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NEBRASKA COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

july – december 2019

# mid-year report

Grand Island Senior High School, Omaha North High Magnet School  
Omaha South High Magnet School, Winnebago Public School (*affiliate member*)  
Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln

 **State Farm**

  
**METROPOLITAN**  
Community College

  
**PETER KIEWIT**  
FOUNDATION

3	<i>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i>
4	<i>DEMOGRAPHICS</i>
5	<i>HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC DATA</i>
6	<i>NCPA ACTIVITIES</i>
10	<i>WELLNESS DATA</i>
11	<i>MENTOR PROGRAM</i>
13	<i>TRENCHARD FOUNDATION INSTITUTE OF EXCELLENCE</i>
15	<i>NCPA COLLEGE GRADUATES</i>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are proud to serve 317 high school scholars and 101 college scholars this academic year. Scholar performance continues to stay high across the board and outperforms the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and nationwide averages in many areas. This report provides information from June 2019 to December 2019.

### NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

#### High School Scholars

- NCPA's high school average GPA is 3.62.
- NCPA scholars average ACT score (n=22.4) exceeds the national average (n=20.8) by almost two points.
- The NCPA high school retention has increased for the seventh consecutive year, even after the program has increased its academic standards and implemented a rigorous selection process.
- NCPA is currently recruiting the fourth cohort at Omaha South Magnet High School and will be reaching full capacity (9th-12th grade scholars) by fall of 2020.

#### College Scholars

- NCPA college scholars have an average cumulative GPA of 3.19.
- Three college scholars earned their bachelor's degree in fall of 2019. There are 87 college graduates to date and we are on track to have our 100th graduate during 2020.
- Two college scholars earned the Gilman National Award during the Fall of 2019—these are the third and fourth scholars to receive this prestigious award in the last two years.
- The first cohort of Winnebago scholars enrolled at Nebraska in the Fall of 2019.

### AREAS OF PLANNED IMPROVEMENT

1. We are continuing to strengthen our college retention model by incorporating a strengths-based approach to increase student engagement and well-being. In the coming months, we are partnering with the Clifton's Strengths Institute at UNL to train and prepare NCPA upper-classmen to serve as peer leaders for incoming first-year scholars.

2. When we developed our Omaha South expansion proposal in 2016, we assumed 30% of those scholars would need mental health support. During the 2018-2019 academic year, one mental health counselor supported closer to 53% at Omaha South and 47% at Omaha North. Furthermore, the recommended student-to-counselor ratio is 1:30; currently, the ratio in Omaha is 1:78. To address the need for increased mental health support, we will be adding a mental health counselor who will be responsible for serving the Omaha North High School scholars.

3. In order to improve our scholar experience, NCPA and Omaha Public Schools agreed to move the selection process by six months to ensure scholars are placed at either Omaha North or Omaha South Magnet High Schools. In the coming months, we will be enhancing our selection timeline and processes.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### NCPA COLLEGE & HIGH SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

	Grand Island	North	South	Winnebago	UNL	Total
<b>Females</b>	56	51	74	22	60	263
<b>Males</b>	41	26	30	16	41	154
<b>Prefer not to respond</b>	1	-	-	-	-	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>418</b>

### NCPA COLLEGE & HIGH SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

	Grand Island	North	South	Winnebago	UNL	Total
<b>African American</b>	4	39	2	-	10	55
<b>Native American</b>	-	-	-	24	4	28
<b>Asian</b>	4	4	-	1	2	11
<b>Hispanic</b>	68	9	73	1	57	208
<b>White</b>	11	16	3	-	22	52
<b>Multiracial</b>	5	9	9	6	6	35
<b>Prefer not to respond</b>	6	-	17	6	-	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>418</b>





# HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC DATA

## HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARS—GPA AVERAGES—FALL 2019

	Grand Island	Omaha North	Omaha South	Winnebago	Combined
<b>Class of 2019</b> (12th grade)	3.69	3.46	4.19	3.17	3.63
<b>Class of 2020</b> (11th grade)	3.59	3.63	3.91	3.34	3.62
<b>Class of 2021</b> (10th grade)	3.67	3.66	3.96	3.14	3.61
<b>Class of 2022</b> (9th grade)	3.67	3.73	-	3.48	3.63



## NCPA ACTIVITIES

### TOTAL EVENTS - FALL 2019

Grand Island	Omaha North	Omaha South	Winnebago
49	10	9	3

*Events are counted differently in each school due to the format and schedule of classes. Grand Island events include seminars that occur after school. Omaha seminars occur during the day as part of U-PASS classes and are not counted as additional events. Winnebago figures include activities led by UNL staff only and does not include all events led by Winnebago Public Schools.*

### EVENT ATTENDANCE RATE

	Grand Island	Omaha North	Omaha South	Total
<b>Class of 2020</b>	89%	82%	-	86%
<b>Class of 2021</b>	89%	82%	80%	84%
<b>Class of 2022</b>	87%	97%	80%	88%
<b>Class of 2023</b>	88%	99%	87%	91%
<b>Total (Average Percentage)</b>	88%	90%	82%	87.25%

*Our goal is for scholars to attend 75% of NCPA-sponsored events.*

### INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH NCPA ACADEMIC COUNSELORS

	Grand Island	Omaha North	Omaha South	Total
<b>1:1 Meetings</b>	92	180	255	527

*Average meeting time is approximately 24 minutes.*

*Meeting topics include: academic skills and study strategies, personal and college access.*

### NOTABLE SCHOLAR ENGAGEMENT

- 37.5% of NCPA scholars at South (n=39) are participating in the Omaha Public Schools Dual Language Program.
- North scholars are continuing to perform exceptionally well in Omaha North's STEM education program.
- Grand Island scholars are actively participating in one of the six Academies of Grand Island Senior High School.
- Winnebago scholars continue to demonstrate their leadership skills in many ways, which include the Corn Harvest Project where they fundraise for college scholarships and educational field trips.

## SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE ACADEMY

All incoming ninth grade NCPA scholars are required to attend a three-day camp at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, which is called Sisters and Brothers of the Academy, to prepare for their first year of high school. By learning more about the NCPA requirements, having difficult conversations about the pressures of high school, and building a positive and supportive cohort, scholars create a foundation for success before they begin high school.

Scholars begin the camp with icebreakers to get to know each other and the NCPA staff and mentors. During camp, scholars participate in various indoor and outdoor team building exercises to foster team-building and confidence. They engage in structured activities and guided discussions about identity and values.

Scholars focus much of their time on the NCPA Pillars of Excellence: Knowledge, Character and Commitment. They also discuss personal issues and contextual influences to be mindful of during their time in high school, including peer pressure, substance use, gangs, violence and unhealthy relationships. NCPA wellness staff and invited guest speakers facilitate empowerment and self-esteem workshops.

Scholars share meals together in the university dining halls and stay overnight in university residence halls. They also tour the UNL campus and spend recreational time at the UNL campus recreation center. This was offered for the eighth time in the summer of 2019, meaning that the current first-year, sophomore, junior and senior high school scholars have attended, as well as the current college first-years, sophomores and juniors.

### NINTH GRADE SCHOLARS SERVED IN 2019

	Grand Island	Omaha North	Omaha South	Winnebago	Total
<b>Participants</b>	24	25	25	13	87



# NCPA SUMMER PROGRAMMING

## SUMMER STARS

Summers Stars aims to provide supplemental instruction for scholars to ensure they retain skills in the areas of math, reading comprehension, writing, and wellness. Students take pre- and post-assessments to measure development in their classes/skills. Summers Stars is a half-day program that lasts four weeks during the month of June.

	Grand Island	Omaha North	Omaha South	Total
# of Participants	112	72	83	267

*Pre- and post-test scores show that math comprehension increased from 52% - 83% across all math levels. English pre- and post-test scores increased from 31%-89% across all English levels.*

## SUMMER SCIENCE CAMP

NCPA's Summer Science Camp exposes sophomore and junior scholars to activities and workshops on the UNL campus around the subjects of math and science. Among the key highlights from this past summer include workshops offered by the Department of Computer Science and Engineering.

	Grand Island	Omaha North	Omaha South	Winnebago	Total
10th Grade Participants	23	18	28	10	79
11th Grade Participants	17	14	37	9	77

## SENIOR RESEARCH CAMP

NCPA's Senior Research Camp introduces scholars to UNL librarians who help guide scholars through the process of starting their senior capstone research project. At the end of Senior Research Camp scholars presented to their peers their selected research topic and initial findings from their annotated bibliography.

	Grand Island	Omaha North	Omaha South	Winnebago	Total
# of Participants	24	12	-	4	40

*Omaha South did not have senior scholars during the summer of 2019.*





# UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY ACADEMIC SUCCESS SEMINAR (U-PASS)

## OVERVIEW OF U-PASS

University Preparatory Academy Success Seminar (U-PASS), offered at Omaha North and Omaha South Magnet High Schools, is designed to enhance NCPA scholars' critical thinking, analytical skills, vocabulary and provide access to tutors. The NCPA U-PASS teacher develops curriculum and provides instruction that engages scholars through creative writing, reading and better preparing them for the academic rigors of college.

## U-PASS CURRICULUM - OMAHA NORTH

### Freshmen

- Read "How It Went Down" book and completed writing responses.
- Selected either "Kindred" or "Life of Pi" book & completed writing responses.
- Completed first round of ACT practice tests.
- Study skills lessons such as note taking, test taking, and oral communications.

### Sophomores

- Read "The Hate U Give" book and completed writing responses.
- Completed first round of ACT practice tests.
- Study skills lessons such as note taking, test taking, and oral communications.

### Juniors

- Selected their own book to read and developed questions using Bloom's Hierarchy of Critical Thinking as a guide to better understand their novels.
- Primary focus for juniors is ACT preparation; scholars completed the reading, math, English and science practice tests.

### Seniors

- Working on senior capstone research project.
- Revisit study skills lessons such as note taking, test taking, and oral communication.

## U-PASS CURRICULUM - OMAHA SOUTH

### Freshmen

- Read "A Heart in a Body in the World" and "Don't Call Me Crazy" books & completed writing responses.
- Explored key college terms and topics and started drafting answers to college essay prompts.
- Completed first round of ACT practice tests.
- Study skills lessons such as note taking, test taking, and oral communications.

### Sophomores

- Read "The Hate U Give" and "How I Resist" books & completed writing responses.
- Completed second round of ACT practice tests.
- Study skills lessons such as note taking, test taking, and oral communications.

### Juniors

- Selected their own book to read and developed questions as a guide to better understand their novels and to prepare for research writing.
- Completed two ACT practice tests and participated in in-depth ACT prep work.

## TUTORING

	Omaha North	Omaha South
# Of Scholars Served Per Day	4	7

*The primary reasons for seeking after-school assistance was math, AP courses and writing.*

# NCPA WELLNESS

## OVERVIEW OF PERSONAL WELLNESS SERVICES

NCPA acknowledges that there are barriers for first-generation, low-income students as they prepare for college and these barriers have stressful and adverse effects. In addition to academic, social and financial assistance to pursue college, NCPA also aims to support students' personal wellness. Wellness services include one-on-one meetings between a scholar and a wellness counselor, participation in a NCPA support group and referral services.

NCPA Wellness counselors transitioned from traditional counseling to a Solution-Focused Based Therapy (SFBT) model due to the high demand for wellness services. SFBT concentrates on finding solutions more quickly than traditional forms of therapy by focusing on the present time and exploring one's hope for the future to find resolutions. Scholars receive six, one-hour counseling sessions within the SFBT model.

## PERSONAL WELLNESS DATA

Wellness 1:1's	Omaha South	Omaha North	Grand Island	Winnebago	Total
# of Interactions	107	55	123	48	333
# of Scholars Served	45	30	42	37	154

Men's and Women's Groups	Omaha North
# of Meetings	30
# of Scholars Served	58

*Men's and Women's groups focused on supporting completion goals, as well as improving persistence and retention rates among these students.*

## INCREASING PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL (PSYCAP) IN NCPA SCHOLARS

Wellness staff members provide psychoeducational workshops, called "seminars," to high school NCPA scholars throughout the semester. In addition to moving to a Solution-Focused Brief Therapy model, NCPA's wellness staff implemented new workshops focused on developing Psychological Capital (PsyCap) elements—hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—among all high school NCPA scholars. The new workshops cover each of the four elements of the PsyCap framework.

It is important to note that this new curriculum for increasing PsyCap in NCPA scholars cannot replace Wellness one-on-ones and small group counseling. The workshops are designed to engage scholars in building coping skills to manage the stress of heavy academic workloads, extracurricular and athletic engagement, and pressure from an increasingly competitive college application process. Furthermore, the wellness workshops help build capacity for wellness staff who need to be available for the scholars who have exhibited a high need and are being cared for within the SFBT model.

# MENTOR PROGRAM

## FALL 2019 OVERVIEW

The NCPA Mentor Program provides support to NCPA scholars at Omaha North and Omaha South Magnet High Schools aligning with the mission and goals of NCPA. Mentors are current University of Nebraska–Lincoln undergraduate students. Mentors go through an interview process, where students are selected based on their previous experience, interest in working with diverse people, and ability to connect with others. Once selected, mentors go through a formalized training program where they obtain skills on how to engage and connect with their mentees by phone or during formal and informal in-person events.

## FALL 2019 MENTOR NOTABLE EVENTS

- Ropes Course at Camp Carol Joy Holling (Omaha North)
- Tailgate at UNL (Omaha North & Omaha South)
- Omaha College Fair (Omaha South)
- Vala's Pumpkin Patch (Omaha North & Omaha South)
- Dinner & Discussion (Omaha South)
- Community Service with Salvation Army (Omaha North)
- Family & Activities (Omaha South)
- Ice Skating (Omaha North)

## MENTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

<b>African American</b>	8
<b>Native American</b>	1
<b>Asian</b>	3
<b>Hispanic</b>	13
<b>White</b>	9
<b>Multiracial</b>	5
<b>Prefer not to respond</b>	1
<b>Total</b>	40

<b>Females</b>	32
<b>Males</b>	7
<b>Non-Binary/Prefer not to respond</b>	1
<b>Total</b>	40

*Mentee/Mentor ratio is 4:1.*

The NCPA Mentor Program took this semester as an opportunity to incorporate suggestions from high school scholars. Some of these suggestions include:

- Reevaluating how the mentor/mentee matching occurs to incorporate more flexibility in how mentoring relationships are formed;
- Having at least one Mentor/Mentee event held on the UNL campus;
- Incorporating new training topics to better prepare mentors for conversations with mentees.

As a result of incorporating new ideas this fall, our mentors reported having more intentional conversations with their mentees and making good use of their one-on-one time together with their mentees. Individual trips to Omaha to visit mentees have increased when compared to the previous year. We also successfully hosted the first Tailgate Event on the UNL campus during an away Husker football game. The tailgate event was a success because it allowed college mentors to show their mentees the experience and excitement of being in downtown Lincoln during the weekends.

As for training topics, we re-evaluated what was being covered in pieces of training and came up with a new curriculum for our mentors. We are still focusing on developing mentoring skills such as communication, leadership, and goal setting. In addition to these skills, we incorporated additional team-building and networking opportunities with fellow mentors. We make sure there is a team-building component present at each training and are promoting collaboration amongst mentors in order to become a stronger team. We have seen amazing results from this transition in trainings this semester. For example, mentors are more comfortable and familiar with other mentors, which has increased attendance of mentors at high school events.

MENTOR PROGRAM EVENTS



# NCPA TRENCHARD FOUNDATION INSTITUTE OF EXCELLENCE

The Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence (TFIOE), NCPA’s college retention program, is comprehensive and personalized. The program guides scholars to achieve their academic and personal goals by providing access to programming to meet academic and social needs, leadership experiences and career exploration. The TFIOE includes a weekly academic seminar, individual meetings with professional staff, academic tutoring, workshops and more.

TFIOE adopted an innovative college retention curriculum using the CliftonStrengths assessment to better support scholars. All scholars take the Gallup’s StrengthFinder assessment and receive individual support designed to help them navigate common challenges students face by utilizing their strengths. The first-year curriculum, Understand your Strengths, is designed to assist scholars transition to college. The sophomore year curriculum, Build your Strengths, is designed to help scholars’ understand their path to success and beyond through understanding their personal values, and how those values align with their chosen career path or can lead them to potential careers. The third and fourth year curriculum, Stretch your Strengths, allows scholars to develop an individualized pathway to reach their goals through internships, job shadow programs, preparation for graduate school, study abroad opportunities and more.

## FALL 2019 DEMOGRAPHICS

	Count
African American	10
Native American	4
Asian	2
Hispanic	57
White	22

	Count
Females	60
Males	41
Non-Binary / Prefer to Not Respond	-

## TFIOE TUTORING

All first-year scholars and designated upperclassmen based on academic performance are required to attend tutoring at one of many campus locations including the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center, the Math, Physics, and Computer Science Resource Centers, or any of UNL’s libraries. **During the fall of 2019, TFIOE scholars tracked 97,075 hours of tutoring.**





## TFIOE RETENTION

### UPDATE ON TFIOE RETENTION PERCENTAGE BY COHORT

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	UNL Comparison	First-Gen, Low-Income Comparison
Returning 2nd Year	96.15%	90.32%	95%	81.40%	80.00%	100%*	84.10%	67.70%
Returning 3rd Year	88.89%	80.65%	90%	77.78%			76.10%	55.80%
Returning 4th Year or Graduated	88.89%	80.65%	90%				73.00%	50.80%
Returning 5th Year or Graduated	85.19%	80.65%					Not provided	Not provided
Returning 6th Year or Graduated	85.19%						Not provided	Not provided

\*1st semester only

Retention data, with the exception of 2019 based on 2018/2019 school year.

### COMMENTARY ON RETENTION

The NCPA freshman-to-sophomore retention was below expectations for the past two years (2017/2018). This has been in part due to severe student issues related to mental health and familial obligations. Prior to 2017, NCPA had an average freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of 92%. This year we implemented a strengths-based approach to enhance scholar success. The new approach focuses on improving scholar engagement and well-being, which research shows leads to higher retention and graduation rates.

### TFIOE PEER LEADER PROGRAM

The TFIOE's Peer Leader Program is composed of a select group of upper-classmen scholars who provide leadership and guidance to first-year scholars. Peer Leaders pride themselves in being caring and informed who serve as role models and "family" to the first-year scholars. In addition to hosting "family outings" and meeting one-on-one with their mentees, Peer Leaders help facilitate lesson plans alongside our TFIOE staff during the first-year academic seminar.

### THIRD AND FOURTH YEAR PATHWAYS

Scholars have the opportunity to personalize their upper-class experience by selecting a one- or two-semester pathway program. No two pathways look alike. Pathways include Service Learning and Civic Engagement, Careers, and Global Learning.

	Service Learning	Careers	Global Learning
# of Scholars	7	18	5

## DECEMBER 2019 COLLEGE GRADUATES

There are 87 scholars in our alumni network. Three scholars joined the alumni network during the Fall 2019 Undergraduate Commencement. Join us in congratulating our December 2019 graduates!

- David Bober, Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. David was hired as a production engineer at Kawasaki in Lincoln, NE, and starting in January 2020.
- Ian Anderson, Bachelor of Science in Fisheries & Wildlife. Ian will be starting his job in January 2020 at Americorps in Omaha, NE.
- Matthew Romer, Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering with Highest Distinction. Matthew is continuing his education at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln starting in January and pursuing a master's degree in electrical engineering. He was awarded a graduate research assistantship to fund his degree.
- Top destinations for alumni include Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island.

