

Visionary, student-centered and exceptionally comprehensive.

As one of the nation's top health science universities, UNMC offers a comprehensive nursing curriculum from baccalaureate to master's to doctoral through postdoctoral plus continuing education programs.

THE ADVANCES
INTERVIEW WITH THE
PROGRAM DIRECTORS



Louise LaFramboise
RN, PhD
DIRECTOR
BACHELOR'S PROGRAM

Q. What things about the BSN program set it apart?

A. Our faculty is outstanding — great stability, long tenure, broad and deep expertise, extraordinary ability to connect with students. As a group, they're creative, innovative, highly adaptable and open to new ideas that enhance education. The environment is student-centered, with interactive, problem-based electronic options that foster independent learning, critical thinking and decision-making.

Q. How do you help RNs advance their education? In a large, rural state like Nebraska, they often live far from the closest UNMC campus.

A. We've created a friendly, all-distance RN to BSN curriculum. All coursework and clinical requirements can be completed in the student's home community or one nearby. Coursework is designed specifically for RN students. If they've already completed certain courses as part of their ADN degree, they need only 20 credits to earn a BSN. Most RNs complete all requirements with 24 credits.

Q. What lies ahead for the undergraduate program?

A. We're freshening the curriculum to reflect the Institute of Medicine's care quality and patient safety recommendations — a convergence of evidence-based practice, patient-centered care, informatics, interprofessional education and care collaboration. We're also expanding the accelerated program to ease the nursing shortage.



Constance Visovsky
RN, PhD, ACNP
DIRECTOR
MASTER'S PROGRAM

Q. U.S. News ranks the graduate program in the top 8% in the U.S. What sets it apart?

A. Exceptional education begins with exceptional faculty — teachers who inspire students, who make learning dynamic. We have remarkable faculty depth and breadth of specialty expertise. Many are known nationally in their field. We've been a leader in distance education, and we're expanding delivery of virtual classrooms and clinics across the state, nation and globe.

Q. Where is the master's program headed?

A. We're enhancing the program to increase flexibility, efficiency and core competencies. As throughout the College, we're embedding the visionary guidelines set forth by the Institute of Medicine for care quality and patient safety. We strive for best-practices leadership in education focused on evidence and outcomes.

We continuously evaluate and adjust our specialty tracks to meet the demands of today's complex health care, especially for advanced practice nurses — nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists.

The nursing shortage has our full attention, and we're creating a nurse educator track to develop faculty. As part of our interprofessional education efforts, we're exploring a dual master's degree with UNMC's College of Public Health.



Ann Berger
RN, PhD, AOCN, FAAN
DIRECTOR
DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Q. What draws students to the UNMC PhD program in nursing?

A. Doctoral students are drawn here by the reputation of the faculty and their leading-edge research. They're also attracted by UNMC's national reputation as a top health science research center. Our faculty offers a wide range of specialties and research interests, and that's appealing. Our distance program is a draw, especially for far-away students who only need to be on campus once a semester.

Q. You offer a Fast-Track BSN to PhD program. Who is it intended for?

A. It's for academically strong BSN graduates who want to be educators and researchers. Full-time students can finish in 4-1/2 years without all the clinical requirements of the MSN program.

Q. Are scholarships and financial aid available for full-time PhD students?

A. Scholarships are available from the federal government, professional organizations and private donors through the College. UNMC also offers student loans. A popular way to support doctoral education is a graduate fellowship, which covers tuition and provides a monthly stipend.

Q. What things are ahead for the doctoral program?

A. Our primary focus has been to prepare nurse researchers. With the national shortage of qualified nursing faculty, we'll increase our efforts to prepare teachers. Our intent is to develop nursing leaders as educators, researchers and public policy advocates.



Karen Schumacher
RN, PhD
DIRECTOR
POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM

Q. Why did the College begin a postdoctoral training program?

A. Dean Tilden launched this program in 2006 to expand the College's research mission. A postdoctoral fellowship is the path to becoming a funded, independent investigator. It presents opportunities to ramp up publication, learn a new research method and plan a new study as a principal investigator. Fellows benefit the host institution by helping incubate new ideas crucial to a thriving research environment.

Q. Are there areas of research emphasis?

A. There are six areas in which our faculty has depth of research expertise: healthy lifestyle behaviors, cancer symptom management and survivorship, health services, symptom management/risk modification in cardiac care, end-of-life and palliative care, family care, and health disparities.

Q. How do postdoctoral fellows spend their time?

A. They work on a research team with their sponsor and with multidisciplinary collaborators across campus. One of UNMC's great strengths is its collaborative environment. They also write grant applications and manuscripts for publication.

Q. What's ahead for the postdoctoral training program?

A. Recruitment is a major near-term goal. We're building a cohort of fellows engaged in a stimulating exchange of ideas. Long term, we'll seek external funding from the National Institute of Nursing Research.

“**Exceptional education begins with exceptional faculty.**”

By any possible measure, a better education means a better nurse.

Advanced education pays in many ways. Obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher widens career options, raises professional respect, boosts earnings and improves outcomes.

