



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

knowledge | character | commitment

# 2021-2022 annual report

Grand Island Senior High School  
Omaha North High Magnet School  
Omaha South High Magnet School  
Winnebago Public Schools





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**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN**

Dr. Moises Padilla, *Director*

**GRAND ISLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

2124 N Lafayette Ave,  
Grand Island, NE 68803  
Jeff Gilbertson, *Principal*

**OMAHA NORTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL**

4410 N. 36th Street  
Omaha, NE 68111  
Dr. Collette Nero, *Principal*

**OMAHA SOUTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL**

4519 S. 24th Street  
Omaha, NE 68107  
Jodi Pesek, *Principal*

**WINNEBAGO HIGH SCHOOL**

202 Osborne Street  
Winnebago, NE 68071  
Dan Fehringer, *Superintendent*  
Cheryl Burrell, *Assistant Superintendent*

**METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP**

Dr. Cynthia Gooch-Grayson, *MCC Associate Vice President*

## FOREWORD

Once again, I am pleased to report that the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy (NCPA) had an incredible year. With the right academic and social support, NCPA scholars have proven that educational success is achievable no matter the circumstances.

One of the most memorable moments of the year was when NCPA seniors from Omaha North and Omaha South received their admissions letters and certificates to Nebraska. We celebrated the high achievement with Chancellor Ronnie Green and Omaha Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Logan. Younger NCPA scholars also had the opportunity to attend and celebrate the special event. To watch video highlights, visit [go.unl.edu/opsncpa](https://go.unl.edu/opsncpa).

We are also grateful to Nebraska alumnus Bruce E. Mackey for his generosity and support of NCPA scholars. The Bruce and Loyce Mackey fund will provide financial support to students who complete the high school requirements to attend Nebraska. I invite you to read more about his motivation for supporting NCPA scholars on page 13.

As the State of Nebraska's flagship university, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln feels a solid responsibility to increase the enrollment and college completion rates of academically talented, first-generation and underrepresented students.

This fall, we are excited to welcome 46 first-year scholars to campus, where they will join the Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence (TFIOE), NCPA's four-year college support program. 27 college scholars earned a 4.0 GPA, and 42% earned a 3.5 or higher GPA this past academic year. For over ten years, 100% of NCPA high school graduates have pursued post-secondary education (24 points higher than the state's rate).

NCPA college scholars have continued to excel beyond the program goals—they averaged higher graduation rates than their Nebraska peers, were accepted into honors programs and served in leadership positions in student clubs and organizations. We are proud of the achievements of our scholars, both inside, outside and beyond the classroom.

The success of NCPA is a result of the commitment of NCPA scholars to their futures and the support of NCPA families, high school partners, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the generosity of many individuals and charitable organizations.

Thank you for your continued support of the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of our scholars to gain greater opportunities for themselves, their families and their futures.



**Moises Padilla, Ph.D.**

Director, Nebraska College Preparatory Academy



## 2022 RECOGNITION RECEPTION AWARD WINNERS

Each school year culminates with a recognition reception, which brings together scholars, their families and educators to highlight and celebrate the year's accomplishments. The receptions include a Senior Showcase, where graduating seniors present their capstone research project. All NCPA scholars must complete a capstone project for their senior year to successfully complete the NCPA high school component. This year's topics include the Long-term Effects of Poverty on Child Development, How Plastic Pollution Affects Coral Reefs and Mental Health in Mexican Culture.

In addition, younger NCPA scholars, as well as high school and middle school teachers, are recognized for their hard work and contributions. We are pleased to recognize the 2022 award winners!

### WINNEBAGO PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Freshman Recognition Award: **Haini-Wiragusge Morgan**

Sophomore Recognition Award: **Maleki George**

Junior Recognition Award: **Dyami Berridge**

Pillar of Excellence Award: **Cherish Flying Hawk**

Middle/High School Educator of the Year: **Brenda Waugh**

### GRAND ISLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Freshman Recognition Award: **Orvin Rubio**  
and **Sophia Heminger**

Sophomore Recognition Award: **John Clark**

Junior Recognition Award: **Alejandro Amador Deulofeu**

Pillar of Excellence Award: **David Sanchez**

Peer Mentor Award: **Ellie Mora**

Middle School Educator of the Year: **Matthew LaCompte**

High School Educator of the Year: **Alexis Stockton**

### OMAHA NORTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL

Freshman Recognition Award: **Maria Rodriguez**

Sophomore Recognition Award: **Willie Johnson**

Junior Recognition Award: **Azriel Carr & Samara Luther**

Pillar of Excellence Award: **Kleh Say**

NCPA Mentor Award: **Mona Miller**

Middle School Educator of the Year: **Mr. Eric Hagan**

High School Educator of the Year: **Mr. Andrew Zimmer,**  
**Mrs. Michaela Marx** and **Mr. Robert Hjelle**

### OMAHA SOUTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL

Freshman Recognition Award: **Nigena Jeannedorque**

Sophomore Recognition Award: **Chelsy Chairez-Ortiz**

Junior Recognition Award: **Kevin Gomez**

Pillar of Excellence Award: **Evelyn Leones**

NCPA Mentor Award: **Mia Garcia-Amador**

Middle School Educator of the Year: **Mr. Ryan Garcia**

High School Educator of the Year: **Mrs. Ilka**  
**Cisneros Ramirez**

3.58

High school scholars have an average GPA of 3.58. Scholars are expected to take at least one AP or Dual Enrollment course and earn a 3.25 each semester.

82.2

NCPA scholar commitment remains high, as evidenced by the 82.2% participation rate in NCPA events. NCPA's set goal is 75%.

2

2 NCPA seniors Anne Martinez & Myrka Perez-Ochoa were selected as QuestBridge Scholars, a national award that provides each selected high school student with a full ride to the college they match with.



ELLIE MORA | GRAND ISLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2022

**Coming from a single-parent household, Ellie understood that money wasn't a luxury at a young age. Through NCPA support, Ellie now sees college as a possibility to have a chance for a better life.**

"My childhood taught me to be independent, brave and a leader. Most importantly, it taught me never to let the world push me down. NCPA is the reason I am ambitious and the reason I can go to college. I would not have been where I am right now if it were not for the support and encouragement I get from this program. Both my sister and I are in NCPA, and coming from one parent and lots of children, there would have been no hope for us to attend college. But now, we have a chance to live a better life than our mom has—a chance to live our dream and lead the way for our younger siblings."

**As a current freshman majoring in biological sciences, Ellie aspires to be an orthopedic surgeon specializing in trauma. While there has been adversity, the support of NCPA families has helped her get closer to her long-life goals.**

"The COVID-19 pandemic changed my high school experience completely. I ended my sophomore year two months early. I never finished learning in any of my classes which left me unprepared for junior year.

I wanted to quit and give up on high school. I was mentally checked out, but my NCPA counselors talked me out of it and helped give me the last bit of encouragement I needed. At Grand Island High School, NCPA is a huge family, and we all support each other."

**Ellie was selected as the Senior Spotlight Speaker for embodying the Pillars of Excellence, and she describes the honor as an affirmation that her peers and family believe in her.**

"I was overcome with happiness and excitement when I found out I was selected as the speaker. It was a feeling that I will never forget because it felt like all my hard work had been seen. I will forever be thankful for the opportunity I received to tell my story."

**As Ellie begins her college journey, the impact of the Pillars of Excellence shapes who she is today.**

"I take the Pillars of Excellence everywhere I go with me. I know how important character and commitment are when it comes to education because we must have the ability to commit to passing a class with a grade that we're proud of. Our character and commitment need to have knowledge as a base. Knowing our abilities and strengths is what shapes us to have a great character and amazing commitment."



**PATRICK WRIGHT | SENIOR, OMAHA NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2023**

**While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted his high school experience, Patrick learned how to adapt and realized the importance of connecting with his peers when he returned to in-person classes this year. The support of NCPA eased his transition back to in-person learning.**

“This school year taught me how to adapt to change and how quickly things can happen and change. It also taught me how important it is to have connections with different people. NCPA has changed my life over the past few years, with its great resources and staff who help you.”

**In addition to helping him prepare for college, financially and academically, NCPA has provided Patrick with a support system that guides him to achieve his goal of attaining a bachelor’s degree in nursing. To him, NCPA is more than a support system—it’s a second family.**

“What I appreciate the most is that NCPA allows me to have people close to me like a second family. When I was a freshman, I didn’t know many of my cohorts. Over time, we’ve grown and become a second family together. It’s been great. NCPA has also had a big impact that it takes away from having to stress about how I’m going to pay for school.”

**While Patrick sometimes doubts himself, he realizes he is fortunate to be a part of NCPA, where he’s encouraged to strive for excellence and never give up.**

“I’ve learned from being in NCPA to try to accomplish something even when you doubt yourself. Because you might do great, and it will pay off because you can go for another shot. To students considering applying to NCPA, I would tell them to do it. Being in this program makes high school a lot easier, even if you don’t know what you want to do after high school. NCPA is a great opportunity to have on your shoulders.”



**KARLA HERNANDEZ GRANILLO | OMAHA SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2022**

**For Karla Hernandez Granillo, making her family proud is her number one goal. NCPA has helped her find a support system that guides her to apply for college.**

“Both of my parents are from Hidalgo, Mexico. My number one goal is always to make my family proud, which is something I have stuck to these past few years. College has been a big conversation in my family. NCPA has had a positive effect on my family by removing the financial stress of going to college and guiding and educating them through the college process. NCPA also changed my life by giving me a support system. The NCPA counselors always check in with the scholars to see how we are doing. The scholars also help each other, since a lot of us have the same classes together.”

**Through NCPA activities, such as Junior Shadow Day and the summer camps, Karla experienced college life and the available academic resources. She plans to study computer science to pursue a career in cybersecurity.**

“I encourage students to apply to NCPA. It’s the best choice I’ve ever made. You’ll meet new people and friends who’ll help you in school, and the staff giving you seminars on self-care. And you’ll explore campus and see what college is like when only being in high school. This is a great advantage to have.”

**One of Karla’s life-long goals is to travel more and graduate from college. The resources NCPA provides will help her aspirations.**

“I plan to study Computer Science at the University of Nebraska Lincoln. Omaha Public School offers rigorous courses. I’ve taken H Programming, H Cybersecurity and AP Computer Science. In the future, I want to have a career in cybersecurity. My goals for the future are to travel more, graduate with a bachelor’s degree, and find a stable job that will support my family and me.”

**One of the many important things Karla learns is to apply Pillars of Excellence to help others.**

“In school, I’m involved in Packer Partners, where every Wednesday, a group of students and I meet up at the library and come up with ways to help the freshmen. On Fridays, we would do activities, such as writing letters to incoming freshmen and encouraging them to get involved. I’ve used the Pillars of Excellence, Knowledge, Character and Commitment in the classroom and outside of it, especially when I meet new people to come out of my comfort zone. I’ve noticed that it’s helped my work ethic, and I will keep using them.”



**ALEX GEORGE, WINNEBAGO HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2023**

**Growing up with eight siblings, Alex understood the importance of teamwork and building his confidence. When he joined NCPA, he met scholars who supported him in overcoming his shyness.**

“My favorite part of NCPA is how supportive the NCPA scholars and staff are. NCPA has opened many doors for me and made me more confident. They also pushed me to do better and always supported my family and me. A challenge that NCPA has helped me overcome is that I used to be shy, but now I am not.”

**His family is a source of Alex’s support and why he dreams of becoming an engineer.**

“The major and career I am considering is engineering. I like building things and can see myself building in the future. My goals are to make enough to live comfortably, support my mom and my family and care for the people around me. NCPA has helped me pay for college, and it’s been a great opportunity.”

**Thanks to NCPA summer camp, Alex has visited the Nebraska campus and immersed himself in experiential learning introduced by various colleges, from law to engineering.**

“Through NCPA, I appreciate coming to camp and meeting new people. I had the opportunity to get to know them as well. I encourage students thinking about applying to NCPA to do it. We don’t pass up this opportunity because it opens many doors for us. NCPA Pillars of Excellence—knowledge, character and commitment—have become part of me that helps me reflect and apply to anything I do inside and outside the classroom.”

## CHANCELLOR GREEN WELCOMES 50 NCPA SCHOLARS ADMITTED TO NEBRASKA

Fifty Nebraska College Preparatory Academy scholars from North and South Omaha High Schools received certificates at a ceremony held at Omaha North and Omaha South High Schools, confirming their admissions to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln for the 2022-23 academic year.

They were invited to attend Nebraska by Chancellor Ronnie Green for their outstanding academic and personal success. He welcomed and personally handed the certificates to the scholars as they walked across the stage.

The NCPA college scholars are among the most successful college students in Nebraska. 125 NCPA college scholars are enrolled in Nebraska, with 42% earned a 3.5 GPA or higher this past academic year. NCPA's freshman-to-sophomore retention rate is higher than the Nebraska average.

The program has grown since 2018 and has provided resources and scholarships that remove barriers for first-generation, income-eligible students to pursue higher education. Students applied to the program while in middle school and had to maintain their grades through middle and high school.

A fellow first-generation college student, Chancellor Green understood the importance of education. He said he continually looks into how the program can be expanded.

“Seeing the success of these students, seeing them admitted to the university—it’s never old,” he said. “It’s always neat to see that success knowing that when they come to the university that they are amongst our very most successful students.”

Green said the program is something “we are immensely proud of at the University of Nebraska.”

Scholars like LaDaysia Smith knew how much NCPA had

opened doors of opportunities for her to accomplish her goal of graduating from college.

“As a first-generation student, it was very meaningful for me to know that all I had to do was put the work in to be able to chase my dreams,” Smith said. “That was very important for me and my family.”

As part of NCPA, the Nebraska sophomore took advantage of prep hours and study hours. More importantly, she’s received support from staff, counselors and peers who push her to be academically successful and, at the same time, mentally and emotionally healthy.

“Without the support of NCPA, I think that I would struggle,” Smith said. “To have people who support you no matter what and push you and don’t minimize your success is very important.”



Ronnie D. Green  
@RonnieDGreen

NCPA scholars are among the most successful students on our campus. Thank you [@OPS\\_LoganSupt](#) for being at both Omaha North & Omaha South and [@TonyVargas](#) for joining me at Omaha South as we presented these scholars their admission letters. Excited to welcome them to [@UNLincoln](#).



## INVESTING IN NEBRASKA'S FUTURE: ALUMNUS GIFT MAKES COLLEGE POSSIBLE



The University of Nebraska–Lincoln has announced endowed funds from alumnus and insurance executive Bruce Mackey to support first-generation students with income barriers to a college education through scholarships and academic programs, including Nebraska College Preparatory Academy (NCPA).

Mackey, a 1955 graduate of the College of Business, said that when he learned about opportunities to help future generations of students, it aligned with how he and his late wife, Loyce Mackey, had decided they wanted to help others.

His gift creates four permanently endowed funds at the University of Nebraska Foundation. The funds will be named Bruce and Loyce Mackey, in recognition of their philanthropic legacy.

Growing up in Frontier County, Nebraska, Mackey said he's grateful for the support of his family that shaped his work ethic. He said he's lived the American dream and wants his gifts to help provide the same opportunities for students.

"I just hope that students can look back when they're older and say: 'I've lived the dream. I had the opportunity. I stood up to it and made it work. But I had some very important support along the way,'" he said.

The Bruce and Loyce Mackey fund for NCPA will provide financial aid to students who complete the program and attend college in Nebraska. The gift will also provide access for the scholars to academic support, professional and personal development opportunities and one-to-one

support throughout their studies in college.

"We're a movement, we're part of this bigger initiative to show other first-generation and low-income students that if you want to be successful, you can do it," NCPA Director Moi Padilla said. "We need the right support. We need the right resources. That's where donors play a role in here, that they're part of this movement."

By investing in NCPA scholars and their families through scholarships and charitable giving, generosity like the Bruce and Loyce Mackey Fund will make a generational impact on scholars, like Nebraska alumni Edgar Ruiz-Guaderrama who is the first in his family to go to college.

"Honestly, I don't know where I'd be today or if I would've gone to college at all," Ruiz-Guaderrama said. "NCPA really helped me get through it."

To learn more about the impact, go to [go.unl.edu/ncpa-thankyou22](https://go.unl.edu/ncpa-thankyou22).

"We're extremely grateful to Bruce and Loyce Mackey because tuition scholarships are critical for Nebraska College Preparatory Academy's first-generation scholars at Nebraska," Director Padilla said. "By providing our scholars with tuition scholarships, they'll have the freedom to enter their professional careers with a strong community of support and without the added burden of student loan debt."

## IMPACT OF PEER SUPPORT AND MENTORSHIP



Preparing for college requires more than academic readiness and financial resources. Factors stemming from in and outside of the classroom can have a stressful and adverse effect on scholars. Providing peer support and understanding is a crucial component of a scholar's success.

While NCPA staff members meet regularly with scholars to discuss school and wellness checks, scholars appreciate having someone other than staff, teachers or parents to talk to. NCPA's **Mentor Program** connects scholars and peers to further bolster their support system and enhance the social aspect of NCPA.

Mentors are current Nebraska undergraduate students, in which the majority of whom are former NCPA high school scholars who have gone through a rigorous interview process and training. Students are selected based on their

previous experience, interests in working with underserved populations and ability to connect with others. Mentors attend a minimum of three events per semester with their mentees.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, mentors and mentees connected and visited Vala's Pumpkin Patch and Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium. Mentors and mentees also had the opportunity to create and donate tie blankets and participate in Speed Mentoring program to learn about academic majors, involvement on campus and student life at Nebraska.



“My mentor keeps me motivated. It’s nice to have someone checking in on me to make sure I’m okay and doing what I need to.”

— **Jayden Rodgers** (*Omaha North Scholar*)

“Being a mentor has allowed me to grow both personally and professionally. It has given me the skills to be compassionate and caring in situations that I might not have had to face. The mentor program has allowed so many great relationships and has helped both the high school and college sides equally.”

— **Shauntee Mims** (*The Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence Scholar and College Mentor*)

“My mentor is someone I can talk to and get insight into situations I have had to deal with. They have been helpful over the past couple of years.”

— **Patrick Wright** (*Omaha North Scholar*)

“I’ve become more outspoken as a result of being a mentor. I used to wait for people to speak to me first, but I am more confident speaking up and leading more on my own now. Being involved in the mentor program has also helped me work on my social skills to get to know others more.”

— **Nayla Torres** (*The Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence Scholar and College Mentor*)

“My NCPA mentor gives me better insight on situations and what’s expected as a college student. It’s been helpful to know someone else who has gone through it, and it motivates me as I prepare for college.”

— **Ruby Ochoa** (*Omaha South Scholar*)

**1:4** The Mentor-to-Mentee ratio is 1:4

**93%** 93% of mentees indicated mentor support is especially helpful to prepare for college

**179** 179 high school scholars received mentoring by college scholars



**The support of NCPA and Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence (TFIOE) has allowed junior microbiology major Kennedy Whiting to achieve her goal of attending college and working in the medical field.**

“Without NCPA, I simply wouldn’t be at a four-year college. College would be completely unaffordable, and quite honestly, it would have been challenging to be the first in my family to set off to college. I would be alone in an unfamiliar town and school without knowing anyone or having any resources. With all the financial and social support that NCPA provides, I don’t feel like I was thrown into the deep end with no knowledge or support, and I know that there is a family there with me at NCPA, ready to help if I fall.”

**After attending one NCPA summer program, Kennedy learned that her passion for science could become a career path. She is thankful for the countless opportunities NCPA has provided her.**

“My favorite part of NCPA has been the opportunities. Before the activities in NCPA in high school, I had never seen a college. I had never explored career fields, and I had never had the chance to get involved in the community and plan out my future. These were new things to me. It showed me how broad the world was outside Grand Island, Nebraska.”

**When Kennedy moved to UNL, college did not feel like a strange world due to her NCPA summer camp experiences.**

“Some of my favorite experiences through NCPA were the summer science camps. They gave us a firsthand look into what college was like by taking us on campus tours, teaching us in real lecture halls and staying in the dorms. When I moved to UNL for my first year, it didn’t feel like a whole new world. I could walk around campus and

recognize a building we visited or know how to get to the union without a map. The campus felt smaller and more familiar because I had already been there and experienced it with people I knew and trusted.”

**Now in college, Kennedy continues to move forward and seize any opportunities college offers. She’s involved in UNL Microbiology Club, the Minority Pre-Health Association, Honor’s Program and the Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experience (UCARE).**

“Attending college is important to me because I have a lot of goals for myself in life. I know that getting my degree is the first step in reaching each of them, and it has also caused me to mature and become an independent adult, which is a lifelong skill.”

**As she sets on her path to college graduation, she realizes that the lessons she’s learned at NCPA impact her beyond her college journey.**

“Being in NCPA has greatly influenced my family. We are on the fast track to the career and life that is most meaningful to us without financial or social barriers. Aside from this, the seminars and programs I have attended during my years at NCPA have taught me a lot of skills and information that have been directly applicable to my family dynamic, including problem-solving, financial planning, and emotional wellbeing. My mom has always especially loved to hear what we learned in seminars and enjoys seeing us apply these skills each day. The dedication required by NCPA has always felt worth it. Even in the summer, when I was learning math while my friends were at the pool, I knew the value of my commitment. I wouldn’t trade the life and well-being skills I have been granted from NCPA for anything.”

## SUCCESS ON CAMPUS

### AWARDS & NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

**Mona Miller**, first-year scholar from Omaha, was selected for the McNair Scholars Program. As a McNair Scholar, Mona will receive mentorship and guidance from a faculty member as she prepares for doctoral study.

**Clarice Santos** is one of eight undergraduate students awarded the university's Student Luminary Award that recognizes her exceptional leadership and commitment to improving the campus and community. Joana Reyes received a Student Luminary notable mention.

**Christopher Nguyen**, junior from Grand Island, received an invitation to join the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) organization. Through his involvement in AIAS, Christopher has access to select portfolio and resume workshops and mentoring opportunities.

**Nayla Torres Ruiz** was selected for the First-Year Research Experience Program, which provides students with an early start to conduct research under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Nayla is working with Professor Velazquez on a project highlighting the experiences of Hispanic parents working in meat packing plants.

**Jean Parker Morris, Daelyn Zagurski and Jaidan Payer** were elected for executive positions in the University of Nebraska Inter-Tribal Exchange (UNITE), UNL student organization that empowers Native American students. UNITE hosts an annual powwow on campus each year honoring high school and college graduates.

**Kelly Solis** was one of 45 students selected to join the Clifton Strengths Institute strengths coaching team. As a student strength coach, Kelly will be mentoring first-year business undergraduate students. Approximately 1,000 new students in the College of Business are coached each year.



**Samuel Aguilera Robledo** completed his first year as a Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experience(UCARE) scholar and was admitted into the McNair Scholars Program. Samuel recently presented his research poster titled "Metabolic Changes Associated with Epilepsy and Dietary Exosomes in the Liver" at the 2022 UNL Spring Research Fair.

**Cynthia Serrano Ortega** served as the academic chair for Kappa Delta Chi Sorority, Inc., a Latina founded national sorority that aims to achieve professional development, academic excellence and graduation for all its members.

**Oswaldo Palma-Vargas** is a New Student Enrollment Orientation leader during the summer of 2022. Additionally, Oswaldo is active in the Combs Scholars Honor Society, an organization designed to build a community for students of color in the Honors Program by offering leadership, networking and mentoring opportunities.

**Viangri Sontay-Lopez** served as the recruitment co-chair and community service co-chair for Sigma Psi Zeta, a multicultural Greek organization that provides a means to success and support for women, particularly women of color.

### INVOLVEMENT ON CAMPUS

Mexican American Student Association	Circle K (President)	Outdoor Adventure and Challenge Course
New Student Enrollment Orientation Leader	Teachers Scholars Academy	NCPA Mentor Program
Melvin Jones Scholars Learning Community	Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experience at Nebraska (UCARE)	LGBTQA+ Student Organization
All-Collegiate Choir	Global Experiences Office	Afrikan People's Union
University Honors Program	University of Nebraska Inter-Tribal Exchange	Minority Pre-Health Association
Combs Honors Scholars	Multicultural Greek Council	McNair Scholars Program
First-Gen Nebraska	University Learning Communities	Future Teachers of Color
TRIO Scholars		American Institute of Architects
		TFIOE Peer Leader Program



ISAAC WARD | UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN ALUM, CLASS OF 2020

As a former NCPA scholar at Omaha North High School and a graduate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in civil engineering, Isaac is one of many stories of success. Isaac, who now works as a structural engineer, appreciates how NCPA has opened many doors of opportunities.

“NCPA has changed my life that it gave me a financial peace of mind in high school and college, which allowed me to focus on my studies without worrying about not being able to afford the education.

**Regardless of Isaac’s path, his family always reminded him to make a difference. By joining NCPA, Isaac and his younger brother, Josiah, could have an opportunity to attend college and make an impact.**

“I am the seventh of the eight siblings raised in a single-parent home. There was never a dull moment growing up in such a big family. We didn’t have much, but we had each other, and that’s all that mattered. It’s taught me to appreciate the important things in life. It was also important in my family for me to follow in my siblings’ footsteps. I felt that college was a way that I could be educated to make a real difference in the world.

**At times, classes and academic pressures in college were challenging. However, the support of NCPA staff like Director Moi Padilla and Program Counselor Deena Curtis guided Isaac to overcome the difficulty and succeed.**

“I received great support from Moi when I was going through a stressful season of membership of my fraternity while balancing academic responsibilities. He helped me understand my power and limitations, which helped me

see it through. In the first semester of my freshmen year, my family dog of 10 years passed away. Deena was there for me while I was grieving, and she drove me to Omaha to be with my family.”

**Isaac knows first-hand that being in the NCPA program requires a lot of dedication and hard work, which both are keys to success for him. He wouldn’t trade his experience and always encourages students to apply to this life-changing program.**

“NCPA is a complete package that consists of helping students navigate social, academic, emotional, and financial pressures that comes with getting an education in the United States. The program understands that no one is perfect and provides immense support with the end goal of obtaining a degree.”



## NEBRASKA GRADUATES



**Bryan Chavez** (Computer Science & Mathematics, Psychology minor)

**Maricela Paramo** (Civil Engineering, Community and Regional Planning minor)

**Edgar Ruiz-Guaderrama** (Psychology, Pre-Medicine)

**Lulu Diaz** (Child, Youth, and Family Studies)

**Daniela Chavez** (Art, Photography)

**David Estrada** (Computer Science & Mathematics)

**Zitlalic Parra Valencia** (Architecture)

**Joana Reyes** (Psychology; Child, Youth, and Family Studies)

**Madison Lee** (Marketing)

**George Silman** (Management; Communication Studies)

**Katie Hill** (Actuarial Science, Mathematics and Finance minors)

**Mandy Dimauro** (Child, Youth, and Family Studies; Inclusive Early Childhood Education)

**Cynthia Serrano-Ortega** (Communication Sciences and Disorders)

**Yohanna Flores** (Child, Youth, and Family Studies; International Studies minor)



**131** NCPA scholars are amongst the most successful students on the Nebraska campus. To date, 131 NCPA scholars have graduated from UNL.

**32** college scholars made the Dean's List and 42.4% earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

NCPA scholars enter their professional careers with a strong community of support and without the added burden of debt (an average of \$13,326 less when compared to their Nebraska peers).



# n c p a



METROPOLITAN  
Community College