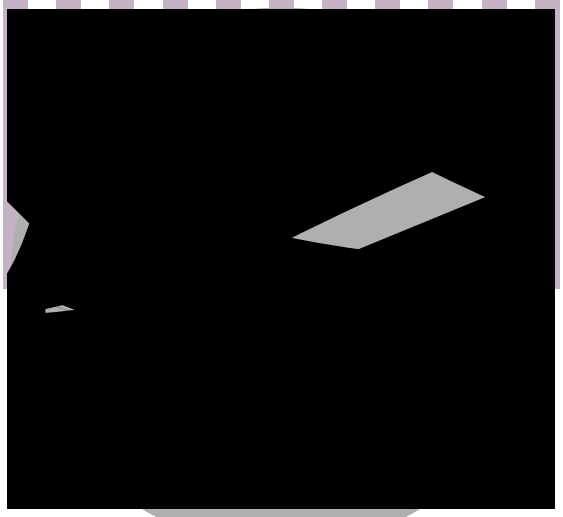


University of Nebraska System

2024 PRESIDENT'S EXCELLENCE AWARDS

August 8, 2024

Award Presentation

Je rey P. Gold, M.D.
President
University of Nebraska System

PRESIDENT'S EXCELLENCE AWARDS

e university's most prestigious awards for teaching, research and engagement recognize individual faculty members and units whose work has had a signi cant impact on students, the university and the state.

OUTSTANDING RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY AWARD

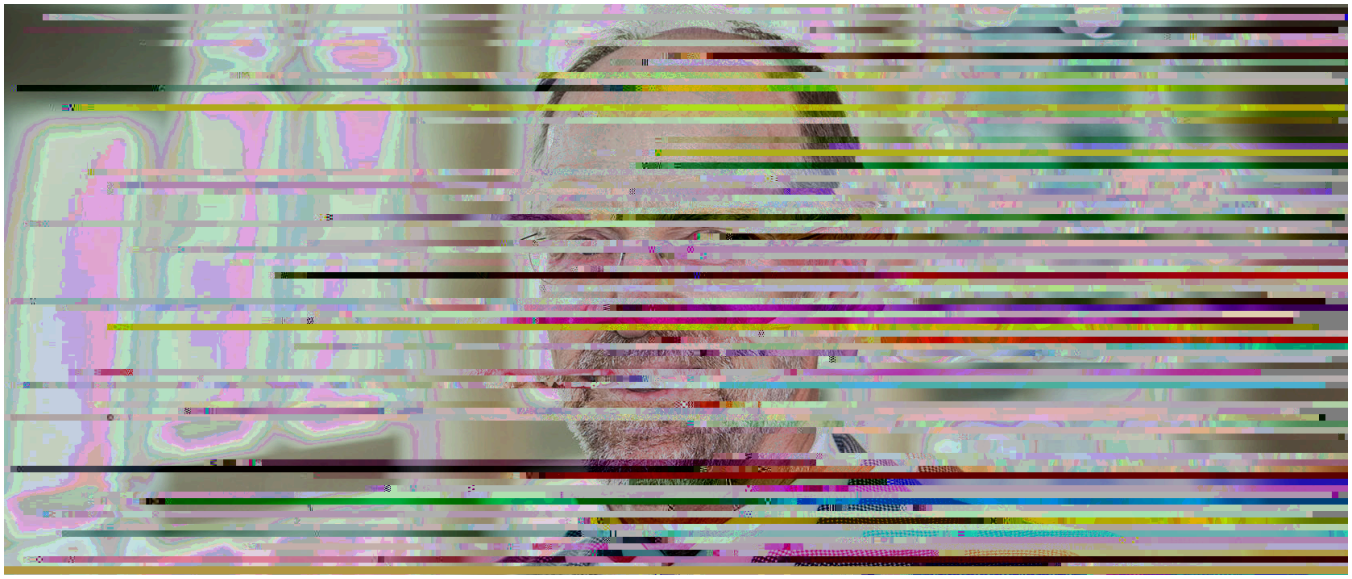
KRISTEN OLSON, PH.D.

Department of Sociology
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Kristen Olson, Ph.D., is the Leland J. and Dorothy H. Olson Professor in Sociology and Director of the Bureau of Sociological Research. Dr. Olson joined the faculty at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 2007.

Dr. Olson's research examines and improves the quality of data collected in surveys, blending social science and statistical approaches to a wide range of survey data collection problems. Her work has been fundamental to

OUTSTANDING RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY AWARD



JONATHAN VENNERSTROM, PH.D.

Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Jonathan L. Vennerstrom is a Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the UNMC College of Pharmacy. Dr. Vennerstrom received a Ph.D. in Medicinal Chemistry from the University of Minnesota in 1985. Before joining UNMC in 1987, he received post-doctoral training at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

He has been awarded numerous grants and contracts from the National Institutes of Health, the World Health Organization, and other public and private organizations to support his work in anti-infective drug discovery. He is widely published and cited in scienti c literature and the mainstream media.

His work in antimalarial drug development from 2000 to 2010 began with the formation of an international team supported by the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), a public-private partnership that receives most of its funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. e team was comprised of researchers from UNMC, Monash University in Australia, and the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute in Switzerland. e team's rst drug candidate, OZ277, or arterolane maleate, was developed by Ranbaxy Laboratories (now Sun Pharma) in India and was introduced to the market in 2012 as a drug combination product with piperaquine (Synriam®). eir second candidate, OZ439, a potential single-dose therapy, progressed to Phase IIb trials. Vennerstrom's work on antimalarial ozonides led to MMV Project of the Year Awards in 2001 and 2006 and the American Chemical Society Award for Creative Invention in 2019. Current drug discovery targets in the Vennerstrom lab include several bacterial pathogens and the neglected parasitic diseases schistosomiasis, leishmaniasis, and Chagas disease.

OUTSTANDING TEACHING AND INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY AWARD

PHANI TEJ ADIDAM, PH.D.
Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship
University of Nebraska at Omaha

INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT AWARD

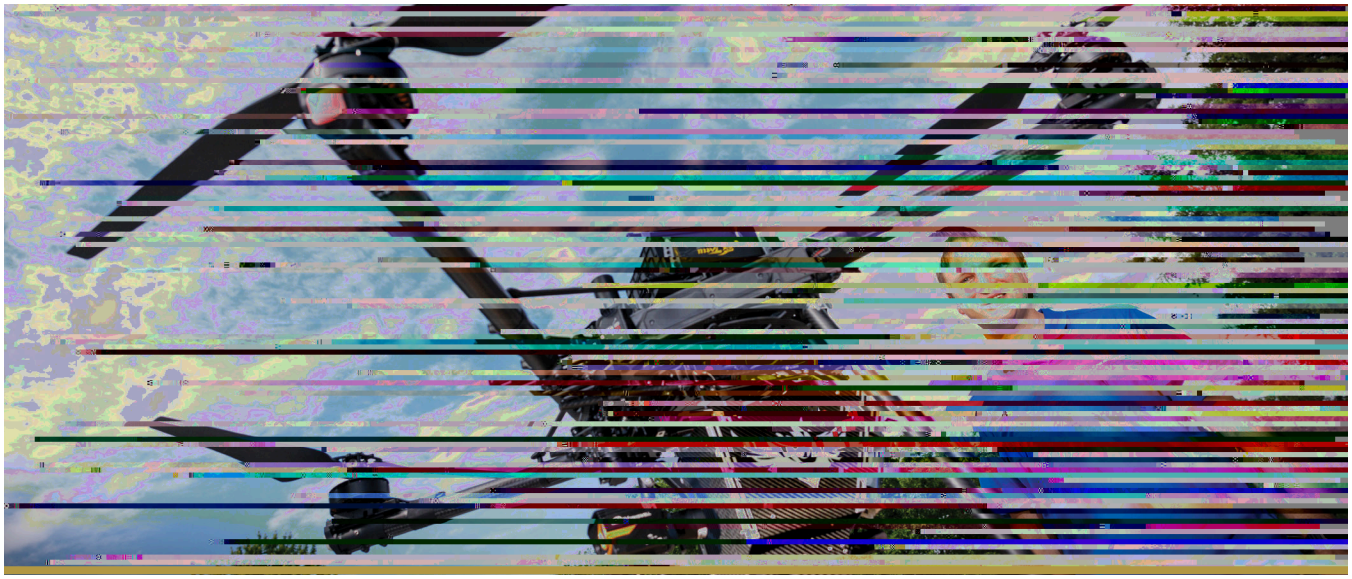
BENSON EDAGWA, PH.D.

Department of Pharmacology & Experimental Neuroscience
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Dr. Benson Edagwa is a Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Neuroscience at UNMC. He earned his undergraduate degree in 2005 from Moi University, Kenya, and a Ph.D. in Chemistry from LSU in 2012.

Dr. Edagwa has played a pivotal role in the development of several new inventions that have been licensed and further developed to treat chronic illnesses. While at UNMC, Dr. Edagwa has been listed as an inventor on 19 unique new invention noti cations, leading to 84 patents and patent applications. He is also listed as an inventor on 45 pending patent applications and 11 issued patents. ese numbers put Dr. Edagwa in the top 1% of all innovative faculty at

FACULTY IP INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION AWARD



CARRICK DETWEILER, PH.D.

School of Computing
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Carrick Detweiler received his B.A. in 2004 from Middlebury College and Ph.D. in 2010 from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, focusing on robotics. In 2010, he joined the faculty of the School of Computing at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL). He co-founded and co-directs the Nebraska Intelligent MoBile Unmanned Systems (NIMBUS) Lab at UNL, which focuses on developing novel drone algorithms and systems that interact with the environment. He is a Faculty Fellow of the Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Institute, a Faculty Fellow of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, and a Senior Member of the National Academy of Inventors.

Carrick is also the co-founder and CEO of Drone Ampli ed, which has grown to over two dozen employees. e technology behind Drone Ampli ed was developed as part of National Science Foundation research at UNL and is exclusively licensed from NUtech Ventures. Drone Ampli ed's mission is to develop, market, and sell integrated drone systems, services, and data analytics for aerial ignition and forest re mapping. Its signature product, IGNIS, is a drone-based system that allows re ghters to remotely ignite backburns and prescribed burns while staying out of harm's way. Drone Ampli ed's technology is rede ning re management practices, enabling the semi-autonomous dropping of ignition spheres and the monitoring of res while keeping personnel far from the re with lower cost and higher availability. e technology is exponentially less costly to purchase and operate, more readily available than helicopters, safer than sending personnel on foot or ATV into dangerous res, and more e cient for managing large and complex areas. ere are now hundreds of IGNIS systems operating on nearly all major wild res.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE COLLABORATION AWARD

THE DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY COLLABORATION

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

e Digital Accessibility Collaboration at the University of Nebraska is a pioneering initiative focused on enhancing digital accessibility and implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) across campus. e mission of the Digital Accessibility Collaboration is multifaceted: it aims to create institutional dialogue about accessibility, provide training

UNIVERSITY-WIDE DEPARTMENTAL TEACHING AWARD

PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

University of Nebraska Medical Center

e University of Nebraska Medical Center's Department of Physical erapy, within UNMC's College of Allied Health Professions, has educated Nebraskans and numerous others for over 50 years, lling crucial workforce needs throughout our state and beyond. Its mission is to advance health for all by optimizing movement through high-quality and accessible educational programs for physical therapy, creating contemporary clinical and educational scholarship, and engaging in professional service at the local, state, national, and international levels. It brings this mission directly to Nebraskans. More than 60% of recent graduates are employed within the state, nearly half in rural and underrepresented areas. Recent graduates work in Brown, urston, Dundy, Je erson, and Phelps counties, to name a few. UNMC PT grads also currently practice throughout the U.S., from Alaska to Florida.

Its three-year professional curriculum, which enrolls approximately 200 students annually and leads to a Doctor of Physical erapy (DPT) degree, is the only public program in Nebraska for the professional education of physical therapists. One of the rst nationally to adopt the doctoral degree, the department celebrated 20 years of DPT graduates in 2024.

e department is at the forefront nationally in using teamwork and technology in teaching, and a dozen faculty have earned national recognition for instruction and education from the American Physical erapy Association. Innovative methods include simulation experiences that allow students to practice in realistic, hands-on clinical scenarios.

e physical therapy department educates future physical therapists on UNMC's Omaha campus and at the Health Science Education Complex (HSEC) on the Kearney campus. Its competitive admissions program searches for outstanding candidates throughout Nebraska, including through the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) and Kearney Health Opportunities Program pathways (KHOP).

U.S. News & World Report ranks UNMC's Department of Physical erapy No. 33 among 279 accredited programs.