



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER

# Office of Global Engagement

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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# From the Leadership



At the University of Nebraska Medical Center, our strength lies in our ability to bridge borders and foster a truly global health community. As we look back on the past year, I am thrilled to share the remarkable growth of our international community and the strides we've made in deepening our global impact.

To that end, I am delighted to report that UNMC welcomed **79 new international students from 26 countries** in 2025. To support this influx of talent, we hosted comprehensive in-person orientations, pre-arrival sessions and events designed to ease the transition to both UNMC and the Omaha community.

Our most important goal remains ensuring the success of our international students during their time here and beyond. The Office of Global Engagement (OGE) staff is dedicated to helping students cultivate meaningful experiences.

Beyond student support, we are also celebrating excellence in faculty leadership. The OGE was pleased to announce the inaugural recipient of the D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award at the iTEACH Awards in April 2025. This prestigious award is designed to build collaborations in global health by full-time UNMC faculty, and we look forward to announcing the second recipient in April 2026.

Through the ongoing collaboration of our employees and students, we have successfully expanded our partnerships into new countries. We extend our sincere gratitude for your contributions in promoting international inclusivity, fostering global awareness and advancing internationalization throughout the UNMC community.

This 2025 report offers a glimpse into the OGE's diverse activities—showcasing our international community, strategic partnerships and comprehensive support systems. Thank you for your continued support as we work to provide excellence to our international students, visitors and the entire UNMC campus.

Sincerely,  
**Jane L. Meza, PhD**  
*Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs*

# Mission and Vision

## Mission

The Office of Global Engagement promotes global understanding and awareness and advances internationalization efforts throughout the UNMC community.

## Vision

Our vision is comprehensive global engagement for Nebraska and beyond, advancing UNMC's world-class education, cutting-edge research and renowned public service to meet the complex challenges of today's interconnected world.

## What We Do

The Office of Global Engagement is committed to providing the UNMC community with high-quality opportunities to enrich and expand its experiences with the people, cultures and contemporary concerns with all regions of the world. The Office of Global Engagement is responsible for:

- **Strategic Growth:** Developing strategies to best serve the university and our international constituents.
- **Immigration and Visa Services:** Offering essential visa support for all international students, employees and visitors.
- **Student Support:** Coordinating creative ways to ensure international students have a smooth transition and successful experience at UNMC.
- **Visitor Support:** Managing the international visitor registration process, in alignment with UNMC compliance.
- **Global Learning:** Supporting students in learning opportunities outside the U.S.
- **Global Partnerships:** Strengthening existing partnerships and building new strategic relationships.
- **Student Engagement:** Providing a range of opportunities and events to engage students on campus and connecting them to the wider Omaha community.
- **Training Programs:** Providing specialized programs with a global perspective focusing on health issues that cross national borders.
- **Delegation Visit Coordination:** Arranging international delegations visits to UNMC and exploring opportunities to develop new partnerships.



# By the Numbers



**79** new international students representing **26** countries, and **295** total international students.



**24** total trainees



**31** students in education abroad programs



**41** active or pending international agreements from **23** countries



**81** international registered visitors representing **20** countries



**878** assisted and sponsored international students, employees and visitors



## International Student Orientation

UNMC welcomed 79 new international students in January and August 2025. These students represent 26 countries and are from 17 academic health sciences programs across all colleges.

H. Dele Davies, MD, interim chancellor and Jane Meza, PhD, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs, welcomed the students during their orientation sessions in January and August. Our international student orientation serves as a comprehensive roadmap for success, featuring specialized sessions designed to equip students with the essential tools for a seamless transition to UNMC.

To kick off the fall semester, we hosted a welcome celebration where students connected

and met with various campus departments. This event served as a vibrant introduction to the UNMC support network, showcasing the many resources available to help our international scholars thrive.

Our long-standing Global Ambassador Program continues to be a vital resource for student success. For more than a decade, UNMC volunteers have served as mentors to help incoming international students transition smoothly.

This year's orientation was further enhanced by seven Global Ambassadors who served as formal Orientation Ambassadors, offering their expertise through student panels and direct peer support.



*Students gather for the Fall 2024 International Student Orientation.*



## First-Year Club

The First-Year Club, created by the Office of Global Engagement, was designed to enhance the experience of international students during their first three semesters at UNMC. In its second year, the First-Year Club elected officials for the first time to help serve as a liaison between newly-admitted students and the Office of Global Engagement. The First-Year Club officers attended International Student Association (ISA) meetings to form a working collaboration and to advance the interests of UNMC's newest students. An integral part of the First-

Year Club programming was the excursions and trips taken by the group. These trips included tours of iEXCEL and the Wigton Heritage Center Museum after which the newly-elected officers were able to connect with the participants and get ideas for programming and excursions. The group also visited the Durham Museum to view the iconic Christmas tree and participate in the Culture Fair.



79 new international students



Representing 26 countries



From 17 academic health sciences programs



*Students relax at a neighborhood restaurant after a tour of the Wigton Heritage Center*

# International Students

## International Student Association



*Cultural celebrations like the Mid-Autumn Festival provided a home away from home for our students. By sharing mooncakes and stories, students from across the globe took part in a cherished tradition that fosters a deeper sense of belonging on campus.*

The UNMC International Student Association, supported by the Office of Global Engagement, hosted a variety of cultural and social events throughout 2025, fostering community among students, staff and faculty. These events provided opportunities for engagement, cultural exchange and fun for the entire campus community. Collaborative events included pumpkin decorating in collaboration with Student Senate, Mid-Autumn Mooncake Festival and Trivia Night. Global Forums were held quarterly.

## Farewell Celebrations

In 2025, the Office of Global Engagement proudly hosted Finals Fiesta, an opportunity for students to take a break from their academics and to honor the achievements of our students completing their degrees in May.

In December, the Office of Global Engagement hosted a Warm Wishes breakfast, which celebrated the end of the semester. Each graduating student was recognized at this ceremony, as well. More than 50 students attended the breakfast event. Dr. Davies, MD, interim chancellor, greeted students at the December Warm Wishes event. Jane Meza, PhD, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs, presented each student with a commemorative coin as a keepsake to mark this special milestone. The receptions provided a warm, welcoming space for reflection and celebration, reinforcing the supportive global community at UNMC.



*Students enjoy breakfast at the Well Wishes event.*



# International Student Association and Brandt receive awards

The UNMC community gathered for the fourth annual iTEACH Awards in April to recognize the students, faculty, and staff who go above and beyond to enrich campus life. We are incredibly proud to celebrate the following Office of Global Engagement and international community honorees:

## Collaboration Award: International Student Association (ISA)

For the fourth consecutive year, the ISA has been honored with the Collaboration Award—a testament to their enduring commitment to partnership. This award recognizes organizations that bridge gaps to create impactful campus programs. The ISA was recognized for its seamless coordination with multiple student groups and UNMC offices to deliver six landmark events during International Education Week, fostering a deeper global perspective across the entire campus.



*The International Student Association (ISA) was awarded the Collaboration Award at the iTEACH Awards Ceremony. Channing Bunch, director, Student Life, Involvement and Development Office (SLIDO), presented the award to Nivedeta Kumar, 2024-25 ISA President.*

## Advisor of the Year: Emily Brandt, MA

Emily Brandt, coordinator, UNMC Office of Global Engagement, was named Advisor of the Year for her work with the ISA. This award celebrates advisors who embody the iTEACH values through tireless dedication and mentorship. Emily was recognized for her infectious enthusiasm and steadfast support, particularly in guiding the ISA through several programs such as International Student Week and the vibrant Holi celebration. Her leadership ensures that our international student leaders have the tools they need to shine.

The awards are sponsored by the UNMC Office of Community Engagement; Student Life, Involvement and Development Office; and the Student Senate.



*Emily Brandt, coordinator, Office of Global Engagement, was honored with an Advisor of the Year Award for ISA.*

# Global Learning Opportunities



*Marco (DIF staff) shows students (standing left to right: Elias Smith, Caden Connealy, Nolan Zeger, Mitchell Blaine; sitting left to right: Eben Samuel and Jacob Rademacher) a plaster mold that was created to design the prosthetic for this patient.*

## Beyond the Border: A Global Learning Experience

During the summer of 2025, siblings Eben and Esther Samuel, both M1s, joined 14 other UNMC Scott Scholar medical students for the university's inaugural Scott Scholars Global Immersion Program in Xalapa, Mexico.

Through a strategic partnership between the UNMC Office of Global Engagement and the Universidad Anáhuac, Veracruz, the Scott Scholars Program successfully launched a new student experience.

As members of this program the Samuels spent their summer bridging the gap between classroom theory and international clinical experience.

The group partnered with DIF Xalapa (Desarrollo Integral de la Familia), a non-profit organization dedicated to the health and social welfare of local families. For the 14 students involved, the trip was a deep dive into a universal healthcare system, blending clinical observation with profound cultural immersion.

### Duality of Care

For the Samuel siblings, the academic heartbeat of the trip was understanding the "duality" of the Mexican system. "The government funds DIF, whose services are free to the public, but wait times are long and resources are limited," Esther explained.



"On the other hand, the private sector is well-staffed but comes at a hefty price."

Eben noted that this exposure was central to the Scott Scholars' mission: to better understand patient populations they will soon encounter in the U.S. and to identify features from global systems that could be integrated at home. A typical day involved traveling to diverse sites to see this mission in action:

- **Mobility Restoration:** Visiting prosthetics clinics to see how devices are custom-fitted to restore patient independence.
- **Specialized Rehab:** Observing movement-based therapy at a Parkinson's rehabilitation clinic.
- **Holistic Support:** Engaging with child development programs and senior centers that empower the elderly to advocate for their rights.

### Innovative Outreach

The Scott Scholars were particularly moved by the proactive nature of Mexican healthcare. Every Friday, DIF hosts community outreach events in the Xalapa city center. "Providers set up stations to provide free consultations in dental, vision, and mental health," Esther said. "We assisted with checking vitals and supporting these specialty services."

Eben found inspiration in the system's reach into rural areas. "Physicians go door-to-door to ensure their rural patients have adequate coverage," he shared. "I found this to be a very inspiring part of their system that I hope can be adapted to fit our system in the United States."

### The "Heart Strings" of Medicine

While the clinical training was rigorous, the emotional impact was profound. For Esther, the most meaningful moment occurred during a visit to a home for teenage girls who had been removed from unsafe environments.

"The girls' home was my favorite part," Esther revealed. "The director described the stories of the girls we were about to meet—it tugged on my heartstrings. I learned the value of

preventative medicine and the fierce advocacy of providers who truly make the most of what they have."

Eben echoed this sentiment, finding his highlight in the people themselves. "The locals were incredibly gracious hosts, ready to involve us in their daily lives," he said. "Despite language barriers, they found every opportunity to teach us more."

### A Lasting Impression

As the Samuel siblings return to their M1 studies at UNMC, they bring back a global perspective defined by a consistent mantra they heard from DIF staff: "We don't have much, but we do very well with what we do have." This resilience and dedication to patient advocacy will undoubtedly shape their future careers as physicians.

### Ongoing Collaboration

In an expansion of our partnership with Universidad Anáhuac Veracruz (UAV), UNMC hosted four students for a month-long International Academic Observership in Family Medicine the summer of 2025. This successful exchange continues into its next phase, with a second cohort of UAV students scheduled to arrive at UNMC in the summer of 2026.



Esther Samuel and Juhi Thakker

## 2025 Education Abroad Students



**4 | Canada**  
College of Allied Health Professions



**2 | Costa Rica**  
College of Pharmacy



**1 | Greece**  
College of Medicine



**2 | India**  
College of Medicine

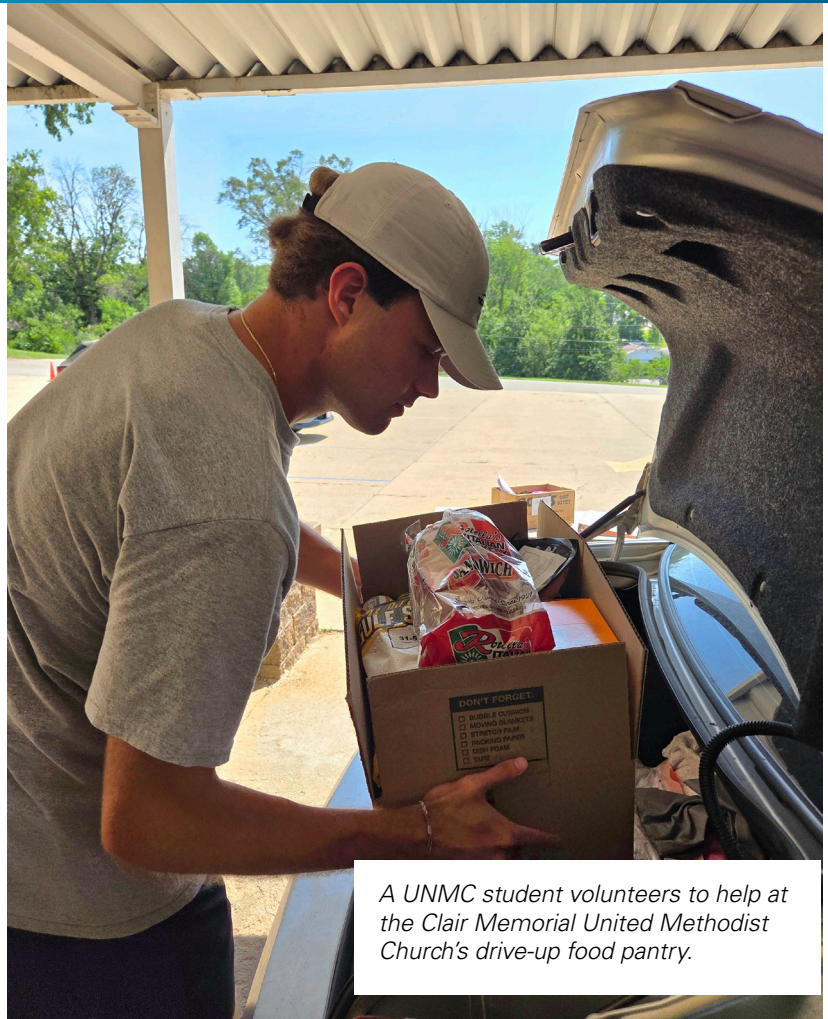


**4 | Kenya**  
College of Allied Health Professions



**1 | Mexico**  
College of Allied Health Professions

**16 | Mexico**  
College of Medicine



*A UNMC student volunteers to help at the Clair Memorial United Methodist Church's drive-up food pantry.*

## Student Association for Global Health

The Student Alliance for Global Health (SAGH), supported by the Office of Global Engagement, brings together UNMC students, staff, faculty and community members to learn about global health issues and to support global health initiatives at home and abroad. SAGH continued its partnership with Clair Memorial United Methodist Church to support the church's drive-up food pantry, offered the third Saturday of every month. For every drive-up

pantry, SAGH arranges for 8-12 student volunteers to assist with packing food boxes, loading food into the vehicle of each customer and post-pantry cleanup. During the warmer weather months, the students also work in the church garden, which provides some of the produce for the pantry boxes.

In the early fall, SAGH selected UNMC student participants for two medical service trips that will take place in Panama during the

UNMC students bag vegetables for the food pantry at Clair United Methodist Church.



March 2026 spring break weeks. Twenty-two students from the colleges of allied health, medicine and nursing will assist the staff of Floating Doctors, a non-profit organization, to deliver health care by boat to 30+ island communities that are not accessible by road and have little access to health care.

Also, SAGH offered another toyraiser for children in Ukraine who have lost one or both parents, due to the continuing conflict in that country. Toys were collected for children ages 3-15 years old via collection bins placed across campus, as well as in the College of Allied Health in Kearney. A total of 348 toys were collected and will be shipped to Ukraine for distribution at a children's center.

SAGH also featured select global health-focused speakers and presentations during the academic year.



Rachel ZumBrunnen, physician assistant student, UNMC's Kearney campus, helps organized the Ukraine toy drive at that location.

## Universidad Anahuac International Academic Observership in Family Medicine

Originally formed in 2016, the innovative partnership between UNMC and the University of Anahuac in Veracruz, Mexico, marked its ninth year with a major milestone.

This July, the two universities launched the International Academic Observership in Family Medicine, welcoming the inaugural cohort of four University of Anahuac students. This one-month program was supported by a generous donation from a private donor.

Jeffrey Harrison, MD, chair of the UNMC Department of Family Medicine and the Milton G. Waldbaum, MD, professor of Family Practice, said the first group of University of Anahuac students participating in the observership was phenomenal.

“It was exciting to witness how their knowledge of family medicine and research skills increased during the time they were here,” Dr. Harrison said. The Department of Family Medicine and the Office of Global Engagement teamed up to design an experience to immerse the students in the U.S. health care system,

American culture and the healthcare perspectives of the Hispanic community in Omaha. Before their departure, students developed a project to be presented at the fall University of Anahuac Health Conference.

Participant Rommina Durante San Román said the four-week academic rotation gave the group an opportunity to observe the work of clinical departments such as family medicine, neurology and emergency care, as well as attend several public health classes. Durante San Román said the experience allowed them to broaden their perspective on the U.S. health care system and its differences from the Mexican model.

“We also had the chance to visit community clinics like ‘One World’ and participate in various activities at the Mexican Consulate, including giving educational talks on two extremely important topics: hypertension and diabetes mellitus,” Durante San Román said. “It was one of the best professional and cultural experiences I’ve ever had.”





*UNMC leadership pictured with student from Universidad de Anahuac (UAV) left to right: Armando de Alba, MD, assistant dean of student engagement, College of Medicine; Jeff Harrison, MD, chair, Department of Family Medicine; Tito Abuid Castro Candia, UAV student; Gabriel David Delgado Castillo, UAV student; H. Dele Davies, MD, UNMC Interim Chancellor; Rommina Durante San Roman, UAV student; Brad Britigan, MD, dean, College of Medicine; and Ana Carolina Herrera Velazquez, UAV student.*

Participant Tito Abuid Castro Candia said, “Everything I learned has given me insight into the same reality experienced globally, and it’s incredible how much awareness can be generated through direct exposure to social and community issues — just as the UNMC program provides.”

“We were very excited to host the first cohort of students on campus,” Jane Meza, PhD, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs, said. “This success will pave the way for more collaborations with the University of Anahuac, our long-time partner.”





*Ukraine surgeons tour iEXCEL and learn to use the interactive wall.*

## Ukrainian health care fellows visit UNMC

UNMC hosted its annual visit of the Senator Ben Nelson Fellows – an ongoing international exchange sponsored in part by the Congressional Office for International Leadership, Open World Program.

The fellows were five physicians and a facilitator from Ukraine, who offered their extensive experience in treating battlefield injuries, while UNMC extended its partnership in opportunities for training. This year's iteration marks more than a decade of

the Nelson Fellows program. The visit included a trip to the Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium, an all-American Thanksgiving dinner and other friendship-building and leisure activities – mixed with a symposium on polytrauma care and rehabilitation from such devastating injuries.

The fellows are respected health care leaders in Ukraine with extensive experience in training, leadership and hands-on medical care on the front lines of battle and bombing and shelling – some



have been injured themselves. One removed an unexploded munition from the body of a wounded soldier.

The participants were nominated for this international honor and began their trip to America in Washington, D.C., before several additional days in Nebraska, hosted by UNMC with support from the Friendship Force of Greater Omaha.

“Each year, we look forward to engaging with the Ben Nelson Fellows,” said Jane Meza, PhD, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs. “Their insights enrich our understanding, and the UNMC community values the opportunity to exchange knowledge and collaborate with them.”

The fellows met with UNMC leadership and with Nebraska state and federal officials. They took part in tours and presentations with UNMC’s Global Center for Health Security, including the Nebraska Biocontainment Unit, iEXCEL and trauma readiness partnership with the U.S. Air Force, C-STARS. The Ben Nelson Fellows also interacted with emergency medicine. During a tour of iEXCEL, Nelson fellows “test drove” some of the technology and asked about the possibility of interacting with UNMC from a similar iWALL in their home country.

Several had extensive experience in simulation medicine but nevertheless were impressed by the facilities at UNMC.

A spokesman for the group, through an interpreter, said he wished to thank the UNMC community for this visit and hopes it leads to further “possible cooperation among our professionals and leaders to exchange ideas and teach each other to work together,” expressing a wish “that peace will come to Ukraine.” He said, “We would use our knowledge only for development.”

Another fellow, in his application for fellowship, said, “I expect to gain experience from colleagues and share my own assistance to those affected by polytrauma and war injuries.”

“Exchanging experience with leading specialists at the international level will enhance the quality of medical services in Ukraine and enable me to introduce innovative approaches to my own practice,” said another, who has already carried out more than 3,000 surgical interventions during the 10-year war with Russia.





Fujita Health University students include Nakajima Sawayo, Abe Manaka, Tsuda Yoshihisa and Kusano Kanata.

## Spring program enhances global learning opportunities

Four students from Fujita Health University in Japan participated in a two-week Spring Immersion Program at UNMC from March 11-21. This program was a collaborative effort between UNMC's Office of Global Engagement, the College of Allied Health Professions, and the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) Intensive English Program.

This visit was part of the growing partnership between UNMC and Fujita Health University, formalized through an MOU signed last September, reinforcing our shared commitment to international academic exchange.

During their time at UNMC, the students:

- Visited UNMC classes, experienced a Virtual Environment Radiotherapy Trainer (VERT) demonstration, and explored training in radiography and clinical laboratory sciences in the U.S.

- Engaged with UNMC Allied Health and international students, fostering cross-cultural connections.
- Toured the Buffett Cancer Center, clinical laboratories, iEXCEL and the Department of Radiology.
- Explored key topics such as AI in healthcare, research, biostatistics, global health and professional communication.
- Participated in insightful sessions on professional communication and campus tours organized by UNO.

This successful exchange highlights our ongoing efforts to enhance global learning opportunities and strengthen international collaboration in healthcare education.



## Summer Physical Therapy program gives visitors experience to take home

Participants in this summer's UNMC Summer Experiential Education (SEED) Program in physical therapy left the program having learned two important professional skills – problem-solving and empathy. Designed for international physical therapy and rehabilitation students, the SEED program is a three-week, in-person summer experience at UNMC.

Administered by the UNMC Office of Global Engagement and delivered by the UNMC Physical Therapy Program, the program offers a comprehensive approach to learning. Students gain hands-on experience through research lab practice, see real-world applications during clinical observations, interact with UNMC doctorate in physical therapy students, and attend lectures and group discussions.

Beyond their studies, 10 students from three universities in Asia participated in several cultural activities.

"The most important thing I learned is how to integrate evidence-based practice with advanced clinical techniques like blood flow restriction training and manual therapy," participant Zhaojie "Chelsea" Wang said. "I observed how therapists at UNMC use clinical reasoning to choose the right intervention and adjust it in real-time based on patient response."



*Megan Frazee, PT, DPT, associate professor, physical therapy, college of allied health professions, shows students from the 2025 UNMC Summer Experiential Education (SEED) Program in physical therapy how to perform a manual therapy treatment technique for low back pain.*

Wang said the approach helped her realize "that physical therapy is not just about applying techniques, but about understanding the 'why' behind each decision."

Said participant Hsiang "Adam" Hu: "Many of the courses allowed me to step into the patient's shoes and truly understand their experiences. It gave me a deeper sense of empathy and reminded me that patients are more than just case studies or textbook examples."

Hannah Tong, executive director of academic partnerships in the UNMC Office of Global Engagement, said the program, in its eighth year, provides international students with a unique opportunity to gain a global perspective on

rehabilitation and physical therapy in the U.S. and take this knowledge back to their home universities.

Joseph Siu, PhD, professor for the UNMC Physical Therapy Program and chair of global health opportunities program in the UNMC College of Allied Health Professions, said the students left UNMC with a greater sense of problem-solving and empathy in care. "These skills are essential for providing compassionate and effective care in a complex and ever-changing field of physical therapy," Dr. Siu said.

# International Partnerships

*The Ambassador to Burkina Faso to the United States, H.E. Kassoum Coulibaly, and his delegation learn about simulation during their visit to UNMC.*



In 2025, UNMC had 41 active or pending international agreements for education, research and business collaborations in 23 countries. Six new or renewal agreements were signed with partners in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Rwanda and Taiwan (2).

The UNMC Office of Global Engagement partnership activities include reviewing and documenting all international agreements, strengthening relationships with existing partners and developing new strategic partnerships. The following partners visited UNM in 2025.

## **Ambassador to Burkina Faso**

The newly appointed Ambassador of Burkina Faso to the United States, H.E. Kassoum Coulibaly, and his nine-member delegation received an overview of UNMC and toured the Global Center for Health Security and iEXCEL.

## **Ambassador to Mauritania**

Minister of Professional Development, Handicrafts, and Vocations, H.E. Mohamed Malainine Ould Eyih; Mauritania's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Cissé Boide, and other delegation members visited UNMC May 20. The delegation met with representatives from the college of public health, college of nursing, external relations and toured the Global Center for Health Security and IEXCEL. The objective of this visit was to establish collaborative partnerships with Nebraska, and enhance opportunities for young Mauritians in multiple sectors.

## **Consulate-General of Japan**

The new Consul-General of Japan in Chicago, Masashi Mizobuchi, and Chicago Consulate Officer Naohito Fujimoto, visited UNMC July 16. They toured the Buffett Cancer Center and iEXCEL. The purpose of their trip was to strengthen the relationship between UNMC and Japan.



## Nigeria

Two delegation members from Nigeria, Rislana Abdulazeez Kanya, PhD, member board of trustees/CEO Centre for Climate-Smart Agriculture, Cosmopolitan University Abuja and Professor Isah Yusuf Chamo, PhD, commissioner of higher education science and technology, Jigawa State, visited UNMC Feb. 6-7. The purpose of the visit was to explore potential areas of collaboration with UNMC, as well as the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and University of Nebraska Omaha.

## Universidad Anahuac Veracruz

The delegation from the University of Anáhuac, Veracruz, Mexico, a long-time partner of UNMC, visited from August 9-11 to advance existing collaborations and explore new opportunities.

The visiting delegates included:

- **Alejandro Escobar Mesa, MD**, dean of the faculty of medicine at Xalapa
- **Brillit Nayeli Jaramillo Islas, MD**, dean of the faculty of medicine at Córdoba
- **Marisol Fernández Gudini**, director of academic quality at Xalapa
- **Maria De Jesus Patricia Mesa Trejo, MD**, faculty member

The delegation engaged in meetings with key representatives from the departments of family medicine and neurological sciences, office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and the Scott Scholars

Program. Discussions included exchange programs, research supporting infrastructure and direction of future programs, with the possibility of additional collaborations.

The delegation took time to reinforce community and diplomatic connections, visiting the Mexican Consulate and seeing firsthand the work of OneWorld Community Health Center in South Omaha.

They also had the opportunity to connect with UNMC students who participated in the education abroad trip to Mexico this past spring, as well as a new international student from Mexico.

The successful visit by the University of Anáhuac delegation reaffirmed the strong partnership between our institutions and sets an exciting stage for deeper collaboration.



*A delegation including Minister of Professional Development, Handicrafts, and Vocations; the Ambassador to Mauritana and his delegation tour the Global Center for Health Security.*



*UNMC and Universidad de Anahuac (UAV) leadership, left to right: Bruce Grogan, UNMC Director of Global Health Partnerships; Jane Meza, PhD, UNMC Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Matthew Rizzo, MD, chair, UNMC Department of Neurological Sciences; Maria De Jesus Patricia Mesa Trejo, MD, UAV Faculty Member; Brillit Nayeli Jaramillo Islas, MD, UAV Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Córdoba; Marisol Fernández Gudini, PhD, UAV Director of Academic Quality at Xalapa; H. Dele Davies, MD, UNMC Chancellor; Alejandro Escobar Mesa, MD, UAV Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Xalapa; Ken Bayles, PhD, UNMC Vice Chancellor for Research; Brad Britigan, MD, dean, UNMC College of Medicine; Sara Pirtle, program manager, UNMC Office of Global Engagement; and Armando De Alba, assistant dean for student exchange, UNMC College of Medicine.*



*John Lowe, PhD, chair, UNMC Department of Environmental, Agricultural & Occupational Health and Director, Global Center for Health Security; Jesse Bell, PhD, director, UNMC Water, Climate, Health Program & director, Environmental Health; Isa Yusuf Chamo, commissioner of higher education science and technology, Jigawa State, Nigeria; Dr. Ying Zhang, PhD, Chair, UNMC Department of Biostatistics; Rislana Kanya Abdulazaaz, PhD, member, Board of Trustees/CEO, Centre for Climate-Smart Agriculture, Cosmopolitan University Abuja; and Ken Bayles, vice chancellor for research.*



*The Consul-General of Japan in Chicago, Masashi Mizobuchi, reads about the origins of UNMC.*

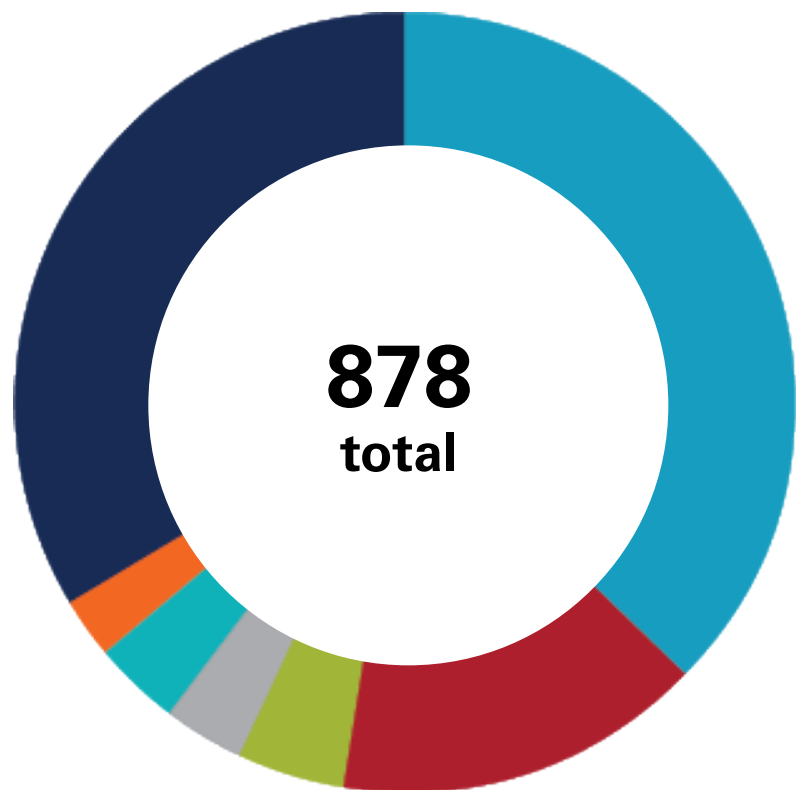
## International Visitors

The International Visitor Program, initiated in 2013, is utilized by campus units to bring visitors to UNMC for engagements ranging from a few hours up to one year. The program ensures the visitors meet UNMC requirements, such as compliance training modules and immunizations, in addition to UNMC Export Control requirements. In 2025, the OGE registered 81 international visitors representing 20 countries.

## Visa Sponsorship

The OGE assisted and sponsored 878 international students, employees and visitors representing 73 countries to work, study or visit UNMC in 2025. OGE staff advised faculty, staff, sponsored employees and students on all visa and immigration-related issues. OGE also provided advice to UNMC departments and international employees regarding the process and regulations for sponsorship of permanent residence.

## International Students, Employees and Visitors by Country, 2025



<b>India   328</b>	<b>Lebanon   30</b>
<b>China   134</b>	<b>Korea   24</b>
<b>Nigeria   38</b>	<b>Other   293</b>
<b>Bangladesh   31</b>	

# Events, Activities and Awards

International Education Week activities attracted more than 250 UNMC students, faculty and staff. The Culture Expo consisted of 19 countries being shared by UNMC representatives. Displays included artifacts, clothing, food, games and traditions.



## International Education Week

Held from Nov. 17-21, 2025, International Education Week served as a celebration of global engagement, drawing over 250 students, staff, and faculty. Co-organized by the International Student Association (ISA) and the UNMC Office of Global Engagement, the week began with a powerful opening ceremony featuring a procession of students representing their home nations.

The ceremony was underscored by remarks from both student leaders and university administration, including:

- **Shabnam Arash**, ISA Vice President & Kirtana Arikath, ISA President
- **Aavash Adhikari**, First-Year Club President
- **Karen Gould, PhD**, Interim Dean of Graduate Studies
- **Jane Meza, PhD**, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

The week's programming was designed to bridge cultures through education, sport and fellowship.

Highlights included:

- **Global Learning:** Education abroad "Lunch and Learn" sessions focused on expanding academic horizons.
- **Active Engagement:** A high-energy Salsa Night and an interactive cricket demonstration.
- **Culture Fair:** As the week's centerpiece, the fair drew more than 180 attendees. Representatives from 19 countries showcased the rich tapestry of their heritage through traditional clothing, artifacts, games, and culinary tastings.
- **Friendsgiving:** The week concluded with a community "Friendsgiving" celebration, featuring a competitive and delicious rice dish cook-off.

Collaborators included the Asian American and Pacific Islander Student Association and the Graduate Student Association.



## D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award

The D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award, established in 2024, was designed to grow or build collaborations in global health and global engagement by full-time UNMC faculty. Global health and engagement involve the various ways faculty work to connect UNMC to the world through their teaching, research and service.

The D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award provides a monetary award toward building or growing global partnerships or projects.

The inaugural recipient of the D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award was Dr. Shannon Maloney, assistant professor in the department of health promotion in the UNMC College of Public Health.

Dr. Maloney's proposed project seeks to establish an international research collaborative between UNMC and one or more research institutions in India. Working alongside community-based organizations, this partnership will develop and evaluate a crucial preconception health intervention. The primary objective of this initial phase is the formation of these collaborative partnerships and the development of a comprehensive research

proposal. To this end, Dr. Maloney will assess the existing landscape related to preconception health, gather pertinent needs assessment data, and establish a preconception health research coalition. Through collaborative efforts, Dr. Maloney and the in-country partners will refine the research protocol and subsequently pursue funding opportunities to support the project, which is anticipated to advance the health and wellbeing of mothers both domestically and internationally.



*Dr. Shannon Maloney, assistant professor in the department of health promotion in the College of Public Health, was the inaugural recipient of the Thayer Family Award.*





*The Potters Touch," by Santosh Shrestha, is the grand prize winner of the Fifth Annual International Photo Contest.*

## Fifth Annual UNMC International Photo Contest

The Office of Global Engagement held its Fifth Annual International Photo Contest in March. Global engagement invited participants to submit up to three of their favorite international travel photos in the areas of cityscapes/architecture, landscapes/nature and people/animals for the contest.

The goal was to have the photos inspire adventure and cultural awareness. The goal was to have photos that inspire adventure and

cultural awareness. An anonymous panel judged the images on originality and creativity, photographic quality and communication of culture and place.

The contest had 17 faculty/staff and 12 student/resident participants, with a total of 83 photos submitted. Global Engagement awarded a grand prize and prizes for the top three entrants in both the student/resident and faculty/staff divisions.



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The Office of Global Engagement has created two digital newsletters to keep our colleagues and partners updated on our international activities. Global Glance is a monthly bulletin that relays technical information, deadlines and other pertinent information and opportunities. Global Connections, published quarterly, contains campus-wide stories of events and accomplishments. Subscribe or read past issues at [unmc.edu/global/news-events/index.html](http://unmc.edu/global/news-events/index.html).



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