UNI STUDENTS GO UNDERGROUND FOR RESEARCH

ALUMNUS OPENS MATH MUSEUM IN AUSTRALIA

THEATRE STUDENTS TAKE ON NEW YORK CITY
New class explores the study of video game music

One digital media alum’s journey from UNI to LA and beyond
Clockwise from upper left: A view of Iceland taken during the Earth and Environmental Sciences winter break trip, floral macrophotography from the research project of biology student Bethany Van Dusseldorp, students work on research in Coldwater Cave, Sabrina Senn of Iowa Falls-Alden school district installs her original sculpture created through partnership with the UNI Public Art Incubator.
This year, we have so much to celebrate on campus, and within the College of Humanities, Arts & Sciences. We added new, in-demand degree programs in engineering, we hired outstanding new faculty members, and we launched new courses to drive the academic experience forward.

We also are making steady progress on two very important building renovations. The first is the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center, a pillar for the arts in our community, which is currently undergoing a $15 million renovation project to increase capacity and make much-needed improvements to the audience experience. The renovation is being completed in phases so as not to interrupt programming, and we look forward to celebrating the grand reopening during the 2024-2025 season.

The second project is a $40 million renovation and expansion of the Applied Engineering Building, which houses the Department of Applied Engineering & Technical Management. Through this project, we are expanding and modernizing the facility to better meet the needs of students studying manufacturing, engineering, construction and other growth industries. We hope to welcome students into the new Applied Engineering Building in the spring of 2024.

As a university, though, there is perhaps one thing we are celebrating above all else. This year, we experienced our largest year-to-year enrollment increase in over a decade. This fall, we welcomed 9,021 students to campus – bolstered by an incoming freshman class of 1,552 students, which is an increase of 8 percent from last fall. Within the College of Humanities, Arts & Sciences, we saw a combined undergraduate and graduate student increase of 14 percent.

This increase is a testament to the amazing work being done by our faculty, staff and administration. It is a testament to our students, and to the value of higher education. But also, it is a testament to the Panther experience that you – our alumni and friends – have enjoyed and have shared with today’s students.

Every day, in your careers and in your communities, you are doing outstanding work and demonstrating what it means to be Panther proud. You are helping tell the story of UNI – our collective story, and our collective success. I am proud and honored to be a part of this UNI community with you, and I hope you will join me in celebrating these stories – your stories – in this issue of Communiqué.
FUNDING THE FUTURE BY PEDDLING THE PAST

Alumnus turns success in world of rare books into scholarships, leaf book donation

It was an impulse buy at a garage sale that pivoted the career plans of UNI alumnus Phil Pirages. That purchase, an architectural book printed in the 17th century, changed his trajectory from that of a professor to a bookseller. After haggling to get the price down to $35 from the original asking price of $45, and while knowing nothing about its worth or the antique book market, Pirages walked away with his first acquisition and what would become his biggest return on investment ever.

Since that fateful find in 1976 (which he later sold for $1,000), Pirages has emerged as one of the top booksellers in the nation, specializing in beautiful illuminated manuscripts and books produced during the earliest stages of printing in Europe, called incunabula. He has traveled the world to attend auctions, frequent book fairs and purchase from private collections. After nearly 50 years in the business, Pirages has a keen instinct about which books are worth picking up, and he’s used that aptitude to resell between 40,000 to 50,000 books over the course of his lifetime. Prices have ranged between hundreds of dollars and hundreds of thousands of dollars. “The longer I’ve been in business, the fewer I buy and the higher the average cost,” said Pirages.

Pirages grew up in Iowa and graduated from Cedar Falls High School, after which he enrolled at UNI. He obtained his bachelor’s degree in English in 1967, serving as the editor of the student newspaper, called “The College Eye” at the time. He went on to get his master’s degree from UNI in 1968, and taught in the UNI English department for a year. His education continued with a Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of Michigan in 1977. He served as a professor at Western Michigan University and then at Kalamazoo College before discovering his passion for dealing in books.

Now, Pirages is starting to slow down a bit. “I’m definitely semiretired, which means that all the things I dislike doing, my four employees do for me,” Pirages said. “I get to do what I love most, which is to find books to buy.” He recently published his memoir, “Booked by Fate,” which tells tales of death threats, harrowing encounters with customs officials and a bevy of fascinating characters and thrilling adventures.

A generous contributor to UNI, Pirages recently donated what is called a leaf book to the College of Humanities, Arts & Sciences. A leaf book is a monograph that relates to an accompanying leaf that has been removed from an important and desirable manuscript or book that is damaged or incomplete. Titled “Letters from the 15th Century: On the Origins of the Kelmscott Chaucer Typeface. A Study, with Specimen Leaves, of the Influence of the Early German Printers on William Morris’ Masterpiece,” the leaf book in this case contains five leaves — one leaf from “The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer” printed by the Kelmscott Press in 1896, and one leaf from each of four books printed by different printers in the 1470s. The accompanying essay, written by Pirages, examines the letterforms and illustrates the influence of the earlier works in the design and creation of the typeface used for the Kelmscott Chaucer, considered to be one of the most beautiful books ever printed and in the same league as the Gutenberg Bible as one of history’s great printing achievements.

Pirages also funds scholarships for UNI students that demonstrate financial need. He credits his experience with the student newspaper as leading to an internship with the local daily paper, which launched the rest of his education and teaching jobs. He says he “felt like a thief,” earning his UNI degrees for a measly $180 per semester. “I have a tremendous amount of gratitude for the experience I had on campus and for the degrees that I earned which enabled me to go on with the rest of my life,” Pirages said.
Taking field science underground

UNI students kick off new research at Coldwater Cave
But Josh Sebree, associate professor of astrochemistry and astrobiology at UNI, is on a mission to show his students that that couldn’t be further from the truth.

For the past several years, Sebree has led an ongoing field research project that aims to discover how the minerals and microorganisms found in extreme environments (like cave systems) could help scientists understand how life might survive on other planets. To do this, Sebree and his students don their caving gear and climb down to the dark depths of various cave systems in the name of science.

The project began in 2019, when Sebree led the first group of UNI students to Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota to analyze organics, waters and minerals found there. As one of the longest and most complex cave systems in the world, Wind Cave remains mostly unexplored. This means much of the ecosystem there has remained untouched for more than 10,000 years – offering a unique look at how extreme life can form and survive in the most unlikely of places. The students were among the first researchers to analyze samples in the cave, and in some cases, were among the few humans to reach certain parts of the cave.

The experience, as much as the research itself, has been eye-opening for many students, Sebree said. “You could tell right away that some of them were hooked,” he said. “You can see the way it impacts them. They come up from the cave as a whole new person. It builds a lot of confidence, and really opens their eyes to exciting opportunities out there in the field.”

Since then, the popularity of the project has only grown. Across more than a dozen trips, more than sixty UNI students have now made the trek to Wind Cave.

More recently, though, Sebree expanded the project to include sampling from Coldwater Cave near Decorah, Iowa. The first student trip to Coldwater Cave took place in the summer of 2022, and Sebree has been bringing students there since – with about one trip a month to Coldwater Cave year round, on top of several trips to Wind Cave throughout the summer of 2023.

Jacqueline Heggen, a biochemistry and biology major going into her junior year, first heard about the cave research while working as a lab assistant for Sebree. “He would talk about the caves and the research going on there, and eventually, I decided to get involved,” she said. “My first experience caving was going to Coldwater in November of 2022. From there, I got hooked. I’ve been on several trips now, with more planned for this summer. From my first moment in the cave, looking around, I realized this was not in the game plan. I never thought I would be doing this. But now, I’m just planning out how I can get to the caves more. Last week I was underground for 30 hours. I can’t get enough.”

So far, the research at Coldwater Caves is still ramping up. Sebree is working to get additional grant funding to buy waterproof equipment for his students to better sample inside the cave. But the team has already collected water samples from certain parts of the cave, which they have brought back to the labs on campus for analysis.
The hope is to eventually sample water from the various tributaries throughout the cave, and establish a more complete idea of the types of microorganisms and minerals that affect the different environments there – similar to the work being done at Wind Cave.

Sebree says he’s excited to add Coldwater Cave to the research project, giving students a look at two very different biospheres. On one hand, there is Coldwater Cave, which is essentially an underground river that flows through the 17-mile stretch of cave system. Because water is constantly flowing in from groundwater and agricultural runoff, it is very nutrient-rich. The water is constantly emptying and refilling itself, meaning that the water is only a couple of days old at any given time. On the other hand, there is Wind Cave, which is home to stagnant lakes of groundwater collected deep below the surface. Because the water takes thousands of years to reach the lakes, some of the water there is more than 30,000 years old. Through the intense process of traveling below the surface with very little food, the microbes that live in that water have become highly evolved to survive on trace nutrients.

“The idea of looking at these two very different biospheres is because we want to look at all kinds of options for what life could be like on other planets,” Sebree said. “Icy moons that look like frozen oceans could potentially be very nutrient poor. Other moons are surrounded by gasses like methane, which may rain really nutrient-rich liquid organics onto the surface.”

The way that life survives in these hostile, nutrient-dense and nutrient-poor cave environments could be the key to discovering whether (and how) life exists in hostile environments on other planets. This idea is demonstrated back in the labs on campus, where one of Heggen’s current tasks this summer involves creating cryogenic ice balls with some of the water collected from Coldwater Cave. Using liquid nitrogen to freeze the water to the
same temperature as an icy moon, the team will be able to see the properties from 
trapped organics – the same as what satellites may one day see on an icy moon.

For the students involved in the research, it's the experience of a lifetime. “It's so 
exciting to be a part of this, and it's such an eye-opening experience,” Heggen said. 
“Going into college I was one of the people who thought science was just sitting in a 
lab. But this project lets us go out into the field, collect samples, and bring them back 
to study. Now that I have this experience, it's shown me what I can do, and what I'm 
capable of. If nothing else, it's really grown my confidence in myself.”

For Sebree, the experience is just as rewarding. “I first got introduced to the idea 
of field chemistry at UNI, by my colleague Alexa Sedlacek, doing carbonate work at 
quarries,” he said. “Normally, field research is reserved for Earth science or biology 
majors, but it really opened my eyes to the fact that chemists can do field research, 
too. I didn't find out about this stuff until I was in my thirties, and I fell in love with it. 
So for an eighteen or nineteen year old, to be able to find out about these experiences 
earlier can totally change what they might think about life and their career, and what's 
possible for them. I would much prefer my students to have this experience early on. 
Plus, it's really fun to provide a different flavor of science and research.”

Going forward, work will continue at both Wind Cave and Coldwater Cave. Sebree 
has several years left in a multi-year grant from the Iowa Space Grant Consortium to 
study Wind Cave, and he's working on securing grant funding to build the research 
being done at Coldwater Cave.

As the two projects continue to grow and gain traction, Sebree is looking forward 
to bringing more UNI students on board. “Our collaboration keeps growing across 
campus,” he said. “We've got students from chemistry and biochemistry, biology and 
Earth science collecting and analyzing samples, we've got digital media students 
filming the trips for documentary-style videos, and we've just brought in students from 
athletic training and kinesiology who are going to study the physical and physiological 
effects of caving. It's a really unique, multidisciplinary project that has resulted in so 
many positive experiences for students here. It's something completely unique to UNI, 
and I'm very proud of that.”

Help support the research!

Your gift will support things such as travel expenses, equipment and other supplies that 
make cave science an invaluable learning opportunity for our students! This hands-on 
experience provides a unique research opportunity that would not otherwise be 
available to undergraduate students.

To make a gift to the Cave Science account through the UNI Foundation, 
scan the code below.
FROM Student TO CEO

UNI computer science alum’s startup goes global
When UNI alumnus Russel Karim saw himself and his business Dhakai featured on the Times Square jumbotron in New York City, he knew he wasn’t dreaming. He was accomplishing what he had always believed was possible.

“As entrepreneurs, we always dream big,” said Karim, who graduated from UNI in 2015 with a degree in computer science and entrepreneurship. “We take on challenges, and we take risks. That’s part of the process. Even while I was at UNI, I was dreaming big.”

The result of Karim’s hard work and big dreams is Dhakai, a technology platform that helps small to midsize clothing brands go from idea to final delivered product ethically, sustainably and cost-effectively.

Dhakai and Karim were featured on the jumbotron in recognition of Karim’s graduation from Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center’s Milestone Makers, which is a program that provides mentoring and training for a small cohort of entrepreneurs over 12 weeks.

Karim, whose business is headquartered in downtown Des Moines, was the first Iowa-based entrepreneur to complete the program since its inception in 2016.

“What we’re building at Dhakai is the operating system for clothing brands,” said Karim. “A lot of our investors like to call us the ‘Shopify’ for the clothing supply chain.”

Karim’s inspiration for the company came from growing up around the clothing supply chain in Bangladesh, specifically in Dhaka, which the name “Dhakai” pays homage to. He said 4.5 million people work in the clothing manufacturing industry in Dhaka alone. Because of the prevalence of the industry, Karim witnessed the difficulties manufacturers had with finding time to engage with brands while running their businesses.
Once Karim came to the U.S., he started seeing friends who had launched their own clothing brands struggle to find the right manufacturing partners because there were so many middlemen involved in the process. Dhakai was his solution for manufacturers to engage more seamlessly with brands and for brands to find the manufacturer that met all their needs with ease.

“The pandemic really showed us that the supply chain is broken right now in this world, and I think that’s exactly why we need more transparency and data on each part of the supply chain,” Karim explained.

Dhakai’s first client was Erica Cole, the founder of No Limbits, an adaptive denim brand for amputees, who was recently featured on “Shark Tank.” Through the Dhakai platform, Cole could access hundreds of verified and compliant factories, see their products and showroom and take virtual factory tours. She was able to order a sample and take it to Kickstarter to raise funds. Those samples Dhakai helped produce ended up helping her make a deal on “Shark Tank” with Mark Cuban and Emma Grede.

Now, Dhakai does the majority of the production for No Limbits and is helping the business grow. “This is exactly why we’ve built Dhakai,” said Karim. “We’re ready to change thousands of brand owners’ lives and enable anybody and everybody to bring their vision to life.”

Currently, Dhakai is working with more than 45 brands. They have nine employees in the U.S. and 10 in Bangladesh. Because the team is split between two countries, Karim typically starts his day at 9 a.m. with his U.S. team and ends it with virtual meetings between 10 p.m. and midnight with the Bangladesh team.

“I think the best part of being a CEO is being able to create employment and jobs. Not everybody gets to create jobs and livelihood for others and their families,” said Karim. “My goal is to eventually create 1,000 jobs.”

Karim’s entrepreneurial roots can be traced to his family. His first business venture was selling candy on the playground as a child, but his entrepreneurial journey truly took flight in college at UNI.

After applying to 17 colleges around the globe, Karim chose UNI in part because of his positive experience meeting Director of International Recruitment and Admissions Kristi Marchesani at a recruitment fair in Dhaka. “Kristi is an amazing person,” Karim said. “She was so caring and really did her due diligence in terms of helping me look into scholarships, opportunities in Cedar Falls and opportunities on campus. She really helped me through this journey.”

Having grown up in one of the world’s most densely populated cities, the smaller size of Cedar Falls and UNI was also attractive to him. “I wanted to go somewhere outside of my comfort zone,” he said. “I had never been to a small town in the U.S., and I wanted to experience something different.”

While Karim thought about becoming an attorney for a while, he ultimately decided that computer science would be the best fit. He was drawn to the field partly because of the promising job opportunities that would await him once he graduated.

During his sophomore year, Karim got involved with the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC), which provides numerous services for student entrepreneurs and community business owners.
Karim employed the help of students in UNI’s textiles and apparel program to conduct market research ahead of Dhakai’s launch.

The JPEC provided him with a strong foundation of business knowledge in everything from how to pitch to potential investors to how to hire the right team members. He held an office in the JPEC to explore his many business endeavors from his sophomore year until the time he graduated.

On campus, Karim put his computer science and business knowledge to good use, building several apps, including one to deliver concessions food to consumers in stadium settings and another to help UNI students complete the Traditions Challenge, among others.

“I utilized pretty much every single resource that UNI had to offer,” said Karim. “UNI helped me build a strong foundation for my career and my entrepreneurial journey. That wasn’t just the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, but it was all the resources I utilized.”

Indeed, Karim’s student experience was packed between the JPEC, being involved with Northern Iowa Student Government, working as a student teaching assistant, studying computer science, working in UNI’s IT department and participating in lots of activities with his fellow international students.

Upon graduation, Karim worked in UNI’s IT department for five years. He even utilized students in UNI’s textiles and apparel program to start doing market research for Dhakai in 2020 before launching the business in 2021.

“I’m very thankful and grateful for the opportunity and all the resources that UNI has provided me with,” he said. “I’m thankful for their support and UNI’s support and the experience that I had. Without it, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”
MAKING MATH COUNT

Lifetime devotion to math leads alum to establish Mathematics Gallery in Australia
Did you know that modern GPS is based on the mathematical concept of degrees, which dates back to the ancient Babylonians? UNI alumnus Calvin Irons knows all about math, its history and how it relates to the current world, and he wants to share that knowledge with others.

He spent his career teaching math and writing textbooks used in schools around the world. He is a co-founder of ORIGO Education, a publisher of mathematics books with offices in Missouri, Canada, Thailand and Australia, where he currently resides. But his most recent passion is building a unique space that shares the history and fascinating world of math to those who visit.

Irons’ newest vision, The Mathematics Gallery, is under construction in Brisbane, Australia. It will be one of the few math museums in the world, the most famous of which is the National Museum of Mathematics in New York City. Irons’ museum will have a different approach than others, fueled by a desire to make math exciting for all audiences.

“The concept of mathematics is fairly narrow in the mind of many people, so we wanted to make sure the community is more aware of what mathematics has been about and is about,” Irons explained. “We’re trying to make people realize where mathematics came from, and acquaint people with its history and reality, while making it interesting.”

Before Irons found his way across an ocean, his story began on a farm in small-town Iowa. The oldest child in his family, his father pushed him to go to college. He was interested in teaching, so he applied to the Iowa State Teachers College (now known as the University of Northern Iowa). He wasn’t sure what he wanted to teach but found an interest in mathematics and took all of the undergraduate math classes that were offered. Irons graduated with his bachelor’s degree in middle/high school education in 1965.

Then, the space race prompted the college to offer more advanced studies of science and mathematics, so they added more courses and Irons joined them.

“There was a lot of incentive to stay on after I did my bachelor’s degree,” Irons said. “I remember those teachers in mathematics. They were very good.”

He continued on to complete his master’s degree in math in 1967. After more math study in Hawaii, he headed to Indiana University to get his doctorate, where he also met his future wife, Rosemary. From there, things took an unexpected turn.

“As a graduate student, I shared an office with an Australian,” Irons said. “He convinced me to come.”

So, Irons spent a year in Australia getting settled, and then Rosemary, also a mathematics educator, joined him. They got married in Australia. He was employed teaching at Queensland University of Technology in the education and mathematics departments and was an educator there for 39 years. His wife taught at the same university.

The couple bought two pieces of land in Brisbane in 1993. Brisbane, located on the east coast of Australia, is home to 2.2 million people and a popular travel locale for visitors. The Irons partnered with another couple and planted grapes on one plot in 1998, turning it into a vineyard. They then built Ocean View Estates, a winery and restaurant, on the same land. It’s now an award-winning tourist destination that employs 30 people, and they use their grape harvests to make and sell their own wine. That second neighboring piece of land is where the museum dedicated to mathematics is currently under construction.
The Mathematics Gallery will be free to visit with the exception of a small fee for tour groups. It will feature works of art, a giant interactive wall, and an extensive library with over 6,000 books, one-fourth of which are older than 1850, dating all the way back to the year 1600. Newer books will be available to study and be showcased in themed displays, while the older ones will be more protected and not available to the general public.

Designed to be a self-sufficient experience for the visitors, the gallery has an outer section featuring different historic cultures in mathematics, starting with Mesopotamia and moving through pre-European mathematics up to the 1500s. The inner gallery will house math in the current era, tying in things like digital technology and coding, and showing how math is used in everyday life.

Over 80 pieces of art, some well-known, will be on display throughout the gallery. Irons commissioned a Hand of Plato sculpture for outside, featuring the five platonic solids, one on each finger. Some of the displays in the gallery will rotate periodically, featuring timely displays and current interests.

While the idea for the gallery came in 2017, the decision to build the gallery happened in early 2020. Despite some setbacks, construction has been proceeding steadily and interior work is in the finishing stages, with anticipated opening in 2023.

Irons anticipates many school tours and visitors will come to learn about math. He hopes to form a partnership with a local college and recruit volunteers to lead tours. Prepared activity worksheets will add an extra challenge and turn a visit into a cohesive, engaging experience.

The couple has also started a foundation to promote good educational practices within the discipline of mathematics. The Mathema Foundation seems another appropriate extension of their work, seeing as the Irons have taught more than 25,000 students at the Queensland University of Technology between them and both have written and developed educational materials for math, authoring and publishing more than 600 books.
After dedicating their lives to math and teaching, The Mathematics Gallery will be a lasting contribution to educating both young and old in the excitement of math and how ancient concepts are still used in everyday life. Most of the books and artifacts that will be housed in the museum are from the Irons’ private collection, brought to Australia from across the globe, including some from Irons’ time in Iowa.

“We wanted to be able to show people that this is what mathematics can be,” he said. “Rosemary and I have no children, so this is what we’re leaving for people.”
STAYING AHEAD OF THE GAME

UNI students take part in new course on the study of video game music
GONE ARE THE DAYS WHERE VIDEO GAMES ARE SEEN AS A SIMPLE PASTIME.

Instead, they are a force to be reckoned with – holding an integral place in modern day society, entertainment and culture.

In recent years, the video game industry has experienced explosive growth – thanks in part to the pandemic, which saw millions of new players logging on during lockdown. Last year, the video game industry brought in more than $200 billion, and by 2030, that number is expected to grow to a staggering $500 billion. Video games are now one of the fastest growing economic sectors – five times bigger than the movie industry, according to the FTC.

In 2023, the Grammy Awards unveiled the first ever dedicated award category for video game soundtracks. On streaming apps like Spotify, a single album from a game soundtrack (Undertale) garnered close to 1 billion streams, with other game soundtracks not far behind.

Music is an integral part of the gaming experience – helping to immerse the player in the game, build mood and signify emotion, and serve as a guide throughout the gaming journey. As more players continue to flock to video games, fields like Ludomusicology (the study of video game music) are growing alongside it, and the UNI School of Music is helping students stay ahead of the game.

This spring, a group of students had the opportunity to take part in a brand new independent study seminar centered around the study of video game music (Ludomusicology). Led by Alison Altstatt, associate professor of musicology and music history, the class was sparked by student interest.
"[The idea for the seminar] started with a student request," Altstatt said. "This is not my area of research and I know very little about video games and video game music, but I’ve been challenged in recent years by students who want to learn about it and research it. When possible, I want them to learn about things that are of interest to them, and I became aware this was an area of passion for a number of students, so we decided to try it out."

The students helped design the class and determine some of the topics they wanted to discuss, and Altstatt used her expertise in musicology to give them the analytical techniques and interpretive perspectives to learn, compose and research video game music in a musicological way.

“I think what makes this [Ludomusicology seminar] special for UNI is that we are so student-centered,” she said. “We pride ourselves on listening to students and responding to what they are curious about. And during this seminar, the students really stepped up, and I was learning from them as much as they learned from me. I think it was good for them to confirm this is a respected area of scholarly interest, and they also gained some musicological chops.”

Jacob Chaplin, a junior music composition and bass trombone performance major, says the class was eye-opening for him. “Growing up, I spent a lot of time playing video games, and I still do,” he said. “One of the reasons I got into music was by playing video games and really liking what I heard in the soundtrack. For me, it’s really great to see the acceptance of [video game music] becoming more prevalent in academia. Institutions are willing to give this genre a chance because the person who wrote that music obviously had to have a lot of skill and knowledge, and it doesn’t make the music any less respectable because it has Mario in front of it rather than a guy waving a stick.”

Chaplin said he enjoyed the chance to not only hear about his peers’ game experiences, and to learn from professionals in the field, but also to dive deeper into what video game music means. During the class, students had the chance to virtually attend the tenth annual North American Conference on Video Game Music where they learned from leading scholars in the field. They also worked throughout the semester on independent research projects to analyze music from a video game of their choice, which they presented in front of the campus community during the annual INSPIRE conference.

The class culminated in the preparation of a museum exhibit designed in collaboration with Jess Cruz, exhibit coordinator and outreach educator for the UNI Museum at Rod Library. Cruz worked closely with the students throughout the semester to craft the exhibit, which explores the field of Ludomusicology, gives a deeper look into the class, and showcases students’ individual research projects in greater detail. The exhibit is on display in the Russell Hall lobby through the fall of 2023, and is open to the public.
For the students involved, having the chance to showcase their work to the public – both at the INSPIRE Conference and through the exhibit in Russell Hall – has been a gratifying experience.

David Phetmanysay, who graduated in May with a degree in viola performance, says the class was one the highlights of his time at UNI. “I loved the class so much,” he said. “I have been an avid gamer my whole life, and at the same time, had a longtime interest in music. I really like how everyone in the class was very invested and wanted to be there because they have such a passion for video games and video game music.”

Phetmanysay and Chaplin agreed that they’re glad the field of video game music is becoming more widely accepted as an area of study. “Just like film music, video game music is building in its credibility as a genre worth studying and worth practicing,” Chaplin said. “Not a single professor at UNI will tell you John Williams isn’t a genius, even if people are swinging laser swords or fighting dinosaurs in front of that music. I think video games are just another evolution of that. If you’re a musician, learning new kinds of music is kind of your job. If you intentionally avoid it, you’re limiting yourself. [Video game music is] very good music on its own. Like Skyrim for example – if you played those tracks in a full concert hall in front of your grandparents, they probably wouldn’t even know it was from a video game.”

Both Chaplin and Phetmanysay said that they would like to continue their involvement in Ludomusicology. Phetmanysay has already written some Minecraft-inspired music, which is currently streaming on Soundcloud, but he says he’d like to someday make a career of writing music for video games. “In video games, you can do anything you want, and get really creative,” he said. “Plus, it’s just a lot of fun – the possibilities are limitless when you aren’t confined to certain boundaries.”

Apart from being a growing career field for music students, Altstatt says the field of Ludomusicology is important because of the vast impact video game music has on people across the globe. “People, especially young people, all over the world listen to video game music for hours every day, and unofficially, it has a big impact,” she said. “I suspect that the field of Ludomusicology will only continue to grow, just like the study of pop music or film music developed and grew. As long as video games are with us, expanding to different platforms and apps, the interest in video game music will be there, too, because people are experiencing it on a daily basis.”

On a more personal level, the Ludomusicology course at UNI was a great experience for Altstatt as a faculty member. “For me as a teacher, teaching gets stale if I’m not always learning,” she said. “Sometimes I learn from experiences that I wouldn’t necessarily have sought out myself. I’m constantly learning from our students. They’re so ambitious, disciplined, and curious. There’s only so much I can get to in the music history core curriculum, so what’s important for me is that they develop tools they can add to their toolbox as performers, teachers, scholars and that they develop confidence in themselves and their capacity to describe, analyze and explain the importance of different types of music. If I want to encourage them to be open minded and curious, I need to model that myself, and for me, this opportunity really enriched my experience. Plus, this is an area of music that’s really meaningful for a lot of [our students], so it’s great for them to be able to work on music that they’re familiar with and invested in, that you might not normally have a chance to talk about in a classical music school.”

Altstatt says she has more students interested in the Ludomusicology seminar, and she’s already planning another course next spring.
Fields of Fascination

Students experience breathtaking sights of Iceland during study abroad

For most students, winter break is a chance to relax, catch up with family and indulge in tasty holiday treats, but for 17 UNI students, winter break meant escaping to one of the most interesting and beautiful countries in the world – Iceland.

Led by UNI Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences professor Chad Heinzel, students spent two weeks climbing volcanoes, lavishing in geothermal hot springs and gazing in awe at the brilliance of the Northern Lights.

Designed to explore Iceland’s history and culture, as well as its unique geological features and deep appreciation of the land and its resources, the trip curriculum combined the study of major geological landmarks with the educational experience of the capital city’s cultural and historical museums.

“Iceland is really a fascinating place,” Heinzel said. “You have the Viking history and culture and then you have the land itself, which is a geologist’s paradise. The landscape is so unique and diverse with volcanoes and glaciers and geothermal pools. There are just a lot of really neat things in a relatively small area.”

The trip is part of Heinzel’s Natural Resources and Civilizations class. Because it is included in the UNIFI general education curriculum, it is open to students from any major and all grade levels to participate. “That was one of the beautiful things about this class,” he said.

“We had future teachers, we had future scientists, we had future accountants and business professionals and we had communications and public relations students, and they bring all of their interests into our discussions and it’s like our own little microcosm of the civilization that UNI is building and contributing to. That’s probably my favorite part of being able to do a class like this.”

Iceland’s commitment to sustainability and conservation were things that spoke to many of the students, including Peyton Paulson, a senior environmental science major with an earth science minor, who hopes to work for the National Park Service once she graduates. “One of the things I thought was really cool was how waste conscious the people are,” she said. “I don’t think I saw a single plastic utensil or plastic straw or styrofoam to-go package. Everywhere we went everyone was using real dishes and glasses, and I remember thinking those are habits that would be really great to practice in the U.S. The people in Iceland have such a respect for what they have. They have all these amazing natural resources and features available to them and they don’t take it for granted. They know what they have and you can see how grateful they are for it, and that was really nice to see.”

“It was just such a great experience,” Paulson added. “I am incredibly happy I got to go and have this experience. Iceland is just beautiful, it’s amazing and the people were so friendly and welcoming.”
Above: Students stop for a photo in front of a waterfall in Iceland.

Far right: An Icelandic rock formation.

Right: A view of the northern lights.
TAKING ON Broadway

Theatre students travel to NYC for Wise Broadway Tour experience
IT’S THE PINNACLE OF U.S. DESTINATIONS FOR THEATER FANS: THE BRIGHT LIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF BROADWAY.

Two UNI students got to experience the magic of Broadway last winter as they embarked on the Wise Broadway Tour — a unique experience made possible by Theatre alumnus Robert O. Wise, who established the Wise Broadway Tour Fund nearly two decades ago. Tour participants travel to New York City, experience a long weekend full of Broadway shows and big city culture, and connect with industry professionals. This year’s selected students were Lydia Burg and Spaz Eigenheer.

Burg graduated from UNI in May with a design and production theatre degree. During her time at UNI, she stage managed, and served as the executive chair of the UNI Theatre Technicians. She'd been involved in nearly every role in theater, but her main interest is in crafting costume accessories.

Eigenheer also graduated in May, earning a double major in Speech Communication and Theatre Education. During their time at UNI, Eigenheer acted on stage, and held a backstage role as assistant ability inclusive coordinator. They've found their passion is working with kids and championing inclusion.

While tour participants travel together with a chaperone from the department, their schedules are chosen individually. There was some overlap in show choices, and the group tried to meet up at least once a day.

After arrival, both students headed to an off-Broadway show of Drunk Shakespeare. Held in a small café, actors perform works of Shakespeare while intoxicated. “They yelled Shakespeare at us. It was so funny, and it was the best introduction to New York theater,” Eigenheer said. “There’s so many underground things that happen that people don’t focus on, so seeing a different type of theater was fun.” Burg agreed, mentioning that it was valuable to see how the actors, stage manager and performance mechanics functioned in a different, smaller setting.
As for Broadway shows, Burg chose which performances to see based on design styles. “One of my goals was to see a diverse spread of different theatrical styles,” she explained. She saw “Hadestown,” “& Juliet,” “Into the Woods” and “Beetlejuice.” Eigenheer picked “Take Me Out,” “& Juliet,” “The Piano Lesson” and “Beetlejuice.” Both were scheduled to see “A Strange Loop” as their final show, but cast sickness canceled the show. Instead, they found available tickets to the closing night of “Beetlejuice,” which was a special experience.

As part of the trip, UNI reaches out to industry professionals that align with the interests of the travelers and sets up a time for them to meet. Burg got the opportunity to meet a props artisan for breakfast, share projects with each other and learn about working in New York. Eigenheer met up with a representative from the New York Children’s Theater. They got to hear about a bilingual show in production, which aligns with their interest in ability inclusive shows. They said it was also good to see that there are job opportunities in New York City that fit with their goals.

The itinerary included time to experience the city outside of the theater as well. Both students went to the Museum of Broadway, and also spent time apart exploring what interested them, from bookstores and art museums to parks and restaurants. The culinary offerings were a highlight; they tried the famous New York cheesecake and met with an alumni of the Wise Broadway Tour program at a chocolate restaurant and got to hear about their New York experiences.

In the future, Burg would like to find a job as a costume crafts artisan, creating the details of costumes — things like hats, ruffs, shoes and armor. She’ll be spending the summer in Utah working and would eventually like to end up in Los Angeles or Las Vegas, working on an avant garde performance with lots of room for creativity in costumes and spaces.

Eigenheer hopes to move to New York City in the next few years. “I applied because I wanted the chance to see the city and feel the city and immerse myself in that culture,” they said. “I wanted to go to see what my future could be.” Currently, they plan to be a substitute teacher in Des Moines in hopes that a full time theater teaching position opens up. Their dream job is working as a community outreach or ability inclusive coordinator in a children’s theater company.

Students apply for the chance to be a Wise Broadway Tour participant. Their application includes a proposed schedule and an essay communicating their goals and how they would benefit from the trip. Eric Lange, associate professor of Theatre, says that it is hard to choose which students to send and he wishes he had the funding to send more travelers.

“This opportunity allows them to see several Broadway productions and to meet with TheatreUNI alumni or working professionals connected to the department while they are there,” Lange said. “The trip exposes them to prominent current theater productions and allows them to explore and learn the cultural aspects of New York City.”

Both of this year’s travelers made a special point to express their gratitude for all of the work put in by the department faculty and staff in arranging the trip, making connections and handling logistics, resulting in a fantastic experience they will remember for a lifetime.
SCULPTING A LASTING IMPACT

UNI Public Art Incubator partnership empowers young artists
The impact of UNI’s Public Art Incubator stretches far beyond campus, and even the Cedar Valley.

Incubator is partnering with local art students to build a sculpture park filled with art created by students from the Iowa Falls-Alden school district.

Under the supervision of UNI staff, UNI students in the Public Art Incubator have fabricated four sculptures based on the middle and high school art students’ designs, and are now in the process of fabricating two more for the community to enjoy.

The collaboration beautifies the Iowa Falls community, gives real-world experience to UNI students and gives the high school students a glimpse into the world of professional arts.

“I think it’s so empowering for them to know that as a student, you can make an impact on your world,” said Chelsie Meyer, a 2007 UNI art alum and Iowa Falls-Alden high school art teacher who is helping lead the partnership. “I feel like this project really values my students as artists and as young adults.”

The partnership is the result of the strong connections Meyer made while she was at UNI that continued after she graduated. During Meyer’s first year out of college, she received a commission to craft a sculpture for her hometown. Tom Stancliffe, retired UNI Department of Art faculty member who at the time was leading the sculpture studio, was able to serve as a guide for Meyer throughout the process. After the project was over, Meyer kept in contact with Stancliffe, who is now a professor emeritus, which allowed her to stay connected with the goings on of the art department.

A few years later, the Public Art Incubator (or PAI for short) was up and running in UNI’s Kamerick Art Building, giving students experience working with professional artists to fabricate sculptures for public places like parks and libraries.
Meyer, who was working for the Waverly-Shell Rock middle school at the time, thought involving her students with the incubator would be a fun way to teach them about public art.

“My students were already doing a sculpture project where they would design little mock sculptures or models,” said Meyer. “I was like ‘Gosh, some of these are really, really neat. It would be great to actually make one of them as a sculpture, but obviously, I don’t have that capacity.’”

Luckily, the Public Art Incubator does have that capacity, and Meyer was able to secure a grant to cover the cost of turning one of the student’s models into a large-scale sculpture.

“It started as this idea that students can have an impact on the community in a meaningful way and in a permanent way,” said Perry. “It’s not just a simulation or an exercise. It’s a real thing.”

When Meyer moved to the Iowa Falls-Alden School District, she brought the assignment with her. Typically, the assignment begins with Meyer showing her students the Public Art Incubator on UNI’s campus. This helps spark their imaginations with sculpture ideas. It also shows the students what a career in art can look like.

“It shows them that sculpture is an option as a viable art career and that cliché of a starving artist doesn’t have to be the case,” said Meyer. “You can be a thriving, working artist.”

Another sculpture fabricated by the Public Art Incubator, titled “Who WE Are: Iowa” by Owen Renaud.
Next, the students fabricate small-scale models, usually out of tagboard, to be critiqued. After students have made any adjustments to their designs, they can present their ideas to the Sculpture Committee group, which contains Iowa Falls residents. This group decides which sculptures will be fabricated.

Finally, UNI students in the Public Art Incubator can get to work, fabricating the sculptures out of aluminum, stainless steel and other materials.

“The exciting thing about it for me is that their imaginations run wild, and that's good,” said Perry. “The challenge is that practicality. So they might have this really ambitious idea, but can it be done? Can it physically be made? Does it fit in the budget? Is it even possible to be made?

“Sometimes their ideas are so ambitious that I don't know if they even have the technology for that yet. But that's the exciting part of it.”

Students enjoy the assignment just as much as Perry enjoys overseeing the fabrication process.

“I wasn't very interested at first about sculptures, but doing this made me enjoy creating art like this on my own more,” said Lauren Lettow, another former student of Meyer’s. “It was fun being introduced to this side of art and really making a connection to the meaning behind art. I enjoyed getting out of my comfort zone and really enjoying a deeper meaning behind art.”

“During the sculpture project for Art & Community, I learned how much time and effort goes into a sculpture,” said Samara Senn. “This project made me have more respect for others that create sculptures. It was fascinating to see the process that a sculpture takes. Even on a small scale like our class did.”

Designs the PAI has fabricated for Iowa Falls include a 10-foot ear of corn and “Fish Frenzy.” This year's designs include Thatiana Núñez's “United Diversities,” which is a series of stacked shapes representing people of different races and ethnicities coming together. “Twisted Spotlight,” which resembles a twisted sheet of paper with various shapes cut from it, “demonstrates connection, community and uniqueness to signify how different and connected the Iowa Falls community is,” according to the artist, Samara Senn.

While her community would love it if the project produces several sculptures each year, Meyer hopes to continue the collaboration with the Public Art Incubator and produce at least one sculpture every other year.

“YOU CAN BE A THRIVING, WORKING ARTIST.”

Two additional artworks the Public Art Incubator fabricated for the Iowa Falls sculpture park include “Fish Frenzy,” designed by Zakary Fredrickson and Connor Wise (left), and “Reality” designed by Mikayla Fjeld (right).
What happens when a patient or their family disagrees with a healthcare team on the best course of action? If you're at the Houston Methodist Hospital in Texas, there's a chance Trevor Bibler will get involved.

Bibler, a 2006 UNI alumnus, serves as the Biomedical Ethics Program Director at the hospital and is a clinical ethicist, helping to analyze ethical issues that arise in the healthcare field and providing recommendations to resolve conflicts.

His role as an ethicist is seemingly the perfect combination of his interests. Before deciding on a major at UNI, he took classes in art history and then biology, considering a career in the field of medicine. But then he took some classes in the Department of Philosophy & World Religions and realized he wanted to change course. He graduated with a major in philosophy and a minor in religious studies. From UNI, Bibler went to Vanderbilt Divinity School and earned his Master of Theological Studies in 2009, studying biblical history and how suffering is depicted in the ancient texts. Then he earned his Ph.D. in religious studies from Vanderbilt University in 2014, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship in clinical bioethics at Baylor College of Medicine and Houston Methodist Hospital.

Now, as a clinical ethicist, Bibler’s duties include discovering and analyzing ethical issues, making recommendations to remediate issues and guide policies, and hopefully finding the best path forward for each dilemma. Complications emerge when a patient’s family disagrees with the treatment that a healthcare team feels is best, or when questions arise about who should serve as a surrogate decision maker for a patient. End of life care decisions, privacy concerns when a patient is incapacitated, and distribution of limited resources during the pandemic are all issues with which Bibler has dealt. State laws can also come into play.

“I'm able to take theories I read about and apply them directly to patients,” Bibler said. “Good medical care doesn’t look the same for everyone. I have the opportunity to ask questions and analyze ethical issues that end up helping resolve a concern.”

The vast majority of ethics cases are brought to Bibler’s attention by the healthcare team, possibly because many patients and families aren't aware that clinical ethicists exist. Every institution that is accredited to accept federal funding needs to have a mechanism to address ethical issues, such as an ethicist, a committee or a review board. Clinical ethicists are often physicians or chaplains who volunteer for the role.

Bibler also works as an assistant professor at the Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy at Baylor College of Medicine, where he teaches and works on research projects, including his current investigation on how different worldviews — often that include ideas about miracles — influence clinical medicine.

As he works as an educator, Bibler fondly remembers his classes with UNI Professor Edgar Boedeker. “We spent a great deal of time analyzing concepts and seeing how arguments function, which is a big part of my job now,” Bibler explained. “My time at UNI became the catalyst for a career where I try to help patients, families, and professionals discover how their values, intentions, and preferences can lead to good and fair medical care.”

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UNI alum helps find most ethical route in healthcare decisions

CARING FOR WHAT’S RIGHT

COMMUNIQUÉ
The University of Northern Iowa is doing its part to equip teachers with computer science skills they can pass on to their students, thanks to a three-year grant of nearly $1 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The grant will allow Iowa teachers to go through an 18-month program made up of five computer science courses. At the end of the 18 months, a recommendation is made to the State Board of Educational Examiners for the participating teachers to receive their secondary computer science endorsements, qualifying them to teach computer science to grades five through 12.

“We firmly believe we have a strong program,” said Ben Schafer, professor in the Department of Computer Science and program coordinator for the Computer Science Education program at UNI (CSEd@UNI). “We think that the five courses we’ve built are well designed, well executed and really do help teachers become better computer science teachers. When you get this kind of an award from the NSF with that kind of magnitude, that’s external validation that what you’re doing is something that other people see as being strong and meaningful as well.” Ninety percent of the funding from the grant goes to UNI while the remaining 10 percent goes to partners at the University of Virginia who will be evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

The timing of this new program to increase computer science education intentionally corresponds with the State of Iowa pushing for more computer science to be incorporated into K-12 education. As a result of recent legislation, all high schools must now offer at least one one-semester course in computer science. Starting July 1, 2023, every elementary school must provide computer science instruction in at least one grade level, and every middle school must provide computer science instruction in either seventh or eighth grade.

“Computer science, as a discipline, is increasingly one of those things that every student should have at least a base familiarity with,” said Schafer. He likens requiring computer science as part of education to the way that English, social studies, science and math are required — they are all subjects people need to understand to be successful members of society. Schafer also believes UNI is the perfect place to offer this type of program. In fact, UNI is one of only two universities in the state to offer a full pathway to this endorsement.

“UNI has a long history of delivering quality education at both the in-service and the pre-service level, and we can leverage that in designing this new program,” he said. “We have an ability here at UNI to offer a program that most other schools in the state just can’t offer because we have the right mix of content specialists and education specialists.”

The first cohort of up to 90 teachers will take courses from June 2023 to December 2024, and the second cohort of up to 180 teachers will take courses from June 2024 to December 2025. Many of the teachers will be able to participate in the program at no cost or at reduced cost thanks to scholarships made possible by the grant funding.
UNI digital media alum finds success filming for Beyoncé and other celebrities
Ben Hagarty got his start in video using the University of Northern Iowa’s camera equipment in Lang Hall.

Over a decade later, he’s built a successful videography career that includes work with major celebrities like Beyoncé, Jay-Z, and Alicia Keys. His work on Beyoncé’s 2019 documentary “Homecoming” earned him a Grammy win and several Emmy nominations.
Despite working with so many big names, Hagarty, a 2011 UNI Department of Communication & Media graduate, has never let the celebrity status of his clients phase him. “People are always asking me for advice, and a lot of it comes down to treating celebrities like people,” he said. “They expect the people working with them to be professional. This allows them to let their guard down and collaborate in an effective way.”

In 2018, Hagarty got the opportunity to work with arguably his biggest celebrity name client to date. As Beyoncé prepared for her headlining performance at the Coachella music festival, Hagarty was there to capture the process with video. “I worked with an incredible team to capture the journey leading up to that live performance,” he said. “Not only was I a part of documenting what was happening behind the scenes, but I also got to join the team that filmed the live show. The footage you see in the documentary — I got to shoot some of that. So wild.” As soon as the Coachella performance wrapped, Hagarty caught a flight to Europe to join Beyoncé and Jay-Z for their On the Run II world tour as their videographer.

Of course, none of this happened overnight. Hagarty grew up in Cedar Falls. He attended Hawkeye Community College then transferred to UNI for the electronic media major, which was the predecessor to the digital media production major.

“One of my friends took the program,” said Hagarty. “He could rent all the camera equipment, and I think we shot a video with it. I was like, ‘You have access to all this stuff?!’ That was a big draw. I could get my hands on the gear and learn. I didn’t know what the program was totally going to entail, but I knew I could figure it out one way or another. I just need to get my hands on the gear.”

Then he went to work. “I was constantly making random things, doing contests — like for the Doritos Super Bowl commercials,” said Hagarty. “We were in Lang Hall just making videos all the time, testing ideas, and it was a cool, cool period of time.”

Hagarty identifies associate professor Francesca Soans as the faculty member who made the greatest impact during his time at UNI. Soans, who still teaches in digital media, remembers Hagarty well. “Ben stood out because of his passion for media production that motivated him to seek out and create opportunities to make media outside of course assignments,” she said. “Ben constantly challenged himself in creativity and skills and inspired others to do the same.” Today, Soans continues to use a documentary Hagarty made in class to teach her students.

While Hagarty had never been the biggest fan of school, he found himself genuinely enjoying many of his assignments in his electronic media courses. “What I didn’t realize at the time was I was learning a lot of communication skills in the way of how I approach people and how that can really play into your career,” he said. “Speaking to people and connecting on a personal level is one of the biggest factors behind my success to date.”
Department of Communication and Media. Hagarty recalls hearing one of the speakers, UNI alum Mark Steines, who had moved to Los Angeles and gotten a job at Entertainment Tonight. As he listened, Hagarty realized someone like himself could make it in Los Angeles.

After college, Hagarty focused on music. He played drums in a band and later became part of a rap group. He lived in his parents’ basement and created a studio space for his own music and others’. Hagarty credits his music background with helping him get more into video, especially in the music industry, because being an artist gave him a unique understanding of what other artists wanted for their video and photography needs. “Once I realized I have more value from a cinema side, I leaned fully into it, and I never looked back,” he said.

At the same time, Hagarty began setting aside money to move to LA. He was convinced if he wanted to make it big, he was going to have to make the trip. “I started taking trips out to California and connecting with certain people and seeing what was possible out there,” he said. “Eventually, I saw a window of opportunity, and so I started saving up a lot of money for me to make that move.”

Hagarty first moved to Los Angeles in 2015. He spent more than a year crashing on an air mattress at a friend’s house and taking any job that came his way, including projects that were unpaid. “It was a lot of saying ‘yes’ to any opportunity,” said Hagarty. “If someone around me had a side business or if there was someone who invested in a taco shop that needed someone to shoot a new beer, I’d shoot it. I didn’t care if it was cool or not. I was just trying to make people know my capabilities.”

When Hagarty started getting more traction and working with more big-name celebrities, he was invited to be the keynote speaker at the 2019 Fast Forward — a full-circle moment that Hagarty describes as surreal.

Sharing his journey to success at Fast Forward was nothing new for Hagarty, who also created Black with No Cream, a creative community and podcast to educate fellow creatives about the industry. On the podcast’s first season, he interviewed creators who have worked with Selena Gomez, Post Malone, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson and others. After becoming a Canon ambassador, Hagarty partnered with Canon to shoot the second season of his podcast. “Helping creatives is probably the thing I love the most out of everything,” he said.

Hagarty recently moved back to Iowa and plans on running his business from Cedar Falls, so he expects to spend a lot of time flying back to LA for work. While the idea of working on feature films or even short films never appealed to Hagarty in the past, he’s become more interested in the idea recently. No matter what route he chooses to take, he plans on having a lot of fun while creating. “I’ve always done whatever is exciting at the time,” he said. “If it seems fun, I’m gonna do it.”
UNI alum Dr. Kimryn Rathmell picked as next director of National Cancer Institute

Recently, President Joe Biden announced his intent to appoint Dr. Kimryn Rathmell as the next director of the National Cancer Institute. Dr. Rathmell is a 1991 graduate from the University of Northern Iowa with degrees in biology and chemistry, and has been recognized for incredible contributions to kidney cancer research. The National Cancer Institute is the federal government’s principal agency for cancer research and training. The NCI’s mission is to lead, conduct, and support cancer research across the nation to advance scientific knowledge and help people live longer, healthier lives. Dr. Rathmell currently leads the Vanderbilt University Medical Center as Physician-in-Chief and Chair of the Department of Medicine.

UNI adds two new engineering degrees to meet growing demand

In an effort to meet growing demand for engineering professionals, the University of Northern Iowa is launching two new degrees.

- The Bachelor of Science in Materials Science & Engineering will emphasize the properties of metals – a core strength of the Applied Engineering & Technical Management Department – and will leverage UNI’s foundry science facilities and materials science expertise in the Physics and Chemistry & Biochemistry Departments.

- A second new program, the Bachelor of Science in Materials Science Engineering Technology, takes a more applied, industry-based and manufacturing approach, leveraging UNI’s existing facilities and strengths in metal casting, and additive and subtractive metal manufacturing applications.

Two UNI alums awarded Yager Outstanding Teaching Award

Two Iowa teachers earned recognition for their service to the field when they were recently awarded the University of Northern Iowa Dr. Robert E. and Phyllis M. Yager Exemplary Teaching Recognition Award. The award is designed to highlight UNI graduates who have gone on to excellence as K-12 teachers in Iowa, and identify a UNI faculty member’s contribution to their success. Recipients of this year’s award are:

- Jessica Dunnick, Music Specialist at Bowman Woods Elementary in Cedar Rapids
- Kate Degner, Secondary Mathematics Coordinator at Iowa City Community School District in Iowa City

The awards were conferred during a ceremony in October of 2023, held on the UNI campus. This award is sponsored by the family of the late Dr. Robert Yager, a UNI alum and nationally recognized science educator.

UNI Applied Engineering & Technical Management students earn 3rd place at national robotics competition

The UNI Technology Club – hailing from the UNI Department of Applied Engineering & Technical Management – earned third place at the national ATMAE 2023 Student Division Robotics Competition held in Atlanta, Georgia. Along with the third place hardware, UNI’s robot also received the Best Technical Communications Design Award. Individually, manufacturing engineering technology student Hannah Tew earned first place in the IT/IQ Technology Challenge and Tessa Warnke was presented a scholarship from the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME).
UNI faculty member awarded fellowship at Harvard University’s Houghton Library
Jeremy Schraffenberger, professor of English and editor of the North American Review literary magazine, was awarded the 2023-24 William Dearborn Fellowship in American History from the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Throughout the year, he will spend four weeks at the library conducting archival research for his project “Slavery, Abolition, and Colonization in the Antebellum North American Review.” The goal is to articulate a clearer picture of the shifting public attitudes toward slavery among the editors and contributors as represented in the pages of the NAR prior to the Civil War, discovering how these ideas are reflected, reinforced, or repudiated in the private internal documents during the editorial and publishing processes of the magazine. The project is part of a larger effort on the part of the current North American Review to become more restorative in its approach to history.

Panther Marching Band performs for 1.5 million people in Spain
Over the 2022 winter break, around 90 students from the Panther Marching Band traveled to Madrid, Spain, where they performed in the annual Three Kings Parade. This parade marks the 12th day of Christmas, called Epiphany or Three Kings Day, when children receive presents. Approximately 1.5 million people watched the parade in person on January 5, with millions more watching on television. Every two years, the Panther Marching Band (PMB) hosts an international trip. In the past, students have performed at the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Dublin, in historic cathedrals in Italy and in cities large and small around the globe.

Two faculty members awarded Religion and Health Curriculum Grant
Two UNI faculty members were recently awarded a Religion and Health Curriculum Grant from Interfaith America. Cara Burnidge, associate professor of religion, and Disa Cornish, associate professor of public health, will use the grant funding to create a curriculum that engages religious identity and diversity. The pair plan to revise their UNIFI General Education courses (American Religious Diversity and Maternal and Infant Health) to encourage general education students (not advanced majors) to think critically about how religious identity impacts maternal and infant health outcomes and how providers and patients can improve their relationship in the prenatal stage to experience better health outcomes at delivery, birth, and infancy.

UNI Opera debuts world premiere of ‘The Beehive’ opera
In March, the UNI School of Music presented the world premiere of the newly-commissioned opera “The Beehive.” Performances featured the UNI Opera Ensemble under the direction of Richard Gammon, director, and Korey Barrett, vocal coach, as well as the Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra led by Erik Rohde, conductor. “The Beehive” was created by New York City artists, composer Jorge Sosa and librettist Melisa Tien. The UNI Opera program commissioned this new piece, which was created specifically for UNI graduate students to perform. In “The Beehive”, the central character, Abby, struggles to find her identity within a hairstyling community of small-town America which is currently facing a crisis.

Physics alum and NASA scientist returns to speak on campus
The guest speaker for the 2023 Begeman Lecture (hosted annually by the Department of Physics) was Dr. Chris Stark, Deputy Observatory Project Scientist for NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope. The title of his talk was “Searching for Other Worlds: The James Webb Space Telescope and Beyond.” During his talk, Stark shared the highlights of the development and deployment of the telescope with the audience, and showcased images captured by the telescope. Stark is a 2004 UNI Physics alumnus, with a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Maryland. He is an expert in extrasolar planets and debris disks.

UNI Department of Biology becomes first in world to utilize new SynDavers
UNI was the first university in Iowa, and one of the first in the nation, to begin using SynDavers (synthetic cadavers) in its classrooms. Now, the university is again leading the charge, becoming the first higher-education institution in the world to receive one of the newest generation models. Funded by the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust, the Department of Biology’s Human Anatomy Lab received the first of these third-generation SynDavers, which are now being used in classrooms to enhance the educations of students in a variety of majors - including biology, chemistry and biochemistry, athletic training, exercise science and psychology. These SynDavers allow students hands-on access to tissues that feel lifelike while also helping them feel comfortable with the most detailed experiences in studying human anatomy.

Gallagher Bluedorn breaks ground on renovation and expansion project
In early June, the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center broke ground on its long-awaited $14.9 million renovation and expansion project. The project will elevate every aspect of the patron experience and continue the center’s tradition of providing world-class performing arts for the community and the state of Iowa. Work on the renovation and expansion project began in May and will continue through the Gallagher Bluedorn’s 2023-24 season. A temporary construction wall will allow work to continue uninterrupted as the center remains open.
In the state of Iowa, English learners (those whose first language is something other than English) are among the fastest-growing populations in our schools, according to the Iowa Department of Education. With an increase of nearly 60 percent in the past decade, all Iowa districts need to be prepared to serve English learners, including immigrant children and youth. Despite this, almost one-third of school districts in Iowa do not employ an endorsed ESL (English as a second language) teacher. But, that’s where two UNI faculty members are stepping up to help.

Thanks to a $1.48 million grant from the United States Department of Education, two faculty members from the UNI Department of Languages & Literatures are working to launch a new project to improve ESL instruction for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Aliza Fones and Carmen Durham, both assistant professors of TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages)/applied linguistics, were awarded the grant to carry out Project UNITED (University of Northern Iowa Teacher Education for Diverse Learners). Project UNITED is a five-year plan to address a shortage of ESL teachers by providing research-based ESL teacher preparation and professional development to current and future teachers.

In general, English learners bring a depth of linguistic and cultural richness to the schools they’re enrolled in. But according to the Iowa Department of Education, ELs continue to experience significant gaps in both achievement and in the opportunities in our schools compared to their non-EL peers. According to the Iowa Department of Education website: “ELs are underrepresented in gifted and talented programming, extracurricular activities, and high-level courses. They are often over- or under-identified in special education. With effective support and access to excellent educators, ELs are capable of the same high level of learning as native English speakers.”

To improve academic outcomes for English learners, Fones and Durham, along with their team and other partnering agencies, will gather data and use research to create and enhance coursework, field experiences and professional development to improve instructional practices. New technologies and options in distance learning will expand the reach of the program, making it easier for in-service teachers to gain ESL credentials. The plan also includes scholarships to help TESOL recruits with the added costs of gaining ESL endorsements and collaboration with community agencies that will increase family engagement, improving outcomes beyond the classroom. UNI is strongly positioned to develop this education framework as its teacher preparation program is in the top one percent in the U.S. in terms of size.

Jim O’Loughlin, professor and head of the Department of Languages & Literatures, is excited about the potential the grant provides. “Project UNITED is going to be a transformative initiative,” he said. “It will fund scholarships for dozens of students, undergraduate and graduate, to acquire an ESL endorsement, allowing UNI’s TESOL program to reach new students who might never have considered further higher education because of financial hurdles. Equally important is the research component of this project, through which our faculty will be able to develop new instructional methods and curriculum in order to ensure that the education students receive prepares them for success.”

The knowledge and resulting best practices gathered at the completion of Project UNITED can be used across Iowa and other states with similar needs for more ESL teachers and to improve the implementation and effectiveness of ESL instruction. “We’re building an infrastructure with the work that is accomplished through the grant,” Fones said. “We’re putting things in place so there is a more sustainable pipeline of teachers who are prepared to support English learners.”
Above: A UNI student works with an English learner

Right: Students work on English skills guided by a UNI student
TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

Unique research project gives UNI biology student a new perspective on plant life
Trading in her microscope and lab coat for a camera and lighting equipment, UNI biology student Bethany Van Dusseldorp tackled a unique research project that meets at the intersection of art and science.

Using a special macrophotography camera, Van Dusseldorp spent countless hours photographing different flowers and analyzing their unique structures as part of her senior thesis research project. The goal of the work is aimed at examining plant and pollinator interaction to determine how certain plants have adapted for certain pollinators, while also collecting better photography for study.

The project was a new one for Van Dusseldorp, a biology: pre-physical therapy major who plans to attend graduate school for physical therapy at the University of Minnesota in the fall. “Most of my experience before this was looking at human anatomy and physiology, so it was new for me to be researching plants and plant structures,” she said. “But I really learned a lot and valued the chance to get out of my comfort zone and gain some new skills.”

Van Dusseldorp first got involved in the research after reaching out to biology professor David Saunders, who recruited her to be a part of the project. “We wanted to see if we could find similarities in the anatomical structure of flowers that have the same or similar pollinators and determine if there is an ideal floral design that best matches the flower to its pollinator, thereby creating the best success for pollination,” Saunders said. “To date, we have far too few specimens to make any solid conclusions, but Bethany’s work has set the stage for additional work to be done.

An additional desire for the project was to show flowers and floral structures in a way that most people have not seen. Using ultra-macro photography, Van Dusseldorp and Saunders were able to magnify the floral structures, so that they could be easily seen. “There is also an artistic component of these images and we wanted that to come through,” Saunders said. “The floral structures of flowers are often colorful and delicate; beautiful and almost alien-like and otherworldly when viewed at magnifications beyond what the normal human eye can see.”

During her documentation, Van Dusseldorp discovered new information about how plant anatomical structures assist in pollination, while collecting new images to help further future research. She hopes the results of her research are a template for other researchers to build on. And while the research is still ongoing, it was the experience itself that made a mark on Van Dusseldorp. “I learned a lot,” she said. “I didn’t have a ton of background knowledge on plant structures going in, but I got out of my comfort zone, learned a lot from both professor Saunders and the staff at the UNI Botanical Center, and was able to make conclusions based on my research. It was a really cool process to go through and a lot of fun. Having that research experience is going to be great going into grad school, since that’s something I will have to do a lot more of.”

While Van Dusseldorp plans to study physical therapy, Saunders says research experiences in other areas are still valuable beyond words. “This project gave her an opportunity to be creative in a way she might not have otherwise pursued,” he said. “This is something I would wish for every student, the ability to pursue an interest outside of their career goals, to be creative and to explore.”

On top of having research experience under her belt, and getting her work published, Van Dusseldorp will also be able to see her photography on display. After seeing her photographs, the Department of Biology decided to partner with the Department of Applied Engineering and Technical Management to print a series of Van Dusseldorp’s photographs onto metal. These artworks will be hung on display in McCollum Science Hall, with an explanation of her work. “I’m really excited to see them on display, I think it’s just a really nice way to wrap up the project,” she said.
1950s
‘56 Jere Graetz, BA, MA ‘68, Burnsville, MN, taught for 40 years, mostly in elementary music. Also was in a men’s choir, church choir and bell choir until age 88.

‘65 Calvin Irons, BA, MA ‘67, Queensland, Australia, remains very active after retirement from Queensland University of Technology after 39 years. He co-founded ORIGO Education, a publisher of mathematics books and founded Ocean-View Estates Winery and Restaurant. A new venture will build a mathematics gallery near the winery.

1960s
‘60 Dick Trotter, BA, Cedar Rapids, retired in 1995 after 33 years with the Cedar Rapids School District. He is still mobile and enjoys playing golf and tennis.

‘62 Sandy Stevens, BA, Glen Ellyn, IL, received the Bill Nelson Award for Contributions to Wrestling by the Iowa Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame on 10/21/2023.

‘63 Louise (Thoms) McGinnis, BA, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier’s 8 Over 80 for 2022.

‘64 Marlene (Wynn) Behn, BA, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier’s 8 Over 80 for 2022.

‘64 Bonita (Dostal) Neff, BA, MA ’66, Munster, IN, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Marquis Who’s Who Top Educators for dedication, achievements, and leadership in communication and speech theory instruction. She is a professor emeritus at Valparaiso University.

‘65 Calvin Irons

‘67, Queensland, Australia, remains very active after retirement from Queensland University of Technology after 39 years. He co-founded ORIGO Education, a publisher of mathematics books and founded Ocean-View Estates Winery and Restaurant. A new venture will build a mathematics gallery near the winery.

1970s
‘72 Mark Rhoads, BA, MA ‘90, Oracle, AZ, would love to connect with fellow dorm mates from Kendall House in Shull Hall from 1968–1972.

‘73 Roger Frederick, BT, MBA ‘02, Hilton Head Island, SC, received the 2021 Jack Franklin Award from USRowing, recognizing his lifetime contribution to the sport.

‘74 Bill Hesse, BA, MA ’78, Bella Vista, AR, retired from public school teaching in 2009 and moved to Bella Vista, AR. He conducted the Bella Vista Men’s Choir for five years, currently conducts the choir at First Presbyterian Church in Rogers, AR, and has a private voice studio.

‘77 Richard Huber, BA, Iowa City, received an Award of Excellence at the 28th Annual Communicator Awards for his logo design for the 2022 All Iowa rotary District Conference.

‘79 Mike McEniry, BM, Rockford, retired from teaching at Mason City High School after 37 1/2 years in public education and retired from teaching at Waldorf University after 4 years of teaching there. He is currently teaching private brass students in his home studio. Since March 2022 he has been collecting, repairing and purchasing instruments, various teaching materials and supplies, and financial donations for a mission project to start an instrumental music program in La Victoire, Haiti, with the help and assistance from First Covenant Church in Mason City. The instruments and materials arrived in La Victoire on 8/8/2023. A music camp was held the following week and the program is now underway. Pastor Evens Paul, a native Haitian missionary, is arranging for the technology so he can teach zoom lessons to the children in La Victoire along with some of the Haitian musicians who are in Haiti.
**1980s**

'81 Joel Alter, BA, Saint Paul, MN, retired in April 2022 after 39 years conducting nonpartisan research, program evaluations and investigations for the Minnesota Legislature. He served as program evaluation coordinator, director of special reviews and interim legislative auditor.

'81 Bill Coontz, BA, Atlanta, GA, is CEO of Dalton, a brand and communication agency.


'84 Sandy (Hauser) Cassidy, BA, was named president of Rockhurst University in Kansas City.

'86 Mark Kittrell, BA, Cedar Falls, received the 2023 Leader of the Year Award from Grow Cedar Valley.

'86 Debra Shapiro, BA, Suffolk, VA, was installed as president of the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association. She teaches technology and engineering at Forest Glen Middle School.

'89 Sheri (Stittsworth) Huerta, BA, Dumfries, VA, received the 2022 Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award from George Mason University. Dr. Huerta teaches courses related to African American history, public history and popular culture for the Honors College and Department of History and Art History.

**1990s**

'90 Guang Jin, MA, DIT '95, Cedar Falls, was named to the Marquis Who’s Who in America for 2022–2023. She is the CEO of Sunshine Global Services, LLC.

'93 Luke Miller, BM, Ottumwa, is the director of bands at the Cardinal Community School District and has been teaching music for 23 years. He serves on the Iowa High School Music Associations adjudicator list and has been a judge at several events over the years. Miller performs as principal tubist for the Ottumwa Symphony Orchestra and recently became manager of the newly formed Ottumwa Symphony Youth Philharmonic and the Ottumwa Symphony Youth Orchestra.

'94 Karen Tupper, BA, Dubuque, was appointed senior vice president of internal communications strategy, planning and signature programs at Citi.

'95 Keith Koehlmoos, BM, Minneapolis, MN, was named the VFW Post 6208 Teacher of the Year. He is an instrumental music teacher at Prior Lake High School.

'96 Karen (Norby) Fannin, BM, Omaha, NE, was named director of the School of Music at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Karen is a professor, director of bands, and conducts the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, teaches undergraduate and graduate conducting, instructs courses in music education, and provides leadership for all aspects of the UNO band program. She is an Edward Clark Diamond Professor of Music.

'98 Tina (Kneisel) Bakehouse, BA, BA '01, Hastings, published a book titled “Discovering Our Magnetic Speaker Within.”

'99 Angela Brommel, BA, MA '01, Henderson, NV, was named Clark County Poet Laureate for 2022–2024. She is the executive director of arts, culture and advancement for the arts and an affiliate faculty member at Nevada State College.

**2000s**

'01 Hilary LaMasters, BA, MA '03, Waverly, received the 2022 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a Spanish teacher for Cedar Falls High School.

'02 Gregory Aker, BA, Columbia, MO, performs as lead tenor saxophonist in the Columbia Jazz Orchestra, and works remotely as vice president of engineering for a fleet management startup based out of Dallas called Vinli.

'03 Gregory Caldwell, BA, Clarkdale, AZ, completed medical residency training in anesthesiology and perioperative medicine and the University of Texas San Antonio. He joined Northern Arizona Healthcare as a general anesthesiologist at Verde Valley Medical Center.

'03 Scott Stokes, BA, Estherville, was named president of Iowa Lakes Community College effective 7/1/2022.
‘04 Sarah (Miller) Diesburg, BS, Cedar Falls, received the 2022 Computer Science Educator of the Year Award from the Technology Association of Iowa. She is an associate professor at UNI.

‘06 Laura (Rutt) Jordan, BA, Johnston, was promoted to brand manager of the State of Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. She has done graphic design with the State of Iowa since 2019.

‘06 Rebecca (Wagoner) McCarty, BA, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2022. She is the director of mission engagement with the Boys & Girls Club of the Cedar Valley.

‘07 Samuel Kreassig, BM, Waterloo, was named associate director of human resources at Waterloo Community Schools. He previously served as assistant principal at Hoover Middle School.

‘08 Dan Black, BM, MA ‘17, ASC ‘18, Council Bluffs, was named a licensed staff member of the year for Council Bluffs Community School District. He is the orchestra director at Abraham Lincoln High School and Kirk Middle School.

‘09 Amanda (Carpenter) Huismann, BA, Waterloo, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2023. She is a communication specialist with the city of Cedar Falls.

‘09 Molly Hanson, BA, Des Moines, is a conservation and community outreach specialist with RDG. She is working on a climate action and adaptation plan for the City of Des Moines and is co-chairing the company’s diversity, equity and inclusion committee.

‘09 Krystal (Campbell) Mikkilineni, BA, Clive, is a shareholder in the restructuring, insolvency and bankruptcy department and the mergers and acquisitions department at Dentons Davis Brown.

‘09 Daniel White, BM, New York, NY, performed as keyboardist for numerous large scale touring NETWorks Presentations shows, as well as the Broadway production of “The Lion King.”

2010s

‘10 Christina (Vignovich) Cortez, BA, Cedar Falls, received the 2023 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a Spanish teacher at Hudson High School.

‘11 Katie Berge, BS, Washington, D.C., is senior director of health policy with Waxman Strategies.

‘11 Taryn Parker, BA, Chicago, IL, was promoted to vice president with KemperLesnik.

‘12 Joyce (Payer) Beyer, BM, MA ‘19, Des Moines, received the 2021 Dr. Robert E. and Phyllis M. Yager Exemplary Teaching Recognition Award. She is an orchestra teacher at North High School and Harding Middle School.

‘12 Katelyn (Pedersen) Tungland, BA, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley’s 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2023. She is a regional director with Junior Achievement.

‘12 Lauren Booten, BA, MA ’19, Ames, received the 2021 Dr. Robert E. and Phyllis M. Yager Exemplary Teaching Recognition Award. She is an 8th grade math teacher at Ames Middle School.

‘12 Nick Krob, BA, Des Moines, is the 2023 chair of the Licensing Executives Society Iowa Chapter. He is an attorney with McKee, Voorhees & Sease, PLC.

‘12 Jacci Linn, BA, London, United Kingdom, is an internships manager with IES Abroad. While London is now home, Cedar Falls will always have a special place in her heart.

‘12 Katelyn (Pedersen) Tungland, BA, Cedar Falls, was promoted to regional director for Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa, overseeing the development team and three area boards.

‘13 Veena Kallambettu, MA, Powell, OH, received the 2022 Louis M. DiCarlo Award for Recent Clinical Achievement from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation. She is a third-year doctoral student and practicing speech pathologist at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

‘14 Megan (Ruebel) Hamm, BA, Waverly, received the 2021 Dr. Robert E. and Phyllis M. Yager Exemplary Teaching Recognition Award. She is a science teacher at Denver High School.

‘14 Riley Schreder, BA, MA ’16, Des Moines, was named a finalist for the 2023 Courage Award at the Inspiring Women of Iowa Event.

‘15 Makayla McDonald, BM, MM ‘17, Brooklyn, NY, was the keynote speaker at the Cedar Valley Arts Summit in Apr. 2023. McDonald sang the lead role of Harriet Tubman in the New York premiere of Thea Musgrave’s “The Story of Harriet Tubman” with Utopia Opera and has performed with Dell Arte Opera Ensemble, Light Opera of New York, Beth Morrison Projects at Harlem Stage, New Muses Project at the Kaufman Music Center, American Opera Project + New York University/Tish and Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, among others.

‘16 Colin Wilson, BA, Iowa City, received his doctor of musical arts degree in voice in Aug. 2023 from the University of Iowa.

‘16 Dr. Robert E. and Phyllis M. Yager Exemplary Teaching Recognition Award. She is a science teacher at Denver High School.

‘15 Daniel Vorwerk, BA, MA ‘17, North Liberty, is the event and communication project specialist for international programs at the University of Iowa.

‘16 Colin Wilson, BA, Iowa City, received his doctor of musical arts degree in voice in Aug. 2023 from the University of Iowa. His submitted thesis/recording project was titled: “Beyond Ev’ry Valley: A Tenor's Guide to Oratorio Arias and Recitatives Beyond the Standards.”
Heathers: The Musical
FEBRUARY 23 – MARCH 3
Based on the 1998 cult hit starring Winona Ryder and Christian Slater, the show welcomes audiences to Westerburg High, where Veronica Sawyer is just another nobody dreaming of a better day. But when she joins the beautiful and impossibly cruel Heathers, and her dreams of popularity may finally come true, mysterious teen rebel JD teaches her that it might kill to be a nobody, but it is murder being a somebody...

Content warning: Heathers deals frankly with issues including self-harm, suicide, bullying and mental health.

Suzette Who Set to Sea
APRIL 20 & 21
In a small seaside village where men build boats and women do not, young Suzette knows she is different – she longs for the sea and believes she is meant for something greater than a life on land. So when a mysterious event occurs, Suzette is forced to do that most difficult thing – prove herself worthy of her destiny. This youth theatre production is best enjoyed by K-5 audiences and their families, and will tour to all Waterloo elementary schools during the Spring 2024 semester.
Since 1876, UNI has built colleges and programs and iconic spaces. We’ve sent Panthers out into the world to build schools, businesses and communities across Iowa and beyond.

Now it’s time to ask ourselves:

**What does the world need from us tomorrow?**

Already, Panther Nation has risen to the challenge. Gifts are creating scholarships for students, providing new opportunities for hands-on learning and renewing the spaces that make UNI’s campus home. Imagine what **Our Tomorrow** will bring.

**Together, let’s build the tomorrow UNI needs.**

*Learn more and make your gift*  
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