

# UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA COMMENCEMENT

**May 8, 2020  
Online Commencement**

*(Due to the COVID-19 current events, UNO decided to host an online commencement for the health and wellness of the graduates and their guests.)*

## PRESENTATION OF COLORS & NATIONAL ANTHEM

*(UCOMM video and Social Media engagement prior to the ceremony. Music in the background.*

*KOPP video will begin the ceremony.)*

### **KOPP:**

**Welcome! Thank you all for joining us for this unprecedented online commencement ceremony at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. We here at UNO have been eager for this moment to recognize and celebrate the achievements of our graduates! We**

**salute your talents and your perseverance, signs of your true Maverick spirit. Now, as members of our UNO family, we all gather, under extraordinary circumstance, to celebrate with you. We will first begin our ceremony with the presentation of the colors and the singing of the National Anthem by UNO Music major, Aaron Lawrence.**

*(Cut to COLOR GUARD video clips and pictures.*

*Followed by video of LAWRENCE performing National Anthem.*

*Video goes back to KOPP.)*

## **WELCOME & PLATFORM INTRODUCTIONS**

### **KOPP:**

**Greetings. My name is Sacha Kopp, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UNO. I am pleased to welcome you to the University of Nebraska**

**at Omaha's May 2020 Commencement. Thank you for joining us, albeit virtually, today.**

**For 112 years, UNO has served as a point of access for excellence in higher education. We are proud to be a premier metropolitan university; relentlessly dedicated to our mission of being student-centered, academically excellent, and engaged with our community and our world.**

**We are Mavericks – independent thinkers, explorers, risk takers – and today we congratulate you, our graduating students, who embody this spirit. We are confident you will continue to innovate, push the boundaries, and strive for success in whatever you do.**

**At this time, I would like to thank our administration, the vice chancellors who oversee**

**business, finance, operations, student success programs, athletics, and community relations, our staff who help UNO operate on campus and online, and our faculty, whose scholarship, teaching, and mentorship provide a world of opportunities for our students. You have all worked tirelessly to ensure our students have been able to continue their academic pursuits during this uncertain time. We would not be here today for these graduates without your unwavering dedication.**

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## **INTRODUCTION OF CHANCELLOR**

### **KOPP:**

**Now, it is my pleasure to introduce UNO's Chancellor, Dr. Jeffrey P. Gold. Dr. Gold took on**

**leadership of our university in May 2017, in addition to his responsibilities while serving as chancellor of the University of Nebraska Medical Center and chairing the board of UNMC's principal clinical care system partner, Nebraska Medicine.**

**With both deep knowledge and broad experience in higher education and health care, Dr. Gold is a tireless advocate for advancing UNO's metropolitan university mission of access, excellence in education, and service to our community.**

**Please help me welcome Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold.**

*(Video transition to GOLD.)*

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**CHANCELLOR'S WELCOME**

**CHANCELLOR:**

**Good morning and welcome. | Thank you for  
joining us | in this celebration of the Class of 2020's hard  
work, | dedication, | and perseverance. |**

**Graduates | – we are honored to recognize your  
achievements today, | and to share this  
transformational moment with you. | In doing so, | we  
also recognize that these milestones are shared | by the  
family, | friends | and other loved ones | who walked  
alongside you | throughout the journey. | Please take  
this opportunity to thank those people | – both present**

**with you today | and in your hearts -| who've helped  
make today a reality. |**

**The University of Nebraska at Omaha's mission |  
is to transform and improve lives | locally, | nationally  
| and globally. | Today, | we also wish to recognize the  
professionals | whose daily work | translates that  
mission into action and impact. | To the UNO faculty, |  
whose talent and dedication | fosters a culture of  
scholarship | reflecting the highest standards of quality  
and rigor; | and to our remarkable staff, | whose spirit  
of service | creates the supportive and caring**

environment | in which our students thrive | – We all  
thank you very much | - Thank you - | for sharing your  
commitment, | your passion, | and your talent | with  
each and every student | each and every day. |

Today's graduating class | is comprised of more  
than **1,084** Mavericks. | More than one thousand newly  
minted UNO alumni | who enter our community with  
new knowledge and skills | and equally importantly  
the Maverick spirit of a “can do” high energy  
approach | and strong set of community values. | Of  
those, | **273** are master's degrees | and **10** are doctoral



degrees. | Some of you are native Nebraskans. | Some  
of you came to UNO from across our country | and  
some of you from around the world. | This class  
represents 28 states | and 39 countries | -- with 83  
international students graduating today. | Now, for  
our International candidates | we are proud | to have  
you join our Maverick family. |

One reason | that we are so proud | to lead this  
institution | is UNO's commitment to our military, |  
veteran, | and dependent students, | on-campus, |  
online, and overseas. | For 9 consecutive years in a

row, | *The Military Times* | has named UNO one of the  
top 10 universities in the nation | for military-affiliated  
students. | We want to recognize all of the veterans  
and service members | among the graduating class |  
today | and recognize your commitment to our  
freedom. |

Thank you for your service. |

At UNO, | we embrace our role as an anchor  
institution | in our community, | and we welcome you—  
| all alumni, | future Mavericks, | and visitors alike —  
to campus | for athletic events, | concerts, | lectures, |

**and community meetings. | I also hope that you will  
return | as lifelong learners, | exploring the rich  
educational opportunities that our university has to  
offer. | We are your University of Nebraska here in  
Omaha, | and we look forward to being part of your  
lives | for years to come. |**

**Class of 2020, | thank you | for sharing this day  
with us. | Thank you for partnering with us | on your  
educational journey. | I can't wait to see | what you  
will do next. | Congratulations, | Class of 2020! |**

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HONORARY DEGREE:

**CHANCELLOR:**

**The Honorary Degree | is the most prestigious honor that is bestowed by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. | This honor is reserved for those | who have rendered extraordinary service | to the university | as well as the regional and global community. | Our recipient today, | Mr. Samuel Bak | is being honored with a Doctorate of Humane Letters | for his innovative contributions | to the field of higher education. |**

**Mr. Bak is a world-renowned artist and Holocaust survivor. His works depict his personal story as well as history, telling vivid stories like no one else.**

**His story begins in 1933 at Vilna, Poland. Shortly thereafter, Vilna was under Soviet and then German occupation from 1940 to 1944. Only he and his mother survived, his father and grandparents; all perished at the hands of the Nazis. After World War II, Mr. Bak and his mother fled to the Landsberg Displaced Persons Camp. It was here that he was able to take his first painting lessons at the Blocherer School in Munich.**

**Mr. Bak's artistic talent started was recognized at a very young age, during an exhibition in the Ghetto of Vilna when he was just nine years-old. After studying**

**in Munich, he was able to attend prestigious art schools in Jerusalem and Paris. While in Paris, he received a grant from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation to pursue his artistic studies. He had his first exhibition in 1959 in Rome of abstract paintings, and in 1961 he was invited to show at an exhibit at the “Carnegie International,” following that, he had a solo exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum in 1963.**

**During the time of these exhibitions, there was a change in his artistic preferences. The shift led Mr. Bak to paint in the style called expressionism. In his work, Mr. Bak paints a vivid story of his personal life, Jewish history, and Holocaust Experiences. He has completed over 8,000 pieces and continues his work today.**

**This last September, Mr. Bak spent a week on our campus where he visited several different classes to talk about his experiences, displayed 70 pieces of art in our Weber Fine Arts Building Art Gallery. Hundreds of people from Omaha and surrounding communities, as well as more than 1,500 middle and high school students saw his works. He also gave several radio interviews, and public talks while on campus. During an event at the Strauss Performing Arts Center on September 25, Mr. Bak generously donated three of his original pieces to the University of Nebraska at Omaha. These works were donated in honor of three donor families, the Fried, Schwalb, and Goldstein families. We encourage you to all come back to campus in the fall to see these displayed in the Criss Library.**

**For his devotion to telling the story of people who  
can't... | for his dedication to using his platform to  
educate new generations... | and for his embodiment  
of what we like to call | the Maverick spirit... | the  
University of Nebraska at Omaha | bestows upon  
Samuel Bak, | the degree Doctor of Humane Letter, |  
honoris causa, | this eighth day of May, | two  
thousand and twenty, | with all rights and privileges  
thereto. |**

**Thank you and congratulations. | Friends, | it is  
my privilege and honor | to introduce to you | the**



**most recent alumnus of our university, | Mr. Bak! |**

**who will now make the commencement address.**

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## COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

*(SAMUEL BAK gives his remarks via video.*

*Video will go back to GOLD)*

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## ORDER OF THE TOWER:

### **CHANCELLOR:**

**The Order of the Tower | is awarded to  
individuals | whose exemplary service | and support |  
have advanced the mission | of the University of  
Nebraska at Omaha. |**

**Today, | we are honored to recognize the  
Goldstein Family | for the contributions and support  
| they have made in advancing UNO | and human  
rights. |**

**The Goldsteins include Mr. Don Goldstein from  
Omaha, NE, Gail Raznick from Boulder, Co, and  
Kathy Goldstein from Pacific Grove, CA. They were  
raised in Omaha, NE by Leonard and Shirley  
Goldstein. Their parents established a Lectureship on  
Human Rights with the UNO Religious Studies  
Department. After the passing of Mr. Leonard  
Goldstein, the siblings carried on his spirit and work**

**of furthering the education, community engagement, and research of Human Rights at UNO.**

**Together, the creation of the Goldstein Family Community Chair in Human Rights and the Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights was established in January on 2018 in the College of Arts and Sciences. This center is uniquely composed of over thirty affiliated faculty from five colleges at UNO. The Goldstein Center for Human Rights is a faculty-governed, nonpartisan nonsectarian organization that promotes the understanding of issues through teaching, research, and creative activity, and community engagement both locally and globally.**

**The Goldstein Center for Human Rights provides access to exceptional teaching, through several different conferences and talks where our faculty share their expertise with our students. It provides access to exceptional community engagement through archives and exhibits, such as Shirley Goldstein's Immigration Right Legacy, the freedom of movement and religion for Soviet Jews, which was shown in the Criss Library. This center also was a major contributor to Samuel Bak's visit to our campus, leading to his inclusion in their annual lecture series, Symposium on Art and Human Rights, which featured scholars across the US, Europe, and South Africa. These experiences promote cultured discussion and panels for our students.**

**The Goldstein children, Don, Gail, and Kathy tirelessly work to continue the support of Human Rights in honor of their parents. In addition to their contributions at UNO, they have also supported the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Beth El Synagogue, the Jewish Federation, and many more efforts throughout the Omaha community.**

**For this commitment | and for their generous contributions to the education of Human Rights, | and the Omaha community, | the University of Nebraska at Omaha | bestows upon Mr. Don Goldstein, Mrs. Gail Raznick, and Ms. Kathy Ann Goldstein | the Order of the Tower award, | this**

**eighth day of May, | two thousand and twenty, | with  
all rights and privileges thereto. |**

**Thank you | and Congratulations. |**

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**CHANCELLOR'S MEDAL:**

**CHANCELLOR:**

**The Chancellor's Medal | is awarded to  
individuals whose outstanding service | to the  
University of Nebraska at Omaha | has shaped the  
institution's course. | Their dedication, | commitment,**

**| and exemplary performance | fuels UNO's  
incredible momentum. |**

**Today, we are able to recognize two such  
individuals, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student  
Success and Dean of Students, Cathy Pettid, and  
Former Dean of the College of Business  
Administration, Dr. Louis Pol.**

**Ms. Cathy Pettid has been with the University of  
Nebraska at Omaha for 15 years. She has fully  
supported students, and has led multiple units and  
initiatives across campus that continues to have a  
transformative impact on the campus community. You  
will see her work in the Service Learning Academy,  
Counseling and Psychological Services Department,**

**Wellness Center, Academic and Career Development Center, and most recently, organizing and developing the new UNO Success Academies initiatives.**

**Ms. Pettid also works with students on an individual level, ranging in situations from mental health, classroom disruptions, family concerns, homelessness, and other extremely trying situations. She does this with professionalism, kindness, sensitivity, and laughter, when appropriate. This kind of care requires her to be available outside of typical business hours, which means she often puts in long hours during the week and even on weekends.**

**During the Scott Campus fire, she worked tirelessly to assist the students who were affected by this event. She helped to find them new**



**accommodations and provided counseling during that stressful time. Ms. Pettid showed compassion for each student and was a positive influence in a very difficult situation. That situation, as well as many others, shows that Ms. Pettid is deserving of the 2020 UNO Chancellor's Medal.**

**Dr. Louis Pol joined the College of Business Administration at UNO in 1984. He became dean of the college in 2003, wherein he provided extraordinary, transformative leadership for the college and made significant contributions to the growth and development of UNO. His connection and reputation amongst the business community is outstanding and much of that is attributed to his “can do” attitude in regard to collaboration. The success of**

**the Entrepreneurship Program and Collaboration Science initiatives are two of these examples.**

**Dr. Pol’s collaboration extended past a local level, and moved into global partnerships with work in India, China, Germany, Finland, Austria, Belgium and Romania. During his time in Romania, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Romania. He has documented his exciting work through his personal blog entitled, “Traveling Dean.”**

**During his leadership, the College of Business Administration was accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, which fewer than 200 business schools worldwide can boast. It has also been rated as the number one business school in**

**the U.S. for military veteran students and is able to distribute over \$900,000 in scholarships to students.**

**The growth of the College of Business Administration led to a new building in 2010, Mammel Hall, and a new addition to the building began in 2019 to better support the needs of the students and the college. Dr. Pol's years of outstanding service to UNO demonstrates his dedication and service worthy of the UNO Chancellor's Medal.**

**In recognition | and appreciation | of their leadership, organization, contributions, expertise, | and long-standing service to UNO, | we bestow upon Dean Cathy Pettid and Dr. Louis Pol | the**

**Chancellor's Medal | this eighth day of May, | two  
thousand and twenty, | with all rights | and privileges,  
| thereto.**

**Congratulations | and thank you. |**

*(GOLD remarks end, cut to DENKER)*

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**CITATION FOR ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT:**

**DENKER:**

**Hello Graduates, my name is Lee Denker and I  
am the President and CEO of the UNO Alumni  
Association. On behalf of the UNO Alumni  
Association, I am pleased to extend congratulations to  
you - the Class of 2020. Along with your diplomas, you**

**have earned new titles today as you transition from UNO students to UNO alumni.**

**More than a century ago, our first graduating class held its commencement ceremony. Those 11 graduates founded a network now with nearly 115,000 UNO alumni. You'll find them doing great things in Omaha, our state and all around the world. Many of your parents, family members, colleagues and friends are part of your alumni network. In fact, let me speak to our alumni watching online today. Take a moment to give your special graduate and all members of this graduating class a shout out via social media with the hashtag #UNOalumni. I know they'd appreciate hearing from you.**

**Now, graduates, I ask you to continue your UNO**

**journey by staying connected with the Alumni Association. We are here for you! You'll receive messages, letters and invitations from time to time and I sure hope that we hear from you. Your ongoing involvement with UNO makes this university stronger. Be a proud Maverick for life.**

**You did it, Mavericks. Congratulations!**

*(Cuts to the DEANS remarks)*

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**DEAN REMARKS:**

**DEAN:** Hello, my name is....

**INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT SPEAKER:**

**DEAN:** Receiving today, his Master of Science in  
**counseling with a concentration in clinical mental**

**health, Randy Hager** (*Ran-dee Hay-ger*) **will speak on behalf of the Class of 2019.**

*(Video transition to STUDENT SPEAKER.)*

**STUDENT SPEAKER:**

**HAGER:** **Members of the Board of Regents, Chancellor Gold, Distinguished Faculty, Esteemed Fellow Graduates and Honored Family, Friends and Guests...**

*(DEAN conferral video.)*

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**CONFERRAL OF DEGREES:**

**DEAN:**

**Now we come to that part of the program you have eagerly awaited – the Conferral of Degrees. Before proceeding with the presentation of candidates, I call your attention to one item of interest: Students**

**graduating with honors are so indicated in your commencement program. In recognition of their outstanding academic achievements, a uniquely designed medallion will be delivered to each student graduating with honors with their diploma.**

**DOCTORATE & EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST DEGREES:**

**SMITH-HOWELL:**

**Chancellor, the following doctoral degree candidates have completed the requirements for their degree.**

- **Doctor of Philosophy**
- **Doctor of Education**



**The faculty of the graduate college takes pleasure in recommending this student to you for the conferral of the degree.**

**MASTER'S DEGREES:**

**SMITH-HOWELL:**

**Chancellor, the following master's degree candidates have completed the requirements for their respective fields of study:**

- **Master of Arts**
- **Master of Science**
- **Executive Master of Science in Information Technology**
- **Master of Accounting**
- **Master of Arts for Teachers of Mathematics**
- **Master of Architectural Engineering**
- **Master of Business Administration**
- **Master of Business Administration: Executive MBA**
- **Master of Fine Arts**

- **Master of Music**
- **Master of Public Administration**
- **Master of Public Health**
- **Master of Social Work**

**The graduate faculty takes pride in presenting them to you for the conferral of the appropriate degree.**

### **BACHELOR'S DEGREES:**

*(Each DEAN will read for their college only; CHANCELLOR GOLD will respond with his same remarks for each college.)*

### **BOOCKER:**

**Chancellor, these candidates have completed the requirements set forth by the College of Arts and Sciences.**

- **Bachelor of Arts and**
- **Bachelor of Science**

**The faculty of the College takes pleasure in recommending them to you for the conferral of degrees.**

**PÉREZ:**

**Chancellor, these candidates have completed the requirements set forth by the UNL College of Engineering.**

- **Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering**
- **Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering**
- **Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering**
- **Bachelor of Science in Construction Engineering**
- **Bachelor of Science in Construction Management**
- **And Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering**

**The faculty of the College takes pleasure in recommending them to you for the conferral of degrees.**

**EDICK:**

**Chancellor, these candidates have completed the requirements set forth by the College of Education.**

- **Bachelor of Science in Education**
- **Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training**
- **Bachelor of Science in Biomechanics and**
- **Bachelor of Science in Public Health**

**The faculty of the College takes pleasure in recommending them to you for the conferral of degrees.**

## **TRAWICK:**

**Chancellor, these candidates have completed the requirements set forth by the College of Business Administration, the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. The faculty of the College takes pleasure in recommending them to you for the conferral of degrees.**

## **BARTLE:**

**Chancellor, these candidates have completed the requirements set forth by the College of Public Affairs and Community Service.**

- **Bachelor of Science in Criminology & Criminal Justice**

- **Bachelor of Multi-Disciplinary Studies**
- **Bachelor of Science in Social Work**
- **Bachelor of Science in Aviation**
- **Bachelor of Science in Emergency Management**  
**and**
- **Bachelor of Science in Gerontology**

**The faculty of the College takes pleasure in recommending them to you for the conferral of degrees.**

**ALI:**

**Chancellor, these candidates have completed the requirements set forth by the College of Information Science and Technology.**

- **Bachelor of Science in Computer Science**

- **Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems**
- **Bachelor of Science in Bioinformatics**
- **Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity and**
- **Bachelor of Science in IT Innovation**

**The faculty of the College takes pleasure in recommending them to you for the conferral of degrees.**

**HILT:**

**Chancellor, these candidates have completed the requirements set forth by the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media.**

- **Bachelor of Arts in Art History**

- **Bachelor of Arts in Communication**
- **Bachelor of Arts in Music**
- **Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art**
- **Bachelor of Arts in Theatre**
- **Bachelor of Fine Arts**
- **Bachelor of Music and**
- **Bachelor of Science in Communication**

**The faculty of the College takes pleasure in recommending them to you for the conferral of degrees.**

*(CHANCELLOR reads the same remarks for each college.)*

## **CHANCELLOR:**

**Now, to our bachelor's candidates | wherever you  
may be today in celebration with your families, |**



**by the authority vested in me | by the Board of  
Regents by the State of Nebraska, | I hereby confer  
upon each of you | the bachelor's degree | for which  
you have been recommended, | with all the rights, |  
privileges | and responsibilities | pertaining thereto. |**

**On behalf of the entire University of Nebraska at  
Omaha community of faculty, staff, and  
administration, Congratulations to all of you - | Now, |  
we hope you went ahead and got your own graduation  
cap and tassel at the UNO Bookstore, or maybe even  
made your own cap! If you did, this is your time to  
have your family and friends record the moment you  
move your tassel. Please share this moment using the**

hashtag **XX** and we will offer a prize **XX** to **XX**. Now,

in keeping with a time-honored academic tradition, |

you may now move your tassels | from right to left! |

Ladies and Gentlemen, | the UNO Class of 2020. |

Congratulations! |

At this time, we will recognize each individual  
degree recipient. Please watch for your name and  
degree to be read and celebrate your many  
accomplishments with your family members at home.

*(MarchingOrder presentation of the students.*

*Followed by KOPP's closing remarks)*

CLOSING:

**KOPP:**

**We thank you for joining us today in this celebration. Though our nation is in the midst of an unprecedented period, we wanted so very much to recognize you today and confer your degrees. Copies of your degrees will be delivered to you in due course. In addition, if your schedule allows, we hope you will join us back on campus in Baxter Arena in December for a special Commencement to be held for our Spring 2020 graduates. Thank you and Congratulations, class of 2020 and remember: Once a Maverick, always a Maverick!!**