

# NEBRASKA BUSINESS

2021



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY *of* NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

# POINTS OF PRIDE



**895**  
BACHELORS GRADUATES  
2019-20



**#1**  
BEST VALUE IN THE U.S.  
FOR ONLINE MBA  
*Financial Times 2021*



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
HOWARD L. HAWAS HALL



**#2**  
ONLINE MBA  
IN THE BIG TEN  
*The Princeton Review 2021*



**4,353**  
STUDENTS  
Fall 2021



**#30**  
PUBLIC UNDERGRADUATE  
BUSINESS PROGRAMS  
*U.S. News & World Report 2021*



**28%**  
SALARY INCREASE  
REPORTED BY MBA ALUMNI  
TO FINANCIAL TIMES  
2021



**#4**  
CAREER SERVICES  
IN THE WORLD FOR  
ONLINE MBA PROGRAMS  
*Financial Times 2021*



**7**  
YEARS NAMED A TOP  
UNIVERSITY FOR  
PROFESSIONAL SALES  
EDUCATION  
*Sales Education Foundation*



**#13**  
ONLINE MBA PROGRAM  
*The Princeton Review 2021*



**\$800,000**  
IN COLLEGE  
SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED  
*In addition to university  
scholarships*



**13**  
YEARS NAMED CFA  
INSTITUTE UNIVERSITY  
AFFILIATION PROGRAM  
*Training students to manage  
investments*



**1 OF 17**  
FOUNDING MEMBERS  
OF AND ACCREDITED IN  
BUSINESS AND ACCOUNTING  
BY AACSB  
*Association to Advance Collegiate  
Schools of Business*



**359**  
UNIQUE EMPLOYERS  
HIRED UNDERGRADUATE  
BUSINESS STUDENTS  
2019-20



**300+**  
TRAINED STUDENT  
STRENGTHS COACHES  
*as of Fall 2021*



**4,800+**  
STUDENTS RECEIVED 1-ON-1  
STRENGTHS COACHING



**95%**  
OF STUDENTS FELT  
CONFIDENT ABOUT  
THEIR COLLEGE  
EXPERIENCE AND FUTURE  
CAREER SUCCESS



**28**  
LINCOLN WORKPLACES  
IMPROVED BY STUDENTS  
CONSULTING  
*Conducted by Clifton Builders*



**2,277**  
CAREER COACHING  
SESSIONS  
2020-21





# COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

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UNIVERSITY of NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

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# DEAN'S MESSAGE

This fall marked our fourth anniversary in Howard L. Hawks Hall. A gift from alumni and friends that keeps on giving, the building not only raised expectations but challenged us to think differently to build a world-class college. Its cutting-edge technology allowed us to serve our students remotely from day one when needed during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it also provided a place for us to safely celebrate another in-person Back to School Bash this fall to welcome students and our entire Nebraska Business community back to campus.

We continue to do big things with your support. We transformed a space in Hawks Hall for our new Diversity & Inclusion Gathering Space – DIGS – as it was named by students. It serves as a hub for conversation, inclusive programs and events to help people feel they belong (see page 10). We also launched the inaugural cohort of Inclusive Business Leaders this fall (see page 11). This cohort-based program brings together first-year business students who demonstrate a commitment to making our college and the business world more inclusive for all.

We partnered with Nebraska Athletics to make their #NILbraska program one of the most extensive and beneficial in the country (see pages 16-17). We help student athletes maximize their Name, Image and Likeness potential long-term through our Accelerate program by leveraging our distinctive offerings in the Center for Entrepreneurship and the Clifton Strengths Institute and providing curriculum through cross-campus collaboration.

Our graduate programs continue to provide a high return on investment for our students. We recently added a Master of Science in Supply Chain Management and two new online graduate certificate programs in strategic marketing and marketing analytics. Successfully completing one of our seven certificate programs enables students to smoothly transition

into our online master's programs, where credits earned from the certificate can be applied to the degree (see pages 12-13).

This fall the U.S. News & World Report ranked us #49 in undergraduate business education and #30 among public institutions. We tied with schools like Auburn, Boston, Tennessee and Villanova and we're ahead of Iowa State, Kansas, TCU and Missouri, as well as Creighton and UNO.

Our MBA@Nebraska – ranked #14 worldwide by Financial Times, #13 worldwide by Princeton Review and #17 in the nation by U.S. News & World Report – was recently recognized by the Wall Street Journal for our high return on investment as our graduates recoup the cost of their degree sooner than those in other programs. Our MBA@Nebraska program has the fifth-lowest debt-to-income ratio out of 567 schools. These recognitions help spark enrollment growth.

We've also been using our ingenuity, creativity and work ethic to flexibly respond to national and regional trends of double-digit declining enrollments. This past year, more



*Dr. Marco Barker, vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion, and Dean Farrell celebrate in DIGS.*

in-state, first-generation and underrepresented minority students chose to create their future at Nebraska Business. Expanding access to education is central to our mission as a land-grant institution.

We offered a new entrepreneurship minor, which appeals to students in any major and pairs well with our business minor for non-business majors since it draws from existing coursework. It's exciting to assist students across the university develop their entrepreneurial talent.

Some other successes which work toward our research and discovery goals in our strategic plan include our School of Accountancy faculty being ranked #5 in archival tax and #6 in archival audit worldwide. Our renowned faculty impact our students and community. For example, you can read about the great work our junior faculty are doing, such as Dr. Brenden Timpe whose research on the Head Start program provides impact by influencing public policy (see page 5).

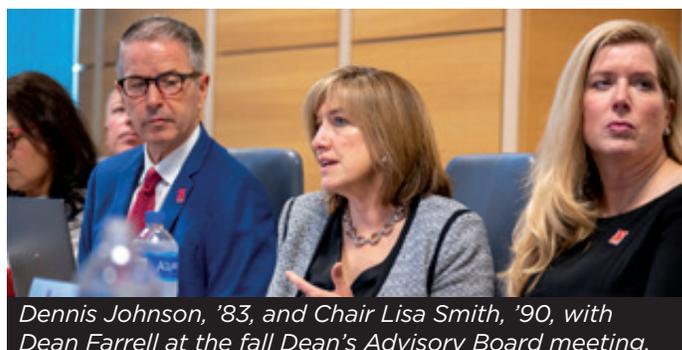
For our learning and transformation goals, we are excited to launch our business and law major for undergraduates in partnership with the College of Law. Taught by law faculty, it serves as a great second major for students in finance, accounting, human resources and more. We began developing the major after our business and law minor became so popular with students across campus.

In addition, we continue to innovate within our long-standing programs. In 2020, Doug Waggoner, '75 and '77, helped us launch the Investors with Purpose program, a new experiential learning course in wealth management (see pages 20-21). Accounting majors also benefit from a new required course merging the worlds of business and theater while preparing future accountants to communicate effectively even during unpredictable situations (see page 21).

The power of our programs, though, comes from our community – and their engagement and connection. For nearly two years, we used creative ways to stay connected. From online webinars on key topics for alumni and virtual global experiences for students who couldn't study abroad to virtual town hall meetings with parents and families answering questions during times of constant change, we utilized adaptability during the pandemic. The innovations helped lead us forward, and our resiliency helped create pandemic-immune momentum. The ingenuity unleashed during this time will continue to empower us to scale to greater heights.

Thank you for your continued support in our mission to develop future business leaders. Together, we do big things. Together, we are Nebraska Business.

Sincerely,



# Health Care Efficiencies Lower Costs

With rising health care costs affecting the lives of many in the U.S., Dr. Yingchao Lan, assistant professor of supply chain management and analytics, researches ways to streamline health care delivery and create a more effective system to help lower costs. Her latest study earned her the Chan Hahn Best Paper Award at the 2021 Academy of Management Conference after being recognized as finalist for the honor twice before.

“Winning the award in operations and supply chain management is a very impressive accomplishment, since the academy is the leading professional society for scholars who conduct research in all areas of management,” said Dr. Jennifer Ryan, Ron and Carol Cope College Professor and chair of the Department of Supply Chain Management and Analytics.

In her paper, “Ancillary Cost Implication of Multisiting Physicians and Inter-Organizational Collaboration in Health Care Delivery,” Lan and her co-authors explored the use of multisiting physicians who practice at more than one hospital, and their impact in reducing costs, such as lab-based diagnostics, radiology-based imaging procedures and prescriptions. Their findings indicated considerable savings passed onto patients, some as high as \$9,348 per hospital visit.

“Patients treated by multisiting physicians experienced, on average per hospitalization, reduction in laboratory charges by 58.57% and radiology charges by 30.11% – even more so when those physicians have less practice experience. Such cost reduction comes from reducing the total number of procedures or tests ordered. We also show that the lower treatment charges do not compromise the clinical quality of patients treated by multisiting physicians,” said Lan.

To conduct the study, Lan examined a unique dataset of more than 163,000 patients treated by upwards of 4,400 physicians at Florida hospitals between 2014 and 2016 from the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP). Ryan explained how the department supports Lan through purchasing datasets like those from the Center of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

“Our department is committed to doing everything we can to support Yingchao and ensure she has access to those datasets,” Ryan said. “The investment should lead to multiple unique research publications, as well as practical insights regarding the coordination of care between hospitals and skilled nursing facilities.”

The research team suggested that because multisiting physicians work at several hospitals, they accumulate best practices from each, which in turn can lead to implementation of those practices across multiple sites. Lan hopes this



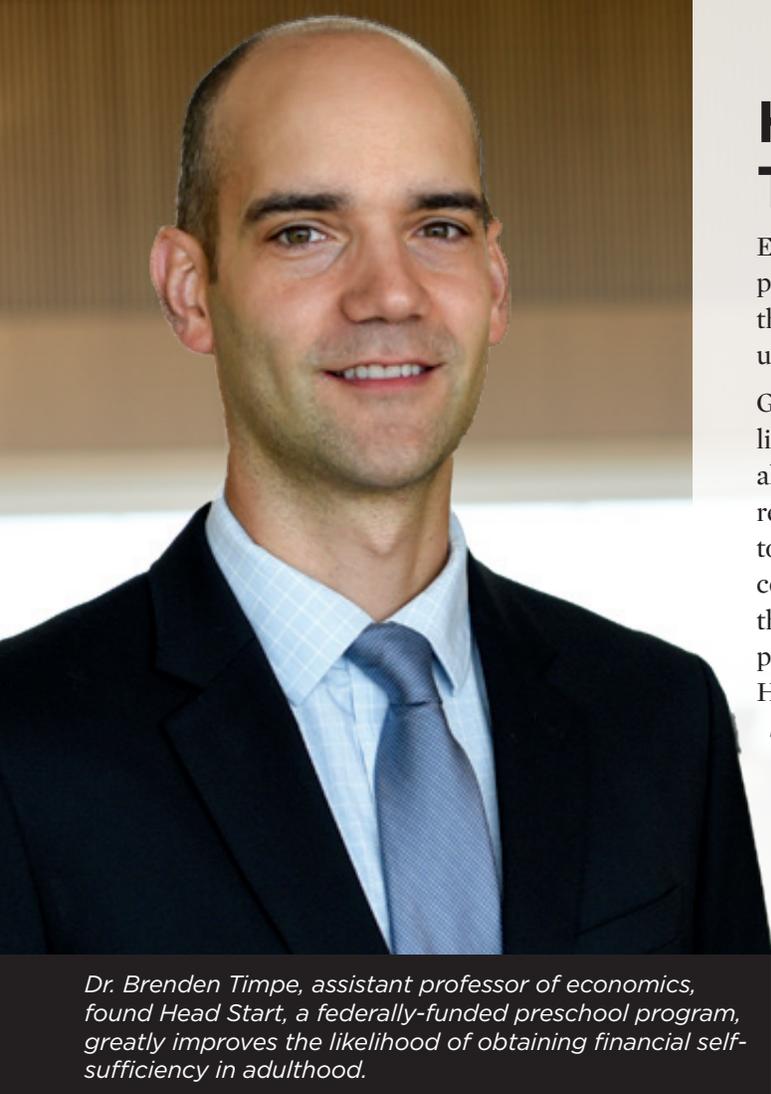
*Dr. Yingchao Lan, assistant professor of supply chain management and analytics, won the Chan Hahn Best Paper Award at the 2021 Academy of Management Conference.*

continued focus on higher levels of collaboration within the health care system can help lead to a more value-based approach.

“The current soaring cost and poor quality of health care is largely driven by fragmentation of health care delivery – lack of collaboration and coordination among health care providers along the care continuum. I hope my work experience in the industry, together with this research can offer some insights for both practitioners and policy makers while health care transforms from a volume-based system to a value-based system,” Lan said.

Three weeks after earning the award, Lan’s paper was also accepted into Production and Operations Management after only two revisions in 15 months.

“I will continue to explore how collaboration among health care providers can improve the health care delivery, freeing patients from being the patch sticker themselves while navigating through their treatment journey,” Lan said.



*Dr. Brenden Timpe, assistant professor of economics, found Head Start, a federally-funded preschool program, greatly improves the likelihood of obtaining financial self-sufficiency in adulthood.*

## Head Start More Than Pays for Itself

Early education from Head Start, a federally funded preschool program for disadvantaged kids, greatly improves the likelihood they obtain financial self-sufficiency in adulthood, according to an unusually large study of its long-term effects.

Getting more education means disadvantaged children are less likely to need public assistance like disability payments and food allowances as adults, meaning that funding Head Start generated revenue, rather than costs, for the federal government, according to Brenden Timpe, assistant professor of economics. He and his co-authors earned an Early Career Research Award grant from the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research for their working paper, “Prep School for Poor Kids: The Long-Run Impacts of Head Start on Human Capital and Economic Self-Sufficiency.”

They estimate the government makes 5.4% to 9.1% per year for at least 30 years for every child it put through Head Start, due solely to savings on public assistance and a small increase in tax revenue from higher wages earned by participants.

The study considers education and economic productivity of about 22.5 million 25- to 54-year-olds born between 1950 and 1980. They were eligible for Head Start at age 5 and under when a program was available in their country of birth and graduated from high school and college at higher rates than the ineligible group. College completion rate among the eligible group was about 39%, or 12 percentage points higher than their slightly older peers.

Head Start eligibility raised average annual earnings slightly. But filings for disability claims among men who had been eligible were about 42% lower (4.8 percentage points) than in the ineligible group, the study finds. Among eligible women, poverty rates were 32% (4.4 percentage points) lower. Overall, Head Start eligibility reduced adult poverty by 23% and receipt of public assistance income by 27% among participants.

Launched in 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty, Head Start offers curriculum, health screenings, meals and referrals to social services as needed. By addressing early social and academic skills and health and emotional needs, the founders expected Head Start to better prepare underprivileged students for success in elementary school and beyond.

The researchers take advantage of Head Start’s uneven nationwide rollout between 1965 and 1980 to create a much larger study sample and measure the program’s impacts much later in life — not just on test scores. By matching Census and American Community Survey data to Social Security Administration data on the exact date and place of birth for each subject, they could see which subjects had access to the program.

Evaluating the long-run effects of Head Start can be difficult as eligible children tend to come from low-income families and neighborhoods, so they can’t simply be compared with those ineligible as generally from better-resourced backgrounds. Timpe compared children who filled Head Start classrooms in its first few years with kids just a year or two older, who grew up in the same families and neighborhoods but were born a little too early to benefit directly from the program.

“Head Start in its earliest years was far from a model preschool program. Nevertheless, even the less-than-perfect implementation of Head Start was likely higher quality than the alternatives available to low-income children in the 1960s,” said Timpe, who added that even with similar concerns now, it may still be much better than less formal childcare. “Overall, Head Start appears to have achieved the goals of its early architects, both increasing children’s economic opportunities and reducing poverty.” — *Original article from UCLA Anderson Review*

# Hiring Dark Personalities Often Intentional

Propensity for unethical behavior may be a desirable trait for accounting executives or even the reason the company hired them in the first place. Dr. Ling Harris, assistant professor of accountancy, examined the role dark personality traits play in the accounting executive hiring process.

“This research is about how job candidates with dark personalities are selected for senior accounting manager positions in for-profit companies,” said Harris. “We recruited real-world professional executives and executive recruiters to look at candidate profiles, and for companies with pressure to manage earnings, we found they select job candidates who have dark personalities.”

Published in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, “Recruiting Dark Personalities for Earnings Management” dove into the relationship between hires with dark personality traits and earnings management, which is the manipulation of company earnings to produce overly positive numbers. Harris and co-authors uncovered how the willingness of some candidates to push ethical boundaries to meet financial objectives often helped them be hired.

“The fundamental issue is that in for-profit companies, earnings management is very prevalent despite regulatory efforts for many decades. For dark-personality candidates, their personality signals their propensity to manage earnings, and surprisingly they’re more likely to be hired if the company needs to meet an earnings target. By focusing on employee selection, we identified one answer to this question resides in the types of people recruited, selected and retained by organizations,” she said.

The study asked more than 100 corporate executives to examine two equally-qualified job candidates to assess their fit in the organization. The candidates included one with dark personality traits – such as rationalizing questionable behavior and narcissistic tendencies – and one who possessed fewer such characteristics. The results displayed a striking contrast depending on the scenario.

“If a company has pressure to manage earnings, then about 86% of hiring professionals would pick the candidate with dark personality traits. If that company doesn’t have pressure to manage earnings, then about 88% would pick the candidate without these traits,” explained Harris.

Prior research indicated a prevalence of dark personalities in management positions and pointed to the possibility that those traits are only an unfortunate byproduct of otherwise



*Dr. Ling Harris, assistant professor of accountancy, researched the relationship between dark personality traits and unethical behavior, like earnings management, and the effects on the hiring process.*

strong leaders. However, Harris and her co-authors conclude quite the opposite.

“What we found is that it is not a byproduct, and that dark personalities are intentionally selected into these positions. It is for the sole purpose of pushing the boundary to engage in earnings management,” she said.

Overall, Harris believes the impact of this research not only comes from the effect it may have on the future hiring process, but also the regulatory implication it has. She hopes their findings help further research and help create better regulations.

“We are providing insights to regulators that in order to have better success in curbing earnings management, they should also consider the cultural dimensions within the company,” she explained.

# Aaron Crabtree Tribute Scholarship Established

The accounting community united to establish the Dr. Aaron Crabtree Tribute Scholarship for Nebraska accounting students. Crabtree served as director for the School of Accountancy for seven years prior to becoming the associate dean of master's programs and executive development this summer.

"We have contributions from faculty, alumni and accounting professionals," Jill Trucke, assistant professor of practice in accounting, said. "This demonstrates how your impact has gone beyond the walls of the College of Business and how many people appreciate you and the work you have done. Our goal is for this scholarship to be permanently endowed."

Crabtree joined Nebraska in 2004 after completing his Ph.D. at Virginia Tech. He became the director of SOA in 2014 and brought leadership, vision and growth through ideas to benefit students, which indirectly impacted public accounting firms and corporations. These efforts included the split internship program where students work during tax and audit seasons without delaying graduation, Discover Accounting pre-college program, Professional Development Days and the university chapter of National Association of Black Accountants (NABA).

"Dr. Crabtree is a true embodiment of selflessness and



*Dr. Aaron Crabtree, who served as director for the School of Accountancy for seven years, was recently honored with a tribute scholarship at the Celebration of Excellence.*

going the extra mile for those around him without the need for recognition. I'm eternally grateful for the countless times he supported me," said Ahmed Ahmed, a senior accounting major from Khartoum, Sudan.

Trucke shared how she appreciated his patience as "being a professor was quite different from being an auditor." She noted his skills in providing direction and suggestions, yet not micromanaging.

Announced at the fall SOA Celebration of Excellence, the scholarship was a surprise to Crabtree.

"I am truly honored by the scholarship. This is the most meaningful professional honor that I could receive as it will have a positive impact on students even after I am gone. Thanks to those who made it possible," Crabtree said.

To donate to the Crabtree Tribute Scholarship, go to [https://go.unl.edu/crabtree\\_scholarship](https://go.unl.edu/crabtree_scholarship) or contact Justin Swanson, development director (see inside back cover).

## Faculty Research

**School of Accountancy faculty** were ranked No. 1 in Nebraska in the latest BYU Accounting Research Productivity Ranking, placing them in the top 15% for faculty research among over 600 national and international institutions measured. Nebraska earned the recognition of No. 5 in archival tax research worldwide and No. 6 archival audit worldwide based on the total research output of the school's faculty in the top 12 peer-reviewed accounting journals.

**Dr. Jimmy Downes**, associate professor of accountancy, provided better clarity to firms' financial statement adjustments in a recent article published in *Contemporary Accounting Research*.

**Dr. Alok Kumar**, W.W. Marshall College Professor and associate professor of marketing, was recognized for promoting research and discovery in the marketing field. He ranks amongst the 2020 top most productive scholars based on his publications over a 10-year period in the premier publications of the American Marketing Association – the *Journal of Marketing* and *Journal of Marketing Research*.

**Dr. J. Kalu Osiri**, director of the International Business Program and associate professor of practice in management, and co-authors' article, "Thrive and Survive: Assessing Personal Sustainability," was published in the March issue of the *American Psychological Association Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*.

**Dr. Troy Smith**, assistant professor of management, co-authored a recent study showing that after abusive behavior some managers fake nice rather than make nice with employees as a means of repairing their social image. *Harvard Business Review* published an article on the research.

**Dr. Todd Thornock**, assistant professor of accountancy, co-authored a recent study examining the impact of managers using emotional language in written/electronic performance feedback. *Strategic Finance* published an article on the research.

**Dr. Julie Wu**, assistant professor of finance, and her co-authors received the first prize in the Spängler-IQAM award for the Best Investments Paper in the *Review of Finance*. This award was presented at the European Finance Association meetings in August 2021 for her paper titled "What Do Short Sellers Know?" *Review of Finance* is among the *Financial Times* top 50 journals.



# Cohort-Based Nebraska Business Honors Academy Attracts High-Ability Students

First started in the fall of 2013, the Nebraska Business Honors Academy attracts high-ability students who want to experience a four-year, cohort-based enhanced business education program. On average, 26% of academy graduates attend graduate programs while the others work in selected fields earning \$10,000 more than other graduating seniors.

“Our students bring exceptional skills and achievements coupled with the desire to challenge themselves and find ways to positively impact the academy, the College of Business and the university as a whole,” said Erin Burnette, academy director. “Participating in the academy enhances their Nebraska experience and contributes to their academic growth in the classroom, leadership exploration in student organizations and campus activities, and deep individual discovery. Each year, I continue to be pleasantly surprised by our students’ willingness to be inquisitive about both themselves and the world around them. They are eager to learn how they can be the best version of themselves and use those skills to create positive change in the communities they will serve as a person and professional in their future careers.”

The 40-45 students selected into the academy each year come from across the country. They complete most of

their foundation and core business courses together using action-based learning focused on the development of critical thinking, technical and communication skills.

“As an out-of-state student, I was worried about finding my place at Nebraska, but the academy made the university feel much smaller and was my home at Nebraska,” said Molly Olander, a senior honors academy student and actuarial science major from Burnsville, Minnesota. “From day one on campus, I had a group of students who would be beside me for the next four years. Through classes, study sessions, group projects, social events and simply spending time together in the College of Business, we have grown up together.”

The academy courses, taught by top faculty, allow students to discuss and develop solutions for real-world business problems and create the social and intellectual bonds necessary for the ever-changing business world. Outside of the classroom, students create a strong social community,



Molly Olander



*On average 26% of academy students attend graduate programs while the others work and earn \$10,000 more than other graduates.*

discuss leadership trends and topics with campus and community partners, and visit with business leaders and corporate executives from across the country.

“From networking with partners and leaders, I have sharpened my communication skills and learned how to better market the programs I am a part of and myself. The power of connections and networking is often underrated, and it is important to give back and take any opportunity you are given,” said Olander.

Through individualized coaching and mentorship from Burnette and Dr. Rebekah Neary-DeLaPorte, assistant director, and non-competitive relationships with their peers, academy students quickly immerse themselves into all that Nebraska offers. They are involved in student organizations and campus activities.

“Experiences like the Leadership Challenge Event placed me on a team to solve an abstract problem by working together to find a creative solution,” Olander said. “At the Travelers Actuarial Case Competition, I got hands-on experience working on a problem I would see as an actuary.”

More than 60% of academy students intern at two or more businesses or nonprofits. After graduation, 62% of academy alumni work outside of Nebraska.

“The business knowledge and skills developed have been helpful in preparing me for life in the workplace after graduation. I gained leadership skills, expanded my worldview, learned to work with teams to reach common goals and became close with an outstanding group of individuals who have pushed me to be my best self every day,” Olander said.

## Lockhart Prepared for Harvard Law School

As a recent Harvard Law graduate, Phoebe Lockhart, '18, reflects on how her time in the Nebraska Business Honors Academy prepared her for life in law school and beyond. The cohort-based program with its enhanced business curriculum readied the Ogallala, Nebraska, native for her time at the Ivy League institution.



*Phoebe Lockhart, '18*

“When I was in college, the Honors Academy challenged me to be the best student I could be. The classes were difficult, and my peers were so smart. In those ways, the academy was great preparation for law school,” said Lockhart, who plans to practice law in Boston.

The daunting experience of moving to a new city and entering law school made for a tough first year, similar to Lockhart's first year in the academy where she faced a tough series of midterms in economics. She embraced the challenge of law school just as she did in economics during her undergraduate years.

“Although I felt defeated at the beginning, I eventually changed my major to economics because I enjoyed Dr. Sam Allgood's courses so much. My transition to Harvard Law was similar. Soon enough, I got to know friends and professors, learned some of the legal lingo and developed my skills through internships and clinics,” she said.

Lockhart noted how case studies and class discussions from the academy curriculum mirrored what she experienced at Harvard Law. She credits Nebraska Business faculty for their expertise and professional advice.

“My last semester of law school, I actually dug up my notes from Dr. Laurie Miller's microeconomics course to help me understand some of the graphs in my antitrust class. Dr. Donna Dudney also offered invaluable advice and encouragement during my law school application process,” she said.

As a member of the second cohort to graduate from the academy, Lockhart has seen the program evolve and traditions form. She also appreciates the long-lasting and impactful relationships forged at Nebraska.

“Now that I'm older, the Honors Academy also means a lot to me as an alum. I am grateful for the network of highly driven, like-minded professionals and the friendships that continue to this day,” Lockhart said.



# Diversity and Inclusion Gathering Space Opens

Huskers came together to celebrate the grand opening of a space dedicated to furthering diversity and inclusivity in the College of Business. The college's Diversity and Inclusion Gathering Space — nicknamed DIGS — serves as a hub for conversation, inclusive programs and gatherings to help all students feel they belong.

“One of our guiding principles established by our 2018 strategic plan is Be Inclusive. We want students, faculty, staff, alumni and business partners to genuinely feel they belong here at the College of Business. This space provides a platform for renewed collaboration where students can co-create the experiences that will help them grow as future business leaders,” said Dean Kathy Farrell.

Under renovation in fall 2020, the DIGS programming began online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Diversity and inclusion-related student organizations began holding their meetings in DIGS and new furniture arrived. Early adopters of the space included students who served as pilot members of the Inclusive Business Leaders (see page 11).

“We were honored to name the space so that its purpose rooted in inclusive excellence is presented in a more approachable way,” said Ambi Anuh-Ndumu, senior marketing major from Papillion, Nebraska. “By calling it DIGS for short, we’re saying to students it’s yours to come hang out, build connections, have conversations and decompress after classes. It provides a space where you can come as you are as well as build your community here on campus.”

Harrison Lloyd, senior international business and economics major from Pflugerville, Texas, said, “Early on, there seemed to be a lack of representation of the LGBTQIA+ community in the college. I questioned my

place in business and wondered if people would take me seriously in a business setting. I joined efforts to form the Pride in Business student organization last year, and in the process, I felt relief. Having representation and opportunities to find community in inclusive spaces allows students to focus on their academics and hopefully lessens the doubts of whether or not they belong.”

Lloyd, who serves as president of Pride in Business and vice president of the Business International Student Association, encouraged students to be an active part of the community-building process.

“My advice to other Huskers looking to make an impact is to show up and be inclusive. Building the sense of belonging for yourself and others is an active process. Introduce yourself to your classmates, make others feel comfortable and be welcoming to all. Not all impacts have to be large-scale to be meaningful,” he said.

The college expanded its strategic plan in 2020 to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. To establish goals and priorities, 14 business faculty, staff, students and alumni were named to the Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board. A number of initiatives launched to help realize these goals, including a diversity and inclusion leadership certificate program offered through the college's Center for Executive and Professional Development.

“Success in our journey requires commitment and action from all of us. This is an endeavor where we have to be intentional, commit every day to be and do better, and lead by example. It’s imperative to our mission,” said Rik Barrera, the college's associate dean of student services, inclusion and chief operating officer.

## Scholarship Program Prepares Inclusive Business Leaders

First-year students started learning how to champion diversity and inclusion in a new program called Inclusive Business Leaders (IBL) at the College of Business this fall. The program assists with attracting more diverse students and helps them thrive academically and socially while supporting their career goals to cultivate a more inclusive environment.

IBL students receive a freshman scholarship, mentors and exclusive networking opportunities. The cohort also benefits from resources such as free tutoring and career coaching.

“They’ll understand ways in which they can grow from the Intercultural Development Inventory, an assessment used to build intercultural competence to achieve diversity and inclusion goals and outcomes. We will reflect and share over the course of the program and work on a capstone project that addresses an inequitable business practice,” said coordinator of the IBL program, Dr. Kasey Linde.

Students partner with professional mentors during the capstone project to help them develop potential solutions. Their year-long experience culminates by presenting their findings.

From the program’s initial pitch, it was fast tracked to become a new offering at the college. Leadership and alumni want the IBL program to help with financial and access barriers for underrepresented students while further building their leadership skills.

“We are grateful to John (’86) and Mary (’86) Schuele for the initial lead gift to run a pilot program while we recruited students. It sparked an urgency and excitement for this program and support from other generous donors followed. It’s a testament to how much people want to see continued improvement of equity and inclusion in the field of business and beyond,” Linde said.

Encouraged by the positive impact the freshmen cohort is already making, Linde looks forward to watching them make a difference in their communities and careers in the future.

“You can feel the momentum building behind this program and it all stems from the shared desire to see the college, workplace and world become a more inclusive place,” she said.



Troy, '93 & '97, Derek, Kya and Julie, '94, '00 & '09, Branch

### Branch Leans Into Strengths

Freshman Derek Branch, a member of the Osage Nation, business administration major and Husker Football player from Lincoln, Nebraska, is working hard so he can accomplish a lifetime goal—building a business that leaves a lasting impact on his community. He found inspiration to study business while in the Future Builders Challenge, a pre-college program that surrounded him with like-minded entrepreneurial students.

#### Tell me about the Future Builders Challenge.

I learned so much about my strengths and also firsthand what it takes to organize and run a successful business. We worked as a true team, every group relying on each other to do their job correctly for the betterment of the team.

#### What has motivated you as a walk on?

Ever since I was little, it was my dream to play college football. I love everything about the game and being with my teammates. When workouts get hard, I think about the feeling of playing in front of 90,000 people in my hometown.

#### Who inspires you?

My dad inspires me (former Husker Troy Branch, '93 & '97, from Camden, New Jersey). Getting to see where he grew up was shocking. Hearing the stories about him growing up with just his mom, not having heat in his house sometimes was extremely humbling. Knowing the struggle, he went through over the course of his life and seeing where he is now makes me believe anything is possible. It is also a great reminder how humble he stays after coming so far.

The inaugural cohort of Inclusive Business Leaders



# Rolling Certificate to M.S. Degree Benefits Alum

After graduating with a degree in mathematics from Nebraska, Casey Christensen, '17 & '21, wanted to expand her analytical skills and advance her career. Four promotions later, she knew she made the right decision to earn a business analytics graduate certificate and roll it into an M.S. in Business Analytics degree from her alma mater.

"I started with the certificate program because it only included four courses and was not as extensive of a time commitment as a full master's degree. I knew I could roll all of the courses into a full master's program later if I desired to continue," said Christensen, a Lincoln, Nebraska, native. "At the same time, I knew the certificate alone would be a great addition to my working portfolio and help me advance in my career."

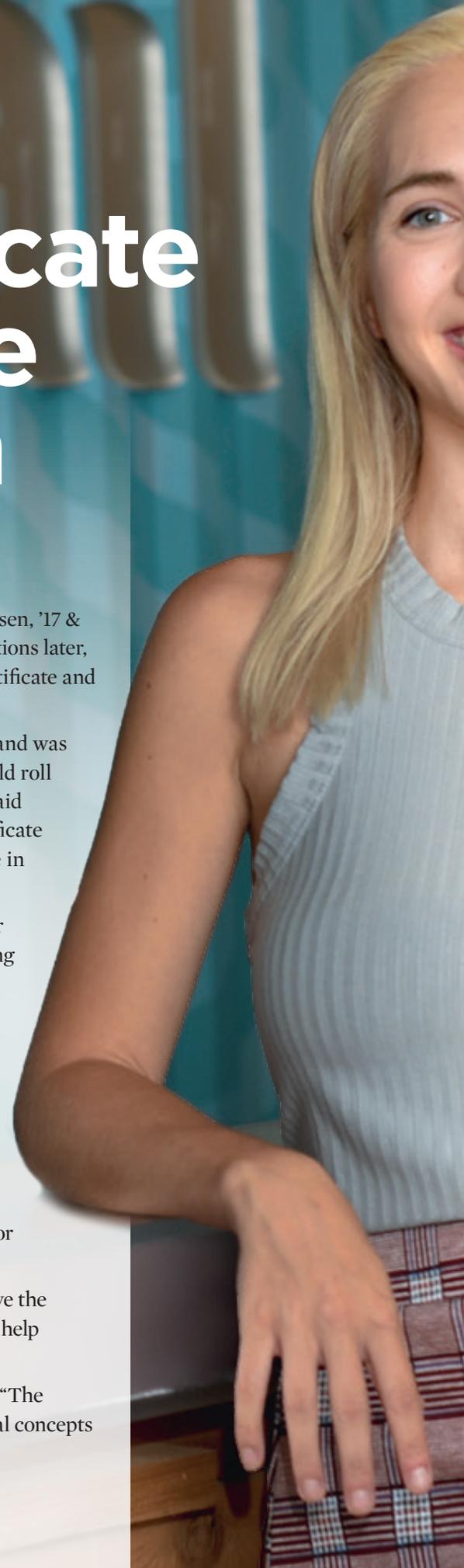
Christensen saw opportunities to apply what she learned in class directly to her work at Spreetail. The online format allowed her to work full-time while earning her certificate.

"A great benefit of taking the program online while working was being able to immediately apply and try out models, processes and concepts learned in class at work," she said. "I work in a few cities and like to travel, so I was taking class from Texas, Florida, Colorado and even on a cruise."

Courses such as Risk and Simulation Modeling (SCMA 837) helped strengthen Christensen's analytics skills. Dr. David Olson, James & H.K. Stuart Chancellors Distinguished Chair and professor of supply chain management and analytics, teaches the course, which helps prepare students for practical application to real-life work in supply chain.

"Organizations are realizing that measuring and modeling risks help them survive the challenges life and the economy throw their way. We cover several tools that can help students contribute to their organizations' risk management," Olson said.

Christensen, who continued into the M.S. in Business Analytics program, said, "The graduate programs equipped me with the knowledge to generate new analytical concepts and processes within the company."





*Casey Christensen, '17 & '21, advanced her talents through the online business analytics graduate certificate program before transitioning into the M.S. in Business Analytics at Nebraska.*

## Johnston Puts Supply Chain Certificate to Work in Air Force

As an aircrew equipment flight chief in the United States Air Force, Master Sgt. Joshua Johnston ensures airmen have the supplies they need for any situation. To contribute to the efficiency of logistics operations in the military, he wanted to earn a supply chain management graduate certificate from Nebraska.



*Joshua Johnston*

“The supply chain management certificate program provided a great foundation and introduction into the realm of continuous process improvement and supply chain management. I chose it because it is one of the best in the nation, and I also wanted to use it as a stepping stone to continue with the Master of Science in Supply Chain Management at Nebraska,” said Johnston.

Originally from Chadron, Nebraska, he headed to college after high school. After one semester, a greater purpose called.

“I joined the Air Force in May 2007 because I felt the need to serve my country as I wasn’t doing enough to help people,” he said. “Both my grandfathers served in World War II in the Army Air Corps.”

Johnston later earned his bachelor’s degree but decided to continue his education to fuel his career in the Air Force.

He utilized the online platform, Canvas, to earn his certificate while residing in Tucson, Arizona.

“I knew I could benefit from the knowledge in the supply chain management certificate program at work in the Air Force,” said Johnston. “The program was very accessible through the online format. Everything flowed smoothly and worked well with basic home internet and my laptop. Canvas is very user friendly, and my professors were very responsive,” he said.

Working full-time, Johnston appreciated the opportunity to apply the concepts and tools learned in his courses in real time. The information acquired also helped improve processes for his team.

“I took my new knowledge and experience to review and change processes and make them more efficient. We re-organized our parachute shop and saved valuable man-hours by cutting down unnecessary steps,” he said.

After earning his certificate, Johnston rolled his course credits into the M.S. of Science in Supply Chain Management at Nebraska, stating, “I always wanted to graduate as a Husker.

**Nebraska Business offers additional graduate certificates in business analytics, financial communications, human resource management, marketing analytics, strategic marketing and supply chain analytics.**



# Center for Entrepreneurship Helps Create the Future of Business

The Center for Entrepreneurship provides students from across the university with the tools to take their future into their own hands while also assisting businesses in the community. With more than 1,100 students enrolled in entrepreneurial courses at the College of Business and many more participating in events and workshops every year, the center helps develop the skills to start, operate and grow a business.

“We are here to meet students wherever they may be in their entrepreneurial journey, whether it’s working through an idea or strategizing how to raise capital. Even if a student doesn’t end up starting a business, they gain a much greater sense of business and how the startup community operates,” said Dr. Sam Nelson, ’11, director of the center and associate professor of practice in management. “We also serve as a hub for connections and resources for the business community.”

Led by management faculty with research expertise and real-world experience with starting and growing businesses, the center also helps provide students with experience in theory and practice in and out of the classroom. Their research background also helps existing business owners with solutions to real problems.

“Students are eager to hear and learn from our faculty members because what is being talked about in classes is extremely applicable to situations in the real world,” Nelson said. “They also wanted to be connected to entrepreneurs in the community.”

The center also hosts business leaders, founders and investors who pass on their experience and advice. Students

often discover more opportunities through the center’s strong connections throughout the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

“We utilize our wide network of community partners and former students in class or over lunch to talk about how they got to where they are now. The students learn from someone who was in their shoes and found a way to succeed,” Nelson said. “We’re always looking to grow our network of partners and business leaders to help cultivate the next generation of entrepreneurs.”

Competitions are also held for students in and out of the university, as well as high school students, to enhance their entrepreneurial talents. Their four signature events include the Innovation Challenge, 3-2-1 Quick Pitch, the 48-Hour Challenge and the New Venture Competition.

While competing to earn \$80,000 in cash prizes throughout the year, students collaborate with peers and expand their network while also developing the skills



*Dr. Sam Nelson, '11, helps guide entrepreneurs.*

necessary to start and operate a business.

“Thanks to the generosity of our partners, we’re not only able to strengthen the entrepreneurial talents of students, but we’re also able to help them realize their business goals through cash prizes,” said Nelson.

The center also provides a space for students to connect and engage with each other. Nelson stated how students can often be found in the space discussing ideas and helping each other.

“The center serves as a safe and welcome environment to come and hang out. We take great pride in so many students and business partners connecting with one another in the center because we know the discussions happening in those moments are going to someday change the future of business,” he said.

## The PALETTE Project Lifts Off

Students from across campus came together to paint a mural and leave their mark at Nebraska in September. Commissioned by the Center for Entrepreneurship (C4E) at the College of Business, the mural became the first venture for a new startup called The PALETTE Project, spearheaded by founder, CEO and senior management major Erika Casarin from Lincoln, Nebraska.

“Not only does the experience break barriers and bring individuals together, but The PALETTE Project also beautifies the communities where we reside,” Casarin said. “I wanted to create an experience for students, allowing them to connect in a meaningful way. This event provided a place for them to mingle and make great memories while also creating unique art.”

Designed like a big paint-by-number activity, the mural was installed in the C4E – the same place Casarin’s idea developed through teamwork.

“I had no idea where to start, so I scheduled a consultation appointment with the Center for Entrepreneurship. I met with staff who took the time to listen to my idea and asked me questions. We found the holes in the model and strategized on how to compensate for them. They guided me through the early business stages,” Casarin said.

Competing in the C4E’s New Venture Competition with her business plan, Casarin also talked to members of the Startups UNL student organization. Then she pitched PALETTE’s first project idea to Dean Kathy Farrell and Dr. Sam Nelson, director of the C4E.

“She communicated how this mural was a way for us to share the story of entrepreneurship at Nebraska and its endless possibilities. It seemed only fitting that the first student-designed venture for the PALETTE Project would be installed in the Center for Entrepreneurship,” he said.

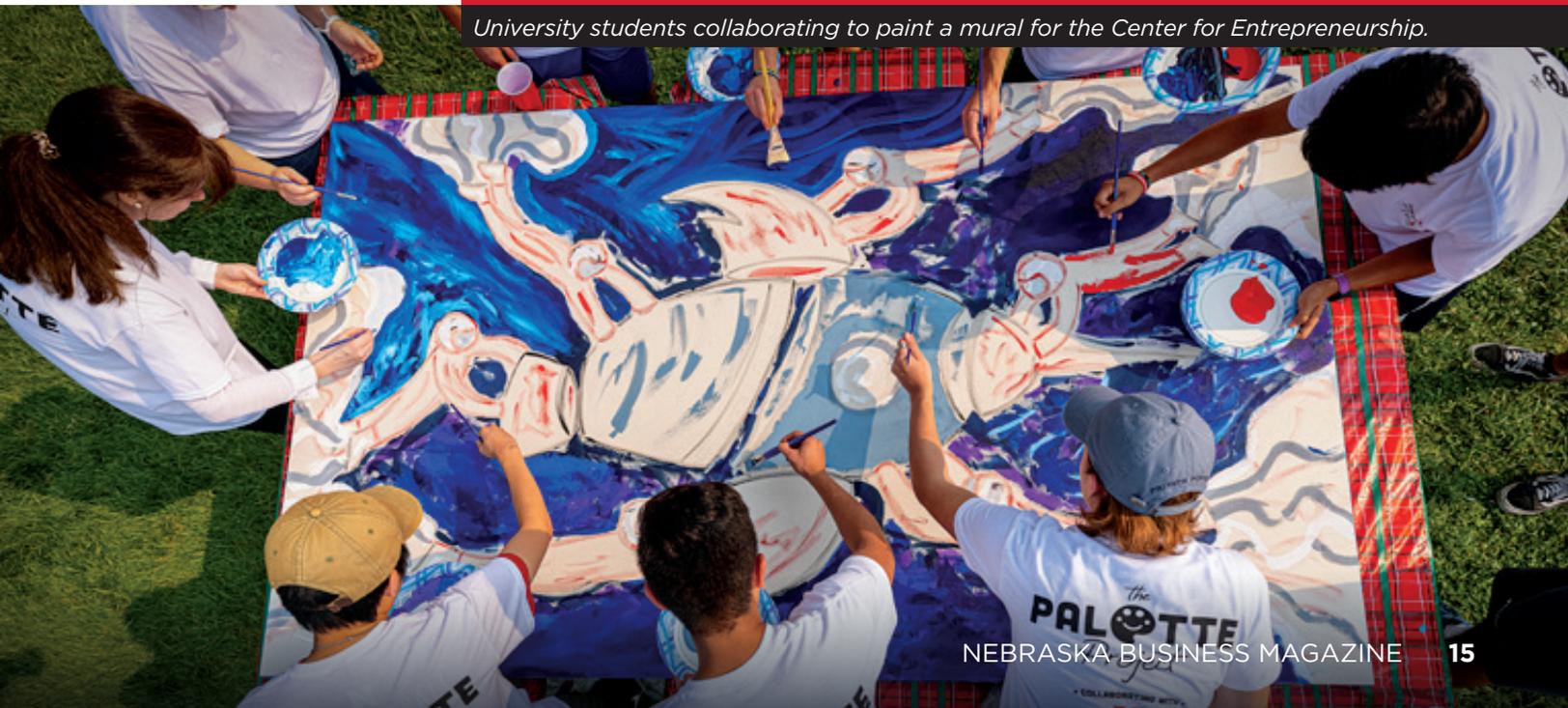
Javier Rivera, senior art major from Omaha, Nebraska, designed the art, “Lift Off” (shown below), and Avry Victor, junior art major from Lincoln, created the graphic design.

“The design exhibits six space people assembling a rocket mid-flight and represent the core values of Startups UNL,” Casarin said. “Through these, we build stronger bonds and achieve individual and group success. Entrepreneurship is fast-paced and invigorating, thus the inclusion of the rocket helps to convey a sky’s-the-limit mentality, and each individual has a role in completing the rocket, highlighting the importance of collaboration and teamwork.”



Erika Casarin

University students collaborating to paint a mural for the Center for Entrepreneurship.





# Nebraska Collaborates on Name, Image and Likeness Program for Student-Athletes

When Nebraska Athletics introduced #NILbraska to prepare student-athletes to maximize the Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) legislation, they did so by utilizing teamwork. Recruited to provide Accelerate, the College of Business developed the program to assist more than 650 student-athletes identify, strengthen and activate their NIL potential.

“Nebraska is leading the way in NIL, and Accelerate helps prepare students by sharing our business, entrepreneurial and strengths-based education. We are leveraging our distinctive offerings at the Center for Entrepreneurship and the Clifton Strengths Institute, as well as interdisciplinary curriculum created through campus partnerships while also working on new efforts to benefit students long term,” said Dean Kathy Farrell. “In addition, Accelerate showcases Nebraska as the place where strengths first started and our college as the central hub for entrepreneurship.”

Joe Petsick, '95, executive in residence and assistant

professor of practice in management, served as the NIL liaison for Nebraska Business for Accelerate. An entrepreneur who co-founded Proxibid, Inc., in 2001, Petsick shared the goal of creating a program which not only focuses on how to help student-athletes make money but also teaches them how to build a business around themselves.

“The College of Business is building the core curriculum to benefit not just student-athletes, but all students on campus who may be interested in leveraging their personal brands. In addition, we provide student advisors to help with aspects of the program to ensure each student-athlete can maximize their potential,” Petsick said.

Joining Nebraska Business in 2019, Petsick recognized student-athletes have a proclivity toward entrepreneurship and knew the College of Business could help them realize their potential. He reached out to colleagues to develop Accelerate for student-athletes.



*The College of Business collaborated to offer Accelerate, one part of #NILbraska, for student-athletes.*

The College of Law's Weibling Entrepreneurship Clinic offers services from representation for legal needs such as entity formation, intellectual property protection and contract review to educational opportunities and brief consultations. Since 2013, law students at the clinic have worked with clients on a variety of early-stage legal matters under the direct supervision of faculty.

The College of Journalism and Mass Communications provides a course called Branding Yourself in Today's Market. Students learn how to formulate their own value proposition and convey their knowledge, skills and abilities to prospective employees.

"Due to these offerings, Nebraska's student-athletes have a distinct advantage due to the collaboration with faculty, staff and students across the university," Farrell said.

## Stretching Strengths at the Clifton Strengths Institute

Student-athletes utilize scientifically developed assessments from Gallup that identify their top natural talents and their entrepreneurial attributes in Accelerate. The Clifton Strengths Institute (CSI), a national model for strengths-based education, is housed in Hawks Hall. CSI staff provide workshops and one-on-one coaching for student-athletes as well as share ways to best maximize strengths for success.

"The first step in personal branding is discovering who you are and what your natural talents are," said Dr. Tim Hodges, '00, '01 & '10, executive director of the CSI and assistant professor of practice in management. "That's why we use the CliftonStrengths® and Builder Profile 10 assessments to determine factors that, when leveraged, lead to personal success."

Through coaching with trained student strengths coaches on an ongoing basis, Husker student-athletes learn to focus on doing more of what they naturally do best. Entrepreneurs and business innovators also assist the student-athletes in their growth as brand builders.

Hodges and team began supporting Nebraska Athletics with assessments and workshops as new student-athletes arrived for summer classes. Hodges also added that Nebraska Athletics and strengths share history as Dr. Tom Osborne, former Husker football coach and athletic director, studied with Dr. Don O. Clifton, '48, '49, '59 & '90, known as the father of strengths, many years ago and often shared how he applied what he learned throughout his coaching and leadership.

"Nebraska Athletics has been a recognized leader for providing student-athletes with academic support and life skills for many years," Hodges said. "This renewed focus on strengths-based development and coaching supplements the current programming to ensure that Huskers are ready for success in the classroom and beyond, today and into the future."



*The Clifton Strengths Institute serves as a national model for strengths-based education, where College of Business faculty, students and staff like Dr. Tim Hodges, '00, '01 & '10, help students learn more about their strengths.*



*Seniors Adam Folsom and Emily Kist helped create and lead the Husker Venture Fund.*

# Building a Husker Venture Fund

Working with senior finance major Emily Kist from Pierre, South Dakota, and the University of Nebraska Foundation, Joe Petsick, '95, executive in residence, helped create the Husker Venture Fund (HVF), a student-led venture capital fund for early-stage startups. Built on a partnership between the College of Business and Invest Nebraska, the fund continues to grow due to the generous support of donors and help from the College of Business Development team.

“The Husker Venture Fund is essential to fill a gap in the funding cycle for early-stage startups, because there are few institutional options available in Nebraska,” Petsick said. “Additionally, there was a lack of internships and professional opportunities for any student interested in a potential career in venture capital or startup investing. Creating a student-led fund exposes dozens of students to the type of hands-on learning that would allow them to become fluent in startup investing.”

Open to any industry, all Nebraska-owned early-stage startups can apply for funds with priority going to student-led businesses first. Faculty and alumni businesses, UNL intellectual property and those with other connections to the university follow.

“Though open to any industry, the businesses must have scalable and innovative technology or software. We plan to deploy annual awards for up to four startups. Returns from successful businesses will replenish the funds somewhat, but donor support is a crucial part of the success of the Husker Venture Fund,” Petsick said.

The HVF provides funding for traditional businesses. Though students promoting themselves as a business would not be eligible, Petsick believes there will be students coming to Nebraska who own an existing business who could benefit from the fund.

“It’s not uncommon for students or student-athletes to run startups, small businesses and side hustles while in college. This is why it was important that the Husker Venture Fund support all students across the university, including student-athletes as part of what we are offering with Accelerate,” Petsick said.

Kist along with Adam Folsom, a senior finance and management major from Omaha, Nebraska, helped fundraise, research and prepare for the fund to go online. Operating as a student organization around the fund, members apply to get hands-on investment experience, foster relationships in the startup community and fund homegrown innovative ideas and solutions. Petsick credits them for making the fund a reality (see page 19).

“I’ve gained unparalleled experience working with talented students, supportive faculty, gracious donors and professionals to ‘Start Something’ at the College of Business. I wanted to provide a unique, hands-on learning experience for students interested in startup financing, while also providing necessary funding to early-stage companies,” Kist said. “It is essential to continue providing resources and building connections between our campus and the startup community.”



*Dr. Herita Akamah, '17, assistant professor of accountancy, and senior Ben Hohensee discuss strengths.*

## Hohensee Learns Firsthand

Selected for the first cohort of the new Husker Venture Fund (HVF), Ben Hohensee gets to learn firsthand how to foster relationships in the startup community and help fund homegrown innovative ideas and solutions. Collaborating with like-minded students and investors, he uses his mathematical and statistical skills in a practical way.

“Entrepreneurship has always excited me, so getting involved allows me to learn the ins and outs of business operations, as well as banking, financial markets and economics,” said the finance major. “Raising capital is vital to any startup’s success, so I wanted to learn more about the process behind it. We get to make a difference and put our knowledge to work by investing real money in startups from funds our managing directors raised.”

The 28-member cohort prepared for real-world investing in a student-led bootcamp. They read and reviewed material from the book “Venture Deals” to learn about general venture capital concepts, term sheets, crowdfunding and more. They also attended a networking event in Omaha.

“Nebraska has challenged me to step outside of my comfort zone. I formed close relationships with other students in the group because of the trip to Omaha. Those early interactions enhanced my social skills and helped me build relationships. Their advice helps me determine what my best steps are after graduation,” the Lincoln, Nebraska, native said.

The cohort also worked together in teams to create fundraising strategies and term sheets, a nonbinding agreement that shows the basic terms and conditions of an investment. Hohensee plans to gain experience in any way possible to ensure his future success.

“The conversations I’ve had outside of class have been beneficial in my learning experience, but more so the discussions we have in HVF,” Hohensee said. “The information we’ve learned about investing and venture capital has already given me a head start for life after college.”

[business.unl.edu/huskerventure](https://business.unl.edu/huskerventure)

## Developing a Startup Accelerator Program

From his background as an entrepreneur, Joe Petsick, '95, executive in residence and assistant professor of practice in management, knew startup accelerators help businesses



*Joe Petsick, '95*

attain success. He also recognized Nebraska startups, as well as student-athletes, would benefit from mentorship, advice, curriculum and resources provided within a startup accelerator.

“There are incredible assets within the College of Business that many companies would likely find useful in helping strengthen their internal managers and leaders. Ultimately, while I could see how these internal resources could certainly help any established business, I believed they would have a profound effect on a startup business,” Petsick said. “After discussing many ways to deploy the potential content, curriculum and programming, the idea of creating our own accelerator program seemed the most appropriate.”

Petsick shared how the Startup Accelerator Program's focus would be on the “very early stages” of established startups. He plans to include programming and access to leadership teams who can help “dramatically ramp up” growth.

“If a student or student-athlete has already started a business, they could qualify for the Startup Accelerator Program. Also, when the Husker Venture Fund provides investment to a startup, it is likely we’ll include access to our accelerator program as well,” he said.

Petsick continues to build new partnerships to help expand offerings and strengthen programs.

“The Startup Accelerator will help fill an existing gap in the state’s startup ecosystem by leveraging existing programming within the college. This programming is focused on helping startup founders and leaders unlock the growth potential within their business,” said Petsick.

# Waggoner Partners to Launch Investors with Purpose Program

Launched in 2020, a new program in wealth management brings together high-achieving students with global investment professionals for a one-of-a-kind learning experience at the College of Business. Doug Waggoner, '75 and '77, envisioned the Investors with Purpose program and pitched the idea to the College of Business, based on trying new things during his own successful career in finance and investment management.

Waggoner's desire to impact the future of his field inspired him to join forces with his alma mater, where he served in various capacities, including as a member of the Department of Finance Advisory Board at the college. He also helped make the new program possible through funding on behalf of the Douglas and Karin Waggoner Family Foundation.

"Our goal is to provide students with the skills and knowledge of asset management with real-world experiences. Industry leaders are excited to be a part of this program, and the students, the College of Business and the future of asset management will all benefit," said Waggoner, who worked for Ford Motor Company, Rockwell International and several asset management firms, including 25 years as a senior leader and managing director at BlackRock.

While many business schools host guest speakers, the Investors with Purpose program brings business leaders into the classroom, as well as develops community between professionals and students through a mentorship component. Waggoner believes these connections formed through the program will help students develop a great career.

"I understand how hard it might be for students to break into this industry," he said. "I didn't have that kind of mentor growing up, but I made it by working hard and not being afraid of taking a risk. Diligence and perseverance are traits Nebraska students have. This program and its mentors can help build their confidence in taking risks and putting yourself out there."

For the course, industry leaders travel to campus to discuss topics, such as FinTech, financial asset alternatives like hedge funds and regulatory issues. After class, they join students at dinner to continue their discussions.



*Doug Waggoner, '75 and '77, pitched and funded a new program called Investors with Purpose.*



*Tina Udell, '97, vice president and managing director of corporate credit at Ameritas Investment Partners, presents to students.*



Students attend dinner with speakers, like Waggoner, after class.

Another benefit of the course includes paid investment internships with the University of Nebraska Foundation or the Nebraska Investment Council. Nick Callahan, senior finance, accounting and economics major from Shawnee, Kansas, completed the first internship connected with the course.

“This program positions us to help launch the career of the next Warren Buffett by letting students understand what it means to take risks and not be afraid to fail,” said Dr. Richard DeFusco, professor and chair of the Department of Finance. “Financial investment is more than just classroom theories, it’s the day-to-day connections you make working with others in the profession. That’s an enormous game changer we’re introducing for our finance students.”

## Accounting Improv Course Bolsters Students’ Communication Skills

Research and Communication in Accounting (ACCT 455) merges the worlds of business and theater with the goal of preparing future accountants to adapt to an ever-changing industry. Ultimately, it prepares students to communicate effectively in the workplace during even the most unpredictable situations.

Dr. Amanda Gonzales, ’03, associate professor of practice in accountancy, and Julie Uribe, ’84, lecturer at the Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film, both developed the course and teach it through two separate five-week sessions.

Gonzales focuses on strengthening students’ written communication while Uribe uses her improv training from the Groundlings School in Los Angeles, with notable alumni like Will Ferrell and Melissa McCarthy, and more than 25 years of experience in the television industry to expand verbal communication.

While students might feel familiar with the traditional setting of Gonzales’ classroom, Uribe takes students outside of their comfort zone through improv exercises and principles. Drew Minard, ’21, accounting graduate and current MPA student, may have felt uncomfortable at times, but he never felt unsupported.

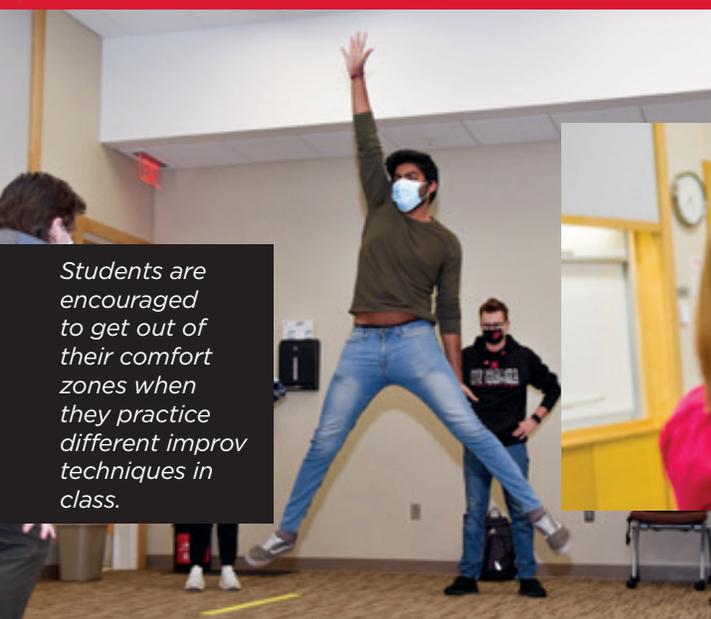
“We were all in it together, and it helped knowing I was in a supportive environment. These principles encouraged me to take risks and push myself,” said the Bartley, Nebraska, native.

The tools Minard and other students learn help set them apart from peers as they transition into the workplace. Minard is already seeing the benefits from this experience in his current internship.

“I have such a wide variety of tasks that I show up to work every day not sure what to expect, so I often find myself engaging in the improv principle, “Yes, and,”” he said.

With plans to work in public accounting, Minard feels better prepared due to the communication tools he learned.

“I anticipate using these skills in every aspect of my career. Communication skills can be the difference between an applicant who gets hired and one that doesn’t, or acquiring and retaining a client or not,” he said.



Students are encouraged to get out of their comfort zones when they practice different improv techniques in class.



Julie Uribe, ’84, teaches improv to accounting students.



# Mackey Commits \$1.6 Million to Make College Possible for More

Bruce E. Mackey, '55, of Tampa, Florida, announced a \$1.6 million estate gift to support students through scholarships and academic programs. His gift will especially help first-generation students, students from low-income families and others with barriers to college.

His gift creates four endowed funds at the University of Nebraska Foundation, with three funds supporting students enrolled in the College of Business. Another endowment will provide financial aid to students who complete the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy, a college access program, who then study at Nebraska.

The funds will be named for Mackey and his late wife, Loyce Mackey, in recognition of their philanthropic legacy.

Students who complete the DREAMBIG Academy, a pre-college program to introduce high school juniors to college and business careers, will benefit from scholarship assistance. The academy is designed for first-generation students and low-income families and others.

Two other funds will support student scholarships and programs within the college's Center for Entrepreneurship and the Center for Sales Excellence.

"The generous planned gift from Bruce and Loyce Mackey will have a significant impact on our students for generations," said Dean Kathy Farrell. "With tuition assistance and the support for our programs, students will have opportunities to co-create their learning experiences and set themselves apart in their careers. We are humbled and honored to help the Mackeys create a legacy that will empower Nebraska Business students to lead the future of business."

About his support, Mackey said, "I just hope students can look back when they're older and say, 'I've lived the dream. I had the opportunity. I stood up to it and made it work. But I had some very important support along the way.'"

A Nebraska native, Mackey served in the U.S. Army after graduating from the university. He devoted his career to the insurance industry, retiring as a senior vice president of a Fortune 200 company.



*Dean Kathy Farrell and  
Dr. Connie Rath, '70 & '71.*

## Connie Rath Awarded Honorary Doctorate

Building a career around studying the success of individuals, Dr. Connie Rath, '70 & '71, received an honorary Doctor of Commerce from Nebraska at Commencement in May. As president of the Clifton Foundation, she helped establish and build the Clifton Strengths Institute at the College of Business.

"It's a Start Something college," Rath said. "We want the institute to be a hub, lab and model for students to map their futures."

Rath earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and master's degree in educational psychology at Nebraska. While doing so, she used her talents as a residence hall counselor and math teacher. She also helped migrant workers earning their GEDs find jobs and go to college.

"Every student needs to know the qualities that help them achieve – their strengths. This is a starting point to plan their career and life," she said.

After graduation, she worked as a high school counselor in Omaha, and then at SRI and Gallup. She earned her doctorate in education, following in her father's footsteps – Dr. Don O. Clifton, '48, '49, '59 & '90, a former Nebraska professor. Deemed the father of strengths-based psychology, Clifton became known as the grandfather of positive psychology.

Rath grew up in Lincoln with her three siblings – Jim Clifton, Jane Miller, '84, and Mary Reckmeyer, '77, '78 & '90. She now resides in Washington, D.C., though often visits Nebraska to coach and guide students.

## Shoemaker Gives Back Through Sales Scholarship

Ryan Shoemaker, '17, utilizes the work ethic honed at Nebraska to achieve success as a sales development representative at Perceptyx. Now he hopes to motivate students to do the same by establishing the Center for Sales Excellence High Achievers Scholarship.



*Ryan Shoemaker, '17*

"Many experiences I had in college helped me get where I am in my career today. I want to give back to the university and center in a way that would impact students who work hard and become overachievers," said Shoemaker, a native of Lincoln, Nebraska, who majored in management.

To be eligible for the new scholarship, students must enroll in the Advanced Professional Selling (MRKT 357) course offered through the Center for Sales Excellence housed in Hawks Hall. The course provides students with a competitive edge and helps them gain real-world sales experience by selling sponsorships for the annual Center for Sales Excellence Golf Tournament.

"Selling actual sponsorships teaches students how to prospect for new customers, approach a potential customer, ask questions and explain a sponsorship's benefits and often, deal with failure, quota pressure and success," said Chad Mardesen, associate professor of practice in marketing, who teaches the course.

Mardesen set the platinum sponsorship at \$5,000, which provided the incentive Shoemaker needed to meet with the leaders of Nelnet.

"I pitched why the sponsorship would be a good idea for them. When I made the ask, they were on board and later became a three-year partner of the sales center," he said. "That opportunity helped shape the way I do my job today."

Awarded to one student who sells \$5,000 or more in sponsorships in MRKT 357 annually, the High Achievers Scholarship will provide students with added incentive to go the extra mile while they gain sales experience.

# FitzSimmons Supports Student Needs at Nebraska Business

When Bob FitzSimmons decided to support the Teaching and Learning Center at the College of Business, he wanted to ensure business students needing assistance received free personalized tutoring services. In addition, the innovative way Nebraska planned to grow and expand the services appealed to his entrepreneurial side.

“The impression of most colleges is that students either sink or swim, and they don’t get a lot of help. At the College of Business though, it wasn’t just ‘we’ll find you a tutor.’ It was much more to help individuals be successful. It was different, and I wanted to be a part of it,” said FitzSimmons.

Established with the opening of Hawks Hall in 2017, the Teaching and Learning Center provided a place for students to study, ask for help and find tutors. FitzSimmons’ support helped take the center to the next level.

“The success and expansion of the Teaching and Learning Center is largely credited to the generosity of Bob FitzSimmons. Due to him jumping on board with our vision to help business students in a more personalized way, the tutoring staff has nearly tripled, and they have held more than 9,000 tutoring visits since fall 2018,” said Dr. Kasey Linde, associate director of the center. “In addition, the TLC now trains and certifies every tutor using the International Center for Supplemental Instruction’s curriculum. We also pilot and adopt new programs like review sessions and the teaching assistant program.”

Originally from St. Joseph, Missouri, FitzSimmons graduated from the University of Kansas in 1962 as a distinguished ROTC student with a business degree. He turned down a commission because he wanted to earn his MBA at Northwestern University.

“I served three years in the Air Force stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base. My wife, Jan, was in nursing school nearby, and we met on a blind date. Fortunately, she could see I was a conscientious guy who wanted to succeed,” Bob said.

The couple wed in December 1963. Three years later he earned his MBA and got his big start working as an assistant product manager for Aunt Jemima Pancake Mix (now known as Pearl Milling Company) on Quaker Street in Chicago. He was then promoted to product manager with “a new sweet cereal” called Cap’n Crunch

before deciding to go into pharmaceutical product management in Elkhart, Indiana, overseeing the marketing of Flintstones™, Bugs Bunny and One A Day® vitamins.

Seven years later, the FitzSimmons’ family moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, where Bob’s new product was a cough and cold syrup called Triaminic. Until then, it had only been promoted to pharmacists and physicians, but Bob’s job was to get it on grocery and drug store shelves. Jan was also in the first wave of rehabilitation nurses starting at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals.

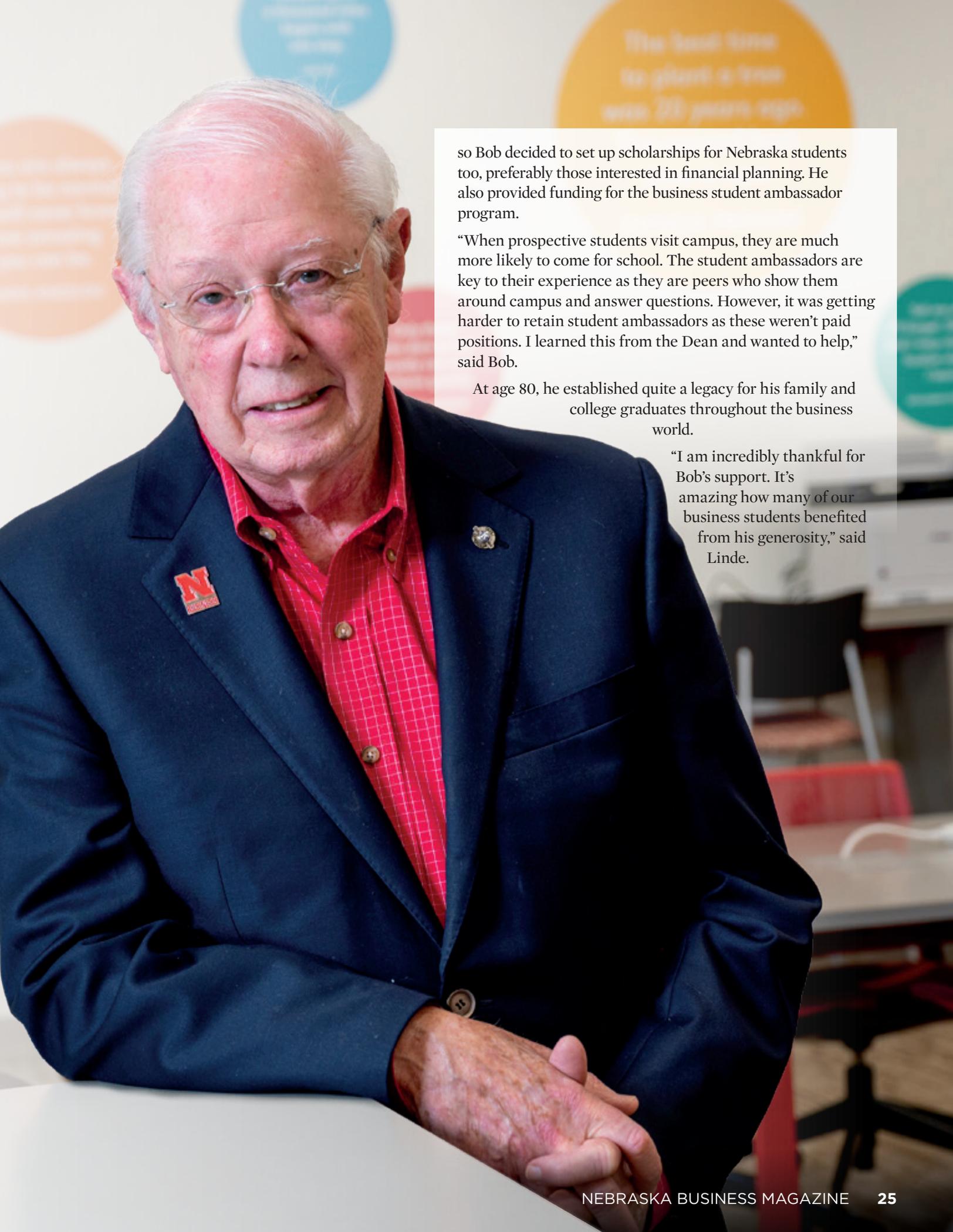
*“Due to him jumping on board to help business students in a more personalized way, we’ve held more than 9,000 tutoring visits since fall 2018.”*

*– Dr. Kasey Linde*

“After 11 years, I could retire, so I started my own business as a Certified Financial Planner® Professional with no clients and it was hard,” said Bob, who found success using innovative ideas, building relationships in his community and helping others help give back. In his new career, he also found many people did not plan for the cost of college, so students were deciding not to attend or graduating with huge debt.

“I convinced my high school classmates to help spearhead a scholarship in St. Joseph. We raised \$50,000 from 1958 graduates, and now we award \$2,000 a year. I also am the president of my church foundation and in five years, we provided \$300,000 in seminary scholarships to 20 recipients,” he said. He also established scholarships at his parents’ alma mater and at KU where his sons, Curtis, an infectious disease doctor (deceased), and Clark, a geologist, also earned their degrees.

His first introduction to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln came when clients called about internships for their children. Many of those interns attended Nebraska,



so Bob decided to set up scholarships for Nebraska students too, preferably those interested in financial planning. He also provided funding for the business student ambassador program.

“When prospective students visit campus, they are much more likely to come for school. The student ambassadors are key to their experience as they are peers who show them around campus and answer questions. However, it was getting harder to retain student ambassadors as these weren’t paid positions. I learned this from the Dean and wanted to help,” said Bob.

At age 80, he established quite a legacy for his family and college graduates throughout the business world.

“I am incredibly thankful for Bob’s support. It’s amazing how many of our business students benefited from his generosity,” said Linde.

# THANKS DONORS!

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# At Nebraska Business, we believe in the power of every person.

Student leaders joined college and university administrators to cut the ribbon celebrating the grand opening of the new Diversity and Inclusion Gathering Space. Left to right: Ra'Daniel Arvie, president of Multicultural Business Student Association; Harrison Lloyd, president of Pride in Business; Oscar Tello Varela, events coordinator of Business International Student Association; Ambi Anuh-Ndumu, Inclusive Business Leader pilot program student who helped

name the space; Ananth Venkatachalam and Elijah Merritt, Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board members; Terry Arvie, president of National Association of Black Accountants; Dean Kathy Farrell; Dr. Marco Barker, vice chancellor of diversity and inclusion; Rik Barrera, associate dean of operations, inclusion and chief of staff; and Mikki Sandin, international business and inclusion coordinator. See page 10.

