



Drake Theatre Arts Department's Legally Blonde went big with over 1,000 attendees, 32 student actors and 2 dogs! See story below by Amber Hussain, Drake Music Theatre/Marketing student and Publicity Coordinator for the Drake Theatre Department. Photo by Ann Leigh

A Note from the Dean

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you had a fantastic weekend and got to enjoy the few hours of sunshine. The highlight of my weekend was seeing Drake's Theatre production of the musical *Legally Blonde*. The students were amazing, captivating an enthusiastic and sold-out audience in the Performing Arts Hall with their outstanding singing, dancing, and acting. A special guest, Griff II, stole the show with a memorable appearance on stage dressed up as Rufus, making this production the talk of the town! A huge congratulations to the incredible cast of 32 students and two dogs, under the direction of our Coleman S.E. Guest Artist, Drake Theatre alum Napoleon Douglas!

As we look ahead, please mark your calendars for two big events coming up in the College of Arts and Sciences: Drake's Conference on Undergraduate Research in the Sciences (DUCURS) this Thursday, April 10, and the Honors and Awards Convocation on April 17. I look forward to seeing you at these events and celebrating the achievements of our students together. After that it's time for Relays week!

I wanted to share an update on two staff hires who will support your work with students throughout the year. Last fall, we lost our liaison to the College in Drake's Career Services office. This position is finally being filled. Rebecca Muntz will join Drake as the Assistant Director of Career Services, beginning Monday, April 21. As the liaison to the College of Arts & Sciences, Rebecca will be a tremendous resource and available to assist students in finding their career paths, coordinate internship opportunities and networking events targeting arts and sciences majors. If you recall, this was one of our priorities identified in our Reimagining work last summer. Thanks to Dr. Gabriel Ford and Amari Love for serving on the search committee.

We are also starting to screen candidates for a new position to be shared with other units: A Campus Events Coordinator who will assist with the planning of conferences, summer camps, bridge programs and other special events.

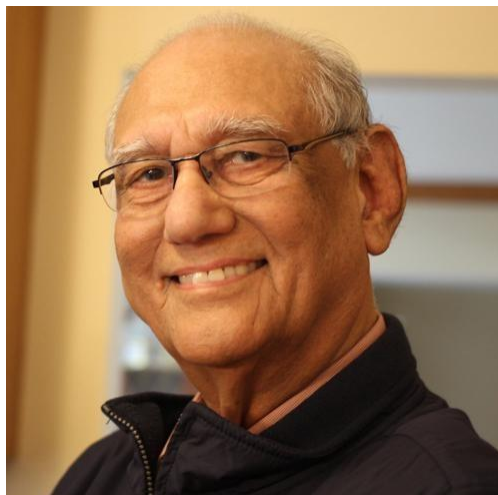
Thank you for all your great work this semester! Please reach out if you need anything during the remaining weeks.

Warmly,

Gesine



Gesine Gerhard, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences



In Memoriam: Ramesh Dhussa

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our beloved colleague, **Ramesh Dhussa**, who taught Geography at Drake for over 30 years until his retirement in 2021. Ramesh was the kindest colleague, always greeting everyone on campus with a warm smile. His passion for geography and India was truly infectious. Ramesh's legacy lives on through the many students who had the privilege of taking his classes at Drake. A celebration of Ramesh's life will take place on Saturday, April 26 at 2pm- 6pm in the community room at 8950 Coachlight Avenue, West Des Moines, Iowa 50266. Ramesh's obituary can be found [here](#).

Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates

Date	Event/Activity
Thursday, April 10	DUCURS 12:30-4:30PM, Upper Olmsted
Thursday, April 17	College of Arts and Sciences Honors and Awards Ceremony, 6:00-8:00pm, Reception in Levitt Hall, Awards presented in Sheslow Hall
Wednesday, April 23-Saturday April 26	Drake Relays
Friday, April 25	Undergraduate classes dismissed at 1:50pm
Friday, May 9	Day Free for Study
Friday, May 9	All Faculty and Staff Meeting and Social, 2:00 (time/location TBD)
Monday, May 12- Friday May 16	Final evaluation period
Friday, May 16	End of Spring 2025 Semester
Saturday, May 17	Spring Commencement Ceremony

[Access the Full College of A&S and University Calendar 2024-25 Here](#)

[Academic Calendar](#) [University Events Calendar](#)

College of Arts & Sciences

Harmon Fine Arts Center
1310 25th Street
Des Moines, IA 50311

Phone: [515-271-3939](tel:515-271-3939)
Email: ask.as@drake.edu



■ COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES Honors & Awards Ceremony

**THURSDAY, APRIL 17TH,
OLD MAIN**

**6:00PM RECEPTION
LEVITT HALL**

**6:30PM CEREMONY
SHESLOW AUDITORIUM**

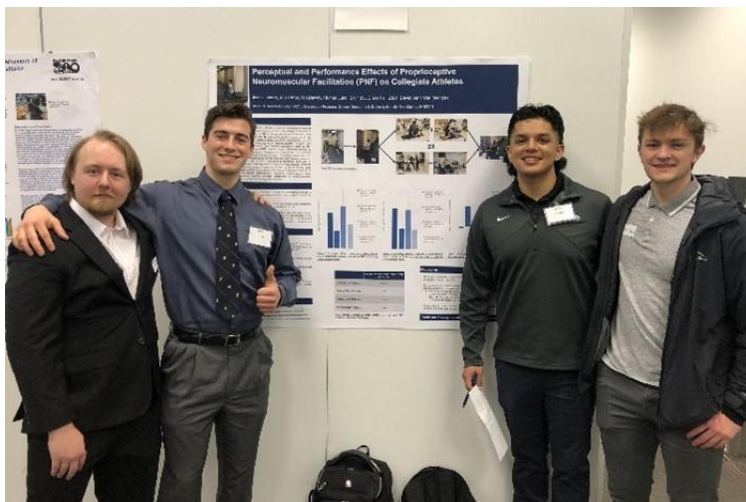
The College of Arts and Sciences invites you to attend the 2025 Student Honors Convocation. Join us to celebrate the accomplishments of our outstanding students and faculty! Bring your friends and family!

ALSO AVAILABLE ON LIVE STREAM

www.youtube.com/

[@sheslowauditoriumlivestream9770](https://www.youtube.com/@sheslowauditoriumlivestream9770)

DUCURS is This Thursday Afternoon! Come Celebrate Student Research!





The Drake University Conference on Undergraduate Research in the Sciences (DUCURS) is happening this Thursday, April 10th, 12:30-4:30pm in Upper Olmsted!

Join us as we celebrate the outstanding efforts of Drake research students and their faculty mentors across STEM fields. Event highlights:

- 3 student oral presentations
- 53 poster presentations
- Keynote presentation “Physics in Finance— Scientific Computer Modeling Tools and Trends in Financial Derivative Analytics” by **Dr. William Humphrey** (distinguished Drake physics alumnus and Numerix Chief Technology Officer & Senior VP)
- Opportunity to engage with students and colleagues
- Raffle PRIZES
- Griff II
- Snacks

Check out the [DUCURS schedule](#) to learn more about the event! Hope you can make it Thursday afternoon to support our students and see the great work being done in Drake’s STEM community.



Keynote Speaker Dr. William Humphrey



Celebrating A&S Highlights



Promo reel for Legally Blonde created by Drake sophomore Gabe Borke highlights the energy of the production.

Over 1,000 attendees, 32 student actors, 2 dogs, and one unforgettable weekend!

The Drake Theatre Arts Department lit up the stage with their pinktastic production of *Legally Blonde* this past weekend. Directed and choreographed by guest artist and Drake alum Napoleon Douglas, the show was a celebration of talent, creativity, and Elle Woods-level determination.

With contributions from 82 dedicated crew and production team members, the show featured the incredible work of: **Napoleon Douglas** (Director & Choreographer), **Taylor Mayne** (Music Director), **Noah Files** (Scenic Design), **John Pomeroy** (Lighting Design & Technical Director), **Virginia Johnson** (Costume Design), **Erika Snyder** (Sound Design), **Madison Green** (Head Properties), **Ann Leigh** (Hair & Makeup), and of course, **Griff II**, bringing star power of his own! This production was supported in part by the William S.E. Coleman Guest Artist Fund and the Friends of Drake Arts.

Missed it? Don't worry!

Catch *A Doll's House Part 2* on stage May 1st – 4th at the Coleman Studio Theatre. [Tickets are on sale now](#), you won't want to miss it.



Assistant Professor of Computer Science **Meredith Moore** was a keynote speaker at the Drake-hosted CCCS Conference (Consortium for Computing Sciences in Colleges, Central Plains Region) on April 4-5.

Professor Moore's keynote address, "Accessible Computing: What Every CS Educator Should Know" presented a practical guide to creating more inclusive environments, and explored why accessibility matters.

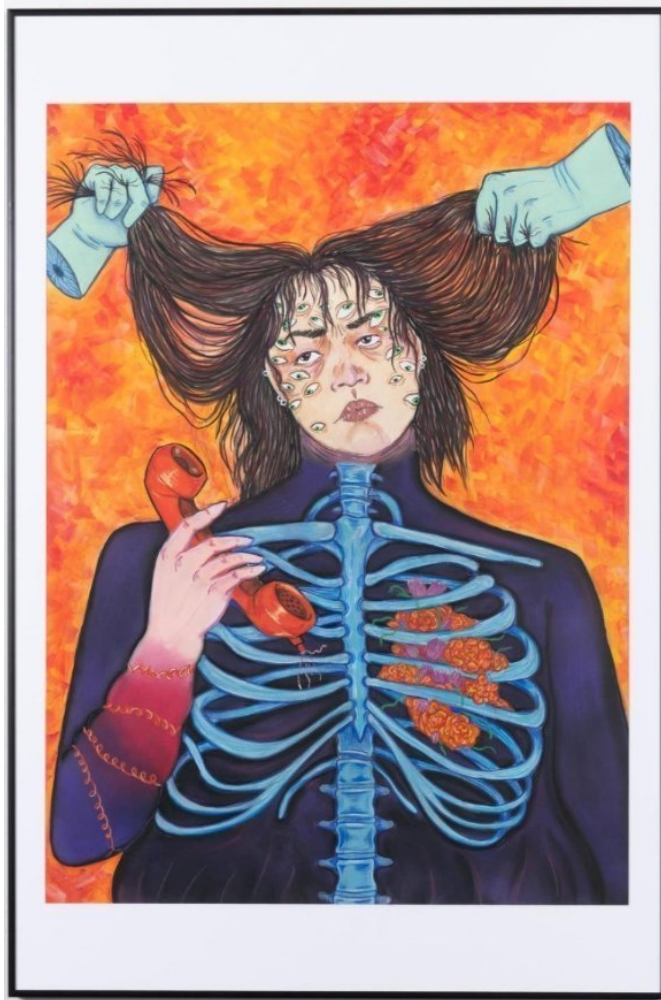
To learn more , please check out Dr. Moore's practical recommendations [here](#).



L-R: Drake A&S Alumni Napoleon Douglas, Madeline Goebel, Rick Hunsaker, Denise Rathman, and Finley Blakeman

A&S Alumni Career Panel held in newly renovated Johansen Student Center

The first A&S Alumni Career Panel event, held on March 27, was a success! We were delighted to welcome back to campus: **Napoleon Douglas** (AS'14), **Madeline Goebel** (AS'16), **Rick Hunsaker** (AS'88), **Denise Rathman** (AS'88), and **Finley Blakeman** (AS'23). Our alumni shared stories of their most meaningful student organization that impacted their career journey, as well as explained their perspectives on the (hidden) utility value of the liberal arts and sciences. Whether this involved thinking across levels of influence (state vs local) or using disciplinary knowledge to find one's passion (a general education requirement opening up a new avenue of career interest), the lived experiences were incredible to hear. Indeed, panelists shared between 2 and 37 years of experience, and students attending the event walked away with valuable career advice. Thank you for helping your Dean's Office promote this opportunity, and we look forward to making it an annual tradition.



Best in Show artwork. "I'll Talk to you Soon," Ty Cullison



Second Prize artwork. Self-portrait by Kenji Sazawa Bachmann

Student Work Celebrated at the 54th Annual Juried Student Exhibition Sunday, March 30

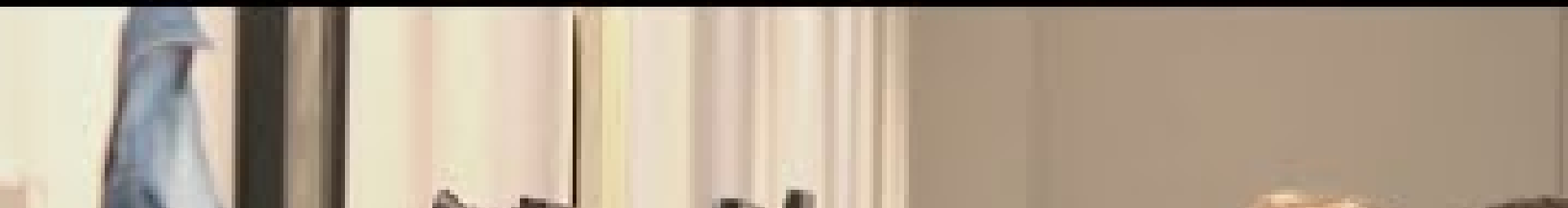
Over 150 people attended the 54th Annual Juried Student Exhibition at the Anderson Gallery on March 30. Drake University President **Marty Martin**, Provost **Sue Mattison** and College of Arts and Sciences Dean **Gesine Gerhard** opened the exhibition and presented the student award winners.

Juried by **Fredo Rivera**, Assistant Professor of Art History at Grinnell College, the exhibition includes 54 works of various medias made by Art & Design students at Drake.

The Best in Show award went to **Ty Cullison's** "I'll Talk to you Soon." Other awards presented were Second Prize, Honorable Mentions, and the Provost Purchase Award.

You can see the exhibition in person from now until April 20, 2025.

Also, check out the video below for Channel 5 news coverage of the event!





Congratulations to Professor of American Studies **Sandra Patton-Imani**, who has been awarded the prestigious Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship, which is designed to promote the interpretation of Virginia history and access to its collections at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture. She will conduct archival research for her next book project focused on an attempted rape trial in 1745 Virginia.



Admissions & Enrollment Corner

It continues to be recruiting season in the College, with prospective students (both direct from high school and transfer students) in their final decision stages! The fourth, and final, Admitted Student Day is scheduled for this Friday, April 11 (last-peek weekend events coming up on Saturday, April 12 and 19). These days are filled with excitement for students and families, as they imagine themselves in our classrooms, theatres, and studios (in addition to in-person visits, over 115 students have taken advantage of our unique virtual academic meetings, continuing through April 11!). **Thank you to the many faculty and staff leaders in A&S who have contributed to making these admissions events a success!**

A special shout-out to faculty who have provided compelling demo classes to prospective students during Admitted Student Days over the last month:

- Women and True Crime (**Dr. Beth Younger**)
- Climate Change: Caused by People? (**Dr. David Courard-Hauri**)
- What's in your Water? (**Dr. Claire Hruby**)
- Neuroscience and the Law (**Dr. Martin Roth**)
- Music Theatre I-LIVE (**Prof. Erin Degner**)
- Studying Human Cadaver Segments and Functional Anatomy (**Dr. David Senchina**)
- Smart Cities (**Dr. Dian Nostikasari**)
- Introduction to Japanese Language and Culture (**Dr. Chinatsu Sazawa**)

Our recruitment numbers are on par with a five-year high (currently 254 entering first-year students are tuition-deposited, along with 22 transfer students) in the College of Arts & Sciences. Please keep May 1 in mind, as students make their decisions by this target date. Any individualized outreach between now and then could be the deciding factor for a student to show up in our classes next year. As Joel Johnson, Dean of Admissions, reminds us: **"Be the reason a student chooses Drake this fall!"**



Save-the-Date: Looking ahead to summer, Admissions will be condensing summer programming into three "Bulldog Days of Summer" on June 6, August 8, and August 15.



Advising & Student Support Corner

Advising Notes

Registration

Registration for summer and fall 2025 courses began on **April 7**. Students can view the registration schedule and determine when they become eligible based on [earned hours](#) (earned hours do not include spring 2025 courses).

Change of Record Form

If you're working with an advisee needing to make an update to a major/minor/concentration, please encourage them to complete the **change of record request** found at MyDrake > Self Service > Student Records > Change of Record Request. Completion of this form will send a message to the Registrar's Office who will update the student's record. The Dean's Office will then make an advisor assignment.

Financial, et al, Holds

Advisees with **financial holds** on their accounts are urged to contact stuacct@drake.edu to determine if a hold can be lifted to allow registration. Small holds may be eligible for a temporary lift to allow registration. Students with a hold(s) on their account received an email from the Registrar's Office on Apr 1 and our office on Apr 2, reminding them of their hold(s) and sharing information on how to resolve the hold(s).

Helping Students Complete the Semester

As we near the end of the spring term, we understand that students' stress levels can increase. Mental and emotional health services are just one way to help support our students, including all the tools provided through [Access and Success](#) and the Starfish Success Portal.

Reporting Non-Attendance

Students who feel they do not have a path forward in a class(es), may stop attending. It's important that information on absent students is **reported to the Dean's Office** through the [Early Alert Form](#) or that a flag is raised in Starfish, so that our office can establish if the student is still on campus and/or conduct a welfare check.

Incomplete Resolution

April is the cruelest month, or so the saying goes...and this may be the time students who were issued an **incomplete** begin to think about work submission. The system will update any remaining fall 2024 incompletes to the default letter grade at the end of the spring 2025 semester. If you're anticipating receiving work from students, **remember to leave yourself grading time**...and maybe **reach out to students** with a reminder of the grading timeline. If a formerly-issued incomplete is now an earned letter grade, please take these steps to **enter the grade**: MyDrake > Self Service > Course Grading > I/IP/NR Grade Updates.

Upcoming Events

Griff II at the Gallery

Come see the 54th Annual Juried Student
Exhibition with special guest Griff II!
Snacks and drinks will be served.

Tuesday, April 8, 1-1:30 pm



■ PANEL DISCUSSION AND NETWORKING FAIR

Homelessness in Des Moines: A Community Conversation



**APRIL 8TH, 2025
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

**Sussman theater
Lower Level Olmsted**

Join us for networking opportunities with local organizations and a community panel of experts on addressing homelessness

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED



**Join Us for an Evening of Connection
and Community Engagement**

Are you passionate about working for positive social change? Don't miss this chance to connect with like-minded students and local leaders from community organizations who are dedicated to making a difference. Engage in meaningful discussions on how you can take action and get involved in social justice initiatives!

Meet community advocates, network with peers, and share ideas. Continue the conversation with a panel discussion featuring experts on the growing issue of homelessness in Des Moines, and discover how local organizations are actively working to address this crisis.

Event sponsored by the Joseph Schneider Symposium Series

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Hosted by Drake's **Office of Community Engaged Learning & Service**, sponsored by the **Joseph Schneider Symposium Series**, and organized by **Dr. Elizabeth Talbert**, Assistant Professor of Sociology.

Networking Fair from 5-6pm in Olmsted Center, followed by a panel discussion in Sussman Theater from 6-7pm.

The event is also posted to **DUGood**: <https://givepul.se/2zf1xb>



■ Humanities Center
Colloquium Spring 2025
How the Humanities Matter

Humanities Center Colloquium Spring 2025: How the Humanities Matter...to Finding the Music in Your Classroom

Friday, April 11, 2:30 - 4:30pm
Collier-Scripps Building, CS-301

Dr. Nicole Ramsey, Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Music Education

From Hurt to Healing: How Our Community Can Support Survivors of Sexual Violence



Thursday April 24, 2025

TIME: 12:30p - 1:30p

LOCATION: DRAKE LIBRARY: READING ROOM

BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH

WWW.SAFECENTERIOWA.COM

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Slay Fund for Justice

Hosted by Drake University Prevention and Education Programs, this lunch and learn training for faculty, staff, and students features **Katie Koestner**, who at age 18 appeared on the cover of TIME Magazine as the first person in history to publicly speak out about being the victim of date rape. Ms. Koestner will be visiting Drake during her stop in Des Moines, as the keynote speaker for the SAFE Center of Iowa's inaugural Teal Tie gala. The SAFE Center of Iowa is a one-of-a-kind sexual assault response center being opened in Des Moines in 2025 (event sponsored by **Slay Fund for Social Justice**).



Psychology & Neuroscience Colloquium (Dr. Eric Emmons, Assistant Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience)

Friday, May 2nd, 2:00 pm
Science Connector Building, Room 101

Title: Behavioral impairment following concussion: Shared neural mechanisms of cognitive control and cognitive dysfunction.

Making sense of the world around us requires careful attention, the ability to track changing conditions, and knowledge about when and how to respond. These so-called "executive functions" rely on neural networks that include the frontal cortex and striatum. These networks are consistently implicated in neuropsychiatric disease and injury states that involve cognitive impairments and executive dysfunction. Current work in my lab focuses on mild traumatic brain injury, otherwise known as concussion. Although cognitive impairment is a key symptom of concussion, our work explores the extent to which frontal and striatal networks underlie these changes and whether there are reliable indicators of cognitive impairment.

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Please check out and share on A&S Facebook and Instagram. In partnership with UCM, we would love to spotlight faculty, students, staff, and alumni and feature your programs through the College of A&S accounts: please send your suggestions to jennifer.cooper@drake.edu. Thanks!

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