



# 2015-2016

## UNI Strategic Plan Accomplishments





## **University of Northern Iowa**

“Leadership and Innovation for the Future:  
Transforming Opportunities into Reality”

UNI continues to provide an excellent educational experience for students and to fulfill our mission to “provide transformative learning experiences that inspire students to embrace challenge, engage in critical inquiry and creative thought, and contribute to society.”

2015-2016 UNI Strategic Plan Accomplishments

# GOAL 1:

## Be a leading undergraduate public university that provides a strong liberal arts foundation.

The University of Northern Iowa *is* Iowa's comprehensive public university. Our faculty and staff recognize and embrace the importance of academic excellence and a strong liberal arts foundation. More than ever, employers in Iowa and across the country and world acknowledge the importance of critical thinking, strong communication skills, working with diverse populations and understanding a collaborative approach to solving problems. At UNI, students receive a rigorous and dynamic collegiate experience from dedicated professors and staff.



### FACULTY EXCELLENCE EXAMPLES

- Two UNIBusiness professors, Dr. Richard Followill and Dr. Brett Olsen (Finance), have been recognized nationally for their outstanding paper “A Closed-Form, After-Tax, Net Present Value Solution to the Mortgage Refinancing Decision” which was published in the journal *The Engineering Economist*. Their paper received the Grant award from the Engineering Economy Division of the American Society for Engineering Education. The award is given to the paper that displays the most originality, logic, problem relevance, and sufficiency of proposed solution.
- Josh Sebree is an accomplished chemist who spent several years working for NASA. The University of Northern Iowa is benefitting from Sebree's knowledge and expertise as he serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Sebree and assistant professors Alexa Sedlacek and Xinhua Shen in UNI's earth science department are currently conducting research on aerosol particles in atmospheres. They received a three-year STEM grant from the Iowa Space Grant Consortium to conduct a multi-tiered study.
- Michele Devlin, professor of health promotion and chair of the Division of Health Promotion and Education, was named to the 2016 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame.
- Sarah Diesburg, Computer Science, made advances in her research on motion virtual manipulatives, with Adam Feldhaus, Mathematics, and two outstanding Computer Science students. This work turns a mobile device and any wall into a smartboard.
- Kyle Gray, Earth Science and Science Educator, received the Biggs Outstanding Teaching Award for the Geoscience Education Division of Geological Society of America which is the highest teaching award for this organization.
- Leisl Carr Childers, assistant professor of history, was awarded a 2016 Spur Award in Best Western Contemporary Nonfiction by Western Writers of America for “The Size of the Risk: Histories of Multiple Use in the Great Basin.” The Spur Awards are one of the most prestigious awards in American literature.
- The National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded the Faculty Early Career (CAREER) grant to Physics faculty member Dr. Rui He. The CAREER grant is one of the most prestigious awards from NSF. The CAREER Grant is awarded to junior faculty members who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through outstanding research, excellent education and the integration of education and research within the context of the mission of their institutions. She is the first UNI faculty member in any department to receive a CAREER grant.
- Anne Marie Gruber (Library Services) was one of only 21 librarians from across the country chosen to participate in the 2016 Institute for Research Design in Librarianship. The IMLS funded Institute brought librarians together for nine days at Loyola Marymount University to receive education in social science research methods and scholarly inquiry. Professor Gruber is studying faculty perceptions of students' research skills and library instruction for service-learning courses.

## RANKINGS AND HONORS

- UNI is second among Midwest Best-Regional Publics in U.S. News & World Report 2016 Ranking.
- UNI is one of the best colleges and universities in the Midwest, again making it on to the list of America's top colleges in The Princeton Review for 2016.
- The UNI College of Business Administration has been consistently ranked one of the Best Business Schools by The Princeton Review, making it on to their list again this year for the 10th straight year.
- UNI is one of the Top 50 Green Colleges recognized by The Princeton Review.
- Rentapplication.com named the UNIBusiness Real Estate Program 12th among the top 30 best universities for real estate studies.
- UNI was named a "College of Distinction" for having engaged students, great teaching, a vibrant community and successful student outcomes by CollegesofDistinction.com.
- TeachTomorrow.org ranked UNI No. 13 in the nation on its 2015 list for Best Online Master's in Education Degrees
- UNI was named to the Military Times "Best for Vets: Colleges 2016" rankings.
- Rod Library won the 2016 American Library Association Gale Cengage Learning Financial Development Award for its Microsoft Surface Hub Crowdfunding Campaign. This national award consisting of \$2,500 and a 24k gold-framed citation is presented annually to a library organization to recognize an innovative, creative, well-organized project which successfully developed income from alternative sources.
- UNI was awarded the 2015 Carnegie Community Engagement classification, one of only 47 public institutions in the nation to be selected for this honor.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT EXAMPLES

- Shelby Yates, a junior majoring in leisure, youth and human services, was one of 218 students nationwide who received the 2016 Newman Civic Fellows Award from Campus Compact.
- Three UNI Public Relations undergraduate students created a short video titled Carrying Hope: One Education at a Time that won second place in a national video contest sponsored by The PR Council, an organization that connects PR students with PR professionals for networking and educational purposes. Brittany Holthaus, Tobias Henderson, and Kathryn Storey created the video that focused on an organization called Esperos. Esperos sells backpacks and bags and they donate part of their profits to help provide access to education for children in need. They received their award at a special ceremony held in New York City.
- Nine UNI ROTC cadets attended a Cadet Summer Training course in Fort Knox, Kentucky. Cadets Timothy Logemann, Nicole Duschen, Joshua Mixdorf, Jayme Edmund, Cody Nolan, Curtis Ege and Trey Roosa attended a 30-day Cadet Leader Course. The purpose of the course is to hone their leadership skills prior to their last year in the program. Cadet Colin Johnson also attended the course and will commission as an officer in the Iowa National Guard upon completion.
- Sunny Teeling, a graduate student in the Clinical Health Counseling Program, was selected to be a Chi Sigma Iota Leadership Fellow, a competitive award granted to only 10 students in the world. She received the award because of her demonstrated commitment to and talents in leadership and academic excellence.
- Vanessa McNeal (graduate student in Social Work) produced a documentary entitled I AM: The Vanessa McNeal Story aimed at educating others about sexual assault and providing a better understanding of the issues survivors experience.
- Several UNI Debate Team members received awards at the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) Nationals in spring 2016. Undergraduate debater Abbie Shew was named a 2016 Cross Examination Debate Association All American; debaters Tatiana Rice and Kayleen Berg won Summa Cum Laude National Debate Scholar Awards; and graduate student Megan Mapes was named North Central Critic of the Year.
- Five UNI students in the UNI Opera program were selected as Promising Young Artists of the 21st Century and performed throughout Costa Rica, including a performance with the Costa Rica National Symphony Orchestra.
- UNI's Gamma Sigma Chapter, a national honor society in the earth sciences, received the 2016 Sigma Gamma Epsilon Quality Chapter Award for the fifth year in a row. The chapter was also awarded the 2016 Sigma Gamma Epsilon Chapter Service Award.
- Joseph Tibbs, a sophomore majoring in biochemistry and physics, was named a 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholar.



# GOAL 2:

## **Provide rigorous and relevant graduate education that meets the needs of graduate students, the university and the community.**

Graduate education at the University of Northern Iowa provides selected programs of advanced study, research and creative activity grounded in a personalized and diverse graduate community that prepares successful practitioners, scholars and professional leaders.

- UNI offers over 50 graduate programs offered on-campus, online, or through blended instruction (online with some on-campus requirements) to serve constituencies throughout the state and the world.
- The UNI MBA program is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the gold standard of business school accreditation, and has been named a “Best Business School” by The Princeton Review for ten consecutive years.
- Students who graduate from UNI’s Master of Social Work (MSW) program pass the state licensing exam at a rate that is 10% higher than the national average.
- UNI Master of Accounting students’ first-time CPA pass rate on all four sections of the Uniform CPA Examination is more than six times the national average.
- The UNI School Psychology Program is the only program in Iowa emphasizing preparation of specialist level school psychologists to work in school settings. Approximately one in three Iowa school psychologists are UNI graduates.
- This year’s graduating class of the History M.A. program had a 100% employment placement rate.
- UNI Speech-Language Pathology master’s students have had on the average a 98% pass rate on the required American Speech-Language-Hearing Association National Praxis Examination. The placement rate was 100%.
- Sixty-eight graduate students presented their research and creative works at the 9th Annual UNI Graduate Student Symposium with 28 graduate faculty serving as judges.
- UNI’s Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling Programs have been nationally accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) since 1990, with the most recent eight-year period re-accreditation decision in July, 2015. The students have a 98% pass rate on both the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) and the National Counselor Exam (NCE).
- The Rod Library offers a credit course, “Beyond Google”, twice a semester to introduce students about the social, ethical, legal, and political issues associated with the use, abuse, and ownership of information. Last year, over 280 students completed the course.
- In efforts to meet educational needs across the state, during the 2015-2016 academic year, UNI developed new distance education graduate programs in Art Education (MA), Social Work (MSW), Public Policy (MPP) and Special Education (MAE).
- UNI Speech-Language Pathology master’s students have had a 100% pass rate on the required exams for clinical competence by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association National Praxis Examination.
- UNI’s Metal Casting Center was awarded funding through America Makes to advance additive manufacturing technologies.
- In response to the new requirements for faculty qualifications prescribed by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE), UNI has reached an agreement with 11 of Iowa’s community colleges to make graduate course work at UNI available to their faculty.
- Graduate students have presented their research at such conferences as the Missouri Valley History Conference, American Psychological Association, Midwest Psychological Association, International Association for Relationship Research, American Speech-Language and Hearing Association, West Lake Division of the Association of American Geographers, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Consumer Communications and Networking Conference.

# GOAL 3:

## Lead the state and nation in preK through 12 education.

The University of Northern Iowa proudly acknowledges its lead in the state in preK through 12 education as evidenced by numerous accomplishments and accolades.

- In November 2015, faculty from UNI's College of Education (COE) and Teacher Education programs travelled across the state to visit professional settings in Iowa, observing many of the great practices that are taking place in our early childhood through 12 schools and related settings. The purpose of the initiative was for COE faculty to gain greater insight into the current state of the teaching profession in Iowa, including engaging in meaningful dialogue (e.g. the challenges practitioners encounter in their respective professional settings) to better inform practices within the COE.
- More than one quarter (28%) of all of Iowa's school principals and superintendents earned their credentials at UNI.
- UNI offered over 20 summer camps for K through 12 students in 2016, in topics as diverse as music, robotics, athletics, tall-grass prairies, digital storytelling, and leadership.
- The Sturgis Youth Theatre hosted The Spectrum Theatre again in 2015-2016. Each session was carefully designed to enhance creative expression of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- UNI hosted the 52nd annual Iowa High School Model United Nations Spring Conference.
- The Department of Physics faculty and students again hosted the State of Iowa Physics Competition for high school students, as well as the AEA 267 Regional Physics Competition.
- During the 2015-2016 academic year, UNI created the Associate Vice President for Educator Preparation position, the first of its kind at the university. This position will more fully coordinate and enhance educator preparation across campus.
- The FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) Iowa Regional was held on the UNI campus in March 2016. This event attracts top students from across the region and builds technical skills, including engineering and computer programming. It engages students in leadership, communication, problem-solving, and other broad-based skills.
- In partnership with a local elementary school, the Teaching Educators about Mathematics (TEAM) student organization held its 10th annual Math Fair for 4th-6th graders in April 2016.
- Ben Schafer, Computer Science, taught 22 Code.org workshops in all AEAs of Iowa, reaching 421 K through 12 faculty. Ben was inducted into the "500 Club" early in the year, a Code.org affiliate for trainers who trained more than 500 teachers in the first year of the program.
- The University of Northern Iowa's College of Education hosted the second annual Education Summit in April 2016. International, national, and regional scholars and leaders in education met to discuss current research, practices and policies. This year's summit theme, "Necessary Connectedness: The New Edge of Education," focused on four primary strands: literacy education, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education, teacher leadership and diversity.
- UNI Research and Sponsored Programs helped secure \$2.6 million in preK through 12 education support funds, in addition to \$9.9 million awarded in FY15.
- The Center for Economic Education, part of the Department of Economics in the College of Business Administration, supplies K through 12 teachers with educational support to improve economics education in their classroom. The center is one of approximately 250 centers nationwide, and the only center in the state of Iowa.
- During the 2015-2016 academic year, the UNI Science Education Resource Center (SERC) checked out 252 elementary and 45 middle school science kits for a total of 297 kits to 109 teachers from 39 different community school districts within Area Education Agency (AEA) 267.





# GOAL 4:

## Create and maintain an inclusive educational environment that prepares students to thrive in a diverse global environment.

Diversity and inclusion remain a significant institutional goal and core value. Campuswide, faculty, staff and students work to create a more inclusive, welcoming environment for all. UNI hosts multiple events and trainings related to diversity every year for faculty, staff and students. We also present Diversity Matters awards in our annual Town Hall on diversity every year for persons on campus who are making a difference in creating and maintaining an inclusive environment at UNI.

- A group of UNIBusiness students visited Italy this summer to earn Six Sigma Green Belt certification, a highly sought after certification for business students. Not only did students receive this training, they gained experience working for international companies. This gave them a better global perspective to apply to problem solving. Last summer the students traveled to Ireland.
- The Tutoring Center, housed at UNI's Center for Urban Education (UNI-CUE), located in downtown Waterloo, Iowa, serves Black Hawk County students in grades K through 12. The center was started in 2009 when parents who had seen older children assisted by various UNI-CUE programs wanted help for their younger students. The learning environment at the Tutoring Center is success oriented and offers opportunities for learners to succeed academically, increase their self-esteem and become more productive citizens within their community. The center not only benefits K through 12 students but also gives UNI students, typically upper-level undergraduate students, a chance to hone their skills as well as earn two hours of college credit.
- In February 2015, the STEM in the Arts Urban Outreach Initiative introduced the world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics to underrepresented junior high school girls in the Cedar Valley. The initiative proved to be so successful that the UNI Textiles and Apparel Program, in partnership with the Waterloo YWCA and Target, offered the Wize Girlz UNI Day Camp over the summer. Activities during the camp included using computer-aided design to create prints, printing custom fabric, textile materials testing, and construction of custom print bow ties and hair ribbons.
- In an effort to establish relationships between UNI minority students and minority alumni, the College of Business Administration sponsored a two-day event in Chicago this past April. The Chicago Connection focused on building relationships and reuniting old classmates, creating a pathway for deeper relationships between alumni and students. Multicultural students have started to plan more alumni-related events like this in an effort to rekindle memories for alumni and make connections with their predecessors. In total, 24 students and 82 alumni attended the event.
- UNI hosted its 10th annual African-American Read-In for UNI students and Cedar Valley youth, as well as the 5th annual Conference on African-American Children and Families in February 2016.
- The Adapted Sports Camp was again held at UNI for young athletes, second grade through high school, with various lower limb disabilities who use wheelchairs for adapted sports.
- For the second year, the Department of Political Science, along with AAUW-Cedar Falls and NISG's Diversity Matters initiative, sponsored the Elect Her – Panther Women Win workshop, designed to encourage and equip students to consider running in student government elections. During the daylong training, participants garnered hands-on campaign skills, heard from inspiring local speakers, discussed research on women in government, participated in engaging breakout sessions, and had a chance to network with female leaders from both UNI and various agencies throughout the community. Featured 2016 speakers included U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, State Rep. Timi Brown-Powers, State Rep. Abby Finkenauer and Claire Celsi of The Public Relations Project.
- UNIBusiness extended a 2+2 agreement with Shanghai DianJi University (SDJU). The 2+2 program, one of the first programs of its kind, works by allowing SDJU students to complete the first two years of their post-secondary education in Shanghai, and then finish their final two years at UNI. Upon completion of their UNIBusiness courses, the DianJi students return to Shanghai to finish their last requirement then receive a degree from both institutions. In addition to the undergraduate program, the agreement includes faculty exchanges and a seamless transition for SDJU's business graduates into UNI's MBA program.



# GOAL 5:

## Enhance the economic, social, cultural and sustainable development of the state.

The UNI Regional Business Center provides leadership on behalf of the university in serving entrepreneurs and small business owners statewide. Various departments and student organizations also contribute to the social and cultural development of Iowa.

- UNI's chapter of Dance Marathon raised over \$370,000 for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.
- UNI hosted the Midwest Summer Institute on Inclusion and Communication again for all for educators, families, support personnel, and researchers.
- UNI continues to host the Iowa High School Athletic Association football playoffs.
- The Iowa Thespian Festival is an annual event sponsored by the Iowa Educational Theatre Association. For the past six years, the Department of Theatre has hosted the event, at various locations on the UNI campus, for over 1,000 theatre students across the state of Iowa.
- UNI's TRiO Program housed at UNI-CUE was selected as one of only two recipients in the State of Iowa to receive a TRiO Educational Opportunity Center Grant from the U.S. Department of Education to Improve Adult College Readiness.
- The on-campus recycling efforts in 2015-2016 diverted 310.25 tons of materials from local landfills.
- In March 2016, the university hosted UNI CARES (UNI Creating A Responsible Environment Showcase), a campus-wide event to showcase diverse projects, research, curricula, and initiatives that contribute to building a responsible environment. Faculty, staff, centers, departments/programs, and student groups shared how they are creating a responsible environment. Participants shared courses, student work, research projects, creative work, and various sites and centers.
- Three UNI Seniors — Shelby Miller, George Ahrenholz and Lauren Turbett — are inaugural participants in the Western Home Communities' Students-in-Residence Program. The students moved in to the facility in May and spent the summer living in the senior living communities. They will continue their residence through the 2016-17 academic year.
- The Geographic Alliance of Iowa (GAI), the National Geographic Society's (NGS) UNI based education branch in the state, integrates teacher education students into its outreach to Iowa educators and students. Supporting two NGS National Initiatives in 2016, the GAI enlisted the support of UNI pre-service teachers to provide direct, field-based support to enhance the learning of 977 Grade 4 through 12 students who participated in citizen science activities in Iowa county parks. The new initiative for the current academic year includes a gift from NGS, a 15 foot by 20 foot Giant Traveling Map of Iowa. UNI pre-service teachers are working together to develop a trunk of Iowa-themed items to place on the map so students can learn about our state's geography. The map is already in the Iowa City Public Schools and will travel to as many as 13 different elementary schools in that district before travelling westward to rural schools in central and north-central Iowa.
- The Advance Iowa program at UNI, a part of Business & Community Services, directly assisted 85 different clients in all corners of the state through many forms. Services are specifically tailored to meet individual client needs and include everything from strategic planning and financial benchmarking, to market intelligence and succession planning.
- In March 2016, the UNI Accounting Club partnered with representatives of KPMG, the international Big 4 audit, tax and advisory firm, to raise \$1,200 in support of children's literacy for First Books. First Books is a part of KPMG's Families for Literacy campaign that provides reading material in the Des Moines area for children who could not otherwise afford to purchase their own books.
- The UNI Center for Violence Prevention (CVP), a regional training center for active, bystander education and intervention strategies, is gaining national attention for its Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program. Now recognized as a leader in the field, the CVP has implemented MVP training at more than 30 Iowa high schools, community colleges and universities, as well as working with ROTC cadets at UNI, Iowa State University, the University of Iowa and the University of Dubuque.
- Green Iowa AmeriCorps offers comprehensive energy services to underserved populations across the state of Iowa. UNI is serving as the headquarters for the program for the eighth consecutive year.





- Laura Jackson, professor of biology and director of UNI's Tallgrass Prairie Center, was invited to speak in December 2015 at the Transportation Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the summit was to call attention to the role of state departments of transportation in the conversation regarding pollinators and monarch butterflies. Jackson spoke about the cost and benefits of managing roadside ecologically and reducing costs of high quality native seed. UNI's participation shows the university is recognized nationally as a leader in applied ecological research, education and technology transfer.
- In FY16 UNI received the National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER grant, one of NSF's most prestigious and competitive early career research grants. demonstrating that basic scientific research at UNI is on the cutting edge and nationally recognized.
- In April 2016, the University of Northern Iowa John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) was recognized for its unparalleled work in student entrepreneurship with the first award for Student Entrepreneurship Program of the Year by the International Business Innovation Association (InBIA). Last year alone, the JPEC served 2,531 clients, primarily students, with various programs such as student business incubation, academic classes, competitions, conferences and a student organization.
- UNI Interactive Digital Studies students went live in Spring 2016 with an interactive website called Imagine Iowa (<http://uni.edu/imagineiowa/>) that focuses on ways that we can be more proactive in protecting the environment in Iowa. The website demonstrates the harm we are doing to our environment and climate, and suggests ways to protect us from further damage.



# GOAL 6:

## Ensure accountability, affordability and access.

UNI is committed to providing access to the population of Iowa through on-campus, distance and online education. Increasing accountability and efficiency are integral to the functioning of UNI, as is providing affordable access to higher education and community services.

- UNI's student loan indebtedness has been decreasing steadily since 2010. The overall decline in borrowing can be attributed to three primary factors: additional loan counseling for students who consider private lending options; the number of teaching majors taking advantage of the Federal TEACH Grant Program; and various financial literacy initiatives on campus.
- UNI assists students in money management and responsible borrowing through a course called "Live Like a Student."
- During the 2015-2016 academic year, over 4,000 UNI students were employed in various positions on-campus.
- Almost 500 UNI students took advantage of the Federal TEACH Grant Program for students planning to teach in a high-need field.
- UNI's Center of Urban Education (UNI-CUE) continues to help students learn about and prepare for college. UNI-CUE collaborates with other University departments and community programs to match its resources with community needs.
- The UNIBusiness Points Plus program allows alumni and friends to earn travel miles for UNIBusiness students participating in College-sponsored travel. The removal of airfare costs allows students to take advantage of travel opportunities they may not have otherwise been able to. Travel opportunities can include study abroad programs, international internships, and student organization competitions - experiences designed to enhance students' classroom learning. During the Fall 2015 semester Andrew Washburn (Management) used Points Plus miles to spend the semester studying in Florence, Italy, while Jacob Vollmar (Accounting & Supply Chain Management) used Points Plus miles to study at the University of Chichester in England.
- Overall credit enrollment in Continuing and Distance Education courses in 2015-2016 was 15,378, a record number. This marked the 10th consecutive year of enrollment growth. Continuing and Distance Education courses were taken by students in each of Iowa's 99 counties, providing a tangible presence in more than 500 cities.
- UNI was ranked one of the top 100 "Best Values in Public Colleges" by Kiplinger's Personal Finance for 2016, because of its high four-year graduation rate, low average student debt at graduation, financial aid options, and overall great value.
- The Washington Monthly College Guide ranks UNI 50th in the nation on their list of Master's universities that are the Best Bang for the Buck.
- AffordableCollegesOnline.org ranked UNI #1 in Iowa during the 2015-2016 academic year, based on affordability and quality of distance education offerings.
- UNI was one of only 24 institutions in the nation to receive the highest score (99 out of 99) on the Princeton Review's 2016 Green Rating Honor Role.
- UNI is now accepting applications for a Bachelor of Arts in Technology Management degree program for community college AAS degree recipients.
- Sponsored funding secured at UNI contributed \$4.3 million for direct student support in the form of student wages, assistantships, travel, participant costs, stipends, scholarships, and project supplies. Thirty-three percent of UNI's sponsored funding focused on Iowa outreach (public service projects); 52 percent benefited academics and student aid and nearly \$3 million were awarded to UNI to support research activities.

