

Photo above: Griff II stopped by Harmon Fine Arts Center to check out one of the new practice rooms and make a cameo in our ALL In 24-Hour Giving Challenge video. He's a very good boy, and a surprisingly competent pianist.

A Note from the Dean

Dear Colleagues,

Sing! was the title of Sunday's concert by Drake University Choirs celebrating peace, joy, and diversity through music and word. The performance was a wonderful reminder to take a moment and appreciate the community we are a part of. A huge congratulations to the choirs under the direction of Professor Eric Barnum! We are thrilled to announce some other milestone events and achievements in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Stewardship updates:

We are getting close to documenting a significant estate gift for Biology that will fund several scholarships for students in Biology. The gift will be a game changer to recruit students for our strong natural science programs! The donor is also a passionate supporter of the arts and plans to give an additional smaller cash gift to our theatre department.

We just received a check for the \$1,000,000 gift for the Darling Institute under Keith Summerville's leadership. The endowment will provide scholarships for students ("Darling Scholars"), establish fellowships for faculty research, and create a Development Fund for Rural America.

The first proceeds from the Cliff Rea estate gift have been recorded (this is a \$4 million endowment for Biology). This tremendous investment will allow us to select the first endowed chair in Biology, support faculty research and student experiential learning, and to invest in equipment and facilities to boost our program.

All-In was a great success! We raised \$27,810 for the College of Arts and Sciences and the Friends of Drake Arts during the 24-hour giving challenge. The campaign also brought lots of traffic to our social media sites. We are grateful for the generous gifts!

There is more good news to share: our recruitment efforts are paying off! Please check out the numbers below. It takes a village (aka a college) to recruit students, and Arts and Sciences faculty and staff have stepped up with great success. Thank you for your dedication and amazing work! We are well on our way to reach our target of 330 students in the Arts and Sciences and 650 students for Drake overall. I am confident that we can make this happen together!

We have three exciting milestone events coming up in the College. Please save the dates for our first Art and Sciences **Alumni Career Panel and Networking Event** on March 27, our annual **Conference on Undergraduate Research** (DUCURS) on April 10, and the Oscars of the Arts & Sciences—our **Honors Convocation** on April 17. You can find more detailed information and action steps below. We are also looking forward to some amazing music and theatre productions over the next few weeks. Make sure you reserve your tickets for Drake Theatre's performance of *Legally Blonde* (April 3-6), it promises to be a great show!

I wish I could list more accomplishments here as this is only a fraction of what you all do and bring to the Arts and Sciences! Please know that each of you are deeply appreciated as you make the College a very special place for our students. I could not be prouder to represent the College of Arts and Sciences in these unprecedented times!

As we experience policy changes at the state and federal level, I ask you to reach out to your students and let them know that they are not only welcome at Drake, but that they *belong* here. Recently passed legislation has targeted the transgender community, and achievements that promote diversity and inclusion on college campuses have been called into question. The diversity of our Drake community, the different backgrounds, perspectives, and languages that each individual brings are fundamental to our mission to prepare students for productive careers, active leadership, and responsible global citizenship. These are the core values we have been teaching in our classes, and we will continue to do so.

Let me conclude by wishing you a happy spring break! I hope you will get to take some time off next week and enjoy those warm temperatures while they last.



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



Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates

Date	Event/Activity
Friday, March 14, 2025	Spring semester midpoint
Monday- Friday, March 17-21, 2025	Spring break (classes do not meet)
Wednesday, March 26, 2025	Midterm grades due by 10:00am
Thursday, March 27, 2025	"Where Can Your Degree Take You? A&S Alumni Panel and Networking Event"
Tuesday, April 1, 2025	Student Award forms for Honors Convocation due to Dean's Office
Monday, April 7, 2025	Summer 2025 and fall 2025 registration begins
Thursday, April 10, 2025	DUCURS
Thursday, April 17, 2025	A&S Honors & Awards 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

Spring A&S Milestone Events

YOU'RE INVITED!

College of Arts and Sciences HONORS & AWARDS CEREMONY

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!

Sheslow Auditorium

April 17, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Reception at 6:00, Ceremony begins at 6:30

Also available on live stream

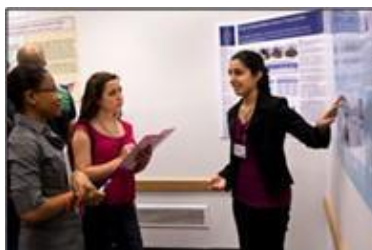
[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/@sheslowauditoriumlivestrea9770)

@sheslowauditoriumlivestrea9770

Drake
UNIVERSITY



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS for the Drake University Conference on Undergraduate Research in the Sciences (DUCURS)



Date: Thursday, April 10, 2025, 12:30-4:30pm

Location: Olmsted Parents Hall & Conference Rooms

Join us for an exciting afternoon to celebrate Drake STEM students' research accomplishments! DUCURS will feature **student oral and poster presentations**, a **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), and **opportunities to connect with colleagues**.

Please visit the **DUSCI website** to view the **event schedule**, **register** for DUCURS, and **submit your abstract** for an oral or poster presentation. **Abstract submission deadline: Friday, March 28.**

Where Can Your Degree Take You?

Arts and Sciences Alumni Panel and Networking Event

Meet the Alumni



Finley Blakeman
B.A. Computer Science
Software Engineer at Growers Edge, Des Moines, IA



Madeline Goebel
B.A. International Relations and Affairs, Economics
Transformation Coordinator at Iowa HHS, Des Moines, IA



Denise Rathman
B.A. International Relations
Executive Director at National Association of Social Workers, Des Moines, IA



Napoleon Douglas
B.A. Theatre Arts
Artistic Director at Pyramid Theatre Company, Des Moines, IA



Rick Hunsaker
B.A. Political Science, International Relations, Geography, M.A. Public Administration
Executive Director at Region XII COG, Carroll, IA

SIGN UP HERE:



Attendees can enter a raffle for Drake Swag!



March 27 | 6-8 PM
Johansen Student Center Ballroom

"Where Can Your Degree Take You? Arts and Sciences Alumni Panel and Networking Event"

Faculty are invited to share this student-centered opportunity with students (or attend alongside students!) as we welcome back five of our esteemed alumni to campus.

Please consider offering extra credit for attending and/or make announcements in your classes about this upcoming career-related event. The topic and discussion will follow from the 'Hidden Utility Value of the Liberal Arts' discussion at the recent College-wide meeting. We hope you can help us get the word out to make this a huge success! An [Eventbrite link](#) is provided for you to share with students (RSVP to help with catering and seating counts) – food will be provided, and we encourage students to submit advance questions in the registration form.



Celebrating A&S Highlights



Congratulations to Assistant Professor **Clare Hruby** and Professor **Keith Summerville** of Environmental Science and Sustainability on receiving a \$175,000 grant from the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust to update and expand the water quality laboratory in Olin Hall.

"A focus of the water quality laboratory at Drake University is to partner with various organizations to determine the origin and recreational risks from waterborne diseases," says Hruby. "This grant will not only provide excellent resources for our students looking to gain hands-on research experience, but the findings will also benefit our larger community and the water we all rely on." Read more about this exciting news [here](#).



Congratulations to the Chair of the Arts & Sciences National Advisory Committee **Robert Palmer** (AS'10, JD'14) and Arts & Sciences alumna **Jennifer Hahn** (AS'15) on being named the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce 2025 Citizen and Emerging Citizen of the Year! The press release notes that, "Jennifer Hahn and Robert Palmer exemplify the heart and soul of West Des Moines through their leadership, passion, and dedication to community service," You can see the full press release [here](#).



Congratulations to Professor **Maria Valdovinos, Ellis and Nelle Levitt Distinguished Professor of Psychology**, has been selected as a recipient of the 2025 Association for Behavior Analysis International Outstanding Mentor Award.

“Dr. Maria Valdovinos exemplifies transformative mentorship through her resolute dedication to nurturing both academic excellence and personal growth in her students...Particularly, she demonstrates a rare combination of academic excellence and compassionate mentorship that has transformed behavior analysis education and practice throughout Iowa and beyond.”

Professor Valdovinos and fellow recipients will be recognized during the Presidential Address at the 51st Annual Convention of the Association in Washington, D.C. this May.

Read the full statement [here](#).



Secret Histories: A New Era in Constance Fenimore Woolson Scholarship has been published by the University of Georgia Press. **Lisa West's** essay "From Glimmerglass to Nowhere" opens the first section on Woolson's experiments as a writer responding to other writers. She argues that Woolson anticipates a materialist feminist approach to nature writing as she echoes yet challenges her great uncle's well-known novel, *The Deerslayer*.



Admissions & Enrollment Corner

ADMISSIONS UPDATE

We are in the Admissions season that focuses on increasing tuition deposits and converting admitted students into excited Bulldogs! Remember there is a trend that students and families tend to visit Drake once rather than numerous times. Each encounter with faculty matters! What are our upcoming efforts with admitted students?

- **Admitted Students Days** will be **March 7, March 28, April 4, and April 11**. These on-campus events feature hour-long academic meetings related to individual programs. The goal: to help admitted students envision what it would be like to be *in* that program and to share what makes each Drake major distinctive from similar programs elsewhere. There also are mock classes for admitted students to attend as well as a full schedule of information sessions, tours, a general information fair, lunch, and more.
- **NEW THIS YEAR:** We will hold a series of faculty-led, **program-specific virtual meetings** for admitted students, in which students can ask questions and compare particular features of a Drake major (or series of majors) with its counterparts at other institutions. Let Associate Dean Lisa West know if you would like to participate in these.

Recent Successes:

- January and February one-on-one faculty visits are on par or higher than recent years.
- Program-specific Admissions events University-wide have seen an increase of 36.4% over the past year. For Arts & Sciences, both Music and Theatre Audition participation was up.
- 50 students and their families attended the two **local Admitted Student Parties** in February despite exciting weather events. Local alumni, faculty, and staff were present to talk everything Drake for these high-energy events.
- There are other **February and March Admitted Student Parties** with alumni volunteers and Drake personnel in cities from **Dallas to Milwaukee**. Like the local ones, these allow admitted students to meet other potential Bulldogs and hear from alums about their academic journeys.
- Compared to last year and two years ago at this time, tuition deposits for EFR are higher, both for the College and University (167 net TDs for EFR in A&S this year; 117 last year; 143 two years ago). In other words, we are up over 42% at this time compared to last year for new entering A&S students, and over 16% at this time compared to two years ago (our benchmark year). The next couple of months will be crucial to reach our target —**let's continue the great work!**

Even though there is a blizzard at the moment (of writing this), we need to anticipate "melt"! There will be ongoing efforts to remain in contact with tuition-deposited students throughout the summer, particularly the weeks following June Orientation.

And the next cycle starts. April 12 will see Sophomores and Juniors for a Preview Day (with an Academic Fair), and April 12 and 19 will be a "Last Peek" for Seniors and Transfers. This summer, Admissions is condensing summer programming into three extended "Bulldog Days of Summer" on June 6, August 8, and August 15. Invitations to participate will happen over the next month or so.

Thank you, as always, to faculty and staff who set up for these events, take time to speak with students and their families along each step of the process, prepare materials to handout, and help students answer the question, "why Drake?"



Advising & Student Support Corner

Notes from the Associate Dean for Student Support

Student Support

Please **reach out** to students who are struggling to process recent state, federal, and global events. Offer to share space with them or to listen to their concerns. There was a Town Hall Monday March 10 at 9 AM in Cowles Reading Room (with President Martin, Provost Mattison and Dean of Students Parker present) for students to discuss recent Iowa House bills. We encourage follow-up conversations. Addressing the concerns student have is better than silence.

New Academic Standing Policy

Drake has implemented a **new Academic Standing Policy**, effective fall 2024. Students must have at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA and have passed at least 67% of cumulative credits attempted to be on good academic standing. Therefore - it may no longer be in a student's best interest to withdraw from a course mid-semester; while withdrawing can protect the GPA, it impacts the % completion rate negatively. Please check with our office if you have questions. The new policy can be found [here](#).

Advising Task Force

The College Advising Task Force will meet early next week for a preliminary meeting - then the first week or two after spring break. If you would like to be on the Task Force or have input, please contact Associate Dean **Lisa West**. Our goal is to discuss what is going well with the **Blended Advising Model** and what we can improve. Key questions include the following. How will we know if academic advising is meeting College goals - and how can we gather data to assess it? How can we work on a College-level implementation of this University-level service?

Registration begins April 7. If you have not already met with your advisees to review progress toward their major/minor and suggested courses to take, please make those appointments now! Academic advisors will be working with students, but we want to ensure faculty input as desired.

Call to Action: Letters to Legislators

Faculty are encouraged to attend **Letters to Legislators**, a non-partisan event co-sponsored by Community Engaged Learning, Student Senate, DEAL, and the Drake Policy Institute. On **March 12, from 5-6 PM** in JSC 230, students are invited to come write to public officials regarding issues about which they are passionate. All materials will be provided, and there will be free food! Contact information: servicelearning@drake.edu or chloe.lepak@drake.edu

Call to Action: A&S Faculty: Nominate Your Student Leaders for the Adams Leadership Awards!

This annual tradition honors **exceptional student leaders and organizations** at Drake. Any student, faculty, or staff member can submit nominations. Categories include:

- Outstanding First-Year Student Leader
- Outstanding Student Organization President
- Outstanding Residence Hall Leader
- Outstanding Collaboration Program
- Oreon E. Scott Senior Legacy Award ...and more!

View the full list and submit nominations [\[here\]](#) by Sunday, April 13.

Nominees and winners will be recognized at the **2025 Adams Leadership Awards on Saturday, May 3**, at 1 PM in Sheslow Auditorium. Mark your calendar—everyone is invited!

Advising Notes from Mary Beth Holtey, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs

Harkin Center Scholarship Opportunities

The Harkin Institute offers two scholarships for Drake University students pursuing internship opportunities in Washington, D.C. Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis. The deadline to apply for a Summer 2025 internship is April 1, for a Fall 2025 internship is June 1, and for a Spring 2026 internship is October 1. See [Scholarships | The Harkin Institute](#) for further information.

FERPA Reminders

Students are increasingly wishing to include their parents in academic advising conversations (and parents new to the college setting are used to receiving frequent updates about student progress in high school courses, without a consideration to privacy law). If you're faced with a remote appointment where a student is nodding off camera or you receive requests for parents to join in on a conversation, please direct the student to complete the **release of information form** at [Authorization for Release of Information rev071217.pdf](#).

There are **best practices** for receiving the **Release of Information Form**:

1. The student should complete the form in-person, in front of faculty and/or staff.
2. If the form cannot be completed in-person, the completed and signed form should be sent from a Drake email to registrar@drake.edu. The Registrar's Office will then send the completed form to the AS Dean's Office.
3. Any revocation of the Release of Information Form should be submitted by the student, in writing, to registrar@drake.edu.

Please note that if a student enters the University before turning 18, enrollment in a post-secondary institution results in adherence to privacy law, i.e., **a 17-year-old student is still protected by FERPA** and information should not be shared with a parent/guardian without the student's consent.

Responding to Students of Concern

We hear that stress, burnout, health issues and fatigue, and pending and recent Iowa bills are increasingly taking toll on students, affecting their attendance, response to outreach, and submission of work. If you are concerned about a student in your course, please **raise a flag in Starfish**. Depending on the type of the flag, students will either be able to see your comments or receive a follow-up from the appropriate office. Another option is to complete an **early alert form**. The form feeds directly to the Dean's office and facilitates our proactive outreach to students who need assistance and connections to key college and university resources.

Forecasting Midterm Grade Entry

Midterm grades are **due before 10 a.m. on Wed, Mar 26**. The entry of midterm grades helps students to make informed decisions on whether or not to remain in a spring course(s). If working with advisees enrolled in 12 credits, please note that dropping a course(s) with a W will not take a student to part-time standing. *But if working with a student athlete, international student or student receiving Veteran's Administration (V.A.) benefits, please urge the student to consult the appropriate office before seeking a drop with a W.* Students have have through Sunday, Mar 30 to drop a course with a W, but should take action before Friday, Mar 28 if they want to speak to someone about their decision. Students will need to complete the add/drop form at www.drake.edu/registrar > Forms > Add/Drop Form. Completed drop forms should be submitted to studentsupport.as@drake.edu.



Faculty Development Corner

Course Ready textbook adoptions coming due for Summer & Fall 2025



We are now in the second semester of Course Ready – by comparison, there were 152 more students who opted in to Course Ready for the spring semester compared to the fall, suggesting that the program is gaining traction! We continue to learn how to best adapt this program at Drake (this spring, most help desk inquiries were about how to access digital bookshelf and when books would arrive).

If you are teaching a summer course, you are asked to submit your **FAST textbook submissions** (through Blackboard) by **Friday, March 14**.

For **fall courses**, the window to submit FAST textbook submissions (through Blackboard) is between **Monday, March 10 and Friday, April 18**.

Lessons Learned:

- (1) If you would typically list a text as “**recommended**” on your reading list, it must be listed as “**required**” in Course Ready, or it will not be included in the students’ package.
- (2) Course Ready extends beyond traditional texts, and it can include **materials** (e.g., art/design supplies, software subscriptions needed for instruction).
- (3) Course Ready **prefers newer editions**; older ones may be difficult to obtain, even though they are less expensive for those who opt-out of the program.

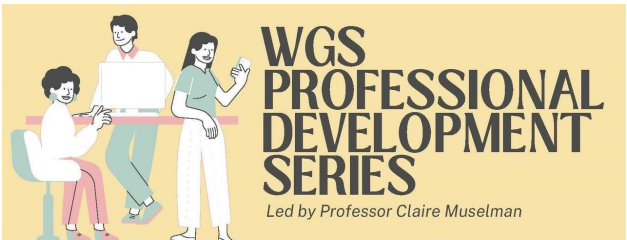
As a reminder, the goals of the program are three-fold: a) helping ensure that students have materials on the first day of instruction, b) providing affordable options for students, and c) staying in compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act. You are encouraged to reach out to **Nate Reagan** – campus contact - (nate.reagan@drake.edu) or **Katie Kiser** - Bookstore contact - (kkiser@ecampus.com) with specific questions that suit your course needs.

Upcoming Events



Tuesday, March 11, 7:30 PM

Sheslow Auditorium



Women's and Gender Studies Professional Development Series: "THE POWER OF PRESENCE: CONFIDENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS"

Thursday, March 13th, 4:00pm - 5:00 pm
Medbury Honors Lounge

Make your presence count in any room. This session focuses on building confidence in professional environments, from interviews to networking events. Learn body language tips, conversational strategies, and how to leave a lasting impression.

Focus: Presence



Thursday, March 27th, 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Johansen Student Center Ballroom

[Get my ticket here!](#)



**Join us for the DUSCI Research Colloquium Series: Friday, March 28,
2:00-3:00 pm in Olin 206**

Schedule of Presentations:

2:00 pm – Dr. Claire Hruby, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science & Sustainability

Using Genetic Techniques to Better Understand Recreational Water Quality

2:30 pm – Dr. Jerry Honts, Professor of Biology

The Need for Speed: How Molecular Motors Drive Ultrafast Ciliate Contraction



Humanities Center Colloquium Spring 2025 **How the Humanities Matter**

Humanities Center Colloquium Spring 2025: How the Humanities Matter

Friday March 28th, 10:30am - 12:00pm
Collier-Scripps Building, CS-335

Session 2: How the Humanities Matter...to Living in a World Overflowing with Plastic

Emily Newman, Associate Professor of Art & Design



Keys to Excellence Piano Series: Winston Choi, Associate Professor of Piano, Chicago College of

Performing Arts--Roosevelt University

Monday, March 31, 7:30pm

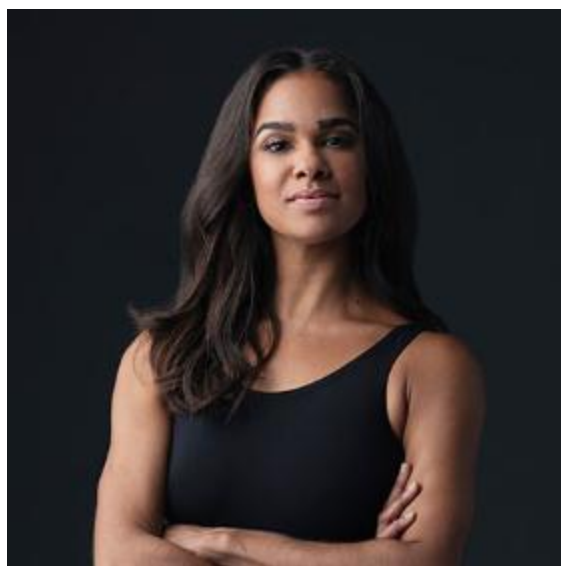
Sheslow Auditorium



Drake Choirs: Eric Barnum, Ted Brimeyer, and Greg Sojka, conductors

Tuesday, April 1, 7:00pm

Sheslow Auditorium



Drake University's Spring Bucksbaum Lecture to feature famed ballerina and diversity advocate Misty Copeland.

Date: April 2, 2025 at 7:00pm

Location: Knapp Center, Drake University

Registration: The event is free and open to the public with no registration required. A clear bag policy will be enforced at the venue.

Moderator: Sally Dix, president of [Bravo Greater Des Moines](#).

Livestream: Can't make it to the event? Watch the event live at [live.drake.edu](#)



Drake Theatre Presents: *Legally Blonde*

Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 7:30 pm

Friday, April 4, 2025, at 7:30 pm

Saturday, April 5, 2025, at 7:30 pm

Sunday, April 6, 2025, at 2:00 pm


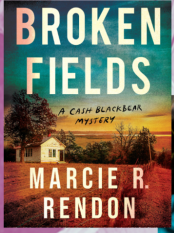
Performing Arts Hall in Harmon Fine Arts Center

Come see Griff II and many other stars in a lively musical about Elle Woods, a sorority girl who, after being dumped by her boyfriend, enrolls at Harvard Law School to win him back, ultimately discovering her potential and defying expectations while staying true to herself.

[Get your Tickets Here](#)

Author Reading Event

MARCIE RENDON



Writing Our Stories, Creating Mirrors

Wednesday,
April 9, 2025
5:00pm – 6:15pm

Cowles Library
Reading Room
Drake University

Book Reading
Q/A Conversation
& Book Signing

Rendon is an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation. She is the **best-selling** author of *Where They Last Saw Her*, Penguin / Random, and the **award-winning** author of the **Cash Blackbear murder mystery series**.

THE SUSAN GLASPELL
**WRITERS
& CRITICS**
SERIES

Event is Free
And Open to the Public

Author Reading Event: Marcie Rendon, "Writing Our Stories, Creating Mirrors"

Wednesday, April 9, 5:00-6:15pm
Cowles Library
Reading Room

Acclaimed author **Marcie Rendon** will give a public reading on **Wednesday, April 9th in the Cowles Reading Room at 5pm**. Rendon will talk about her current writing projects, art as healing, and her dedication to creating mirrors.

Like A&S on Social Media!



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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