FORWARD

AWARD RECIPIENTS

STUDENT & FACULTY STORIES

NCPA ACTIVITIES

SUPPORT FOR NCPA STUDENTS

INSTITUTE OF EXCELLENCE

REFLECTION FROM CHANCELLOR PERLMAN

NCPA: THE FIRST 10 YEARS

THANK YOU TO CHANCELLOR PERLMAN

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This year the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy celebrates 10 years of preparing underrepresented students for academic success. What started out as a pilot program with 52 students has expanded into a model of college access that continues to serve hundreds of scholars. Meanwhile, graduates of NCPA have pursued graduate school, been accepted into professional programs, or have started successful careers.

NCPA scholars have proven educational success is achievable no matter the circumstances with the right academic and social support.

Even after the program has increased its academic standards and implemented a rigorous selection process, high school retention rates and ACT scores increase year after year. NCPA scholars are being accepted into UNL’s honor programs and continue to earn higher GPAs each year.

This report recognizes the accomplishments of the past year and reflects upon how NCPA has developed during the past 10 years. It celebrates the scholars and the staff who have made NCPA what it is today.

We hope it also serves as a testament to what supporters of this program have made possible throughout the past decade. You have played a significant role in the success and growth of NCPA and in the lives of the scholars and families who are a part of it, and we appreciate your contributions greatly.

We are proud of the advances made through NCPA in its first decade and press forward with anticipation of what NCPA scholars will accomplish in the decade ahead. We hope you enjoy taking a closer look at the inner workings of NCPA through this year’s report.

Thank you again for your continued support of the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy.

Harvey Perlman, J.D.
19th Chancellor of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln
2001–2016

Amber Williams, Ed.D.
Director, Office of Admissions & Nebraska College Preparatory Academy
Associate Dean, Enrollment Management
2016 RECOGNITION RECEPTION

AWARD WINNERS

Each year, the school year culminates with a Senior Showcase and Recognition Reception held in each city. All NCPA Scholars must complete a capstone research project their senior year to successfully complete the NCPA high school component. The scholars showcase their projects, which paves the way for their next step of collegiate thinking and research. This year’s research topics included cultural and gender issues, literature, history, science and health.

In addition, younger NCPA scholars, as well as high school and middle school teachers are recognized for their hard work and contributions. We’re pleased to recognize the 2016 award winners.

OMAHA NORTH MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL
Freshman Award: Sanjaya Bolton
Sophomore Award: Justin Brown
Junior Award: Khila Bowling
Pillar of Excellence Award (Senior): Josiah Ward
Middle School Educator of the Year
(McMillan Magnet Middle School): Cathy Hill
High School Educator of the Year
(Omaha North Magnet High School): James Ahern

GRAND ISLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Freshmen Award: Osvaldo Palma Vargas
Sophomore Award: David Estrada
Junior Award: Selena Ramirez
Pillar of Excellence Award (Senior): Lado Yezinai
Middle School Educator of the Year
(Barr Middle School): Thompson Koch
High School Educator of the Year
(Grand Island Senior High School): Jeff Vyhlidal

College scholars at UNL have an average cumulative GPA of 3.18, the highest in the history of the program

NCPA staff held 1,211 individual meetings with NCPA college scholars

NCPA staff spent 21,449 minutes in individual meetings with NCPA high school scholars
Kevin Custard always wanted to work with young people. He began his career in education as a vocal music teacher.

“I enjoyed that, but truly found my calling when I became a high school counselor. I really enjoy the one-on-one interaction and seeing the end result of all of the years of schooling and helping students get started on their next chapter in life,” he says.

Custard has worked with the NCPA since its implementation at Omaha North. He serves as a liaison between the NCPA staff, North High staff and students.

“Kevin helps make sure NCPA is successful in every step of the program —from helping us select the best class possible, to making sure our students are in the classes they need to be,” notes Jeff Hall, senior assistant director at UNL.

“Supporting them in their efforts to complete the requirements and do well in their classes is very important,” Custard says. “In the early days, I was responsible for printing transcripts, grade reports and schedules. Now it is more disseminating information between all groups; making sure that counselors have the most current information regarding the program and making sure that students are placed in the correct classes that align with the requirements of the NCPA program.”

“Kevin has been an excellent resource for the program in a variety of areas,” explains Amanda Murtaugh, senior assistant director at UNL. “From mental health processes to scheduling courses, he has been instrumental in the success of our students at Omaha North.”

And students’ success is his priority.

“Any program that provides post-secondary education to Omaha North High Magnet School is important to me,” he says. “I always try to get the students to focus on the long-term goal of attending UNL. There are not many scholarship opportunities of this caliber available to students, let alone a guarantee of a full-ride scholarship to students in their freshman year.”
Being prepared to succeed in college as well as having a scholarship to pay for tuition are huge benefits that NCPA scholars and their parents greatly appreciate. Yet families find the program also provides unexpected but equally important benefits that boost the success of the scholars.

“The first positive effect was that she got self-confident after being selected for the program,” explained Afsana Khan, mother of Akangkha Khan, a junior at Omaha North. “This is obviously an honor to be selected.”

Akangkha’s father Layket agrees. “The change I have seen in her is that she got very independent going on trips, camps and events. And she developed great leadership skills,”

“With NCPA, it’s allowed me to just get out of my shell and kind of talk to everyone,” says Akangkha. “I think that skill of being able to talk to anyone is going be very useful after college and even during because it’s a real life skill that is crucial. It’s given me the assurance and confidence that makes me, me.”

Her confidence has expanded beyond NCPA, too. Interested in robotics and designing robots since freshman year, she helped start a new chapter of SkillsUSA at her school and served as vice president. The club attends state and national skills contests in specific job demonstrations such as engineering and health. Since then she’s become club president and was recently reelected. Her goal is to recruit more members and make the chapter at Omaha North even more established.

Still, she’s looking ahead even further and is planning to major in chemistry/pre-med. She’s considering a career as a pediatrician specializing in either neurology or psychology for children. She wants to attend medical school and add grad school along with a residency.

“In order to receive the scholarship, it’s pushed me to work harder in school and further raise my personal expectations,” Akangkha explains. “Having NCPA pushes me to look for more scholarships because those high expectations have allowed me to be eligible for a number of scholarships, which has been a positive for the whole family. College is one of those things we can’t really avoid in order to reach success and having that weight being taken off our shoulders is so calming.”

Although she was born in the U.S., her parents came from Bangladesh where all of the Khan’s large family still reside, leaving Akangkha and her parents far from their immediate support. Thankfully, developing a second family is another benefit of the program.

“NCPA provided me that little school family that everyone wants. We get to hang out at events and honestly, I’ve made lifelong friendships with the people I have met through NCPA.”
Larry Uhing has worked with the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy since the very beginning and has seen first-hand what a difference it has made.

“This program is a life-changing experience for students. The academic expectations prepare students to excel in college, the leadership seminars provide members with solid core values, and the relationships with cohorts promote fellowship and support for a lifetime. This is perhaps the most rewarding high school program I have ever encountered,” he explains.

Not only has NCPA changed the lives of those in the program but its effects reach even further.

“NCPA has had a ripple effect on all students and has dramatically increased the number of underrepresented students attending college from Grand Island Senior High. Since the inception of NCPA our school has found the number of underrepresented students attending college has significantly increased. In fact, more students completed the ACT college admission test this year than ever.

“NCPA students are positive leaders in our school and other students have modeled their commitment to attend post-secondary educational institutions,” he says.

Uhing is a guidance counselor and the NCPA sponsor at Grand Island, which involves providing school counselors with information and assisting NCPA staff with helping students.

“My goal is to support the intentions of the program and the talented and dedicated staff. NCPA is involved with students and their lifestyle from middle school through college graduation,” he says.

More so, NCPA staff appreciates Uhing’s assistance and contributions through these 10 years.

“Larry is incredibly supportive of our program and our staff. He is extremely caring and personable, and I trust any questions or concerns for our program or our students to be taken care of when he is in charge. He is kind, reliable, and dedicated to student and program success,” says Amanda Murtaugh, senior assistant director at UNL.

“Larry has been a huge advocate for NCPA and for our students. Without his guidance, support, and insight, NCPA would not be where we are today,” says Jeff Hall, senior assistant director at UNL.

Uhing’s enjoyment of school that began when he was a child has led him to share his love of education and make lasting contributions in many lives.

“Through all levels starting with elementary through high school and college, and then working many years as a teacher, coach and counselor, education provided me with a network of friendships and endless opportunities to impact the lives of students, parents and staff.”
When Jairo Gamboa moved to this country from Bogota, Colombia, with his family at age 6, it was rough. He didn’t speak the language, so he was put into remedial English learning classes and lower academic levels than his peers. But he wanted to learn the same things as his friends.

“As a kid my parents gave up a lot to get us over here. I wanted to make them proud and learn as best as I could,” Jairo remembers. “We moved to the U.S. and sacrificed a lot to get here. So when I got here I decided I needed to try my best in order for me to succeed.”

“I began to push myself academically so I could be at the level of my friends. I started reading a lot. I studied hard and got to the level where I could understand and comprehend things quickly. Eventually that motivation got me to where I’m at now.”

Now he’s headed to UNL where he’s the first NCPA scholar to be accepted into the College of Business Administration’s Honors Academy. He’s looking forward to studying finance and economics, and is planning on a future career in business.

Providing a better future is exactly why Jairo’s parents, Maria and Jairo Sr., moved from Colombia to Grand Island; more specifically to ensure the safety and security of their family, which includes Jairo’s older sister, Laura, and his twin sister, Ana.

“Our dreams are for him to finish his academic studies, and get a career he enjoys,” says Maria and Jairo Sr. “Also so he becomes a person who participates positively in society.”

Jairo Jr. was active in Key Club during high school and he experienced first-hand the importance of contributing to society.

“It’s important because you are a part of the community and it’s also a part of you. By helping out your community you’re helping out yourself and others which is important in life,” he says.

And for Jairo Jr., NCPA provides a positive community of support for him.

“NCPA basically became a second family to me,” he says. “Especially our counselors Raymond and Jena, you begin to trust them and you want to make them proud. Although I am motivated, NCPA helps you out and provides support morally and academically.”

Meanwhile, his parents also appreciate the guidance NCPA and its staff has provided their son throughout his academic years.

“It has an amazing group of people that helps children and their parents through high school so kids can achieve their future goals.”
HARD WORK AND BIG REWARDS

NCPA scholars work diligently throughout the school year taking advanced courses, attending weekly seminars, and participating in events, mentoring opportunities and service learning projects, as well as regular one-on-one meetings with staff. NCPA requires a big commitment from scholars that fortunately comes with equally big rewards.

On that note, it’s valuable to take a closer look at what participation in NCPA looks like for the scholars and their families.

In Grand Island, events bringing together different classes such as sophomore and junior bowling, and freshman senior socials take place monthly. Socials and events involving scholars’ families are also held. Grade-specific events such as Financial Aid Night for seniors and their parents are held, as well as juniors attending Shadow Day at UNL.

Regular events in Omaha are similar to Grand Island’s and include student socials such as movie night and bowling as well as Mentor/Mentee Dinners.

Canned food drives were also held as service learning projects at both schools.

Scholars from both schools who are elected by their peers to be class ambassadors also attend the annual Ambassador Retreat held at UNL. Plus, NCPA counselors meet with parents during parent-teacher conferences.

While the schedule and requirements demand a large amount of time and effort both in and out of the classroom, scholars rise to the challenge and find the experiences are always worth the work.
RETAINING SKILLS IN THE SUMMER

While many high school students head to the pool each summer, NCPA scholars head to school.

Scholars spend the academic year taking advanced courses. To help scholars carry those skills and knowledge into the upcoming year, they receive enhanced academic engagement by attending classes and camps during the summer.

Summer Stars is a half-day program offered at both high schools with a focus on math, English, writing and life skills. Scholars in Omaha have the option to earn college credit through Metropolitan Community College classes.

When Summer Stars classes are finished, scholars head to UNL for Summer Science Camps, which are free for NCPA scholars and help them learn more about science and UNL campuses. Scholars are required to attend each summer they are in high school (before 10th, 11th and 12th grade).

While taking classes and attending academic camps isn't usually a high schoolers first choice of summer activities, scholars do appreciate the opportunity and realize its benefits.

"Even though Summer Stars requires me to wake up early in the summer, the end result is actually really useful because it makes sure that you don't forget the things you've already learned and it's way less stressful than actual school," explains Omaha scholar Akangkha Khan. "And the Science Camps allowed me to live on the dorms and get a feel for campus life and further explore UNL with my buddies right beside me."

For three days, sophomores and juniors from Grand Island and Omaha live on campus and indulge in a rich curriculum created by NCPA and NEBRASKA EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research). In past years, students have worked with DNA, water science, food science, physics, engineering, robotics, solar energy, plant science, and nanoscience.

The scholars interact with UNL faculty and learn about potential areas of study and related careers. Sophomores have the opportunity to explore UNL’s City Campus, and juniors explore UNL’s East Campus.

Meanwhile the camp for seniors helps develop the skills needed to create a foundation for the required capstone research project on the topic of their choosing. Seniors work with UNL library staff to explore available research opportunities and tools. The goal is to walk away with a capstone research topic and a basic understanding of research.

In addition, seniors will spend a day participating in Red Letter Day, a full campus open house program.
SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE ACADEMY

Weeks before the newly-selected NCPA scholars attend high school, they attend three-day camps at UNL’s campus—Brothers of the Academy (BOTA) for the young men and Sisters of the Academy (SOTA) for the young women.

Scholars from Omaha and Grand Island attend together and bond with their peers and staff to create the foundation of their NCPA family. They learn how to support each other and how to face difficult situations that may arise in high school. Scholars from both cities walk away united as brothers and sisters.

“I was excited but nervous because I was staying on campus with a group of strangers,” explained Da’Von George, an Omaha Scholar.

“After BOTA I felt like this group of strangers were my best friends. BOTA prepared me for NCPA by showing me what the program was all about. My favorite activities were the high ropes course, and the discussion circles. I learned more about my peers and I learned how to communicate with others.”

Scholars have the option to participate in the high ropes course at camp. This exciting course offers participants challenge in a controlled, safe environment with trained and certified facilitators. Scholars are able to choose what challenges they would like to participate in.

In addition, NCFA staff design and present a curriculum that focuses on the NCPA Pillars of Excellence: knowledge, character, and commitment. They also discuss topics that may be sensitive such as substance abuse, gangs, and healthy relationships, as well as discussing tactics and solutions to deal with these sensitive issues should scholars encounter them.

Fellow Omaha Scholar Caslyn Kingkade was also anxious about going but overcame those fears and had a positive experience as well.

“I felt like I had a support system with me going into high school even if we weren’t that close yet. It gave me great social skills with the Omaha girls.” Her favorite activities were making notecards for one another, ziplining “even though it was scary” and indulging in an authentic college experience by having ice cream for breakfast.

“Before I went, I was nervous,” Zitlalic Parra Valencia of Grand Island remembers. “After SOTA I felt really excited for what was to come. SOTA prepared me for high school and NCFA because I got new friendships and they support and help me with everything.

“I learned there are other people who might be going through the same family issues, or financial issues as you. There’s always going to be people who understand you and support you. I experienced a family connection with non-family members, which is great,” says Parra Valencia.

“After BOTA I was very comfortable with the group,” recalls Steven Mena of Grand Island. “The Omaha kids I was just getting to know and I thought they were really neat. It prepared me by letting me know I could talk to the others in the program and not feel judged, which was very comforting.”

“NCFA is work but it’s worth it,” Kingkade points out. “You make so many friends and meet so many new people. It’s like a big family.”
MENTORING
DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS WHILE BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS

Peer support and mentors who have “been there” are a large component of what makes NCPA scholars successful. While NCPA staff and educators work closely with scholars, having a peer to talk to and work with provides benefits for both the mentors and mentees.

Grand Island scholar Abigail “Abby” Javier Paxtle is a mentor to freshmen Kya Pass and Carolina “Cari” Thompson. Abby says being a mentor means a lot to her because she had mentors that helped her and she wants to do the same for others.

“Having Abby as my mentor means having a friend, someone who is dependable and who is always there for me to talk to when I need it,” says Kya. “It has showed me that there are people in NCPA who genuinely want to help me.”

Kya recalls how she had to give a speech for her English Honors class and was struggling with preparing for it. “Abby helped me get enough confidence in myself to try and practice, and even set up a time to make sure I got in some practice.”

Situations like that are why Abby enjoys being a mentor. “I love it when they message me about their accomplishments or if they need some advice,” she says.

Abby was there to support Cari when she was trying out for show choir. “She was there every step of the way by helping me prepare. She cheered me on because I was losing doubt in myself.”

To Kya, NCPA is “like having another family who is always there when you’re down, and to make sure that you’re on top of your school work. We work together if someone is having an issue or isn’t getting enough volunteer hours; we always help them and make sure they’re meeting requirements.”

The support she gets through NCPA has given Cari a broader sense of what’s possible.

“I like knowing I can do different things to make a difference in the community because in the long run it will change the world. NCPA gives me a chance for those opportunities I never knew I was open to.”

Abby Javier Paxtle (center) was nominated to receive the Peer Mentor Leadership Award for 2015-16 by her mentees Cari Thompson (left) and Kya Pass (right).
ALL AROUND SUPPORT

Most have heard the adage “It takes a village to raise a child.” In that spirit, providing a support system is a significant part and benefit of NCPA. Ask the scholars in the program and you’ll hear how NCPA has become their second family.

Not only does NCPA provide tangible resources such as instruction and tuition, but the intangible value of a supportive community and having one-on-one check-ins with staff ensures scholars stay on track and succeed to their highest potential.

NCPA staff carries out the curriculum and components of the program, but more importantly, they spend hundreds of hours getting to know each scholar.

Jena Mendoza and Susie Brown, NCPA counselors in Grand Island and Omaha respectively, are two of the staff members in each school working closely with scholars.

Susie Brown and Omaha scholars have fun trying out a selfie stick.

“Jena has gone far beyond being a typical counselor, becoming an incredibly important part of our lives and hearts and I appreciate her more than words can express.”

Omaha senior scholar Shakuan Smith says it’s obvious Brown genuinely cares about her job and her students.

“Susie actually sits down with students and makes checklists of things that need to be done. This type of support is important, especially during a stressful senior year. She is very easy going, personable and always in a good mood. She adds positivity, which is great for seniors.

“She helped me with completing the long paperwork of the Questbridge Scholarships and organizing the application. Her help made a difference as I was able to get everything done and ultimately I was awarded the scholarship,” Smith explains.

In whatever way scholars need support to succeed academically, NCPA staff work hard to address scholars’ needs in and out of the classroom.

As Grand Island scholar Guadalupe Esquivel explains it, “Jena has gone far beyond being a typical counselor, becoming an incredibly important part of our lives and hearts and I appreciate her more than words can express.”
When I was five, I always had a sense that someday I would make a change, whether it was within my family, community, or the world,” remembers UNL sophomore Cindi Izaguirre-Perez.

Before she heard about NCPA, she had never considered pursuing a college education and actually didn’t know what college was. In middle school, she said her goal was to work at a meatpacking plant and help her family.

However, when she heard Raymond Ramirez, NCPA director of operations, speak about the program and all of its advantages, she was intrigued.

“I remember my step-father encouraging me to apply, and truly to this day, NCPA has become the greatest blessing I have ever received. NCPA has provided endless opportunities for me to discover and strive for my dreams that I once thought I would never accomplish.”

Now she’s majoring in Global Studies and Ethnic Studies with minors in French, Spanish, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. She’s on track to graduate in May 2018.

Her involvement on campus includes being a member of the Mexican American Student Association, as well as Define American which is an organization that advocates for immigrant rights. She is also a part of the Center of Civic Engagement which promotes community service and will serve on the IOE Advisory Board.

Her long-term career goal after she graduates is to gain experience in an organization that helps provide assistance to immigrants and refugees, such as Nebraska Appleseed or the Asian Community Center. Then she wants to pursue a master’s and Ph.D. in Public Policy at a top-tier university. Her dream job is to be a professor.

“College has really become a great experience, and taking courses over subjects that interest me, really makes it exciting. Overall, college gives me the opportunity to not only be educated, but also pursue a job that will not only help our community or world, but also my family.”

Cindi is the daughter of Guatemalan-Honduran immigrants and a graduate of Grand Island Senior High School. Her family includes her mother, who is disabled, her step-father, who works at a meatpacking company, an older brother and three younger brothers.

“NCPA has had a positive effect on my family. It has given my family hope that they will see their daughter be a professional someday. Hope that their daughter will make a difference in this world. Hope that there are good people willing to help those who have no opportunities, obtain opportunities. This program has helped me connect with my family and help them understand how education will help me help them.”

While NCPA requires a lot of dedication, it has been more than worth it to Cindi and she appreciates all the time and effort the staff has invested in her.

“I’ve been able to obtain so many opportunities because of the support I have been receiving from the staff. They have contributed so much in my successes and doing my best in the program is a better way for me to repay them.”

Cindi Izaguirre-Perez | IOE Scholar, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

PHOTO: JACK SHEARD
INSTITUTE OF EXCELLENCE

Once NCPA scholars graduate from high school, the Institute of Excellence helps them transition to a successful college experience.

The Institute of Excellence (IOE) is the individualized retention program through NCPA at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln focusing on academics, professional growth, and campus involvement. It pushes students to achieve their academic and personal goals by giving them access to programming to meet academic and social needs, as well as leadership experiences.

The IOE helps each student through one-on-one meetings with the NCPA Retention Coordinator, individualized retention plans, grade-specific seminars, and social, leadership, and character building events throughout the year.

IOE scholars also serve as mentors for high school and undergraduate NCPA scholars. Their hard work pays off in a full academic scholarship, individualized support, and engagement in life skills and leadership development.

Building on those skills and opportunities, more than a dozen NCPA scholars have studied abroad in the past few years. Going to countries such as Brazil, Spain, Guatemala, Japan, and the United Kingdom, these scholars earned college credit while learning about another culture.

This campus involvement and leadership development plus experiences outside of the classroom have provided strong résumés and preparation for IOE scholars’ endeavors beyond college, such as professional and graduate school as well as engaging careers in the workforce.

IOE scholars were among UNL students and professors who studied abroad in Brazil.
INSTITUTE OF EXCELLENCE ALUMS

The first Omaha scholar to graduate from UNL was Taylor Armstrong in December 2013. In May 2014 Abel Covarrubias became the first Grand Island scholar to graduate from UNL. Approximately 103 IOE scholars are currently attending UNL. The following IOE scholars have graduated with degrees from UNL.

**OMAHA**

Taylor Armstrong  
Child, Youth and Family Studies  
Currently: Pursuing a master’s degree in gerontology

Gavrella Dickey  
Metro Community College graduate  
Dental Hygiene

Alyssa Randall  
Behavioral Health

**GRAND ISLAND**

Abel Covarrubias  
Finance and Economics

Leidy Santiago  
Child, Youth and Family Studies

America Ornelas  
Child, Youth and Family Studies

Carolina Ibarra  
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Linda Nguyen  
Biological Sciences

Dennis Garcia  
Business Administration

Christina Nguyen  
Child, Youth and Family Studies

Alyssia Casillas  
Sociology  
Currently: Pursuing a dental hygiene degree at UNMC

Sarai Urbina  
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Haley Goakey  
Psychology

Jhany Alvarado  
Business Administration

Rene Aranda  
Criminology & Criminal Justice  
Currently: Pursuing a master’s in social work at UNO

Elizabeth Sanchez  
Psychology and Spanish  
Currently: Pursuing Occupational Therapy at Nebraska Methodist College

Patrick Sullivan  
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Stephanie Hernandez  
Business Administration

Yosivel Alvarado  
Child, Youth & Family Studies
Stacked amongst the long list of accomplishments and endeavors carried out by Chancellor Harvey Perlman during his tenure, the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy (NCPA) shines brightly in the array.

Under Perlman’s leadership, UNL’s commitment to providing programs and services that enhance the college-going rate of underprivileged students was being carried out.

“The high school population was becoming more diverse and those cultures were unfamiliar with higher education,” Perlman recalls. “UNL needed more diversity. The idea was to bring in resources and interact earlier with students to get them on the track to college.”

With his vision to help first-generation and low-income youth succeed, NCPA was developed and implemented in 2006.

“Financial barriers were the first obstacle,” he notes. “The cultures of many of these students are not accustomed to borrowing money, so financial aid isn’t going to be a path for them.”

By selecting promising 8th grade students to complete a curriculum focused on science and math to prepare them for the rigors of college coursework, NCPA scholars who successfully completed the academic and programmatic requirements, and whose parents have sufficiently engaged in the program, were guaranteed to graduate from UNL without financial debt.

As Perlman reflected back to the beginning of the program, he said, “When NCPA was piloting, no one was sure if it would work. We’ve learned by trial and error, and made adjustment through the years. In the end, we did prove that if we expect hard work and success from students they will meet the challenge and succeed beyond our expectations.”

Due to the overwhelming success of NCPA in Grand Island Senior High school, members of the Omaha Empowerment Network, Omaha North Magnet High School Administration, and the North Omaha Foundation, petitioned UNL to expand in the Omaha Community. With overwhelming community support in fall 2008, UNL welcomed an additional 14 freshmen and 11 juniors as scholars at Omaha North Magnet High School.

Since 2006, more than 600 scholars and their families have been served.

While Perlman is no longer at the helm of UNL, his vision and effort will be evident for generations to come and he’s proud of what NCPA scholars have accomplished so far.

“It’s gratifying to see students’ successes exceed their expectations.”

Harvey Perlman | 19th Chancellor of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 2001-2016
NCPA: THE FIRST 10 YEARS

2006
• First freshman cohort at Grand Island Senior High School begins

2008
• First freshman cohort at Omaha North Magnet High School begins

2009-2010
• NCPA academic standards were strengthened; increasing core and cumulative GPA standards from 3.0 to 3.25 and requiring 9–12 grade students to take honor core classes and AP classes (beginning sophomore year)
• First cohort of 33 students enrolls at UNL
• NCPA student ambassador program is implemented in Grand Island and Omaha
• The Institute of Excellence (IOE) retention program is implemented at UNL
• A new partnership agreement is developed with Metropolitan Community College (MCC) providing increased academic options for the Omaha scholars
• Successfully implemented the NCPA Mentor Program

2011
• NCPA hires a Senior Assistant Director to coordinate emotional & mental health services and training for NCPA staff, students, and families.
• Capstone Research Project component implemented for high school senior scholars
• NCPA increased requirements to a 3.25 AND at least one honors and/or AP course each semester
The Nebraska College Preparatory Academy was one of the first programs that partnered a major university, community college, high school, and community organizations to tackle college success. Since its inception, hundreds of scholars and their families have been served by the program, while GPAs and ACT scores continue to rise, and scholars continue to achieve new successes each year. The milestones below illustrate the development of NCPA through its first 10 years.

- **2012**
  - Brothers & Sisters of the Academy is implemented to assist incoming scholars transition successfully to NCPA and high school
  - 8th grade semi-finalists interviews implemented for the selection process

- **2013**
  - First NCPA scholar enrolls in MCC
  - First NCPA scholar graduates from UNL

- **2014**
  - First NCPA scholar graduates from MCC
  - First NCPA scholar enrolls into graduate school

- **2016**
  - First scholar accepted in the University Honors Program and the College of Business Administration Honors Academy
  - As of June 2016, more than 600 scholars have been served by NCPA since 2006
  - As of June 2016, 11 scholars have studied abroad in six different countries
THANK YOU, CHANCELLOR PERLMAN!

The students of Grand Island and Omaha appreciate all you have done for NCPA. We wish you the best!
"Being a part of this program has prepared me for college and helped me seek my goals for the near future. Not only that, but those three words – Knowledge, Character & Commitment – have molded me as a person within these four years."

—Shacara Pierce | Omaha

"I have learned that you have to be really responsible and be able to work with people. Being an ambassador is being a role model who everyone can look up to and trust with their problems."

—Cynthia Serrano | Grand Island

“As an ambassador, I like being a leader amongst the sophomore class and making a bigger impact in the NCPA.”

—Justin Brown | Omaha
"I’m thankful for all the opportunities that NCPA has let me experience, and thankful for the reassurance of a good future to look forward to."

—Michaella Deladia | Grand Island

“I would tell students to do the (NCPA) program because it prepares you for college and helps you strive for greatness.”

—Da’Von George | Omaha

“I love being in NCPA because the group of people is like a family. It helps to have people with the same goals as you academically.”

—Bethany Turner | Grand Island