

May 2019

UNK Global News



From Kearney to Vietnam

From The University of Nebraska 2019 Global Engagement Report

Growing up on a farm in Ashland, Nebraska, Daniel Kritenbrink never anticipated that he would later serve as U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam. As a farm boy, he developed a strong work ethic and spirit of perseverance—but gaining first-hand experience with global issues is what helped to launch his career in public service.

After graduating from Ashland-Greenwood High School, Kritenbrink chose to attend UNK (then Kearney State College), where he enrolled in the Honors Program led by Dr. Richard Jussel. It was at UNK, while participating in the James. E. Smith Midwest Conference on World Affairs, that he made the decision to join the foreign service and serve his country.



Ambassador Kritenbrink

Studying abroad opened the world to Kritenbrink. Among his many experiences, he benefitted from a short study tour to the Soviet Union in 1989, followed by a full academic year studying at Kansai Gaidai University in Japan in 1990-91. He credits Dr. Tom Magstadt, then chairman of the UNK political science department, for encouraging him to study in Japan and expand his perspective on the world.

“Dr. Magstadt had talked to me not long after UNK set up the new exchange program with Kansai Gaidai University,” Kritenbrink said. “I initially told him I wasn’t interested, but after he asked a second time, I realized what a tremendous opportunity it would be for me.”

The year of learning Japanese helped Kritenbrink develop keen insights into Asian cultures, as he realized the importance of speaking with others in their native languages, rather than relying solely on English. His travels to other parts of the world also helped him to hone his networking skills, communicate effectively and work collaboratively to solve problems and develop solutions.

Studying abroad also helped the future Ambassador to see Nebraska’s role in the global context more clearly and understand the importance for Nebraskans to engage actively in the global economy. Kritenbrink later went on to study Mandarin Chinese, and his knowledge of the language was put to good use during his sixteen years helping U.S. citizens and companies build connections in Japan and China.

The most important moment in Kritenbrink’s career came on July 27, 2017, when he was nominated as U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam. He was confirmed to the role in October of the same year.

As a speaker at UNK’s May 2018 commencement, Ambassador Kritenbrink encouraged UNK graduates to start locally in thinking about their connections to the world and the contributions they can make: “Be confident, proud of who you are, believe in yourself and consider carefully what you can do to contribute to society.”

In reflecting on his opportunity to study abroad, Ambassador Kritenbrink believes that he can’t overemphasize the importance of studying a foreign language. “Speaking another language can be a tool and an asset. It can also serve as the key to unlocking another culture and understanding how people think and talk about themselves. It has been fun to learn Japanese and Chinese. To be able to speak another language is exhilarating.”

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA



KEARNEY

From the Director

I am pleased to share with you the 2019 University of Nebraska Global Engagement report which can be accessed via the following link:

<https://nebraska.edu/-/media/unca/docs/offices-and-policies/documents/global-engagement/2019-global-engagement-report.pdf?la=en>

UNK is prominently featured in this year's report, including the article about **Ambassador Krittenbrink** on the first page of this newsletter. You will also find a profile of **Ann Marie Park**, Assistant Director of International Education who oversees international partnerships and study abroad. This year Ann Marie helped create two exciting new programs, including a four week summer program in Australia and a fall semester complement to the highly successful Czech Republic program. Read on to learn from three UNK students who have participated in study abroad in Japan, Ireland, and the Czech Republic. Next is a review of the Nebraska Semester Abroad program in the Czech Republic and reflections from **Dr. Doug Biggs**, Professor of History, who led this program in 2018. The UNK section concludes with a profile of UNK international alumnus **Andrés Traslavina**. Andrés included study abroad in his undergraduate experience and went on to become Director of the Global Recruitment Team for Whole Foods Market, owned by Amazon.

Many successful Loper alumni, like Ambassador Krittenbrink and Andrés Traslavina, report that study abroad opportunities were among the most impactful aspects of their UNK experience. If you are a current or future UNK student (or just want to learn more about study abroad opportunities at UNK), I encourage you call Ann Marie at 308-865-8944 to talk about how you can incorporate study abroad in your program.

Have a great summer!



Dr. Tim Burkink

University of Nebraska Africa Summit 2019

Three UNK faculty members were selected to serve as panelists for the University of Nebraska (NU) Africa Summit 2019. The Summit took place on Thursday, March 28, at the Truhlsen Events Center on the campus of the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha.

Organized by the Senior International Officers for the four NU campuses—Dr. Tim Burkink at UNK, Mr. Josh Davis at UNL, Dr. Jane Meza and Mr. Bruce Grogan at UNMC and UNO, and Dr. Steven Duke in NU Central Administration—the Summit was intended to provide the opportunity for NU faculty, staff and graduate students to meet each other, learn about each others' projects or research taking place in Africa, and identify ways to work together to enhance the University's engagements with Africa.

The Summit was opened with a keynote address pre-

sented by Professor Stephen Obaro, M.D., Ph.D., with the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at UNMC. A series of breakout sessions followed the keynote, each with several panels on a variety of subtopics.

From UNK, Dr. Greg Brown, Department of Kinesiology and Sports Sciences, served on the Southern Africa panel; Dr. Frank Tenkorang,

Department of Marketing, Agribusiness and Supply Chain Management, served on the Business, Technology, Social Sciences, and International Relations panel; and Dr. Michelle Fleig-Palmer, Director of Health Care Management Programs, served on the Health Sciences and Health Systems panel.

Following the Summit, Tenkorang reflected on its impact, saying, "The breadth and depth of ongoing teaching and research activities in Africa by NU faculty were impressive—from Agriculture to Business to Climate to Health Systems."

Brown echoed Tenkorang's comments, stating, "I was impressed by the tremendous level of involvement of NU faculty in research and service activities across the African continent."

A reception and tour of the Buffett Cancer Center and the Biocontainment Unit followed the Summit.



Dr. Frank Tenkorang



Dr. Greg Brown



Dr. Michelle Fleig-Palmer

Sister City Program Leads to Agreement with Czech Republic University

Kearney's Sister City connection with Opava, Czech Republic has led to a partnership with a Czech university.

When members of Kearney's Sister City committee invited officials from Opava, Czech Republic to visit Kearney in 2016, included in the invitation was Jaroslav Machovsky, who worked for the City of Opava at that time. Machovsky then organized the visit when Kearney officials traveled to Opava and Poland in June of 2017.

In 2018, Machovsky transitioned from his career in local government to one in higher education, as the head of external and international relations with the University of Social and Administrative Affairs in Havirov, Czech Republic. He then reached out to UNK in an effort to form a partnership that would open the doors for student and faculty mobility and cooperative research opportunities.

The agreement was signed in August, and two seniors from the University of Social and Administrative Affairs were the first to visit UNK earlier this semester. Barbora Markova and Gabriela Pilchova arrived in Kearney for their short-term program on March 25. They spent two weeks in Kearney and enjoyed an enriching and varied schedule of academic and cultural experiences on campus and in the community.

Markova and Pilchova observed courses in Business and Psychology, including Professional Selling, Human Development, Principles of Management, Business Communications, and Human Resource Management. Other campus activities included participation in an *Adulting 101* seminar for high school students hosted by ENACTUS, a tour of the Office of Communications and Community Relations with Assistant Vice Chancellor Kelly Bartling, attending the AJR (Indi-pop band) concert, attending the Undergraduate Student Research Day, and several optional campus activities such as performing arts and athletic events.



Barbora Markova & Gabriela Pilchova

UNK MBA Director, Dr. Sri Seshadri, invited Markova and Pilchova to tour the new Central Nebraska Veterans Home in Kearney with his Dawn Rotary Club. They also had the opportunity to experience crane-viewing at Rowe Sanctuary with Dean Tim Burkink. Additional community activities included an event at the Museum of Nebraska Art and a concert at The World Theatre.

One final unique experience for the Czech students was a day trip that involved traveling to Fullerton, Nebraska with UNK Admissions recruiters to visit the high school there.

Now, back at their home university, Markova and Pilchova are finishing up their programs. Upon graduation, Markova will continue her studies at a university in Prague, while Pilchova will begin working in her hometown of Havirov. They also gave a presentation to faculty and students, sharing their heart-warming UNK and Kearney experiences and memories. It is our hope that their visit will be the start of a dynamic partnership for years to come.

Pilchova & Markova with Dean Tim Burkink



International Alumni, we want to keep in contact with you!

- ◆ Please go to unk.edu/international to update your contact information and tell us what you are doing these days
- ◆ Catch up on news and happenings by reading the UNK Global Newsletters
- ◆ See the campus activity calendar or access the UNK Alumni Association website
- ◆ Join the UNK International Alumni Facebook group to read about happenings on campus and around Kearney
- ◆ If you are interested in being a person prospective students could email about life at UNK, send an email to international@unk.edu.
- ◆ Finally, many current international students heard about UNK by "word of mouth." Please share your UNK experience with your friends and relatives so they can receive the same great education you did!

Students, Community Connect through UNK's International Food Festival

By Tyler Ellyson, UNK Communications

Food is often referred to as a universal language. It can bring people from different backgrounds together and bridge the gap between cultures. Everyone enjoys a good meal, no matter where they're from.

That was evident Sunday during the 42nd annual Scott D. Morris International Food and Cultural Festival, hosted by the University of Nebraska at Kearney International Student Association. The event at UNK's Health and Sports Center brings around 1,500 people to campus to celebrate diversity while sampling a variety of dishes from across the globe and learning more about students' home countries.

Tejesvini Balaji, president of UNK's International Student Association, said the festival is a great opportunity for students to connect with each other and the local community. "UNK is so welcoming to international students, and events like this are beautiful in the sense that you get to see all the different cultures and be exposed to a different kind of lifestyle," said Balaji, a third-year psychology student who was born in India and raised in Dubai.

Students from a dozen countries contributed to the event by preparing food, performing on stage and organizing informational tables with games and educational activities.

It took Jahad Al Bulushi and his friends 10 hours over two days to cook enough chicken kabuli to feed the hungry crowd. The popular dish from his native Oman includes chicken, rice and a mix of vegetables and spices. "That's what we eat almost every day for lunch, and some people eat it for dinner," said Al Bulushi, who learned his mother's recipe when he came to the U.S. to study supply chain management through a scholarship program.

The UNK junior, participating in his third International Food and Cultural Festival, said the reaction from attendees makes all the work that goes into the event worthwhile. "Spring semester, for me, is all about those two hours during the food festival," he said. "The atmosphere this festival creates, all the people. They are just surprised. They love it. They are so interested in what they're seeing, and that brings me satisfaction." "The smallest thing I can do is share my culture with them," Al Bulushi said.

The festival, which is free to attend, also featured dishes from Japan, China, South Korea, Nepal, Spain, Australia and Poland, as well as performances ranging from traditional songs to modern K-pop and Japanese street dancing.

Taehoon Kim, a third-year marketing student from South Korea, was part of a group demonstrating taekwondo mixed with some choreography to the popular song "HandClap" by Fitz and the Tantrums. In addition to the food and entertainment, which he described as "awesome," Kim said the UNK event gives him a chance to advertise his home country. "I should be a representative of South Korea's culture as an international student," he said.

Nearly 500 international students from 51 countries attend UNK, representing 7 percent of the total enrollment.

Gilbert Hinga, dean of UNK's Division of Student Affairs, said events like the food festival enhance cultural awareness on campus and in the community while embracing the global society we live in. "This event is incredibly important because part of our mission at

UNK is to create a learning environment that's inclusive for all students," Hinga said. "It's really a wonderful opportunity to showcase the diversity, inclusion and rich culture represented here."

The International Food and Cultural Festival is sponsored by Morris Printing Group of Kearney, UNK LoperNites, the Pepsi Fund and UNK's Office of International Education.



Scott D. Morris International Food and Cultural Festival

photos courtesy of Todd Gottula, UNK Communications



For complete photo gallery:
<http://unknews.unk.edu/2019/03/11/s-tudents-community-connect-through-unks-international-food-festival/>

UNK Develops Partnership with Autonomous University of Nayarit, Mexico

Officials from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the Autonomous University of Nayarit, Mexico held several meetings at their respective universities this academic year in order to establish a partnership that will open the door for student and faculty exchanges and shared research opportunities.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion Director, Juan Guzman, who assists with recruitment efforts in Latin America, was instrumental in bringing the two institutions together. Born and raised in the capital city of the State of Nayarit, Tepic, Guzman has close ties within the community and university.

Autonomous University delegates have traveled to Kearney three times to meet with faculty and administration to define the parameters of the partnership. Delegations from UNK have also made trips to Mexico to meet with faculty, staff and students there.

The third visit to UNK by Autonomous delegates included students who participated in UNK's Cultural Unity Conference, held at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney on Friday, March 1. The Autonomous students gave an interesting presentation to the audience of nearly 450 high school students from Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado. The topic of the presentation was Indigenous populations in Nayarit.



UNK delegation with Indigenous students in Nayarit

There are three facets to the partnership, including our English Language Institute summer program for students, faculty development opportunities that include English training and shadowing professionals in specific careers, and the Delfin Research Project.

The Delfin Research Project is a consortium of universities in Latin American countries, including Colombia, Costa Rica, and Mexico, for the purpose of performing joint research projects involving students and faculty. Autonomous University is the host institution in Mexico. UNK is the first U.S. institution to join this consortium. Professor of Political Science, Dr. Will Avilés, and Associate Professor of Chemistry, Dr. Hector Palencia, are spearheading the Delfin Project at UNK.

A Delfin delegation will be visiting UNK early in May to make presentations to all interested faculty and administration. They will also be working with Avilés and Palencia to coordinate upcoming projects.

Planning is underway for the first group of UNK students who will travel to Tepic, likely in 2020, for faculty-led summer programs in specific disciplines.



Juan Guzman and Asst. Director of International Education Traci Gunderson with the President of the State of Nayarit, Mexico

UNK Piano Student Seulji Kim Performing at Carnegie Hall

Seulji Kim, UNK piano performance major and international student from South Korea, won second place in the American Protégé International Music Talent Competition. She competed in the college/professional category.

The win gives Kim the opportunity to perform in the winners recital, taking place at Carnegie Hall in New York City on December 22, 2019.

Kim transferred to UNK from the University of Minnesota in 2018 after having studied with UNK piano instructor Jay-

oung Hong at the Minnesota International Piano Camp that summer. Sitting Dr. Hong's teaching style as the factor that drew her to UNK, she said she wanted to be able to study under Hong full time.

Kim also plays keyboard in the UNK Jazz/Rock Ensemble.. (photo by Corby Dorsey, UNK Communications)



The University of Nebraska Kearney is an affirmative action / equal opportunity institution. Individuals needing accommodation under ADA should contact the ADA coordinator at UNK, 308.865.8655.

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