We have long taken great pride in, and been committed to, being one of the nation’s premier undergraduate institutions with excellent graduate education, scholarship and public service. That ongoing commitment to our core values as an institution has elevated the university to a new level of distinction.

For the second year in a row, UNK is ranked a “Top 10 Public Regional University in the Midwest” by U.S. News & World Report, a category defined as the very best master’s-level universities. The ranking was announced in the magazine’s annual “Best Colleges” edition.

To earn this distinction, we competed with universities in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin for inclusion on this prestigious list.

Achieving this ranking among such a distinguished group of peers is certainly a tribute to the quality of our faculty, staff and students. And, even in a period of relative austerity, the energy, enthusiasm and support of so many people, on and off campus, has kept our university progressing toward ever higher levels of excellence.

For example, our Department of Music and Performing Arts celebrated its largest ever financial gift last year, a gift that totaled $2.5 million. In addition to establishing the Ronald J. Crocker Chair in Orchestra, it represents a perpetual legacy that will support the music program and provide scholarships for top-achieving students of music.

The research, scholarship and creative activity of our faculty provide the foundation of our teaching and inspire not only the lives of our students, but the lives of people across the state, the region and the nation.

This fourth issue of New Frontiers features only a small sampling of our scholars and their work. In these pages, you will read about outstanding faculty whose research has been published in multiple languages around the world and across the nation.

There is only one way to describe the University of Nebraska at Kearney these days—we are making progress on all fronts. There is much to celebrate at UNK!
Welcome to New Frontiers

Research and creative activity is about discovery – for students, for faculty and for our society. We are proud of the many discoveries that occur at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and through this publication we will illustrate some of them.

In this issue you will meet seven faculty members whose work exemplifies the innovative, interdisciplinary and international spirit of research at UNK. Their diverse projects—on subjects ranging from the migratory routes of bats to law and order in the wild west, international partnerships for research in school psychology to international studies of family dynamics, and finding the literary relationship between French writer Marcel Proust and Spanish American writers to the intricate techniques in the creation of remarkable glass art—offer a glimpse into the scientific, scholarly and creative endeavors engaging our faculty and students across the four colleges on the UNK campus.

What is difficult to describe in a magazine story is the energetic and variable nature of the research process – a process that every scholar, regardless of discipline, undergoes. From the initial idea to the excitement of discovery to the published results or creative product, the researchers experience many ups and downs, starts and stops, and may be led in different directions. It is the process of research that provides the excitement and sense of exhilaration. As you read the stories in this issue, you will get a sense of each scholar’s passion for his or her research or creative endeavors.

When I look at the scope of scholarly pursuits and creative activity presented in this issue, I see individual profiles of a university that is consistently bringing its commitment to excellence to the larger community. The success of UNK evolves from sustained commitment—commitment to providing demanding educational and training opportunities, as well as to addressing critical and societal needs through discovery and partnership.

But research and creative activity is not enough. It must go hand-in-hand with teaching. At UNK, our focus on involving students in research and creative activity enriches our undergraduate and graduate programs. We must, after all, depend on the next generation to take these discoveries to the next stage of development. Overall, UNK has benefited from the inherent and remarkable synergy between faculty research and teaching. Not only do our faculty conduct groundbreaking research and creative activity, they also enhance public life by helping to educate a new generation of scholars, teachers, scientists and thinkers.

At UNK, we have discoveries in all fields of study. I hope you enjoy learning about these findings in the following accounts of some of our projects. We appreciate your joining us in opening the doors to discovery.

KENYA S. TAYLOR, Ed.D.
Dean for Graduate Studies and Research
For migratory species, the greatest threat is the expansion of wind energy in areas such as western Nebraska. “They (bats) seem attracted to the wind turbines,” Geluso said. They get near the blades and die of lung damage.

Some researchers attribute the injuries to an undetectable low pressure zone created as the wind moves through the turbine blades, according to a recent article in Scientific American.

“We don’t know the routes and timing of migratory bats,” Geluso said, which is why he does studies to “fill in the holes” in bat knowledge.

Many of Geluso’s studies on bats, other small mammals, reptiles and birds have led to unexpected findings. After catching only a handful of eastern red bats over about nine years at the Wildcat Hills sites, Geluso and his group of field biologists captured about 50 in 2010. “Every night last year we were catching them,” Geluso said.

He has caught a lot of bats over the years, not to mention various species of rats and other small mammals, in Nebraska and New Mexico. Many of his field studies have been conducted in New Mexico, where he received his bachelor’s and doctorate degrees in biology. He holds a master’s degree from the University of Nevada.

His skills as a field biologist are much in demand, as reflected by the more than $158,000 worth of grants he has been awarded since 2006, the year he arrived at UNK. The grants have come from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and UNK. He also has written technical reports for those same entities, plus the National Park Service.

Since 1997, Geluso has authored or co-authored 50 published articles. Of those, 38 have been published since 2006, and he currently has another five manuscripts in review.

Today, the younger bat man of the family is completing a 10-year study of bats in the Panhandle of Nebraska to better understand the routine of migratory bats and the dangers they face from future wind turbines that may be built to help meet the growing demand for renewable energy.

Through a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission grant, Geluso is collecting data about the timing and habitats of migratory species in the Wildcat Hills and rugged areas in Cheyenne and Kimball counties.

He explained that there are two major threats to bats in the United States. For hibernating species, particularly in the eastern U.S., the danger is a fungal disease, white-nose syndrome. First identified near Albany, N.Y., it has killed more than one million hibernating bats in eastern North America, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and has spread to 18 states and four Canadian provinces.

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Since 1997, Geluso has authored or co-authored 50 published articles. Of those, 38 have been published since 2006, and he currently has another five manuscripts in review. Among the journals that have published his findings are the Journal of Mammalogy, Western North American Naturalist, Southwestern Naturalist, Aquatic Sciences, Prairie Naturalist, Herpetological Review, Journal of Kansas Herpetology, Occasional Papers of the Museum of Texas Tech University, Bulletin of the University of Nebraska State Museum, Functional Ecology, Texas Journal of Science, Annuals of the Entomological Society of America, Physiological and Biochemical Zoology, and Transactions of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences.

Geluso also is in demand to give presentations about his work. Most recently, he was part of a presentation on the interacting effects of land management and hydrology on bird communities along the Platte River. The presentation was given at a joint meeting of the Association for Field Ornithologists, Cooper Ornithology Society and Wilson Ornithology Society held in April.

He has also presented at annual meetings of the Ecological Society of America, Southwestern Association of Naturalists and the American Society of Mammalogists. His expertise on bats brought invitations to present data to the Southern Bat Diversity Network and at the North American Symposium for Bat Research.

It was at the University of New Mexico where he met his wife Mary Harner, then a graduate student in biology, specializing in river ecology. “I met her in the Ph.D. program” Geluso said, “actually at my graduation party. We were in the program together, but we were both field biologists. It took three or four tries to schedule the first date.”

Geluso said that they have known from the start not to expect similar schedules or to make plans to be home for supper every night. However, now that they have two young daughters, Geluso said they will try to do field studies closer to home.

For the past two years, Harner has worked half-time at the Platte River Whoooping Crane Trust near Alda and half-time as a UNK biology faculty member. However, she was recently named the new science director for the Crane Trust and will be full-time there by next spring.

Together, Harner and Geluso are conducting a study on the Crane Trust land to record the results of grazing and burning habitat management practices on reptiles and amphibians. They have a $35,000 Nebraska State Wildlife Grant, which is matched by the Crane Trust and UNK. Also, a $2,500 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant is funding a study of the effects of grazing on the rare Platte River caddisfly.

Teaching has also been important to Geluso, who has taught six biology courses at UNK since joining the faculty in 2006. However, he is using 2011-2012 as a sabbatical year to complete numerous studies and papers, some of his own and some with students, on topics that range from the bats of western Nebraska and Crane Trust grazing to wood rats, shrews and birds.

He is also assisting in a fish study being conducted by Casey Schoenebeck, a faculty member in the Department of Biology, and a graduate student researcher. Schoenebeck and his student determined that they needed to involve a mammal expert in the study after they found mammals in the stomachs of largemouth bass taken from Interstate 80 sandpits.

That photo is of me at 5-years-old at Carlsbad (Caverns National Park), said Keith Geluso, pointing to the image on the computer screen in his office in Brunner Hall of Science.

Where else, but at the famous bat-filled New Mexico caverns, would the son of a long-time University of Nebraska at Omaha bat biologist be when he was hanging out with his dad? “As my mom says, I was brainwashed at an early age by my father,” Geluso said.

The photo of a small boy in a Beatles-style haircut stretching out the wings of a Brazilian free-tailed bat for the camera is a portrait not only of that moment, but of a future.
Bats and birds always will be Geluso's first research interests. He said he has taken a bird field guide along on every family vacation since he was a child, and he still enjoys bird watching. The observational skills he developed while watching birds continues to be valuable.

"It seems like everybody knows, identifies and watches birds. I could use my ability to observe birds to watch and study mammals that most people don't care as much about," Geluso said. He doesn't understand the "eeewwww factor" some people experience when they are around the bats, rats and snakes he studies, because he has loved the outdoors since he was a child watching his dad handle mice and bats. "I grew up with hamsters, snakes and tarantulas. I also had a kangaroo rat as a pet," Geluso said.

"So I don't study them, because they're scary," he added. As a field naturalist, Geluso's job is basic science — collecting facts that may say something about the health of ecosystems and how humans have changed them by building dams, contributing to global warming and other factors. "I go out to observe and report things not already in the literature," he said. He also is helping people understand the importance of small mammals. For example, kangaroo rats play an important role in dispersing plant seeds in the Sandhills, Geluso said, and insect-eating bats probably save American farmers hundreds of thousands of dollars by consuming agriculture pests. His appreciation for and knowledge of bats pay an added dividend when they can be used to help UNK biology majors select topics for their required senior thesis. In 2008, he worked with Matt Serbousek of McCook to do a first-of-its-kind bat survey along the Republican River in southwestern Nebraska.

"You set up mist nets in places you think bats frequent and hope you catch them," Geluso said. The places include the river, its tributaries and some buildings. "Usually, I have a good idea of where they like to come to drink."

Bats like smooth water, so that is what Geluso and Serbousek looked for in locating mist nets at 15 such sites in five counties from April 2007-2008. "It doesn't have to be overnight, but in the evenings... The best time to catch bats is right after dusk," Geluso said.

The first steps for Serbousek were to make a list of bat species he expected to observe and then study their characteristics from collections at UNK and the University of Nebraska State Museum in Lincoln. One species not expected, Geluso said, was the evening bat, which was our most captured species. Decades-old studies had found only a handful of evening bats in the state, and then only in southeast Nebraska. "We're not sure why, but they're moving in distributions," he said. "... We have seen mice that have moved westward, squirrels that have moved westward and now bats that have moved westward.

"That's what science is. Usually, you have an idea or make an observation, and then create a hypothesis. And next you go out and test it." Geluso has been doing that at work, and on his own, ever since his dad gave him a box of 40 traps and several mist nets when he was an undergraduate student. "I'd go out with my Mammals of New Mexico (guidebook) just to see if I could capture something, so I could say that I saw it." He calls it bird watching, but with mammals.

The Internet and more publicity about bats have increased public interest in visiting major bat-viewing sites in New Mexico, Texas and Nevada, Geluso said.

"I think any kind of publicity for bats, and clearing up misconceptions, is good overall for bats. They are part of the ecosystem and are valuable. They're good for farmers in Nebraska," he said.

They also are abundant. Geluso said bats make up one-fourth of all mammals in terms of species, with 1,100-1,200. Rats and other rodents make up one-half of the mammalian species, and all other groups are the other one-fourth.

"Why be a bat biologist? A quarter of the mammalian species on earth are bats," he said, and most of them are in the tropics, where he also has done field studies. "I'm a kid in the candy store down there. You never know what you're going to get; there are so many species." Tropical bats fall into five categories by what they eat: fruit, nectar-pollen, blood, animals and insects.

Of the 45 bat species in the United States, 13 inhabit Nebraska and eat insects. Insect-feeding bats also are the main predator of night-flying insects around the world. Further, most species in the state are hibernators. They do live in caves, but Geluso said, "Bats are very resourceful. They hibernate now in houses, root cellars, sewer systems, mines, you name it. Holes in the ground." In general, the places where they are "hanging out or roosting" in Nebraska are not likely to be disrupted by humans.

So what makes bats special? "They are the only flying mammals," Geluso said. And not all bats use echolocation — locating objects by reflected sound. For example, the flying fox, which some see as a "more pleasing bat, uses its nose and eyes to find fruit.

One of the myths Geluso wants to dispel is that most bats are, well, blind as a bat.

"How do you test how well a bat can see? If you walk into a roost, they'll follow you with their eyes. If you put your finger in their face, guess what happens?" he said, noting that bats do bite.

Another myth involves vampire bats. They are not out to get people, Geluso said, although he does sleep in a tent while in the tropics where vampire bats live, because they will feed on humans if given a chance. Of the three kinds of vampire bats: only one feeds exclusively on mammalian blood, one feeds on birds and one feeds on both.

Bats can have rabies, but humans are only likely to be infected if they pick up an injured or sick bat off of the ground, and are bitten.

"All the bats that get the virulent strain will die, but they are not carrier as far as I know," Geluso said. "They don't have it, spread it and live forever to spread it. Humans are not going to come into contact with a healthy bat."

And one final thing — bats don't fly around and get caught in people's hair.

"I'm in Carlisle with 300,000 bats flying by me, and I don't get attacked," Geluso said. "Of course, I don't have much hair on my head these days, so this may not be the best evidence to dispel that myth." ■
A Passion for Proust

When asked about his lifetime study of French writer Marcel Proust, Herbert Craig, a professor and former chair in the Department of Modern Languages, smiles broadly and says simply:

“I have a passion for Proust. Yes, yes, yes.”

It is a passion that has made Craig the international expert on Proust in the Spanish-speaking world. Considered one of the greatest novelists of the 20th century, Proust (pronounced Proost) is best known for his seven-part novel In Search of Lost Time (The Remembrance of Things Past). The French novelist, critic and essayist lived from 1871-1922.

Craig remembers first reading Proust as an undergraduate student in a survey course at Ohio State University. He can still remember the teacher’s name—Mr. Mitchell. Further direction came when he later studied with Proust specialist Germaine Bree.

“She encouraged me to study what I was interested in.” He next recalls reading Proust while he was in the Army, stationed in Hawaii. It was 1971, the year of the Proust Centennial. That same year, an article by Cuban writer Aljo Carpinterio noted: “All Spanish American writers of his generation—something to Proust.”

Craig credits that article for his inspiration to study the literary relationship between Proust and Spanish America, an inspiration that became a lifetime focus for Craig. He has since searched through major libraries on three continents—South America, North America and Europe—finding and recording the literary connections between Proust and Spanish American writers.

He calls his work on Proust “The French Connection,” meaning that the work is not only about Spanish American writers, but also about France.

“I found I really liked (Proust), even though he was a difficult writer,” Craig said. “He wrote sentences that lasted pages. He analyzed people very carefully; he thought like I did. I felt then that I needed to find a way to work on Proust.”

After his stint in the U.S. Army, Craig went on to earn two master’s degrees—one in Spanish American Literature (1972) and one in French Literature (1985) — and then on to earn a doctorate in Contemporary Spanish American Literature (1983) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His thesis topic—“The Presence of Proust in Argentine Narrative.”

In 1976, before earning a second master’s degree, he received a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship to do research on Proust in Argentina. He spent nine months in Buenos Aires doing research in the libraries. Craig said that he began studying the connection between Proust and Argentinean writers, because “Argentina was the most ‘Frenchified.’ It is a country of immigrants interested in French writers.” However, surprisingly, the first mention of Proust was not found in Argentina.

“I was looking for the earliest (Spanish American) article published on Proust,” Craig said. “It was in Venezuela in 1920. I think his friend (Venezuelan) Reylindo Hahn had something to do with that. Venezuela is not a country that is European. That was a surprise. I expected it to be in Argentina.”

The Venezuelan article about Proust was published shortly after he received the prestigious Le Prix Goncourt, a French prize awarded to the author of “the best and most imaginative prose week of the year.” Awarding the prize to Proust is said to be one of the most controversial selections in the history of the Goncourt, in part, because the award typically went to young, beginning authors who showed promise. Proust was 48. However, Proust was just beginning his career as an author, which fulfilled the primary criteria for the prize.

“Proust wrote about high society,” Craig said. “He was interested in the nobility of France. Some did not like it very much, because he was a bit unmetrical. He showed the futilities of people.”

However, Craig said, Proust is best known for his treatment of memory and time. Proust coined the term “ involuntary memory,” a concept in which cues in life evoke memories without any conscious effort, as opposed to voluntary memory, which is making a conscious effort to remember details from the past. Perhaps the best known example of using involuntary memory in Proust’s writings is called the “episode of the madeleine (French cookie)” in which a madeleine and a cup of tea remind Proust of an earlier incident in his life. Proust has given madeleines a bit of a reputation by describing them as “a little shell of cake, so generously sensual beneath the pietry of its stern pleating…”

In 2002, after years of meticulous research, Craig published his first book: Marcel Proust and Spanish America: From Critical Response to Narrative Dialogue. For the book, he studied the work of 50 different writers and found connections. To do the research, he traveled to 16 Spanish American countries, often spending a month or more doing research in major libraries in each country. The research took him to Spain eight different times.

“Others have studied Proust, but most study a single aspect. It’s (his book) pretty thorough,” Craig said, noting the completeness and complexity of his studies, as did a 2005 review of the book by Stephen Hart of the University College London. The review was published in the “Bulletin of Hispanic Studies.” Hart wrote, “(The book)… is clearly based on a great deal of painstaking archival research—for which the author is to be commended…” Yet another reviewer, Richard Bales of Queen’s University in Belfast, wrote: “Craig’s critical bibliographical backup is exemplary, and gives additional substance to a book which is notable for simultaneous breadth and depth of investigation.” Guillermo David, an Argentine author, said of Craig: “The fact that he (Craig) undertook this research in a third language other than his own native English, in addition to French—the language of the very author (Proust) being researched—doubles not only the difficulty assigned to such a task but also the merit of his work.

“In his research are found multiple cultural crossroads that provide a paradoxical twist, rich in new perspective, with careful consideration of the historical events that serve as a backdrop for the author’s work… the challenge undertaken (has) consumed the majority of Craig’s most intellectually productive years and molded his professional life.”

David added: “He (Craig) never imagined that this enigma turned calling would determine his destiny and to the joy of Proustian readers make it possible for him to take on the immeasurable challenge of cataloging a century’s worth of Proustian works produced on two continents. Herbert Craig undertook this task, which would have been discouraging even to the most daring, with patience, determination and unparalleled skill. He confronted the improbable task of investigating a new frontier never explored by Academia.”

Craig is currently editing a second book on Proust and Spain, Marcel Proust and Spain: Critical and Narrative Trajectories. A third book with an Argentine colleague is in the process of being published in Spain.

Beyond the books, Craig’s publication history further reflects his lifelong work. He has published nearly 20 peer-reviewed articles in three different languages—English, French and Spanish—world-
wide. In addition, he has had 19 articles published in international journals where the work was selected for inclusion by an individual rather than by a committee. A little more than a year ago, he was asked to write a piece about Proust for an encyclopedic dictionary published in Madrid, Spain.

In addition to writing for scholarly journals, he has served as an editor for a number of national and international publications, and as a reviewer for numerous essays and books by other authors. Beyond the many publications, Craig has presented papers at more than 30 national and international conferences. Over the years, the conferences have taken him to professional gatherings in more than 10 states and six foreign countries, including Costa Rica, France, Puerto Rico, Spain and Venezuela. He was invited to present his research on Proust at major conferences in Spain and Uruguay.

As Craig talks about his research, he often punctuates the ends of his comments with a smile and the softly-spoken series of affirmations: "Yes, yes, yes." It is a habit that likely stems from his years of encouraging students in his French and Spanish classes.

"I came to UNK to teach translation in French and Spanish," he said. He joined the UNK faculty in the fall of 1989, after having taught and chaired the Department of Foreign Languages at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kan. At UNK, he teaches classes in Spanish, Spanish American literature and translation, and has served as the departmental chair.

"I also teach students about novels from my research, but I have to be careful," he said. "I don't teach just those novels."

In addition, Craig teaches classes in Spanish American film. "I am a specialist, but my teaching is also broad," he said.

In a letter of recommendation for the Pratt-Heins Award, Sonia Dams Kropp, chair of the Department of Modern Languages, wrote: "...I would like to take this opportunity not only to express my admiration for the breadth of Dr. Craig's scholarly activity, but also to emphasize the significance of this record in light of a few of his other contributions in the department," noting that Craig gave up scholarly release time to teach additional courses.

"He has consistently volunteered to teach a graduate evening course in Spanish, in order to accommodate nontraditional master's degree students," Kropp said. "Dr. Craig's enthusiasm and kind concern for students—who unanimously praise his intellectual stimulation—may be helpful to measure the extent of his dedication as a scholar-teacher."

And his students excel. A graduate student of his, Erin Roark of Kearney, was named the UNK Overall Thesis Winner last spring for her thesis titled "Calo Identity: History, Self-Perception and Self-Expression as Portrayed by Tony Gatlif's Film 'Vengo.'"

Roark's thesis has been submitted to the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS). The MAGS awards recognize and reward distinguished scholarship and research at the master's level. To be considered, the thesis must contain work that makes an unusually significant contribution to the discipline. Craig is modest about his own awards. In 2010, he received the prestigious Pratt-Heins Award for Scholarship and Research. When asked to describe himself as a scholar, he says: "I am following a tradition. I have devoted my life to studying the letters of Proust."
In most labs across campus, audible “ooohs” and “awwwws” do not erupt as the work takes place, and certainly, observers do not break into spontaneous applause when the work is complete — unless you’re in Chad Fonfara’s glassblowing lab. There, the work—process and product—works its magic on the artists and onlookers, alike.

The lab, tucked away at the far west end of Otto Olsen, fills a space repurposed from a former woodworking classroom. Wood floors were removed to expose smooth, bare concrete. Now, three gas furnaces stand in a line against a block wall.

Nearby are two annealers, metal kilns used to bring the fragile, hand-blown glass pieces safely down to room temperature. The concrete block glory hole furnaces, steel rods, metal annealers and massive work tables that make up the “hot shop” are a sharp contrast to the row of colorful, delicate glass bowls lining an overhead shelf at one end of the room.

In Fonfara’s office, large, organic glass forms hang overhead, suspended from metal ligatures like so many giant cocoons. A wall of shelves at one end is lined with his glass works—a visual history of his artistry. Clearly, his current works are not the usual “vessels,” sparkling bowls and shimmering vases, he made in the beginning.

“My work has evolved from functional pieces to sculptural works in glass,” he said. And his work is earning him recognition.

Last spring, Fonfara was one of 12 featured artists in Esprit: A Taste of Art at the Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA). In addition, his work has been included in juried exhibitions at the Moss-Thorn Gallery in Hays, Kan., the Streecker-Nelson Gallery in Manhattan, Kan., and at MONA. He and his advanced glass students were commissioned to create more than 20 individual glassworks for the Spirit Biennial Fundraiser in 2008 and again in 2010. In 2011, he and two advanced students were commissioned to create 40 glass awards for the UNK Alumni Association’s Gold Torch Society. Further, his work has earned him acceptance into two of the most prestigious glass workshops in the nation. Last summer, he was selected to participate in workshops at Pilchuck Glass School near Stanwood, Wash., and at The Studio at the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, N.Y. Pilchuck, an international center for education in glass arts, is well known, because Dale Chihuly, the internationally acclaimed glass artist, was one of the three founders.

At The Studio workshop, Fonfara was one of only nine glassblowers in the nation accepted to participate in the Venetian techniques session, and one of only three to receive a partial scholarship to attend. The 2010 session at Corning was taught by Venetian glass maestro William Gadenrath. This summer, Fonfara was again accepted to attend a workshop at The Studio, this time with glass artist Boyd Sagols.

“Because of the educational opportunity, I was able to add Venetian techniques to the current glass curriculum here at UNK,” he said. “It is my hope to similarly integrate glass sculptural techniques into the advanced glass curriculum while continuing to develop my body of work.

“I think that is the beauty of teaching at the university level...growing the curriculum to reflect ongoing professional experiences and research. One feeds the other, and I enjoy passing down newly acquired knowledge to the students.”

Last fall, he brought Thom McMahon, a glass artist he met at Pilchuck, to the UNK campus as a visiting artist and guest lecturer. McMahon is from Smithville, Tenn.

“The week-long glass workshop benefitted UNK glass students by exposing them to a professional glass artist in a region of the country where there is a scarcity of working professional glass artists,” Fonfara said.
"It takes a tremendous amount of time and practice to master this medium."

As the work continues, Fonfarra rolls the gather on a thick metal table, a process called marvering. Putting his mouth against the other end of the pipe, he blows to create a bubble or "parison." Next, he elongates the bubble by blowing the pipe back-and-forth like a clock pendulum. The work must move quickly. Glass cools rapidly and must be plunged back into the hot "hole" in the furnace repeatedly to keep it pliable.

As Fonfarra works, at his command, the assistant moves in to help and then must quickly move out of the way, not only to avoid hampering the gatherer, but also for his own safety. It is like watching a carefully choreographed dance; there is a certain rhythm and graceful, flowing motion step-by-step throughout the process.

To work the glass, Fonfarra sits at a bench that has arms on each side, laying the steel rod across the arms with the glass on his right. He begins rolling the steel rod with the palm of his left hand, while his right hand moves deftly from tool to tool, shaping the glass. His arms glint with moisture as the well-developed muscles flex with every movement. Sweat runs down his cheeks and drips off his chin. Fonfarra doesn’t notice. The work requires his complete concentration.

"I have less than five minutes of good concentration," he said. "I liken the process to learning a musical instrument: each hand operating independently of the other, working together to create the piece. It takes a tremendous amount of time and practice to master this medium."

Another command, and his assistant squats on Fonfarra’s left, and when told, blows a short breath through the pipe. “There are many aspects of the process that can be dangerous,” he said. “A wrong move with the pipe can knock someone’s teeth out. The gatherer must give clear and concise commands to the assistant throughout the process.” The gatherer is the lead designer of the piece, controlling each step, telling the assistants what to do and when to do it.

With help from the student assistant, additional gatherers are applied and shaped into the stem, handle and base. A gather is attached to and opposite the blowpipe to a solid iron rod called a punty. After the blowpipe is broken free, the gather can then shape and fire polish the open end. When the punty is detached, the rough spot that is left (punt mark) can be smoothed out after annealing by grinding and polishing in the adjacent table.

When the piece is complete, there is spontaneous applause from observers, and smiles of success from Fonfarra and the student.

Getting to experience glassblowing as an observer or a student is not a common experience on a university campus. Of the campuses in the University of Nebraska system, UNK is the only campus that offers classes in glassblowing. Further, according to Fonfarra, there are only two other campuses in Nebraska that offer glassblowing, none in North Dakota or South Dakota, and only one in Kansas.

"Glassblowing classes (at UNK) are open enrollment,” Fonfarra said, noting that, in the past, a class of 22 might have had only two art majors. “But I am refocusing the program. Glassblowing has to be taught in a cultural enrichment course for non-majors. Now with the new emphasis on mastering a greater variety of fundamental forms, higher standards for the signposts of good craftsmanship, the increased intensity of the curriculum and the new technology I am teaching, I can prepare more students to graduate with the necessary skills to work in glass after graduation, whether as a glass assistant to a professional artist, at a glass school or museums, or in an MBA program.”

As an undergraduate student at UNK, Fonfarra began his studies in the graphic design field before becoming a studio artist majoring in sculpture and ceramics. He then went to Kansas State University where he earned the M.F.A. in sculpture. The Omaha native took one glassblowing class as an undergraduate, but it wasn’t until he returned to the campus that he got hooked on glassblowing.

“My background is in traditional sculptural materials—bronze, wood and iron,” he said, “I began working in glass when I started teaching in Kearney (UNK) in 2006.” This time the experience with glass was different.

“For the first two years, I studied foundational glassblowing techniques by making cups, bowls, cylinders, vases and goblets,” he said. “During my third and fourth year, my sculptural sensibilities and personal aesthetic turned over as I began to distort the vessel form, challenging the proclivities of the glass and negating the functionality of the form. Gradually my work evolved into my current ‘Cases and Remains’ series.”

His most recent work, “The Glass Imaginarium,” was a featured Artist-in-Action installation this summer at the 35th Annual Smoky Hill River Festival held at the Oakdale Park in Salina, Kan. Fonfarra was one of only a few featured installation artists chosen to exhibit. More than 70,000 people attend the three-day festival each year.

His installation featured six glass boats suspended in the river, so they appeared to be floating. 12 glass cattails, intermingled with the living cattails along the bank; and six metal tree forms, with three or four cocoon-like glass pieces suspended from each “tree.” The pieces were removed from the site at the end of each day and installed again the next day as a new form to be reflected on.

“Everything worked out perfectly,” he said of the installation. And although Kansas is known for high winds, Fonfarra said, “The wind blew, but wasn’t a problem.” A group of children viewing the “Imaginarium” told him that the glass pieces looked like fairy eggs. One child exclaimed, “There must be a lot of fairies around here!”

In the fall, he had a solo exhibition in the Skylight Gallery in the Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA). The works in that show were a continuation of his “Cases and Remains” series. Inspiration for one of the installations he created for the MONA show came from news coverage of thousands of red-winged blackbirds falling from the skies in Arkansas and Louisiana in January.

“When I saw the birds, I had an emotional reaction,” he said, and he began creating sculptural shapes of the red-winged blackbirds in glass. “No one in the glass world is interested by being able to make one piece. Anyone can do something once. This is a medium where makers and collectors alike appreciate mastery. If you can repeat a form, that shows some skill.” He created more than 30 of the birds for a piece he titled “Blackbirds: Meditation on Death.”

His work has taken a new direction, from the functional to the more sculptural. The reason for the new direction is reflected in a piece he recently wrote: “It is the responsibility of any object-maker working in the medium of glass to create work that speaks to the greater human condition, conveys meaning and emotion, and addresses… themes relevant to our society rather than superficially creating beautiful, but necessarily functional, commercial objects.”

When asked whether he considers himself an artist or a craftsman, he is quick to define himself: “I don’t like being called an artist. I am a ‘maker’ I make objects. Glass is another medium to convey ideas visually.

“In sculpture, it’s a mix of ideas and process,” he said. “In glass, you begin with the process first. Once you have the foundations in glass, then you push to bring concepts to it.”

Of the work, he said, “There are a lot of happy accidents, and a lot of disappointments.” Recently, he has been working with scale, making larger and larger pieces, not losing any of the cultural sculptural forms, but those with sculptural forms I am deliberately trying to get right up to the point where the form could fail due to the thickness, so the pieces do not immediately look like a glass object but more like the papier mache forms in which they have their inspiration. There is so much that worked on this piece.

“Nobody is 100 percent happy with what they make. That is what keeps you hungry. When you fail, you replay it in your mind. When it works you repeat the process so the successful steps get ingrained through practice.

There are hundreds of variables in making each piece. The process of working with glass is unsystematic, because it takes so long to master these variables. Everything happens in the moment and not every step goes as planned.

“It leaves you wanting more, to do it better, to gain a mastery, to expand one’s technical and visual vocabulary in glass in order to be able to create new forms and integrate new ideas in the medium of glass.”
A spring Sunday night in 1998 spent in a hand-built, two-story brick farmhouse in far western Romania made a lasting impression on Sylvia Asay as a person and a researcher identifying traits of strong families.

Asay, professor and chair of the Department of Family Studies and Interior Design, had spent two weeks interviewing and observing the four-generation family for her doctoral dissertation about families in post-communist countries of Eastern Europe, specifically Romania.

“I watched their family dynamics. If they went to church, I went to church with them and to the stores,” she said. On the last Sunday of her visit, Asay, her husband Ted and their three sons were invited to the poor family’s home for dinner. As Asay tells the story 13 years later, it’s clear by her expression that every detail remains crystal clear in her memory.

“They all stood around the table, and we ate. We didn’t realize until later that they couldn’t afford to eat,” she said. “What a lesson for three boys then in third grade, fifth grade and a sophomore in high school.”

She planned all along to pay the family for their time and hospitality, but the family didn’t know that when they invited the Asays for dinner.

Over the two weeks, she had often wondered how the Romanians could even get up in the morning, knowing how hopeless their lives were. “But they were some of the happiest people I’ve ever met. I learned more from them than I ever will from anywhere else,” Asay said.

“When I walked away, I thought, ‘How arrogant of me to think I would be doing the teaching,’” Asay’s childhood with her parents and two sisters on a Kearney County farm near Kearne was idyllic in comparison.

The 1974 Atholl High School graduate participated in speech, theater and vocal music took every 4-H project officer; went to church every Sunday with her family; watched her dad and uncle grow corn, Soybeans and cattle.

She learned to drive at age 9 behind the wheel of a “round-top, stick-shift pickup” pulling a trailer onto which the men loaded irrigation pipe. Her first classroom was one she created at home to present lessons and give tests to her younger sisters.

They were a typical Nebraska family. “We were tight-knit and close to extended family — grandparents, aunts and uncles. Everyone got together at holidays, and nobody moved away,”

Asay said. Asay and her husband have incorporated those positive values into their 35-year-marriage and into the lives of their sons, now 28, 25 and 22.

Faith was a key component to family strength. No marriages ended in divorce. “I guess if we had dysfunction, we never talked about it,” she said.

“Family has a lot of different configurations today,” Asay said.

“There’s a 50 percent divorce rate. That means more single parent, shared-parent and blended families, and children sometimes raised by relatives other than parents.

“There isn’t really a typical family. There are strong families and families with challenges,” she added.

Family strengths have been her focus since she took her first class on marriage and family relations at Trinity International University near Chicago, where she started her college career as an English major before transferring to Kearney State College/UNK.

Asay found her calling when a Trinity professor required students to do a “geneogram” study of their family trends, including factors such as education, professions and personalities. “You can begin to see why you are the way you are,” Asay said, and then avoid negative patterns and focus on positive ones.

She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees at KSC/UNK, in home economics education and vocational education, respectively. Her first big step toward understanding family strengths on a global scale came in the mid-1990s when she led the groundwork for her Romanian research as a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Today, she teaches classes on marriage and family relationships, cross-cultural family patterns, and families in crisis; speaks on and writes about family strengths; and extends her global research to domestic violence issues.

When she needed a dissertation topic, her initial studies of family dynamics in Eastern Europe “just sort of fell in my lap,” Asay said.

“I was so intrigued by the fall of the (Berlin) wall,” she said. Asay decided she had to learn more about the families behind it. Her husband had been on a church mission to teach English as a second language in Romania, so they decided to return and take their boys.

“That was one of the best decisions we ever made as parents — to let them see the world. They came back different kids,” Asay said.

She did a pilot study in 1994, using focus groups of women in two major Romanian cities — Bucharest, the capital, as well as the cultural, financial and industrial center of the country, and Craiova, the sixth-largest city and a political center. Women in the two cities were gathered for the focus groups with the help of American missionaries.

Her goal was to better understand the culture in Romania.

Her research is “qualitative,” which involves talking to people and collecting information in words, versus quantitative, which is often done by survey and expression information in numbers.

“I can’t do research without a story,” Asay said. “I want the in-depth, the descriptive things.” Many of her stories were gathered by observation in 1998 during two-week stays with each of three Romanian families — a farm family, a family in a mountain town in the Transylvanian Alps and a family in the Black Sea city of Constanta.

What Asay found were the poverty and the lingering effects from the old communist system. “Even in 1998, I could never record either audio or video because of the fear of who was listening,” she said, which was almost 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. “They don’t question anything, Mary didn’t think on their own, because they weren’t allowed to think on their own.”

Asay said that in the communist education system, students learned only what their teachers told them. They rarely wrote essays, because government officials did not want anyone’s opinion.

She tells the story of an American missionary who had lived in the same building in Bucharest for years with no hot water.

One day, he decided to see if he could fix the system. He went to the basement and found valves labeled “hot” and “cold” in Romanian. He turned the “hot” valve and instantly had hot water.

“No one ever went down to see why they didn’t have hot water,” Asay said. “They didn’t question it.”

She connected with her Romanian families through university sociology departments there that she had contacted via the Internet, asking also for assistance with housing for her family and interpreters.

Asay also visited some of the notorious Romanian orphanages. She said some orphans had been subjected to AIDS experiments during the time that former head of state Nicolae Ceausescu was in power and that most of the orphans had emotional disabilities from the lack of human contact as babies. Groups such as World Vision had started to take over management of the orphanages by 1998.

When asked why people left their children in such places, Asay replied, “Economics. They just could not afford a child, so they would just leave them there. They thought they were doing their children a favor.”

Worse yet, many children in neighboring Moldova were abandoned to the streets.

Asay’s early research also included interviews and family surveys in former East Germany in 1999. The research was done with the help of faculty at the University of Rostock, where the
UNK construction management program had a working relationship. Asay and UNL Extension Professor of Family and Community Development John DeFrain have worked together on numerous publications about family strengths. The two co-edited the book, Strong Families Around the World: Strength-Based Research, which includes chapters from a selection of internationally recognized family specialists, including Asay’s work on Romania. Asay and DeFrain have determined that there are six qualities that make families strong: appreciation and affection, commitment, positive communication, enjoyable time together, spiritual well-being, and the ability to manage stress and crisis effectively. They have found the six qualities in strong families around the world.

“I found the six qualities there,” she said of her international studies. “They looked a little different, but they were still there.” For example, Asay said one reason Eastern European families are close-knit is because they could not trust anyone else while under the communist system of government.

Today, with more freedoms and outside influences on children, that strength now is being tested. Asay said there are also issues for families around the world. She used the example of families once gathering in the living room to watch TV together. Today, families scatter to TV in several rooms of the house to watch at the same time, but separately. Among her current research projects is a study of text messaging and its use within families.

Her research has been selected for presentation nationally and internationally, including at the University of Russia in Moscow, Shanghai (China) Academy of Social Sciences, Australian Family Strengths Conference, the World Public Forum (WPF) in Rhodes, Greece, and at the National Council on Family Relations in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Her work has also been published in numerous refereed journals, including Marriage and Family Review, Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences, Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal, and The Journal of Teaching in Marriage and Family.

Asay’s career has focused on positive family traits. However, her more recent research in Romania and Moldova, reflected in a paper published in the January 2011 edition of the Journal of Family Violence, looks at domestic violence.

“That’s everywhere. We noticed that in every single country we studied,” Asay said.

A new book edited by Asay, DeFrain and two others, expected to be published in 2012, will feature chapters by authors from 17 countries to give a global perspective on family violence issues.

A spring Sunday night in 1998 spent in a hand-built, two-story brick farmhouse in far western Romania made a lasting impression on Sylvia Asay as a person and a researcher identifying traits of strong families.
at more than 30 national and international conferences, includ-
ing presentations in Thailand, Spain and South Korea. His more than 50 national and international publications include a 2008 article titled “Improving Legibility in Lan-
guage Without Space Between Words.”

In that research, he looked at the effectiveness of differ-
ent ways to make spaceless texts more readable. His findings could have implications not only for computer program-
ners who use languages that run words together, but for those teaching people to read languages (such as Thai, Greek and Hebrew) that do not put a space between words.

McFarland, who specializes in infant mental health, was one of only seven professionals on the advisory board to re-standardize the Bayley Scales of Infant Development. He was one of only four U.S. advisory board members for the re-standardization of the Wechsler Preschool and Pri-
mary Scale of Intelligence. He has received campus and university-wide awards for service and teaching; the Nebraska School Psychologists Association honored him with the Founders Award in 2001, Outstanding School Psychologist award in 1990 and the Service Award from 1987-1990. His “collaborative team assessment” model of evaluatiing young children, which he developed with Theresa McFarland, his wife, was outlined in a 2001 article in the journal Zero to Three.

While presenting that model at a conference several years ago, McFarland said he realized how different views on school psychology can be. Teams from all over the Pacific Rim attended; while some countries were familiar with the latest psychological theories and the respective terminologies, others had sent school representatives who were not profes-

Archway and McFarland have co-authored a former UNK Thai graduate student Kamsonwan Tangdhanakanond. The study looked at differ-
ing attitudes toward school psychologists among Thai and American college students; the findings were published in 2009 in School Psychology International.

Other scholars include Shannon Helgoth, who did a meta-analysis of 43 countries that have school psychology programs, and Kynda Rendickson, who collected data on infant mental health while in Lithuania. Rendickson com-
pared the data to results from American infants, and her findings will be published in the next issue of the journal published by ICR members. Jessica Good, in her scholarly study for her specialist degree, compared the accreditation standards of the ISPA and the National Association of School Psychology.

These projects were among the many Archway and McFarland have co-mentored, earning them the UNK Graduate Studies and Research Mentor Award in 2011. It was the first time the university gave a dual award. The duo has organized the Kearney portion of eight online research symposiums, during which students and faculty from five different universities have presented their original research. The universities that have participated include UNK, VM, Black Hills State University, Chulalong-
korn University (Thailand), and Pusan National University (South Korea). In 2008, UNK and VM further expanded the initiative by creating the International Journal of Psychology: A Biopsychosocial Approach.

McFarland is one of two editors-in-chief, along with his counterpart at VM, and Archway is one of two asso-
ciate editors. While both the print and online versions are published in Lithuania, the UNK editors find reviewers for and decide on all the English language submissions.

While he welcomes the greater participation, McFarland said having more countries involved makes the symposium’s tricky scheduling even trickier. Last spring, the event began at 7:30 a.m. in South Dakota, 8:30 a.m. in Kearney and 4:30 p.m. in Lithuania. Once, the presentations ended at midnight for one site. McFarland and the other organizers are considering how to deal with logistics as the symposia grow.

“As we look at the number of partners who want to get involved, (it seems that) our students could get the chance to interact with dozens of students around the world, but maybe in a half-dozen symposia around the world, rather than in one,” he said.

All 50 students in the school psychology graduate program, McFarland said, are touched by the ICR and that influence will continue to grow, with a new course called Globalization of School Psychology. Among the course requirements is that students become members of the ISPA and befriend a school psychology student from another country.

McFarland said his hope is that UNK graduates learn to work across social class and economic lines, cultural lines, languages, and all the other barriers that often keep people from understanding and helping each other.

“It is just so helpful to expand their horizons, because so many of our students haven’t had these experiences,” he said.

At least one important part of the ICR initiative was gone in the fall. Archway’s retirement is official in August. Although he will not have a role in the symposia or with student research, he will continue to edit the journal.

“He and I certainly fully intend to stay involved with the journal,” McFarland said, as well as doing their own collabora-
tive research. “The partnership will live on.”
“A lot of it, nobody had been through since the trial. I actually touched the documents involved in the case. I actually touched documents that had the signature of the judge who tried the case.”

Gunfighters face off in a dusty street, each ready to make the other eat lead because the town isn’t big enough for both of them. Sunlight flashes off the steel of their pistols. Smoke rises from both barrels, but one now lies in the limp hand of a dead man. That was justice in the Old West.

At least that is the image Mark Ellis, like most of America, grew up with. His research, however, is helping to reshape the lawless reputation of the American frontier. The history professor has shown that while the West may have been wild, it was also a place where people made, enforced and valued the law.

In 2007, Ellis published Law and Order in Buffalo Bill’s Country, Legal Culture and Community in Lincoln County, Nebraska, 1866-1918. The book focuses on North Platte and the trial of John Burley, who was convicted of manslaughter in 1869. As he writes in the conclusion of the book, Ellis found through this case that “19th century plains settlers created an environment where law and order rather than lawlessness prevailed, even in the wild and wooly dimes of Buffalo bill’s country.”

The book took second place in the Scribes Book Award from the Legal Writers of America, and was a finalist for the Great Plains Distinguished Book Prize. Ellis said the book builds on the research of other historians, but “takes a different path” in focusing on the establishment of legal system in a western community. The only book with a similar focus, he said, shows how law was applied on the Oregon Trail.

While Law and Order was Ellis’ first book of academic research, his career has been marked by frequent publications on a variety of subjects. His article in the Summer 2005 issue of Western Historical Quarterly, which also analyzed the Burley case, was nominated for three national awards. He has written dozens of articles and essays, as active as a reviewer and edited the Buffalo County Historical Society’s newsletter, Buffalo Tales, from 2002-2006. He has written two local history books with UNK students, A Century of Sports at the University of Nebraska at Kearney with Jordan Kiek, who is now a Ph.D. student at the University of Tennesse and currently on a Fulbright Fellowship in Latvia, and Kearney with Heather Stauffer, who is now a graduate student in English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Those publications, and the many graduate student projects he has mentored, earned Ellis the UNK Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award and the Graduate Studies Faculty Mentor Award in 2009.

Two books, including one that builds on his Law and Order research, are upcoming. Ellis said his research has slowed because of his duties as graduate chair and as the director of the online graduate program in history.

Ellis defines himself as a local historian, focusing on the history of the area in which he lives. Growing up in southern California, his ideas of the West were formed by popular movies and books that featured gunfighters and quick draw artists. Later, at California State University, Northridge his mentors included Roger McGrath and Clare McKenna, who documented the high levels of homicide in several 19th century western communities.

When Ellis came to Nebraska to earn his doctorate degree, he thought he would find the same lawless atmosphere pervaded this part of the West. “When I began the project, I was actually going to confirm that image,” he said. “The deeper I got into the research, the more I found that was not the case.” Part of his research was done with records housed in the attic of the Lincoln County (Nebraska) Courthouse. Although many of the records had been damaged by vermin, fires and the passing of time, it was still an exciting experience for the historian, seeing and holding papers no one had seen or held since the late 1860s.

“A lot of it, nobody had been through since the trial. I actually touched the documents involved in the case. I actually touched documents that had the signature of the judge who tried the case.”

Finding Law & Order In The Wild West

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What Ellis found in the Burley case was a community committed to seeing legal justice done. While the murder itself may sound like something out of a B western – a man shows his buddies the money he has saved to buy a wagon and mules, and one of them shoots him in the head to get it – what followed definitely went off script. Burley’s lawyer argued for and got a change of venue for the trial, because there were too few people in the area for an adequate jury pool. Burley was convicted of murder and given the death penalty, but the Nebraska Supreme Court reversed the conviction. By the time Burley was retried and convicted
of manslaughter, Lincoln County had built a jail and had enough residents to put together a jury of his peers.

None of what happened in the Burley case, Ellis is quick to point out, contradicts the fact gunfights, vigilante mobs and “frontier justice” happened in the American West. His work simply shows that the people who settled the frontier brought the concept of legal justice with them, and applied it.

“If they didn’t have a courthouse, they built a courthouse. If they didn’t have a jail, they built a jail.”

Ellis wrote about the Burley case in his doctoral dissertation, and developed his work into a book after coming to UNK in 2000.

Since 2000, Ellis has juggled his own research with his role as director of the online master’s degree program. More than half of the online students are teachers from all over the world. They are seeking advanced education, and they participate in classes. One of Ellis’ students e-mailed to say his assignment would be late, since he would be flying a mission over Afghanistan on the day it was due. That, Ellis said, was a good reason for an extension.

The success of the program has helped support bringing in two visiting professors—one from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and one from Texas Tech University—who offered classes last fall about 19th and 20th century Europe.

While exciting, Ellis said, the success of the program has also meant less time for the two books he has in process. One of them, co-authored with Vern Volpe, chair of the UNK Department of History, will look at the impact of World War II on Nebraska. Ellis said the book is an outgrowth of the Veterans Research Project, a Library of Congress effort to collect veterans’ stories. The UNK history department has participated in the project since 2004. He added, though, that he has been interested in military history since he was a kid, when both his grandfathers told him stories about fighting in World War II. Nebraska has an especially intriguing story related to that time period, Ellis said, because the war experience transformed the state so dramatically.

“This part of the country was isolationist until Dec. 7, 1941,” Ellis said. “Overnight, this becomes one of the most involved and patriotic of places.”

While the book is still in its early phase, Ellis said it marks a new research focus, on the 20th century for him. He plans at least one more look, however, on the legal system of the West.

Ellis said there are many ways his findings in Law and Order can be expanded, and he intends to do that in a book titled The Cowboy Menace. It will explore the central plains conflict of the 1870s between small town settlers and the cattle drives that came up from Texas. Far from a simple case of “farmers vs. cowmen,” the conflict was a clash of values, economics, lifestyles and priorities.

The middle-class tradespeople and farmers in the small towns along the rail lines were mostly northerners, many of whom had fought for the Union in the Civil War. The people driving cattle through a shrinking “free range” were mostly southerners, and supporters of the Confederacy who “tended to lean toward a We’ll handle these matters ourselves’ kind of attitude, while the northern tendency was to turn toward the law. There was a conflict of values, not just economics,” Ellis said.

That conflict led people to subvert or ignore the law at times. Ellis said by looking at some of those incidents, he wants to help reveal a more complex and more accurate picture of the American West. It was a wild and woolly place, a place of conflicting values and shifting ideas where law and order finally won out.
UNK is a growing university of 7,100 students from all 93 Nebraska counties, 49 states and 53 countries. UNK is thriving with a 5.1 percent increase in enrollment, 23 percent increase in transfer students, 8.8 percent increase in non-Nebraska students as well as 4 percent increase in international students and 16.3 percent increase in eCampus enrollment.

Students select from 170 undergraduate, 25 pre-professional and 34 graduate degree options. With a 17-1 student-to-faculty ratio, UNK students learn from more than 300 faculty who are recognized for excellence in scholarship, teaching and research.