101 Things You Should Know About the University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Artificial muscles, the Pulitzer Prize in journalism, lyrical hip-hop, and pollen counts.  
A fast-driving robot, a 2.8 million-year-old fossil, women’s prisons, “Taps.” Tough Mudders, and HIV gene therapy.

Q: Just how are these (and many more) exciting, curious, creative, significant, and occasionally wacky things related?

Find out by paging through “UNLV 101” — a crash course on campus accomplishments.

At a university as large, dynamic, diverse, and complex as UNLV, we could have easily called this book UNLV 1001, but we had to stop somewhere. These facts offer a taste of what makes UNLV…well, UNLV.

You’ll read a lot about the great things our students, faculty, and alumni are doing. Some highlight the recognition our academic programs are earning. Others describe UNLV’s impact on our community. You’ll learn how we’re making homes safer, saving water while harvesting solar energy, spurring business development, patenting new medical treatments, leading the way in gaming law, and helping meet the mental health needs of our community.

They all add up to show why UNLV is on the brink of becoming a Top Tier public university. And we promise, there won’t be a quiz.
Our Students
1  Home Means UNLV

Contrary to its commuter-campus reputation, UNLV has more full-time students than ever — approximately 75 percent — and many are calling campus home, with new residence halls under construction to keep up with demand. Our students are making the most of their college experience in and out of the classroom, with close to 40 percent involved in at least one of nearly 300 registered student organizations.

2  Stunning Sunrise

A team of UNLV students won a Design Excellence Award from the Department of Energy for Desert Sunrise, a zero-energy house designed for the Moapa Paiute Tribe. Their design combined tribal culture and tradition with science for a durable home suited for the Mojave Desert environment.

3  All That Jazz!

UNLV’s Latin Jazz Ensemble, directed by Uli Geissendoerfer, won DownBeat magazine’s top Student Music Award for Latin Group in a 2015 worldwide competition. This is the eighth time DownBeat has honored UNLV student musicians since 2010.
Passing Fancy

For the past five years, graduating students in UNLV’s athletic training program have established a great tradition — earning a 100 percent pass rate on the Athletic Trainer’s Certification Examination on their first try. Just a few years ago, students in the program won the National Athletic Trainers’ Association quiz bowl championship in a Jeopardy-style nationwide competition.

Our Differences, Our Strengths

U.S. News & World Report ranked UNLV second on its list for “most diverse campuses.” And with 25 percent Hispanic enrollment, the university is now officially a Hispanic Serving Institution that can apply for more grants leading to student success.

Happy Feet

Early detection of foot problems in people with diabetes can prevent serious medical complications, so a team of UNLV health sciences, engineering, and business students developed a shoe insole system that can sense where foot ulcerations may occur. The company they created, MovéoMedics, has won $115,000 in prize money from business plan competitions.
That Counts!

Four Lee Business School accounting students took top honors and $15,000 in prizes at the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants’ national competition. The REBEL-ation team bested 140 college teams. Their success is just one of the reasons the Lee Business School jumped 28 spots in recent U.S. News & World Report rankings.

Nobel Cause

Environmental engineering doctoral student Erica Marti was one of only 55 U.S. students selected to attend the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting, where she learned from some of the 70 Nobel Laureates in attendance who are noted for their work in global health, cancer and AIDS research, astrophysics, and more.
With a Little Help From Our Friends

UNLV students are an amazing group, and thanks to the generosity of our donors, thousands of them can be recognized for special talents, academic merit, community accomplishments, and perseverance in spite of obstacles. Privately funded scholarships at UNLV include the Bennett Honors Mentor Scholarship program for juniors and seniors in the Honors College who work with first-year students; the Philip J. Cohen Scholars program for students who might not meet traditional scholarship criteria; the Engelstad Scholars program, which recognizes the value of community service; the Lee Scholarship for business students; and the Kitty Rodman Scholars program for students pursuing careers in special education.

9 Truman Scholar Streak

Hannah Kelley, a junior in UNLV’s Honors College, was one of just 54 college students nationwide in 2016 to receive the Truman Scholarship. The $30,000 award for graduate studies is based on academics and public service leadership potential. Another Honors College student, Daniel Waqar, won the award in 2015.

10

Game Time

Students in UNLV’s Gaming Innovation course are making their marks in the industry. Through this program, they’ve filed dozens of gaming patents, and their inventions are already in casinos. Check out Pai ‘WOW’ Poker, a game invented by student Charlie Bao Wang.
OUR PROGRAMS
Redefining Toughness

Enrollment in the Honors College has skyrocketed in recent years, and so have the qualifications of those admitted. The college’s students, a 700+ cadre of National Merit Scholars, valedictorians, and high achievers, aren’t content to rest on their academic laurels. They challenge themselves in other ways, such as participating in Tough Mudder, a demanding obstacle course that builds confidence and camaraderie.

Nursing Mastery

UNLV’s online master’s degree in nursing is ranked 13th in the country, according to U.S. News & World Report. The School of Nursing’s online nurse practitioner and nurse educator degrees are aimed squarely at improving access to quality health care.
On the Fly

It’s especially fitting that a city known as the Entertainment Capital of the World has a university that created a special degree program for entertainment engineering. Students take classes in mechanical, civil, and electrical engineering, computer science, theater, art, architecture, film, and music to learn how to design and then build eye-popping effects...like having one of its first graduates “fly in” to get her degree.

Diving In

Students in UNLV’s School of Medicine will dive right in to their studies by taking a course to become certified emergency medical technicians (EMTs) in their first weeks of medical school. This immersion learning will give them a deeper understanding of the community here as well as the realities they’ll face when treating patients. In addition to its innovative curriculum, the school is establishing clinical partnerships with University Medical Center, Sunrise Hospital, the VA Medical Center, and Dignity Health Nevada.
Ensuring students’ academic progress is a top priority at UNLV. That’s why our Academic Success Center has been, well, such a success. Advisors and mentors help students focus on the right classes for their majors and future careers. The retention rate for those using its services is 89 percent.

LV Law

U.S. News & World Report recently ranked UNLV Boyd School of Law second in the nation for legal writing — the highest it has ever placed — and ninth in the nation for its dispute resolution program. The publication ranks the nation’s best graduate schools and specialty programs each year. Overall, Boyd was ranked 78 out of 196 accredited law schools, while its part-time program climbed up four spots to 18.

That’s an Education

Ninety-five percent of education majors newly employed by the Clark County School District are evaluated by supervising teachers as well or extremely well prepared for the classroom.
Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas!

The William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration is consistently ranked as one of the top hospitality programs in the country, and it’s not hard to see why. With more than 150,000 hotel rooms, internationally known resorts, and industry leaders on the UNLV faculty and among its alumni, Las Vegas is the ideal living laboratory for students of hospitality and gaming.

The Write Stuff

Graduates of UNLV’s creative writing program are making their mark in the world. They are writing acclaimed novels, publishing in The New York Times, winning literary awards, and teaching at prestigious universities. The program is affiliated with the Beverly Rogers, Carol C. Harter Black Mountain Institute, which sponsors generous stipends, the Rogers Literary Prize, and visits from world-renowned writers like Toni Morrison, Derek Walcott, Cheryl Strayed, Wole Soyinka, Jane Smiley, and Joyce Carol Oates.
More Than Acceptable
The competition is fierce to get into medical and dental schools. UNLV students who participate in the preprofessional program created by life sciences professor Joseph Nika have a special advantage. He gets them hooked on community service as well as academics. With extensive volunteer experiences in places like the Las Vegas Rescue Mission and Ronald McDonald House Charities, his UNLV preprofessional students have very high acceptance rates — more than 85 percent make it into medical school and 100 percent are accepted into dental school.

Fast Talking, Fast Moving
UNLV’s fast-talking debaters average between 350 and 400 words per minute, and since the debate program was re-established in 2007, they haven’t wasted a second as they rapidly moved up in the national ranks. In the fall of 2015, UNLV’s Sanford I. Berman Debate Forum was ranked 15th in the country, according to the National Debate Tournament Rankings Report, ahead of those from Georgetown, Stanford, ASU, Dartmouth, and Northwestern.
Our Research
Pet Friendly

Does having a pet change dating dynamics? That’s the focus of a study by UNLV anthropologists Peter Gray and Shelly Volsche published in Anthrozoös in collaboration with PetSmart and Match.com. Some of their survey’s fascinating findings — 35 percent of women and 26 percent of men said they were more attracted to someone because they owned a pet. And nearly half of the women and a quarter of the men said they judged dates based on how the person responded to their pet. More men than women used their pets to attract dates, and dogs are, hands down, the sexiest pet a man can own.

Life on Mars?

Though the debate rages on, a team of UNLV researchers, led by geoscience professor Elisabeth Hausrath, has discovered that phosphate — an essential chemical ingredient for life — may have been more abundant on Mars than during the emergence of life on Earth. The team is also working with NASA’s Mars Exploration Program to investigate how soil and water might have once interacted on the surface of our solar system’s most Earth-like neighbor.

Honey of a Solution

Millions of bees may be saved, thanks to the work of scientist Penny Amy. She has found a way to prevent American foulbrood disease, a bacterium that devastates beehives, reduces pollination, and hurts agriculture. Instead of using antibiotics, Amy’s solution involves a natural process that targets the bacterium but is safe for bees and humans. The technology has been patented and will be licensed by startup Colony Shield.
Our Research

26

Reality and Orange Is the New Black

Criminologist Emily Salisbury has gotten used to the drill when she walks into a women’s prison — handing over her wallet, her keys, and her cellphone, and then waiting for the pat-down. The guards let her keep her pen and notebook. She’s been studying these prisons for more than 10 years and is one of a few experts studying gender-responsive approaches to reduce the likelihood of women returning to prison once they have been released.

Reality and Orange Is the New Black

27

May the Best Robot Win

Metal Rebel, UNLV’s humanoid robot, outdrove the competition in the Defense Department’s DARPA Robotics Challenge, finishing his drive in less than a minute. The DARPA Challenge has robots complete a series of tasks that they might encounter when responding to disasters, such as walking through rubble, breaking through walls, and turning off valves. UNLV placed first in the driving test and eighth overall in a field of 23 international corporations and universities, including Lockheed Martin, Kaist, MIT, and Carnegie Mellon.
Something to Jaw About

The recent discovery of a 2.8 million-year-old fossilized jawbone in Ethiopia is helping scientists clear up a clouded time in the evolution of modern humans. UNLV anthropologist Brian Villmoare co-directed the international research team that found the jawbone and published its findings in the journal Science.

Who’s to Judge?

Could there be implicit gender or racial biases about how the legal profession evaluates judges? That’s what political science professor Rebecca Gill is trying to find out. The National Science Foundation’s Law and Social Sciences Program is funding her work to understand the connections among law, legal processes, and human behavior.
Muscling In
Creating artificial muscles could one day help millions of people with disabilities, and that is why mechanical engineering professor Kwang Kim has been developing new polymer-metal composites. He’s leading an international team that has received a nearly $4 million grant from the National Science Foundation. His artificial muscles could revolutionize the field of soft robotics with materials that mimic biology and improve medical diagnostic and invasive surgical systems.

Going Underground
Stalagmites in Nevada and New Mexico are unlocking the secrets of how climate in the Southwest has changed over the last 5,000 years. The National Science Foundation is funding a three-year grant so UNLV geologist Matt Lachniet and his team can understand how a weather phenomenon like El Niño has influenced drought cycles in the past so that scientists can better predict droughts in the future.
Survival of the Fattest

Life sciences researchers are using the world’s fattest fruit flies to investigate obesity-related heart problems. Rather than fattening up the flies via a rich diet, they created these specimens through repeated breeding and natural selection so they could better study how evolutionary changes affect heart health.

The On Switch!

UNLV has one of the top-five university supercomputing centers in the country, thanks to the generosity of Switch, Cisco, and Intel’s Cherry Creek Supercomputer. Cherry Creek can process in a single day what would take an average PC 20 years to accomplish. Switch and Cisco also donated a private fiber network linking UNLV directly to Switch and its 1,000 global partners, making UNLV one of the most connected universities in the world.
Our Impact
Tapping a Need

Until recently, a live performance of “Taps” was a rare occurrence at local funerals for veterans. When three Rebel alums realized piped-in music was the norm, they decided to find a better way to honor our veterans. Professional musicians Larry Ransom (’02 BM), Gary Cordell (’10 BA), and Joseph Durk (’10 BM) organized a nonprofit group, TAPPS (Trumpeters Alliance to Perform Patriotic Services), which now sends out trumpeters to perform “Taps” live at veterans’ funerals free of charge.

Man About Town

Len Jessup is the 10th president of UNLV. As an acclaimed professor of entrepreneurship, he possesses the right blend of business and academic acumen to lead a university on its way up. He is off to a good start. Already serving on the boards of the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce and the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance, he’s working to ensure that the university and the community are in sync so UNLV can achieve Top Tier status in education, research, and community involvement by 2025.
Our Impact

36 Something to Smile About

“The hallmark of our school is service,” says Karen West, dean of the School of Dental Medicine, which treats more than 60,000 patients annually. UNLV’s dental clinics provide low-cost dental care to Southern Nevadans and offer free dental care to eligible local veterans and seniors in assisted living centers.

38 Keeping Memory Alive

UNLV and the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health have been awarded an $11.1 million federal grant to study Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases. UNLV’s National Supercomputing Center will handle data management and statistical analysis for this massive project.

37 She’s a Keeper!

Vegas Seven magazine declared Claytee White, the first director of UNLV’s Oral History Research Center, the “Best Keeper of our History.” Claytee has preserved the history of Southern Nevada by gathering memories through recorded interviews. “Oral history allows everyone — not just a ‘name person’ — to be a part of history.” Her collections include Heart to Heart (about early health care in Las Vegas), All that Jazz (a study of musicians who’ve played with the greats), and the African American Experience in Las Vegas.
UNLV has revived an airborne pollen-monitoring program once operated by Clark County. The program records pollen counts and studies trends while keeping people with allergy and breathing problems informed about pollen concentrations so they can limit their exposure to airborne irritants.

On UNLV’s main campus, nearly 5 percent of the students are veterans, and UNLV has grown its services to meet their needs. UNLV also offers classes at Nellis Air Force Base to military personnel and their family members. Active military members stationed in Nevada no longer have to pay extra fees to attend UNLV, making earning a college degree virtually free for them. Combine these factors, and it’s easy to see why G.I. Jobs magazine has recognized UNLV as a military-friendly school for five consecutive years.

Around 57,000 local residents have learned how to help themselves navigate the legal system by taking free classes offered through a partnership with UNLV’s Boyd School of Law, the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, and Nevada Legal Services. The classes on tenant rights, immigration, children’s rights, and other topics demystify court procedures.
Combining Forces

UNLV’s Mental and Behavioral Health Coalition is focusing on children’s mental health. Faculty members from psychology, social work, counseling, addictions, marriage and family therapy, and nursing are working together to address Nevada’s workforce shortage of child mental health professionals. The U.S. Department of Health Resources & Services is funding the effort.

“Why” Is Just as Important as “What”

Some of the most exciting research on improving teaching techniques in college classrooms is being led by UNLV professor Mary-Ann Winkelmes. The Chronicle of Higher Education did a cover story on a project she’s leading involving several public universities that are testing ways to develop higher rates of student success. Transparency in teaching — helping students understand the purpose and context of an assignment as well as its requirements — is proving to be a particularly effective way to help first-generation college students make greater progress.
Conduct on Camera

Will wearing body cameras change the way police officers — or the people they are interacting with — behave? That’s the big question criminal justice researchers at UNLV are trying to answer after a yearlong, large-scale study about the effectiveness of officer body cameras. UNLV is working with the Metropolitan Police Department to survey 400 police officers in a study funded by the National Institute of Justice.

Teaching Teachers

There’s a teacher shortage in Clark County, and UNLV’s College of Education is doing everything it can to address it by developing creative programs to get more people into teaching. There’s a summer program that helps people in other professions get on the fast track for certification. There’s a special “Troops to Teachers” program that helps members of the military transition into teaching. And there’s a “Grow-Our-Own” program, which targets high schoolers interested in education as a potential career.

Social Skills

For more than 10 years, the UNLV School of Social Work has collaborated in the Nevada Partnership for Training, a statewide consortium of family service agencies to enhance the skills of professionals who work with children and families. Experienced specialists like Judy Tudor help those new to the child welfare field relentlessly pursue the goal of a permanent home for each child they meet.
Mountain of Information

Brookings Mountain West, a partnership between UNLV and the Brookings Institution, the world’s leading public policy think tank, provides high-quality, independent research focused on the dynamic Intermountain West region. The Bookings Mountain West Lecture series presents free public events on topics including deficits and tax policy, education, energy, foreign policy, global climate change, housing, immigration, and robotics.

To Be Continued...

Through UNLV’s Division of Educational Outreach, there’s always something new to learn. Nontraditional students — more than 30,000 of them — can take classes in a variety of formats: face-to-face, online, and a combination of the two, and at a variety of locations throughout the Las Vegas Valley. People can earn professional certifications, prepare for different careers, earn college credits, explore new talents or hobbies, and learn just for the fun of it.
Our Faculty
Our Faculty

Outstanding Audit

The American Accounting Association presented professor Bill Messier with its 2015 Outstanding Accounting Educator Award. This is not the first time Bill’s been honored nationally. He’s won several distinguished service and educator awards and is a recognized expert in auditing.

We’ve Got Your Back

There’s no easy solution to chronic back pain. Nursing professor Jennifer Kawi is researching ways people can reduce their discomfort, lessen their reliance on pain medication, and improve their quality of life.

The Gold Treatment

Glioblastomas are aggressive brain tumors that are very difficult to treat. What if there were a way to attack the microscopic traces of cancer left after surgery to slow down or stop the tumor’s recurrence? Health physics professor Steen Madsen is working on that challenge using gold, nanoparticles, microphages, and lasers to some day eradicate all traces of cancerous brain tumors.
He’s Game
A fifth-generation Nevadan, Bo Bernhard calls Las Vegas home, but he has worked all over the world in places like South Africa, Australia, Singapore, South Korea, Macao, Mexico, Vietnam, Russia, Canada, and throughout Europe. As a UNLV professor in both hotel management and sociology, and as executive director of the International Gaming Institute, Bo has combined his research interests to become a worldwide expert in global gaming regulation as well as human behavior in relation to problem gambling. He’s in demand and has been interviewed by ESPN, CNN, the History Channel, and addiction specialist Dr. Drew Pinsky.

Fostering Concern
Although teen pregnancy rates have dropped dramatically recently, they have not fallen for girls in foster care. Award-winning social scientist Ramona Denby-Brinson looks for ways to help since an estimated 23 percent of girls in foster care are pregnant or parenting. “Having a baby is a deliberate attempt to replace the family that they don’t have,” says Ramona. Typical pregnancy-prevention strategies aren’t as effective with foster kids, so she’s exploring ways to help this special group.

Cutting Out HIV
Marty Schiller of UNLV’s Nevada Institute for Personalized Medicine is bringing us closer to an HIV cure. Current drugs slow the virus, but they don’t rid the body of the HIV DNA. Gene therapy may be the solution. He is working with a common plant protein that sticks to DNA full of the virus, then acts like scissors to cut it out without harming non-infected DNA nearby. When the cell repairs itself, the new copy won’t contain functional HIV. Once the patent for the protein and gene editing process is approved, the next phase of testing will start in partnership with BYU.
Wearing It Well

In her lively history of fashion, Dress Casual: How College Students Redefined American Style, professor Deirdre Clemente talks about how young people in the 1920s gained increasing social and cultural clout. Her knowledge of vintage fashion and the Jazz Age so impressed the filmmakers of the 2013 version of The Great Gatsby that they hired her to consult with their costume designers. She sees clothing as cultural history and the early 20th century as the start of a trend toward more casual and egalitarian dress.

A Difficult Health Issue

The serious intestinal infection Clostridium difficile (C. diff) has become an epidemic in hospitals and other health care settings. UNLV biochemist Ernesto Abel-Santos has patented a drug that can prevent the infection. And thanks to a $3.25 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, he will continue to test and refine this treatment through his startup company, Abel Therapeutics LLC.

Flow of Ideas

Jaci Batista is overseeing a project that could change the way solar plants are built. As co-leader of the $20 million Solar Energy-Water-Environment Nexus project, the engineering professor researches how to conserve water in solar generation. She is joined by UNLV veteran researcher in solar technology, Robert Boehm, in heading this Nevada System of Higher Education initiative to improve solar energy infrastructure. The consortium, which includes scientists across the state, is exploring the balance among water conservation, the environment, and solar energy as it applies to large-scale solar operations in the desert.
Dr. Robot-Oh

When it comes to robotics and drone systems, UNLV is on the leading edge, thanks to Paul Oh. His team scored a top-10 finish in the world’s premier showcase for state-of-the-art robots, along with international engineering heavyweights like NASA, Carnegie Mellon, and MIT. “Over the next two to five years, I want our robotics lab to dazzle. Whether it’s with drones, vehicles, or legged-robots, we feel we could really make an impact by partnering with business,” says the Lincy Professor of Unmanned Aerial Systems.

Crushing Problem

Thousands of wounded soldiers with muscle-crush injuries are air evacuated because of battlefield trauma. They are subjected to high-altitude conditions on long flights that can worsen their condition. Nursing professor Barbara St. Pierre Schneider’s studies in muscle injury recovery are guiding techniques to improve aeromedical evacuation, and her work has been featured in many publications, including *Aviation, Space and Environmental Medicine*, and *Innate Immunity*. 
Our Alumni
Killer Degree

Music major Ronnie Vannucci ’11 BA) would sneak into the Alta Ham Fine Arts Building after hours to practice with his band. Today he is best known as the drummer for that same band — The Killers — whose albums have sold 22 million copies worldwide. Success hit before graduation, but between international tours, Ronnie came back to UNLV to complete his studies. At UNLV’s 2011 Commencement, he received his degree — and a key to the Alta Ham Fine Arts Building. 

All the Colors

Acclaimed artist Tim Bavington, best known for translating music to canvas by assigning sounds to corresponding colors and compositions, is both a UNLV graduate (’99 MFA) and a member of the UNLV fine arts faculty. His paintings are displayed in public collections all over the country, and the artist created “Pipe Dream,” a large-scale sculpture inspired by Aaron Copland’s “Fanfare for the Common Man.” The artwork graces the east end of Symphony Park by the entrance of The Smith Center in downtown Las Vegas. 

Tara’s Treasures

Tara Pike-Nordstrom (’95 BS and ’99 MS) began championing green living as an environmental studies undergraduate student and then put her master’s thesis into action at her alma mater when she founded the Rebel Recycling Program. Tara has been tireless in leading a program many colleges view as a model. She has spearheaded special game-day and event recycling efforts, brought hydration stations to a desert campus, held interdepartmental competitions to reduce paper waste, and partnered with the community for Christmas tree recycling. Her goal: make UNLV a zero-waste campus where all trash is either recycled, reused, or composted.
Breaking News

Journalist Hannah Birch ('12 BA) was in The Seattle Times newsroom when she spotted a trooper’s tweet. There had been a mudslide in Snohomish County, Washington, that soon turned out to be one of the largest disasters in the state, killing 43 people. Hannah alerted her editor, made some judgment calls, and verified facts before being the first to break the news. As a producer who worked on the homepage of The Seattle Times, she was part of the team that won a 2015 Pulitzer Prize for breaking-news reporting with its digital coverage of the Oso mudslide.

Crime Does Pay

As the creator, executive producer, and often screenwriter for TV’s hit “CSI” franchise, crime does pay for Anthony Zuiker ('91 BA). He came up with the idea for his television show while a student at UNLV. He comes back to campus to meet with screenwriting and film students while still creating new concepts for film and TV.

This Guy Is Everywhere

Since winning “The Next Food Network Star” competition in 2006, Guy Fieri ('90 BSHA) has lived up to that promise, hosting several of his own shows, including “Guy’s Big Bite” and “Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives.” Guy has restaurants all over the country, including his Vegas Kitchen & Bar on the Las Vegas Strip. Now Guy has an even better reason to visit Las Vegas these days — his son is a UNLV student.
Former UNLV All-America punter and quarterback great Randall Cunningham has become the first UNLV player in school history to be voted into the prestigious College Football Hall of Fame. He still holds both the career passing and punting records at UNLV. After a long and successful career in the NFL, Randall returned to Las Vegas, where he completed his degree (’04 BS), became a minister, and now coaches high school football.

Former Rebel soccer star Simon Keith (’92 BS) is the first athlete to ever play at the professional level after a heart transplant. He arrived at UNLV in 1987, a year after his surgery. For many years, Simon was sick of being thought of as the “heart guy,” but speaking in front of the organ transplant community gave him a change of heart. Today the Las Vegas businessman is one of the world’s longest-surviving heart transplant recipients, the author of Heart for the Game, the subject of an ESPN E:60 telecast, and the COO of the Nevada Donor Network.

Married choreographers Napoleon (’96 BS) and Tabitha D’Umo (’96 BA) met as students at UNLV (he studied biology; she majored in communications) and performed on the Rebel cheer and dance teams. They’ve created dance routines for Cirque du Soleil, NFL cheer squads, Madonna, Celine Dion, and Justin Timberlake. The duo are probably most famous for the Emmy-winning “lyrical hip-hop” dances they’ve created for the television show “So You Think You Can Dance.”
Our Community & Partnerships

PAY to the Order of UNLV School of Medicine $10 Million
Amount Ten million dollars 00/100 Dollars

Engelstad Family Foundation

Date: 6/17/15
Getting Down to Business

Community leaders count on UNLV’s Center for Business and Economic Research, which tracks key statistics and puts economic indicators into perspective. The center’s work is wide ranging and includes analyzing local, regional, and state economic conditions as well as providing national, state, and custom business forecasts, conducting surveys, and economic impact studies.

No Fighting

The Saltman Center, a worldwide authority on conflict resolution, is right here on the UNLV campus. Providing top-notch public service, research, and teaching, it’s ranked the ninth-best dispute-resolution program in the country.

A First-Class Gift

Thanks to tremendous community support, including a $10 million pledge from the Engelstad Family Foundation, the entire inaugural class of the UNLV School of Medicine will receive full four-year scholarships. In addition, funds have been raised for scholarships for selected members of the next three entering classes. Each scholarship is worth an estimated $100,000.
72 Give Her a Hand

Hailey Dawson was born with a rare condition called Poland Syndrome that caused her hand to form with only a thumb and pinky. Her “special hand,” as she calls it, doesn’t have the ability to grasp things like a baseball or bicycle handlebars. An email from Hailey’s mom got UNLV engineering professors and students intrigued by the challenge of creating a “robohand” for her on a 3-D printer. This hand can be replaced at a fraction of the cost of traditional prosthetics as Hailey grows. The teamwork with UNLV has been a success. In August 2015, Hailey was able to throw out the first pitch for her favorite team, the Baltimore Orioles. She even got to meet Manny Machado.

73 Never Too Late to Learn

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UNLV offers retired and semiretired adults intellectual and social experiences in a welcoming atmosphere. Around 1,500 Southern Nevadans take and teach 200-plus OLLI classes. A recent $1 million gift from the Bernard Osher Foundation is keeping the OLLI community strong. From classical mythology to science fiction films of the ’50s, to line dancing, OLLI has a course to cater to just about any interest imaginable.

74 Safe House

Dr. Shawn Gerstenberger, dean of Community Health Sciences, makes house calls, but in his case, the house — not its owner — is the patient. Shawn leads the Nevada Healthy Homes Partnership in collaboration with the health district and other community partners. His team of certified home inspectors identifies and corrects preventable health hazards that can trigger asthma and unintentional injuries.
Preserving Jewish Heritage in Las Vegas

The Special Collections Division of UNLV Libraries has digitized more than 800 documents, 1,000 images, nearly 100 oral histories, and 125 biographies as part of the Southern Nevada Jewish Heritage Project, which tells the history of the Jewish community in Las Vegas. The collection includes stories from business owners to homemakers, from executives to activists, from the unsung to those with well-known names like Adelson, Fine, Goodman, Greenspun, Katz, Mack, Molasky, and Wynn.

Batteries Included

UNLV and Tesla Motors have formed a $1 million research partnership that will draw on the expertise of faculty to explore advances in battery manufacturing. One project is working to improve the recycling of metals from lithium ion batteries. Another will enhance manufacturing processes at Tesla’s Northern Nevada Gigafactory by focusing on water recycling and treatment.

Get the Lead Out!

Although lead is a naturally occurring metal, it can be extremely harmful if it gets into the body, particularly for young children. Researchers in UNLV’s School of Community Health Sciences have been instrumental in identifying lead hazards. They have found unacceptable levels of lead in candies and hot sauces and were responsible for getting the tainted products off store shelves in Las Vegas.
Our Athletes
Scholarly Record

A record number of 56 student-athletes received the Mountain West Conference’s Scholar-Athlete Awards in 2015, one of the highest academic honors granted by the conference. To be eligible, students must maintain a 3.5 GPA or better over two academic terms at their university. The UNLV women’s volleyball team had the highest number — eight — scholar-athletes.

New Beginning!

Marvin Menzies was named the Runnin’ Rebels basketball head coach in 2016 and is poised to continue the program’s proud tradition. An experienced coach with UNLV and West Coast roots, Menzies is a proven winner who knows what it takes to build and lead a successful program on and off the court. During his nine years as head coach at New Mexico State, his teams have won conference championships and earned five NCAA Tournament berths.

Headed in the Right Direction

Head UNLV football coach Tony Sanchez, who built a national powerhouse at Bishop Gorman High School, has made the unusual leap from high school coaching (his Gorman teams won six straight state championships and earned him USA Today All-USA Coach of the Year recognition) to Division I college football coaching. He’s generating unprecedented interest and support for Rebel football, instilling a level of energy, discipline, and accountability that’s preparing the program’s student-athletes for success in every facet of life.
The UNLV’s men’s golf team has been among the best in the country for more than two decades, earning three national championships (one team, two individual). The Rebel program boasts an impressive lineup of alumni playing on the PGA Tour, including 2013 Master’s winner Adam Scott, Chad Campbell, Andres Gonzales, Charley Hoffman, Skip Kendall, Bill Lunde, and Chris Riley. In 2015 UNLV’s women golfers qualified for the NCAA Championship for the fourth time in the program’s 14-year history.

In addition to bringing their game to the Lady Rebels when they transferred to UNLV from Kansas, twins Dakota and Dylan Gonzalez brought their sizable social media following (together they have more than 1.7 million followers on Instagram). The multitalented duo have made an impact on the court, and their social media process is attracting new fans to the program, including rapper and music producer Drake, who attended the Lady Rebs’ home season opener.

The men’s soccer program at UNLV has been on a roll. In 2014 the team advanced to the NCAA for the first time since 1988. Coach Rich Ryerson (‘87 BSBA), a former UNLV soccer standout, won West Region Coach of the Year honors. To top it off, two players born and raised here, Salvador Bernal and Danny Musovski, have earned All-American status.
UNLV’s Lied Library

Our Campus
There’s No Place Like Home

The Thomas & Mack Center may look almost new with its improved seats and a luxury lounge, but it still feels like home for the Runnin’ Rebels. UNLV is consistently ranked in the top 25 nationally for home basketball attendance. The facility, along with the adjacent Cox Pavilion and the Mendenhall Center, is also the summer home to USA Basketball and the NBA’s Summer League. The arena is far more than a basketball venue, however. It has hosted such notable entertainers as Sinatra, Pavarotti, U2, and many other headliners as well as special events.

Baseball Grows Here

Before becoming a perennial All-Star as a player and 2014 National League Manager of the Year, Matt Williams hit the diamond as a member of UNLV’s Hustlin’ Rebels. Matt is one of more than 20 UNLV baseball All-Americans over the program’s near 50-year history. Thanks to the new Anthony and Lyndy Marnell III UNLV Baseball Clubhouse, future Rebel All-Americans now have access to training, equipment, and amenities that rival the country’s best programs.
In the LEED
UNLV has buildings that are LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified. Greenspun Hall is gold certified and generates about 30 percent of its own power. The LEED silver-certified Science and Engineering Building, named the Best Public Green Project when it opened, is designed specifically for interdisciplinary research and features flexible laboratory space.

Now That’s Clean!
The Science and Engineering Building has Nevada’s only nanotechnology clean room. One section of the room has a class level of 1,000, meaning that it contains no more than 1,000 particles that are 0.5 microns or larger within a cubic foot; the other section is a Class 10,000-level clean room. Clean rooms are necessary for sophisticated research involving optoelectronics, high-speed electronic devices, and nanostructures.
Pipe Up
Edward Smith wanted to leave a legacy to honor his late wife, Maurine Jackson Smith, a talented organist and UNLV graduate. He couldn’t have found a better tribute — the magnificent pipe organ in the Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall. Built by the Rudolf von Beckerath Co. in Germany, the organ has three keyboards, 53 ranks, 38 stops, 30,000 pipes, and 10,000 pieces.

Meet Me at the Flashlight
The landmark “Flashlight” sculpture, constructed by internationally known husband and wife artists Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, is a favorite meeting place in the Performing Arts Center plaza between Judy Bayley Theatre and Artemus Ham Concert Hall.
Building for the Future

Hospitality Hall, a new home for the Harrah Hotel College, is taking shape in the heart of the UNLV campus, just west of its old home in Frank and Estella Beam Hall. The building will feature sweeping views of the Las Vegas Strip, a café, outdoor patios, and more than 93,000 square feet of classroom, lab, and meeting space. Hospitality Hall is a facility built for the hospitality industry by the industry, with founding donors Caesars Foundation, Konami Gaming, Las Vegas Sands, MGM Resorts International, Boyd Gaming, Station Casinos, the Engelstad Family Foundation, and the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation each signing on with $2.5 million gifts to supplement state construction funding.
Really!
And Now Here’s Your Runnin’ Rebels…

Those words start what is widely regarded as the greatest pregame show in all of college basketball. The tradition began in the mid-1970s with swirling spotlights, a loud pep band, and cheerleaders. The show has become even more elaborate and, to some opponents, intimidating, over the years. A visiting coach once told *Sports Illustrated* that the pregame show was worth 10 points to UNLV. Today’s display includes the original crowd-pleasing elements plus strobe lights, a red carpet, the Rebel Girls, and UNLV’s trademark indoor fireworks with 60 pyrotechnic effects.

Seeing Red

More than 5,000 students earn their degrees at Commencement every year. UNLV undergraduates from every state and 84 countries now wear scarlet caps and gowns when they receive their bachelor’s degrees, creating a sea of red in the Thomas & Mack Center. Graduates join the ranks of 108,000 alumni.
The Ghost Chair

Legendary basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian was known to be superstitious. He never wanted anyone to sit next to him during basketball games. That empty seat became known as “The Ghost Chair.” Tark invited retired athletic director Brad Rothermel to attend the March 3, 1992, game against Utah State. The only seat available? The Ghost Chair. “There were three or four minutes to go, and we were up by only 6,” Brad noted. “Tark leaned over and asked me to leave.” The Rebels won the game, 65-53. Thanks to the UNLV Alumni Association, there’s now a sculpture on campus to honor the Hall of Fame coach. It was dedicated before Tark passed away.

Masterful

It’s only natural that UNLV would be the first place in the nation to offer the Master of Laws degree in gaming law and regulation. The William S. Boyd School of Law offers more gaming courses to juris doctor students than any other law school in the country.
That’s Entertainment!

Dance, theater, and music come to life at UNLV’s Performing Arts Center. The PAC hosts more than 350 events a year and also welcomes 40,000 Clark County schoolchildren who come to campus to attend and participate in student performances and recitals annually.

National Champs!

UNLV’s Rebel Girls won the national championship at the 2016 Universal Dance Association (UDA) College National Championship. It is the fourth national title for the program that also won top hip-hop honors in 2008, 2010, and 2013. Since 2008, UNLV has produced eight top-five finishes at the UDA College National Championships in the Hip-Hop competition, including two runner-up finishes in 2014 and 2015.
Music to His Ears

Internationally acclaimed composer and conductor Eric Whitacre ('95 BM) won a Grammy in the Best Choral Performance category for his album “Light & Gold.” During his acceptance speech, he thanked his UNLV music professor, David Weiller, for being “the man who tricked me into joining choir and changed my life completely.” Eric is widely considered one of the most popular and performed composers of this generation (and, by the way, he composed UNLV’s Alma Mater as a student). Not bad for a guy who walked into his first music class at UNLV as a pop musician who couldn’t read music!

A Spirited Debate

The spotlight is on UNLV and Las Vegas as the site for the final presidential debate of 2016. The Thomas & Mack Center was chosen as the venue, and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority has worked with UNLV to bring this very special event to the city. The debate, which is administered by the Commission on Presidential Debates, attracts nearly 3,500 media representatives from all over the world, creates learning opportunities for students and has an estimated publicity value of more than $50 million.
The Streak

The UNLV men’s basketball team holds the NCAA Division I record for the most consecutive games scoring a three-point goal. The streak extends back to the 1986–87 basketball season, when the NCAA first established the three-point goal, and UNLV has had at least one three-pointer in every game it has played since then.

The Meaning of the Mountain

What exactly is the Beverly Rogers, Carol C. Harter Black Mountain Institute? There are many answers to this question. For established authors, it is home to sought-after fellowships that allow them the time and space to complete their projects. To international writers endangered in their home countries, it is a City of Asylum — a place to create without death threats and censorship. And to literary-minded Southern Nevadans, it is a producer of provocative panels that examine everything from the magic of jazz to the moral quandaries of modern medicine.
Enrollment at UNLV is projected to reach nearly 40,000 students in the next decade. The campus has gained some much-needed breathing and growing room with the purchase of 42 acres just west of the Thomas & Mack Center on Tropicana Avenue. Possible uses for the land include space for medical and laboratory facilities, additional student housing, a campus village that includes some retail space, or a large stadium that could host special events as well as Rebel football games. Campus and community planners are working together to determine the best use of the additional land.