

# CONNECT LEARNING WITH LIFE

IMPACT REPORT | PUBLISHED MARCH 2020





*We envision a future where every student stretches their unique strengths through deep and engaged learning while building meaningful relationships to co-create their Nebraska experience.*

#### OUR PRIORITIES:

1. Create *transformative experiences* and communities that contribute to retention and student success.
2. Provide a comprehensive and collaborative approach to *student care and well-being*.
3. Promote *diversity and inclusion* throughout Student Affairs.
4. Lead through *creative and innovative* use of fiscal and human resources.





# STRETCHING STUDENTS' STRENGTHS



## Husker GROW: Guided Reflection on Work

As a group fitness instructor, Rachel Speckmann understands the importance of making each participant who steps through the door feel valued and acknowledged. She challenges herself to greet those who are new to the class, build community among participants and radiate positivity – all interpersonal skills she plans to use in the future as a nurse.

“The knowledge and insights gained through Husker GROW are undoubtedly beneficial. As a group fitness instructor, I am constantly practicing skills like communication, encouragement, time management, problem solving and critical thinking. Although the two jobs are very different on the surface, the strengths developed now will transfer into my career as a nurse.”

**- RACHEL SPECKMANN**

*Pre-nursing student | Omaha, NE*

The Husker GROW program focuses on student employment and volunteerism as high impact practices. Through brief, structured conversations with a trained coach, students increase their ability to identify experiences that relate to the soft skills desired by employers.

**1,700+**

students work for Student Affairs each year.

**92%**

of students participating in Husker GROW agree their position helped with interpersonal skills.

**9**

academic units and

**4**

colleges have partnered with Student Affairs to receive training to implement the Husker GROW program.

**5000+**

students have been involved in Husker GROW since implemented in 2016.





# CULTIVATING STUDENT SUCCESS

## *The Nebraska Residential Experience*

When students move into the residence halls, they get more than a home. They are surrounded by a community of caring professionals and trained peers who offer meaningful learning experiences that help students develop, grow and thrive. In Fall 2019 the Nebraska Residential Experience, a shared curriculum for all residents, began deepening the learning that was already taking place within halls.

“Residence Life is uniquely positioned to engage students through building community. The learning outcomes defined in the curriculum strengthen our commitment to concentrate and assess these efforts while maximizing expertise from across campus.”

**- TONY RATHGEBER**

*Interim Director of Residential Education*

Residential learning will continue to evolve in the coming year as the Husker Student POWER framework of Purpose, Ownership, Well-being, Engagement and Relationships helps staff develop engaged communities where residents have transformational experiences, connect to campus resources and build lasting relationships.





**WHY I PARTICIPATE IN THE VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA) PROGRAM**

*“You walk away with an education in individual income tax that you simply can’t get from a textbook. You get to help the Lincoln community and your fellow students. And you have amazing networking opportunities with students and business professionals you may not have met otherwise.”*

**- MACKENZIE MAPES**

*Accountancy graduate student  
Columbus, NE*

Students at Nebraska contributed 2,200 hours to the VITA project last year, giving an estimated \$1.3 million back to the Lincoln community.



**97%**

of TRIO Scholars scholars who participated in the Student Support Services (SSS) program were retained from fall to spring in 2019-20.

**91.4%**

of Greek first-year members returned to UNL in Fall 2019.

**93.5%**

of first-year students living in residence halls were retained in the halls from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020.

**6,700+**

interactions resulted from an increased focus on evening and weekend programs through Student Involvement, the Nebraska Unions and Campus Recreation in Fall 2019.



# BOOSTING MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS



## An Upstream Approach to Care

When students moved into Abel and Sandoz Halls last fall, they met Megan Laurence, an advanced graduate student in the Marriage and Family Therapy program, serving as a counselor to residents. Laurence supports students' personal growth and academic progress by providing consultation, individual and group therapy and education to address mental health issues.

"What I value most about this program is its commitment to serving students where they most need it. Oftentimes, the biggest struggle with mental health resources on college campuses is visibility and accessibility. By planting a resource in the spaces where they live, it not only normalizes help-seeking but also provides students with easier access to professionals."

**- RONI MILLER**

*Spanish and Political Science major | Crete, NE*

While increasing access for support, the Counselor-in-Residence program seeks to promote resilience, reduce stress and increase students' coping skills through increased collaboration on mental health promotion. The program aligns with JED Foundation recommendations for the university to expand preventative and proactive resources to address student concerns before they escalate into crises. The program is a partnership between Student Affairs, University Housing, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the College of Education and Human Sciences.





### WHY I AM A WELL-BEING COACH

*“I went to counseling when I was a freshman, and I was really intimidated. It took a lot of courage. But asking for help doesn’t make you weak. I think it actually makes you stronger, because you put yourself out there and you’re vulnerable. I feel like, even if I just help out one person, it’s a win and it’s all worth it.”*

- CLAYTON WILSON

*Psychology major | Kearney, NE*

Wilson and other well-being coaches are trained peers who help students in nine dimensions: career, cultural, emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual well-being.



**1,700+**

faculty, staff and students have been trained as REACH suicide prevention gatekeepers since 2018.

**2**

full-time advocates serve as a dedicated emotional support resource for sexual assault victims and survivors at UNL.

**1,827**

students met with Counselors at CAPS in Fall 2019, including 354 same-day crisis appointments in Fall 2019.

**30**

students have been trained as well-being coaches to assist peers.



# BUILDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY



## The 'We Are Nebraska' Internship

Wesley Deuel, a senior studying Speech Pathology, strongly believes in the value of each person using their voice and sharing their story. As a Trans woman, Wesley is especially proud of her leadership in the competitive speech team, a group that offers space for queer, non-white, differently abled, and other marginalized people to share their truth and speak their minds. Now she shares her lived experience with others through We Are Nebraska, a theatrical experience that inspires, educates and entertains while focusing on inclusion.

"I have always been an extremely open person, and I love being able to apply my lived experience to others in order to foster healing. Being able to share my story with others is incredibly empowering for me."

- WESLEY DEUEL

*Speech Pathology major | Woodbury, MN*

Recruiting students from across all colleges and backgrounds, the We Are Nebraska internship is a revolutionary leadership and inclusion program initiated through a partnership between Student Affairs and the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts.





## WHY I PARTICIPATE IN COFFEE TALKS

*“Coffee Talks are a nice time to relax and practice my conversational English. I enjoy sharing experiences about our life and foods. It makes me feel more involved and helps improve my speaking skills and confidence.”*

- MANUEL PEREZ

*Intensive English Program  
Chihuahua, Mexico*

Launched as a pilot project in April 2016 by Student Involvement, the program brings together domestic and international students to explore life on campus, cultures and anything else that comes to mind during hour-long chats in the Nebraska Union.



# 2

new culturally-affiliated Greek organizations joined the fraternity and sorority community at Nebraska in 2019. This brings a total of:

# 11

Culturally-affiliated fraternities and sororities.

The Lavender Closet recently opened at the LGBTQA+ Center as a resource for students to find free, gender-affirming clothing.

# 1,000+

students each semester rely on Services for Students with Disabilities for academic assistance.

# 4

locations offer Let's Talk, an informal drop-in session with CAPS counselors. These are hosted at the Women's and LGBTQA+ Centers, Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center and the Military and Veteran Success Center.

Step UPI, a nationally-recognized bystander intervention training framework, was adopted throughout Student Affairs. Trainings can be adapted to address a number of concerns including discrimination, sexual violence, relationship abuse, high-risk drinking and mental health.



# SUPPORTING EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY

## Housing Stipends Attract Incoming Students

When choosing which college to attend, students are often faced with difficult decisions involving student loans, financial aid and a monetary gap. To help close that gap and make financial aid packages from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln more attractive to prospective students from target markets, University Housing partnered with Admissions to offer over \$1.5 million dollars in Nebraska Housing Credits this academic year.

“At Nebraska, we believe in the power of every person, and we want to make BigTen education as affordable and accessible as possible. The top concern of most students and families is managing cost of college, and the Nebraska Housing Credits have helped us to lower the cost of attendance for many new Huskers. Furthermore, our excellent on-campus living experiences allow us to meet scholars where they are at and provide direct support, increasing our students’ ability to graduate on time.”

**-ABBY FREEMAN**

*Director of Admissions*

Originally piloted in 2013, the program has been implemented annually since 2018 —contributing over \$3.6 million to students through financial aid. In the current program housing credits both help bring students to Nebraska and are a renewable benefit for returning residents who meet certain criteria.





## WHY I PARTICIPATE IN STUDENT GOVERNMENT

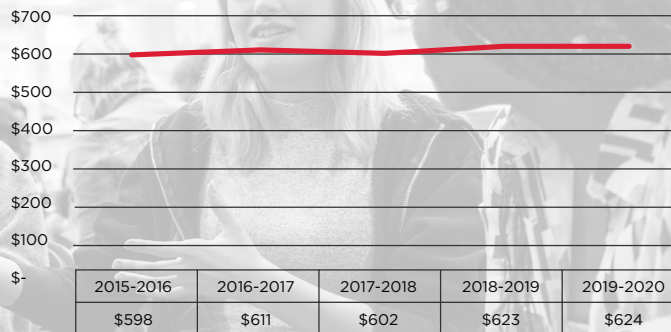
*“Fees make up a noticeable chunk of a student’s cost of attendance, but the programming and support services they fund are an integral part of the student experience. Finding the balance between these two competing facts requires a strong student voice in the allocation process. Students have the ability each year to meet with fee users, provide feedback on their services, and determine the utility of continued funding. This transparent and accountable stewardship of financial resources ensures that students have a say in how their money is being spent.”*

**- JARED LONG**

*Political Science and Journalism major | Beloit, KS*

## 5-Year Student Fee Trend

As good stewards of resources, Student Affairs works to increase the value of the student experience. With a 4.3% increase in student fees over the past five years, totaling only \$26 per semester, Student Affairs has considerably invested in student well-being, renovated and improved infrastructure for student programs and renewed the commitment to offering engaging events and transformational leadership experiences.



University Program and Facilities Fees (UPFF) per Semester

**< 1%**

of state funding supports Student Affairs.

**\$500,000+**

has been saved in programmatic efficiencies and combined operations in FY20. Meanwhile, service improvements like the move toward a short-term counseling model without a designated limit on visits noticeably enhanced student support.

**\$1.8**

**MILLION**

in grant funding offered support for TRIO programs, civic engagement, suicide prevention and the Counselor-in-Residence program in FY20.



# CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



## Dining Reduces Environmental Impact

When Sustain UNL, a recognized student organization, approached the ASUN student government and University Housing about a concept to remove plastic bags from campus convenience stores, they weren't sure what to expect. After presenting data on the short lifecycle and waste produced from plastic bags, student leaders in ASUN saw the issue at-hand and placed a vote on the ballot to demonstrate support.



“Our students presented housing and dining services with compelling information on plastics and the environment. This certainly resonated with us. Their request to end the use of plastic bags in our dining operations just made sense, was well-accepted by our customers, and achievable very quickly.”

**- DAVE ANNIS**  
*Director of Dining Services*

But it hasn't stopped there as housing and dining staff are committed to sustainability. Additional ventures have included a pilot program offering reusable to-go containers at the East Campus Dining Center, installation of a biodigester, replacing old dishwashers with newer energy efficient models and a commitment to educate students and staff through Leanpath software.



**WHY I MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH THE NEBRASKA DISASTER RECOVERY**

*“Having to return to school two days after seeing the trauma and destruction my community experienced left me yearning to continue to help. I expected to return to work with my hands, tearing homes down and helping to bolster broken infrastructure. Instead, I spent six weeks working to stand up a recovery group that helps survivors and communities invest in long-term recovery and distribute government and charitable resources. NDR trusted me and put me in a situation where I could work hard and make a difference supporting the real heroes of the recovery effort.”*

**- JUSTIN MYERS**

*Economics major | Omaha, NE*

The Center for Civic Engagement recruits and connects students to Nebraska Extension’s flood recovery serveship, an effort that pairs students with meaningful disaster mitigation experiences in communities devastated by flooding.



**22**

students are helping Nebraska communities respond to devastating floods via the Flood Recovery Serveship Program.

Voter registration is a priority for the Center for Civic Engagement, who is committed to promoting social and economic sustainability, in partnership with ASUN and the Husker Vote Coalition.

Experiences like well-being coaching from Big Red Resilience & Well-being, service-learning trips through the Center for Civic Engagement, and “Zero Waste Meal Prep” classes from Campus Recreation further students’ understanding of their social, economic and environmental impact.

**~ 16,000**

pounds of clothing were donated to Goodwill during the spring residence hall moveout and various furniture items were collected for recycling. University Housing also participates in the university’s cardboard recycling program during fall move-in.



# PROMISING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

## *Infusing Energy into East Campus*

As the demographics and needs of our students at Nebraska change, Student Affairs seeks new and creative solutions to challenges facing our campus and community. In the interest of bringing equity in resources and student experiences on Nebraska's East Campus, a \$28.5 million renovation of the Nebraska East Union will bring dynamic student-focused spaces, improved community dining options, a new Starbucks and an expansion to the Great Plains Room.

"It is an exciting time on East Campus as we look forward to the opening of the newly renovated Nebraska East Union. Enhanced community spaces will encourage collaboration and help foster additional resources for student success and support."

**- NICOLE FRERICHS**

*Assistant Dean for Student Success  
College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources*

Further supporting the East Campus community, CAPS counselors now offer designated appointments at the Recreation and Wellness Center. Campus Recreation also continues to invest in the campus with new outdoor fields and the FitBox, offering outdoor functional workout equipment.



## WHY I ENGAGE IN LATE-NIGHT AND WEEKEND PROGRAMS

*“Campus events make the student experience more exciting! They give you the opportunity to step out of your comfort zone and meet new people. For me, it helps to get away from the stress of school. I’d like to see more events monthly, especially closer to the weeks before finals.”*

- KAITLYN NGUYENDUY

Pre-nursing student | Omaha, NE

# 260+

staff and students engaged in Peace and Civility Project workshops in Fall 2019, discussing the nine tools of civility.

# 2,911

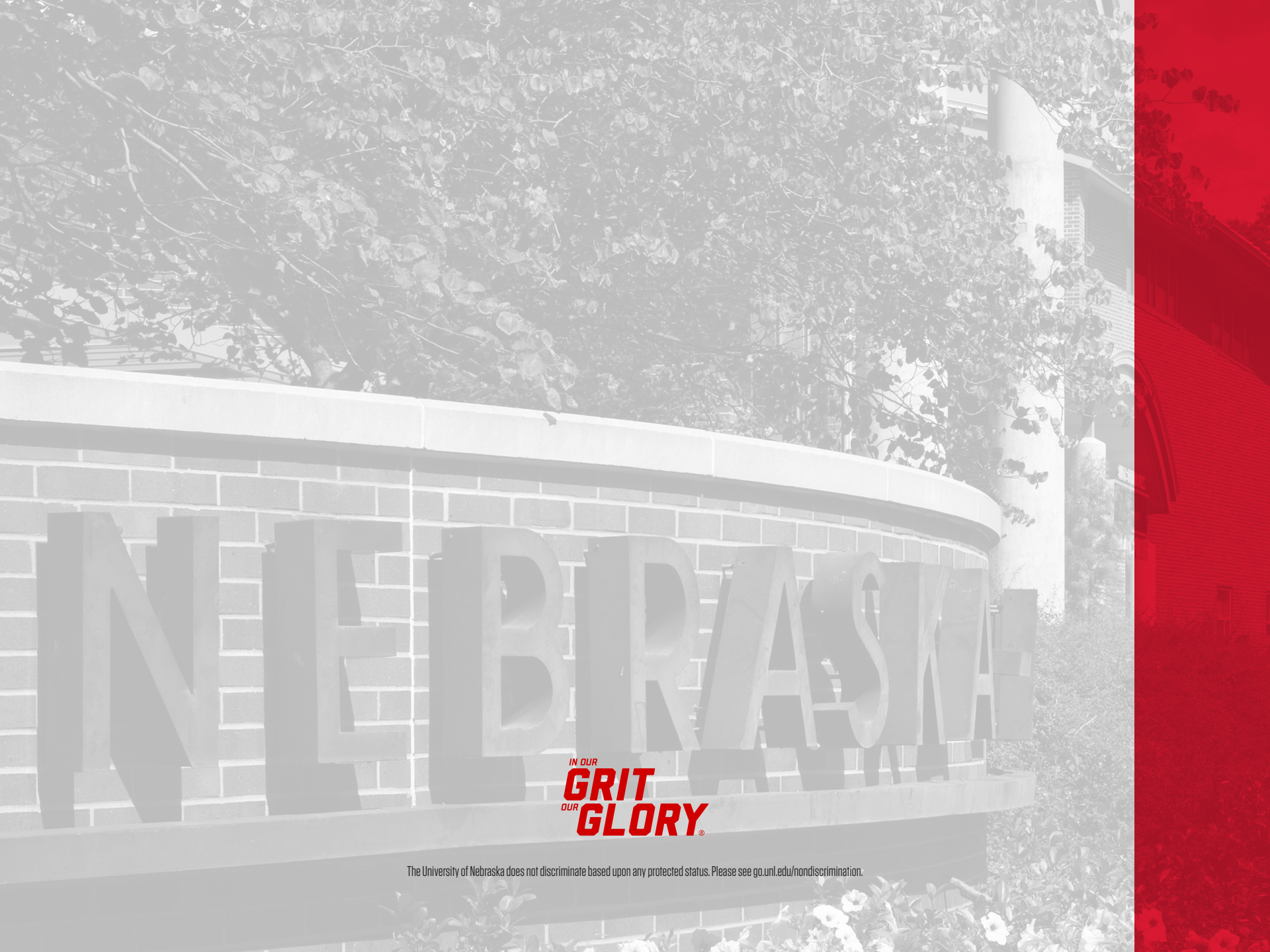
registrations were yielded for the university’s newly restructured Family Weekend. Further efforts to offer an inclusive experience for those who support students are being explored.

An inclusive campus community is a shared priority. Student Affairs is committed to increasing staff members’ understanding of diversity and the ability to take action.

Community building and support for graduate students, commuter students, transfer students and online students are areas we’d like to expand to further support retention and academic performance.







# UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

IN OUR  
**GRIT**  
OUR  
**GLORY**®

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