

# 2024-2025 Inaugural Mary Eliza Mahoney Mentoring Program

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In Fall 2024, the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing (UNMC CON) implemented the Mary Eliza Mahoney Mentoring Program (MEMMP). The MEMMP addresses the immediate and ongoing recruitment and retention needs of prelicensure nursing students from underrepresented and first-generation populations. The purpose of the MEMMP is to implement a proven mentoring model (Christian, Cater, & Dieujuste, 2021) in the CON at UNMC that simultaneously transforms the trajectories of academically at-risk students, recruits nurses from communities most in need, and encourages nursing graduates to serve those same communities.

The MEMMP is modeled after

the Dotson Bridge and Mentoring program, an existing and successful program at Simmons University in Boston, Massachusetts (Simmons University, 2024). UNMC CON Dean Lepaine Sharp-McHenry has experience with the Dotson Bridge program and its beneficial outcomes. She adds, “The Dotson Bridge Mentoring Program is a phenomenal program geared toward recruiting, retaining, and graduating Asian, Latina, African, and Native American (ALANA) and first-generation nursing students. The goal is to invest in their success as future nursing professionals.” Based on the success of the mentoring program at Simmons University, Dean Sharp-McHenry collaborated with an anonymous community donor to replicate the mentoring

program at the UNMC CON.

MEMMP will set students up for academic success and provide professional role models to build relationships designed to retain nurses in Nebraska. Professional mentorship is important for all nursing students but is particularly important for students from communities currently underrepresented in the nursing profession and first-generation students.

Each student, known as a Mahoney Scholar, is assigned an experienced nurse mentor employed in practice who will provide individualized support every week. The Mahoney Scholars will have opportunities to participate in specialized workshops, study groups, and leadership programs. Students also are expected to participate in a community service project each year to foster civic responsibility and reinforce the expectations of a professional nurse. The MEMMP is housed in the UNMC CON and led by Director Dr. Precious Davis, who is committed to mentoring undergraduate students. “Providing an experienced nurse from the community as a mentor for these students will be a key ingredient to their success in overcoming generational barriers in education,” states Dr. Davis. “The enthusiasm from both the Mahoney Scholars

and the mentoring staff and faculty is so encouraging.”

MEMMP recently enrolled 50 Mahoney Scholars across all UNMC CON campuses and secured 20 nurse mentors from the local community, 8 Peer Mentors, 8 Graduate Assistants, 5 Faculty Liaisons, and is additionally supported by each campus’ Assistant Dean. In addition, the Mahoney Scholars will receive a \$10,000 scholarship for full participation in the program. We believe MEMMP has a tremendous opportunity to not only grow the Nebraska nursing workforce but also impact the demographics of the Nebraska nursing workforce so that it includes more underrepresented and first-generation populations. To our knowledge, MEMMP is the first of its kind in Nebraska. 🔥

## RESOURCES FOR THE MAHONEY SCHOLARS INCLUDE:

- A dedicated space on each campus with computers and whiteboards to facilitate learning.
- Workshops to address soft skills development and content-specific needs identified by the scholars.
- Support for the development of writing skills.
- Study groups for the most challenging courses to foster collaborative learning, networking, and friendships; these will be led by Peer Mentors (senior level UNMC CON students) and Graduate Assistants (UNMC CON graduate students).
- A Faculty Liaison from each campus to support the Director, coordinate local operationalization of the MEMMP, and interface with Peer Mentors and Graduate Assistants.
- A leadership workshop offered annually with guest speakers to inspire students to develop a leadership mindset as they develop as a future nurse.
- Study space to facilitate group tutoring; workshops, and peer collaborations, and
- Provide tools to optimize academic success.

### Reference

Christian, L., Cater, G., & Dieujeste, C. (2021). The Dotson bridge and mentoring program: A diversity success story. *Nurse Educator*, 46(5), 306-310.

## Author Biographies

Dr. Tiffany A Moore, PhD, RN, SANE-A, FAWHONN is an Associate Professor at the College of Nursing. Dr. Moore educates students in the Undergraduate and PhD programs at UNMC CON. Her research program focuses on the effects of chronic stress in the maternal/child population. Clinically, Dr. Moore has worked as a Forensic Nurse Examiner since 2019. Dr. Moore has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the MEMMP and is enthusiastic about the potential implications of this program for student success.

Dr. Kelly Gonzales, PhD, APRN-NP, FNP-C, has been in academia for eighteen years and has been a Family Nurse Practitioner for ten years. Since 2014, she has been engaged in faculty practice as part of her academic appointment. Dr. Gonzales has research expertise in nursing education and practice that includes survey development and implementing and evaluating quality improvement programs. Dr. Gonzales knows first-hand the challenges of increasing the nursing workforce given her experience as a nurse practitioner faculty who 1) oversees didactic and clinical education for family nurse practitioner students, 2) mentors new clinical faculty, 3) recruits and retains preceptors, and 4) functions as a preceptor in the clinical site. Dr. Gonzales is passionate about growing the nursing workforce through nursing education and transition to practice programs.

Dr. Katherine (Kati) Bravo, PhD, RN, CPNP-PC, UNMC CON BSN Director and Interim Assistant Dean of the Omaha Division, has been working in academia since 2005. She has received recognition for her excellence in teaching and is passionate about educating nurses for future healthcare needs. Her research interests include nursing education and quality instructional processes. She has received specialized training in Human-Centered Design through Stanford University's Executive Education program and serves as Co-Director of the UNMC Design Thinking Program.

Dr. Precious S Davis, EdD, MSN, RN (Dr. Lady P) is an Assistant Professor at UNMC College of Nursing and Director of the Mary Eliza Mahoney Mentoring Program. She previously worked as a Nurse Case Manager in Infectious Diseases at UNMC, specializing in HIV care and management and a Staff Nurse on the LIED Tower of UNMC. Dr. Davis's area of clinical interest includes retention and engagement in care, motivational interviewing, public and community health, health inequities and social determinants of health. Her passions include mentoring, volunteering, and health education. Dr. Davis received her Doctorate in Health Care Education and Leadership from Clarkson College in Omaha, Nebraska. She also received her master's in nursing education at Western Governors University and bachelor's in nursing at Nebraska Wesleyan College. Dr. Davis has over 20 years of Nursing experience and is on a mission to integrate her nursing experiences into medical science and service-learning education.

Dr. Lepaine Sharp-McHenry, DNP, CNS, RN FACDONA, Dean of the UNMC College of Nursing is experienced in higher education, nursing practice, and nursing regulation. She has gained recognition as a transformational leader in her field who actively supports mentorship and leadership development. She is an enthusiastic advocate of branding your professional image among her colleagues and has gained the respect of industry leaders across the country. She is known for her service in politics, education, and her community. She is committed to advancing the profession, investing in the next generation of nurses, promoting health equity, diversifying the nursing workforce, and making a difference at the local, state, and national level. McHenry also served as Dean and Professor of the College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences at Simmons University, Boston, MA.