



We Have a lot to Celebrate!

ARTS AND SCIENCES END-OF-SEMESTER CELEBRATION

Join us for Appetizers and Drinks
to Recognize Faculty and Staff Accomplishments,
P&T Milestones and Retirements,
and Gesine's eight-year tenure as
Dean of the College.

Friday, May 8 3-5 PM
Turner Jazz Center

A Note From the Dean

Dear Colleagues,

This is the final newsletter of the academic year. And what a year it has been! As we head into the last stretch of the semester—grading exams, adjudicating performances, reading papers, and offering feedback on research and creative projects—I want to take a moment and thank you for the care, dedication, and collegiality you bring to this work every day. The end is in sight, and summer is around the corner. Time to celebrate!

Thank you for a fabulous year, and for all you have done for your students, your colleagues, and for the College. I see the care you take with our students, the way you show up for one another, and the commitment you bring to the work. Your teaching, mentoring, advising, scholarship, and service make this place truly special.

This newsletter celebrates some of the latest accomplishments across the Arts and Sciences—please check out the stories below. And one more piece of good news to end the year: as of this morning, and with May 1 (decision day) in the rearview mirror, we have recruited 350 new first-year students with primary majors in the Arts and Sciences who have submitted their tuition deposit. That is a fantastic number, and it reflects the many ways you have supported our admissions efforts by meeting with prospective students, offering program overviews, and representing Drake so well on visit and admission days. Thank you for that extra effort; it truly made a difference.

Before we all head into summer, I hope you'll join us for our **College Social** this **Friday, May 8, from 3:00–5:00 p.m.** in the **Turner Jazz Center**. We'll have snacks and special drinks, a chance to connect and celebrate the end of a successful year, and time to recognize colleagues for milestones in their professional careers.

For me, this gathering will be especially meaningful, as it will also be my chance to say goodbye after serving as your dean for the past eight years. This role has been one of the most rewarding and fulfilling chapters of my academic life, and I have been grateful for it every single day (even the hard ones!).

It has been an honor to serve and represent the College of Arts and Sciences with such outstanding people, programs, and a strong liberal arts mission. Thank you for making that mission real for our students, day after day. I couldn't be prouder of what you do—and I couldn't be more thankful for the privilege of working alongside you. If you're able, please stop by on Friday to say goodbye.

Wishing you the very best as you finish the semester—and, once grades are submitted, a wonderful start to summer.

Warmly,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gesine".

Gesine Gerhard
Dean and Professor
College of Arts and Sciences

Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates

Date	Event/Activity
Friday, May 8	Day Free For Study
Friday, May 8	College-Wide Social, Turner Jazz Center
Monday, May 11 - Friday, May 15	Final Evaluation Period

Friday, May 15	End of Spring Semester
Sunday, May 17	Spring Commencement Ceremony
Wednesday, May 20	Spring final grades due by 10:00am
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day (university closed)

[Access the Full College of A&S and University Calendar 2025-26 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



Faculty and Student Recognition

Celebrating Our Newly Promoted and Tenured Faculty



Dr. Joshua Carlson has been awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. Since joining Drake in 2021, he has distinguished himself as an outstanding teacher, an accomplished and highly collaborative scholar in discrete mathematics, and a dedicated contributor to departmental and university service. He is also an exceptional mentor to students engaged in undergraduate research projects. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Carlson on this well-deserved recognition of his excellence and impact.



Dr. Meredith Moore has earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. Since returning to Drake in 2020 (Meredith started her academic journey as an undergraduate in the College of Arts and Sciences!), she has built an exceptional record as an innovative and inclusive educator, a dynamic scholar in human-computer interaction and accessibility, and a dedicated leader in programs such as the CODE Scholars initiative. Congratulations to Dr. Moore on this significant milestone and her many contributions to the College of Arts and Sciences!



Congratulations to **Dr. Md Alimoor Reza** on receiving tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. Since arriving at Drake in 2021, he has established a strong record as an engaging teacher, a nationally recognized scholar in artificial intelligence and robotics, and a valued contributor to initiatives such as the Qingdao partnership and student mentorship. We celebrate Dr. Reza's accomplishments and his continued impact on our students.



Dr. Stefanie Wang has been awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. Since arriving at Drake, she has distinguished herself as a creative and highly effective teacher who brings a sense of “fun” and engagement to the classroom, alongside a strong record of scholarship marked by her successful shift into and growing expertise in computational mathematics. We are thrilled to celebrate Dr. Wang’s accomplishments and her many contributions to our academic community.



Dr. Marc Busch has been promoted to Full Professor in the Department of Biology, recognizing his long-standing contributions to the university since joining Drake in 2009. He is known for his impactful teaching in microbiology and virology, his technically sophisticated and collaborative research program—supported by significant external funding—and his exceptional leadership in roles such as department chair and in shaping STEM facilities like the Science Connector Building. Congratulations to Dr. Busch for this ultimate recognition of his sustained accomplishments and the many ways he supports students at Drake.

Arts and Sciences Honors and Awards Ceremony



*(Pictured above: Outstanding Teacher of the Year 2025 **Dr. Rob Collis** and Outstanding Teacher of the Year 2026 **Dr. Deb Cronin**)*

The College of Arts and Sciences celebrated our amazing students and faculty on April 16 at the Honors and Awards Ceremony. Over 100 students were recognized, and several donors were present to hand out awards! We are pleased to share some of the student, faculty, and departmental highlights of the evening with the College.

Assistant Professor **Dr. Deb Cronin** was recognized as Outstanding Teacher of the Year, and last year's award winner Assistant Professor **Dr. Rob Collis**, gave the honors address. **Kenton Ausmer**, (BIO and BCMB, minor in Chinese) was awarded the E.A. Sheslow Prize for Distinguished Leadership. Departmental Awards were also presented to students, and ten Arts & Sciences honors societies were recognized.

Thank you to faculty, students, families and donors who came out to help us celebrate these remarkable achievements!



(Pictured above: Kenton Ausmer and emcee, Dr. Nanci Ross of Biology)



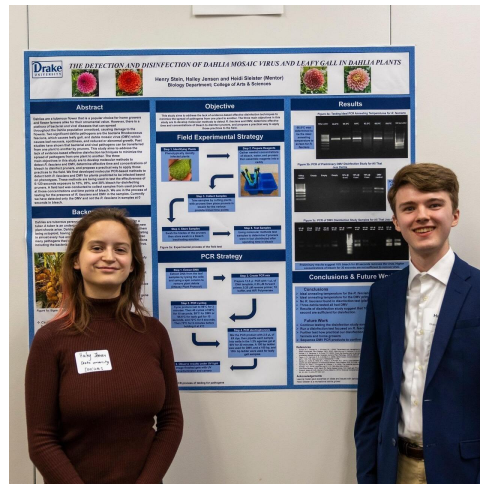
*(Pictured above: Professor of Art and Design **Emily Newman** and Donor **Jan Fleming** present the **Jan Fleming Award** to senior Fine Arts Student **Lily Lampe**)*



(Pictured above: A full house in Sheslow Auditorium. Below: Student award winners from across College departments)



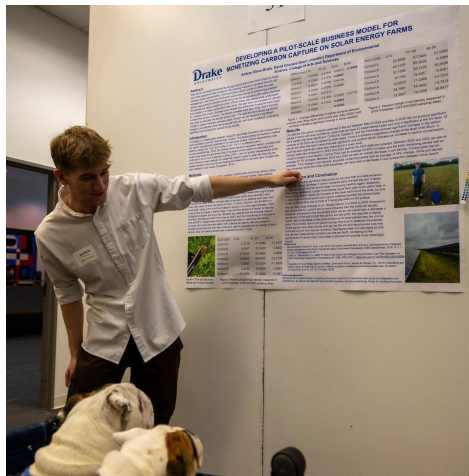
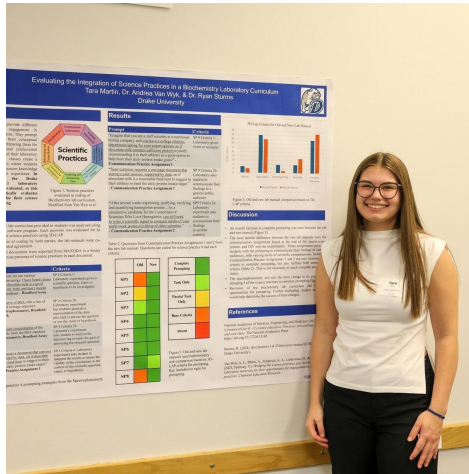
DUCURS 2026



Congratulations to all Drake University student presenters and faculty mentors who made the 23rd annual Drake University Conference on Undergraduate Research in the Sciences (DUCURS) such a success!

The 23rd annual Drake University Conference on Undergraduate Research in the Sciences (DUCURS) featured over 50 student projects, showcasing the hard work, innovation, and dedication to scientific research across nine disciplines.

We're proud to celebrate the students and mentors whose passion for discovery continues to strengthen Drake's academic community. Learn more at the link: <https://www.drake.edu/dusci/>



College of Arts & Sciences Alumni Gathering at Relays



Over 100 A&S alumni and friends gathered at the Painted Street Party over the 2026 Drake Relays, networking with **Dean Gesine Gerhard**, **Associate Dean Jill Allen**, and **Associate Dean Adina Kilpatrick**.

Many guests donned “Proud A&S Alum” stickers and ranged from our most recent graduating class in 2025 to late 1970s graduates. It was a beautiful celebration for the College of Arts & Sciences, across the decades to strengthen ties to College alumni!



Faculty Development and Opportunities



Faculty & Staff Development Opportunities from the Provost Office

The Office of the Vice Provost has limited funds available for the remainder of the fiscal year 2026 to support professional development and research activities. It is also not too early to begin planning for FY27 needs. Please go [here](#) to view the list of internal funding opportunities available.

As a reminder, internal grant funding opportunities are open throughout the academic year and are reviewed on a rolling basis. These opportunities are designed to support faculty scholarly work, creative projects, and professional growth aligned with institutional priorities. Each program outlines eligibility, covered expenses, timelines, and application procedures. Please review the guidelines carefully before submitting. Given that funding is limited and often competitive, early planning and timely applications are encouraged.

Please contact [Jimmy Senteza](#), Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs

Promotion & Tenure Information Session upcoming on May 11

This year's Promotion and Tenure Committee will be offering an information session to tenure-track faculty interested in learning more about the process. The session is geared towards those who are going up for promotion and tenure next year, but any tenure-track faculty who are interested are welcome to attend. The session will be on **Monday, May 11 at 9:30 in Collier Scripps room 120**. Please contact [Jennifer Cooper](#) if you are interested in attending.



Celebrating A&S Highlights

Distinguished Professorships Awarded

Congratulations to three of our faculty members who have been honored with distinguished professorships! **Dr. Athan Petridis**, Professor of Physics, has been awarded **the Windsor Distinguished Professorship**, which supports distinguished science faculty. **Dr. James Romain**, Professor of Saxophone, and **Dr. Heidi Sleister**, Professor of Biology, were each awarded **the Ellis and Nelle Levitt Distinguished Professorship**—an honor recognizing exceptional faculty for teaching excellence, scholarly contributions, consulting activities, leadership, and service to the university's mission. Congratulations!





A special shout-out to **Dr. Melisa Klimaszewski**, Professor of English and Director of the Black Diaspora Studies Minor, for her guest editorship of a special issue of *Victorians*. The issue centers on “Race, Color, and the Victorians,” and includes Dr. Klimaszewski’s introductory essay. Read it on *Project Muse: [Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature](#)*, Vol. 148 (Winter 2025): 145–158.



We are pleased to recognize **Dr. Dian Nostikasari**, Assistant Professor of Environmental Sciences and Sustainability, as the recipient of the 2026 Ron Troyer Research Fellowship. Congratulations, Dian!



Thank you for Going All In for Arts and Sciences!

Thank you to all of you for making this year's one-day social media All In Giving Challenge a success!

Donors contributed 74 gifts directly to the The College of Arts and Sciences! Including the challenge dollars raise, **we raised \$19,045.**

We are proud to have made such a strong impact in the All In Giving Challenge!



Student Support Corner

Celebrate Global Advising Week, May 2- May 8

On May 2, 1979, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was formally chartered. NACADA promotes and supports quality academic advising in institutions of higher education to enhance the educational development of students. NACADA provides a forum for discussion, debate, and the exchange of ideas pertaining to academic advising through numerous activities and publications. If there's a campus advisor you

appreciate, this week is a great time to reach out to them. This week also will see a webinar dedicated to appreciative advising of students. Please consider attending...

Advising Philosophies through an Appreciative Lens Webinar

Wednesday, May 6 | Johansen Student Center: Ernst Ballroom | 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Join us for discussion on crafting or reviewing your advising philosophy through an appreciative lens. We will discuss a variety of approaches to advising and how we draw upon them in our practices. We invite you to bring your experiences from this academic year for an interactive session on celebrating our unique perspectives and insights as academic advisors.

I'm Not Counting the Days...You're Counting the Days

We're almost there! We don't need to tell you that the weeks leading up to finals are stressful for students. Our office will be sending information to students urging them to take care of themselves, and linking them to the [finals exam schedule](#). If you want to encourage events that can help students decompress, please consider the below:

- **Holistic Wellness Pop-Ups**

Connect with your advising specialist and find snacks, drinks and wellness resource

- Wednesday, May 6, Meredith Breezeway, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Thursday, May 7, Olin Hall Lobby, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

- **Pet Therapy and Chair Massages**

Friday, May 8, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m Upper Olmsted

We recognize that finals are stressful for faculty, too. Below, please find some reminders for the end of term:

Grades are due before 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 20. The timely submission of grades is tied to a variety of end-of-term processes, including the posting of degrees and confirmation of those who should be listed on the Dean's and President's Lists. A few reminders:

- Submit grades for everyone on your roster(s). If a student appearing on your roster didn't validate their attendance at the beginning of the semester, email Mary Beth Holtey (marybeth.holtey@drake.edu). If a student has a non-reported grade on their transcript, they cannot be listed on the Dean's List or President's List, or earn a degree, as applicable.
- If you enter a grade incorrectly, i.e. you entered a grade of B, but the student earned an A, please follow the steps: MyDrake > Course Grading > Grade Change Request.
- If in a previous term you issued an in-progress mark (IP) and the student has now earned a letter grade please update the grade in MyDrake > Course Grading > Grade Change Request.
- If you oversaw an independent study or internship this semester, please remember to enter a grade.

Reminder on the Updated Incomplete Policy

If a student has not attended your course for several weeks or submitted any work during the term, it may seem friendly to extend an incomplete, but experience has shown that these students rarely successfully complete the work or earn a high grade. And, students who take several incompletes may be in a type of financial aid "limbo," without resolved credits and a clear sense of hours earned.

Beginning in the fall 2025, students needed to accept the issuance of an incomplete. Specifically, after you visit MyDrake > Course Grading > Incomplete Grade Request, the student will receive an email asking them to complete a ProcessMaker form, to confirm their acceptance of the incomplete, acknowledge the outstanding work, deadline for work submission and grade if no further work is submitted.

From [General Regulations | Drake University Academic Catalog](#) : The mark "I" (Incomplete) indicates a student has not submitted all evidence required for a final grade. The student must make satisfactory arrangements with

the instructor to complete the work within 30 days of the end of the course. The instructor writes out the conditions that must be met to remove the incomplete. As a component of these conditions, the instructor may demand an accelerated deadline or may provide an extended deadline if special circumstances warrant (a semester abroad, student teaching, etc.). The instructor will indicate online the final grade for the course in the event the work is not completed. A copy of conditions that must be met to complete the course is also given to the student. Marks of incomplete are changed to a final grade either by the instructor (upon completion of the work) or by the Office of the Registrar (upon attaining the specified due date). Marks of incomplete are not computed in the G.P.A.



Resource Reminder: Drake Concern Center

The Drake Concern Center is an online, searchable application for Drake University students, faculty, and staff to find campus and community resources to address various needs or concerns.

<https://drake.concerncenter.com/>



Upcoming Events



Drake Vocal Jazz Singers Live Music Concert

Wednesday, May 6th, 7:30 PM
Burns United Methodist Church

Join Drake Vocal Jazz Singers for an evening of incredible music featuring students **Alex Miara**, drums; **Colby Drown**, guitar; **John Ching**, bass; **Jack Crilly**, horn, and joined on the program by **Son Peruchos**, known for their vibrant blend of Andean and South American folk traditions. This event celebrates the first collaboration between **Rev. Dr. James Pernel Sr.**, Associate Director of New Communities of Faith, and **Dr. Ann Cravero**, Director of the Drake Vocal Jazz Singers - creating community one concert at a time!

*This concert is possible thanks to the generosity of **Dr. Richard Deming** and his gift to The Ones Campaign, the Office of Community Engaged Learning for service and service-learning projects that engage Drake students in activities that aim to **advance social change and spark joy** for all involved. Dr. Deming is the Medical Director of Mercy One Cancer Center. Through his career and philanthropy, he promotes compassion, joy, and positive social change.*

Mental Health and the Justice System



ENDURING CHALLENGES, EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsored by the Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement, the Slay Fund for Social Justice, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Institute for Justice Reform and Innovation at Drake Law School.

This free, one-day conference provides an overview of justice system efforts to respond to and support mental health in Iowa. Through a series of panels, attendees will hear from people with practical expertise working across the justice, healthcare, and service provider systems.

MAY 7TH, 2026
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

**HARKIN INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC
POLICY & CITIZEN
ENGAGEMENT**

REGISTER HERE!



- This event is free but registration is required.
- This is a hybrid event. Attendees have the choice to attend in person at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, or virtually.
- The in-person event will take place at The Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement. Lunch will be provided.
- Online attendees will watch a live stream of all general session content and will have the opportunity to participate in Q&A.

Drake
UNIVERSITY

Mental Health and the Justice System: Enduring Challenges, Emerging Opportunities

Thursday, May 7, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Location: The Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement. Lunch will be provided.

Online attendees will watch a live stream of all general session content and will have the opportunity to participate in Q&A.

This free, one-day conference provides an overview of justice system efforts to respond to and support mental health in Iowa.

Through a series of panels, attendees will hear from people with practical expertise working across the justice, healthcare, and service provider systems.

The goal is for everyone to leave better informed and with ideas for improving the response to mental health inside, outside, and alongside the justice system.

The event is sponsored by the Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement, the Slay Fund for Social Justice, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Institute for Justice Reform and Innovation at Drake Law School.

This event is free, but [registration is required](#).

OPEN HOUSE!

Dear students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends,

Please join Dr. Claire Hruby

and the Environmental Science & Sustainability Department

in celebrating the official opening of the

Water Quality Laboratory

OLIN HALL ROOM 124

Friday, May 8, 2026, 1-3 pm

Refreshments will be served in the hallway

BEFORE



AFTER!



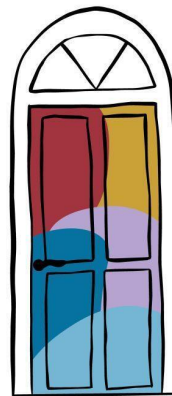
Open House: Water Quality Laboratory

Friday, May 8, 1:00-3:00 PM

Olin Hall, Room 124

Please Join Dr. **Claire Hruby** and the Environmental Sciences and Sustainability Department in celebrating the official opening of the Water Quality Laboratory!

The event is open to all, and refreshments will be served in the hallway.



KUNSTKAMMER

APRIL 30 - MAY 16 2026

Featuring the work of
BERKELEY COYNE, SOPHIA ERNST, AVA HESS,
ADALEE MILLER, AND JORDAN WYER

Kunstkammer: BFA Thesis Exhibition

April 30 - May 15, 2026

Anderson Art Gallery

Featuring the work of Berkeley Coyne, Sophie Ernst, Ava Hess, Adalee Miller and Jordan Wyer

Exhibition Statement: *Kunstkammer* loosely translates to “art cabinet” or “chamber of art.” Our time at Drake has introduced us to many disciplines: painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, and graphic design—all of which are represented here today. With these skills, we have created five distinct bodies of work. Rather than combining our pieces or curating them to fit a specific theme, we decided to embrace our differences, creating an oddity space where they all exist in discordant harmony. We hope you enjoy your journey through our collection!



Opera - Jazz - Choir - Musical Theater

Drake University Summer Voice Intensive

Taking voices to the next stage.

June 8-12, 2026 | 9am-5:30pm
Final Performance 5:30pm on June 12
Ages 14 and up

Registration on: <http://DUVI2026.eventbrite.com>

Early bird pricing of \$400 available through May 26, 2026!

@devoiceintensive Drake University Summer Voice Intensive

Drake University
Harmon Fine Arts Center
1310 25th Street
Des Moines, IA 50322
515.271.3534
duvi@drake.edu



[Taking Voices to the Next Stage: 2026 Drake University Voice Intensive](#)

DUVI is a summertime camp designed for young singers ages 14+ to develop their voices and build confidence in performing and auditioning.

Know an aspiring musician who would like to join us?'

During this weeklong camp, students are invited to Drake University's campus to work with voice faculty and other professionals in the Department of Music. Students have the opportunity to enhance their vocal techniques, sing with ensembles, and meet peers with the same vocal music passion.

Additionally, students have opportunities to participate in opera scenes, jazz choir, or musical theatre scenes, while under the instruction of our renowned faculty.

Tag A&S on Your Social Media!



Please tag Arts & Sciences in your social media posts so we can share what you're up to. When you create your

post, add @DrakeUArtSci to tag us in Facebook, and @drakeartsci in 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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