



NEBRASKA

**LIFE SKILLS
& ENRICHMENT
2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide proactive education, fostering the acclimation to the University of Nebraska, promote total person development best preparing student-athletes for life after sport, and serve as a powerful recruiting resource for each team.

LIFE SKILLS OVERVIEW

Complementing Academic Support Services is the comprehensive Life Skills program, continually recognized as a model of service to prospective, current and former student-athletes. The Athletic Department provides Life Skills programming for every student-athlete, first to acclimate them to the University of Nebraska, and then to promote their total-person development.

Led by a dedicated senior administrator, Keith Zimmer, a staff of four professionals develop and provide programming in individual and team settings to assist with total-person development of all student-athletes. Areas of emphasis include proactive life skills education, community involvement, career planning, effective communications, healthy relationships, leadership development, relationship violence awareness, and financial literacy.

The Athletic Department supports a comprehensive community service program, reflected during the 2023-2024 academic year with 396 student-athletes earning recognition for their community service efforts impacting approximately 25,000 people throughout the state of Nebraska and beyond.

Staff members remain committed to total-person development even after a student-athlete's graduation.

BIG TEN ADVISORY COMMISSION

Nebraska Baseball Alum, Shawn Buchanan, continued to serve on the Big Ten Advisory Commission in the 2023-2024 academic year and collaborates with Life Skills to assess the student-athlete experience for all Husker student-athletes. Each Husker student-athlete had the opportunity to complete a comprehensive student-athlete welfare survey with specific questions in place to assess the minority student-athlete experience and provide specific feedback to the Big Ten regarding how to best manage and enhance the Division I college student-athlete experience. Additionally, Shawn presents annually to the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and the entire student-athlete population at the beginning of the year all student-athlete meeting.

LIFE SKILLS STAFF

DEVELOPMENT - SERVICE - LEADERSHIP



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Life Skills*

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SPORT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Football, Rifle, Softball,
Swimming and Diving,
Men's Tennis, Women's
Tennis, Volleyball



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SPORT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Men's Basketball, Bowling,
Football, Men's Golf,
Women's Golf, Soccer



TOM LEMKE

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SPORT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Baseball, Football, Men's
Gymnastics, Women's
Gymnastics, Wrestling



KATE FRAZIER

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SPORT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Women's Basketball,
Men's Cross Country,
Women's Cross Country,
Football, Men's Track and Field,
Women's Track and Field

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT

DEVELOPMENT - SERVICE - LEADERSHIP

The Life Skills staff facilitates individual student-athlete meetings throughout the academic year. Goals of the meetings are to continue developing positive rapport, learning about the student-athlete's background, providing specialized assistance related to career development, personal growth, involvement and professional school aspirations. Additionally, Life Skills staff completes nearly 400 presentations for prospective student-athletes during the recruitment process.

4-YEAR TIERED PROGRAMMING

DEVELOPMENT - SERVICE - LEADERSHIP

SUMMER BRIDGE

The Summer Bridge program provides first-year student-athletes an introduction to tools and resources meant to maximize their overall student-athlete experience with regards to personal and career development. Topics covered during the summer bridge sessions include NIL, a personal strengths assessment, building a personal brand, communication, networking, career exploration, financial literacy, as well as involvement in a community service event. Summer Bridge was attended by 87 new Husker student-athletes in the Summer 2023 semester.



HUSKER HEROES

For the 13th year, Life Skills along with the Organizations Networking for Everyone with Special Needs hosted the Husker Heroes outreach event in Memorial Stadium on September 17th. Required for all first year student-athletes as part of the 4-Year Tiered Development Programming, Husker Heroes is a specially designed event for individuals with disabilities and their families to interact and play games with Husker student-athletes. The 2023 event hosted over 600 participants from all over the state of Nebraska and annually serves as an introduction to the culture of service at Nebraska for student-athletes who participate. A total of 87 Husker student-athletes were in attendance to host sport related stations, interact with attendees, sign autographs, and pose for pictures.



BIG RED WEALTH SERIES

Through a partnership with the Nebraska Council on Economic Education, the Life Skills team provided financial education seminars to all Husker student-athletes based on their academic year in school through the Big Red Wealth Series. Topics covered in the Big Red Wealth Series included budgeting and building credit attended by 113 first-year student-athletes, tax documents and filing taxes attended by 93 second-year student-athletes, investing and retirement planning attended by 109 third-year student-athletes, and buying a home and types of insurances attended by 160 fourth through sixth-year student-athletes.

LEADERSHIP & INVOLVEMENT FAIR

Second-year student-athletes gathered in Memorial Stadium on February 12th for the Leadership and Involvement Fair to connect with local organizations for volunteer opportunities and leadership development opportunities. The 104 student-athletes in attendance heard from a panel of current student-athletes and graduates including soccer alum, Marissa Popoola, gymnastics student-athlete, Clara Colombo, and track & field student-athlete, Micaylon Moore, who spoke about the ways they have benefited from being involved on campus and in the community. Attendees then had the opportunity to meet and learn from 20 campus, community, and athletic department organizations eager to work with Huskers.



CAREER FAIR

Husker student-athletes assembled in the West Stadium Club on February 19th for the 32nd Annual Husker Student-Athlete Career Fair. In total, 259 student-athletes attended the event which featured 36 companies with representatives from the Lincoln and Omaha area. Many of the companies in attendance also have a presence at the national level for student-athletes who wish to seek employment outside of Nebraska following graduation. The Husker Student-Athlete Career Fair, which is the longest running 4-Year Tiered Development Programming event hosted by the Life Skills department, annually aims to connect third-sixth year student-athletes with employers for internship and full-time job opportunities.

NETWORKING NIGHT

Held on September 25th, 89 second-year student-athletes participated in Husker Networking Night which began with a keynote address from Executive Associate AD for Life Skills, Keith Zimmer. Following Zimmer's message, attendees participated in a speed networking segment where small groups of student-athletes were matched with professionals in various career industries to practice their elevator pitch, ask questions, and learn about networking strategies from the 37 professional guests in attendance, which included 11 Husker letterwinners. The evening concluded with a dining etiquette education session led by Rachel Larson from the UNL College of Business where attendees then practiced their newly learned skills over a catered dinner.



The Life After Sport Seminar is hosted annually for all student-athletes who are exhausting their athletic eligibility. The 2024 Life After Sport Seminar on April 15th was attended by 58 student-athletes and featured world renowned storyteller, Stanford Certified Design Your Life Coach, and entrepreneur, Mike Smith. Smith led attendees in numerous activities that encouraged them to start thinking differently about what's next after their sport, reflected on desired career paths, and discussed the depth of the professional network they have built as Husker student-athletes. Lastly, Smith guided attendees in making a "Mind Map" where they started with one idea for a job after finishing their sport and challenged them to expand on that idea to explore all the possible opportunities that related to their original word.

LIFE AFTER SPORT SEMINAR



GAMBLING & HAZING EDUCATION

All Husker student-athletes attended a mandatory educational seminar on sports wagering and hazing on September 19th in Memorial Stadium. Attendees heard from a diverse panel of experts including compliance and the FBI on sports wagering rules and regulations as well as support resources from sports psychology and the Nebraska Problem Gamblers Assistance Program. The sports wagering feature presenter was Dan Trolaro from EPIC, who is an NCAA approved speaker on sports wagering. Additionally, attendees heard from campus members from student conduct, fraternity and sorority life, and sports psychology on the dangers and consequences of hazing on college campuses.

POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

DEVELOPMENT - SERVICE - LEADERSHIP

Life Skills coordinates the nomination and application process of numerous institutional, conference, and national postgraduate scholarships. To apply student-athletes must be in their final season of athletics eligibility, performed with distinction in the classroom, and have represented Nebraska as a positive student-athlete ambassador. Scholarships facilitated by Life Skills include the Big Ten Postgraduate Scholarship, Wayne Duke Postgraduate Scholarship, NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship, N-Club Scholarship, and Frank Solich Postgraduate Award.

POST-ELIGIBILITY OPPORTUNITIES

DEVELOPMENT - SERVICE - LEADERSHIP

Beginning in 2015, the Husker Post-Eligibility Opportunities Program (PEO) has offered Husker alumni a one-semester scholarship, valued up to \$7,500, to apply toward an internship, study abroad experience, entrepreneur endeavor, or graduate school. To qualify, student-athletes must graduate, exhaust athletic eligibility, earn a scholar-athlete ring, and be in good standing with the university and athletic department at the time of application for PEO funding.

Eligible student-athlete alumni continued to take advantage of the Husker Post-Eligibility Opportunities (PEO) Program in the 2023-2024 academic year. Overall, 67 Husker alumni took advantage of the PEO program for internship (27), graduate school (34), study abroad (2), and entrepreneur (4) experiences during the 2023-2024 academic year and a total of \$476,657 was awarded, bringing the 7-year total to \$3,278,229 in aid awarded through the PEO program.

67

2023-2024 PARTICIPANTS

\$476,657

2023-2024 SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

DEVELOPMENT - **SERVICE** - LEADERSHIP

2,500 EVENTS
25,000 SERVED

Husker student-athletes completed over 2,500 different community outreach events during the 2023-2024 academic year serving over 25,000 community members, including but not limited to retirement home visits, elementary school fun nights, book readings, Boo at the Zoo, food drives, clothing drives, donor events, Dance Marathon, People's City Mission & PCM Help Center, daycare visits, Center for People in Need, Shop With a Jock, and hospital visits.



LIL RED LETTERS

Thirty student-athletes took part in the Lil Red Letters pen pal program. Through a partnership with Hearts for Healing, each Husker was matched with a child from a military family and exchanged monthly letters throughout the academic year.



LIFE SKILLS SPORTSMANSHIP PEP RALLY

Over 2,500 elementary and middle school students from across the state of Nebraska attended the Life Skills Pep Rally prior to the women's basketball team's first home game on November 6th. Students heard from a number of speakers consisting of Nebraska student-athletes and coaches on the importance of sportsmanship, setting goals, teamwork, and anti-bullying. After the conclusion of the pep rally, students were treated to a bottle of water and a slice of pizza and were then able to attend the women's basketball game before returning to school.

AMERICAN EDUCATION

Over 100 student-athletes contributed as guest speakers at local schools speaking on the importance of hard work in the classroom during week long celebrations to over 3,000 students.



SCHOOL IS COOL

LINK-N-LEADERS

Third through sixth grade Lincoln Public School students were recognized by their teachers for their leadership qualities and received an invite to attend the Link-N-Leaders event on April 7th. Link-N-Leaders features activities focused around the core values of the Nebraska Athletic Department (Integrity, Trust, Respect, Teamwork, and Loyalty) and a chance to interact with Husker student-athletes.



EVERYBODY PLAYS MINI-CAMP

Each semester elementary-aged students with special needs within Lincoln Public Schools were invited to take part in a four-week sports mini camp. The goal of the event is to give children with special needs an opportunity to be a part of a team and build relationships with Husker student-athletes.





NEBRASKA FOOTBALL ROAD RACE

The Nebraska Football Team hosts the Nebraska Football Road Race each summer. Featuring a mile-long Fun Run and a 5K race, the Nebraska Football Road Race is an annual effort to raise awareness and funding for pediatric brain cancer research. Due to rain, activities were moved indoors for the 2023 event.

NEBRASKA FOOTBALL THANKSGIVING HOSPITAL VISITS

All members of the Nebraska Football team visited area hospitals the week of Thanksgiving. The team is split into four groups, going to four different hospitals across Lincoln. Players go room to room in the hospitals providing hope and encouragement to patients and their families.

NEBRASKA FOOTBALL DAY OF SERVICE

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, all members of the Husker football team participated in a day of service at local organizations around the city of Lincoln. Team members are split into four separate groups and assisted with projects at nonprofits in the Lincoln area including Lincoln Food Bank, People's City Mission, PCM Help Center, and Center for People in Need.



NOFILTER SERVICE ABROAD

DEVELOPMENT - **SERVICE** - LEADERSHIP

22 student-athletes from 13 different Husker teams and two Life Skills staff members represented Nebraska Athletics on the NoFilter Service Abroad trip to Panama in May through a partnership with the Give and Surf non-profit organization. Participants built a bathroom, sidewalks, and were active in after school programs at a local school while culturally immersing themselves in the Panamanian culture.



RECOGNITION

DEVELOPMENT - **SERVICE** - LEADERSHIP



The 34th annual A Night at the Lied celebration was held on April 28th at the Lied Center for Performing Arts on the campus of UNL to recognize outstanding performances in competition, the classroom, and community outreach over the previous calendar year. Life Skills annually recognizes student-athletes for their commitment to community outreach by awarding student-athletes with the Heart & Soul Award, the Sam Foltz 27 HERO Leadership Award, and recognition of the Tom Osborne and Brook Berringer Citizenship Teams.

HEART AND SOUL AWARD

Two student-athletes were presented with the Heart & Soul Award, the most prestigious individual honor given out by Life Skills to Seniors who have consistently gone above and beyond to make an impact on campus and in the community since their first day as a Husker.

2024 RECIPIENTS

Sadio Fenner, Cross Country
Lindsey Thiele, Golf

CITIZENSHIP TEAMS

396

TOM OSBORNE CITIZENSHIP TEAM

All student-athletes who completed at least 6 volunteer service projects throughout the year which impacted over 25,000 Nebraskans.

42

BROOK BERRINGER CITIZENSHIP TEAM

Football student-athletes who completed at least 10 volunteer service projects throughout the year.

SAM FOLTZ 27 HERO LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Sam Foltz 27 HERO Leadership Award, named in honor of late Husker punter Sam Foltz, awards student-athlete leaders from each sport. The criteria for the HERO Award include exceptional leadership, consistent and dedicated community service, and positive influence on the team. Nominees are identified by the Life Skills staff with approval from the Academic staff and head coaches.

Trevor Acton, Cross Country
Josiah Allick, Basketball
Mari Aluonis-Pfannenstiel, Track & Field
Sarah Barton, Swimming & Diving
Alexis Buchert, Bowling
John Bullock, Football
Lauren Buzzell, Soccer
Caitlin Cairns, Swimming & Diving
Katelyn Caneda, Softball

Laney Choboy, Volleyball
Taylor Christopoulos, Gymnastics
Clara Colombo, Gymnastics
Jagger Condomitti, Wrestling
Marissa Cosentini, Bowling
Deavion Deleon, Track & Field
Isaac Gifford, Football
Emily Haimes, Swimming & Diving
Callin Hake, Basketball

Cale Jacobsen, Basketball
Camilla Johannessen, Rifle
Katie Kuenemann, Gymnastics
Luke Lindenmeyer, Football
Lucy Loy, Tennis
Roman Mangini, Football
Will Marshall, Golf
Karlie Moore, Track & Field
Abbie Squier, Softball

LEADERSHIP GROUPS

DEVELOPMENT - SERVICE - LEADERSHIP



The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) is the voice of the student-athletes and featured 53 members in 2023-2024, including at least two representatives from each Nebraska sport. SAAC met monthly during the academic year and hosted various events and initiatives throughout the year. The SAAC executive team featured President, Sam Phillips, Vice President, Sadio Fenner, Big Ten Representative, Micaylon Moore, Social Justice Officer, Cece Villa, and Secretary, Cece Ossi.



INNER CIRCLE

The Inner Circle emerging leader group featured 58 members that explored various leadership traits and professional development topics in monthly meetings featuring prominent guest speakers. The meetings culminated with the Inner Circle Career Combine where members networked and conducted mock interviews with area professionals. Members of Inner Circle are nominated by coaches, Academic Counselors, and Life Skills staff members to apply for membership.



Husker Healers is a student-led leadership group featuring 40 members specifically for student-athletes interested in healthcare careers. Members met monthly for meetings led by upperclassmen to discuss various topics related to the pursuit of healthcare related graduate schools and careers. Members also connect with community members for shadowing and volunteer opportunities in healthcare.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

- STUDENT-ATHLETE FORMAL
- SAAC CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT
- APPRECIATION LUNCHEONS
- DONOR THANK YOU LETTERS
- LINK-N-LEADERS
- FOOD, CLOTHING, AND GIFT DRIVES
- MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK



N-Volved featured 47 student-athletes from all sports in its sixth year of existence. The group is a discussion-based, social climate leadership group which provides student-athletes a safe space to discuss and explore current events, and have conversations on difficult topics. The group met once a month throughout the academic year for a total of eight meetings led exclusively by members within the group.



DREAM MORE - DO MORE - BECOME MORE