

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER
Office of Global Engagement
Annual Report
2021



Friends and colleagues,

Our commitment to our international community has not wavered over the past year. We continue to create opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to further global engagement at UNMC.

We were happy to welcome international students for the fall and spring semesters, taking our total number of international students on campus to 223 in 2021. Our international students, who are vital to our mission, enrich our campus by sharing their unique insights and

experiences with the UNMC community. We were fortunate enough to have our international student welcome lunch and global ambassador appreciation event in person this fall. I had the pleasure of conversing with many of our international students, and it was great to meet new faces and see familiar ones. I also had the chance to personally thank our global ambassadors who work hard to be a friend and mentor to our incoming students. Their effort strengthens our overall international student support mission.

I would like to highlight the 25th anniversary of the Student Alliance for Global Health (SAGH) last year. SAGH has grown and established many excellent activities and learning experiences for our student population. Even with the pandemic canceling their global experiences, they have managed to get involved in the local Omaha community to learn and give back. The innovation behind the virtual medical Spanish course is a poignant example of how UNMC has continued to push ahead during these challenging times.

We have been consistently communicating with our global partners in the preparation of our academic exchange programs resuming operations when appropriate. UNMC developed three new partnership agreements in 2021. Our support services staff continues to assist our international population on campus.

Lastly, I want to highlight our new office location. In April, our staff moved into the beautifully remodeled Williams Science Hall. We now have a central hub on campus to unify all student support services to serve our UNMC students better. Make sure you stop by sometime to say hello.

Thank you for your continued support of the Office of Global Engagement as we diligently work to provide excellence to our UNMC campus.

Sincerely,

Jane Meza, PhD
Associate Vice Chancellor for Global Engagement



Mission and Vision



Mission

The Office of Global Engagement (OGE) promotes international diversity, fosters 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 OGE 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:

- Providing support to and advocating for the university's international community including students, faculty, staff, and scholars;
- Facilitating and coordinating diverse opportunities for global learning experiences;
- Coordinating bilateral exchange programs for health science rotations and research with UNMC's global partners;
- Developing and managing observership and training programs;
- Managing the US immigration and visa sponsorships of international students, faculty, staff, and visitors on behalf of UNMC;
- Collaborating with UNMC departments to ensure compliance with UNMC policies including compliance training, immunizations, and export control;
- Developing and maintaining academic collaborations and business partnerships;
- Developing capacity in the healthcare sector;
- Bolstering economic development in Nebraska and the world;
- Coordinating various international and cultural engagement opportunities.

2021 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

International Students

UNMC welcomed 73 new international students in 2021. These students represented 23 countries and participated in 17 academic health sciences programs across all colleges. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to cause challenges for our international students due to the limited availability of visa services at some embassies and consulates and international travel restrictions. Some of the accepted international students have had to defer the start of their UNMC programs.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

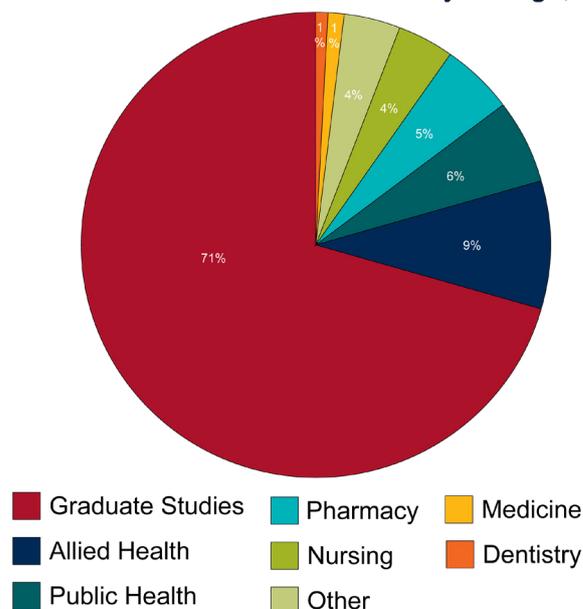
For the ninth consecutive year, UNMC offered the International Student Orientation (ISO) and the International Student Ambassador program comprised of UNMC student volunteers. In January 2021, we welcomed 21 new students from six countries for the spring semester ISO. It was our largest spring cohort to date. The OGE staff personally distributed welcome bags to the incoming international students in Omaha. For the fall semesters ISO in August 2021, we welcomed 42 new students from 16 countries.

ISO topics discussed include, but are not limited to, Academic Integrity, Title IX, UNMC Library Services, Student Support Services, US Customs & Culture Shock, Stress Management, Counseling & Student Development, and Visa/Immigration Compliance. Jane Meza, PhD, associate vice chancellor for Global Engagement, has welcomed our students at each ISO, either by Zoom or in person.



Emmanuel Nazaire Essam Nkodo, Fulbright MPH student presenting information on his home country of Cameroon

International Student Enrollment by College, 2021



Fall ISO Students

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The OGE continues to support the International Student Association (ISA). Due to COVID-19, UNMC suspended some on-campus events for early 2021. The ISA was able to host its week-long International Week activities in person again from November 13-19. A variety of activities were hosted to highlight the international diversity of the UNMC campus. This year's activities included a Diwali celebration, an intercultural awareness workshop, a cultural linguistics workshop, a ping-pong tournament, a culture expo and OGE open house, and an international movie night at Film Streams Dundee.



Global Learning Opportunities

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, UNMC canceled all in-person global experiences and other OGE annual programs such as the in-person Medical Spanish/Global Health Course, SAGH Medical Service Trips, and the International Student Research Forum.

MEDICAL SPANISH

UNMC, through the Office of Global Engagement, has been offering Medical Spanish/Global Health Courses in Latin America since 2000. While many health centers throughout the state have access to live or phone interpreters to serve this population, the need for health care professionals who can speak Spanish remains high. Under the guidance of Sara Pirtle, OGE program manager, and in partnership with language centers, one-on-one instruction in Spanish-speaking countries was made available. First from 2000-2007 in Guatemala then from 2009-2018 in Nicaragua. With the help of Armando De Alba, MD, assistant dean of DEI student programs of the College of Medicine, a new partnership with the University of Anáhuac, in Xalapa (UAV) in the state of Veracruz, Mexico, began in 2019.

The 2021 course was based on the traditional four-week course model that had previously taken place in the host country which was now adapted due to the limitations caused by COVID-19. This Immersion Spanish course is one of the collaborations initiated through the multifaceted partnership between UNMC, UNO, and UAV. Dr. Shirley Delair, associate dean, DEI, developed and directs the Immersion Spanish program. The Spanish instruction is provided by the UAV linguistic department, under the direction of Rocio Rio Rojas.

Five COM students participated in the new Immersion Spanish M4 elective in February. The course featured 1:1 individualized virtual instruction (determined by the student's level of Spanish language skills) for six hours per day, five days per week, for three weeks. In addition to the intensive Spanish language instruction, the participants received six virtual lectures, given in English, including a lecture about the health care system in Mexico. For the fourth week of the elective, students attended lectures on Latinx health. They participated in journal clubs and in online learning modules in Spanish. Lastly, they had the opportunity to virtually shadow a social worker of a local health system. The experience cumulated with each student delivering a presentation on the social determinants of health for the Latinx population in Omaha on the last day of the rotation, with a post-presentation discussion.

Variations of the Immersion Spanish course are offered for UNMC residents, health care professionals, and community members, including a non-credit version for UNMC students.

Programs

BEN NELSON FELLOWS

The OGE and the Congressional Office for International Leadership co-hosted a reunion webinar in October 2021 for the Ben Nelson Fellows from Russia who visited UNMC in September 2019. Host members from the Council Bluffs Sister Cities Association were in attendance, including the six Russian oncologists and several UNMC faculty. We hope the next cohort of Ben Nelson Fellows will be able to travel to the US in 2022

CHINA SCHOLARSHIP COUNCIL

In 2021, the OGE welcomed six new students and said goodbye to 15 graduating students sponsored by the China Scholarship Council (CSC). There are currently 41 CSC-sponsored students on campus. The OGE provided one-on-one support to students, including virtual office hours throughout the year. We also communicated with students about important updates relevant to them and the pandemic, including international travel guidelines and safety procedures.

FULBRIGHT PROGRAM

In 2021, the Fulbright Program celebrated its 75th anniversary. It was established in 1946 to expand and strengthen the relationships between the people of the United States and citizens of the rest of the world. It is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by the Institute of International Education's Council for International Exchange of Scholars.

For the second consecutive year, UNMC has been named a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program top-producing institution by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. For the 2020-2021 academic year, UNMC ranks among the institutions with the highest numbers of their scholars (faculty, researchers, and administrators) awarded Fulbright scholarships. For more than 20 years, UNMC has participated in the Fulbright program, hosting fellows from countries worldwide.

UNMC was proud to welcome six Fulbright scholars from Jordan in June who were here for the UNMC Fulbright Faculty Development Program. All were assistant professors in medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and marine biology from five universities around Jordan. This UNMC Fulbright Faculty Development Program focused on One Health and lasted 10 weeks from June 20 through August 31.

This specially designed program was made possible through strong collaboration between the UNMC College of Public Health and the Office of Global Engagement.



Included in the photo are Anas, MD, PhD; Wael Elrayes, MBBCh, PhD, Fulbright Scholar Program principal investigator; Amani, BSc, MSc, PhD; Alla, BSc, MSc, PhD; Zeinab, BSc, MSc, PhD, AFHEA; Nasar, BSc (MD), Msc/M.Phil, PhD; and Mohammed, BSc, MSc, PhD.

STUDENT ALLIANCE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH (SAGH).

In 2020-2021, the UNMC Student Alliance for Global Health (SAGH) proudly celebrated its 25th anniversary. To mark this special occasion, the SAGH Board held a speaker series for the entire UNMC community from March 22-26. The speakers came from various medical backgrounds, but all shared their views of global health and ways to make a difference here in the US. Speakers included Gina



Wilson-Ramirez, MD, MPH, MA, '98; and Steve Pergam, MD, MPH, '98; who were the original co-founders of SAGH and who organized the first medical service trip in March of 1996. Other speakers included Nicholas Comninellis, MD, MPH, DIMPH; Elizabeth Rogers, MD, MAS, '07; and Christine Ngaruiya, MD, MSc, DTMH, '10.

The Student Alliance for Global Health was launched in August 1995; the first medical service trip took place in March 1996, with 13 students and Dr. Kristine McVea and Sara Pirtle as faculty/staff sponsors to Nicaragua. One of the participants arranged for his mother (a Spanish language professor) to offer a medical Spanish course prior to departure. Flash forward 25 years later:

- Medical service trips have been offered annually from 1996-2019. They were stopped for the past two cycles only due to the pandemic.
- The medical service trips are interdisciplinary; to date, students from all seven UNMC colleges have participated: medicine, nursing, pharmacy, allied health, public health, dentistry, and grad studies.
- From 13 students, the number of participants has grown to approximately 50 or more students each year, spread out over two or more locations.
- Over the years, service trips have taken place in Jamaica, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, the Texas/Mexico border, and several Native American reservations.
- Short-term Medical Spanish classes are offered every year, keeping up the tradition that began the first year of SAGH's existence.
- The 2020-21 SAGH board includes at least four students not originally from the US and has board representatives from most UNMC colleges.

For most of 2021, SAGH members have had various opportunities to volunteer with food distribution activities with Clair United Methodist Church and OneWorld. Some activities have included sorting food donations, preparing grocery boxes, and helping with drive-up or personally delivering food to those unable to leave their homes. With these opportunities, SAGH continues to support through their volunteer efforts during these challenging times, and they have extended their outreach to communities in both North and South Omaha.



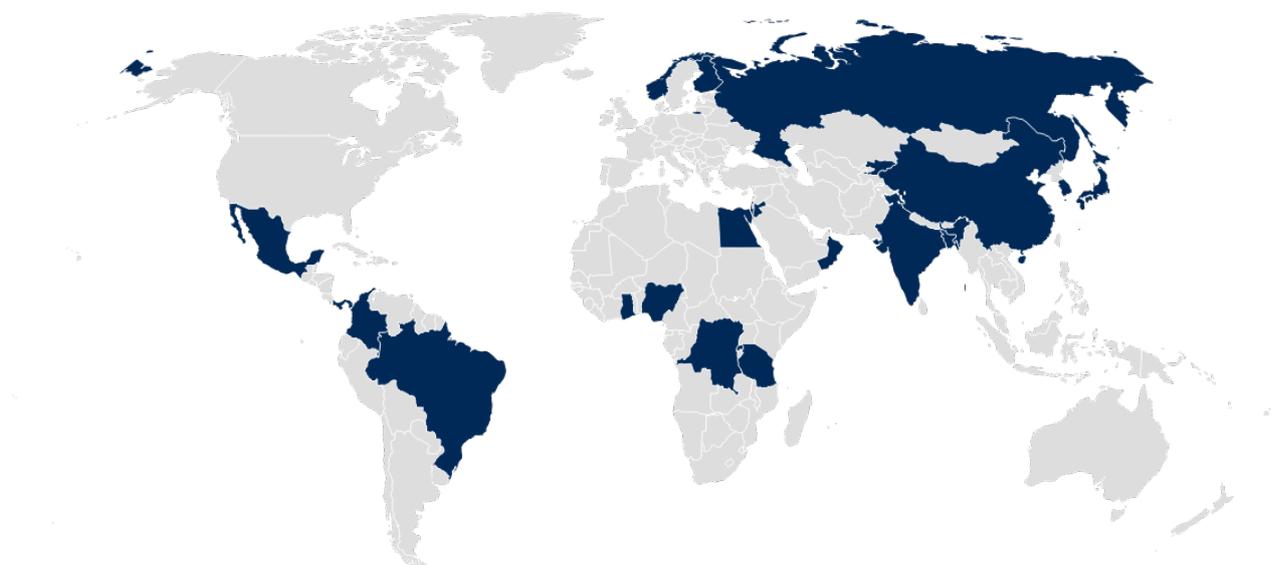
SEED PROGRAM

The UNMC Global Health Opportunity Program (GHOP) for Summer Experiential Education (SEED) in Physical Therapy was designed for international physical therapy and rehabilitation students interested in developing a global perspective on rehabilitation, learning physical therapy education and research, and practice in the United States. In previous summers, this course was offered on-campus at UNMC, but due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year's course was presented as a three-week online summer program from July 12-30. More students were able to join this program online than had previously come to Omaha in years past. The 2021 course welcomed 24 SEED students from six different universities in Asia. UNMC faculty from the Division of Physical Therapy Education at the College of Allied Health Professions lead online lectures and discussions with the students. During the student online Round Tables, SEED students had the opportunity to meet with UNMC Physical Therapy Students.

Partnerships

The OGE's partnership activities include reviewing and documenting all international agreements, strengthening relationships with existing partners, and developing new strategic partnerships. UNMC currently has about 60 active or pending international agreements for education, research, and business collaborations in 22 countries. In 2021, three new agreements were signed with partners in Bangladesh, Mexico, and Nigeria.

Map of active or pending partnership agreements by country, 2021



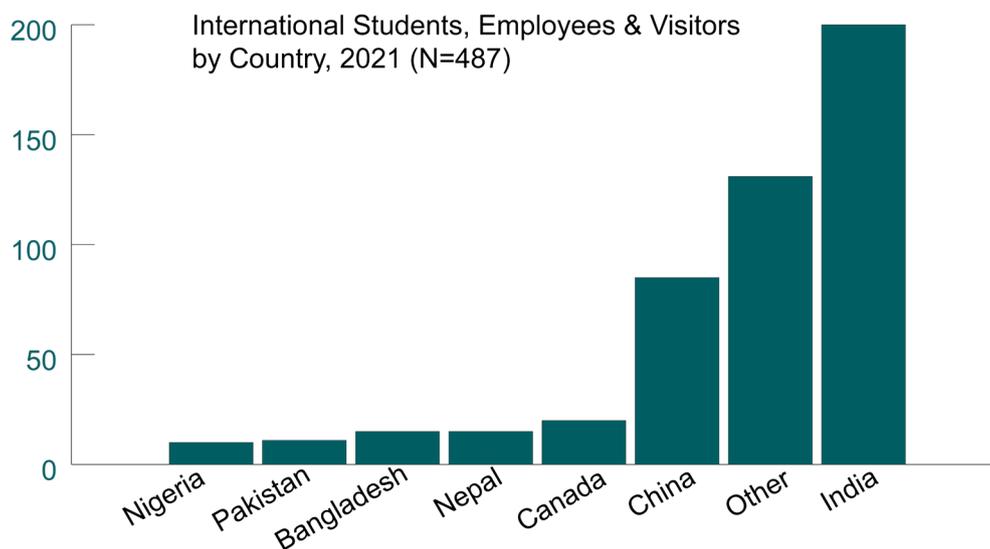
Map: Danielle Thies • Source: Office of Global Engagement • Created with Datawrapper



Support Services

VISA SPONSORSHIP

The OGE assisted and sponsored 487 international students, employees, and visitors representing 60 countries to work, study or visit UNMC in 2021. The OGE staff advised faculty, staff, sponsored employees, and students on all visa and immigration-related issues. The OGE also provided advice to UNMC departments and international employees regarding the process and regulations for sponsorship of permanent residence. Services were also offered to UNO to prepare government petitions to sponsor international employees to work at UNO.



INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, UNMC continued to host international visitors for programs ranging from a few hours to one year. The OGE worked with the office for the Vice Chancellor for Research to ensure that essential international visitors were screened and complied with UNMC's COVID-19 policies. The OGE ensures that the visitors meet immunization requirements, including for COVID-19, and compliance training modules in addition to UNMC Export Control requirements prior to arrival on campus. In 2021, the OGE registered 66 international visitors representing 16 countries.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

In 2021, the OGE revised the international travel policy for UNMC travelers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and constantly changing international travel conditions. These changes include a standardized international travel request that complements the existing travel authorization process and a new International Travel Review Committee that includes staff from the offices of Emergency Management and Export Control. During 2021, the OGE processed 14 international travel requests to eight countries.



TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE

The OGE offered free virtual and in-person tax preparation assistance to the UNMC international community in 2021, with 178 individuals participating.

Other Activities

NEW OFFICE LOCATION

In April 2021, the OGE moved to our new home in the newly remodeled Williams Science Hall. We are on the east side of the second floor of WSH. This relocation provides a central location for UNMC student services, making it easier for students to access essential offices such as academic records, financial aid, and the cashier all in one place. This new location allows us to better serve our international and domestic students and our campus collaborators.





“Feeling the Glacial Blues,” by student Alison Bauer, was the 2021 grand prize winner

INAUGURAL PHOTO CONTEST

The OGE held its inaugural International Photo Contest in March. The OGE invited participants to submit up to three of their favorite travel photos for the contest. The goal was to have the photos inspire global curiosity, a sense of adventure, and a yearning for knowledge. An anonymous panel judged the images based on originality and creativity, photographic quality, and communication of culture and place. The contest had 12 faculty/staff and 22 student/resident participants, with a total of 92 photos submitted. The OGE awarded a grand prize and prizes for the top three entrants in both the student/resident and faculty/staff divisions.

OGE COMMUNICATIONS

The OGE has continued to create two digital newsletters to keep our colleagues and partners updated on our international activities. The Global Glance is a monthly bulletin that relays technical information, deadlines, and other pertinent information and opportunities. The Global Connections is a quarterly newsletter that contains campus-wide stories of events and accomplishments.

To receive these digital publications, please sign up here: https://www.unmc.edu/global/engagement/sign_up.html and to read past issues, please go here: <https://www.unmc.edu/global/engagement/publications.html>.

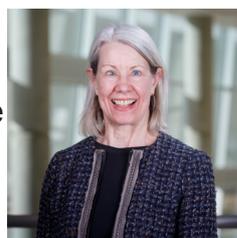
Office of Global Engagement Staff



Jane Meza, PhD
Associate Vice Chancellor for
Global Engagement
Professor of Biostatistics at
UNMC College of Public Health



Lenal Bottoms, MA
Administrative Program Associate



Sara Pirtle, MBA
Program Manager



Steve Daubendiek
Visa/Immigration Specialist



Daniel "Dan" Teet
International Student Advisor



Bruce Grogan, MPH
Director of Global Health
Partnerships



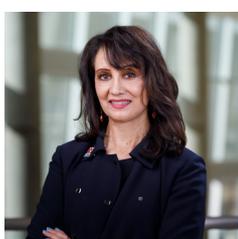
Donald "DJ" Thayer, MBA
Director of International &
Domestic Business Affairs



Bo Han, PhD, MBA
Senior Business Development
Specialist



Danielle Thies, MA
International Program
Associate



Nasreen Maiwandi, MPH
International Visitor Associate



Zenghan "Hannah" Tong, PhD
Director of Academic
Partnerships
Instructor at COM
Pharmacology/
Exp Neuroscience



Leah Niebaum, MA
Program Associate



Connor Willingham
Coordinator

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2021 RECAP

487

Visa-Sponsored
International
Participants



60
Countries



UNMC established three new international agreements in Bangladesh, Mexico, and Nigeria.



223

International
Students

43

Countries

71%

Enrolled in
Graduate
Studies



UNMC welcomed 73 new international students to campus in 2021.

For the second consecutive year, UNMC has been named a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program top-producing institution by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. .





University of Nebraska Medical Center

Office of Global Engagement
985700 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-5700
402.559.4517 | global@unmc.edu

unmc.edu/global
Twitter [@UNMCglobal](https://twitter.com/UNMCglobal)



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