Greetings from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. It is hard to believe that as I write this, it is already Thanksgiving week, and upon our return from the holiday, only three weeks remain in this Fall 2016 semester.

Our International Student Services personnel are busy preparing for the arrival of new international students for the Spring 2017 semester. We anticipate having approximately 75% more new arrivals this January than we did in January 2016. Particularly notable is the steady increase in the number of students being admitted from Oman, as well as Nepal.

The World Affairs Conference, UNK and Kearney’s premier global platform, was held in September. This year saw Ambassadors, other top diplomats, EU representatives, writers, photo-journalists, experts, academics and performers all converge on Kearney to interact with our community on one of the most pressing challenges of our times: migration, borders, and identity. Where else in the Heartland would this have been possible! It’s a tribute to UNK that a world-class event of this nature could take place far from the political arenas of Washington DC, New York or Brussels. Our UNK students and outstanding faculty were deeply engaged in record numbers in the discussions—which also attracted schools and community members from across our region. As the quote from John Donne put it: “No Man is an Island” indeed: we here in Kearney, Nebraska are fully aware of that and are prepared to play our part in understanding and managing today’s global issues.

All UNK students were given the opportunity to give UNK International feedback on which countries would be appealing for study abroad opportunities. Last year the students asked for, and received a short-term study abroad opportunity in Milan, Italy. Another popular choice was Spain. Thus, we worked diligently this past summer to find an ideal university to partner with. The first group of Spanish speaking students will travel to Madrid in February, followed by another group in the Fall 2017 semester.

At UNK we call ourselves Difference Makers. You will have the opportunity to read about an international student organization that was recognized for making a difference for the UNK and Kearney communities.

Finally, the UNK Alumni Association, in partnership with UNK International, is hosting its first International Alumni Reunion in September of 2017. We’ve announced it on Facebook and are already seeing a great deal of interest from our international alumni, who are looking forward to catching up with friends at their “home away from home.”
Human rights. His keynote was entitled *Justice for Migrants and all Working People.*

Given the degree to which Germany has been in the forefront of the European refugee crisis, having received more than one-million refugees in 2015 alone, it was important for the audience to hear from someone with first-hand knowledge of what is taking place there. German Consul General Herbert Quelle spoke candidly about the challenges faced by Germany, in hopes that his presentation would leave the audience with a greater understanding of the reality of the crisis in Europe. Quelle noted that the number of immigrants Germany received in 2015 equals approximately 1.5% of Germany’s population. In the U.S., this percentage would correspond to nearly four-million refugees. However, in the past two years, the U.S. has received somewhere between ten-and twenty-thousand refugees. “It is important that you, as citizens of this area, take along a feeling of sympathy and understanding for the situation in Europe,” Quelle said. “We are important allies, and we will stick together.”

After several more compelling presentations ranging from the Palestinian diaspora to public health, climate change, and violence against women, the day was rounded out with the evening keynote address, *Growing Up in the Shadow of the Border,* by Mr. Rick Najera, a comedian, nationally acclaimed speaker, award winning screenwriter-performer-director, and author with credits in film, television, theatre, Broadway, and new media. Najera drew a large crowd for his address in which he explored borders, bridges, and boundaries. “In Najera’s career, he advocates for greater Latino representation in the media and politics, and
encourages others to take the pen into their own hand, so to speak, and tell their stories,” said Dr. Michelle Warren, Assistant Professor of Spanish at UNK. She continued, “He told about some of the prejudice he encountered while growing up in Southern California and also some of the stereotypical expectations that he deals with while working in Hollywood. His talk made us laugh like crazy but also made us think about breaking down barriers and ‘borders’ built of stereotypes and prejudices. His dynamic presence and encouraging story of victories was particularly impactful for UNK’s young Latino population—what a great role model! Everyone enjoyed Rick’s address immensely.”

Day two of the conference was every bit as compelling as day one, starting with a presentation by the Director of the European Parliament Liaison Office with the U.S. Congress, Mr. Antoine Ripoll, whose topic was Europe’s migration challenge. The audience also heard from the Ambassador Božo Cerar of Slovenia, and diplomats representing Mexico, the Netherlands, and Cameroon, as well as some of Nebraska’s own.

Dr. Marjorie Heier grew up in Nebraska and graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine. After practicing rural medicine in the state for 22 years, she became the medical director of a missions clinic in the Rufunsa District of Zambia. She spoke about the challenges of overcoming regular endemic/pandemic threats amongst both host and immigrant populations.

The conference planning committee surprised Mrs. James E. (Donna) Smith by presenting her with the Ari Sosa World Affairs Conference Service Award, in recognition of her decades of outstanding dedication to the conference. Another special treat was the opportunity to welcome Nancy Smith, daughter of James and Donna Smith, who drove from her home on the east coast to attend the conference.

“The 2016 World Affairs Conference was one of the very best conferences in my 28 years at UNK. The issues of refugees, migration, and borders were so very well explored. Due to the thought-provoking and poignant sessions, our campus community has a better understanding of the serious challenges confronting our shared humanity,” stated Professor of Political Science and interim Dean of Natural and Social Sciences, Dr. Peter Longo, following the conference.

The 2016 conference experienced record attendance numbers. Total attendance for all sessions was 1,943 Kearney High and UNK students, as well as faculty, staff, and Kearney area community members. This compares to 1,106 in 2014, 1,387 in 2013, and 1,242 in 2012.

For more information, including the complete conference agenda, speakers’ biographies, and additional photos and video, go to www.unk.edu/worldaffairs.
UNK Launches Study Abroad Program in Spain

In October of 2015, UNK students were given the opportunity to participate in a survey with the goal of identifying in which countries they would want to study abroad. Students expressed high interest in Spain, so we are happy to announce that all UNK students now have the opportunity to go where they asked and experience the best of Spain.

This past summer, Asst. Professor of Spanish, Michelle Warren, and Asst. Vice Chancellor for International Affairs, Michael Stopford, traveled to Spain in search of the perfect location. Nestled in the heart of Madrid is Centro Universitario Villanueva.

Centro Universitario Villanueva offers the unique opportunity for students to either fulfill UNK Spanish requirements or take courses taught in English. This allows all UNK students, regardless of major/minor, to take part in a truly exciting and enriching study abroad program in the center of Madrid.

Outside of the classroom, students will discover the vibrant city of Madrid through cultural activities such as a visit to Muesdel Prado, Santiago Bernaeu and Plaza de toros de las Ventas. Students will not only gain knowledge in their respective courses of study and earn 12 credits, they will also learn through immersion in Spanish culture and life.

The inaugural group of six Spanish major/minor students will travel to Madrid in February, with the English program taking place in Fall 2017. The deadline to apply to study abroad in Madrid, Fall 2017, is February 17, 2017. For more information, email unkstudyabroad@unk.edu.

ISA Honored as Outstanding Student Organization

The International Student Association (ISA) was chosen as UNK’s Outstanding Student Organization for the 2015-16 academic year. The organization was recognized at the Applauding Excellence celebration held at the conclusion of the 2016 spring semester.

The purpose of ISA is to promote understanding among students regardless of their nationality. They achieve this by:

- Hosting open meetings that include team-building activities, sharing holiday traditions, and presentations about different countries, as well as hosting special events such as the Welcome Week, Halloween, and Valentine’s dance parties
- Encouraging participation in campus-wide events such as The Big Event
- Keeping students informed about campus activities or services.

One of the most impressive events ISA hosts is the Scott D. Morris International Food and Cultural festival. This event gives approximately 200 international and domestic students the chance to integrate, communicate, and work together to share traditional food, cultural entertainment, games and activities from around the world with the 2,000 attendees from UNK and Kearney area communities.

The festival gives attendees the chance to experience the sights, sounds, and flavors of the different countries. More importantly, attendees can dialogue with those from other cultures and gain an understanding and sensitivity they may not have had before.

Congratulations ISA on this well-deserved honor!
For the past five summers, the UNK Office of Study Abroad has hosted a week-long World Leaders Camp with the goal of increasing global awareness amongst incoming freshmen, and piquing their interest in exploring study abroad opportunities.

In an attempt to retain these goals, yet broaden the audience to include high school students from around the world, eight international students were invited to participate in a Global Leaders Scholarship Program the week prior to the World Leaders Camp. The eight international students, selected through an application process in their schools, arrived in Omaha on July 9—two students each from China, Brazil, the United Arab Emirates and Mexico.

The first week was devoted to intensive English immersion in order for them to brush-up on their language skills before joining the World Leaders Camp students for their second week here. They were in class each day, but their evenings and weekend were devoted to exploring Kearney. They visited the Archway, Yanney Park, Big Apple, went horseback riding at Cottonmill Park, and visited downtown Kearney during Cruise Weekend. These activities were eye opening and fun.

For a majority of the international students, it was their first time on a university campus that did not consist of skyscrapers and crowds of people. They were fond of the beautiful greenspace, as well as all the squirrels and rabbits on campus.

On July 18, four students from Nebraska joined the group. These students had never traveled internationally. Throughout the week, the international and Nebraska students enjoyed a mix of presentations by UNK faculty members and cultural activities, including:

- Salsa dancing at El Museo Latino
- Polka dancing, making kolaches, and playing the accordion and Czech bagpipe in Wilber, Nebraska – the Czech Capital of the USA
- Learning Origami and Calligraphy with the Japanese Association at Kearney

As part of a closing activity, the students wrote messages to one another. Below are some comments the staff received from that exercise:

“Thank you for choosing us. You changed our lives.”

“Thank you for choosing this amazing group of people for this program. It changed my life and I’ll never forget this!”

“These two weeks were amazing. You gave us the best experience ever and I will always remember this.”
New Majors of Interest to International Students

The University of Nebraska at Kearney has announced the addition of two new programs of study that are sure to attract the attention of current and future international students.

The Engineering Foundations Program, housed in the Department of Physics, prepares students in math, physics, chemistry and engineering so they can transfer to the University of Nebraska—Lincoln (UNL) after their sophomore year.

The second option is a dual degree physics and engineering program. This allows students to earn a Bachelor’s degree in physics with an emphasis in engineering from UNK. Those students can then earn a second Bachelor’s in engineering from UNL. This program allows students to earn the UNK degree in three years and the UNL degree in two additional years.

The benefits of the engineering program include more one-on-one support from professors who are experts in mechanical and electrical engineering, smaller class sizes, lower tuition costs, preparation specifically designed for engineering at UNL, and help finding appropriate internship opportunities.

The Department of Communication is now offering a sports communication major. This degree program helps prepare students for a variety of career opportunities in the sports industry.

Sports communication specialists do everything from reporting sports news, to broadcasting sporting events, to marketing. The sports communication major will give students the opportunity to develop the skills they need to be prepared for all of those roles in the industry.

Students who major in sports communication will have coursework in communication and journalism, as well as in writing, design, small group communication, and leadership.

The Department of Communication created three new courses for the sports communication major. They include Sports Writing for the Media, Radio Workshop: Sports, and a sports section of The Antelope newspaper staff.

Students who pursue a major in sports communication are encouraged to minor or double major in sports administration.

International Alumni, save the dates!

The University of Nebraska at Kearney will hold its inaugural International Alumni Homecoming Reunion, September 14-16, 2017.

All international UNK alumni are invited to return to campus to reconnect with your alma mater and old friends.

Please share this event with your UNK international alumni friends and plan to meet them back on your campus.

Information about the event will be available on the UNK International Alumni Facebook Page and UNK International website as plans come together.

You won’t believe how much the campus has changed! Make your plans now to attend!

Please go to unk.edu/international to update your contact information and tell us what has been going on in your life since you left UNK.