

# Global Connections

Quarterly Newsletter from the Office of Global Engagement  
January 2026



## A message from the Office of Global Engagement



I hope you had a wonderful holiday, spending time with family and friends. On behalf of the UNMC Office of Global Engagement, I would like to wish you a Happy New Year!

This is the second year of accepting applications for the D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award. Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think would be interested in applying for the award. The deadline for submission is January 26.

A delegation of five Ukrainian health care professionals, through the Ben Nelson Fellows program, visited UNMC in November. The theme for this visit was Serving Battlefield Injuries. The group met with the departments of anesthesiology, emergency medicine, neurosurgery, neurological sciences and the Global Center for Health Security. They also toured the Davis Global Center and Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center.

Also in November, International Education Week, hosted by the International Student Association, provided many activities featuring cultural displays, food and traditions for UNMC students, faculty and staff to enjoy.

Additional information on these and other activities such as Warm Winter Wishes event are highlighted below.

Please follow our [website](#) and [X](#) to stay in touch with us. As always, please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about our programs.

Jane L. Meza  
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



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

### Introduction

The D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award is 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 up to \$10,000 toward building or growing global partnerships or projects and may be used for travel expenses, conference attendance or coordination, publications, research projects, etc. that promote global health and global engagement.

### Eligibility

All full-time UNMC faculty are eligible.

The goal of these funds is to provide resources for building or growing collaborations with international partners. This funding may be used for faculty development and/or research partnerships and other global engagement projects. Funds may not be used for salary support, to compensate for revenue losses or replace other funding.

### Process and Procedures

The D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award may be awarded for up to \$10,000 to be spent over a maximum of two years. A report at the end of each year is required.

Applications for the D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award will be awarded annually in April. The deadline for applications is January 26, 2026. The D.J. and Janet Thayer Family Global Engagement Award Committee will review all applications and make funding recommendations.

Go to this link to begin the application process: <https://forms.office.com/r/VrRfTnxWRF>.

There are four parts to the application. All parts are required. Applications that are not totally completed will not be submitted through the online form.

#### 1. Personal information

#### 2. Supporting documents

This includes applicant's personal statement, project description and budget.

### 3. Dean/director/chair letter of support

The letter should describe:

- How the proposed project or partnership meets the goals for the faculty and the department, college or institute
- The applicant's current and future role within the department, college or institute
- The sustainability plan for continued funding after the period of this award

### 4. Applicant's CV

This should be an up-to-date document that reinforces the applicant's qualifications and commitment to global engagement.

Application materials must be received electronically by January 26, 2026, for full consideration by the Global Engagement Award Committee. The winner will be required to submit a report by April 1, 2027. If you have questions, please contact Jane Meza at [jmeza@unmc.edu](mailto:jmeza@unmc.edu).

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## Ukrainian health care fellows visit UNMC



*Photo taken by Kalani Simpson, UNMC strategic communications*

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

[Read UNMC Today article here](#)

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## International Education Week activities highlights food, music, traditions



More than 300 UNMC students, staff, faculty and friends enjoyed the International Education Week activities held Nov. 17-21.

International Education Week kicked off with an opening ceremony of students representing their respective countries. Opening remarks were given by Jane Meza, PhD, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs, and Karen Gould, PhD, interim assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs.

More than 175 people attended the Culture Fair with representatives from 16 countries who shared cultural displays, food, games, music and traditions with their fellow UNMC community members.

Other International Education Week events also included Cricket Introduction Night, Education Abroad Lunch and Learns, Friendsgiving Potluck and Salsa Night.

International Education Week was hosted by the International Student Association. Respective events were co-sponsored by the Latino Medical Student Association, UNMC Office of Global Engagement, Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science, and the Student Alliance for Global Health.

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## Toy drive supports Ukraine children



*Rachel ZumBrunnen, UNMC physician assistant student, organized the toy collection for Ukraine on the Kearney campus.*

More than 345 toys were collected to be sent to Ukraine for the children who have lost a parent due to war. Toys were collected at the Kearney and Omaha campuses. The toy drive was sponsored by the Student Alliance for Global Health in collaboration with Valentina "Valia" Gumenyuk, PhD, assistant professor, UNMC Department of Neurological Sciences.

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## **Warm Winter Wishes event provides farewell to students**



The Office of Global Engagement staff, students and friends said farewell to international students during the Warm Winter Wishes event held Dec. 18. We wish these students well as they are leaving UNMC and moving onto new opportunities.

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## Recent achievements by UNMC faculty & staff

### Global Center for Health Security honored for Uganda collaboration

UNMC's Global Center for Health Security has been recognized for its support of health care professionals in Uganda as it begins a phase in its ongoing collaboration in the country.

[Read UNMC Today article here](#)

### Anesthesiology creates impact, connections in Zambia

Two teams from the UNMC Department of Anesthesiology recently returned from a global health outreach trip to Lusaka, Zambia, where each team spent two weeks working alongside local faculty and trainees at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH).

[Read UNMC Today article here](#)

### International family medicine partnership marks ninth year

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.

[Read UNMC Today article here](#)

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## Request for ideas

Have an idea for a story or want to discuss an international program or event?

Have a suggestion for our newsletter?

Please contact us at [global@unmc.edu](mailto:global@unmc.edu) with your ideas and suggestions/comments.

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**Office of Global Engagement**  
985700 Nebraska Medical Center  
Omaha, NE 68198-5700

[Website](#)



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**Nebraska**  
Medical Center

UNMC – Office of Global Engagement | 985700 Nebraska Medical Center | Omaha, NE 68198-5700 US

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