Graduate Studies Alumni Council News
A Message from the Alumni Council President; Geoff Thiele, Ph.D.

Our Graduate Studies Alumni Council, while relatively young, is committed to offer alumni engagement opportunities for our students. In addition, we are committed to building a stronger sense of community between our alumni and our students. We have had some good successes and are continually in search of new ideas and ways to involve our alumni and our students. I am pleased to share with you that the Graduate Studies Alumni Council presented three awards during the UNMC Alumni Reunion weekend. These awards include:

Graduate Studies Distinguished Alumnus Award Recipient; Gary Sieck, Ph.D.
Graduate Studies Early Career Achievement Award Recipient; Christine Cutucache, Ph.D.
Graduate Studies Honorary Alumnus Award Recipient; Dave Crouse, Ph.D.

A big thank you to Wayne Stuberg (former Graduate Studies Alumni Council President) who stood in for me to recognize these individuals for the service and dedication at the Alumni Reunion Banquet. All have made a substantial impact in their professions and have set a high bar for the rest of us. Biographies of their accomplishments can be found in the next section of the newsletter.

This academic year our Alumni Council has continued to build the continuity and interactions between our alum and students. It is our goal to help our students to become more exposed to the career opportunities that are available to them, as well as to have the potential to interact with alumni who have chosen these career options. One of the events that has been very successful to achieve this goal has been the annual student-alumni networking events. Additionally, we are always trying to increase our profile with respect to any fund-raising opportunities that may be helpful to supporting our students.
If you are interested in getting more engaged with the Graduate Studies program and your alma mater, [click here to read more](#) and apply for consideration to serve on the council. If you have any questions, comments or ideas please feel free to contact me. Most importantly, we look forward to engaging you and connecting you back to UNMC.

Sincerely,
Geoffrey M. Thiele, B.S., Ph.D., '79 (UNL), '84 (UNMC)

---

**Graduate Studies Alumni Honored**

During the "Living the Legacy" Alumni Reunion Reception, the following notable alumni received awards:

- Graduate Studies Distinguished Alumnus Award
  **Recipient:** Gary Sieck, Ph.D.

- Graduate Studies Early Career Achievement Award
  **Recipient:** Christine Cutucache, Ph.D.

- Graduate Studies Honorary Alumnus Award
  **Recipient:** Dave Crouse, Ph.D.

[Click here to read more](#)

---

**Nominate a Colleague for an Alumni Award**

The Graduate Studies Alumni Council is seeking nominations for the 2020 alumni awards. The award categories include:

- Distinguished Alumnus Award
- Early Career Achievement Award
- Honorary Alumnus Award

[Click here to view](#) a description of the nomination form and find instructions about how to nominate. [Click here to view](#) a list of past award recipients.

---

**Thank You for Supporting the Graduate Studies Innovation Fund**
Your investment in the UNMC Graduate Studies Innovation Fund supports student engagement, provides networking and professional development opportunities, enhances education for students and alumni, and supports the people and programs of your UNMC Alumni Association.

Today's students will be as grateful for your gift as you were for the gifts that enhanced your education. Many of them will continue this tradition of giving because they'll understand their contributions will help launch careers just as your generosity helped launch their own. To learn more about the Graduate Studies Innovation Fund, [view the FY19 Impact Report](#).

**Upcoming Events**

**Graduate Studies Convocation**
December 19, 2019
2:00 PM
Durham Museum

**Graduate Studies Networking Night**
January 23, 2020
5:00 - 7:00 PM
Corkscrew Wine and Cheese Blackstone

*If you are interested in participating or being a speaker in the future please contact karli.burt@unmc.edu*
Alumni Night on the Court
February 26, 2020
UNO men’s basketball game vs. North Dakota
Reception held prior to the game
Stay tuned for ticket purchasing details
7 PM Game

Showdown in O-Town
Nebraska Cornhuskers vs. Creighton Bluejays
Baseball
Tuesday, April 28, 2020
Tailgate: 4:30 - 6:30 PM
Game: 6:30 PM
Stay tuned for ticket purchasing details.

UNMC Alumni Association 2019 Year in Review
Click on the image to play the 1 minute video

UNMC Alumni Association Cruises
The UNMCAA and Go Next are pleased to offer exceptional cruise opportunities for you, your family, and your friends. Below are the 2020 trip offerings and more will be available in 2021. Learn more or book here.

**Gaelic Inspiration**
- July 12-22, 2020
- Dublin to Dublin
- Discover the lush landscapes and fascinating heritage of Ireland aboard Oceania Cruises’ Nautica on this spectacular nine-night cruise.

**Forests & Fjords of Alaska**
- July 30 - August 10, 2020
- Seward to Vancouver, BC
- Explore the forests and fjords of Alaska’s coastal cities on this unforgettable eleven-night trip aboard Oceania Cruises’ Regatta.

**Cosmopolitan Havens**
- November 3-11, 2020
- Rome to Monte Carlo
- Sail to some of the most cultured cities on the western Mediterranean on this seven-night cruise aboard Oceania Cruises’ elegant Marina

---

**Graduate Studies Program News**

A Message From the Dean
Our graduate students are thriving in prestigious industry internships. Their success is a testament to the extraordinary training they receive at UNMC -- both in technical skills and the "transferable" or professional skills that are pivotal in one's career, no matter which one it is. Current students will have multiple opportunities to expand these skills through professional development workshops offered here on campus, as well as others offered in collaboration with all the universities in the NU system. You will also hear about the achievements of our alumni, who continue to flourish long after graduation.

Finally, I'm pleased to share information about some recently introduced new training opportunities. The new M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis has been approved by the Board of Regents and a new innovative track in the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences (IGPBS) is open for enrollment.

I hope you enjoy reading this latest issue and learning about all the exciting opportunities that we continue to create for our students.

H. Dele Davies, MD, MS, MHCM
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Dean for Graduate Studies

Outstanding alumnus: Jamie Gehringer, Ph.D.

Graduate Studies alumnus Jamie Gehringer, Ph.D., ’19 is now a research assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at UNMC's Munroe-Meyer Institute. Dr. Gehringer oversees the Virtual Reality Laboratory, researching how cutting edge VR technology can be applied to help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Dr. Gehringer's work using virtual reality games to help patients practice physical therapy movements was recently featured in the Omaha World-Herald. Read the article here.

Tell us what you're up to...
Share your news for class notes or update your contact information. Click here to submit.

Industry Internships Offer a New Perspective
Many graduate students may go into their Ph.D. training with the idea of obtaining faculty positions at research universities. But, "It's incumbent on us to make sure students can really see all opportunities," said Aaron Mohs, Ph.D., director of the pharmaceutical sciences graduate program.

Nicholas Wojtynek, a Ph.D. student in Dr. Mohs' lab, recently returned from a 12-week summer internship with Takeda Oncology at its U.S. headquarters near Boston. Wojtynek worked at Takeda's global medical affairs department, on the publications team. This wasn't lab work -- instead, he worked on publications and presentation of data and clinical trials results. [Click here](#) to read the article.

---

**New doctoral program in Bioinformatics and Systems Biology (BISB)**

A new doctoral program in Bioinformatics and Systems Biology (BISB) covers a wide array of topics to address questions in biomedical research. The BISB is a subplan within the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences (IGPBS).

Its graduates should be positioned to be in high demand for positions in academic research or in the biotechnology industry. "Bioinformatics is now an integral component of many types of biomedical research," said Karen Gould, Ph.D., co-director of IGPBS. [Click here to read full story](#).

---

**Matriculation Ceremony Welcomes Ninety-nine Students**

Ninety-nine incoming students were welcomed into UNMC's Graduate Studies programs at the Aug. 20 matriculation ceremony.

The ceremony honored each new student individually, and offered a chance to meet their new on-campus community, including faculty, fellow graduate students, and alumni.

Wayne Fisher, Ph.D., H.B. Munroe Professor of Behavioral Research at Munroe-Meyer Institute, delivered the keynote address. His remarks included a handful of tips for a successful launch to a graduate career.
UNMC News

UNMC Has a New Front Door

In September of 2019, campus leaders and invited guests gathered to thank philanthropists Bob and Polina Schlott for their contributions in making possible the new southern entrance, which has been named the Medical Center Plaza. The greenspace and lighted walkway, located on the northwest corner of 42nd and Leavenworth streets, features 18 ceramic columnar sculptures created by Omaha artist Jun Kaneko.

The greenspace and lighted walkway, located on the northwest corner of 42nd and Leavenworth streets, features 18 ceramic columnar sculptures created by Omaha artist Jun Kaneko. The sculptures are incorporated into a grove of mature trees. Benches line the walk and provide visitors, medical center employees, and students the opportunity to seek calmness and beauty amid a tranquil park-like setting.

Walter 'Ted' Carter Confirmed as Next NU President

The Board of Regents voted to confirm Walter "Ted" Carter, VADM (Ret.), as the eighth president of the University of Nebraska system.

Carter, the immediate past superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy whose tenure included records in graduation rates and student diversity and a top national ranking by Forbes Magazine, will begin transition work as NU's president-elect on Dec. 16. He will assume overall leadership on Jan. 1, succeeding Interim President Susan Fritz, Ph.D. Read the full story here.

Leaders announce preliminary plans for campus transformation
Landscape of the medical center campus will be transformed.

Recently, Nebraska Medicine and UNMC leaders announced plans that call for the construction of a new, state-of-the-art facility on the northwest corner of the current medical center campus.

A significant part of this project could open the door to opportunities for new federal, state and local partnerships, which would further establish UNMC/Nebraska Medicine as one of the most elite academic medical centers in the world, capable of preparing for and treating the most complex diseases.

As the project is still in its infancy, specific costs will be established as it takes shape. Early estimates project millions of new square feet, a size and scope that is in line with other prominent academic medical center projects nationally. Architectural renderings and program specifics are not yet available. Read the full story here.