

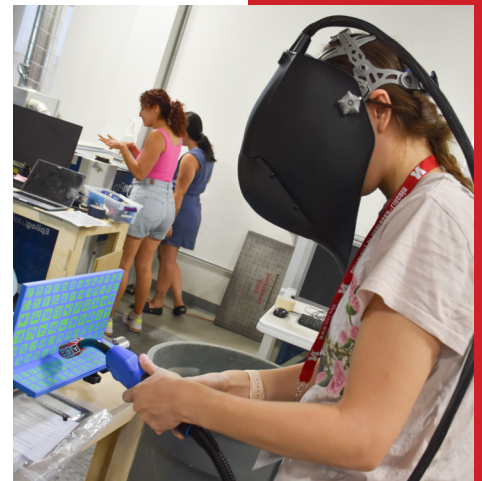
JUNE 8 - JUNE 12, 2025  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

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# MID-AMERICA TRANSPORTATION CENTER **STEM ACADEMY**



MID-AMERICA  
TRANSPORTATION CENTER







The Mid America Transportation Center's STEM Academy is a summer program that provides students with an extended learning opportunity in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects.

Students explore a wide range of education and career options after high school through the mentorship of faculty, university students, and professionals in the public and private sector.

# SUNDAY, JUNE 8

All times are in Central Time

4:30 PM

## ARRIVAL AND CHECK-IN

University Suites - 1780 R St, Lincoln, NE 68508

5:15 - 5:30 PM

## TRANSITION TO LIED CENTER COMMONS

5:30 - 5:40 PM

## WELCOME NOTE

Lied Center Commons - 301 N 12 St  
**Dr. Gabriel Bruguier**, UNL Libraries

5:40 - 6:30 PM

## UNL STEM AMBASSADOR ACTIVITY

Lied Center Commons  
**Ms. Alivia Olson**, STEM Ambassador,  
Junior in Chemical Engineering  
**Ms. Abby Murray**, STEM Ambassador,  
Senior in Biological Systems Engineering

6:30 - 8:00 PM

## OPENING DINNER

Lied Center Commons  
**Keynote Speaker: Mr. T.J. McDowell, Jr.**, Assistant Vice Chancellor & Dean of Students, UNL

8:00 - 8:15 PM

## TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY SUITES

8:15 - 9:00 PM

## SUPERVISED ACTIVITIES AT DORMS

University Suites

9:00 PM

## HEADCOUNT AND CURFEW

# MONDAY, JUNE 9

All times are in Central Time

8:00 - 9:00 AM	<b>BREAKFAST</b> Willa Cather Dining Complex - 530 N 17th St, Lincoln, NE 68588	2:30 - 4:15 PM	<b>LIBRARY ACTIVITY: MAP THE STACKS</b> <b>Dr. Gabriel Bruguier</b> , Assistant Professor, Research Specialist Librarian, Research Partnerships, UNL Libraries <b>Dr. Wenjie Wang</b> , Assistant Professor, Geospatial Data and Programs Librarian, UNL
9:00 - 9:20 AM	<b>BUREAU OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH PRE-SURVEY</b> University Suites, Multipurpose Room	4:15 - 4:30 PM	TRANSITION TO CHAMPIONS CLUB
9:20 - 9:30 AM	TRANSITION TO HAMILTON HALL	4:30 - 6:30 PM	<b>STAR POWER ACTIVITY</b> Champions Club - 707 Stadium Dr, Lincoln, NE 68501 <b>Mr. Ezzat Haider</b> , MATC Education & Outreach Program Manager
9:30 - 10:15 AM	<b>CHEMISTRY ACTIVITIES</b> Hamilton Hall <b>Activity 1:</b> Polymer Science-Gummy Worm Lab	6:30 - 7:30 PM	<b>DINNER</b> Champions Club
10:15 - 11:30 AM	<b>CHEMISTRY ACTIVITIES</b> Hamilton Hall <b>Activity 2:</b> Non-Newtonian Fluids- Oobleck Lab	7:30 - 7:45 PM	TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY SUITES
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM	<b>LUNCH</b>	7:45 - 9:00 PM	<b>SUPERVISED ACTIVITIES AT DORMS</b> University Suites
1:00 - 2:15 PM	<b>CHEMISTRY ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Activity 3:</b> Colorful Chromatography T-Shirts	9:00 PM	<b>HEADCOUNT AND CURFEW</b>
2:15 - 2:30 PM	TRANSITION TO LIBRARY & BREAK		





# TUESDAY, JUNE 10

All times are in Central Time

8:00 - 9:00 AM

## BREAKFAST

Willa Cather Dining Complex

9:00 - 9:30 AM

TRANSITION TO SPRING CREEK PRAIRIE  
AUDUBON CENTER

9:30 - 11:45 AM

**SPRING CREEK PRAIRIE AUDUBON CENTER**  
11700 SW 100th St, Denton, NE 68339

**Mr. Jason "The Birdnerd" Sauver,**  
Senior Education Manager, Spring Creek  
Prairie Audubon Center

11:45 AM - 12:15 PM

TRANSITION TO THE MILL

12:15 - 1:30 PM

## LUNCH

The Mill - 2021 Transformation Dr #1350,  
Lincoln, NE 68508

1:30 - 3:30 PM

**NEBRASKA INNOVATION CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

Innovation Studio - 2021 Transformation  
Dr #1500, Lincoln, NE 68508

3:30 - 3:45 PM

ICE CREAM BREAK

3:45 - 5:30 PM

**NEBRASKA INNOVATION CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

5:30 - 5:45 PM

TRANSITION TO EAST CAMPUS UNION

5:45 - 7:45 PM

## DINNER & BOWLING

East Campus Union, Husker Bowling  
Center

7:45 - 8:00 PM

TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY SUITES

8:00 - 9:00 PM

**SUPERVISED ACTIVITIES AT DORMS**

University Suites

9:00 PM

**HEADCOUNT AND CURFEW**



# WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11

All times are in Central Time

8:00 - 9:00 AM

## BREAKFAST

Willa Cather Dining Complex

9:00 - 10:00 AM

TRANSITION TO SAC MUSEUM

10:00 - 11:50 AM

## STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND AND AEROSPACE MUSEUM

28210 W Park Hwy, Ashland, NE 68003

11:50 AM - 12:00 PM

TRANSITION TO MAHONEY STATE PARK

12:00 - 2:00 PM

## LUNCH & ACTIVITY

Mahoney State Park, Peter Kiewit Lodge - Ashland, NE 68003

2:00 - 4:00 PM

## NATURALIST PROGRAMS

Mahoney State Park

**Activity 1: Herpetology & Nature Center**

**Activity 2: Primitive Shooting Sports**

4:00 - 5:00 PM

TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY SUITES

5:00 - 6:00 PM

## PREPARE FOR FORMAL DINNER

6:00 - 6:15 PM

TRANSITION TO MORRILL HALL

6:15 - 6:30 PM

## GROUP PHOTO

6:30 - 8:30 PM

## FORMAL DINNER

Morrill Hall - 645 N 14th St, Lincoln, NE 68588

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jamie Williams, Ed.D., MBA, MS**, President & CEO, Team81 Inc., UNL Alum and past Associate Athletic Director

8:30 - 8:45 PM

TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY SUITES

8:45 - 9:00 PM

## SUPERVISED ACTIVITIES AT DORMS

University Suites

9:00 PM

## HEADCOUNT AND CURFEW

# THURSDAY, JUNE 12

8:00 - 9:00 AM

## BREAKFAST

Willa Cather Dining Complex

9:00 - 9:30 AM

## CHECKOUT

9:30 - 10:00 AM

## BUREAU OF SOCIOLOGIC RESEARCH POST-SURVEY

University Suites, Multipurpose Room

10:00 - 11:00 AM

## ROLLER COASTER GROUP ACTIVITY

11:00 - 11:30 AM

## MENTOR & TEACHER STATEMENTS

11:30 AM - 12:00 PM

## CERTIFICATE CEREMONY

12:00 PM

## LUNCH & DEPARTURE

# ACADEMY LEADERSHIP



## **Mr. Ezzat Khider Haider Shalal**

*Education and Outreach Manager  
Mid-America Transportation Center*

Phone: (402) 472-9194  
Email: ehaider2@unl.edu

**Mr. Ezzat Haider** was born and grew up in Iraq. His previous work and initiatives have qualified him to be a community organizer. Ezzat Haider has a master's in communication studies from the North Dakota State University (NDSU). He attended Minnesota State University

Moorhead (MSUM) with a double major in communication and international studies, graduated with two bachelor's degrees, and minored in leadership. Ezzat earned a bachelor's degree to teach English as a second language from the University of Duhok-Iraq. From August 2019 to May 2022, Ezzat worked as a part-time instructor for North Dakota State University.

Ezzat held Arabic and Kurdish interpreter positions while completing his education, and again in 2017 at Family Health Care. He was a community coordinator at Metro Interpreter in Fargo, North Dakota in 2015 and at the New American Consortium for community education classes and initiatives. Mr. Haider founded a nonprofit called Chira Global Development Organization. Ezzat volunteered with the City of Moorhead on their housing and planning committee for over a year where he would advocate for immigrants to express concerns and questions. He also participated in orientations and workshops that supported the idea of diversity, equity, inclusion, and opportunity in the F-M community. Because of this community work and efforts, Ezzat was honored to receive the City of Moorhead/Human Rights Commission human rights award for 2018.

In July 2022, Ezzat moved to Lincoln, Nebraska and worked as the business services and outreach coordinator with Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska. He also worked as an adjunct instructor teaching at Southeast Community College. Today, he is the Education and Outreach Manager at Mid-America Transportation Center.



MID-AMERICA  
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## **Dr. Aemal Khattak**

*Director  
Mid-America Transportation Center*

Phone: (402) 472-8126  
Email: khattak@unl.edu

**Dr. Aemal Khattak** is a Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Director of the Mid-America Transportation Center (MATC) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He specializes in transportation safety, infrastructure planning, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and manages \$3.0 million per year in grant funding.

Dr. Khattak's career in civil engineering includes 25 years at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is an accomplished author having published more than 100 publications on various transportation topics. He serves as the inaugural editorial board member of the Transportation Research Records and is the past chair of the Transportation Research Board Standing Committee on Highway/Rail Grade Crossings (AR080). Dr. Khattak teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in highway engineering, urban transportation planning, transportation safety, and travel demand.



MID-AMERICA  
TRANSPORTATION CENTER



## **Mr. Brent Wojcik**

*Social Studies Teacher  
Umo<sup>N</sup>ho<sup>N</sup> Nation Public School*

Email: bwojcik@unpsk-12.org

**Mr. Brent Wojcik** is a social studies teacher at the Omaha Nation High School in Macy, Nebraska. He grew up in South Sioux City, Nebraska, and attended Morningside University in Sioux City, Iowa. He played football at Morningside University and played many sports in high school.

Mr. Wojcik has been at the Omaha Nation High School for seven years. He previously worked at the Sioux City Lewis and Clark

Interpretive Center in Sioux City, Iowa for seven years, then went to Wayne State College for a teaching certificate in Secondary Social Studies. He is now working on his master's of History through the University of Nebraska-Kearney. He's also coached football and basketball, worked at the Boys and Girls Home, presently coaches Quiz Bowl and used to be the Lego league coach for the school.







**Ms. Michele Blackbird**  
*Director of Native American Education*  
*Umo<sup>N</sup>ho<sup>N</sup> Nation Public School*

Phone: (402) 560-0329  
 Email: mblackbird@unpsk-12.org



**Ms. Michele Blackbird** is an enrolled member of the Umo<sup>N</sup>ho<sup>N</sup> Nation and a direct descendant of Chief Blackbird. Ms. Blackbird currently teaches at the Umo<sup>N</sup>ho<sup>N</sup> Nation Public School, where she worked as a paraprofessional while in graduate school. She has since spent her eighteen-year teaching career working with secondary students. She has taught Alternative Education, Middle School Science, Credit Recovery, Secondary Life

Skills, and Secondary Inclusion. She teaches Umo<sup>N</sup>ho<sup>N</sup> Language and Culture and fulfills her role as the Director of Native American Education (Title VI) at UNPS. She also spent five years teaching algebra at Little Priest Tribal College as an adjunct professor in the evenings and summer. This year, she returned to Little Priest Tribal College as a part-time adjunct professor of Teaching and Learning Teacher Education while continuing her career at Umo<sup>N</sup>ho<sup>N</sup> Nation Public Schools.

Ms. Blackbird holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English/creative writing from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, a Master of Education in mild/moderate – special education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a Master of Science in Pre-K through 12 Administration, and a Master of Science – Education in Curriculum and Instruction Leadership, as well as cross-curricular Instruction from Wayne State College. She also holds teaching certifications in elementary education, ESL for K-12, special education 7-12, High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) endorsement for secondary language arts (7-12), and HOUSSE endorsement for secondary natural sciences (7-12). Ms. Blackbird is currently studying in the Doctoral program of EdAd at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



**Mrs. Samantha Eberly**  
*High School Science Teacher*  
*Winnebago Public School*

Phone: (712) 541-9623  
 Email: sEberly@winnebagok12.org



**Mrs. Samantha Eberly** grew up on her family's farm outside of LeMars, Iowa, with her two brothers, two sisters, and parents, Mark and Lori Loutsch. She attended Remsen-Union from kindergarten until graduating as Salutatorian in 2008, then attended South Dakota State University, majoring in Chemistry, minoring in Physics, and earning a teaching certificate

after student teaching at Brooking High School. She was active in The Pride of the Dakotas Marching Band at SDSU and helped start the school's National Science Teacher Association chapter. She was a Hach Chemistry and REMAST Scholar. Mrs. Eberly graduated from SDSU in May 2013 and began teaching high school science in Winnebago, Nebraska, that fall. She earned her Master of Arts in Teaching: Teacher Leadership from Morningside College in 2020. Mrs. Eberly currently co-coaches Winnebago's speech team and advises Winnebago's National Honor Society.

Mrs. Eberly and her husband Nick live in Homer, Nebraska, with their sons, Noah and Milo, and their two cats, Dusty and Randall. They enjoy camping, gardening, and spending time with family.



**Mrs. Katie Kloefkorn**

*Physical Education & Health Teacher*  
*Native American Success Coach*  
*Scott Middle School*  
*Lincoln Public Schools*

Phone: (402) 202-4421  
 Email: kkloefk@lps.org



**Mrs. Katie Kloefkorn** has been working at Scott Middle School since 1997. She teaches Physical Education and Health, and is the department liaison to the district as well as the Native American Success Coach. Prior to being hired at Scott, she taught Physical Education at Hill Elementary and Lakeview Elementary schools. She received her Bachelor's degree in Physical Education K-12 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and her Master's in Counseling with a Guidance Endorsement, also from UNL.

# ACADEMY LEADERSHIP



## Ms. Mary Herrington

*Science Teacher  
Culler Middle School  
Lincoln Public Schools*

Phone: (402) 770-2066  
Email: mherrin@lps.org



**Ms. Mary Herrington** is a Science Teacher at Culler Middle School. She has been with Lincoln Public Schools as an educator for 33 years. She continues to work on her PhD at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), earned her Master of Education in 1996 at UNL while also being elected to leadership positions in several campus organizations, and her Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from UNL in 1984.

After attending MATC's Professional Development Science and Math Summer Institutes in 2007 - 2012, sponsored in part by Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Ms. Herrington proposed a transportation-themed after-school club to help the school's sixth, seventh and eighth graders engage in STEM topics and think about possible careers. RRRC Club was started at Culler Middle School in 2010 and is currently in 3 Middle Schools in Lincoln, NE.

"In our competitive society it is important for students to not only receive a solid education, but to work with someone who builds hope for their future. That is why collaboration with the UNL and MATC staff, as well as community members, is exciting, meaningful, and rewarding. Being a part of the RRRC Program has been the best part of my day for the past 14 years."

Ms. Herrington looks forward to her next adventure, meeting new people, and working together to build hope for a brighter future.



## Ms. Zahra Aras

Phone: (402) 310-7083  
Email: zahramaras@yahoo.com

**Ms. Zahra Aras** is a freshman at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, majoring in International Business. She's part of the Inclusive Business Leaders Program and proud to be both a Susan Buffett Scholar and a Horaio Alger Scholar. Her goals include graduating with a strong academic foundation and visiting



the travel destinations she's been saving over the years. Outside academics, Ms. Aras enjoys reading, exploring various music genres, and painting in her free time.



## Ms. Janana Khattak

Phone: (402) 580-8981  
Email: jkhattak2@huskers.unl.edu

**Ms. Janana Khattak** is a recent graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she majored in Political Science with minors in Economics, Philosophy, Communications, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, and Public Policy Analysis. On campus, she partook in student government, research through UCARE and the Bureau of Business Research, various RSOS, and UNL's only nationally recognized senior honor society Mortar Board. She was a member of the Speech team where she was an All-American, multi-year National finalist, and finished as runner-up in Communication Analysis in 2024. She will soon undergo a year of service in Kansas City through AmeriCorps before attending law school. She also volunteers with the Nebraska Library Commission, and Reading is Leading. Outside of this, she enjoys doing arts and crafts, and listening to music and podcasts.



## Mx. Alex Clinger

Phone: (719) 339-3006  
Email: aclinger2@huskers.unl.edu

**Mx. Alex Clinger** is of Winnebago descent and currently an Environmental Studies major at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. They are also working on a minor in German and a minor in Indigenous Studies. They currently work in a hydroponics lab and focus their studies on Indigenous food sovereignty and Indigenous science. Mx. Clinger's interest in the environment came from growing up in Colorado Springs and often going into the mountains and forests. They moved to Nebraska to be closer to their tribe and have new opportunities for study. They are a member of UNL's intertribal exchange and help plan cultural events around campus.

When they aren't studying, Alex spends their time reading, creating art, and mingling at the Lincoln Indian Center's apothecary.







## Mr. Delges Al Hayder

Phone: (218) 790-6872

Email: delhayder03@gmail.com



My name is **Delges Al Hayder**, and I am currently pursuing a degree in Computer Science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln UNL. I am a sophomore, soon to be a junior and transferred to UNL from Southeast Community College last year. My experience over the past two semesters at UNL has been both

transformative and empowering, significantly boosting my confidence in developing real-world projects. Throughout my time here, I've had the opportunity to work with various programming languages including Python and C. I've also gained hands-on experience with UNIX systems, where I learned how to build and execute programs from the ground up. These experiences have deepened my understanding of the field and strengthened my technical abilities.

More than just technical growth, my time at UNL has helped me develop essential life and professional skills such as critical thinking, adaptability, and a hunger for continuous learning. I've become more confident, resourceful, and driven toward achieving my future goals.

I've also made it a point to get involved in campus activities and programs that foster connection and personal growth. I believe every transfer student should take advantage of the resources and opportunities UNL offers, both academically and socially. These experiences not only help students transition smoothly but also enrich their overall college journey.

Outside of academics, I dedicate time to expanding my skills and knowledge. I enjoy reading books that promote personal development and give me new perspectives. I also make time for fun and relaxation playing soccer, enjoying family picnics, or taking road trips with my family are some of my favorite ways to unwind. I'm a naturally curious and hardworking person, always striving to build a life and skill set that aligns with the future I envision.



## Ms. Kate Colleran

Phone: (720) 517-5088

Email: kcolleran74@gmail.com



Hi, my name is **Kate Colleran**. This year I'll be a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, studying Microbiology and Political Science. I'm passionate about exploring both the scientific and global aspects of the world, with future goals in either laboratory sciences and medical research or a career in international relations. Outside of academics, I enjoy drawing, reading, and running. I'm excited to get to meet you guys and show you all the great things that STEM at UNL has to offer!



## Mr. Brandon Loughrin

Phone: (510) 397-9885

Email: bloughrin2@huskers.unl.edu



**Mr. Brandon Loughrin** grew up outside Los Angeles and earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of California, Berkeley. He spent 15 years developing and managing infrastructure projects for public agencies across California and Nebraska, focusing on practical solutions that serve

communities. Now living in Kearney, Nebraska with his wife and dog, Brandon is pursuing a master's degree in transportation engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His academic interests center on the intersection of equity and sustainability in design and community development. He has a hands-on interest in designing and building systems that improve how people interact with their environment, and he enjoys classic cinema in his free time.



## Ms. Kylie Pitchanau

Phone: (402) 452-8482

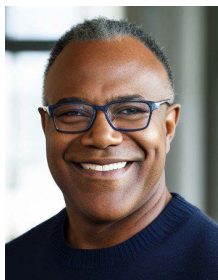
Email: kyliepitchanau@gmail.com



**Ms. Kylie Pitchanau** is a senior Nutrition, Exercise, and Health Science major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She works as a backstage technician at the Lied Center for Performing Arts and as a learning consultant for the Center for Academic Success and Transition office on campus. Kylie is also involved with

Husker Pantry, the university's food pantry. After graduation, she intends to pursue a Master's degree in Athletic Training to someday provide care within the performance arts field. Some of her hobbies include drumming, reading, painting, and baking.

# ACADEMY COLLABORATORS



## **Dr. Jamie Williams Ed.D., MBA, MS**

*President & CEO  
Team81 Inc.*

Email: jamie@team81.com

**Dr. Jamie Williams** is a University of Nebraska-Lincoln alum and served as the UNL Associate Director for diversity and leadership initiatives. He is also a frequent lecturer at universities and C-Suite events. A proven winner, he achieved a Super Bowl ring playing with the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl XXIV, and 20+ years as an enlightened educator. Success is a recurring theme in business, media, and education. Dr. Williams is skilled in building accomplished teams that have excelled in a variety of disciplines. This includes the creative interdependence necessary to complete the pro football film, Any Given Sunday. He developed the team that launched an NCAA Athletic program from scratch at the Academy of Art University. Dr. Williams later collaborated with technology colleagues to start the Bulgarian Entrepreneurial Center (BEC) in Sofia and Varna. His core ideologies are ethical leadership, design thinking, teamwork, mindfulness, reverse accountability, and strategic flexibility. Williams is Founder, President and CEO of Team81 Inc. — providing IT Services Company for Government Agencies.



## **Mr. Jason St. Sauver** *Senior Education Manager Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center*

Phone: (402) 797-2301  
Email: scp@audubon.org

**Mr. Jason “the Birdnerd” St. Sauver** is the Senior Education Manager at Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, an 800-acre tall grass prairie preserve part of the National Audubon Society. Originally from South Dakota, Mr. St. Sauver has been working in the environmental education field for over 15 years (with Audubon



and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), leading field trips, creating curriculum, and planning public events about birds, wildlife, conservation, and climate.

Along with his work in outdoor education, Mr. St. Sauver has been a leader and advocate with Audubon for their equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives – specifically working on programs, projects, and events with Nebraska’s indigenous communities focusing on the importance of indigenous plants for birds, wildlife, and people.



## **Mr. T.J. McDowell, Jr.** *Assistant Vice Chancellor & Dean of Students University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Email: tmcowell2@unl.edu



**Mr. T.J. McDowell, Jr.** is an assistant vice chancellor and Dean of Students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). In this capacity, he regularly meets with students and student organizations to ensure they have the services, opportunities, and support they need to thrive at UNL. Before returning to UNL in 2025, he was the Chief of Staff for the Mayor of Lincoln. Previously, he was an assistant vice chancellor of Student Life and Leadership at UNL and vice president of Student Life at Nebraska Wesleyan University. He started his career as a nonprofit administrator, serving as the executive director of the Lighthouse and Malone Community Center. T.J. is from Lincoln, NE. He attended Lincoln High (Class of 1990). T.J. was a first-generation college student. He is a proud member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.



## **Dr. Gabriel Bruguier** *Assistant Professor & Research Specialist Librarian Research Partnerships, UNL Libraries University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Phone: (402) 472-4538  
Email: gbruguier2@unl.edu



**Dr. Gabriel Bruguier** is an Assistant Professor and Research Specialist Librarian at University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries in the Research Partnerships Department.

He is an enrolled member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe and grew up in Vermillion and Sisseton, South Dakota.

From 2017 to 2023, Dr. Bruguier was the Education and Outreach Coordinator at the Mid-America Transportation Center, where he oversaw three outreach programs that supported Native American students at all levels of their education. In January 2023 he joined the Research Partnerships faculty at UNL Libraries. Along with other members of the department, he supports evidence synthesis research, research metrics, reparative research practices, and Indigenous Data Sovereignty. Dr. Bruguier has served as the City of Lincoln Representative on the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs since 2018. In 2021 he was elected to the Great Plains Fellows at UNL’s Center for Great Plains Studies, and in 2023 was elected to the Board of Governors at the Center. He is currently one of the faculty advisors to the University of Nebraska Inter Tribal Exchange (UNITE), a recognized student organization for Native American students at UNL.





**Mr. David Martin**  
*Director*  
*Nebraska Innovation Studio*

Phone: (402) 472-5514  
 Email: dmartin18@unl.edu

**Mr. David Martin** has been Director of Nebraska Innovation Studio (NIS) since September 2017. His goal is to create and expand collaborations within the university and in the greater community and to make sure makers have the tools and resources they need to achieve their vision. Before coming to work at NIS, he was an executive producer at CNN, a senior investigative producer at Al Jazeera America, and a newspaper correspondent

for The Associated Press and other news outlets. In his spare time, he enjoys photography and screen printing.

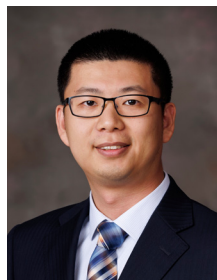


**Mr. Jerry Reif**  
*Assistant Director*  
*Nebraska Innovation Studio*

Phone: (402) 472-5114  
 Email: jreif@unl.edu

**Mr. Jerry Reif** has been with Nebraska Innovation Studio since March of 2016 and has been the driving force behind the development of the makerspace. Mr. Reif has spent many years developing his creative side before coming to NIS. He owns his own construction business and has spent a number of years in the metalworking, woodworking, and aviation industries. He has been consulted on the development and build out of a number of

makerspaces in the Midwest from rural libraries to Community Colleges and State Universities.



**Dr. Wenjie Wang**  
*Assistant Professor & Geospatial Data*  
*and Programs Librarian*  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Email: wwang37@unl.edu

**Dr. Wenjie Wang** is an Assistant Professor, Geospatial Data and Programs Librarian at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Previously, Dr. Wang was a GIS Specialist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Dr. Wang earned his Ph.D. degree in geography from the University of Connecticut and earned his Master's degree in civil and environmental engineering from Duke University. His research interests include land use, land cover change and improving the accuracy of satellite image classification.

At UNL, he collaborates with researchers to integrate GIS into their research and teaching. Valuing interdisciplinary collaboration, Dr. Wang is dedicated to helping researchers, students, and the broader community harness the power of geospatial data, assisting them in identifying appropriate geospatial datasets, designing data workflows, and analyzing spatial patterns. He is actively engaged in promoting GIS resources and services to the university community. He also conducts workshops and training sessions, empowering users to develop their GIS skills and make informed decisions based on spatial data. Beyond his professional endeavors, Dr. Wenjie enjoys exploring the great outdoors.



**The Venture Park Education Team**  
*Mahoney State Park*

**The Venture Park Education Team** provides outdoor learning opportunities for guests and groups who visit our area state parks and recreation areas. They hope to inspire appreciation and knowledge of natural and cultural resources while promoting greater understanding, support for and participation in conservation and outdoor recreation.

# ACADEMY COLLABORATORS



**Ms. Alivia Olson**  
*Engineering Ambassador*  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Email: aolson57@huskers.unl.edu



**Ms. Alivia Olson** is an incoming junior at UNL studying Chemical Engineering with a minor in Engineering Leadership. She is passionate about making engineering accessible and inspiring growth in others. Through her involvement in the Engineering Ambassadors, she presents various engineering topics to diverse groups of students in the Lincoln area. As the STEM Coordinator at Calvert Elementary School, she designs STEM curriculum and introduces students to engineering concepts. Alivia is also involved in NHRI Leadership Mentoring, where she mentors a young leader and is a teaching assistant for the organization's leadership class. This summer, she is working as an Orientation Leader at UNL, helping incoming engineering students with their transition to college. In her free time, Alivia enjoys exploring the outdoors and sharing a meal with loved ones.



**Ms. Abby Murray**  
*Engineering Ambassador*  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Email: amurray14@huskers.unl.edu



Hi, I'm **Abby Murray** from Omaha, Nebraska. This fall, I'll be a senior majoring in Biological Systems Engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in the research and development of new biomedical technology!

**Ms. McKayla Cholewinski**

*Lab Manager*  
*Chemistry Department*  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

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My name is **McKayla Cholewinski**, I graduated from Slippery Rock University in 2019 with a BS in Chemistry with a concentration in Environmental Chemistry. I went on to pursue a PhD in Analytical Chemistry at Baylor University, where I am still currently a PhD candidate researching baleen whale ecology by studying stable isotopes measured in their baleen plates and earwax. I currently live in Lincoln with my husband and two dogs and work as the lab manager in the Chemistry Department at the University of Nebraska.





# HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS

## UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA STATE MUSEUM - MORRILL HALL



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA  
STATE MUSEUM

Established in 1871, the University of Nebraska State Museum is the state's premier museum of natural history. The mission of the Museum is to discover and disseminate knowledge about the natural world through research and education. The Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a proud Smithsonian Affiliate. Visitors to

Morrill Hall will find interactive exhibits featuring Nebraska's past and present biological diversity, and its cultural heritage with a dedicated First Peoples of the Plains gallery.

Morrill Hall is known for its paleontological collections, especially its iconic Elephant Hall, where visitors will see the world's largest articulated fossil Columbian mammoth alongside a unique collection of Nebraskan fossil elephants. Also featured are interactive paleontology exhibits including a Jurassic dinosaur gallery. The recently renovated fourth floor includes a Smithsonian-inspired Visible Lab, hands-on Science Exploration Zone, and Sustainable Earth gallery with a 5-foot diameter digital globe. The onsite Mueller Planetarium provides visitors with additional opportunities to explore our Universe and our place in it. In addition to the permanent galleries, the museum hosts temporary exhibits on diverse topics.

As an active University-based research museum, faculty curators, students and staff maintain over 13 million specimens, ethnographic and archeological objects. Research collections include: anthropology, botany, entomology, geology, invertebrate paleontology, parasitology, vertebrate paleontology, and zoology.

## UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Libraries advances the mission of the University by teaching students to become critical information-users and knowledge creators; through the creation, delivery, curation, and preservation of information resources; through collaborative partnerships in research and creative activities; by advocating for equitable access to information; and by creating diverse and inclusive learning environments.

### LIBRARIES

The University Libraries currently holds more than three million volumes in its collection and maintains six library locations including Love Library, the Adele Hall Learning Commons, the Dinsdale Family Learning Commons, and subject libraries in Architecture, Geology, and Mathematics. The Music Library is currently closed while the Music Department's building is under construction. The Libraries maintain a Libraries Depository Retrieval Facility on East Campus where a great deal of the collections are stored. The website, [libraries.unl.edu](http://libraries.unl.edu), provides students, faculty, and staff access to a multitude of databases, electronic journals, electronic books, services, and experts. The University Libraries are open to the public and visiting researchers.

# HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS

## UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA FOUNDATION



The University of Nebraska Foundation's mission is to grow relationships and resources that enable the University of Nebraska to change lives and save lives. Their vision is to be recognized as the trusted partner of those wishing to support the University of Nebraska.

Since the establishment of the University of Nebraska Foundation in 1936, encouraged by Chancellor Edgar A. Burnett, two things have remained constant — the value Nebraskans place on higher education and their commitment and loyalty to supporting their university. The tremendous growth in private gifts from individuals and organizations illustrates this tradition of support.

From the seeds sown in 1936, the University of Nebraska Foundation has grown to become one of the largest foundations in the country serving public universities. It remains committed to the ideals of its early founders: to provide support for the University of Nebraska beyond what the state alone can provide and through these investments in higher education provide for the greater commonwealth.

## NEBRASKA INNOVATION STUDIO



NEBRASKA  
INNOVATION  
STUDIO

Nebraska Innovation Studio (NIS) is a community-oriented makerspace that serves as a hub for innovators, artists, and entrepreneurs. NIS is one of the nation's top makerspaces, a 16,000-square-foot facility with a full metal shop, wood shop, rapid prototyping room, art studio, ceramics and textiles equipment, and more. NIS is open to anyone, and membership is month-to-month.

From software to saws — NIS has a little bit of everything. After taking part in necessary trainings, members can use our wide variety of high-tech and hands-on maker equipment.

## EUGENE T. MAHONEY STATE PARK



Located midway between Nebraska's two largest cities, Lincoln and Omaha, this modern state park is 690 acres along the Platte River. Mahoney has an aquatic center and indoor playground, hiking and biking trails, treetop ropes course, an observation tower and, for the colder months, indoor rock climbing, sledding and ice skating.

Park development began with the state's purchase of the site in 1985. The park opened in 1991 and was named after Eugene T. Mahoney, a former state senator and long-time director of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. He is credited with reversing the fortunes of the moribund state park system during his directorship. The park bears the Mahoney family crest as its symbol and has a loop of cabins named for Ireland's County Cork, the Mahoney family's ancestral home.



## STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND & AEROSPACE MUSEUM



The Strategic Command & Aerospace Museum was built as a state-of-the-art center for housing the aircraft and artifacts used by the Strategic Air Command during the Cold War. With careful restoration efforts and impressive displays, they've been sharing this critical time in history with the next generations for 25 years.

Now, they aim to honor their heritage while looking toward the bright future of air and space innovation. The museum remains a significant historical resource while also using its collection to ignite the imagination of tomorrow's scientists and explorers. Specializing in science and space exploration, technological innovation and a genuine commitment to sharing and preserving the nation's history, they're uniting our past and future to secure our spot as the Midwest's premier museum and science center.

## SPRING CREEK PRAIRIE AUDUBON CENTER



# Audubon

Spring Creek Prairie  
Audubon Center

Audubon established Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center in 1998 on the site of the former O'Brien ranch approximately 20 minutes southwest of Lincoln, Nebraska.

The 1,160-acre tallgrass prairie sanctuary offers over three miles of walking trails, native prairie grasslands, wetlands and ponds, wildflowers and grasses, and beautiful scenic vistas. In its midst more than 235 species of birds, 370 species of plants, and other wildlife dwell side-by-side with historic 19th-century wagon ruts from a cutoff to the Oregon Trail. Their mission is to protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow.



# MID-AMERICA TRANSPORTATION CENTER **STEM ACADEMY**

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA  
STATE MUSEUM



University of Nebraska  
**FOUNDATION**



**Audubon**

Spring Creek Prairie  
Audubon Center



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