you could reach out and touch some of them. I don't even know how student-athletes would handle it, because it is a lot of pressure having all of those people right on top of you. Our fans truly felt like they made a difference in the outcome of the matches, and they did. Nebraska was ranked No. 1 and their coach said, "We're not going to play in that snake-pit."

### You have had the opportunity to see generations of student-athletes come through your doors. How has the UNI experience and education impacted their future as leaders?

That is exactly the reason I love coaching and why I have stayed in it as long as I have. This is a crucial time in their life when they come to college and grow and develop. We help them grow as a part of the team and help them build some of the intangibles. There are so many professors and staff members on campus that are truly difference-makers in these young women's lives. Whenever I get worn out, I'll get an email from a former student-athlete telling me how their experience as a UNI student-athlete is helping them with a situation at work or a situation at home or dealing with incredible loss in their life. It always reminds me exactly why we are doing this. UNI does it better than most. The student-athletes are cared about here, but they are also challenged and pushed on a daily basis.



# DESIGNING **FOR** change

Chaotic times are not unfamiliar to **Anesa Kajtazovic**, '07. As a Bosnian American, she immigrated to the United States with her family when she was 10 years old. After surviving the war and enduring refugee camps, her family was fortunate to be one of the first to be placed directly in Waterloo, Iowa — in February — a challenge of its own. These experiences would shape how Kajtazovic later came to view politics, community and leaving the world a little better than she found it.

After attending the University of Northern Iowa, graduating with a double major in public administration and business management, Kajtazovic jumped feet first into politics. At the age of 24, she became the youngest woman ever elected to the Iowa legislature and the first Bosnian American elected to any public office in the United States. A couple of years later, she entered the race for an open seat in Congress. She didn't win, but that certainly didn't stop her.

She instead transitioned into the nonprofit world, working in child abuse prevention as executive director for Family & Children's Council of Black Hawk County. Today, she's the development director for the Allen Foundation at UnityPoint Health and a volunteer and board member for various organizations, including the Waterloo Community Foundation, the Rotary Club of Cedar Falls, Waterloo Telecommunication Commission and Bosnian-American Leadership Network of the Cedar Valley (an organization which she also founded).



## THIS MUCH IS CERTAIN: KAJTAZOVIC IS NOT ONE TO SIT IDLE.

In winter 2019-20, Kajtazovic decided to explore her entrepreneurial side, enrolling in Red Cedar — Cedar Valley's CO.STARTERS, a nine-week, cohort-based program that equips aspiring entrepreneurs to turn ideas into action. She left with her "big idea" and in January 2020, googled who at UNI she should talk to about it. In her search, she came across the textiles and apparel (TAPP) program, and promptly reached out to **Annette Lynch**, professor of textiles and apparel and director of the School of Applied Human Sciences, who ... did not seem at all interested in her idea. Pivoting, Kajtazovic mentioned another idea she'd been toying with — an e-commerce site for reversible, sustainable and ethically-made clothing. But, she admitted that she was struggling to find brands that met all of her requirements.

"That's because there aren't any! You should do that," said Lynch. This new concept caught Lynch's attention. There was just one small problem: Kajtazovic had no experience with fabric, sewing, manufacturing or ... really, any of it.

Not one to shy from a challenge, she went home and started researching immediately, growing to love this new idea more and more. She might not have design experience, but she had the passion and business know-how to get this idea off the ground. Perhaps students from the UNI TAPP program could help with the areas where she was lacking?

Unfortunately, this too would hit a snag. By early spring, all students were already committed to internships and other initiatives for the upcoming summer.

## IN WALKS A PANDEMIC...

There aren't many good things to say for the COVID-19 crisis, but here's one of them: It forced people to get creative, fast. In a last-ditch effort, Kajtazovic reached out to Lynch once more in early May.

At this point, some of the students, particularly seniors, were getting nervous. They needed a final summer internship in order to receive their degree, but companies were canceling left and right. Many had to contend with furloughing employees — not a great time for interns.

Such was the case for **Jenna Vermost**, '20, who was looking forward to an internship in NYC when COVID-19 put everything on hold. Many other TAPP students were in the same boat, so Lynch and fellow TAPP professor,

**Sharon Mord**, started reaching out to alumni to see how they could help. A few students turned to **Laura Van Waardhuizen**, '04, who helped oversee internships to support the "Masks Across the Frontlines Iowa" initiative and develop the website Mask Facts, which houses carefully researched information for mask makers and wearers. Vermost was almost set to help here as well, before Kajtazovic reached out one more time to see who might be available. Vermost, whose preference is creative design and sewing, was the perfect fit.

So too was **Rachel Funkhouser**, senior, who was planning to head out on an overseas mission trip. She wouldn't be graduating in May 2020, but when her trip was inevitably canceled, she realized it would be a great chance to get a leg up on her summer internship. When she heard about Kajtazovic's

Jenna  
Vermost



Rachel  
Funkhouser





## THE Vision

**ETHICALLY AND SUSTAINABLY MADE CLOTHES FOR WOMEN TO WORK, TRAVEL AND PLAY**



**reversible**



**wrinkle-resistant**



**multi-purposeful**



**comfortable**



need for help, she was thrilled. Funkhouser hopes to eventually work for a smaller company, where she'll have to wear multiple hats in both technical and creative design, so this was an incredible opportunity for hands-on experience.

## KAJTAZOVIC HAD HER TEAM.

The three would work closely, socially-distanced of course, throughout the summer. Kajtazovic first walked them through her vision for a line of ethically and sustainably-made clothes for women to work, travel and play. She wanted the pieces to be reversible, wrinkle-resistant, multi-purposeful and comfortable, utilizing sustainably

grown and ethically harvested/manufactured materials.

With a tall task in front of them, the interns got straight to work, researching fabrics, patterns and manufacturers. Funkhouser would eventually find the perfect fabric for her pieces, a soft and sustainable material called Tencel, made out of the fiber of eucalyptus trees. It's similar to cotton, but even softer and utilizes less water to be grown. This fabric, along with linen, would play a large role in the patterns they would eventually develop.

Together, the team assembled four pieces for Kajtazovic's new line, "Anesa K": two reversible blazers, a reversible skirt and a top that can be worn in four different ways. With these items

in hand, Kajtazovic has a completed "tech pack" she can pass along to possible manufacturers to inspect and, eventually, replicate.

## LOOKING AHEAD.

In fall 2020, Kajtazovic secured two more interns, including Funkhouser, who utilized the opportunity to fulfill an independent study credit in dress and human behavior. To do so, she'll once again start with research, this time focusing on how different companies market their brands to their targeted audiences, and how these practices could be applied to "Anesa K." She'll also help build their portfolio, utilizing her photography skills to showcase the four pieces in various styles and configurations.

Both interns are staying in touch throughout the next year, as Kajtazovic continues her search for the right manufacturer. It's a difficult task, as they balance sustainability, ethics and cost. But it's been a worthwhile struggle.

As Kajtazovic reflects upon her journey, she's begun to question her own purchasing decisions. What is the role we can all play to support businesses that are doing good?

"The world can be a really depressing place, especially these days, but we as consumers are powerful," Kajtazovic stated passionately.

Connecting back to COVID and her past year she continued, "We all have to envision what we want the change to look like ... there are a lot of positives that can come out of all of this."

We have no doubt Kajtazovic will do just that. With support, she'll continue to surge forward and push the boundaries of what is possible, for both herself and her community. In doing so, make the world a little better than how she found it. [UNI](#)

For updates on Kajtazovic's journey, follow along on social media @Anesa K and [anesak.com](#).



**"We can support the world that we envision through our purchasing decisions. Sometimes we underestimate that power."**

- ANESA KAJTAZOVIC







## New welcome center greets prospective students

A historic brick building at the heart of campus has been transformed into the University of Northern Iowa's new front door.

The Admissions Welcome Center, which opened in August, provides prospective students a bright, welcoming space complete with views of the Campanile, a monitor featuring the day's visiting "Future Panthers" and colorful video display highlighting how the university helps students reach their goals.

"We wanted this to be a memorable space for prospective students — a spot that future alumni will recall from the first time they stepped foot on campus," said Admissions Director **Terri Crumley**. "Campus visits are a crucial part of the recruitment process, and I'm

pleased at how the university has stepped up its efforts to welcome visitors to campus."

The 4,100-square-foot space located next to the Curris Business Building was originally constructed in 1932 as a maintenance building (the word "Shops" is still carved in stone above a lower-level door) and later transformed into an art studio. Most recently, the facilities design and construction offices, as well as custodial offices, were housed in the facility.

A renovation project added a new presentation hall with seating for about 55 people and a large projector screen, main space with "Panthers" written in purple text on the ceiling, upstairs conference rooms and an elevator to ensure accessibility.

"That first impression is huge," said **Shelly Christensen**, '11, admission events coordinator, who served on the planning committee. "We wanted it to have that wow factor."

Until the summer of 2020, visiting students and their families first went to Gilchrist Hall, gathering in a lobby that sometimes got crowded as others passed by to change their class schedule, pay tuition or get a vehicle sticker. The new space is dedicated solely to prospective students.

The timing was perfect, Christensen said, allowing UNI to welcome visitors to campus Monday through Saturday in a building that allows for social distancing during the pandemic.



## UNI Army ROTC finds a new home in Nielsen Fieldhouse

After years of anticipation, the cadets and cadre of the University of Northern Iowa Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Panther Battalion returned to campus this fall to a new, innovative facility.

A planned upgrade to the Nielsen Fieldhouse, formerly connected to the Malcolm Price Laboratory School, was expanded to provide space for the growing program and Department of Military Science. The renovation, supported by a \$2.7 million budget from the Iowa Board of Regents, includes new offices, classrooms, lounge and meeting spaces for the department. The old gymnasium has also been transformed, including

ample space for socially-distanced physical training as well as an impressive, fully equipped new weight room dedicated to ROTC.

The space comes at a fortuitous time, as the Army launches its new physical training regime. Starting in October 2020, all soldiers are now required to pass the Army Combat Fitness Test, which replaces the Army Physical Fitness Test. The new test assesses soldiers' ability to perform physical tasks more inline to what they might encounter in combat conditions: the strength deadlift, standing power throw, hand-release pushups, sprint/drag/carry, leg tucks and 2-mile run.

Along with the improved space for physical training, the fieldhouse also provides military science with spacious, state-of-the-art classrooms and meeting spaces that actively encourage collaboration. The lounge area offers a great opportunity for cadets to get to know each other and socialize in a more relaxed setting, outside of training.

Future plans include the development of a 'call for fire' training room, where cadets will learn virtually how to call in artillery fire on an enemy. The room will be outfitted with an abundance of military technology and be the first of its kind for an ROTC battalion.

## Professor's work could help revolutionize your phone

**Pavel Lukashev**, associate professor in the department of physics, has received a National Science Foundation Award grant totaling more than \$236,000 for his research in the rapidly emerging field of spintronics. Spintronics combines magnetism and electronics to expand the battery capacity of electronics, which

enables them to run faster and more efficiently. One example of a common spintronic device is a hard drive. Lukashev and his team will use the funding to continue their research of new materials that allow for spintronic device development. The grant will also allow them to purchase supplies and equipment for their studies.





## UNI researchers will track the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Arctic

The University of Northern Iowa Department of Geography, the ARCTICenter and the GeoTREE Center have been awarded a nearly \$200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

The Rapid Response Research grant, “Tracking and Understanding Spatiotemporal Dynamics of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Arctic (COVITA)”, has been awarded to professors **Andrey Petrov**, ‘04, **Tatiana Degai**, **John DeGroote** and **Mark Welford**, who will work with UNI staff, students and a collaborator at Texas State University to develop and deploy a real-time, web-based COVID-19 data hub.

“In order to understand the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences in the Arctic, we need to bring together state-of-

the-art science, alongside with Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge systems,” said Andrey Petrov, director of the UNI ARCTICenter. Information from the study will be made available to stakeholders including Arctic residents, researchers and policymakers, and has already been used in the recent COVID-19 report to the Arctic Council.

UNI ARCTICenter, established in 2015, manages an extensive grant portfolio focused on human-environment interactions in the Arctic, social and economic change, Indigenous communities’ adaptation to changing climate and sustainable development.

A real-time Arctic COVID-19 Tracker can be found online at [arctic.uni.edu/arctic-covid-19](https://arctic.uni.edu/arctic-covid-19).

*Established in 2015, the University of Northern Iowa ARCTICenter develops collaboration among faculty, staff and students who are engaged in research and educational activities pertaining to the Arctic, remote and cold regions. UNI has a long legacy of involvement in the Arctic and cold environments research, dating back to 1941 alumna **Dorothy Jean Ray**, a renewed Arctic anthropologist. Understanding the Arctic is relevant for Iowans by aiding researchers in predicting cold weather and other hazardous weather events, and sustainable regional and community development solutions, particularly for rural settlements.*

## UNI strengthens commitment to entrepreneurship with marketing department name change

The College of Business Administration reaffirmed its commitment to encouraging and educating future entrepreneurs by changing the marketing department’s official name to the Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship. Coursework for the entrepreneurship program consists of both classroom and real-world business application, such as the financial aspects of a startup, business models, growth strategy planning and more. Students are able to partner with local businesses to assist the owner in identifying possible growth opportunities within their business. Another area on campus that received a name change is the Department of Communications. The name has officially changed to the Department of Communication and Media in order to reflect the growth and success of the digital media major program. The department’s media programs include majors in digital media, with emphases in journalism, leadership, and production and interactive digital studies. Both programs have nationally acclaimed faculty and high placement rates for graduates, with nearly 550 undergraduates enrolled in the program.



## UNI@DMACC: Preparing Iowa’s future

The University of Northern Iowa and the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) entered into a new partnership to allow placebound students a streamlined pathway to a four-year degree. The partnership, known as “UNI@DMACC,” allows students to complete the first two years at DMACC and then complete their degree online through UNI.

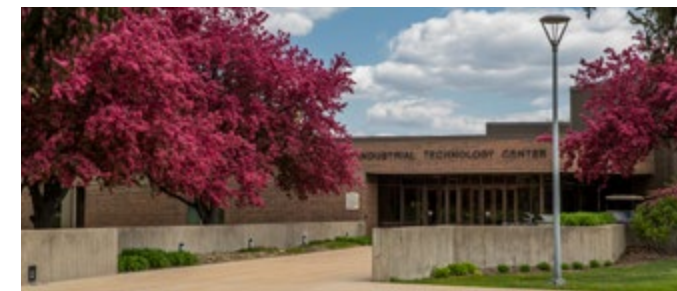
Students can build upon the strong foundation of their associate’s degree by pursuing a UNI online bachelor’s degree. Degree programs include Bachelor of Liberal

Studies, Bachelor of Applied Science in criminal justice or managing business and organizations, and Bachelor of Arts in elementary education.

Designed specifically for busy adult learners, the online programs are affordable, flexible, and relevant. Courses are taught by the same dedicated faculty who teach on campus, and students are supported by an advisor who is available to provide personalized support every step of the way. For additional program details and to request information, visit [belong.uni.edu/dmacc](https://belong.uni.edu/dmacc).

## Iowa Credit Union Foundation partners with University of Northern Iowa to bring financial literacy to high schools

The Iowa Credit Union Foundation has pledged \$50,000 to UNI in order to help train educators to teach financial literacy courses in Iowa high schools during the summer of 2020. The program allows educators to receive graduate credit while learning how to better teach students about the importance of personal finance. Approximately 200-400 teachers will participate in the training over the next five years and will positively impact the 30,000 students that graduate from Iowa high schools each year by helping them understand student loans, debt and savings.



## \$44.7 million ITC project wins state approval

The Industrial Technology Center (ITC) acts as an education facility for students pursuing careers in manufacturing, engineering technology, construction and other rapidly-growing industries. Thanks to approval for \$40.5 million in funding by the State of Iowa legislature, the 46-year-old building will undergo renovations and equipment updates in order to better equip students to enter their respective fields. It will also allow for a 40% increase in enrollment. The UNI Foundation will be responsible for fundraising for the remaining cost to renovate the ITC.



1950s

**‘58 John Focht, BA,** Cedar Falls, was named one of the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier’s 8 Over 80 for 2020.

1960s

**‘66 Helen (O’Connell) Schumacher, MA,** Denver, was named one of the Waterloo/ Cedar Falls Courier’s 8 Over 80 for 2020.

**‘69 Chuck Gantenbein, BA, MA ‘73,** Mooresville, NC, retired after 44 years as a school psychologist in Iowa, Michigan and North Carolina.

1970s

**‘70 Barbara (Norris) Corson, MA, Splst ‘78,** Waterloo, was named one of the Waterloo/ Cedar Falls Courier’s 8 Over 80 for 2020.

**‘70 Mary (Gehring) Rees, BA,** Houston, TX, earned a PhD in psychology and interdisciplinary inquiry from Saybrook University in San Francisco, CA in 2019.

**‘71 Mary (Larsen) Semler, BA,** Hampton, received an Award of Merit for 40 years of leadership in the Franklin County Arts Council.

**‘74 Cheryl Mullenbach, BA,** Panora, published a book titled “Stagecoach Women: Brave and Daring Women of the Wild West.”

**‘75 Gail (Carlson) Eichstadt, BA,** Sioux Falls, SD, retired as senior staff attorney with Disability Rights South Dakota in June 2019.

**‘76 Willard Smith, BA,** Marion, OH, retired in 2018 after 15 years as the career services coordinator at the The Ohio State University at Marion.

**‘77 Dennis Johnson, BA,** Marion, retired in June 2019 after 33 years as a Lutheran pastor in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa.

**‘77 Connie King, BA,** Davenport, retired after 31 years of teaching, the last 17 at Bettendorf High School. She taught English and was the yearbook and newspaper adviser.

**‘77 Charlene (Western) Montgomery, MA,** Waterloo, was named one of the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier’s 8 Over 80 for 2020.

**‘78 Rebecca (Willson) Keeling, BA,** Waterloo, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She teaches 6th grade math and science at Blessed Maria Assunta Palotta Middle School.

**‘79 Diane (Dewall) Ballard, BM,** Gahanna, OH, is completing her 42nd consecutive year as a music educator, with the last 35 at Gahanna Jefferson Schools.

1980s

**‘80 Jerry Ask, BA,** Cedar Rapids, was named to the Financial Times 400 Top Financial Advisers for 2020.

**‘80 Ward Budweg, BA,** Decorah, with his wife, Jacky, published a book titled “The World at 10 mph,” telling of their three year bicycle adventure around the world.

**‘82 John Couture, BA,** Jacksonville, FL, is a vice president with Bank of America and recently transferred from Kansas City to the Jacksonville office.

**‘82 Ann Kness, BA,** Webster City, retired in 2015 after 33 years of teaching. She continues to substitute teach, volunteer at church and the local library and serves on the board for the local recreation center.

**‘83 Cathy Conklin, BA,** Urbandale, retired from the Urbandale School District after 30 years. For fun she took a position of office assistant with Transportation Consultants.

**‘83 Julie Nelson, BA,** Austin, TX, published a book titled “Success Faster: Quickly Launch or Relaunch Your Real Estate Career.”

**‘84 Kevin Boatright, MA,** Lawrence, KS, was named to the 12 member Friends Council of the Hall Center for the Humanities at the University of Kansas.

**‘85 Mary Potter Kenyon, BA,** Dubuque, is a program coordinator at the Shalom Spirituality Center and published a book titled “Called to Be Creative: A Guide to Reigniting Your Creativity” in Aug. 2020.

**‘86 Daneille Slifka, BA, MBA ‘93,** Windsor Heights, is director of marketing services at Flying Hippo Brand + Digital.

**‘86 Tracy Wagner, BA,** Bradenton, FL, was appointed to a five year term on the Higher Education Facilities Financing Authority by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

**‘87 James Pedersen, BA,** Blue Springs, MO, retired 7/1/2020 after 32 years of service in Missouri Public Schools, with the last 23 spent in the Fort Osage R-1 School District in Independence, MO.

**‘88 Angie (Demaria) Jones, BA,** Knoxville, is the wellness supervisor and head fitness instructor/personal trainer at the Knoxville Recreation Center.

**‘88 Patrick Murphy, BA,** Northport, AL, celebrated 25 years with the University of Alabama, with the last 23 as head softball coach.

**‘89 Lora (Moore) Kester, BA,** Marshalltown, is principal and district curriculum coordinator at Mease Elementary in the Humboldt Community School District.

1990s

**‘90 Lexy (Kness) Davies, BA,** Clarinda, is the county youth coordinator for ISU Extension & Outreach in Page County.

**‘90 Dana (Wade) Oxley, BA,** Swisher, was named Iowa Supreme Court justice by Governor Reynolds 1/28/2020.

**‘91 Steven Kremer, BA,** Cherokee, was promoted to brigadier general in the Iowa Army National Guard.

**‘91 Sherry (Tryon) Parker, BA,** La Porte City, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She teaches second grade at Dysart Geneseo Elementary.

**‘91 Rodney Zehr, BA, MA ‘02,** Mason City, was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award in Mathematics Education for Arts and Science at North Iowa Area Community College.

**‘92 Chad Butterfield, BA,** Shawnee, KS, was appointed as chief financial officer of Greene County Medical Center 6/29/2020.

**‘92 Jason Follett, BA,** Ankeny, was elected to the board of directors for Special Olympics Iowa to serve Jan. 2020 Dec. 2023.

**‘92 Paul Numedahl, BA,** Humboldt, is high school principal with the New Humboldt Community School District.

**‘93 Gail Farber, MA,** Waterloo, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is an English language development specialist at Waterloo Lincoln Elementary.

**‘93 Brent McClure, BA,** Saint Louis, MO, was named partner with Anders CPAs + Advisors effective Jan. 2021.

**‘93 Tony Reed, BA,** Marshalltown, has been executive director of the Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Center for 25 years.

**‘93 Beth (Riley) Sulentic, BA, MBA ‘02,** Cedar Falls, is director of strategic pricing at The Marmon Group.

**‘94 Wesley Golden, BA,** Clinton, was named to the 2020 Clinton High School Hall of Honor Class. He is the director of learning and collaboration for the district.

**‘94 Barbara (Sabelka) Schwamman, BA, ASC ‘16,** Osage, was a nominee for the 2019-2020 Iowa Superintendent of the Year award by the School Administrators of Iowa.

**‘96 Tatum (Teut) Buse, BA, MBA ‘01,** Marion, was named chief financial officer at Collins Aerospace, a division of Raytheon Technologies.

**‘96 Tom Rastrelli, BA,** Salem, OR, published a memoir titled “Confessions of a Gay Priest:

A Memoir of Sex, Love, Abuse, and Scandal in the Catholic Seminary.”

**‘96 John Sutter, BA,** Asbury, is senior director of marketing with Alliant Credit Union.

**‘97 Denise (Gunderson) Alderks, MA, ASC ‘97,** Dike, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She teaches 5th grade at Aldrich Elementary in Cedar Falls.

**‘97 Sheila (Arends) Kinman, BA,** West Palm Beach, FL, is senior vice president of philanthropy with the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay.

**‘98 Allison (Heland) Behne, BA,** Jefferson, earned an MS degree from Walden University in 2005 and co authored a book titled “The CAFE Book, Expanded Second Edition.”

**‘98 Trisha (McMillan) Chambers, BA, MA ‘00,** Spokane, WA, teaches high school Spanish and travels with students around the world.

**‘98 Fred Lowery, MA,** Grand Island, NE, is in his 10th year teaching special education at Grand Island Senior High School. He is part of the Engineering and Technology Academy and teaches transition related classes.

2000s

**‘00 Alexander Poole, MA,** Bowling Green, KY, is professor of English and interim

department head of modern languages at Western Kentucky University. He published a book titled “Learning a Language: Understanding the Fundamentals of Language” in Oct. 2020.

**‘00 Jessica (Gisch) Richter, BA,** Clive, is a partner with BKD CPAs & Advisors.

**‘00 Tamar Sanikidze, MM,** Austin, TX, is head of voice division at the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin.

**‘01 Rollie Fors, BA,** Leawood, KS, is senior vice president in the advisory and transaction group at CBRE.

**‘01 Andrew Johnson, BA,** Marion, is chief financial officer at Keystone Savings Bank.

**‘02 Michael Creen, BA,** Huntington Beach, CA, was admitted to the partnership at PwC.

**‘03 Mark McConnell, BS,** Pella, published a book titled “The Prime of My Days: Lessons in the Prime of Life from the Book of Job.”

**‘03 Kelli Snyder, BA, EdD ‘12,** Dunkerton, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/ Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is an associate professor of health, recreation and community at UNI.

**‘04 Scott Behrends, BA,** Cedar Falls, was named one



of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. He is co-owner of Ninja U.

**‘04 Joe Bolick, BA**, Waterloo, was appointed director of the Iowa Waste Reduction Center at UNI on 12/20/2019.

**‘04 Tim Jones, BM**, Waukee, received his skydiving “A” license and plans to continue thrill seeking and the next license level.

**‘04 Griff Jurgens, BA**, Honolulu, HI, was named one of the Pacific Business News 40 under 40 for 2020. He is the education director of the Blue Planet Foundation, which is dedicated to clean energy initiatives.

**‘04 Becky (Ahlstrom) Lins, BA, MA ‘06**, Cedar Falls, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a counselor at Peet Junior High.

**‘04 Nick Oswald, BM**, Ankeny, was selected by the Iowa Choral Directors Association to have his 9th Grade Bass Clef Choir perform at the 2020 ICDA Choral Showcase.

**‘04 Nick Sly, BA**, Denver, CO, was named assistant vice president and branch executive of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City’s Denver branch.

**‘05 Stacey Conaway, BA, BA ‘10**, Minneapolis, MN, is senior manager of external reporting at Winnebago Industries.

**‘05 Jed Ellerbroek, BA**, Saint Louis, MO, is a small cap senior research analyst with Argent Capital Management LLC.

**‘05 Tara Raymond, BA**, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is a physical education teacher at Orange Elementary School.

**‘06 Brian Downing, MA, ASC ‘06**, Milford, was named Iowa Bandmaster’s Administrator of the Year for 2020.

**‘06 David Schmitz, BFA**, Des Moines, was named administrator of the Iowa Arts Council.

**‘07 Lindsey Newcomb, BA**, Waterloo, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is the marketing manager at Advanced Heat Treat Corp.

**‘07 Kyle Reeve, BA**, Vinton, is principal at Tilford Elementary School in the Vinton Shellsburg Community School District.

**‘07 Sharra Wagner, MM**, Kansas City, MO, earned her DMA in clarinet performance from the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance in 2013. She is the director of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Foundation.

**‘08 Tim Flattery, BA**, West Des Moines, became an employee shareholder with Holmes Murphy.

**‘08 Desiree (Hall) Garrido, BA**, Atlanta, GA, is lead talent acquisition consultant with WellStar Health System.

**‘08 Mallory (Cink) Mohwinkle, BA**, Marion, was named one of the Corridor Business Journal’s 40 under 40 for 2020. She is the director of creative services with TrueNorth Companies L.C.

**‘08 Lindsey (Leonard) Wilson, BA**, Bennington, NE, received the 2020 Alice Buffett Outstanding Teacher Award. She is a social studies teacher at Morton Middle School in Omaha.

**‘09 La Toshia Burrell, MA**, Waverly, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is the director of employee engagement at The Accel Group.

**‘09 Christopher Harms, BA**, Minneapolis, MN, was promoted to director at Varde Partners.

**‘09 Todd Henningsen, BA**, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. He is a wealth adviser for BerganKDV.

**‘09 Krystal (Campbell) Mikkilineni, BA**, Clive, is an attorney with Bradshaw, Fowler, Proctor & Fairgrave, PC.

**‘09 Andrew Morse, BA**, Cedar Falls, was named one

of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. He is assistant to the president for board and governmental relations at UNI.

**‘09 Kyle Rehnstrom, BA**, Spencer, became a shareholder at Campbell, Higgins & Mummert, P.C. 1/1/2020.

**‘09 Brandi Spates, BA**, Kansas City, MO, was selected to the 2020-2022 Centurions Class, a two year program focused on education, leadership and service in the Kansas City community.

**‘09 Daniel Velasco, BM**, Lawrence, KS, was featured on the cover of Flute Talk Magazine’s April 2020 issue. He is an assistant professor of flute at the University of Kansas.

## 2010s

**‘10 Bonnie Alger, MM**, Killeen, TX, is executive officer of the 1st Cavalry Division Band at Fort Hood, TX.

**‘10 Courtney Althoff, BA**, West Des Moines, earned an MBA from the University of Iowa in 2018 and is senior enterprise project manager with Kum & Go headquarters.

**‘10 Alexander Conyers, BA**, Waterloo, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. He teaches 9-12th grade science at West High School.

**‘10 Nicki (Valentine) Davis, BM, MM ‘12**, Cedar Falls, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She teaches 5-12th grade band at Hudson Community Schools.

**‘10 Creighton Jenness, BA, ASC ‘19**, Pocahontas, is assistant principal at the middle school of Humboldt Community School District.

**‘10 Amy (Costliow) McKinney, BA, MA ‘12**, Tega Cay, SC, is the program development manager with Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center Foundation.

**‘10 Megan (Nolte) Schmitt, BA**, Cedar Rapids, earned an MS degree in business analytics from the University of Iowa 5/15/2020.

**‘11 Sarah Deppe, BFA**, Madison, WI, was selected as the artist for a sculpture to be installed at the Black Hawk County Courthouse by the Cedar Falls Waterloo 19th Amendment Centennial Committee.

**‘11 Brent Green, BA, MA ‘19**, West Des Moines, was promoted to senior benefit analyst of human resources with UnityPoint Health.

**‘11 Kelsey Hammer Parks, BA**, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is the owner of Kelsey Hammer Productions.

**‘11 Rachelle (Hanselman) Kidwell, BA**, Cedar Falls, is the academic eligibility coordinator at UNI.

**‘11 Luke Steimel, BA**, West Des Moines, is an investment and product solutions analyst I with Principal Financial Group.

**‘12 Megan (Kammarmeyer) McKenzie, BA**, Manchester, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is executive director of the R.J. McElroy Trust.

**‘12 Ryan Murphy, BA**, Council Bluffs, was promoted to senior systems engineer at WoodmenLife in Omaha.

**‘12 Aaron Quinby, BA**, Mankato, MN, is an attorney with Fredrikson & Bryon in the real estate, family and closely held businesses and bank and finance groups.

**‘12 Carrie Radloff, MA**, Sioux City, is communications director at Westmar College.

**‘12 Alyssa (Smith) Seeman, BA**, Cedar Rapids, is a graphic support specialist for Cedar Memorial Park Funeral Home.

**‘13 Ryan Christoffer, MA, ASC ‘13**, Waterloo, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. He teaches 4th grade at Highland Elementary.

**‘13 Janae (Holtkamp) Guay, BA**, Cedar Falls, was promoted

to controller at CPM Holdings Jan. 2020.

**‘13 Jesus Lizarraga Estrada, BA, MA ‘17**, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. He is the associate director for freshmen recruitment and access at UNI.

**‘13 Danielle (Carlson) Range, BA**, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is co owner and operator of Orange Theory Fitness.

**‘13 Kelly (Wiltjer) Vick, BA**, Mount Pleasant, WI, became a trademark paralegal for SC Johnson in July 2019.

**‘14 Stacia Fortune, BA, MM ‘16**, Lawrence, KS, earned her doctorate in clarinet performance from the University of Kansas in 2019 and is a professor of clarinet and saxophone at Kansas Wesleyan University.

**‘14 Ryan Leach, BA**, Waukee, is a compliance senior associate with Wells Fargo.

**‘14 Ryan Lehmann, BA**, Cedar Falls, received the 2020 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. He teaches 2nd grade at Lowell Elementary in Waterloo.

**‘14 Joyce Levingston, BA, MA ‘17**, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar

Falls Courier for 2020. She is a community leader and director of One City’s momentum program.

**‘15 Mitchel Christoffel, BA**, Le Mars, is general manager of Total Motors and serves on the board of directors for the Le Mars Area Chamber of Commerce.

**‘15 Jessie (Nemesi) Cruise, BA**, Waukee, is a university relations consultant with Principal Financial Group.

**‘15 Jessica Du Bois, BA**, Alexandria, VA, was named one of the 40 under 40 for 2020 by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce.

**‘15 Jordan Eberhart, BA**, Coralville, earned an MBA and master’s in management communications from the University of Dubuque. He is a senior program support specialist at Collins Aerospace.

**‘15 Derek Hertges, BA, MACC ‘16**, West Des Moines, is a financial advisor with Principal Financial Group.

**‘15 Ben Owen, BM**, Coralville, earned an MA in choral conducting and pedagogy from the University of Iowa in 2020 and is director of music ministries at Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church in Cincinnati, OH.

**‘15 Audrey Wadzinski, BA**, Council Bluffs, was admitted to the Global Field Program at Miami University. During summer 2020



her work focused on education on Galapagos' blackberry and other invasive plant species.

**'16 Sarah Baker, BM,** Casa Grande, AZ, is in grad school for wind band conducting at Northern Arizona after being a middle school band director for four years.

**'16 Colleen Borczon, BA,** Glen Burnie, MD, is working towards a masters in social work at the University of Maryland as a behavioral health workforce integration service and education substance use disorder workforce expansion fellow. She is also a registered behavioral technician with Verbal Beginnings, LLC.

**'16 Sarah (Hanson) Green, BA,** West Des Moines, is vice president of philanthropy for Lutheran Services in Iowa.

**'16 Jessica (Hyslope) Lange, BA,** Ankeny, earned a MS in special education from Drake University in 2019 and is a special education teacher with Des Moines Public Schools.

**'17 Tanner Bernhard, BA,** West Des Moines, is marketing director of Truckers Insurance Associates.

**'17 Darian Jones, BA,** Des Moines, was promoted to digital analyst with Principal Financial Group.

**'17 Elizabeth Simmons, BA,** Cedar Falls, was promoted to human resources generalist at Harrison Truck Centers.

**'18 Trevor Rayhons, BA,** Chicago, IL, is a specialist in corporate communications with Horizon Therapeutics PLC.

**'18 Veronica (Greene) Schiltz, BA,** Overland Park, KS, is a student at Cleveland Chiropractic College.

**'18 Ryan Stevenson, BA,** Waterloo, was named one of the Cedar Valley's 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. He is a community leader and political activist.

**'18 Abigail Van Patten Freeman, BA,** Cedar Falls, is a behavioral health intervention services counselor with Heart and Solutions Counseling Agency and is pursuing an MA in clinical mental health counseling at UNI.

**'19 Grant Helle, BS,** Hiawatha, is an environmental specialist with the Iowa Waste Reduction Center at UNI.

## 2020s

**'20 Cody Berns, BA,** Cedar Rapids, is a police officer with the Cedar Rapids Police Department.

## Marriages

**'11 Ashlee (Shill) Gioimo, BA,** married **Brett Gioimo, BS '14,** on 9/15/2018.

**'11 Brent Green, BA, MA '19,** married **Sarah (Hanson) Green, BA '16,** on 11/2/2019.

**'12 Alyssa (Smith) Seeman, BA,** married Joe Seeman on 10/31/2020.

**'16 Jessica (Hyslope) Lange, BA,** married Branden Lange in July 2020.

**'17 Brianna (Meyer) Arpy, BA,** married Benjamin Arpy on 8/31/2019.

**'18 Grant Schiltz, BA,** married **Veronica (Greene) Schiltz, BA '18,** in Sept. 2019.

**'18 Abigail Van Patten Freeman, BA,** married **Garrett Freeman, BA '19,** on 11/23/2019.

## Births

**'02 Michael Creen, BA,** and Maadhavi Creen, Huntington Beach, CA, welcomed twins in 2020.

**'05 Richard Dedor, BA,** and Steve Adams, Urbandale, daughter Kennedy Brook adopted 2/26/2019.

**'06 Jesse Hach, BS,** and **Lindsay (Guenther) Hach, BA '11,** Grimes, son Tripp born 7/22/2019.

**'10 Wes Offerman, BA,** and **Jessica (Ueland) Offerman, BA '11, MA '15,** Fargo, ND, son Brooks born Feb. 2018.

**'11 Ashlee (Shill) Gioimo, BA,** and **Brett Gioimo, BS '14,** Walford, son Hudson born 12/17/2017 and son Colton born 5/26/2020.

**'11 Rachelle (Hanselman) Kidwell, BA,** and Steve Kidwell, Cedar Falls, daughter Marnie born in 2020.

**'12 Ryan Murphy, BA,** and Kourtney Murphy, Council Bluffs, son Tripp adopted Mar. 2020.

**'13 Derek Olsthoorn, BA,** and **Morgan (Nibe) Olsthoorn, BA '14,** Ames, son Elliott born Apr. 2017 and son Levi born Sept. 2019.

**'15 Jordan Feltman, BA,** and **Lucy (Kapsch) Feltman, BA '15,** Roseville, CA, son Declan James born 1/26/2020.

## Deaths

**'47 Donna (Wheeler) Harman, BA,** died 5/7/2020 in Waterloo.

**'58 William Emry, BA, MA '73,** died 2/21/2020 in McAllen, TX.

**'61 John Bartlett, BA,** died 6/26/2019 in Lafayette, CO.

**'62 Nancy (Mitchell) Le Masurier, BA,** died 4/2/2020 in Arlington, TX.

**'70 Claudia (Jensen) Hamilton, BA,** died 1/2/2016 in Cedar Falls.

**'73 Gregory Temple, BA,** died 6/10/2018 in Muscatine.

**'75 James Henry, BA,** died 12/27/2019 in Coralville.

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- + A guide to making your will
- + Information on charitable gift annuities and other income gifts
- + Ways to donate real estate
- + What to do in the first 48 hours after you lose a loved one
- + Making the most of your retirement assets

For more information on how you can make plans to support UNI contact:

**JANE HALVERSON**

Senior Director of Gift & Legacy Planning  
jane.halverson@uni.edu  
319-273-4665  
uni.planmylegacy.org

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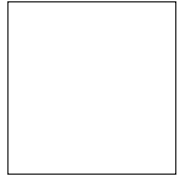




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