

# Newsletter

This newsletter is distributed via email from the UNMC College of Medicine Parents & Family Association.

## Class of 2025 Fast Facts

This fall, the UNMC College of Medicine welcomed the class of 2025.

- 132 students joined the class out of 1908 applicants.
- 79% of the class are Nebraska residents.
- 10% of the class is first-generation (meaning neither parent received a college degree).
- There are now 527 total students in the College of Medicine.

## Class of 2025 Officers

**President:** Pranita Devaraju

**Vice President:** Reba Brenner

**Treasurer:** Joe Kleinsmith

**Alumni Relations Chair:**

Garret Ost diek-Wille

**Social Chairs:**

Bria Foley, Olivia Taylor, Currey Zalman

**Curriculum Chairs:**

Cole Homer, Grace Kelly

**Philanthropy Chairs:**

Madi Han, Max Regester, Tim Kaftan

**Wellness Chairs:**

Ty Connely, Kaitlyn Crutchley

**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Chair:**

Alyssa Bursott



## Class of 2025 Earn Their White Coats

On Aug. 20, the UNMC College of Medicine held its annual White Coat ceremony to welcome the incoming class of medical students. One-hundred and thirty-two students received their white coats during the ceremony, which was held in the Orpheum Theater.

"This white coat ceremony is the first step in the transition of our newest class of students to becoming physicians," College of Medicine Dean Bradley Britigan, MD (pictured right) said as the ceremony began.





Fall/Winter Edition Newsletter  
November 2021

This newsletter is produced by the Alumni Relations Office at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Editors: Laura Olson, Kat Hamilton, and Catherine Mello

Photographer: UNMC Alumni Relations and Public Relations Staff

UNMC Alumni Relations  
985200 Nebraska Medical Center  
Omaha, NE 68198-5200

402.559.4385

[www.unmc.edu/alumni](http://www.unmc.edu/alumni)

## Message from the PFA President

Happy Holidays to all of you from the Parent and Family Association!

It seems cliché for me to state that it is hard to believe the holidays are already upon us, but I will do so anyway. In the blink of an eye, the excitement we, as parents, significant others, family, and friends experienced along with our medical students at the beginning of the academic year, has morphed into anticipation for a mid-winter break. Little did we know a year ago that we would continue to feel the medical, social, and personal impact of the global pandemic at the end of 2021. While some aspects of our lives have normalized, it is still odd to see and experience the lingering effects of the virus after eighteen months.

Despite this, our students continue with their work toward becoming the health care providers they dream of becoming. The M1s are finishing their first semester of medical school; studying for exams and learning how their newfound knowledge will be used in the real world. They will be looking forward to their first real break from studying over the holiday break. Sleeping, eating, relaxing, and catching up with family and friends (although not necessarily in that order) will be priorities after exams are finished. Enjoy your time with them!

Our second-year students will soon be finishing the didactic portion of their curriculum and you may find them fretting about their next med school experience because the next step for them is, literally, the Step 1 exam. This is the first of many licensing exams they will be required to take over the next years. Regardless of how well UNMC has prepared them for this, some of them will be apprehensive. They may ask for personal space and time to study over the holidays. Be patient and thankful that they will still need to eat, sleep, and catch up.

The M3s have spent the fall working in various clerkship rotations that will help them narrow down the medical specialties in which they might be interested. Some may already have decided where their special interests lie, others may need more time. This is such an exciting year for them as they learn better how to actually 'be' doctors.

For the students in their final year of medical school, the M4s, the upcoming holidays may be the most relaxing they have experienced since beginning their studies. Interviews for some residency programs began in October. They will continue through February. Depending on their specialties of interest, students may have anywhere from ten to twenty or more interviews scheduled during this time. The goal toward which the students are working is to be matched with a specialty program of interest to them. Where they will spend the next two to ten years of their medical careers will be revealed on March 18, Match Day, when family, friends, and faculty will gather to celebrate.

Whether your student is taking time over the holidays to wind down or taking time to celebrate, enjoy your time with them. It is my hope for everyone that THIS coming new year will bring a sense of well-being and comfort into our lives that has been missing and that we find many reasons to celebrate! With our students, we truly have much to be thankful for.

Happy Holidays from the UNMC Parents and Family Association

## Make a Gift to the Parents & Family Innovation Fund

You can help support the work of the Parents & Family Association with a tax deductible gift to the Parents & Family Innovation Fund at the University of Nebraska Foundation. [Click here](#) to support the Parent & Family Association.

Thank you for your generous support!

---

## Resource Spotlight | Ombuds Office

The UNMC Ombuds are impartial, confidential consultants who assist faculty, staff and students in resolving conflicts informally, voluntarily and privately. The ombuds team helps with a wide variety of problems, especially those concerns that are confusing, complicated, upsetting or not being addressed through other university channels.

An ombudsperson can help UNMC faculty, staff and students by:

- Providing active listening and objective feedback;
- Helping to define a problem and identifying options to solve it;
- Explaining relevant UNMC policies and procedures;
- Facilitating improved interpersonal communication; and
- Identifying problem trends at the organizational systems level

“We first try to help visitors identify possibilities for solving disputes informally,” Dr. David Carver, PhD, Director, said. “We may also explain complex policies and procedures. However, ombuds do not participate in formal complaints, appeals, grievances or disciplinary processes.”

**Ombuds consultations are informal, private and free-of-charge.** For more information about UNMC ombuds services, [visit the Ombuds program website](#) or call the ombuds program confidential phone line at 402-559-2491.

## Alumni Share Advice with Current UNMC Students

The UNMC Alumni Relations Office hosts a blog where alumni share real-world advice and reflections for UNMC students and emerging alumni.

[The Connections Project Blog](#) is a great resource that students can view on their own time to learn about topics such as personal finance, professionalism, mentorship and more.

Below are a few recent blog posts from UNMC College of Medicine alumni. We encourage you to view these posts and share them with your student!

- [My Journey with Medicine, Psychiatry & Mental Health](#), Lauren Edwards, MD'13
- [Creating a Welcoming Environment for LGBTQ Individuals](#), Desi Bailey, MD'75
- [Preparation from UNMC & Giving Back](#), Carol Swarts, MD'59
- [Creating an Inclusive Environment in Healthcare & Advice for BIPOC UNMC Students](#), Isaiah T. Crum, MD'20
- [Embracing Change](#), Colin Weekes, MD'00, PhD'98

## Pilot Grant Provides Impetus for Health Inequities Curriculum

As part of UNMC's ongoing commitment to ensure students have the tools to care for patients from a wide range of backgrounds, first-year medical students are learning about the root causes of health inequities.

A \$3,000 pilot grant funded by the UNMC College of Medicine in 2019 is the impetus for a new addition to the curriculum: "Structural Challenges & Inequities in Healthcare Delivery," which includes lectures and discussions focused on social and structural determinants of health, unconscious bias and microaggressions, and racism in medicine.

First-year medical students also spend a half-day in the Highlander neighborhood in North Omaha, where they engage with community leaders in housing, education, policy, health outreach and other areas.

The curriculum is based on two main frameworks:

- Structural competency, which focuses on fostering an understanding of the intersections between race, class, clinical presentation and systemic root causes of health inequity; and
- Community-engaged teaching, which focuses on centering the strengths of the community, sharing power in a reciprocal way with community partners and amplifying the lived experiences of individuals from marginalized groups.

### Student Spotlight: Frantzlee LaCrete

#### Hometown

Lewellen, Nebraska

#### Program and Year

MD/PhD, Class of 2022

#### Education

Chadron State College  
Chadron, Nebraska

#### Hobbies

Meatcraft, beardsmanship,  
woodworking, frolf, golf, ping pong

#### Staying Balanced

Hang out with my wife (pregnant with twins), dog (St. Bernard) and friends.



#### Three things people may not know about me:

- I am a first-generation born in the U.S. on my dad's side of family, all from Haiti.
- My family used to own a carnival and do state fairs until I was 3 years old, so I am technically a carny.
- I tore my patellar tendon on my last throw in discus at Chadron State College, so I started medical school in a straight leg brace.

# 2021-2022 College of Medicine Student Calendar

## Semesters

First Semester (M1-M2):	August 23, 2021 – December 17, 2021
First Semester (M3):	June 28, 2021 – December 17, 2021
First Semester (M4):	July 5, 2020 – December 17, 2021
Second Semester (M1):	January 3, 2022 – May 27, 2022
Second Semester (M2):	January 10, 2022 – June 29, 2022
Second Semester (M3):	January 3, 2022 – June 24, 2022
Second Semester (M4):	January 3, 2022 – May 1, 2022

## Special Events

Match Day (M4):	March 18, 2022
Honors Convocation (M4):	May 6, 2022
Commencement (M4):	May 7, 2022

Full Academic Calendar available [here](#).

## 2021-2022 PFA Sponsored Events

Match Day:	March 18, 2022
M1 Picnic:	May 27, 2022

### UNMC College of Medicine Phases of Curriculum

Phase  
1

#### Foundations of Medicine 18 months

Integrates basic, clinical and health systems sciences into blocks that are organized by the organ systems of the human body.

Take the USMLE Step 1 exam.

Phase  
2

#### Clinical Applications 12 months

Extensive clinical learning experiences in six of the core disciplines of medicine. Clinical rotations range from 6-12 weeks in length.

Phase  
3

#### Career Preparation 13 months

Individualized training for each student in their career specialty choice to prepare students for success in residency training and beyond.

Register for USMLE Step 2 CK and CS at least one month before graduation.

## Immersive Spanish Course Adapts for COVID-19

For more than 20 years, the Office of Global Engagement (OGE) has offered a robust intensive Spanish language elective to fourth-year medical students. The class is a four-week immersion program, offering one-on-one instruction for three weeks, six hours a day, five days a week – a total of 90 hours classroom time, supplemented by two lectures per week on health care-related topics related topics, followed by a one-week in-country volunteer experience. The course has traditionally been popular – averaging about 11 students per course.

When COVID-19 restrictions made the travel aspect of the course impossible, Sara Pirtle, Program Manager in the OGE, grappled with a way to enhance the value of the new version of the course, which still featured one-on-one language instruction (now virtual) but lacked the in-country immersive experience.

In response to this issue, Shirley Delair, MD, and the UNMC COM Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion developed a unique social determinant of health-related fourth week. This change shifted the program to allow medical students to virtually attend social work visits and telehealth visits with OneWorld's Spanish-speaking clients, allowing the students an eye-opening glimpse at the dynamics and needs of the families being served.



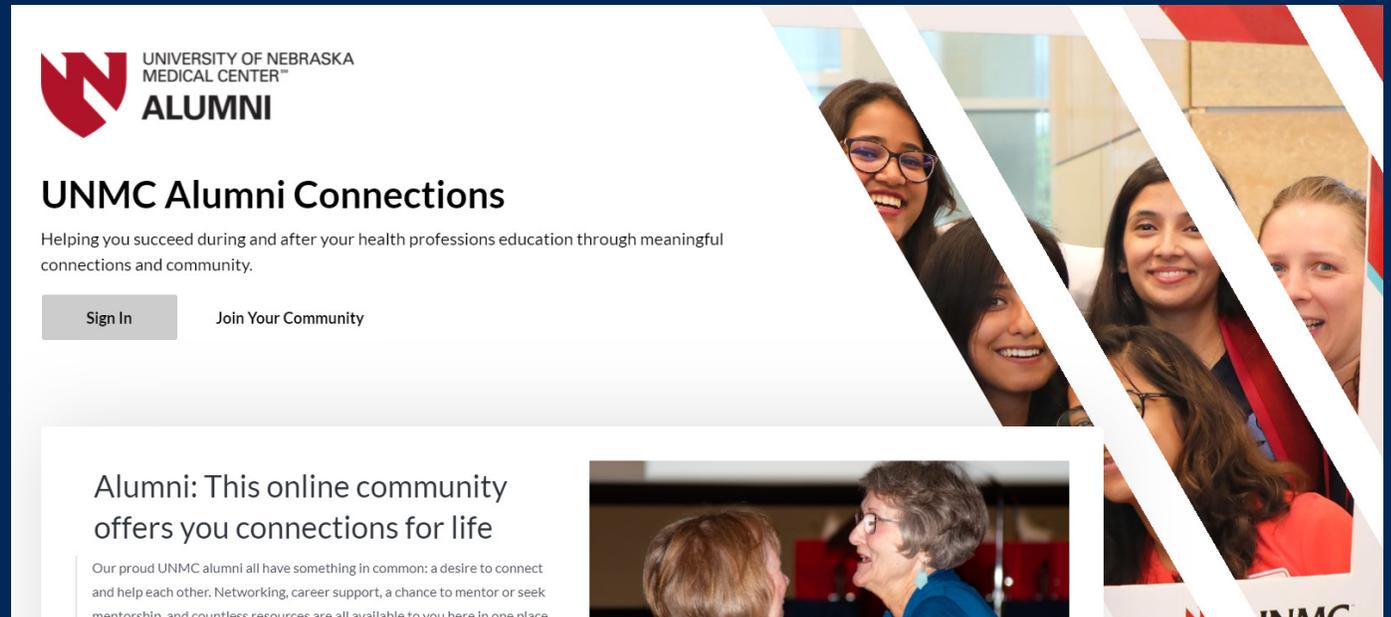
*Sara Pirtle, at right, with a tour guide (third from left) and students in Xalapa in 2019.*

Omaha-based OneWorld Community Health Centers are volunteer-staffed free clinics that provide patients with financial, cultural and linguistic barriers better access to quality health care services. Dr. Delair, recognizing the need for more Spanish instruction as a valuable tool to address health barriers and disparities in the Spanish-speaking population, had long wanted to offer an option for students who could not afford to travel or had other obligations that precluded them from traveling outside of Omaha.

Dr. Delair and Pirtle hope to explore other Spanish-language education and immersion opportunities for UNMC medical students and other UNMC students.

“Our goal is to help our students improve their communication with the underserved Latinx community,” Pirtle said. “As this innovative program shows, there are various avenues to explore in pursuit of this goal!”

# UNMC Alumni Association Hosts Online Platform for Students and Alumni



In April, the UNMCAA launched a special online community called Alumni Connections for UNMC alumni and students. Students are invited to build a profile that will transition with them upon graduation.

The platform will facilitate:

- Networking opportunities with colleagues who share similar interests and professional experiences;
- Inter-professional groups and discussion boards for conversations about hot topics in health care and other interest areas;
- Opportunities to find a one-time or long-term mentor and easy-to-use scheduling assistance to set up meetings;
- The HOST program for fourth-year medical students looking to connect with alumni before and during residency interviews; and
- The ability to locate alumni through powerful filters, including professional interests, location, identity groups and more.

Students can sign up for Alumni Connections at [connections.unmc alumni.org](https://connections.unmc alumni.org).

## Stay Connected with the UNMC Alumni Association

Subscribe to the [Connections Project Blog](#), which features advice from UNMC alumni on real-world topics, such as financial literacy, professional development, and more.



# Parents and Family Association 2021-2022 Advisory Council

## President

Mary Sinclair - Student Year 2022

## Treasurer

Jannelle Pfeifer - Student Year 2022

## Members

Mary Matis - Student Year 2022

Colleen Connely - Student Year 2022

Carol Lackner - Student Year 2022

Alan Gilmore & Julia Cronin-Gilmore  
- Student Year 2022

Paul & Sheryl Aufenkamp  
- Student Year 2022

Jacey Johnston - Student Year 2023

Scott & Paula Hardin - Student Year  
2023

Stephanie Sacco - Student Year 2023

Mike & Melissa Karloff - Student Year  
2024

Pat & Cindy Regan - Student Year 2024

Mark Ziegenbein - Student Year 2024

Elaine Adams - Student Year 2025

Kim Anderson - Student Year 2025

Michelle Schefcik - Student Year 2025

Mike & Marian Weaver - Student Year  
2025

## Student Representatives

Tiffany Truong, Class of 2022

Rebecca Brooks, Class of 2023

Anna Wilwerding, Class of 2024

Garret Ostdiek-Wille, Class of 2025

## Contact Us

The Parents & Family Association Advisory Council gets administrative support from the UNMC Alumni Relations Office. For more information contact:

Laura Olson  
Alumni Engagement Coordinator  
[lauraj.olson@unmc.edu](mailto:lauraj.olson@unmc.edu)

College of Medicine  
Parents & Family Association  
985200 Nebraska Medical Center  
Omaha, NE 68198-5200  
402.559.4385

[www.unmc.edu/alumni](http://www.unmc.edu/alumni)  
[alumni@unmc.edu](mailto:alumni@unmc.edu)