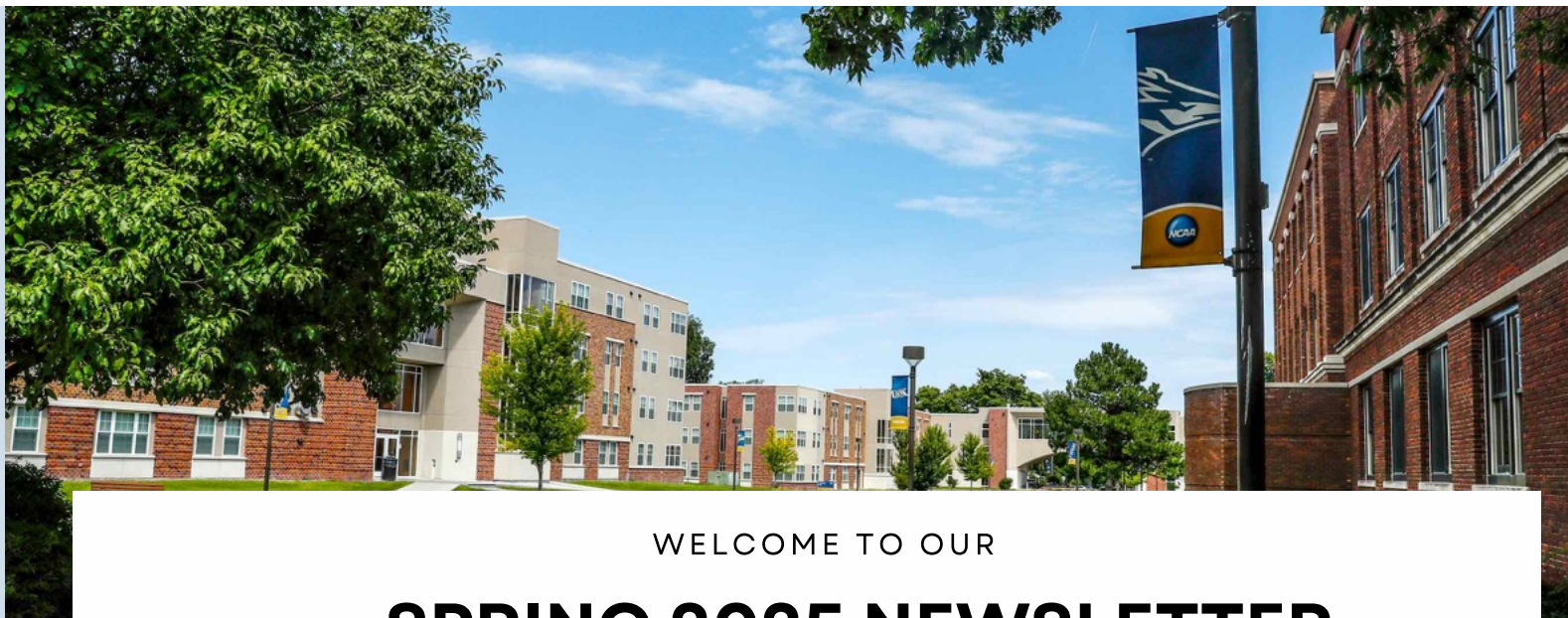




WELCOME TO OUR

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER



Greetings from the Department Chair



Greetings from the Department of Counseling, School Psychology and Family Science. My name is Doug Tillman. I suspect I am familiar to many of you, but not in my new role as Interim Department Chair. I want to thank Toni Hill for her years of service as the Department Chair ahead of me.

We have many exciting things going on in the department and the future is bright. Our undergraduate faculty was hard at work on a Family and Consumer Sciences Occupational Endorsement. This endorsement prepares future middle and high school teachers for delivery of Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum and for advisement of FCCLA programming. Additionally, our School Psychology program was approved for a blended delivery, opening the door to fill the shortage of School Psychologists. We will soon be launching these programs.

Finally, this summer, our department will have the retirement of Dr. Grace Mims. We are very excited for Grace and thank her for her many years of service. She will certainly be missed, but we are all excited for her.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

DR. GRACE MIMS ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

After 17 years of service at UNK and 16 years at the University of South Dakota, Dr. Grace Mims will be retiring on August 31, 2025. Throughout her 33-year career as a Counselor Educator and Supervisor professor, Dr. Mims has made significant contributions to the field and mentored countless students. The department celebrates her accomplishments and wishes her well in this next chapter.



DR. TONI HILL RECEIVES PRATT-HEINS AWARD FOR SERVICE

"Service is as natural to me as breathing," Hill says. "I believe to whom much is given, much is expected."

She's demonstrated that throughout her 14-year UNK career. A professor and chair in the Department of Counseling, School Psychology and Family Science, Hill is known for putting students first and advocating for those who need her. She's mentored numerous undergraduate researchers from various disciplines and been extremely active in the Thompson Scholars Learning Community.

Hill has also dedicated her time to committees and councils across UNK and the NU System, including the UNK Women's, Gender and Ethnic Studies Committee, World Affairs Committee, Research Advisory Council, Undergraduate Research Council, Early Childhood Committee, Inclusive Excellence Leadership Council and UNMC College of Nursing Diversity Committee. She was selected to co-lead the Promoting At-Promise Student Success-Professional Learning Community Initiative at UNK in 2021 and appointed as a fellow in the NU DEAL leadership development program in 2022.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

DR. TAMI MOORE RECOGNIZED BY NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS

Dr. Tami Moore has been inducted into the National Council on Family Relations' Legacy Circle after over 20 years as a Certified Family Life Educator and professor of Family Science. The department congratulates Dr. Moore on this significant achievement and recognition of her dedication to the field.



DR. UMUT ARSLAN'S SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Peer-Reviewed Journal Publications

- "Mindfulness and Resilience as Serial Mediators of Links Between Childhood Psychological Maltreatment and Substance Misuse"
- "The Mediating Role of Cognitive Flexibility in the Relationship Between Positivity and Career Adaptability Among University Students"

Book Chapters

- "School-Based Interventions in Loss and Grief: Preventive Guidance"
- "School-Based Interventions in Loss and Grief: Crisis Intervention"

Conference Presentations

- International conference in Kosovo: "Ethical Issues in Family Counseling"
- Midwest Psychological Association Conference:
 - "Childhood Maltreatment's Impact on Mental Well-Being: Key Variables' Mediation"
 - "Pain Catastrophizing and Subjective Vitality: Psychological Vulnerability's Mediating Role"

Student Mentorship Dr. Arslan mentored two master's students who presented at UNK Student Research Day:

- Kailex Wilcox – "Evaluating Nebraska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan: Insights, Comparisons, and Future Directions"
- Charlotte Okraska – "Ethical Challenges in Counseling: Future Counselors' Approaches to Political Discussions with Clients"



PROGRAM NEWS



FAMILY SCIENCE PROGRAM EXPANDS OFFERINGS

The Family Science Program now offers a 6-12 Family and Consumer Science Occupational teaching endorsement for students considering careers teaching FCS in middle and high schools. This new program prepares future educators to deliver Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum and advise FCCLA programming.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM UPDATE

It has been a busy and productive year in the School Psychology Program! Dr. Tammi Ohmstede returned as the program chair and was excited to add alumnus, Macey Kohls, as Graduate Lecturer. A big thank you to Kyle Heilbrun, Meghan Schneringer, Jessica Shepard, and Danielle Nguyen for covering some classes throughout the year as the program is still down one faculty member.

This year we have five interns who have been working in school districts across Nebraska and one in Idaho. There are four students completing their practicum experiences this year working with school psychologists in Lincoln, Seward, Grand Island and ESU 11. Finally, we are excited to announce that we welcomed sixteen new students into the school psychology program in the summer/fall who are diligently working and learning about the field of school psychology!

We had several students attend the NSPA conference in person and online this year. Congratulations to Amelia Meyer for receiving the 2024 NSPA UNK Student of the Year Award! Three of our second-year students also attended and presented at NASP in Seattle, WA in February.



EXCITING NEWS:

The UNK School Psychology Program will soon be launching a new "blended" option for individuals who hold a teaching certificate and have 2 years of teaching experience. This option will allow for teachers to continue teaching and complete the program with only having to be on campus a few times per year. We are trying to meet the needs of the ever-changing world of education and the shortage of School Psychologists. I'm sure we will have our trials and errors, but we are excited to start this new journey!

As the year comes to a close, faculty and students are busy finishing up class and program requirements along with preparing for our student annual evaluations and graduation for the interns. We hope your year was as fun and productive as ours, and as always, we love hearing from our alum if you would like to send any updates. There continues to be a shortage of School Psychologists so tell your friends about the awesome School Psychology Program at UNK!!

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Bright Futures Kearney Public Schools

In October 2024, Bright Futures Principal, Megan Schmidt, reached out to Dr. Grace Mims to see if UNK Practicum students could offer group psychoeducation and support for her staff and families following heartbreaking challenges. Megan surveyed her staff to assess needs. The results were:

1. Workplace Stress Management and Burn Out Prevention
2. Self-Care for Early Care and Education Professionals
3. Strengthening Families in Crisis
4. Vicarious/secondary trauma



This spring, Samantha Clark and Elizabeth Neukirch have been conducting groups and meeting Bright Future staff needs while simultaneously gaining meaningful service-learning experience to better prepare them as clinical mental health counselors. By all accounts, this partnership has been a win/win for all involved. We are so glad Bright Futures reached out to us and look forward to continuing our partnership through CMHC practicum services.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

FAMS Students Contribute to FCCLA Fall Conference



The department hosted the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) fall conference at UNK on October 22, 2024. Over 200 middle and high school students and advisors attended. FAMS faculty (Dr. Obasi, Dr. Moore, Dr. Stolzer, and Dr. Kennedy) presented break-out sessions and Dr. Hill provided the opening welcome. The conference concluded with a FAMS student panel featuring Emma Arens, Korbyn Moldenhauer, Delaney Olmer, and Fabian Lopez.

Chelsea Turek, CMHC Student

Fondest Program Memory

I would say taking practicum and marriage and family classes with Dr. Grace Mims! I learned so much and I made some new friends in those classes. I loved learning from my fellow classmates and my professor."

Career Plans

I am going to intern at Revive Inc. in Hastings, Nebraska this summer. I am looking forward to finding out what I like doing in the counseling field and learning all I can while in internship

Organization Memberships

I am a member of Chi Sigma Iota, Nebraska Counselor's Association, and the American Counseling Association. I am also the secretary for the Graduate Student Association. I am a Graduate Assistant for the CSPFS department and I love my co-workers!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Additional Comments

A few of my friends and myself started a National Counselor Exam study group and it's been great to support each other in our studying and boost each other's self-esteem

AWARD RECOGNITION

JOSH SCHUMAN – HESA ALUMNI OF THE YEAR



Since completing his graduate studies, Josh has built a career rooted in student support, leadership development, and community accountability. He began his professional journey as the Assistant Director of Greek Life at High Point University, where he advised fraternity chapters, implemented harm reduction education for the entire Greek community, and managed operations for 12 fraternity and sorority houses and over 60 university owned residential properties.

From there, he joined the University of South Carolina as the Associate Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life. In this role, he continued his work advising fraternity and sorority chapters, expanded leadership development initiatives, and supervised a team of property managers overseeing fraternity and sorority housing.

Josh now serves as the Associate Director of Student Conduct at the University of Kentucky. In this role, he leads the investigation and adjudication of conduct cases involving student organizations, helping foster a culture of accountability, integrity, and respect on campus. He emphasizes collaboration and relationship-building with students, volunteers, and inter/national partners to guide organizations through the conduct process. His approach prioritizes restorative practices that address harm, rebuild trust, and promote long-term success.

Reflecting on his graduate experience, Josh credits his program with developing the foundational skills necessary to build meaningful relationships and support students through complex, often challenging situations. These skills have remained central to his work, allowing him to offer steady, compassionate guidance to students and communities navigating moments of uncertainty, conflict, or need.

AWARD RECOGNITION

KARA ESTES – SCHOOL COUNSELING SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR

The University of Nebraska at Kearney proudly recognizes Kara Estes as the 2025 School Counseling Site Supervisor of the Year. A graduate of UNK's counseling program, Kara now serves as a school counselor for Kearney Public Schools, splitting her time between Horizon and Sunrise Middle Schools. Her commitment to excellence, mentorship, and student well-being continues to shine through in her role as a supervisor of emerging school counselors.

Nominated by Roan Howard, Kara was praised as "one of the most hardworking, thoughtful, and inspiring people I've ever known," navigating the challenges of supporting over 1,200 students, two administrations, and numerous staff all while mentoring UNK counseling interns with passion and grace. Roan shared the profound impact Kara has had, stating, "She's modeled what it looks like to be an impactful school counselor, has given reassurance when I've questioned my purpose, and has guided me on this career journey."

It is especially rewarding to see one of our own alumni leading by example and shaping the future of school counseling. Congratulations, Kara, on this well-deserved honor. Your dedication and heart make UNK proud, and we are grateful for the incredible work you are doing in Nebraska's schools.

AWARD RECOGNITION

JENNY BOONE – HESA SITE SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR

The Higher Education Student Affairs (HESA) program proudly honors Jennifer Boone, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at Colorado Mountain College -- Rifle, as the 2025 Site Supervisor of the Year. Nominated by graduate student Brenda Walck, Jenny's impact as a mentor and leader has made a lasting difference in the lives of those she serves.

Jenny's supervision style is rooted in ethics, compassion, and student-centered leadership. Brenda shared, "Jenny exemplifies a people-first, student-focused style of leadership that is both inspirational and transformative." Her approach to mentorship empowers students to grow with confidence, creativity, and a deep sense of belonging. Brenda further reflected on the personal impact Jenny made, stating, "She gave me the gift of 'me' along with the confidence to live with purpose, excitement, and self-worth." Jenny's leadership is not only transformative but also deeply personal, creating safe and supportive spaces that uplift both students and colleagues.

It is wonderful to recognize our students and their outstanding supervisors, especially those making a difference in Colorado. Congratulations to Jenny Boone for this well-deserved honor and thank you for your unwavering commitment to excellence in student affairs.



AWARD RECOGNITION

JASON OWENS – SCHOOL COUNSELING ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

Jason Owens taught American History for 16 years before transitioning to a school counseling role at Kearney High School. In that position, he worked closely with many at-risk students and their families, focusing on truancy, credit recovery, and mental health support. While managing his caseload, he also supervised several school counseling candidates, all of whom secured positions in the field. In 2020, Jason became the Principal of the Hanny Arram Center for Success, a non-traditional school within Kearney Public Schools. He continues to draw on his experience as a school counselor, working with at-risk families and taking pride in his students' achievements.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES



WE ARE PROUD TO CONGRATULATE THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS
WHO WILL BE GRADUATING NEXT WEEK:

Jacky Morelos

Kiana Schuster

Amanda Garber

Fabian Lopez

Kayle Morris

Lauren Redinger

Ally Vavra

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR GRADUATES! WE WISH YOU
THE BEST IN YOUR FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

DEPARTMENT FACULTY AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS



FACULTY

Umut Arslan

Toni Hill

David Hof

Heather Kennedy

Grace Mims

Matthew Mims

Tami Moore

Sharon Obasi

Tammi Ohmstede

Jeanne Stolzer

Doug Tillman

DEPARTMENT FACULTY AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS



GRADUATE ASSISTANTS:

Chelsea Turek

Emma Arens

Rachel Rehtus

Megan Garbe

Chris Vera

Taylor Philbrick

Mayson Fago