

# YEAR IN REVIEW

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

*CAS: Flourishing Ensemble  
Climbing Higher, Expanding Possibility, Thriving Together*





*The College of Arts and Sciences Ambassadors (CASA) is a selective organization that acts as a resource for the advancement of the college. Members work in an ambassadorial capacity between the college and students within the College, alumni of the College, and members of the community. Recruitment for this organization is done in the spring.*

# CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

## Editors

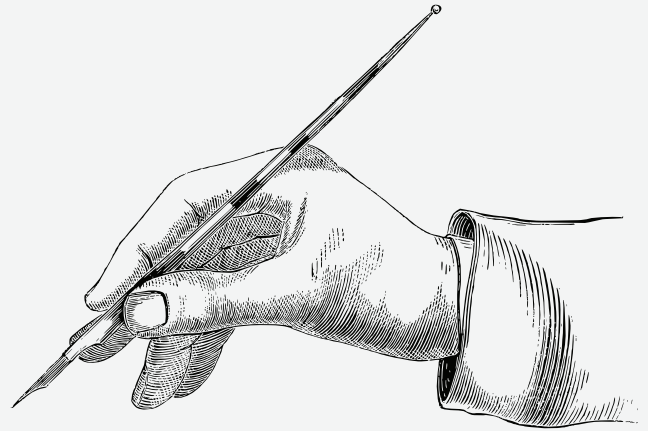
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Chelsey Ewen, Promotions Director  
Amy Berg, Assistant Director, NDSU Sponsored Programs  
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**On the Cover.** Jessica Brown, 2025 Winter Graduation. Cheerleader Katrina Cysweski (L) with Taylor Mayer (M) and Aurora Baker (R). Student Zakk Volk on piano. Theatre hockey players: Paige Holbrook (Top), Gabriel Mowery (L), Ava Borgerding (M), Jillian Schotters (R).

# COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES AMBASSADORS

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**“GO CONFIDENTLY IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DREAMS. LIVE THE LIFE  
YOU HAVE IMAGINED.” — HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

# IN THIS ISSUE

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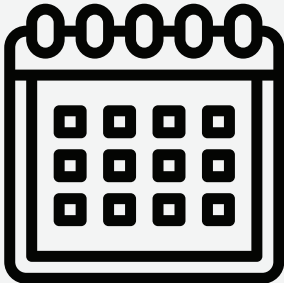
1.

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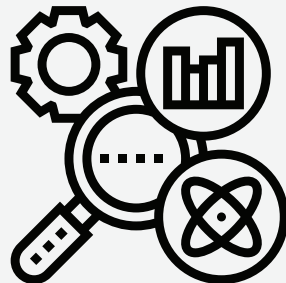
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SCHOLARSHIP &  
RESEARCH

# DEAN'S FORWARD

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## Flourishing Through Purpose, Curiosity, and Community

Kimberly Wallin, PhD  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

This year's Year in Review celebrates a theme that resonates deeply with me: flourishing. Using Nadeje Alexandre's prompt: What helps you flourish, in your work, life, or community?



For me, flourishing begins with purpose. Working in higher education means being part of something larger than ourselves. Serving as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences gives me a daily opportunity to support the success of others. Whether it's encouraging a student discovering their passion, mentoring a faculty member pursuing new ideas, bringing innovative programs to life, such as NDSU Honors College, I'm constantly inspired by the people around me. Seeing others grow, achieve, and realize their potential reminds me why education and community matter so deeply. When we flourish, it strengthens the entire academic community and motivates me to keep learning, listening, and leading with care.

Curiosity is another essential part of flourishing. Higher education invites us to ask questions, explore new approaches, and continually learn alongside our students. Whether we are reimagining how we teach, strengthening programs, or finding new ways to serve our community, curiosity keeps our work dynamic and meaningful. It encourages us to keep evolving so that we can better meet the needs of the students and communities we serve.

Balance and perspective are just as important outside the office. I am often asked, "how do you do so much and keep it together?" However, "it" is defined--spending time outdoors helps me reset and reconnect with the bigger picture. Whether it's a walking meeting, walking with a friend, or simply breathing in the quiet of nature on my deck, it is an essential element of my day. Prioritizing yoga and meditation give me space to slow down, reflect, and stay grounded during times of change. These moments of mindfulness help me return to work with clarity, patience, and focus.

At the center of it all are the small moments with others and alone that make life meaningful. Time with family and friends reminds me that joy, encouragement, and laughter are essential to flourishing in any role. Even quiet moments at home with my cat Carat

bring a sense of gratitude. Together, these relationships, along with time in nature and a commitment to mindful living, sustain the energy and compassion I bring to my work, my community, and the shared goal of helping others thrive.

When we invest in one another, when we center our work on opportunity and belonging, and when we remain curious about what we can achieve together, we build a place where students, colleagues, and our broader community can truly thrive.

# A LETTER FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

## STUDENT AMBASSADORS



Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to share this year's newsletter with you. This issue was assembled through the hard work of the College of Arts and Sciences Ambassadors (CASA), and it highlights some of the outstanding work and accomplishments of students and faculty throughout the 2025-2026 academic year. This newsletter features several stories, events, and milestones to provide a glimpse into what makes our college special.

We are honored to have led CASA this year, giving our time to serve members, students and faculty of the college, and the NDSU community at large. Throughout our tenure, we have further developed our leadership abilities and gained a deeper appreciation for the impact of our college on its members and the surrounding community.

We are hopeful that this publication will be both informative and encouraging to you all. This is just a sample of the amazing work being done in our college, and we are grateful to represent such a talented and diverse community. We offer a sincere thank you to the many faculty, students, and staff who have supported us, and we earnestly hope that the NDSU legacy of excellence, creativity, service, and inclusivity will continue to thrive in the generations of students to come.

With gratitude,  
Chance & Katrina

# CASA EXECUTIVE BOARD

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## **KATRINA CYSEWSKI, CO-PRESIDENT**

I WILL BE GRADUATING THIS SPRING WITH MY BACHELOR'S IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES AND MINORS IN CHEMISTRY AND PSYCHOLOGY. IN ADDITION TO CASA, I AM ALSO ON THE CHEER TEAM AND SERVED AS ONE OF THE CAPTAINS THIS YEAR! I LIKE BEING A PART OF CASA BECAUSE I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN THE COLLEGE AND TO SUPPORT OTHER STUDENTS. AFTER GRADUATION, I WILL BE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SCHOOL STARTING THIS AUGUST! IN MY FREE TIME I LOVE TO SPEND TIME WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY, TRAVEL, SKI, AND BAKE.



## **CHANCE BOWLINGER, CO-PRESIDENT**

I AM A SENIOR GRADUATING THIS SPRING WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE, AND I COMPLETED MY UNDERGRADUATE THIS WINTER IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS. I AM INVOLVED IN A VARIETY OF SECTORS OF CAMPUS SUCH AS THE UNIVERSITY JAZZ ENSEMBLE, THE ROCK CLIMBING CLUB, CHI ALPHA CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, CAMPUS (ACE) TUTORING, AND OTHER CAMPUS RECREATION SUCH AS INTRAMURAL SPORTS. I SPEND A MAJORITY OF MY DAYS ON CAMPUS, AND I LOVE INTERACTING WITH AS MANY STUDENTS AS POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE DAY!



## **ARIANA PFAFF, CO-VICE PRESIDENT**

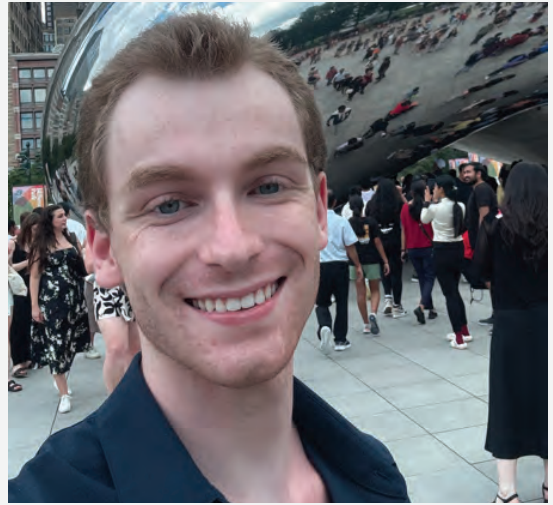
I AM A SENIOR MAJORING IN ANTHROPOLOGY WITH MINORS IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY. IN ADDITION TO SERVING AS ONE OF THE CO-VPs OF CASA, I AM A RESEARCH ASSISTANT ON THE PHARMACY SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (PSEP). I ENJOY BEING A PART OF CASA BECAUSE IT OPENS THE DOORS FOR CONNECTING WITH PEERS IN DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES. I VALUE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES AND I BELIEVE CASA HELPS ME BROADEN MY OWN. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO STUDYING ABROAD IN CHIANG MAI, THAILAND THIS UPCOMING FALL AND HOPE TO HOPE TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCE WITH PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS UPON RETURNING. AFTER GRADUATION, I PLAN ON ATTENDING GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR COUNSELING EDUCATION AND OBTAIN LICENSURE IN MENTAL HEALTH OR ADDICTION COUNSELING. OUTSIDE OF THE ACADEMIC WORLD, I ENJOY TRAVELING, DANCING, AND SWIMMING.

# CASA EXECUTIVE BOARD

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## **SAM LIES, CO-VICE PRESIDENT**

I AM A THIRD-YEAR STUDENT FINISHING MY SENIOR YEAR AT NDSU AND CURRENTLY STUDYING BIOLOGY WITH A MINOR IN CHEMISTRY. MY GOAL IS TO CONTINUE MY EDUCATION IN BOTH FIELDS, WITH THE HOPE OF ATTENDING MEDICAL SCHOOL. THIS YEAR, I HAVE WORKED HARD TO STRENGTHEN BOTH MY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND MY PATIENT CARE EXPERIENCE. I AM CURRENTLY EMPLOYED AT SANFORD HOSPITAL AS A PATIENT CARE TECHNICIAN. IN ADDITION TO MY WORK IN HEALTHCARE, I AM ACTIVELY INVOLVED ON CAMPUS. IN ADDITION TO SERVING AS VICE PRESIDENT OF CASA, I AM A LEARNING ASSISTANT FOR MULTIPLE COURSES. THIS YEAR, I ALSO STEPPED OUTSIDE OF MY COMFORT ZONE BY JOINING A RESEARCH TEAM, WHICH HAS ALLOWED ME TO FURTHER EXPAND MY ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE. OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL AND WORK, I ENJOY SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS, TRAVELING, HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS, AND PLAYING GOLF.



## **AVA HALDORSON, TREASURER & SECRETARY**

I AM A SOPHOMORE MAJORING IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES AND MINORING IN CHEMISTRY, SERVING AS SECRETARY & TREASURER. I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT BEING A COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AMBASSADOR BECAUSE IT ALLOWS ME TO REPRESENT THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND AID IN THEIR SUCCESS THROUGH EVENTS AND VOLUNTEERING. INVOLVEMENT ON CAMPUS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO ME, SO I DEDICATE MY TIME AS AN OFFICER IN THE HORTICULTURE CLUB AND THE WOMEN'S CLUB VOLLEYBALL AND AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE S-STEM HERD SCHOLARS AND CANTEMUS, NDSU ALL-WOMEN CHOIR. BEYOND CAMPUS, I WORK AS A YOUTH VOLLEYBALL COACH AND HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH AND DEBATE JUDGE. AFTER GRADUATION, I PLAN TO FURTHER MY EDUCATION BY ATTENDING PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA) SCHOOL. IN MY FREE TIME, YOU CAN FIND ME LINE DANCING, ARRANGING FLOWER BOUQUETS, AND WHEN THE WEATHER IS NICE, HITTING THE GOLF COURSE.



## **CADENCE KLINE, PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**

I AM A SENIOR MAJORING IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES AND MINORING IN CHEMISTRY. AFTER GRADUATION, I PLAN TO PURSUE MY MASTERS IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES. AS A MEMBER AND OFFICER OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AMBASSADORS (CASA), I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT SUPPORTING FELLOW STUDENTS IN THEIR ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL SUCCESS. I ENJOY ORGANIZING EVENTS THAT HELP ALLEVIATE THE CHALLENGES OF COLLEGE LIFE WHILE FOSTERING A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY. BEING PART OF CASA HAS ALLOWED ME TO CONNECT WITH SOME OF MY PEERS AND CONTRIBUTE TO A SUPPORTIVE AND ENGAGING CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT. OUTSIDE OF CASA, I AM ALSO A PEER MENTOR FOR THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES. IN MY FREE TIME, I ENJOY WALKS OUTSIDE, READING, AND COOKING.



# CASA EXECUTIVE BOARD

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## **SYDNEY ARMSTRONG, PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**

I'M A JUNIOR MAJORING IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES WITH MINORS IN CHEMISTRY AND PSYCHOLOGY. ORIGINALLY FROM COLORADO, I'VE LOVED THE COMMUNITY AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME WITH BEING A STUDENT AT NDSU. ALONG WITH CASA, I AM A MEMBER OF THE NDSU WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM, THE RED CROSS CLUB, AND PRE-MED CLUB. I VOLUNTEER WEEKLY AT ESSENTIA HEALTH AND HOPE BLOOMS, A FLORAL REPURPOSING NONPROFIT. IN MY FREE TIME, I LOVE HIKING, READING, BAKING, AND PLAYING GUITAR. I PLAN TO PURSUE A MEDICAL DEGREE AFTER I GRADUATE NEXT FALL.



## **DR. NADEJE ALEXANDRE, ASSISTANT DEAN FOR STUDENT SUCCESS AND FACULTY ADVISOR**

NADEJE BRINGS OVER 20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE MENTORING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS. SPECIALIZING IN STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND ADVISING, SHE IS DEEPLY COMMITTED TO HELPING STUDENTS DISCOVER PURPOSE, JOY, AND BALANCE IN THEIR ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL LIVES.

GROUNDING IN A HOLISTIC APPROACH, NADEJE PLACES STUDENTS AT THE CENTER OF EVERY DECISION, CHAMPIONING NOT ONLY THEIR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH, BUT ALSO THEIR HEALTH AND WELLBEING. SHE HAS LED THE CREATION OF IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES SUCH AS FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE, PEER MENTOR PROGRAM, AND A RANGE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS DESIGNED TO FOSTER CONNECTION AND SUCCESS, WHILE STRENGTHENING STUDENT RETENTION.

THROUGH HER WORK, NADEJE EMPOWERS STUDENTS TO DEVELOP SELF-AWARENESS, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS. SHE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT HELPING EVERY STUDENT RECOGNIZE THE MEANINGFUL IMPACT THEY HAVE ON THE WORLD SIMPLY BY BEING WHO THEY ARE.



# A WORD FROM ADVISORY BOARD VICE PRESIDENT

## GRANT HENRIKSEN



### **A YEAR OF PROGRESS: REFLECTING ON THE NDSU COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES ADVISORY BOARD**

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES HAS TAKEN MEANINGFUL STEPS TO STRENGTHEN ITS IMPACT, SHARPEN ITS MISSION, AND EXPAND ITS ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE NDSU COMMUNITY. AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD, I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING ALONGSIDE DEDICATED MEMBERS WHO SHARE A COMMON GOAL: ADVANCING THE COLLEGE'S MISSION AND ELEVATING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

### **STRENGTHENING BOARD EFFECTIVENESS AND PURPOSE**

A CENTRAL FOCUS OF THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN INCREASING THE BOARD'S EFFECTIVENESS AS A STRATEGIC PARTNER TO THE COLLEGE. MEMBERS HAVE WORKED TO CLARIFY HOW THE BOARD CAN BEST SUPPORT THE COLLEGE'S BROAD MISSION, WHETHER THROUGH ADVOCACY, OUTREACH, OR DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENTS AND FACULTY. THIS HAS INCLUDED DEEPER DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE BOARD'S LONG-TERM ROLE, HOW IT CAN ADD VALUE, AND HOW TO ENSURE ITS WORK ALIGNS WITH THE EVOLVING NEEDS OF THE COLLEGE.

### **RECRUITING AND INSPIRING CHAMPIONS FOR NDSU**

THE BOARD ALSO EXPLORED NEW WAYS TO RECRUIT INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT THE COLLEGE'S MISSION. A KEY THEME HAS BEEN HOW TO EXCITE OTHERS, ALUMNI, INDUSTRY PARTNERS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS, ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPACT OF NDSU. BY SHARING SUCCESS STORIES, HIGHLIGHTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS, AND EMPHASIZING THE COLLEGE'S RELEVANCE, THE BOARD IS HELPING BUILD A BROADER NETWORK OF ADVOCATES.

### **CONNECTING STUDENTS TO INDUSTRY**

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS THE BOARD EXAMINED THIS YEAR WAS HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE BRIDGE BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THE INDUSTRIES THEY ASPIRE TO JOIN. MEMBERS DISCUSSED STRATEGIES FOR EXPANDING INTERNSHIP PIPELINES, INCREASING INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION ON CAMPUS, AND CREATING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO ENGAGE WITH PROFESSIONALS IN THEIR FIELDS. THESE CONVERSATIONS ARE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE INITIATIVES THAT WILL HELP STUDENTS TRANSLATE THEIR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE INTO MEANINGFUL CAREER PATHWAYS.

### **PROMOTING NDSU'S VALUE AND EXCELLENCE**

THE BOARD ALSO EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATING THAT NDSU OFFERS NOT ONLY A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION BUT ALSO EXCEPTIONAL VALUE. IN AN ERA WHEN STUDENTS AND FAMILIES ARE INCREASINGLY FOCUSED ON RETURN ON INVESTMENT, THE COLLEGE'S COMBINATION OF ACADEMIC RIGOR, RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, AND AFFORDABILITY STANDS OUT. BOARD MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN SHARING THIS MESSAGE WITH PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS.

### **GROWING ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE NDSU COMMUNITY**

THIS YEAR SAW A NOTABLE INCREASE IN BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION AT NDSU-RELATED EVENTS. MEMBERS ATTENDED CAMPUS ACTIVITIES, ENGAGED WITH ALUMNI AND STUDENTS, AND GATHERED FEEDBACK FROM THE BROADER COMMUNITY. THESE CONVERSATIONS HAVE PROVIDED VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO HOW THE COLLEGE IS PERCEIVED AND WHERE NEW OPPORTUNITIES MAY LIE. THE BOARD'S GROWING VISIBILITY HAS STRENGTHENED ITS CONNECTION TO THE COLLEGE AND REINFORCED ITS ROLE AS AN ENGAGED, INFORMED ADVISORY BODY.

### **WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS AND EXPANDING REPRESENTATION**

THE BOARD CONTINUES TO GROW AND DIVERSIFY, WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS FROM ACROSS DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE COLLEGE. THIS BROADER REPRESENTATION HELPS TO ENSURE THAT THE BOARD REFLECTS THE FULL ACADEMIC SPECTRUM OF THE COLLEGE AND BRINGS A WIDER RANGE OF PERSPECTIVES TO ITS WORK. THE ADDITION OF NEW VOICES HAS ENRICHED DISCUSSIONS AND STRENGTHENED THE BOARD'S ABILITY TO SUPPORT THE COLLEGE.

### **SUPPORTING THE COLLEGE'S STRATEGIC PLANNING**

FINALLY, THE BOARD HAS BEEN ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE COLLEGE'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS. BY CONTRIBUTING INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY, ALUMNI NETWORKS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, BOARD MEMBERS ARE HELPING SHAPE A FORWARD-LOOKING VISION FOR THE COLLEGE.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN ONE OF RENEWED ENERGY, DEEPER ENGAGEMENT, AND MEANINGFUL PROGRESS FOR THE BOARD. AS WE LOOK TO THE YEAR AHEAD, THE BOARD REMAINS COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COLLEGE, EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS, AND CHAMPIONING THE MISSION OF NDSU ACROSS THE REGION AND BEYOND.

# BOARD OF ADVISORS

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## JOSH BOSCHER, A

JOSH BOSCHER, B.S. '03 AND M.ED. '08, SERVES AS THE CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY BOARD. HE CALLS NORTH FARGO HOME WHERE HE WORKS AS A REAL ESTATE BROKER, SUPPORTING 140 AGENTS ACROSS THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA. ADDITIONALLY, HE SERVES IN THE NORTH DAKOTA SENATE REPRESENTING DOWNTOWN AND A GOOD PORTION OF NORTH FARGO. IN ADDITION TO THE ADVISORY BOARD, JOSH IS A BOARD MEMBER FOR THE FARGO MOORHEAD SCIENCE MUSEUM.



# BOARD OF ADVISORS

## SHARON BERRY, PHD, ABPP

SHARON EARNED HER BS IN PSYCHOLOGY & SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION ('75) AND A MS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY - HEALTH & BEHAVIOR THERAPY ('83) AT NDSU. SHE WENT ON TO EARN HER PHD IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY. SHE SPENT OVER 35 YEARS IN THE PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION & TRAINING WORLD (CHICAGO AND MN CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS), WITH THE BEST JOB AS A DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL TRAINING IN A NATIONALLY ACCREDITED INTERNSHIP AT CHILDREN'S MN, WHILE ALSO SERVING CHILDREN/TEENS WITH MEDICAL CHALLENGES. SHE IS NOW IN HER OWN PRIVATE PRACTICE WORKING WITH ALL AGES. NDSU WAS PIVOTAL IN HER CAREER CHOICES AND AMAZING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES, AND SHE IS THRILLED TO SERVE ON THE INAUGURAL CAS BOARD OF ADVISORS.



## MEDORA SLETTEN LAUF

MEDORA IS A PROUD BORN AND RAISED NORTH DAKOTAN. SHE GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS (MN) IN 2010 WITH A DEGREE IN COMMUNICATIONS AND JOURNALISM. SHE SPLITS HER TIME WORKING AND VOLUNTEERING FOR YOUNG LIFE. IN A WORLD THAT IS TELLING TEENAGERS THEY ARE GROWING UP TOO FAST AND TOO SLOW, YOUNG LIFE SEEKS TO TELL KIDS IN A JOYFUL WAY THAT THEY MATTER, AND JESUS LOVES THEM RIGHT WHERE THEY ARE. SHE IS CURRENTLY SERVING ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE THEODORE ROOSEVELT MEDORA FOUNDATION. MEDORA LIVES IN BISMARCK, ND WITH HER HUSBAND ROBBIE. DURING THE SUMMER THEY ENJOY TRAVELING ACROSS THE I-94 CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE NORTH DAKOTA BADLANDS AND THE LAKES OF MINNESOTA.



## DOUGLAS MAHONEY

DOUG EARNED HIS BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN MATHEMATICS ('91) AND A MASTER'S DEGREE IN APPLIED STATISTICS ('93) FROM NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY. WHILE EARNING HIS DEGREES, DOUG WORKED A TEACHING ASSISTANT AND WAS THE INAUGURAL MEMBER OF THE STATISTICAL CONSULTING GROUP AT NDSU. SINCE GRADUATING, DOUG HAS WORKED AS A BIostatistician AT MAYO CLINIC-ROCHESTER AND HAS ACHIEVED THE RANK OF ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BIostatistics. DURING THE PAST 15 YEARS, DOUG'S RESEARCH HAS FOCUSED ON STUDY DESIGNS AND ANALYSES OF LIQUID BIOPSY TESTS FOR THE EARLY DETECTION OF CANCER. MOST NOTABLY, DOUG IS A CO-INVENTOR OF THE NON-INVASIVE COLON CANCER SCREENING TEST USING DNA FROM STOOL COLLECTED AT HOME AND IS MARKETED UNDER THE NAME COLOGUARD. CURRENTLY, MUCH OF DOUG'S RESEARCH IS SPENT ON DEVELOPING AND MODELING DATA FROM PLASMA DERIVED MARKERS IN ORDER TO SCREEN 16 CANCERS FROM A SINGLE BLOOD DRAW. OUTSIDE OF WORK, HE IS INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY AND HAS COACHED 2 YOUTH FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS, IS THE PROUD FATHER OF TWO THRIVING ADULTS, AND RECENTLY HAS BECOME AN OVERZEALOUS GRANDFATHER OF TWIN GIRLS WHICH HE FREQUENTLY VISITS IN OREGON.



## MIKE JOHNSON

MIKE JOHNSON GREW UP ON THE WINDY PRAIRIE OF NORTH DAKOTA IN THE CITY OF JAMESTOWN AND RECEIVED A DEGREE IN CHEMISTRY FROM NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY IN FARGO, EVENTUALLY WORKING IN REGULATORY AFFAIRS FOR 3M PHARMACEUTICALS AND MEDTRONIC, PLC. HE SITS ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR TWO NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, DADSFIRST AND HEART OF A WARRIOR. HE AND HIS WIFE OF 40+ YEARS HAVE THREE MARRIED CHILDREN AND SEVEN GRANDCHILDREN. THEY MAKE THEIR HOME IN SHOREVIEW, MN, A SUBURB OF ST. PAUL.



# BOARD OF ADVISORS

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## SHELLI MCGUIRE

NDSU ('91) BS IN PSYCHOLOGY

U OF MN – MA INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

CURRENTLY LEAD TOTAL REWARDS AT REVO HEALTH, WHICH IS A MANAGED SERVICES ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING PHYSICIAN-OWNED PRACTICES LIKE TWIN CITIES ORTHOPEDICS. MY TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, HR TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONS – AND I USE MY NDSU PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE EVERY DAY! I LOVE BUILDING HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS AND HELPING PEOPLE FIND THEIR PASSION WHICH IS WHY I ENJOYING SERVING ON THIS BOARD OF ADVISORS. MY HUSBAND AND I HAVE TWO ADULT CHILDREN (OUR SON IS ALSO A BISON ALUM) AND LOVE SPENDING TIME AT OUR CABIN IN ALEXANDRIA, MN, AND FOLLOWING THE BISON.



## KRISTEN (PATNODE) SETIEN, CHAIR OF MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

MY NAME IS KRISTEN (PATNODE) SETIEN. I RECEIVED BOTH MY UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEGREES FROM NDSU, EARNING A BS IN CHEMISTRY AND MS IN COATINGS AND POLYMERIC MATERIALS. I HAVE SPENT MY POST-GRADUATE CAREER IN THE INDUSTRIAL COATINGS INDUSTRY, FIRST IN POLYMER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND NOW WORKING ON THE PROCUREMENT SIDE OF THE BUSINESS. OUTSIDE OF WORK, I ENJOY SPENDING TIME WITH MY HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER IN OUR LOCAL MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD.



## ANTHONY DUTTON

ANTHONY DUTTON IS A 2014 GRADUATE OF NDSU'S PhD PROGRAM IN HISTORY AND A PROFESSOR AT VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY, WHERE HE IS PRESIDENT OF THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION. PREVIOUSLY A DEPARTMENT CHAIR AND RECIPIENT OF THE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD FROM VCSU'S STUDENT SENATE, DUTTON CONTINUES TO PURSUE AN ACTIVE RESEARCH AGENDA AND TO SERVE THE NDUS.



## ALEXIS WOLF, SECRETARY

I GREW UP ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE TWIN CITIES IN OAKDALE, MN. I ATTENDED NDSU FROM 2007 TO 2011, GRADUATING WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE AS A DOUBLE MAJOR IN MATHEMATICS AND MATHEMATICS EDUCATION. DURING MY TIME AT NDSU, I WORKED IN RESIDENCE LIFE, ADMISSIONS, AT THE LIBRARY, WAS A TA FOR THE MATH DEPARTMENT, AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE COAR TEAM. I RECEIVED MY MASTER'S DEGREE FROM UW-RIVER FALLS IN 2015 WITH A FOCUS IN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION. MY CURRENT POSITION IS TEACHING 7TH GRADE MATHEMATICS AT JOHN GLENN MIDDLE SCHOOL IN THE NORTH ST. PAUL-MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE DISTRICT. I RESIDE IN STILLWATER, MN WITH MY HUSBAND JORDAN (NDSU '12) AND CHILDREN FRANKLIN AND OLIVER.

# BOARD OF ADVISORS

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## AARON FEICKERT

AARON RECEIVED A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND PHYSICS, MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MATHEMATICS, MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICS, AND DOCTORATE IN PHYSICS FROM NDSU. HAVING PREVIOUSLY WORKED AS A COMPUTER SCIENTIST FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, APPLIED CRYPTOGRAPHY RESEARCHER, AND SOFTWARE ENGINEER, HE NOW HEADS A TEAM OF APPLIED CRYPTOGRAPHY RESEARCH ENGINEERS AS RESEARCH ENGINEERING LEAD AT ALPEN LABS. HE LIVES IN THE MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL METRO AREA WITH HIS WIFE AND TWO CATS.



## BRIAN LYNCH

BRIAN LYNCH IS A THEATER TECHNICIAN FOR THE FARGO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AND IS A FREELANCE LIGHTING DESIGNER IN THE FARGO AREA. BRIAN CURRENTLY MANAGES THE TECHNICAL THEATER PROGRAMS AT DAVIES HIGH SCHOOL AND DISCOVERY MIDDLE SCHOOL AS WELL AS SERVING AS THE LIGHTING DESIGNER FOR THE FM BALLETT. HE HAS WORKED WITH MANY LOCAL THEATER GROUPS INCLUDING THEATER B, THE GASPER'S SCHOOL OF DANCE, GOOSEBERRY PARK PLAYERS, FMCT, AND TROLLWOOD PERFORMING ARTS SCHOOL. AS A 2015 NDSU GRAD HE HAS BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE ASKED BACK TO DESIGN SHOWS FOR THEATER NDSU AND THE NDSU OPERA. BRIAN HOLDS A B.F.A. IN THEATER ARTS.



## DAVID CLOUSTON

I ALWAYS TELL EVERYONE THAT BASED ON WHAT NDSU HAS GIVEN ME, I CAN NEVER GIVE BACK ENOUGH. I DON'T THINK I WOULD HAVE GOTTEN ANYWHERE IN LIFE WITHOUT THE EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND MENTORSHIP OF NDSU. SO, FIGURING OUT HOW TO SUPPORT THE SCHOOL, ITS STUDENTS AND FACULTY IS MY PASSION. WE HAVE SUPPORTED MY COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT BY A YEARLY FUNDING OF A STIPEND FOR THE PRE-LAW SOCIETY AND ITS FACULTY ADVISOR. WE ALSO FUND THE CLOUSTON TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP WHERE WE FLY FOUR STUDENTS TO DALLAS, AND THIS YEAR 6 STUDENTS TO BISMARCK, IN THE SPRING TO SPEND THREE DAYS BEING EMERSED IN THE PRACTICE OF LAW AND THE ND LEGISLATURE. THEY TOUR COURT FACILITIES, MEET JUDGES AND LAWYERS FROM DIFFERENT PRACTICES (CIVIL, CRIMINAL, CORPORATE, FAMILY LAW), WITNESS COURT OF APPEALS ARGUMENTS, AND CIVIL AND CRIMINAL HEARINGS/TRIALS. THIS YEAR THE MET ND LEGISLATORS, WITNESSED COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND SPENT THE AFTERNOON ON THE FLOOR OF THE LEGISLATURE. THEY ALSO MET THE ND SUPREME COURT AND THE ND GOVERNOR—KELLY ARMSTRONG.

WE HAVE ALSO FUNDED THE KENNETH W. CLOUSTON FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP (NAMED AFTER MY GRANDFATHER) FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE, PUBLIC POLICY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE MAJORS. WE HAVE FUNDED THE CLOUSTON FACULTY FELLOWSHIP IN THE POLITICAL SCIENCE/PUBLIC POLICY DEPARTMENT.

I AM ALSO A MEMBER OF TEAM MAKERS AND THE GREEN AND GOLD COLLECTIVE.



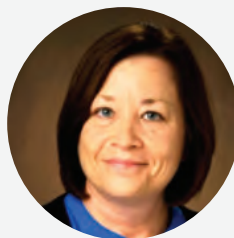
# DEANS OFFICE & CHAIRS

## WHAT MAKES YOU FLOURISH?



*KIMBERLY WALLIN, DEAN*

Living with purpose.



*DIANE GOEDE, ASSISTANT TO THE DEAN*

Maui beaches.



*NADEJE ALEXANDRE, ASSISTANT DEAN FOR STUDENT SUCCESS*

Stillness through reflection, nature, and creative expression.



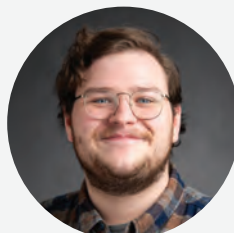
*JESS JUNG, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR FACULTY AFFAIRS AND SUCCESS*

Unwavering support from my family and cuddles from my kiddos.



*JENNA RENO, BUSINESS MANAGER*

A good ice coffee and a sci-fi book.



*WYATT AMUNDSON, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

Quality time with quality people



*NICK BAUROTH, POLITICAL SCIENCE*

Lamb curry and a good horror film.



*STEPHENSON BECK, COMMUNICATION*

A good workout, a productive meeting, or a wonderful classical soundtrack.



*BRADLEY BENTON, ENGLISH*

Baked goods.



*JULIA BOWSHER, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES*

A good chat with a friend.



*GREG COOK, CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY*

Monday night TRIVIA... and wine.



*DENNIS COOLEY, HUMANITIES*

A really good place for beer and pizza.

# DEANS OFFICE & CHAIRS

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*DOMINIC FISCHER,  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE,  
DISASTER RESILIENCE AND  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT*

Good coffee and my hair.



*CLAYTON HILMERT,  
PSYCHOLOGY*

The promise of good food.



*SUSAN KLIMAN,  
ARCHITECTURE*

Awesome faculty and my kitten.



*FRIEDRICH LITTMANN,  
MATHEMATICS*

Doing research in mathematics.



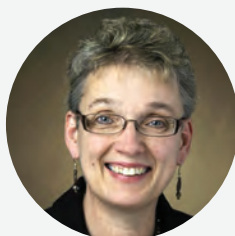
*RHONDA MAGEL, STATISTICS*

Socialization with running marathons.



*SYLVIO MAY, PHYSICS*

When my students discover what I was about to explain.



*SUSAN RAY-DEGGES,  
INTERIOR DESIGN*

Student Success.



*AMY STICHMAN, CRIMINAL JUSTICE*

Cats.



*MICHAEL STRAND, ART AND  
DESIGN*

Being a Theatre and Music dad to my two sons who are active performers.



*CHRISTINA WEBER, SOCIOLOGY  
AND ANTHROPOLOGY*

Being outside, hiking, biking, gardening. Horror films and pop culture.



*DEAN WEBSTER, COATINGS  
AND POLYMERIC MATERIALS*

Seeing graduate students develop into successful researchers. Especially when they get their first journal article published.



# NEW ACADEMIC CHAIRS

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## WHAT MAKES YOU FLOURISH?



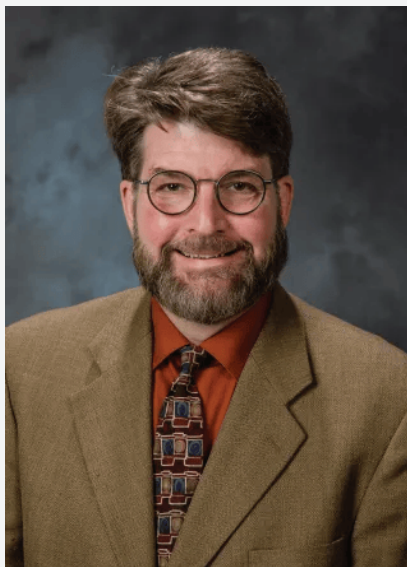
*ELIZABETH REILLY*  
*EDUCATION*

People who are willing to dream, graciousness, and kindness.



*TYLER WOTTRICH*  
*DIVISION OF PERFORMING ARTS*

Great food, great art.



*ROBERT HUBBARD*  
*DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS*

Being part of an institution that promotes justice, peace and belonging.

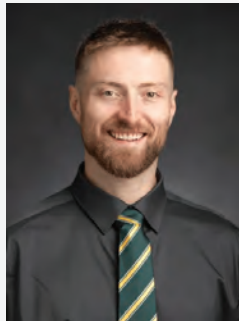
# NEW FACULTY

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The College of Arts and Sciences welcomed 11 new faculty members over the 2025-2026 academic year, across several disciplines.



**Bappaditya Chandra**  
Chemistry & Biochemistry



**Ian Berry**  
Communication



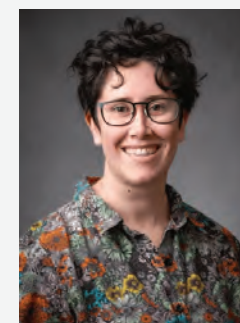
**Emily Zhan**  
Communication



**John Smiley**  
Theatre



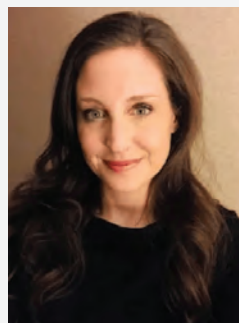
**Will Sutton**  
Music



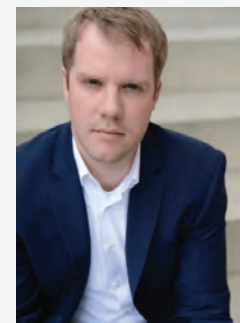
**Evelyn Milburn**  
Psychology



**Kuang Lee**  
Theatre



**Danielle Kvanvig-Bohnsack**  
English



**Mark DeMull**  
Music

Not pictured: **Courtney Cavellier** - School of Education  
**Luc Chinwongs** - English

# PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

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## What helps you flourish?



*Kaitlyn Alme-Hjelseth, Lead Advisor  
Humanities, Education*

What helps me flourish in my work, life, and community is the people around me. Whether it's collaborating with colleagues to accomplish shared goals, connecting with students as they explore their personal and professional paths, or spending time recharging with my family, I couldn't flourish without connecting to those around me.



*Kelsey Seeba, Academic Advisor*

*Communication, Apparel, Retail Merchandising and Design, Art and Art Education, Disaster Resilience and Emergency Management, Interior Design, Journalism, Landscape Architecture*

I flourish when I can spend time in the outdoors, whether it's fishing or hiking, and cheering on my favorite hockey teams.



*Rob Glarum, Academic Advisor  
Architecture*

What helps me flourish in my work is relaxing in a park, while hanging with friends, eating some good food on the grill.



*Patti Seidler, Academic Advisor*

*Psychology, Theatre, & Women and Gender Studies*

I flourish in my life, work, and the community when I am sharing my time and knowledge helping others, showing kindness, and providing empathy. I flourish in assisting people consider, discuss and organize their goals and plans for the future.

# PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

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*Matt Hansen, Academic Advisor*

*Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Chemistry Education, Physics and Physics Education*

Having a sense of belonging or purpose helps me flourish, because without that I would feel lost or unmotivated.



*Jill Lodde-Greives, Academic Advisor/Lecturer*

*Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Biological Science Education, and Pre-Med and Pre-Professional*

Participating as a volunteer with NDSU Bison Strides replenishes my energy and lifts my spirit. Having the opportunity to partner with some participants for many years has allowed me to witness their growth over time. It's a joy and honor to get to connect with the participants each session



*Jessica Bauer, Assistant Director of Student Success Initiatives*

*University Studies*

*Finding purpose in everything.*



*Andrea Hein, Associate Director, Career and Advising Center*

*Behavioral Statistics, Math and Math Education, and Statistics*

*Drinking coffee and reading books*



*Linda Fricker, Academic Advisor*

*Anthropology, Criminal Justice, English and English Education, and Sociology*

## THE HEART OF THE OFFICE: CELEBRATING DIANE'S LASTING IMPACT

BY DR. NADEJE ALEXANDRE



After two decades of dedicated service, Diane Goede leaves behind a legacy that is far greater than her title as executive assistant to the dean. While her role placed her at the center of the dean's office, Diane's impact reached far beyond it; touching every corner of the College of Arts and Sciences and the many people fortunate enough to work alongside her.

To know Diane is to understand what it means to feel truly seen and heard. Her office has long been more than a workplace. It's seriously a gathering place. Nearly every visit finds someone sitting across from her, engaged in conversation that might begin with a work question but often grows into something more personal. Diane has a rare gift: she listens with intention, gives her full attention, and makes each person feel like they matter. That kind of presence is both grounding and invaluable, and appreciate having that kind of role modeling for our students.

Though she officially supported the dean, Diane supported everyone. Faculty, staff, and students across academic units have all relied on her wisdom, kindness, and steady guidance. She has been a quiet force behind the scenes; keeping things running smoothly while fostering a sense of warmth and connection that defines the culture of the office. Her presence has never just filled a role; it has shaped an environment.

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## THE HEART OF THE OFFICE: CELEBRATING DIANE'S LASTING IMPACT CONTINUED

Diane's journey to this point reflects both dedication and a spirit of adventure. Originally from Hutchinson, Minnesota, and raised in Silver Lake, she began her career at NDSU in the TRIO program before moving to the Physics Department (thank you Dr. Sylvio May for hiring Diane!). She then spent 19 years in the College of Science and Math, which later merged with Arts and Humanities to form today's College of Arts and Sciences. Prior to her time at NDSU, Diane worked in the dean's office at the University of North Dakota's medical school.

Her life beyond campus tells an equally rich story. For nearly a decade, Diane lived abroad in Germany and England, following her husband's military career, with time also spent in Spokane, Washington between overseas assignments. Her love of travel has taken her to unforgettable places, from sailing on a replica of Christopher Columbus' Santa Maria off the coast of Portugal (an adventure she remembers fondly, minus the seasickness), to cruising through the Greek Isles, to treasured family vacations in Hawaii.

That same adventurous spirit continues to guide her as she looks ahead to retirement in Missouri. Plans are already forming for trips to Australia and New Zealand, along with smaller journeys across the United States. All new chapters waiting to be written!

While Diane may be stepping away from her role, the mark she leaves behind is indelible. She has been a steady presence, a compassionate listener, and a source of warmth that has defined the workplace for so many. Her absence will be deeply felt; not just in the work she did, but in the way she made people feel. Diane Goede is, simply put, unforgettable. And she will be missed more than words can fully express. We love you Diane!



Diane (middle) with family in Hawaii

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## A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE CHALLEY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY DR. TYLER WOTTRICH



Having served as a piano faculty member for eleven years in the Challey School of Music was not looking to make a professional change: I love mentoring my piano students, nerding out in the occasional music theory course, and performing with and serving alongside my colleagues. Moreover, the CSoM (as we affectionately abbreviate it) is a special family of students, staff, and faculty who all know each other and are sincerely invested in seeing each other succeed at the highest levels, both musically and personally. The CSoM family also encompasses a wonderful group of alumni and community members who not only participate in the life of the school but whose generosity empowers everything that goes on at the newly remodeled and revitalized Challey Hall.

I applied for the position of Director of the Challey School last summer because of this unique family which had become my family, as a way to double down on my investment and involvement in the music-making and doing of life together in the CsoM. And, I still get to teach, nerd out, and perform!

Music changes things: music “expresses those things that are inexpressible and about which it is impossible to remain silent” (Victor Hugo); music education radically energizes and equips the brain (watch any of the many Ted Talks out there); music is not an add-on or elective experience for our lives, but rather the communal, identity-shaping vessel that frames everything we do. The Challey School of Music is long-recognized for and poised to elevate its leadership in training great musicians and music educators as we joyfully partner with Theatre as the Division of Performing Arts as well as with all of our kaleidoscope of compatriots in the College of Arts and Sciences.

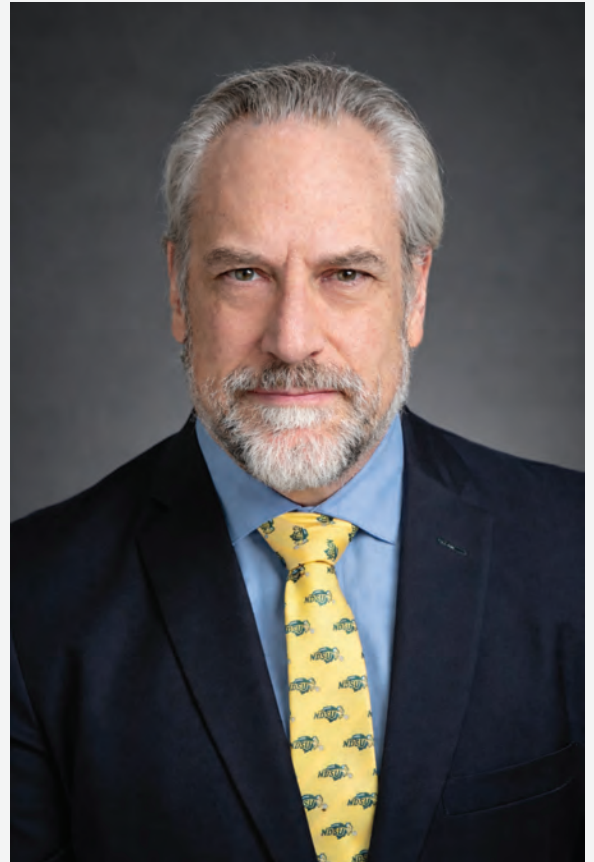


## WHERE AMBITION MEETS OPPORTUNITY: LAUNCHING A BOLD HONORS COLLEGE

BY DR. JAMES BROWN

I am incredibly grateful to be Executive Director of the Honors College. The efforts to create the Honors College, led by Dean Kimberly Wallin, Prof. Matt Smith and a Core Design Team are impressive and inspiring. The enthusiasm and commitment I have experienced from faculty and staff affirms that this community is ready to build something truly extraordinary.

In the last decade I have spent living in Fargo, I have developed an ever-growing affection for NDSU. I have supervised talented graduates and developed lasting friendships with alumni who "bleed green". Changing career paths to academia was not something I was considering, but when I learned about the establishment of the Honors College, I was intrigued by its mission and approach. NDSU is building something truly different and unique: an Honors College rooted in an abundance mindset that is willing to take bold risks. I concluded that this is a



once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I applied for the position, understanding that my background was atypical for a role in academia. The willingness of the university leadership, search committee, and faculty to broaden the types of candidates under consideration for this role shows dedication to expanding the purpose of the Honors College beyond the traditional ideas of honors in the academy.

The Honors College web page summarizes its audacious vision: "where ambition meets opportunity", "a place for bold ideas", and "driven by an abundance mindset". These ideals spark passion and engage the intellect. They make you believe that there is a chance that you could do something different here, something important. The Honors College will focus on removing barriers to this vision. The full scholarship for students will enable them to dedicate the time and effort necessary to engage in complex, difficult problems. The living and learning community for the first two years will enable them to build community and collaborate. The flexible curriculum, experiential coursework, and innovative learning objectives will enable students and faculty to think beyond established structures. Interaction and collaboration with renowned innovators and global thought-leaders will enable transdisciplinary creation of new ways of thinking and types of knowledge. Most importantly, the Honors College will engage with the university, local, and global communities, enabling it to have a positive impact on those communities and embracing the wisdom they can bring to the Honors College.

Realizing the vision of the Honors College requires building new courses, new ways of faculty-student engagement, new facilities, new external collaborations, and new ways of learning and achieving. The Core Design Team is building a curriculum that will be flexible yet rigorous and engage new technology and pedagogy. Faculty and students will innovate together. Pilot projects and workshops initiated in the Honors College may evolve and result in completely new courses for the university and serve as a model for higher education. A new Human Potential Studio will be a space for collaboration, innovation and community, encompassing a broad array of resources, from musical instruments to 3D printers, from an electronics breadboard to a sewing machine. Visiting scholars and entrepreneurs, from those who have successfully launched multi-billion-dollar companies to local individuals who recently created one-person start-ups, will encourage and inspire students and faculty. New tools, including artificial intelligence, advanced prototyping, and immersive visualization, will serve as a playground for new ideas. This environment will unleash the creativity and unlock the potential of every student. Students, faculty, and staff will be encouraged to look at the world with optimism and see unlimited possibilities. Ambition and audacity create adversity.

The students who will join us in the Fall 2026 as the inaugural class are an outstanding group. They are incredibly bright and accomplished and are rapidly developing a sense of the world and the place they want to occupy in it. I look forward to joining the dedicated faculty, staff, and university leadership in welcoming them to an Honors College that will be a foundational chapter in their university experience and beyond.



## SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES: CONNECTING CLASSROOM LEARNING WITH COMMUNITY IMPACT

DR. JAEHA LEE

Service-learning is a course-based educational experience that integrates meaningful community service into academic learning. In service-learning courses, students participate in organized service activities that address real community needs while connecting those experiences to course concepts through reflection. This process deepens students' understanding of their discipline and helps them develop a stronger sense of personal values and civic responsibility.

Service-learning also represents a shift in how knowledge is created in the classroom. Rather than knowledge flowing primarily from professor to student, faculty, students, and community partners learn from one another and create knowledge together through shared experiences and dialogue.



Service-learning is valuable for the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Because CAS spans disciplines across the sciences, humanities, social sciences, and the arts, service-learning provides a powerful way to connect classroom knowledge with real-world challenges. This approach benefits all three stakeholders—faculty, students, and community partners. For students, service-learning strengthens understanding of course material, introduces new perspectives, and helps develop professional skills and civic awareness. For community partners, it provides additional energy and support to expand or enhance existing services while allowing them to participate actively in the teaching and learning process. Faculty benefit by engaging students with diverse learning styles, fostering interactive teaching methods, expanding collaborations with colleagues, and creating opportunities for scholarship.

Across the College of Arts and Sciences, faculty in diverse disciplines incorporate service-learning into their courses to connect classroom learning with meaningful community engagement. In Sociology, for example, students in Introduction to Sociology partner with Micah's Mission to examine food insecurity and the broader social service landscape, gaining firsthand insight into community needs and the complexities of delivering effective support. Similarly, students in the Social Inequality course collaborate with the YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties to explore how systemic inequality affects local communities, allowing them to apply sociological theories to real-world contexts. In Biological Sciences,





## STEPS, SUNSETS, AND BACHLE: A LIFE ABROAD

BY TYLER MARTIN

If you know Berlin, you know to sit on the steps of the Altes Museum after dark to take in the music and sounds. If you're invested in Florence, you know to watch the sunset from Piazzale Michelangelo and stay for the dance performance. If you want to become a true resident of Freiburg, you'll have to fall into the Bächle, play BINGO at O'Kelly's Pub, climb the Munster, and visit the tallest tree in Germany. I spent three months in Europe in the fall as part of the SoDAA study abroad program, and my resulting acquisitions could not be overstated. I gained deep insight into history, culture, architecture, and travel. My experiences abroad enveloped much more



than seeing and studying. For me, they caused integration into a place. This was rarely comfortable. I didn't understand the bus driver yelling in German that I had missed my stop, and learning meant accepting the hour walk back. My learning coalesced slowly and humbly at times but quickly and strikingly at other times. I navigated Berlin with my history professor, Sabine, and saw in life size the monuments, ruins, and rebuilds of history. One of my favorite memories is reaching the peaks of the black forest mountains that surround Freiburg, Germany. The expanse of beauty and breathtaking color I saw on that mountaintop, after a hike of four hours, was instantly rewarding. Other views I saw were as equally enthralling. The nearly finished Sagrada Familia basked in the shimmer of muted evening light. The sun-burnt cliffs and dwellings of Marseille stunned against the blue of the water with a view from Chateau d'If. Berlin's own rubble hill, Teuffelsberg, provided historic significance underneath my feet while I gazed ahead toward the vast city. One moment, one experience, nor one photo can sum up living a whole. Rather, the experiences gave me a perspective of gratitude. I realized I have so much to learn, but it renewed my own desire to discover, and it spurred thankfulness that I have that desire-- a desire that can take me places farther than I've now gone.



## GOOD BYE BISON BIDDERS BOWL

BY MEGAN BARTHOLOMAY

The North Dakota State University Foundation marked the end of a long-standing tradition on Saturday, September 27, 2025, as the 44th and final Bison Bidders Bowl welcomed alumni, supporters, and friends for a memorable night centered on generosity and impact. Hosted at Butler Machinery Arena, the event generated more than \$885,000 for student scholarships at North Dakota State University. Since launching in 1982, the Bison Bidders Bowl has stood as the region's premier fundraising gala and one of the university's most highly anticipated events, blending lively auctions, a strong sense of community, and a shared commitment to philanthropy.

More than 600 attendees took part in an evening filled with dining, entertainment, and spirited bidding on exclusive items and experiences, all aimed at advancing the university's mission. The event paid tribute to decades of impact, during which the Bison Bidders Bowl engaged thousands of supporters and raised millions to benefit students and strengthen the institution. While this year's event marked the conclusion of the Bison Bidders Bowl, NDSU's culture of giving remains strong through initiatives such as Giving Day, endowed funds, scholarships, and other avenues that continue to support the university and its students.



# JESSICA WACHTER – ARTIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

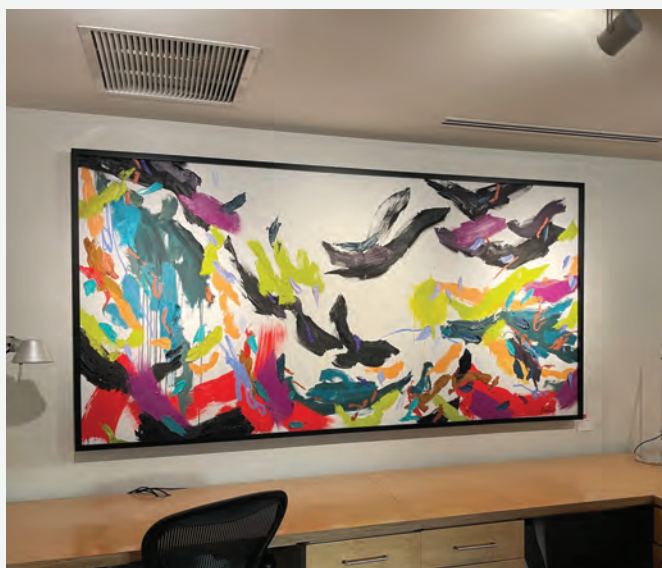
BY MEGAN BARTHOLOMAY



Jessica Wachter '09 earned a Bachelor of Science in Art with a minor in Interior Design. Based in Bismarck, she is known as an abstract expressionist painter. Her work draws on personal experiences such as celebration, struggle, love, and loss, expressed through large-scale canvases filled with vibrant color, layered texture, and dynamic composition. Her artwork appears in collections around the world and has been exhibited across the United States. Notable venues include the Celebration of Fine Art in Scottsdale, the Art Basel Miami Beach in Miami, the Laguna Gallery of Contemporary Art in Laguna Beach, the Capital Gallery, and the

Plains Art Museum. One of her paintings is also part of the permanent collection at the North Dakota State Museum. She has donated her paintings to causes such as Bison Bidders Bowl, which raises scholarship dollars for NDSU students. In both 2024 and 2025, her paintings sold on auction for \$35,000 each!

In addition to her studio work, Wachter advocates for women in the arts and works to elevate diverse voices across the creative community. In addition to her creative pursuits, Jessica sits on the NDSU Foundation magazine's "Herd" editorial board, serves as an NDSU Foundation Trustee, serves on NDSU's School of Architecture, Art and Design Advisory Board, and founded the Jessica Wachter Visual Arts Scholarship. Thank you Jessica, for all that you do!



Dean Wallin and Jessica at Art Ever



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EDUCATION: GOOD TECHNOLOGY WITH REAL MORAL RISKS

BY DR. DENNIS COOLEY

One early proponent of artificial intelligence compared contemporary concerns about AI to the 1970s' exaggerated fears that calculators would erode human mathematical ability. In one sense, that fear was justified: many people today struggle to perform anything beyond simple arithmetic without technological assistance. Yet calculators also liberated human thinkers from tedious computation, allowing them to pursue more complex, creative, and abstract forms of mathematics



that have advanced both theory and application. Calculators ultimately proved to be beneficial technology—tools that enhanced human capacity rather than diminished it.

The analogy suggests that AI, as a new technology with potential side effects, should not be rejected merely because it disrupts familiar practices. Indeed, AI and computer systems can perform many tasks more efficiently and accurately than humans, and this fact should be acknowledged and even celebrated. AI excels at solving problems ranging from simple to extremely data-heavy, often at speeds and scales impossible for human workers. Tasks such as sorting market data, identifying patterns in large datasets, or analyzing complex variables can be completed in seconds rather than hours, months, or being infeasible altogether.

By replacing guesswork and habit-based decision-making with real-time data analysis, AI enables businesses and institutions to make more informed choices. In areas such as finance, healthcare, and education, this efficiency frees human talent to focus on tasks better suited to uniquely human cognitive abilities—judgment, creativity, empathy, and moral reasoning. Moreover, AI can push humans beyond routine thinking. Research shows that when humans compete with superhuman AI systems, they are often forced to abandon habitual strategies and develop novel ones. While this demands more effort and cognitive energy, it can foster innovation and strengthen human agency rather than weaken it.

Given these benefits, it is difficult to argue that relinquishing mental drudgery in favor of more meaningful intellectual work is inherently harmful. Tools exist to make life easier and

to enable humans to live more fully as moral agents within their environments. Used appropriately, AI can serve exactly this purpose. However, serious problems have emerged that must factor into ethical evaluations of AI's permissibility. AI systems integrated into social platforms and conversational agents pose significant risks to psychological health and social development, particularly for vulnerable individuals. Documented cases illustrate these dangers: chatbots encouraging destructive personal decisions, adolescents forming unhealthy emotional dependencies on AI, and algorithmic systems promoting compulsive engagement at the expense of sleep, learning, and social connection. These technologies are not neutral; they are often deliberately engineered to exploit cognitive vulnerabilities in order to maximize engagement.

The convergence of emotionally responsive AI and persuasive recommendation algorithms creates a high-risk environment. Such systems can distort reality, erode autonomy, and normalize manipulation as a feature rather than a failure of design. As AI increasingly emulates moral reasoning and decision-making, there is a genuine danger that humans may become less autonomous, more passive, and increasingly shaped by systems optimized for exploitation rather than flourishing. To live well, humans must regularly exercise their abilities for critical reasoning, creative thinking, communication, and engagement with the world. Ethical safeguards—such as transparency, mental health protections, and regulatory oversight—are therefore essential to ensure that AI remains a tool that enhances human life rather than a silent architect of diminished agency and well-being.

## NEW PERMANENT EXHIBIT OPENS AT BONANZAVILLE

BY DR. ANGELA SMITH

A new permanent exhibit curated and produced by students in North Dakota State University's Public History program under the guidance of Professor Angela Smith will open to the public on Saturday, May 10 at 1:00 p.m. at Bonanzaville. The two-part exhibit—developed during the Spring 2025 semester—traces the formation of Fargo from its frontier origins in the 1870s through the rise and fall of Bonanza farming in the Red River Valley.

### OPENING DAY SCHEDULE

*Free and open to the public*

- Exhibit Viewing: 1:00–3:00 PM
- Program & Reception: 2:00 PM
- Film Screening: Glacier, Prairie, Farm: 3:00–4:00 PM

The poster is set against a dark brown background. At the top left, the words "exhibit opening" are written in a large, white, sans-serif font. To the right, the date and time "saturday may 10 1 pm-4 pm" are displayed in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below this text are two film posters. The left poster has a grey header with the text "IRON RAILS/PRAIRIE DREAMS" and "THE EARLY HISTORY OF FARGO" below it. The image shows a historical street scene with wooden buildings and a horse-drawn wagon. The right poster has a yellow header with the text "THE RISE AND FALL OF BONANZA FARMING: 1870-1930" and "EMPIRE OF GRAIN" below it. The image shows a vast, dry landscape with a person walking in the distance. In the bottom right corner of the poster, there is a decorative graphic of golden wheat stalks.



## FORMING FOUNDATIONS - UNIV 100 IN ITS SECOND YEAR

BY DR NADEJE ALEXANDRE

Now in its second year, the UNIV 100 First Year Experience is already reshaping how students in the College of Arts and Sciences begin (and sustain) their academic journeys. What began as a bold initiative has quickly evolved into a cornerstone of student success, grounded in a simple but powerful idea: the first year should not just orient students to college life, but equip them to thrive within it.

From the outset, UNIV 100 was intentionally designed as more than an introduction. It serves as a foundational experience that integrates academic preparation with personal development, helping students build the habits, skills, and confidence needed for long-term success. This dual focus reflects the course's guiding purpose: to create a supportive foundation while developing competencies that extend well beyond the classroom.

The course itself is rooted in research and collaboration. As co-chair of a dedicated committee, we examined national best practices and studied peer institutions, and engaged in professional development through conferences and seminars. This work led to a clear rationale: students benefit most when their transition to college is intentional, supported, and holistic.

UNIV 100 addresses this need by helping students navigate the transition to college, strengthen academic skills, build community, and become familiar with campus resources. At a deeper level, the course fosters self-efficacy and resilience, qualities that empower students to adapt, persist, and grow.



Themes like Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Critical Reflection are not simply discussed, they are practiced. From the very first day, students engage in structured conversation and exercises to build confidence, communication skills, and social awareness. Activities such as vision boards invite students to reflect on how their personal aspirations align with their academic paths, making their education feel both purposeful and personal.

The impact of UNIV 100 is already evident. Enrollment has increased by more than 60% in just one year, a clear sign of both student demand and faculty support. The course now brings together students from a wide range of majors, creating a dynamic and interdisciplinary learning environment.

Feedback has been equally encouraging. Surveys conducted mid-semester and at the end of the term, analyzed by Dr. Katherine Duggan of the Department of Psychology, revealed overwhelmingly positive responses. Students consistently highlighted the value of interactive activities, the opportunity for meaningful social engagement, and a growing sense of belonging within the college.

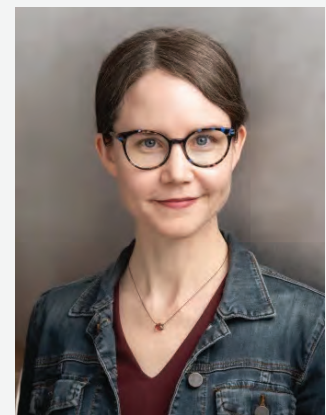
As UNIV 100 continues to evolve, its impact is clear: when students are given the tools to connect, reflect, and grow from the very beginning, they are far more likely to flourish. This course has become more than a program; it is a shared commitment to student success, and a powerful investment in the future of our CAS community. **Thank you Instructors for your commitment and dedication to the First Year Experience!**



Dean Kimberly Wallin



Assistant Dean Nadeje Alexandre



Vice Provost Carrie Anne Platt



Clayton Hilmert, Chair  
Psychology



Kat Duggan, Faculty  
Psychology



Dennis Cooley, Chair  
Humanities



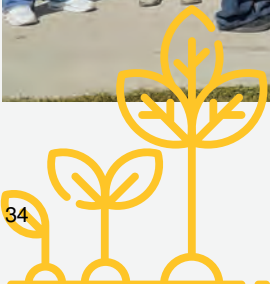
Tracy Barrett, Faculty  
History



# HUMANITIES JOINS FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

BY DR. DENNIS COOLEY

Dr. Tracy Barrett (History Faculty) and Dr. Dennis Cooley (Chair, School of Humanities) were enthusiastic about the opportunity to teach UNIV 100: You Got Here, Now What? Tools for Epic Success, a course designed to support students' successful transition to NDSU. The class brought together students from across the college and engaged them in activities focused on building networks, fostering community, and developing skills essential for success in their majors and university life. Teaching the course required both instructors to adopt a new, more active teaching style, which was challenging but ultimately rewarding. The experience strengthened their pedagogy and positively influenced their teaching in other courses.





## WHAT MAKES YOU STAY? A SENIOR THESIS

BY AMY BERG

If you went to a vocational school, attended university classes, or pursued additional training or certifications, what did your first week or semester of school look like? What motivated you to stick with your program, attend classes, or continue your training? For me, my first semester at North Dakota State University was hectic. I encountered a lot of roommate and suitemate changes, with some dropping out of college for various reasons, including feeling as though college wasn't the right fit. I was lucky enough to persist, and now, in my senior year, I had the privilege of representing North Dakota State University and the Social Psychology and Affective Neuroscience in Health (SPANH) Lab through presenting my undergraduate senior thesis findings as a poster presentation at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference located in Chicago, Illinois this year. My research question was:

### **What factors contribute to a first year, first semester student success and what informs their decision to continue enrollment at NDSU?**


Specifically, my research theorized that social-emotional factors such as loneliness and university belonging (feeling connected to the university, peers, school spirit, faculty, etc.), can be major determining factors in a student's decision to stay enrolled in college.

#### **I hypothesized:**

- A student's level of loneliness would be related to their intention to continue enrollment at NDSU at the beginning of the semester, such that higher levels of loneliness would be associated with weaker intentions to continue enrollment at NDSU.
- I thought that feelings of university belonging at the end of the semester would help explain the relationship between loneliness across the semester and end-of-semester plans to enroll. See the figure below for a graphical depiction of this prediction.


To test my hypotheses, I gave out four online surveys at different time points throughout the Fall semester to new freshmen enrolled in a first-year experience seminar called "You got here, now what? Tools for epic success" (think of a one-credit crash course, like University 101). Students reported their feelings of loneliness, university belonging, and intent to continue enrollment at NDSU.

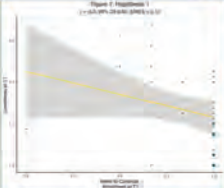
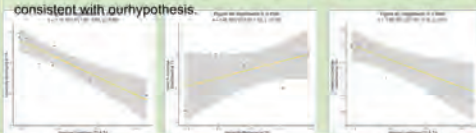
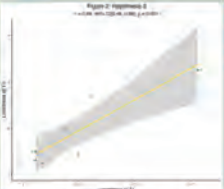
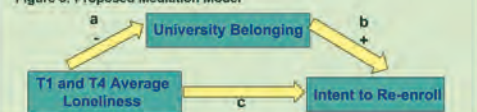

I am grateful to be working alongside Dr. Anna Finley (Assistant Professor at NDSU and Director of the SPANH Lab), who helped design and guide this senior thesis, Dr. Katherine Duggan (Assistant Professor at NDSU and Director of the PATHS Lab) for her connections and feedback, and Jani Western (SPANH Lab graduate student) for guidance. Special thanks to the NDSU College of Arts and Sciences, especially Assistant Dean for Student Success, Dr. Nadeje Alexandre, and Dean Dr. Kimberly Wallin; without your support, funding for this project wouldn't be possible.

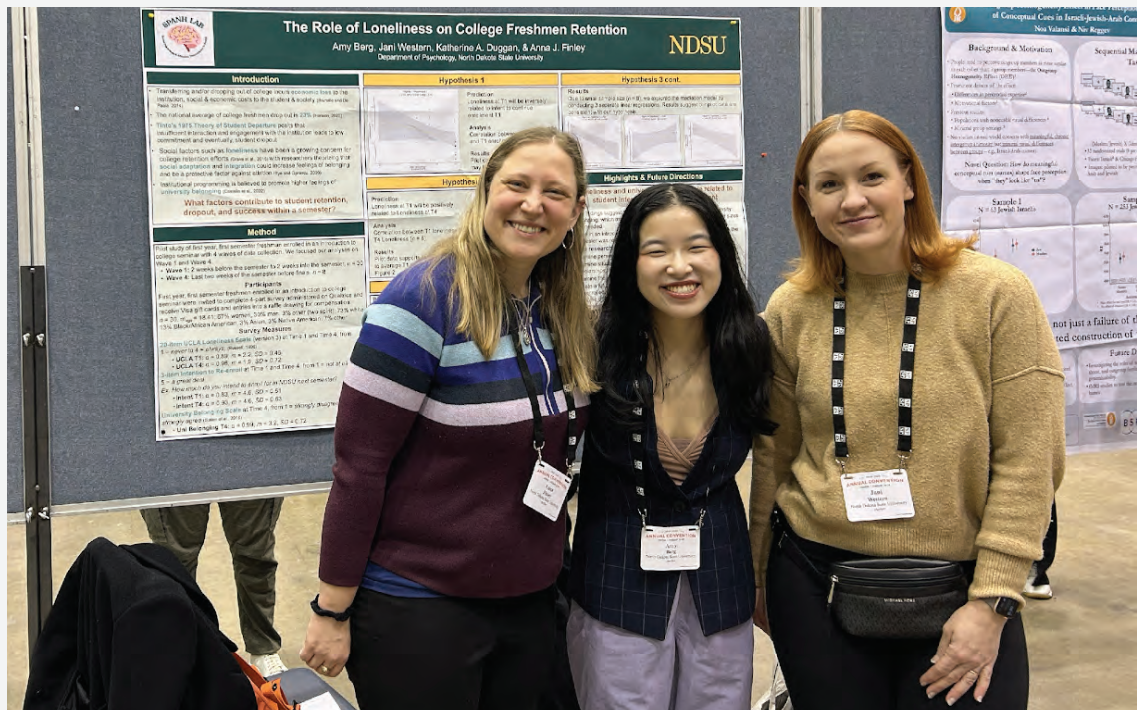


## The Role of Loneliness on College Freshmen Retention

Amy Berg, Jani Western, Katherine A. Duggan, & Anna J. Finley  
Department of Psychology, North Dakota State University



Introduction	Hypothesis 1	Hypothesis 3 cont.
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transferring and/or dropping out of college incurs <b>economic loss</b> to the institution, social &amp; economic costs to the student &amp; society (Brunello and De Paolis, 2014)</li> <li>The national average of college freshmen drop out is <b>23%</b> (Hanson, 2025)</li> <li><b>Tinto's 1975 Theory of Student Departure</b> posits that insufficient interaction and engagement with the institution leads to low commitment and eventually, student dropout</li> <li>Social factors such as <b>loneliness</b> have been a growing concern for college retention efforts (Dineen et al., 2016) with researchers theorizing that <b>social adaptation</b> and <b>integration</b> could increase feelings of belonging and be a protective factor against attrition (Byle and Ogrescu, 2020)</li> <li>Institutional programming is believed to promote higher feelings of <b>university belonging</b> (Costello et al., 2022)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><b>What factors contribute to student retention, dropout, and success within a semester?</b></p>	<p><b>Hypothesis 1</b></p>  <p><b>Prediction</b> Loneliness at T1 will be inversely related to intent to continue enrollment T1</p> <p><b>Analysis</b> Correlation between T1 loneliness and T1 enrollment intentions (n = 30)</p> <p><b>Results</b> Pilot data suggests Hypothesis 1 may be supported. See Figure 1</p>	<p><b>Hypothesis 3 cont.</b></p> <p><b>Results</b> Due to small sample size (n = 8), we explored the mediation model by conducting 3 separate linear regressions. Results suggest our pilot data are consistent with our hypothesis.</p> 
Method	Hypothesis 2	Highlights & Future Directions
<p><b>Method</b></p> <p>Pilot study of first year, first semester freshman enrolled in an introduction to college seminar with 4 waves of data collection. We focused our analyses on <b>Wave 1: 2 weeks before the semester to 2 weeks into the semester, 30 Weeks and 14 weeks</b> of the semester before finals, n = 8</p> <p><b>Participants</b> First year, first semester freshmen enrolled in an introduction to college seminar were invited to complete 4-part survey administered on Qualtrics and receive Visa gift cards and entries into a raffle drawing for compensation.</p> <p>n = 30, m<sub>age</sub> = 18.41; 67% women, 30% men, 3% other (two spirit), 73% white, 18% Black/African American, 3% Asian American and 14% Other from 1 = never to 4 = always, (Russell, 1996)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>UCLA T1:</b> <math>\alpha = 0.89, m = 2.2, SD = 0.46</math></li> <li>• <b>UCLA T4:</b> <math>\alpha = 0.96, m = 1.9, SD = 0.72</math></li> </ul> <p><b>Item Intention to Re-enroll</b> at Time 1 and Time 4, from 1 = not at all to 5 = a great deal</p> <p>Ex. How much do you intend to enroll for in NDSU next semester? • <b>Intent T1:</b> <math>\alpha = 0.83, m = 4.6, SD = 0.51</math> • <b>Intent T4:</b> <math>\alpha = 0.93, m = 4.6, SD = 0.63</math></p> <p><b>University Belonging Scale</b> at Time 4, from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree (Sakim et al., 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Uni Belonging T4:</b> <math>\alpha = 0.99, m = 3.2, SD = 0.72</math></li> </ul>	<p><b>Hypothesis 2</b></p> <p><b>Prediction</b> Loneliness at T1 will be positively related to Loneliness at T4</p> <p><b>Analysis</b> Correlation between T1 loneliness and T4 Loneliness (n = 8)</p> <p><b>Results</b> Pilot data supports Hypothesis 2, and to average T1 and T4 Loneliness. See Figure 2</p> 	<p><b>Highlights &amp; Future Directions</b></p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><b>Loneliness and university belonging are related to student intention to continue enrollment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our findings suggest that higher loneliness leads to reduced university belonging, which may mediate dropout intention, but larger samples are needed</li> <li>• Even in an introduction to college seminar, student loneliness across the semester was relatively stable</li> </ul> <p><b>Future research should</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine personality factors like resilience and conscientiousness</li> <li>• Examine situational factors relevant to enrollment (i.e., financial aid, scholarships, family commitments)</li> <li>• Examine the role of faculty student interaction and mentorship</li> <li>• Create a future study that compares first year first semester freshmen who are enrolled vs not enrolled in an introduction to college seminar and examine differences in loneliness and enrollment intention over the course of the semester</li> </ul>
Hypothesis 3		
<p><b>Prediction</b> University Belonging will mediate the relationship between loneliness and intent to continue enrollment (see Figure 3) such that: <b>intention to enroll in the same institution (Figure 4c)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Path a:</b> Students who report feeling more average loneliness will report less university belonging at the end of the semester (Figure 4a)</li> <li>• <b>Path b:</b> Students who report less university belonging at the end of the semester will report less intention to enroll (Figure 4b)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Figure 3: Proposed Mediation Model</b></p> 		
Funding & Contact Information		
<p><b>Funding for this study provided by the NDSU College of Arts and Sciences</b></p> <p>Preregistration available at <a href="https://osf.io/eqhrr">https://osf.io/eqhrr</a></p> <p><b>Questions? Email Amy Berg</b> <a href="mailto:amy.berg.1@ndsu.edu">amy.berg.1@ndsu.edu</a> or <b>Dr. Anna Finley</b> <a href="mailto:anna.finley@ndsu.edu">anna.finley@ndsu.edu</a></p> 		



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Anna Finley, Amy Berg, and Jani Western at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference

## CREATING, CONNECTING, CELEBRATING: NDSU ART CAMP

BY ERIC SYVERTSON

Art Camp at NDSU, led by the Department of Art and Design+, returned for its third year on Friday, March 27. The event brought together 18 high schools from across the region. In total, about 200 high school students were welcomed to Renaissance Hall, along with nearly 40 high school art teachers and about 40 student volunteers from the department.

Throughout the day, students were immersed in diverse workshops, all led by faculty and students of the Department of Art and Design+. They explored ceramics, sculpture, drawing, collage, photography, fashion design, printmaking and a variety of other media. Meanwhile, high school art teachers participated in professional development activities at Art Teacher Camp. This year, they took part in creative rituals like pasta-making and pour-over coffee, highlighting how craft-based engagement can enrich daily routines. These sessions offered inspiration for integrating hands-on creativity into daily teaching practices. The Friday program culminated in an awards celebration at the Plains Art Museum recognizing outstanding work from the high school students.

On Saturday, Art Teacher Camp continued with professional development sessions for teachers, allowing educators to deepen their practice and earn continuing education credits. Then, on Sunday, teachers and students celebrated Youth Art Camp at the Plains Art Museum, where elementary and middle school students showcased their artwork in an exhibition coordinated in partnership with the North Dakota Art Education Association. NDSU art education students hosted interactive workshop stations throughout the museum. The turnout was phenomenal, with approximately 800 visitors engaging in the activities and checking out the student artwork.

The event showcased the dedication and vision of the Department of Art and Design+ in supporting NDSU's land grant mission. Art Camp continues to be the largest event of its kind within our region and reflects the university's commitment to fostering creativity in community. More info along with pictures and video can be found at [www.NDSUartcamp.com](http://www.NDSUartcamp.com)



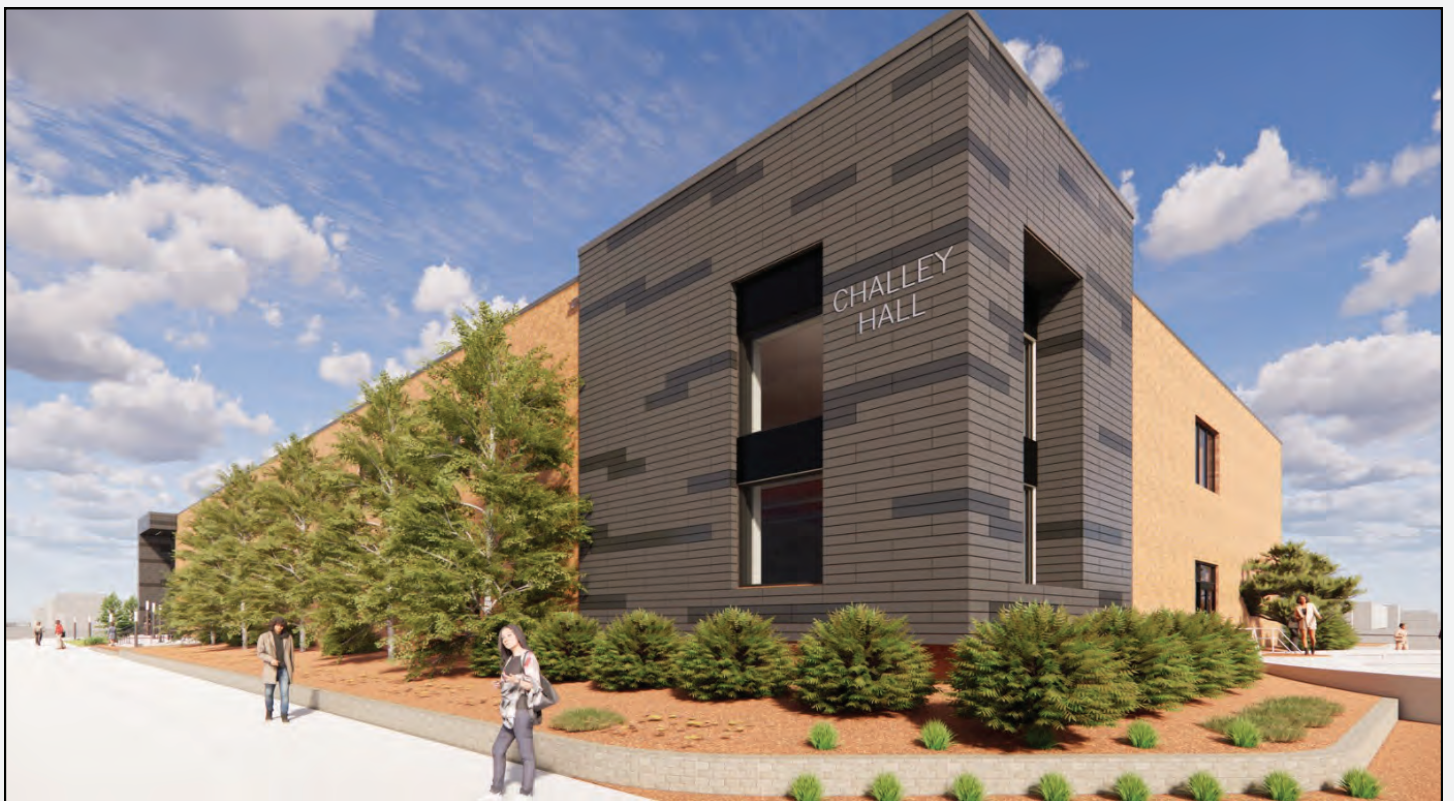
## CHALLEY HALL: A NEW CHAPTER FOR MUSIC AT NDSU

North Dakota State University has renamed the Reineke Fine Arts Center to Challey Hall, honoring the extraordinary philanthropic contributions of Robert and Sheila Challey. Their decades of support have strengthened students, faculty, and programs within the Challey School.



Recent renovations include a 9,700-square-foot addition with modern rehearsal spaces, recording studios, upgraded classrooms, and enhanced performance areas—all made possible through private giving. The nearby Music Education Building is also being updated, creating an inspiring new gateway to the arts on campus.

Serving nearly 160 music majors, the Challey School of Music prepares graduates who enrich schools and communities across the nation. Challey Hall now stands as a vibrant hub of creativity and collaboration, ensuring NDSU's legacy in music education continues for generations to come.



# COLLEGE EVENTS

## 2025-2026

### A DECADE OF CHAMBER MUSIC AT NDSU

BY DR. NADEJE ALEXANDRE



The 2025 NDSU Chamber Music Festival marked an exciting milestone as the festival entered its second decade of bringing world-class chamber music to Fargo-Moorhead. Over the past ten years, audiences have experienced thrilling performances by Grammy Award winners, members of major U.S. orchestras, and faculty from prestigious institutions including Stony Brook University and Carnegie Mellon University. Works from Mozart and Beethoven to contemporary composers like Margaret Bonds, Frank Zappa, and Libby Larsen have graced the festival stage; some even making their world premiere here in Fargo. Throughout

the festival's history, NDSU music students have risen to extraordinary heights, working side-by-side with distinguished guest artists and gaining invaluable experience in the process. This year's festival continued that tradition, welcoming internationally renowned cellist Colin Carr, professor at Stony Brook University and the Royal Academy of Music in London. Alongside Carr and other guest artists, students performed a wide-ranging repertoire, from the sweeping Prokofiev Cello Sonata and the mighty Brahms Piano Quintet to Schubert's beloved song cycle *Die Schöne Müllerin*, performed by NDSU tenor faculty Kelly Burns and festival director Tyler Wottrich. Thank you Dr. Wottrich and company for sharing all of your beautiful music!



# WELCOME TO NDSU!

BY MAGGIE LATTERELL

Welcome Week is designed to set students up for success at NDSU. Students hear from returning student leaders, connect with peers, learn about campus resources, and build skills to thrive as a Bison. The College of Arts and Sciences hosted new students for Meet Your Academic Community. Over 500 students gathered in Festival Concert Hall to learn about our college, meet leaders, and vie for fun prizes. Next, students divided up by their academic major to meet faculty and staff, connect with their classmates, and explore labs and learning spaces. Students then joined the rest of the class of 2029 to Walk Through the Gates and be welcomed to the Herd by faculty and staff. Students met back up with their Welcome Week groups for lunch, Welcome to the Academy, classroom tours, and the final small group meeting before classes began at 4PM. Numerous Welcome Week activities continued for two weeks and offered opportunities to learn about all NDSU has to offer!



**Welcome Class of 2029!**  
**College of Art and Sciences New Student Orientation**



# HOMECOMING AS THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR STUDENT GOVERNMENT

BY PATRICK KADRMAS

At the end of April of 2025, I was appointed and sworn in as the Executive Commissioner of Public Relations and to be a part of the 2025-2026 Executive Team for Student Government under the Frello administration. One of the important duties that I had was to facilitate the sale of the Homecoming T-Shirts! I loved looking at all of the designs that were submitted by the student body and their ideas/designs for the Y2K



theme for the 2025 Homecoming shirts. The winning design, from a Medical Laboratory Science major, truly captured the design (with some Bison thrown in there) of what people think of when they hear Y2K. When ordering the shirts, it was, for a lack of better words, a pain and slog, since I did not know what a vector file was nor how to make one; but I got it to work in the end!

## A HOMOECOMING TO REMEBER

BY JESSICA BROWN

NDSU Homecoming 2025 was one to remember. Throughout the week there were countless activities, events, and volunteer opportunities where students were able to showcase their Bison Pride. The Blue Key Honor Society put on the Homecoming Show and were able to donate the proceeds to Good for the Herd, the food pantry on campus. The annual parade and Bison Bash were full of floats from student organizations and local businesses as well as a DJ, food trucks, and inflatables for students and community members. Our football team took on the University of South Dakota and ended victorious 51-13. On Homecoming weekend, some of the College of Arts and Sciences Ambassadors were able to attend the 44th and Final Bison Bidder's Bowl where money was raised for student scholarships! What a week Homecoming 2025 was!

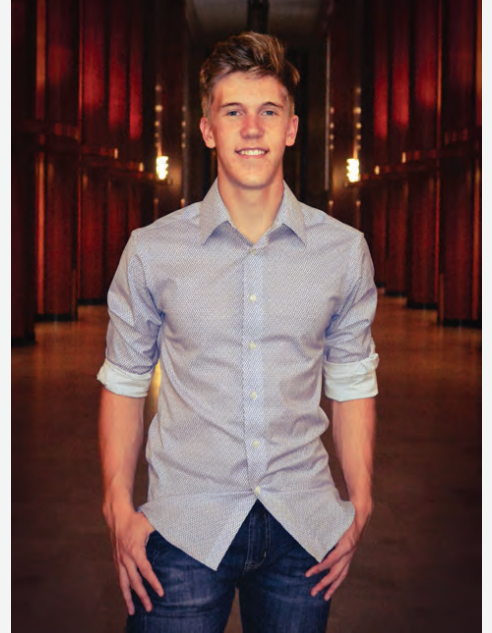


## A DAY TO CELEBRATE DONORS: HONORS DAY

BY CHANCE BOWLINGER

As one of the co-presidents of the College of Arts and Sciences Ambassadors, it is a privilege to honor such accomplished alumni, dedicated faculty and fellow scholarship recipients. Our university holds a strong reputation, and our donors all directly contribute to that excellence.

For Honors Day, I want to offer a heartfelt thank you to the donors who make our college's scholarships possible. You most likely hear "thank you" many times from grateful students, but I want to personally voice these words with complete sincerity. Scholarships have been a critical part of my own story. They provide the time and resources that allow me to contribute to areas of campus I otherwise couldn't reach. Because of your generosity, students like me feel empowered to take risks and extend ourselves further into the university community without feeling financially burdened. This support is truly invaluable, and your contributions are felt deeply across this entire campus. I am grateful for the opportunity to acknowledge your impact today. Truly, thank you.



### **CASA Faculty Excellence Award By Katrina Cysewski**

Each year the College of Arts and Sciences Student Ambassadors nominate a professor to receive the Faculty Excellence Award at Honors Day. This year, we are proud to present this award to Dr. Tara Slominski. As a new faculty member, Dr. Slominski has already made a profound impact on students, supporting them through difficult coursework in anatomy and physiology. She truly cares about her students and their success in their academics and future. We know that she will continue to do amazing things and empower students for years to come. Thank you, Dr. Slominski, for all your amazing work!



# “PAWS” FOR WELLBEING

BY CADENCE KLINE



Who doesn't enjoy a little puppy love? During the Week of Wellbeing, hosted by the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office and Student Ambassadors, students had the chance to unwind with some much-needed puppy therapy. Generous faculty members brought their beloved dogs to campus throughout the week, giving students the opportunity to take a break from their busy schedules. Whether watching fun tricks, playing a game of fetch, or simply enjoying a few snuggles, students happily soaked in the joy that the dogs brought. Events like these offer a meaningful way for students to relieve stress during high-pressure times while connecting with fellow dog lovers. Puppy therapy continues to be a fan favorite... for both the students and the pups.



## LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS WITH WEST FARGO PARKS

BY DR. NADEJE ALEXANDRE

This year, the College of Arts and Sciences continued its partnership with West Fargo Parks to offer a series of engaging workshops designed to bring learning, creativity, and discovery to community members of all ages.

Throughout the fall and winter seasons, the Department of Physics hosted a popular Drone Workshop, where participants explored the science behind drone technology while gaining hands-on experience operating the devices. The workshop provided a fun introduction to physics concepts while demonstrating how emerging technologies are shaping the world around us.

For adults interested in the intersection of science and everyday life, Dr. Greg Cook, Chair of the Department of Chemistry, led a well-attended workshop titled “The Chemistry of Wine.” Participants enjoyed an evening of learning and tasting as Dr. Cook explained the chemical processes that influence flavor, aroma, and the winemaking process. The arts were also well represented in this year’s programming. Due to overwhelming interest, two Ceramics classes were offered, giving participants the opportunity to explore clay techniques and create their own pottery in a welcoming studio environment.



**Art Professor Andy Stark**

As the seasons shifted, spring and summer workshops invited creativity and exploration in new ways. A Watercolor Art Workshop encouraged participants to experiment with color, composition, and painting techniques, while an Introduction to Architecture class for young learners inspires creativity and design thinking among aspiring architects.

These workshops reflect the College of Arts and Sciences’ commitment to connecting academic expertise with the broader community. By partnering with West Fargo Parks, faculty and instructors are able to share their knowledge in ways that spark curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning. We look forward to continuing this collaboration and seeing what exciting opportunities next year will bring.



## SONIA KOVALEVSKY MATHEMATICS HIGH SCHOOL DAY

The Sonia Kovalevsky Mathematics High School Day is a program of mathematics activities for young women. Female high school students and their teachers from throughout North Dakota and Western Minnesota are invited to come to Fargo to meet the NDSU mathematics faculty, professional women from the Fargo area who use math in their careers, and other high school students who are interested in math. We will have several workshops through which we hope to inspire the participants to continue their study of mathematics.



## BOO! NDSU HALLOWEEN



This year's theme for the CASA booth was Winnie the Pooh. Kids enjoyed Pin the Tail on Eeyore, candy and stickers. Faculty, staff and people from the Fargo-Moorhead community bring their kids to Cater Hall, where the ambassadors set up a booth for candy and games.



Dr. Stephenson and Sarah Beck as Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman in Casablanca

## WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT CAREER EXPLORATION



“At the Career Event that I attended was how to become a Learning Assistant (LA). Becoming an LA seems like the best way to get experience and it would help me get good recommendation letters for when I apply to pharmacy school. I would like to start getting experience as soon as possible and it’s nice to know that there are great opportunities at NDSU”. -Ainsley Kennedy

“The Criminal Justice Career Fair experience connected deeply to my personal values and career goals. I’ve always been drawn to roles that require precision, ethical clarity, and a commitment to community safety.” -Anonymous

Overall, the career fair wasn’t just cool, it was motivating. It turned abstract interest into tangible possibility. And it reminded me that the journey into my future work isn’t just about choosing a job, it’s about choosing a purpose. - Anonymous

Attending the Criminal Justice Career Fair is more than just an opportunity to collect brochures and shake hands; it was a moment of clarity. Surrounded by representatives from police departments, federal agencies like the FBI and DEA, and even law enforcement from neighboring states, I found myself immersed in a network of professionals who live out the theories and models we study in class”. -Tanner Wolf

I noticed that almost every graduate guest speaker talked about how important internships and networking were in getting their first jobs. It was encouraging to hear that many of them didn’t land their “dream job” right away but used early opportunities to gain experience and move closer to where they wanted to be. -Kate Thompson

Meeting with a career advisor was huge. I may not be the typical freshman. I am a decade older than most of my peers. I can have my goals; I can have my visions. In the end, I will go where the people need me most. I will go where my community needs me. Chaplain or not, non-profit or not. The experiences at NDSU will set me up for a wonderful career path ahead. If only I keep my mind, my eyes, and my heart open to the possibilities. -Quincy Tullock



# STUDENT SUCCESS

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## LEARNING NEVER ENDS

BY DR. JIM SIMMONS

Jim Simmons, now seventy-three, is a testament to the enduring power of curiosity. A self-described “student older than average” at North Dakota State University, he continues to embrace learning as a lifelong pursuit. Raised in western Maryland, Jim was deeply influenced by his grandfather, who, despite having no formal education, instilled in him a simple but powerful mantra: “Get your education.” That advice became a guiding principle. Early interests in language (sparked by diagramming sentences and studying Spanish and German) grew into a lifelong passion. He double-majored in English and German at Davis and Elkins College before heading to the University of North Dakota for graduate study. While earning advanced degrees in German and English, Jim studied in West Berlin during the Cold War, an experience that broadened his cultural and intellectual horizons.



His early academic work included contributions to *Plains Folk: North Dakota’s Ethnic History*, marking his first connection to NDSU. It was also during this time that he discovered another lasting passion: hockey. Jim’s teaching career took him from Illinois College—where he encountered the legacy of the Morrill Act—to William Carey College in Mississippi, and eventually back north to Lake Region State College. Along the way, he taught English, German, and philosophy, chaired departments, and advised students, while continuing to expand his own knowledge. He pursued philosophy through a German correspondence program, edited medieval texts, and contributed scholarly entries on German writers.

Later, at Mount Marty College, Jim served in multiple leadership roles while completing a Graduate Diploma in Theology from the Melbourne College of Divinity. Even in the final years of his career, he remained both a teacher and a learner.

In retirement, Jim returned to Fargo, drawn by its vibrant academic community and love of hockey. He stayed intellectually engaged through translation work and travel to Germany. At seventy, he once again answered the call to learn, enrolling at NDSU as a part-time student. His recent studies include the History of the Holocaust and advanced Spanish coursework.

For Jim Simmons, learning is not bound by age or circumstance. It is a way of life; one that continues as long as curiosity endures.

# FROM MENTEE TO MENTOR: SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS AT NDSU

BY CONNOR WOLF

I'm a sophomore studying Mechanical Engineering & Global Studies, formerly known as International Studies. I was born & raised right here in Fargo, North Dakota, so if you ever need local tips-restaurants, study spots, things to do-I've got you covered.

My role as a peer mentor is to help you navigate college successfully, academically, socially, and personally. Whether you're feeling overwhelmed, confused about something, or just want someone to talk through decisions with, I'm here to support you.

I want to start by being real with you all. I remember a time when I was in your exact shoes. I was new to college, had a ton of freedom that I wasn't used to and honestly... was not taking school as seriously as I should

have been. I was going out on weekends, skipping classes, and telling myself I'd catch up later. Eventually I hit a point where I realized I wasn't going to reach the goals I had originally set out. Before I connected with the NDSU mentorship program, I had a coach who mentored me. He was the first person who really encouraged me to take my goals seriously and helped me see the potential I wasn't seeing in myself at the time. Having someone who believed in me-and pushed me in the right ways-altered the course of my life. That experience is a big part of the value I see in mentorship now. I know firsthand

how powerful it can be to have someone in your corner. That's why I'm here now, to help you avoid some of the stress I put myself through. Nothing is too big or too small-if you're unsure where to go, start with me.

I'm located in Minard 202, a safe, relaxed place to chat with other students, relax between classes, grab a hot chocolate or stop by for academic support. Whether you need tutoring, want to ask questions, or just want to sit and chat, my door is open.



Peer Mentors Cadence Kline and Jessica Brown

# MY JOURNEY TO STATISTICS AND TEACHING

BY AKINDELE VICTOR OMOLAYO

My academic journey has not been a straight path, but it has shaped who I am today.

I completed my Bachelor's degree in Geology in my home country. During my studies, I worked with data collection, measurements, and analysis. Although I enjoyed learning about the Earth and natural processes, I realized that what interested me most was working with numbers. I discovered that I was very good at mathematics and enjoyed solving quantitative problems. That interest led me to pursue statistics. Before being admitted into the master's program, I applied as a non-degree student to take the required statistics courses.

This step allowed me to strengthen my foundation and prepare for graduate-level work. It required determination and extra effort, but it helped me build confidence in my abilities. After successfully completing those courses, I was admitted into the master's program in Applied Statistics. Switching from Geology to Statistics was challenging, but my strong math background helped me adapt. I enjoy logical thinking and solving problems step by step. Statistics allows me to use mathematics to answer real-world questions and understand patterns in data.



**Congratulations to the proud Papa!**

I appreciate how statistics can be applied in many fields, including science, healthcare, and business.

As a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Department of Statistics at NDSU, I have the opportunity to support students in their learning. I truly enjoy tutoring because I like helping students understand concepts that may seem difficult at first. I understand that statistics can feel overwhelming, so I try to explain ideas in a simple and clear way. I encourage students to ask questions and feel comfortable in class.

My journey has taught me persistence and confidence. I am grateful to be part of the NDSU statistics community and to help students succeed in their academic goals.



Statistics tutor team with Faculty Advisor, Dr. Ronald Degges

## TRAVELING BISON AWARD - DIONNA MARTEL

BY AMY SCOTT

I have been fortunate to know and work alongside Dionna Martel for over 10 years at NDSU.

She has made a meaningful difference in every role she has held, from Business Coordinator with the College of Arts and Sciences to Award and Proposal Officer with Sponsored Programs Administration. Whether Dionna is assisting faculty, staff or students, she approaches her work with dedication, kindness and a sense of humor that makes a positive impact on others around her.

Recently, Dionna used her grants knowledge and expertise to help write a grant proposal to secure funding for a soda kiln in the Department of Art and Design. Hearing her talk about the process and then learning that the proposal had been funded, I could feel how happy and excited she was about the capabilities of the new kiln! This achievement highlights not only the difference she makes in her work but also the value and benefit the soda kiln will bring to faculty and students.



Amy Scott(L) with Dionna Martel

It is with sincere pride that I nominate Dionna Martel for the traveling Bison Award. As both a co-worker and friend, you are truly deserving of this recognition!



# HOW EXPERIENCE SHAPES EXPRESSION

BY JONATHAN ERICKSON



On quiet Sunday mornings in Duluth, music filled the sanctuary before I ever understood its meaning. Sitting beside my grandmother—an organist since childhood—I watched her transform a room with sound. Music was the first language that made sense.

My upbringing, however, was anything but harmonious. Raised largely by my grandmother while my mother worked long hours, I found stability in small rituals: church services, shared meals, and melodies that lingered long after the final note.



Childhood instability soon gave way to foster care, multiple home placements, and constant change. Through it all, music remained my anchor. Piano lessons became more than instruction - they were a way to maintain connection, memory, and identity. Even outside formal training, sound shaped my world: from video game scores that built immersive “musical spaces” to the sweeping compositions of John Williams in Star Wars, which ignited my imagination.

Adolescence brought both challenge and clarity. I began playing clarinet, eventually discovering a passion for wind band repertoire. For the first time, music wasn’t just something I consumed - it was something I could actively create and contribute to.

Still, growth was not linear. Personal loss, including the death of my grandmother, distanced me from music entirely for a time. What once grounded me became too painful to approach. It would take years - and the encouragement of mentors, professors, and loved ones - for me to return.

When I did, it was transformative.

Through composition studies, I began to see my past not as fragmentation, but as foundation. Every influence fed into my creative process. My early compositions drew on memories of Duluth winters, the resonance of church organs, and the layered textures of the music that raised me. Over time, I developed a voice that reflects both my influences and my individuality. Today, I understand that artistry is not formed in isolation. It is the product of environments, relationships, and resilience.

My journey has been defined by change. Across different homes, families, and stages of life, music remained a constant thread, connecting me to my past and leading me back to myself.

In many ways, I am still that child sitting at the organ bench. But now, I have the opportunity to create, to give back, and to inspire others as I was once inspired.

Because in the end, expression is not created from nothing. It is formed—patiently, imperfectly, and powerfully—through experience.



## BISON CLIMBERS TAKE ON THE FLATLANDS COMPETITION

BY CHANCE BOWLINGER

This February, 25 members of the NDSU Rock Climbing Club traveled to Lincoln, Nebraska to represent the Bison at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s annual rock climbing competition called “Flatlands.” The club has attended this event annually for over a decade, and NDSU students maintain a formidable presence at this event. This year, our members accounted for nearly a quarter of the total participants. The roster reflected a broad spectrum of the student body, with both male and female climbers competing across all skill brackets ranging from recreational to advanced. These engagement levels are what make NDSU clubs so vibrant and interactive.



Beyond the competition itself, the trip serves as a significant community-building experience. By utilizing university and club funding, most of the travel and lodging costs was covered to ensure that the event remains accessible to all members regardless of their financial situation. The weekend is always full of laughter and camaraderie as the members share 2 Airbnbs for nights filled with conversations and games. Additionally, several NDSU climbing club alumni attended the competition which added a unique bridge between generations of NDSU students that can only happen through these engaging student events!

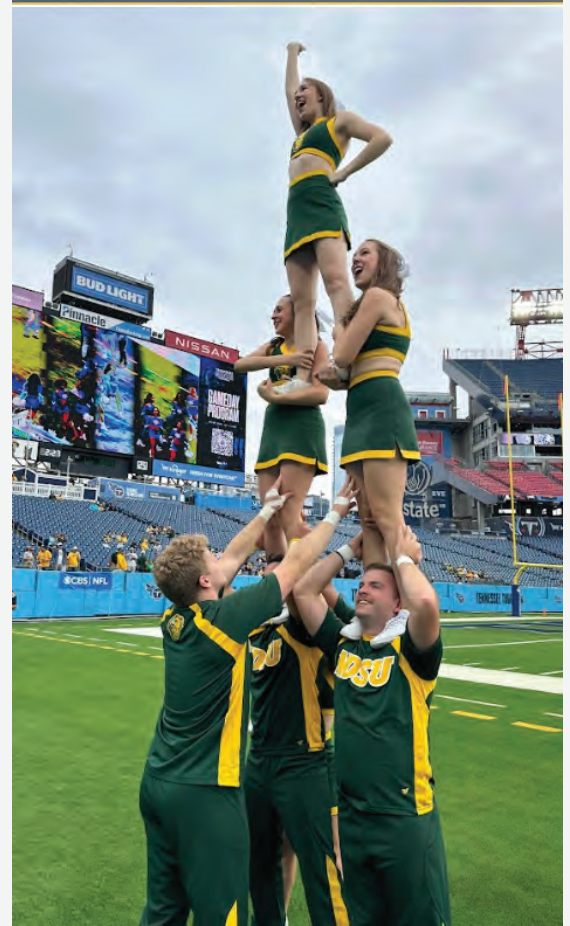




## CHEERING WITH PRIDE

BY KATRINA CYSEWSKI

Throughout the year, the NDSU Cheer Team has been supporting the NDSU community at game days, parades, and countless other events. I have had the privilege of serving as one of the captains of the 2025-2026 team, and it has allowed me to support NDSU in an amazing way outside of the classroom. The team has supported NDSU cheering for football, men's and women's basketball, and volleyball. Whether at home in Fargo, or on the road in places like Nashville, Charleston, New York, and more, the athletes on the cheer team work hard throughout the year to bring energy and pride to every NDSU event. Hours of practice every week learning new stunts, pyramids, basket tosses, and other skills may not seem like it



translates to the classroom, but cheer has made me a better student and person by developing valuable life skills. While balancing academics and athletics can be challenging, Cheer has allowed me to give back to the NDSU community in an amazing way.



# SENDING LETTERS OF LOVE FROM NDSU!

BY MEGAN HEFTA

Letters of Love spreads love all around the world, starting here at NDSU! This volunteer club brings students together to create handmade cards for children in hospitals, sending messages of encouragement and kindness to children who need it the most. Meetings are held about twice a month and usually include around 20 students, resulting in over 100 cards being made in a single meeting. Each gathering is filled with music, sweet treats, conversation, creating a welcoming environment where students can build friendships while giving back to children all over the world.

One of the most meaningful aspects of Letters of Love is the creativity it encourages. Students are able to design colorful, personalized cards with drawings and uplifting messages, helping to brighten a child's day during a difficult time. These small acts of kindness can have a big impact,

bringing comfort and happiness to children in hospitals around the world. At the same time, members gain volunteer experience and a sense of fulfillment from helping others. As the club continues to grow here at NDSU, it welcomes new members who are interested in making a difference and spreading kindness one card at a time.



# NDSU HORTICULTURE CLUB TAKES ON NATIONAL COLLEGIATE LANDSCAPE COMPETITION

BY AVA HALDORSON

This Spring, NDSU's Horticulture Club competed in the 50th Annual National Collegiate Landscape Competition (NCLC). NCLC is the perfect opportunity for students to not only compete in events but also to gain insight on their future careers and find internship opportunities within their field of study. Throughout this competition, workshops and career fairs were held to gain those connections with businesses around the nation.

NDSU brought a total of eighteen students to NCLC, each competing in one of the thirty events offered for the competition. Four students earned top three finishes. In arboriculture techniques, Micah and Adriana Potts finished third in this event demonstrating throw line use and tree climbing skills. Janina Temple ended with a second place finish in construction cost estimating. In landscape plant installation, Ciara Horn, Janina Temple, and Adriana Potts finished second in this event. These achievements, along with the efforts of the 14 other dedicated members, all contributed to the team's 20th place finish at the National Collegiate Landscape Competition. Dr. Todd West, the advisor for Horticulture Club, was named the Outstanding Educator of the Year, an honor well deserved. The team's performance at NCLC highlights the dedication, skill, and determination of the Horticulture Club, and members look forward to representing NDSU again at next year's National Collegiate Landscape Competition.



## GETTING INVOLVED - PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CLUB

BY LILAH BERGAN



NDSU's Pre-Physician Assistant (PA) club is a way to support students interested in becoming Physician Assistants by providing guidance on PA school preparation and the application process. The club also offers opportunities for application tips, volunteer experiences and even networking with current PA students. Over the fall 2025 semester the Pre-PA club volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House of the Red river valley. The Ronald McDonald House is a nonprofit in south Fargo that provides a place for families to stay while their children receive medical care. Volunteers can help by cooking meals, making baked goods, cleaning the house, and offering a warm and friendly presence to the families staying there. The Pre-PA club baked treats for the families staying at the house, including brownies, cookies, and muffins. With many families there at the time, it was a meaningful way to spend our free time showing care and support to those going through a challenging period. The Ronald McDonald House is a great nonprofit that gives back to families who need a little extra support, and you don't have to be a good baker to volunteer there!



## FUELING FINALS: ONE SNACK AT A TIME

BY KATRINA CYSEWSKI

The College of Arts and Sciences Ambassadors hosted their second annual Fuel for Finals event in December, in the Memorial Union. Students were able to stop by CASA's booth for free snacks, treats, and energy drinks to help them fuel their studying during finals week. Students enjoyed Bubbl'r, Alani, and other treats such as goldfish, popcorn, fruit snacks, and granola bars! Everyone was excited to receive some free treats as a pick-me up amid the stressful finals season!

A colorful poster for the 'Fuel for Finals' event. The background is light yellow. On the right side, there are illustrations of a green cup of orange juice, a slice of orange, and a donut with colorful sprinkles. The text is in bold red and black fonts. The main title 'FUEL FOR FINALS' is at the top. Below it, it says 'College of Arts and Sciences Ambassadors'. The date '12.11.25' and time '11:30AM - 2:30PM' are listed. At the bottom, it says 'Stop by our booth in the Memorial Union for snacks and treats to fuel for finals week!'.

# FUEL FOR FINALS

College of Arts and Sciences Ambassadors

**12.11.25**

11:30AM - 2:30PM

**Stop by our booth in the Memorial Union for snacks and treats to fuel for finals week!**

## WE DON'T HAVE TO BOWL ALONE

BY CAMRYN ANDERSON

Robert D. Putnam lays out a simple yet upsetting fact in his 2000 book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* --- American's social and civil engagement has decreased dramatically since the 1960's. He exemplifies this using bowling leagues: while over the years people report going bowling more often, the number of people who participate in bowling leagues has decreased. This illustrates a long trend of decreasing social engagement and increasing individualism. People aren't joining volunteer groups, community organizations, Rotaries, or Kiwanis as frequently in the present day.

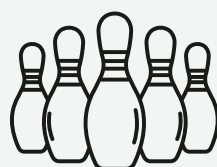
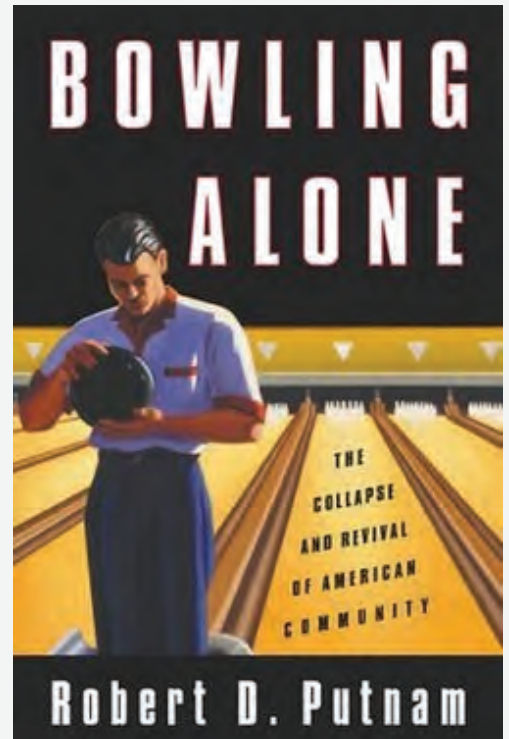
Despite the declining trends, there are some groups that persist and gather together. One of these groups is the NDSU Sociology & Anthropology Dept. Book Club! Starting last semester, this group of social sciences students, staff, and faculty get together to read and

discuss books about social issues and cultural trends. We started the club with *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, a 2018 book by Safiya Umoja Noble, and have since begin reading *Bowling Alone* this semester.

Ironically, the creation of the book club itself fights the very issue that Putnam explores in *Bowling Alone*, which is that people are less politically and civically engaged than they used to be. When publishing the book in 2000, Putnam discussed the stats showing a massive decline in voter turnout and participation in political life. He argues that this disengagement has snowballed into disengagement from other aspects of public life, such as volunteer groups and clubs. He theorizes that this decrease in in-person social engagement has been caused, in-part, by the digitization of our entertainment, which cuts out the "need" for person-to-person social activities.

However, the Soc/Anth department is taking a chance to not only combat the trend of decreasing person-to-person engagement by creating a space where we can talk about the civic and social issues that people used to discuss at, say, their bowling league meets. The value of coming together and talking to each other --- whether it be about a book, a social issue, or a sports league --- is immeasurable in a time where it feels like every new form of entertainment and technology is designed to disengage us from each other.

The Soc/Anth Book Club provides an outlet to read a new book and engage with others from different walks of life (and different branches of social sciences). We meet again on Tuesday, 3/31 in the Soc/Anth department suite in Minard Hall to discuss Section 3 of the book!



# BLUE KEY HONOR SOCIETY FUNDRAISER FOR MYA'S MISSION

BY ANDREW CHRISTOPERSON



Mya's Mission is a North Dakota based nonprofit organization that supports people living with addiction and mental health struggles who want to access treatment and support but do not have the resources. Along with providing education to communities in need, Mya's Mission is a lifesaving bridge to recovery. To learn more about the organization benefiting from Blue Key's Philanthropy, visit <https://www.myasmission.org/>



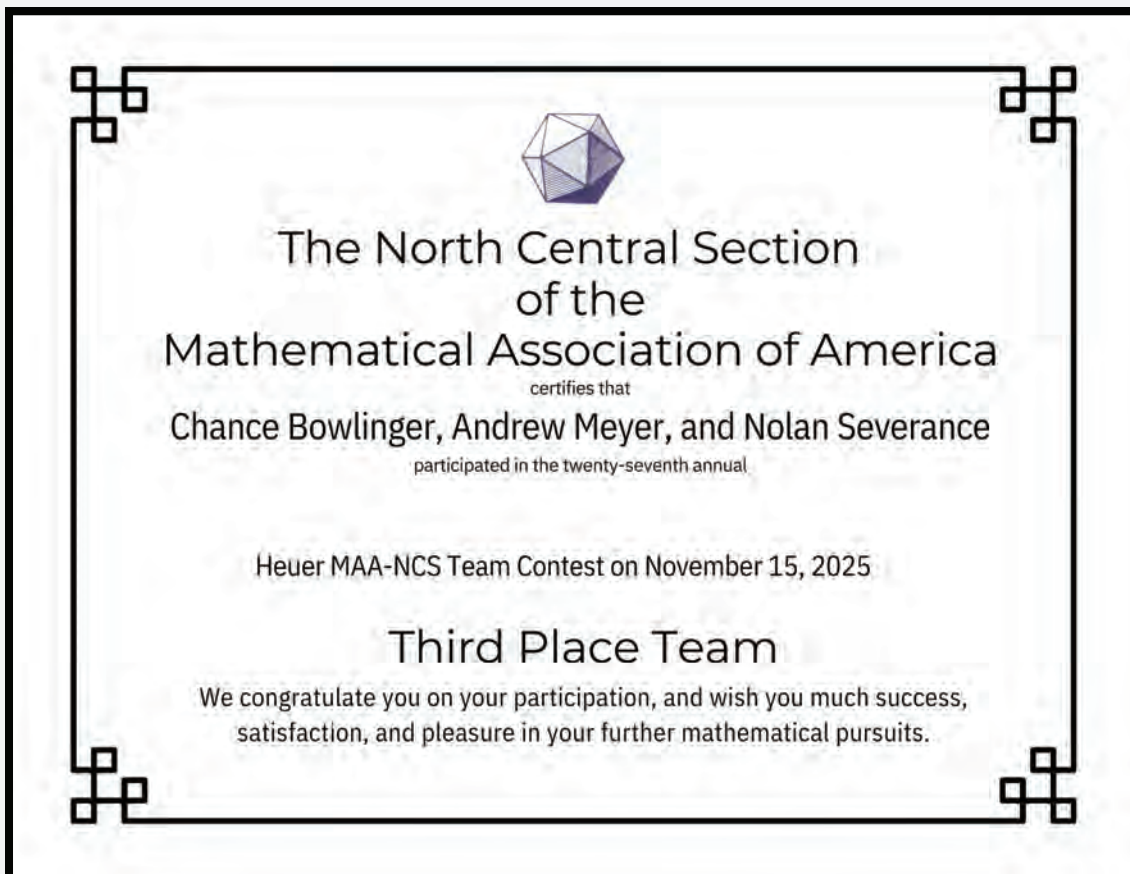
## NDSU MATH TEAM EARNS TOP HONORS IN REGIONAL COMPETITION BY CHANCE BOWLINGER



In November, an NDSU mathematics team titled "Excessively Complex Analysis" secured third place out of sixty-three competing teams in a regional mathematics competition. The team consisted of Chance Bowlinger (Computer Science and Mathematics), Nolan Severance (Statistics), and Andrew Meyer (Agribusiness and Applied Economics). The competition included twenty participating universities ranging from South Dakota to two Canadian provinces.

The examination focused on ten proof-style questions, with each problem worth up to ten points. Unlike standard multiple-choice or short answer tests, scores were determined by the

technical correctness and logical thoroughness of written proofs. Although the exam was proctored locally at each respective university rather than at a central site, the high-ranking place against a large international field demonstrates the competitive technical programs fostered within NDSU's mathematics program. Further, the diversity of student majors illustrates how students from varying academic backgrounds like Agribusiness and Computer Science can collaborate to solve complex problems.



# CREATIVITY & INNOVATION

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## A HARPSICHORD STORY

BY CHELSEY EWEN

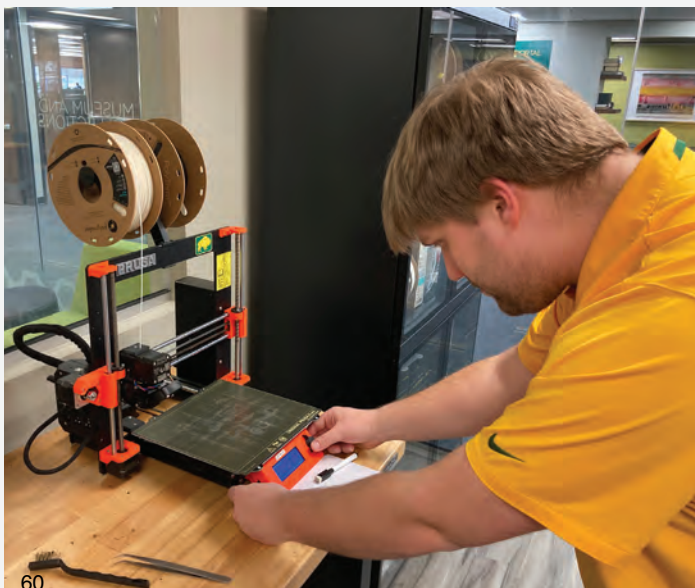
NDSU music, library collaborate to restore harpsichord with 3D printed parts  
Since 3D printing was developed in the early 1980s, people have used the technology to print all kinds of items ranging from surgical equipment to plant pots to game pieces. But what about replacement parts for musical instruments?

That's the question the NDSU Challey School of Music and its registered piano technician Christian Heaford asked when essential parts for the school's harpsichord – a piano-like instrument from the Baroque era – were no longer being produced by the manufacturer.

As NDSU's go-to harpsichord expert, Heaford was willing to explore any solution that would replace its worn-out springs, plectra and tongues in time for NDSU's performance of Handel's Messiah in December. He connected with Zachary Drechsel, an Interlibrary Loan Associate at NDSU Libraries who helps run the Digital Fabrication Lab.

Fortunately, after five rounds of experimentation over the course of several months, Drechsel printed a tongue using a filament called Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol, or PETG. Most 3D printed projects use Polylactic Acid (PLA), but PETG provided the flexibility and functionality that the harpsichord tongues required. To print over 200 tongues, Drechsel created a template that fit 25 tongues per sheet. Each sheet took up to five hours to print. Heaford had the parts he needed within a week.

With Handel's Messiah quickly approaching, Heaford brought in NDSU piano student Zakk Volk to assist him with installing the new tongues and restring the harpsichord. "As soon as we changed the strings and added the new parts, there was at least twice the volume," Heaford says. With only three days to spare, the harpsichord was ready to shine not only at Handel's Messiah, but any other performances featuring Baroque music for years to come.



## THEATRE ARTS 2025-2026 SEASON



### **Romeo and Juliet**

By William Shakespeare

Adapted by Jon Micheels Leiseth



“What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?...The exchange of thy love’s faithful vow for mine.” - Romeo and Juliet exchange vows of love in Romeo and Juliet, a Theatre NDSU and Theatre B Co-Production.

Photo credit: Justin Eiler

### **Glory**

By Tracy Power



“The skilled lady hickory manipulators of Preston, are finally your National Champions! And the fans are on their feet!” - Hilda, Nellie, Helen, and Marm celebrate after winning the Canadian National Championship in Glory by Tracey Power.

Photo Credit: Justin Eiler

## THEATRE ARTS 2025-2026 SEASON

### **The Sound of Music**

Music by Richard Rogers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, and book by Howard Lindsay & Russel Crouse.



“The hills are alive with the sound of music!” - Maria sings as she walks in the Austrian countryside in *The Sound of Music*, a Theatre NDSU & Challey School of Music Co-Production.

Photo Credit: Justin Eiler

### **The Sound of Music - Sing-A-Long at Brewhalla**

Music by Richard Rogers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, and book by Howard Lindsay & Russel Crouse.



“So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Goodbye” - the von Trapp Children, Maria, and the Captain sing, “So Long, Farewell”, as part of the *Sound of Music Sing-A-Long at Brewhalla* to promote *The Sound of Music*, a Theatre NDSU & Challey School of Music Co-Production.

Photo Credit: Yao Kuang Lee

## FROM STAGE TO SPOTLIGHT: “GLORY” EARNS “AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATRE FESTIVAL” RECOGNITION

Theatre NDSU’s production of “Glory” was selected to be featured at the Region 5 American College Theatre Festival (ACTF) in Rochester, MN, in January.

ACTF is a national program that recognizes excellence in college theatre and provides professional development opportunities to university theatre programs across the U.S.

“Glory,” by Tracey Power, follows four Canadian women who form one of the most iconic women’s hockey teams in history: the Preston Rivulettes.

“This play was an immense challenge for everyone involved. Many of us didn’t know much (or anything at all) about hockey or the Preston Rivulette’s prior to reading the play,” said Jess Jung, the play’s director and theatre faculty member. “Our learning curve was high. In addition, we used dance choreography to stage seven hockey games, which was unlike anything we’ve done before.



“With that, this production pushed us out of our comfort zone. Yet “Glory,” at its heart, is about perseverance — it’s about these amazing, real women that persevered despite countless obstacles. I’m so proud of the theatre students that persevered throughout this process. It makes the recognition even more special. They absolutely deserve to have their hard work recognized.”

Students Gabrielle Mowery, Ava Borgerding, Jillian Schotters and Paige Holbrook starred as four of the Preston Rivulettes hockey players in the production.



## CHALLEY INSTITUTE GUEST SPEAKERS INSPIRE

DR. ALEXEY LEONTYEV

Challey Institute events at NDSU bring a wide range of voices to campus through programs like the Menard Family Distinguished Speaker Series, the Human Progress and Flourishing workshop, and community conversations such as AI Everywhere and for Everyone and Nobel at Noon. Across topics—from economics and energy to free speech, higher education, technology, and public policy—these events create a welcoming space for open inquiry, respectful dialogue, and genuine viewpoint diversity.



For me, participation in these events and support through the Challey Faculty Fellowship also created space to stretch my research program beyond its “usual” home in chemistry education. The fellowship helped me explore how my work on assessment, measurement, and evidence-based teaching could inform questions in areas I had not previously considered, such as industrial application of green chemistry. In that way, Challey programming not only broadens viewpoints on campus, but also helps faculty translate their expertise into high-impact contexts.



# SCHOLARSHIP & RESEARCH

## EATING OUR YOUNG: THE EXECUTION OF BLACK AND INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN EARLY AMERICA”

BY DR. AMY GORE

On December 20, 1786, a young Black and Indigenous girl stepped onto a gallows and into a noose. She had been convicted of the murder of a six-year-old white girl just two days prior, and according to the law her conviction required that she be hanged within forty-eight hours. While Hannah Ocuish had confessed to the murder, at her trial she plead “not guilty” and seemed not to understand the proceedings due to what may have been an intellectual disability. Ocuish may have been the youngest person ever executed in American legal history, but she was not the only child and far from the only person of color. While contemporary scholarship has firmly established the presumption of guilt that rests upon Black children as a result of systemic racism, my project focuses on some of its earliest recorded history in the execution sermon and seeks to trace the missing longer continuum of indentured servitude that separated and isolated Black and Indigenous children from their parents and their communities.



## DESIGNING RESILIENT FUTURES: NDSU STUDENT EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Shima Goodarzi, a Master of Landscape Architecture student at North Dakota State University, has been awarded the 2026 Kenneth R. Brooks MLA Research Scholarship and CELA Conference Travel Fellowship by the Landscape Architecture Foundation. This competitive national honor recognizes outstanding graduate research proposals that advance the field of landscape architecture.

Goodarzi's work focuses on urban design, ecological systems, and sustainable planning. Her current research explores the use of digital twins and performance modeling to improve social and environmental outcomes in urban landscapes. Drawing on her academic and professional background in architecture, she brings an interdisciplinary approach that connects design, ecology, and community engagement.



Faculty in NDSU's Department of Landscape Architecture, Disaster Resilience and Emergency Management praised Goodarzi's creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative spirit. Her early work in the program, including research conducted in New York City and Baltimore, demonstrated both technical skill and a strong commitment to equitable, resilient design.

The scholarship supports Goodarzi's continued research and her participation in the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture annual conference, further positioning her as an emerging leader in the field.

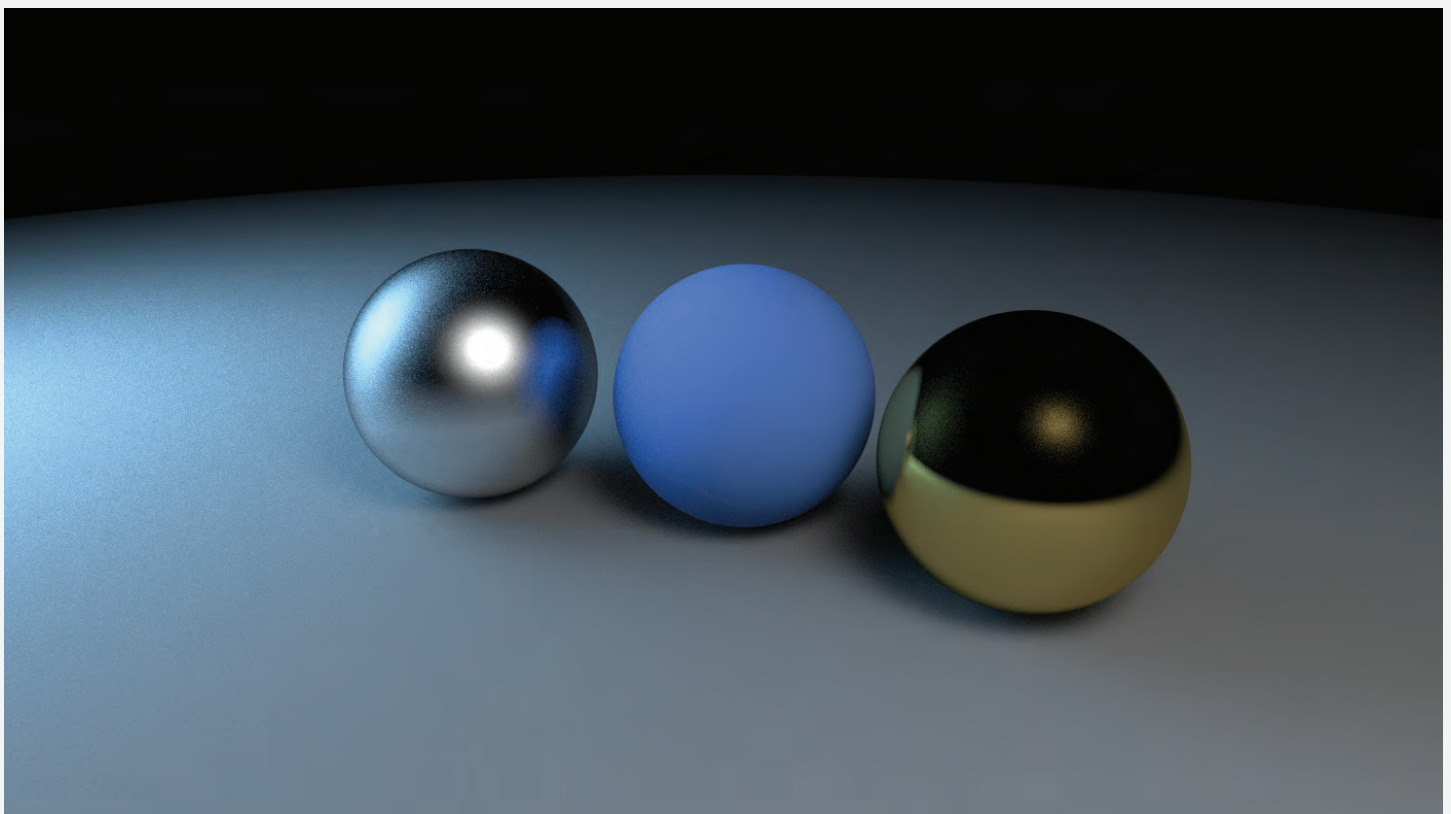


## RAY TRACING FROM SCRATCH

BY CHANCE BOWLINGER

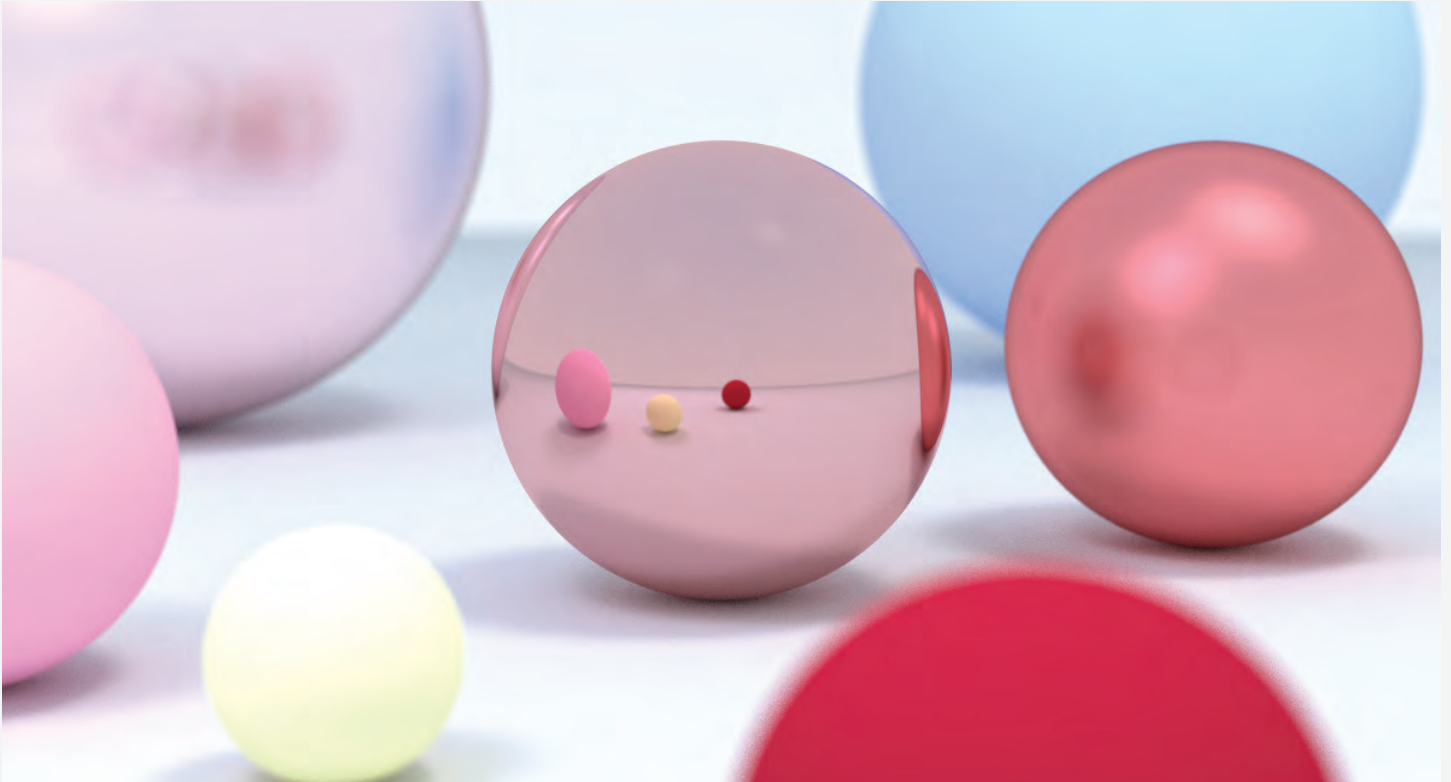
Under the advisement of Dr. Simone Ludwig, I am conducting research in the field of computer graphics, specifically focusing on an area called ray tracing. This technique simulates the physical behavior of light to create realistic 3D scenes which is essential in the real world for cinematic CGI, architectural modeling, and high-end video game engines. My project involves building a ray tracer from the ground up, starting with fundamental mathematical definitions for vectors and spheres, and eventually progressing to complex features such as camera systems, material reflectivity, and recursive path tracing for indirect lighting. This work serves as a practical application of my dual undergraduate degree in Computer Science and Mathematics as it requires rigorous logic and computational efficiency.

The core of my research compares various lighting schemes to determine their viability in different environments. My analysis has centered on three primary metrics: visual noise (quality), computational efficiency (speed), and robustness (flexibility in simulating diverse types of lights). By evaluating these trade-offs between rendering speed and visual fidelity, I aim to identify methods that provide high-quality, realistic graphics while maintaining computational feasibility. This research is designed to prepare me for a career in computation graphics at industry leaders like NVIDIA or Epic Games' Unreal Engine.



# AN EXPLORATION OF SAMPLING EFFICIENCY AND VOLUMETRIC LIGHT MODELS IN REALISTIC RENDERING

BY CHANCE BOWLINGER



The use of ray tracing in computer graphics to simulate realistic lighting pushes the limits of modern hardware to render photorealistic, computationally expensive scenes. While previously considered computationally infeasible, recent hardware advancements have prompted the capability to render high-quality, dynamic scenes in near-real time. This paper overviews the fundamental implementation of a path tracer and explores the optimization of light source representations within a Monte Carlo framework.

We introduce a Gaussian volumetric lighting model that treats lights as 3D probability distributions and performs comparative analysis against traditional disk proxy models. Our research evaluates the utility of these models through the comparison of visual variance (noise), computational efficiency, and robustness across diverse scene and lighting configurations. Specifically, we examine the interaction of these light models with specular and fuzzy-metallic surfaces.

Further, we illustrate the efficacy of Importance Sampling over uniform distributions. We derive specific Probability Density Functions for Gaussian volumes and showcase how targeted sampling can achieve low-variance images with significantly fewer samples than naive uniform methods. The results of this study underscore the inherent trade-offs between photo-like accuracy and computation speed, and they serve as a guide to navigating the ideal balance between image fidelity and rendering performance.

## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The **Department of Communication** had two award recipients at the 2025 Annual American Advertising Awards, hosted by the American Advertising Federation of North Dakota. Xyle Altura received a Gold ADDY (Elements of Advertising - Cinematography) and a Silver ADDY (Film, Video & Sound - Television Advertising) for his project “Carhartt: The American Dream.” Libby Leonard won a Silver ADDY (Online/Interactive - Social Media Campaign) for her work on a strategic campaign promoting a limited-edition hoodie. Both students used original video to create effective storytelling and emotional weight. Altura found additional success at Districts, and his two entries advanced to Nationals! Congratulations!



**Department of Biological Sciences** continues its record of campus leadership. I want to especially recognize and thank the follow faculty:

*Lisa Montplaisir*, Faculty Senate President, Provost Faculty Fellow for Implementation, representative to the State Board of Higher Education and Council of College Faculty

*Matt Smith*: Faculty Senate Secretary, Honors College Faculty Lead

*Jenni Momsen*: Director of the STEM Ed PhD Program

*Laura Aldrich-Wolfe*: Director of the Environmental and Conservation Sciences (ECS) Graduate Program

*Katie Reindl*: Director of the Cellular and Molecular Biology (CBM) Graduate Program

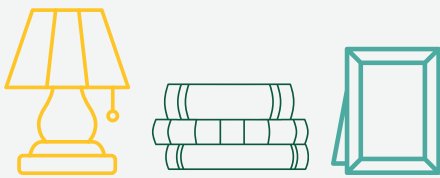
The **Department of Psychology** has included several meaningful highlights across, including Dr. Michael Robinson being named a University Distinguished Professor, the most prestigious recognition awarded by NDSU. Faculty research continues to thrive, with Dr. Jeremy Hamm receiving an R01 focused on how stress shapes health in everyday life and Dr. Leah Irish (MPI) receiving an R01 examining how sleep affects health and well-being—both of which will provide valuable research opportunities for students. Our graduate program continues to build momentum, including a new partnership with Sanford Health through which we are welcoming our first jointly supported graduate student. Together, these accomplishments reflect the strength of our faculty, the growth of our programs, and our ongoing commitment to impactful research, training, and community engagement.

# INTERIOR DESIGN SHINES!

BY DR. SUSAN RAY-DEGGES AND ALETHA LIPPAY



2nd - 4th year Interior Design students, in partnership with the Building Industry Association (BIA) of the Red River Valley, designed, specified, and built 8' x 12' flex spaces that debuted at the Home & Garden Show at the Fargo Dome this winter. Five groups of students designed five unique flex spaces, areas in your home that you can redesign to be more functional or adaptable to changing needs. The winning team was awarded a scholarship from the BIA Foundation of the Red River Valley.



Sixteen NDSU interior design students gained hands-on experience during the Scheels Design Challenge at Fargo's Scheels Home and Hardware. Guided by Dr. Susan Ray-Degges and designer Leah Martin, teams of three to four students had three hours to design a themed small space—such as "Vintage Vibes" or "Lake Retreat"—using store inventory and preordered items. Participants valued the shift from theoretical projects to tangible application, concluding the event with professional critiques from local designers.



Dr. Susan Ray Degges, Interior Design Program Director takes team of students on an awards trip in Dallas. Students won the Team Award for Design of the Future Award. This was the first time that NDSU has attended this event and look forward to more.





## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT BY DR. NICK BAUROTH

This was a busy year for the **Department of Political Science & Public Policy** as we worked on important University and College initiatives, including Post-Tenure Review, the Gallup Engagement Poll, Digital Accessibility, and Work Equity policies. However, the Department and its faculty continued to work on improving the undergraduate experience at NDSU as well as engaging in important research. Some notable Department highlights for this year include:

The Clouston Family Political Science and Public Policy Faculty Fellowship was awarded to Dr. Steve Briggs in December, 2025. His proposal examined the use of force by police officers in the United States. ‘Use of force’ can be a slippery concept to operationalize, which has left the field without a standardized measure. However, Dr. Briggs may have a valid means of measuring ‘use of force’ that will advance our understanding of crime policy. Much of his Fellowship will fund the hiring of undergraduate students within our major to carry out data gathering, analysis, and other elements of the research process.

Our Pre-Law Advisor Dr. Thomas Ambrosio worked closely with the Pre-Law Club, which is a student-run organization for undergraduates considering law school. As such, Dr. Ambrosio helped organize a number of events with Club officers, such as: ‘What is the LSAT?’; a presentation by North Dakota District Court Judge Stephanie Hayden; ‘What is Environmental Law?’ with Tami Norgard of Vogel Law; and a road trip to the University of North Dakota Law School. The Pre-Law Club continues to be very active in 2026.

Dr. Elizabeth Carlson organized and started offering Policy Lab, which is a project-based service-learning class designed to give students hands-on practice with policy design while helping a local non-profit organization solve a policy problem. The community partner is counting on students for assistance on important matters, which means the stakes are high. The first Policy Lab began in January with a partner in Growing Together, which runs community gardens that are open to everyone but which have a primary goal of ensuring food security among recent immigrants and refugees.

Dr. Carlson also organized ‘PoliTALKS’ throughout the year, which were a series of discussions where Political Science faculty and undergraduate students considered the major issues of the day. ‘PoliTALKS’ proved to be quite popular, with ten to fifteen students (mostly non-POLS majors) attending each session.



## EXPLORING THE FRONTIERS OF PHYSICS AT PHYSCON

BY DR. SYLVIO MAY

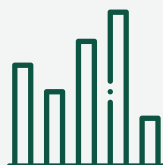
Eight students from the **Physics Department** attended the Physics and Astronomy Congress (PhysCon) in Denver, Colorado, held October 30–November 1, 2025. The national conference brings together undergraduate physics students and leading scientists to share ideas and explore current developments in science. With support from the Darrell and Carol Strobel Endowment Fund, NDSU students were able to participate in talks, workshops, and networking events. Highlights included presentations on topics ranging from



quantum information to the future of scientific research, as well as a keynote talk by Nobel laureate Eric Cornell. The experience provided students with valuable insight into careers in physics and strengthened the community within NDSU's Society of Physics Students chapter.

## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT

BY DR. RHONDA MAGEL



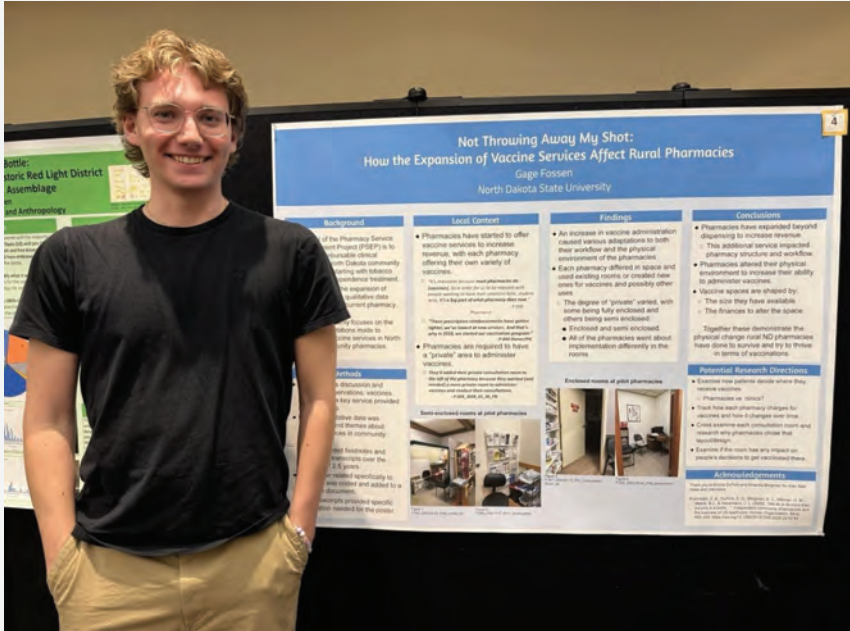
Every faculty member in the **Department of Statistics** has been engaged with students in some significant aspect of research during this past academic year. This includes the lecturer and Professor of Practice as well as the tenured faculty members.

In December, Dr. Ron Degges and Andrew Lexvold invited 20 high school students from Northern Cass High School to come to NDSU for a morning of analyzing research data. The high school students worked in groups, each with a graduate student from NDSU, to analyze a set of data, and present the research results of the analysis. President David Cook came to observe.

This Spring, the Department will have had nearly 10 Ph.D. students defend their dissertation research and one Masters student defend her research. In addition to this, three more Ph.D. students will have defended their research proposals. We are so proud of these students. Every tenured faculty member (Dr. Choi, Dr. Magel, Dr. Orr, and Dr. Shen) has been the research advisor to at least one of the graduating students. Research has been conducted in the areas of Nonparametric, Artificial Intelligence, and Gene Expression, among others. Our administrative assistant, Judy Normann, has helped us keep track of things. We have had a very busy spring!

# ANTHROPOLOGY STUDENT FIELD EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH ALONGSIDE THE PHARMACY SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

BY ARIANA PFAFF



Anthropology students collaborated with the Pharmacy Service Enhancement Project (PSEP) as part of a hands-on field experience. Through this work, they gained practical training in ethnographic methods, including fieldnote documentation, interviewing, and qualitative data analysis. For their final project, students conducted secondary analysis of pre-existing fieldnotes and interview transcripts collected by anthropologists on the PSEP team. Based on this analysis, they developed research posters on

topics of interest. Students presented their findings to members of the PSEP team and incorporated professional feedback into their work. Several students further showcased their posters at the Anthropology and Sociology Department Research Day, as well as NDSU's broader student research event.

# SUMMER FUN WITH ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY STUDENTS



Archaeological Field School is a project that focuses on early farming in the Red River Valley. Students learn archaeological field and lab methodologies like excavating, mapping and artifact processing under the summer sunshine.



## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AWARDS CELEBRATION

The College of Arts and Sciences proudly hosted its annual Awards Celebration, recognizing the remarkable achievements of faculty and staff across a wide range of contributions, including Research, Teaching, Creative Activity, Mentoring, and Inclusion. This year's event was especially meaningful, as the college honored awardees from both the current and previous year, celebrating two years of excellence in one memorable occasion. Congratulations to all of this year's honorees for their dedication and impactful work!





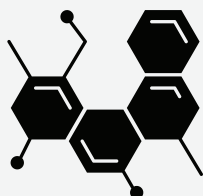
## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH DAY

BY SAM LIES

This year, I had the opportunity to work in research time with a Discipline-Based Education Research (DBER) team alongside a group of undergraduate students and faculty. As a pre-med student, I wanted to continue building my application by gaining meaningful research experience. I was fortunate to have prior exposure through a CURE (Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience) class, which helped students build a foundation in research by working in small groups to design and carry out independent projects. In this course, I developed skills such as reading and analyzing research papers, creating visual aids, and designing research poster skills that I will continue to use throughout my career.

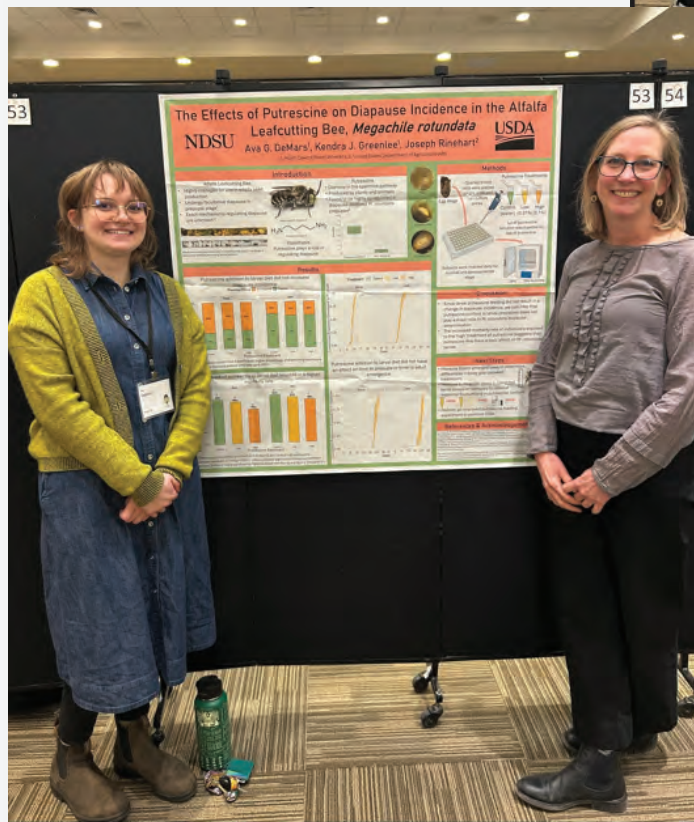
This year, I took the next step by joining a full research team. During the spring semester, I enrolled in BIOL 499, a VIP (Vertically Integrated Projects) course that allowed undergraduate students to collaborate with graduate students and faculty to study how students' learning strategies impact their exam performance. In this course, I had the opportunity to work with faculty members I had previously taken classes from, which made the experience especially meaningful.

As part of the team, we created a research poster focused on understanding how students study in STEM courses. I gained experience conducting qualitative research and developed additional skills, including working collaboratively in a team, creating a methods flowchart and codebook, and transcribing interviews. These skills contributed to our final project, which we presented at Student Research Day, an event dedicated to showcasing undergraduate research to peers and faculty. Overall, I think this experience strengthened my research abilities and deepened my understanding of educational research. I believe that carrying these skills with me will make me a stronger candidate as I pursue my career in medicine.

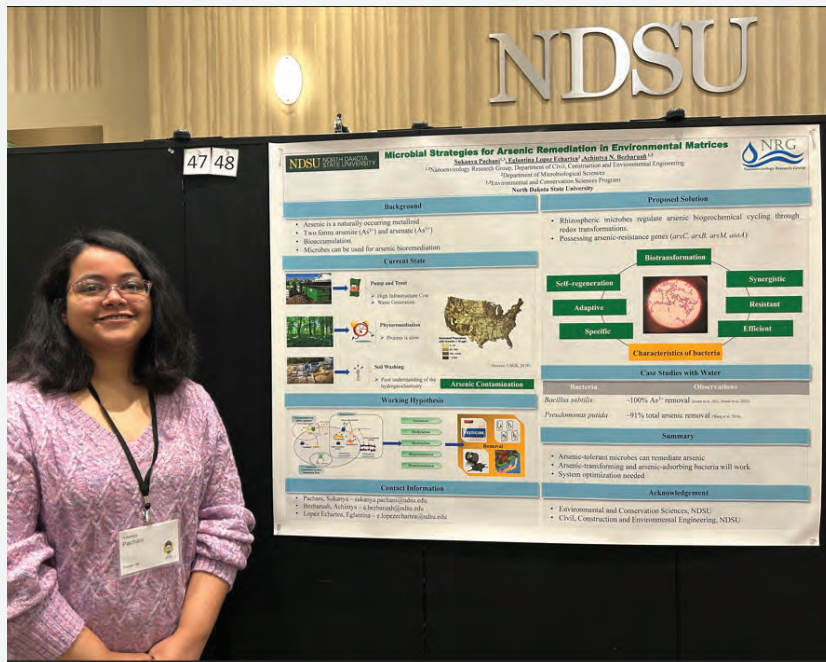


# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH DAY CONTINUED

Sam Lies Poster  
Presentation

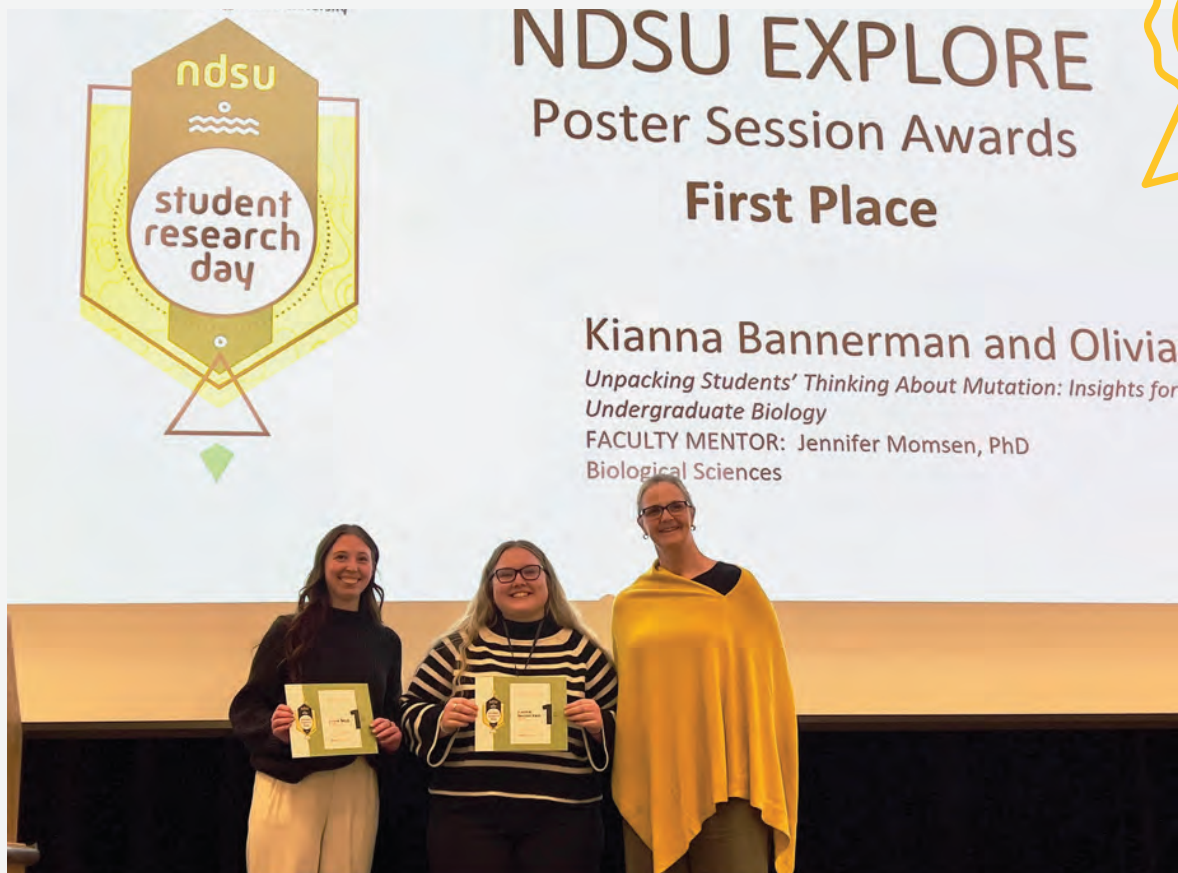


Ava Demars with Dr. Kendra  
Greenlee Poster Presentation



Sukanya Pachani Poster  
Presentation

## BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES UG RESEARCH FIRST PLACE AWARD



Two undergraduate students in Biological Sciences, Kianna Bannerman and Olivia Boyd took first place in the NDSU Explore Undergraduate Poster Session for their work investigating student understanding of mutation. Congratulations on this great achievement!



## DR. CHARLETTE MOE - 18 YEARS OF SERVICE

BY AVA HALDORSON



Dr. Charlette Moe is the Assistant Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music at NDSU. She has dedicated 18 years of teaching to our campus. After such a contribution to our community, she has decided to retire following the end of the 2025-26 school year. Dr. Moe came to NDSU in 2004 to start her doctorate and ended up staying 18 more years to teach, meaning 22 wonderful years were spent at our college.

Throughout her time, she has earned accolades such as Moorhead Teacher of the Year, Ulen-Hitterdal Teacher of the Year, and guest conductor of over 100 festivals. If you have had the privilege to speak with her, I am sure you will get to hear about her family. Dr. Moe incorporates deep messages such as grief, love, memory, and more throughout her music, often using her husband, Gordon, son (Gavin) daughter-in-law (Danyel) & granddaughter Marne (age 3), son (Garner), and daughter-in-law (Zella) to help describe the feelings and experiences she wants to capture.

When asked about her favorite memories over the years, Dr. Moe had difficulty naming just one. As director of the University Chamber Singers (UCS) and Cantemus, NDSU's all women's choir, a memory representing Cantemus instantly came to mind. Cantemus got the opportunity to work with Rosephanye Powell, composer of "Still I Rise", to become somewhat of a motto for the women's choir. Every year at the spring concert, Cantemus sings Still I Rise and for a last hoorah, the May 3rd concert this school year will perform "Still I Rise." The choir is inviting all past members to join in; it is truly a full circle moment for this director. Dr. Moe has always held deep care for each and every student, so it is no surprise her final favorite memory is hearing the future plans of graduating seniors and having them stay in touch with her. Her final message as she settles down with her family and enjoys time on the lake is, "I think people benefit so much from making art together. The benefits toward mental and physical health are immeasurable. It's not about what music you are doing but what music can do for us."



## WALKING BESIDE US: BUILDING COMMUNITY AND FINDING WHAT MATTERS BY CHANCE BOWLINGER

Thank you NDSU, faculty and fellow students.

It is an honor and a blessing to celebrate this milestone together. We are marking the end of one chapter and stepping into whatever comes next. As I reflect on the past four years, I've come to realize that many of my most important lessons were learned outside the classroom.

Former President Kennedy once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." When I first arrived at NDSU, I spent my time searching for "my" community. In time, I realized I needed to change the question: not what my university could do for me, but what I could do for my university. I had to stop being a community seeker and become a community builder. Healthy communities, I discovered, are not found—they are intentionally cultivated through self-sacrifice, faithfulness, and genuine care for others.

Even then, a new challenge emerged: the people around me were not exactly like me. But over time, I came to see the beauty in that. There is strength in unity, especially when it exists alongside diversity. We are united under the Green and Gold, pursuing shared values and goals, yet we remain wonderfully different in our interests, talents, and perspectives. True community is built through inclusivity, peaceability, and selflessness—not by demanding uniformity, but by embracing the uniqueness of each individual.

Along the way, I also learned to value the people beside me more than the goals in front of me. For much of my life, I was focused on what lay ahead—what I could achieve, earn, or accomplish. But I have come to understand that the most important place to look is right beside me. Slowing down to truly see and appreciate the people I love has brought a deeper sense of contentment than any achievement ever could. The joy I once chased so relentlessly was not ahead of me—it was walking beside me all along.

Take time to be present with those around you. Laugh, cry, embrace, serve, and love them well. They are beside you today, and we do not always know where tomorrow's path will lead.

My journey at NDSU began as a sprint—focused on moving ahead as quickly as possible. But as we step into what's next, I hope we choose to walk more slowly and intentionally. Wherever we go, we carry with us what we've learned here. We have the opportunity to build new communities—ones rooted in service, authenticity, and care for others.

To the Class of 2026, congratulations. May wherever you walk be filled with peace and joy.





# COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



*"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."*

*-- Margaret J. Wheatley --*