

# CSBS *kudos!*

A PUBLICATION OF UNI'S COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES // SPRING & SUMMER 2024

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

FACULTY ACCOLADES

---

IN MEMORIAM

---

FEATURED STORIES

---

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

**UNI**

---

**University of  
Northern Iowa**

College of Social &  
Behavioral Sciences



## FACULTY ACCOLADES

**Kenneth Atkinson** (history) published the book chapters in "Receptions of Paul During the First Two Centuries: Exploration of the Jewish Matrix of Early Christianity," and "Pushing Sacred Boundaries in Early Judaism and the Ancient Mediterranean: Essays in Honor of Jodi Magness." He also published articles on a seventh-century AD Greek historical document about early Islam attributed to a female prophet, a study of first-century BC Aramaic religious and historical texts, and the fourth-fifth-century AD Roman empress Galla Placidia.

**Jiuqing Cheng** (psychology) coauthored the article "Ambiguity Preference in Waiting Time: Investigating the Desirability Effect and the Interplay of Temporal Description, Outcome Category, and Evaluation Mode," in the *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*.

**Disa Cornish** (public health) and Cara Burnidge (philosophy & world religions) published the article "Two Professors Create New Assignment on Religion and Public Health," in *Interfaith America*, as part of a year-long teaching collaboration on religion and health.

**Lane Forsman** (social work) published "The Interaction of Gender Identity and Sexual Assault on Campus" in the *Journal of Social Work and Welfare Policy*.

**Donna Hoffman** (political science) was named the Chuck and Barbara Grassley Professor of Political Science. Under this endowed professorship, she will provide programming to UNI students and the broader community related to her scholarship and the importance of Congress and public service.

**Kim MacLin** (psychology) spoke on "An Evening to Remember? Why Everyone's Memory is Horrible and How to Use (and Defend Against) Memory in Court," for The Blackstone Inn of Court in Des Moines, and on "Topics for Expert Testimony in Criminal Sexual Conduct Cases," for the Public Defender Association of Iowa in Ankeny.

**Ramona McNeal** (political science) co-authored the book chapter "School Violence: A Focus on Mental Health," in the "Impact of Gun Violence in School Systems."

**Jaimie O'Gara** (social work) published "The Impact of Undermining Coparenting on the Mental and Physical Health Outcomes of Black Fathers: The Role of Depression and Restrictive Emotionality" in *Social Work in Public Health*.

**Jayme Renfro** (political science) authored "Public Administration: The Essentials," a free online textbook designed to make learning accessible for students everywhere. She was also awarded the 2024 YWCA "Women of Persimmon" award, recognizing significant contributions to our community and beyond.

**Marybeth C. Stalp** (sociology) co-authored the article "Reorganization of Gendered Labor During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Review and Suggestions for Further Research," which was one of the top downloads in *Sociological Inquiry*. The article has also been included in the National Institute of Health's *National Library of Medicine Database* and the World Health Organization's *Global Research on Coronavirus Disease* (Covid19 Research Database).

## AWARDS



**Cathy DeSoto**  
2023-2024 Distinguished  
Scholar Award



**Christopher Larimer**  
2024 Outstanding Graduate  
Coordinator Award



PROMOTIONS



**Olivia Chen**  
Promotion & Tenure  
at Assoc. Professor,  
School Counseling



**Tom Connors**  
Promotion to Full  
Professor, History



**Libby Fry**  
Promotion to Assoc.  
Clinical Professor,  
Social Work



**Donald Gaff**  
Promotion to  
Full Professor,  
Anthropology



**Sei-Young Lee**  
Promotion & Tenure  
at Assoc. Professor,  
Social Work



**Tricia Schrage**  
Promotion & Tenure  
at Assoc. Professor,  
Athletic Training



**Heather Schaffner**  
Promotion to  
Associate Adjunct  
Instructor, History

NEW ROLES, NEW FACES



**Carissa Froyum**  
Interim Head, SAC



**Gina Holman, MSN**  
Clinical Assistant  
Professor, Nursing



**Steven Jokinsky**  
PostDoc, CSBR



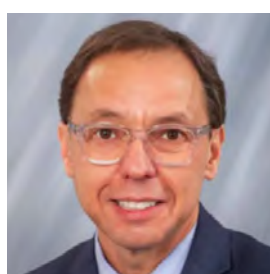
**Lt. Col. Erik Lampe**  
Head, Military  
Science



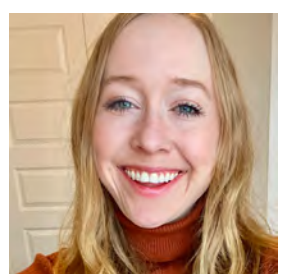
**Khamsai Lo**  
Asst. Prof. of Practice,  
Interior Design



**Natalie Nedza, MSN, RN**  
Clinical Assistant  
Professor, Nursing



**Jesse G. Swan**  
Coordinator, WGS



**Anna Vaagsmith**  
Grants Manager  
& Data Collection  
Specialist, Geography

## RETIREMENTS



**Pita Agbese** retired after 35 years in the Department of Political Science at UNI. He earned his Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1984 and served in term positions in several universities (including UNI) before beginning his appointment here as an assistant professor in 1989. He earned tenure in 1992 and was promoted to professor in 1998. Pita completed his undergraduate work in his native Nigeria, and before coming to the U.S. to pursue graduate studies he taught at the high school level, meaning that the 2023-24 academic year culminates a 50-year career of teaching.

Pita built an international reputation as an expert on Nigerian politics, civil-military relations, and human rights, among other topics. His scholarship on civil-military relations and democratization was especially influential, investigating the ways that the military could be an obstacle to both democratization and development more broadly. His expertise in Nigerian politics extended into other realms as well, including human rights, ethnic conflict and environmental issues. He co-edited seven books and authored or co-authored two dozen peer-reviewed book chapters and twenty journal articles during his career. He earned grants from the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He served the university and the discipline in a variety of ways, including through consultancies and lectures delivered around the world. As just one indicator of his scholarly expertise and reputation, in 2019 he was selected as an election monitor in the Nigerian presidential election.

For many years, Pita taught the Non-Western Cultures: Africa course within the Liberal Arts Core. In doing so, he exposed thousands of students to African cultures, history and politics. In recent years, he continued this work by developing a new UNIFI course, “Colonial Encounters,” using the history and politics of colonialism to examine the development of African nations. Within political science, he taught courses in African politics, international law, international organizations, international political economy and U.S. foreign policy, among others. In recognition of his accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, and service, Pita received the Regents’ Award for Faculty Excellence in 2004.

The department wishes him a rewarding retirement. We will miss his collegiality, the colorful photos that adorned his office door (he is an avid photographer), and his joyous laugh punctuating our discussions in department meetings.



**Cindy Juby** retired this year from the Department of Social Work at UNI. She earned her Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2005 and joined UNI as an assistant professor in 2006.

Cindy was promoted to Associate Professor in 2012 and subsequently took on the role of department head, a position she held from 2012 to 2022.

During her tenure as department head, Cindy guided the department through significant staffing changes and played a major role in two re-accreditation processes. She also initiated and led the development and implementation of the MSW Trauma-Informed Specialization and the establishment of an online MSW program track.

Cindy was initially hired for her expertise in child welfare and, early on, her teaching and research focused

on child welfare and policy. As the department faced faculty shortages, she broadened her teaching repertoire to cover a variety of courses across the BSW and MSW programs. Despite these broader responsibilities, her true academic passions and research interests remained centered on child welfare and poverty.

In retirement, Cindy enjoys spending quality time with her family, particularly her young great-nephews, and traveling with her sisters. She also finds joy in gardening and cuddling with her beloved cats.

## IN MEMORIAM



**David Whitsett** died after 82 years of a meaningful, high-quality life. Dr. Whitsett's adventurous life began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he and his sister, Toni, were raised by parents John David Whitsett and Dorthea (Upton) Whitsett.

After high school, he pursued his interest in human behavior through psychology at Penn State University, later earning his Ph.D. in organizational psychology from Case Western Reserve. His career led him to consulting firms in New York, where he was a specialist in managing large-

scale change.

Dr. Whitsett later moved to Cedar Falls, joining the psychology faculty at UNI. He excelled at sparking students' excitement about psychology using his natural storytelling and presentation skills. He was deeply involved in UNI athletics, especially wrestling.

He took pride in helping coaches and athletes "create their own realities" in pursuit of their highest-level performance. Dr. Whitsett was an avid marathon runner; he guided a group running rim-to-rim in the Grand Canyon and co-created a marathon running course at UNI.

Dr. Whitsett remained connected to the Cedar Falls community, publishing a history book about the city in 2013. After surviving cancer and retiring from academia, he later moved from Iowa to

Texas to be closer to his daughters.

Dr. Whitsett cherished solitude, independence and intellectual stimulation. As an atheist and freethinker, he devoured books about science and evolution. He also loved listening to music, especially to live bands. His favorite song, "Imagine" by John Lennon, reflects his relentlessly optimistic outlook on life.

Dr. Whitsett wished to be remembered as a man "who did what he said he would do," as someone who left others feeling energized, included and significant, and as a man who lived and died on his terms. He had an extraordinarily sharp mind and wonderful sense of humor. Dr. Whitsett will be remembered as an amazing human being who embodied meaningful living.



**Christopher R. Edginton** died peacefully on September 3, 2024 with his family lovingly by his side. Dr. Edginton was born on April 12, 1946 in Oak Harbor, WA, to Clifford and Ruth Edginton, who raised their son in the San Francisco Bay Area along with his three sisters Deborah, Carol, and Noelle. He earned his A.A. from Foothill College, B.A. in Recreation from San Jose State College, M.S. from the University of Illinois in Park and Recreation Administration, and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa in Higher Education Management. He was a loving father and grandfather, patient

mentor, and trusted colleague to all who knew him.

Known affectionately as "Dr. E" by his students and colleagues, Dr. Edginton was a Professor Emeritus at UNI, where he also previously served as the director of the School of Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services from 1991-2010, and as the R.J. McElroy Professor of Youth Leadership. One of the leading academics of his generation in the Parks & Recreation and Leisure Studies field, Dr. Edginton authored 16 books and over 350 articles during his prolific career, which redefined management and leadership concepts in his industry. He never stopped writing, publishing his last article in August 2024, only days before his passing. A strong proponent of the important role that leisure plays globally on life satisfaction, he also served as the

Secretary General of the World Leisure Organization from 2004-2014, a career defining achievement.

Perhaps his most significant career accomplishment, Dr. Edginton was the founder of the Camp Adventure Youth Services program, a service-learning initiative based at UNI that sent undergraduate students across the globe to serve U.S. military and diplomatic families in overseas locations in Japan, Korea, Germany, Italy, and dozens of other countries. During the 35-year lifespan of the program, over 20,000 college students participated in the program serving hundreds of thousands of military youth and their families. Known for its empowering motto, Catch the Magic, the Camp Adventure program touched the lives of countless people throughout the world, creating magic moments for all who were part of it.

## A hub for civic education

Soon, the UNI will be known for civic education in Iowa. That's in part because of a recent initiative happening across campus, fueled by a highly-competitive Humanities Connection Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The project is titled, "Humanities for Civic Education: Preparing Teachers and Students for Engaged Citizenship." As one of the NEH grant reviewers noted, it has "the potential to improve civic education in the state as a whole."



**READ FULL STORY**  
[csbs.uni.edu/hub-civic-education](https://csbs.uni.edu/hub-civic-education)

## Normalizing death, one café conversation at a time

It takes an extraordinary kind of person to handle conversations regarding end of life with a steady head and a compassionate heart. Melinda Heinz, assistant professor in the Department of Family, Aging and Counseling, is just such a person. And she doesn't limit these conversations to her classroom. In her downtime, she intentionally creates space for these discussions through hosting what's known as a "death café."



**READ FULL STORY**  
[csbs.uni.edu/death-cafes](https://csbs.uni.edu/death-cafes)

## UNI to house papers of Senator Chuck Grassley, offer endowed professorship

UNI is proud to announce two historic gifts to the institution from Senator and Mrs. Chuck Grassley - a gift of the papers and other historical materials from the Senator's time in the U.S. Senate to the UNI Rod Library, and a gift of an endowed professorship in the Department of Political Science. Together, these gestures honor the extensive legacy of Senator Grassley's career in public service and continue the longstanding support Senator and Mrs. Grassley have provided to the University of Northern Iowa.



**READ FULL STORY**  
[csbs.uni.edu/grassley-papers](https://csbs.uni.edu/grassley-papers)

## UNI forms 3+1 family services program with university in Kosovo

UNI's close relationship with the people and academic institutions of Kosovo continues to strengthen and expand. Last year on a trip to Kosovo with a delegation led by President Mark Nook, **Bill Henninger** formed a relationship with a university that has now resulted in a formal memorandum of understanding with UNI's family services program. Because of this agreement, students in Kosovo can attend the University of Gjakova for three years and UNI for one year and end up with a degree from both universities.



**READ FULL STORY**  
[csbs.uni.edu/kosovo-partnership](https://csbs.uni.edu/kosovo-partnership)



## **UNI professor's selfless act of organ donation saves a life**

Bill Henninger saw an opportunity to help a stranger in need and made the decision to donate his kidney, potentially saving their life. "In the end, I have no regrets," said Henninger, head of the Department of Family, Aging & Counseling and associate professor of family studies. "I really don't think about it much. I have about a four-inch scar down by my stomach. Every once in a while, I see it, and I'm like, 'Oh, yeah, I did donate a kidney, didn't I?' It hasn't impacted me a whole lot after the initial recovery."



**READ FULL STORY**  
[csbs.uni.edu/organ-donation](https://csbs.uni.edu/organ-donation)

## **As a nurse, she saved his life. Now at UNI, they're co-workers.**

It was 1 a.m. on March 6 when Mark **Welford** awoke with a pain in his chest. At first, he thought it was heartburn. It quickly became clear he needed urgent medical treatment. At nearby Waverly Health Center, staff nurse **Natalie Nedza** waited for the ambulance to arrive. Through radio communication, her team heard the patient had flatlined. "Patients that have cardiac arrest in the field and don't have access to immediate defibrillation or cardiac medications don't do very well."



**READ FULL STORY**  
[csbs.uni.edu/nursing-saves-life](https://csbs.uni.edu/nursing-saves-life)

## **Donors launch scholarship initiative for UNI nursing students**

As UNI gears up to welcome the inaugural class of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program students this fall, donors are already rallying to support the future nurses. Thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends, each of the incoming 30 BSN students will receive financial assistance to offset tuition and other costs of the program such as lab fees. The gifts are part of an Our Tomorrow campaign initiative to secure donor support for nursing scholarships, academics and capital projects.



**READ FULL STORY**  
[csbs.uni.edu/nursing-scholarships](https://csbs.uni.edu/nursing-scholarships)

## **Giving back to caregivers**

Learning of his alma mater's plans to establish a standalone Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, Michael Wright, '69, knew he had found a perfect way to create something positive from his loss. It was early 2022 and Wright had just recently lost his wife, Lynn, to cancer. Over their 52 years together, the two shared a passion for UNI. Lynn was also an alum, graduating with a degree in elementary education in 1972. Michael from Mount Pleasant, Lynn from Chicago – their lives together began in Cedar Falls at what was then known as the State College of Iowa.



**READ FULL STORY**  
[csbs.uni.edu/giving-to-caregivers](https://csbs.uni.edu/giving-to-caregivers)



# STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

## 2024 Student Leadership Awards

The following CSBS students and organizations took home high honors:

### Outstanding Student Leader Award

**Caroline Christensen** (political communication)

**Hattie Dukes** (public health)

**Samantha Heyer** (gerontology, biology)

**Taylor Short** (criminology, psychology)

**Tienna Trettin** (family services, psychology)

### Servant Leadership Award

**Will Krueger** (family services, psychology)

**Sam Zimmerman** (social work, Spanish)

### Lux Award

**Noah Hackbart** (political communication)

### Promising Young Alumni Award

**Savannah Soltero** (kinesiology: exercise science)

### Outstanding President in a Student Org Award

**Sam Adams** (interior design)

**Tienna Trettin** (family services, psychology)

### Emerging Philanthropist

**Tinashe Chigudu** (criminology & criminal justice)

### Boots to Book Scholarship

**Carrick Johnson** (sport administration)

### Iowa American Legion Scholarship

**Keevan Jones** (kinesiology: exercise science)

**Marvin Carr** (social science teaching)

## Community Engagement Celebration Day

### People's Choice Award

**Alyssa Blackburn** (psychology): "Caring for Memories: A Caregiver's Journey with Dementia."



## Midwestern Psychological Association Conference in Chicago

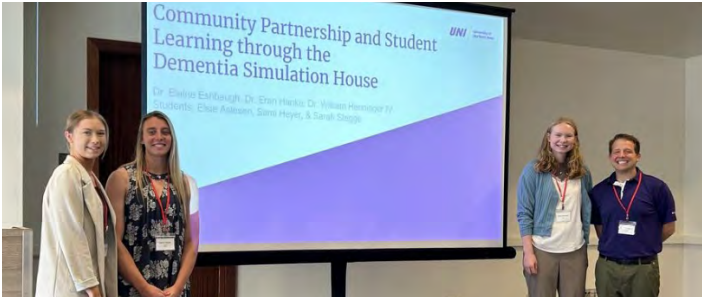
Students **MacKenzie Grenko**, **Monty Crain**, **Taylor Brown**, **Alexa Roudabush**, **Kieran Luedke**, **Tenzin Kalsang**, **MaKayla Hall**, **Jordan Neely**, **Kat Fury**, **Emma Forest**, **Natalie Dalton**, **Luke Banaszak** and **Krishna Patel** attended the Midwestern Psychology Association Conference in Chicago with Department of Psychology faculty **Helen Harton**, **Nick Schwab**, **Jiuqing Cheng** and **Dilbur Arsiwalla**.



## Internships at Effigy Mounds National Monument

Students **Anna Babberl** (anthropology) and **Kaaci Krier** (history) spent their summer internship at Effigy Mounds National Monument in Harpers Ferry, where they assisted with guided tours, provided research and developed new interpretations materials for the monument.





## Students and faculty attend Teaching in Family Sciences Conference in Puerto Rico

Students **Sami Heyer** (gerontology & biology), **Sarah Stegge** (gerontology & communication disorders), **Elsie Aslesen** (mental health counseling) and **Kaitlyn Walthall** (family services) attended the Teaching in Family Sciences Conference this summer in Puerto Rico with Department of Family, Aging and Counseling faculty **Michael Fleming**, **Nathan Taylor** and **William Henninger**.

The group presented on several topics, listed below, and reported that the trip was a great opportunity to experience a culture they had never interacted with before. They additionally had time to explore the rain forest and old San Juan during their time abroad.

"Community Partnership and Student Learning through the Dementia Simulation House" —Heyer, Stegge, Aslesen and Henninger

"All my students want to do is watch videos" —Taylor and Henninger

"Group base experiential learning: Benefits of book reads & Book clubs for Family Science Students" —Taylor and Walthall -

"Understanding secondary school violence prevention needs and resources: Bridging silos through a student engagement project." —Fleming

## Students tackle climate change through Geography's service-learning class

Sixteen students, undergraduate and graduate and from seven different departments across campus, tackled climate change through UNI Geography's 'Climate Action Planning' class. The service-learning course establishes partnerships with cities, counties, and organizations across Iowa to take climate action at a local level.

In the spring 2024 semester, students collaborated with the cities of Fairfield and Waterloo, via UNI's Center for Energy and Environmental Education.

For Fairfield, students worked directly with the city's Sustainability Coordinator to tabulate and analyze the city's greenhouse gas emissions, identify best practices for food waste composting, and evaluate the potential for alternative housing.

Urban forestry was the focus of the Waterloo project, where students created a public-facing website that highlights the importance of tree planting for mitigating the excess heat expected to worsen due to climate change.

This effort led to a Geography MA student research project that will use computer programming to design a new web-based tool to help Iowa communities systematically replant trees in the event of a derecho or a rapid decline in tree cover due to tree diseases or insects, all while focusing on the most vulnerable neighborhoods.

# SUMMER STUDY ABROAD

## LONDON

Course Leader: **Carolyn Hildebrandt** (psychology)



## GREECE

Course Leader: **Gregory Bruess** (history) and **Isabela Varela**



//////////////////// **MALTA**  
Course Leader: **Louis Fenech** (history)



**YUCATÁN** //////////////////////  
Course Leader: **Fernando Calderón** (history)



---

*CSBS Kudos*, published every semester, highlights accomplishments of faculty, students and alumni of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and makes colleagues in the college and across campus aware of the great things being done in CSBS. By sharing these ideas, interests and contributions, we strive to sustain a sense of community.

***UNI***

**University of  
Northern Iowa.**

College of Social &  
Behavioral Sciences