

A Note From the Dean

Dear Colleagues,

As we settle into the new academic year, I am excited to share more details around one of our five strategic priorities: "Caring for Each Other." We will focus on ways to increase recognition and support for the many things you do and create a collaborative environment where everyone feels they can contribute and belong.

One way we demonstrate our care is through the **Faculty Development Grant (FDG)** opportunities. These grants provide essential support for professional growth, exciting collaborations, and ongoing research projects. Please note the various grant categories and let me know if you have any questions. The application deadline for FDG applications is October 31.

Celebrating our achievements and recognizing the hard work of our colleagues is another way we show care for one another. Our of our most prestigious events of the year is the upcoming **Stalnaker Lecture**, given by the 2025 Stalnaker Lecturer Dr. Maria Valdovinos, on October 16. The evening will be a great occasion for intellectual engagement with colleagues from across the Art and Sciences. We invite you join the **reception** in Levitt Hall after the lecture for further celebration and time together.

I would like us all to welcome our newest faculty members who have joined the College this fall. Check out their bios below, and if you see one of your new colleagues on campus, please invite them for a coffee or conversation!

Caring for our students goes beyond the classroom and includes mentorship and advising. I am so proud of how students in the College receive individualized attention and can rely on a network of support. We will finally have a full team of advising specialists and are looking at ways to optimize the **Blended Advising Model** and increase students' success. Every newsletter edition includes the **Advising Corner** with timely reminders and updates. A new internal Advising website has been created that provides additional support for both advisors and students.

Our care extends far beyond the Des Moines campus. I am thrilled to report that three of our faculty have begun teaching in China in our dual degree program at **Drake-Qingdao University United College!** This partnership took a lot of concerted effort, and the beginning of our teaching demonstrates everyone's commitment to global engagement and education. I am thrilled to welcome the second cohort of Chinese Bulldogs to our programs for a total of 360 students!

Finally, I would like to invite all of you to participate in the **All-College meeting** on September 26. This gathering is an excellent opportunity to build community and trust across the departments and offices, discuss new initiatives, and remind us of our common goals and priorities in the College of Arts and Sciences. Your presence and input are needed as we navigate the academic year together. I hope to see many of you there!

Here's to a great semester ahead, filled with care, collaboration, and mutual support!

Warmly,

Gesine



THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES PRESENTS

THE 41ST ANNUAL STALNAKER LECTURE

"How Did We Get Here? Undertreatment of, and Psychotropic Overprescription to, People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities"

THURSDAY, OCT. 16 6:00 P.M. SHESLOW AUDITORIUM

Reception to follow in Levitt Hall Free to Attend or stream live at tinyurl.com/mrx9n2me



Dr. Maria Valdovinos, Ellis and Nelle Levitt Distinguished Professor of Psychology

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are prescribed psychotropic medication at a level that is disproportionate to the general population. This presentation will discuss the factors that have influenced this pattern of prescription, the effectiveness of medication within this population, and policy changes that could provide greater access to preventative, supportive, and effective treatments for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Save the Date! Dr. Maria Valdovinos is presenting the 41st annual Stalnaker Lecture on October 16 at 6:00 PM in Sheslow Hall.

Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates

Date	Event/Activity	
Friday, September 19	J-Term and Spring 2026 schedules are due to the Dean's Office by 4:30 pm	
Friday, September 26	College-Wide Meeting, 2:00-4:00 pm, Library Reading Room	
Wednesday, October 1	Department recommendations for 2026 P&T Candidate due to the Dean	
Wednesday, October 1	Intent to apply for promotion to professor in fall 2026 due to the Dean/Chair	
Wednesday, October 1	Last day to submit proposal for new travel seminar to A&S Curriculum Committee for J- term 2027	
Friday-Sunday, October 3-5	Parents Weekend	
Friday, October 4	Admissions Event: Fall Saturday Visit Day	
Friday, October 10	Admissions Event: Fall Campus Preview Day	
Monday- Tuesday, October 13-14	Fall Break (classes do not meet)	
Thursday, October 16	41st Annual Stalnaker Lecture, 6:00 PM, Sheslow Hall, reception following in Levitt Hall	

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 Email: ask.as@drake.edu



Celebrating A&S Highlights

Arts and Sciences Welcomes New Faculty















Leland Aldridge, Visiting Assistant Professor of Physics

Dr. Leland Aldridge joins us from Gonzaga and Minnesota State University Moorhead. He received his PhD from the University of Connecticut and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Yale University. He specializes in the slowing and cooling of molecules using laser light and enjoys helping students connect theory and practice in their physics classes. Fun fact about Leland: Outside of physics, Leland enjoys constructing logic and crossword puzzles

Neal Endicott, Visiting Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition

Dr. Neal Endicott specializes in Music Theory and Composition. He holds a M.M. and a D.M.A. degree in composition and music theory from Michigan State University, as well as degrees in composition, business, and music performance from Western Michigan University. Before joining Drake, Neal served on the faculties of East Tennessee State University and Saginaw Valley State University. Neal's research blends creative composition and traditional scholarly work, focusing on the development of methodologies to diversify and modernize the undergraduate music theory curriculum. Fun Fact: Neal is a massive Francophile and enjoys discussing French music and cuisine.

Emilee Hart, Assistant Professor in ENSS, Zoo and Conservation Science

Dr. Emilee Hart specializes in Zoo and Conservation Science, focusing on behavioral endocrinology and hormonal monitoring techniques. She received her PhD in Biomedical Sciences – Human Evolutionary Biology from Kent State University. Before her time at Kent State, she worked at the Tulane National Primate Research Center in New Orleans, managing a primate breeding colony of over 5,000 monkeys and conducting health assessments. Emilee is exited to involve students in her research on reproductive health and wellness of animals in zoos. Emilee has nearly ten years of experience in theater and brings an engaging teaching style to her courses. Her dynamic approach has even led her fitness watch to classify her lectures as "aerobic exercise!"

Bryan Hummel, Visiting Assistant Director of Bands/Assistant Professor of Percussion

A proud Drake alum, Bryan Hummel returns to the Music Department to teach percussion and serve as Assistant Director of Bands. He graduated in 2014 with degrees in Percussion Performance and Music Education from Drake University and earned his Master of Music in Percussion Performance from Arizona State University. Bryan has a diverse teaching background. He has taught band and orchestra to elementary, middle, and high

school students, and served as instructor with athletic bands at Arizona State University. He is an active designer for the marching arts. Fun fact: Bryan and his fiancée, Nichole, are getting married next June!

Misha Winchester, Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre Costume Design

Misha Winchester brings a wealth of experience in costume design and education. She got her MFA in Theatre Costume Design and Technology from the University of South Dakota. She has taught costume design at the University of North Dakota, the University of Nevada, Reno, and at Truman State University. Misha is publishing her first book, a sewing how-to guide, this October. Fun fact about Misha: She was born the same year as Star trek and has been a Trekkie since then!

Lu Zhang, Professor of Practice in Data Analytics, Qingdao/Drake University United College

Dr. Lu Zhang joins the College of Arts and Sciences as an inaugural faculty member in the Data Analytics program at Drake/Qingdao University United College. She received her Master's in Applied Statistics from Anhui University in China and completed her Ph.D. at Northern Illinois University. Lu's background is deeply rooted in statistics—both in applying it to help people solve problems and in teaching the next generation about its power and versatility. Her research focuses on training machine learning models with high-frequency financial data, essentially exploring how AI can mimic financial trading strategies with probabilities. Fun fact: Lu moved to Qingdao a couple of weeks ago with her cat!

Lan Zhou, Professor of Practice in Biology, Qingdao/Drake University United College

Dr. Lan Zhou joins the College of Arts and Sciences as an inaugural faculty member in the Data Analytics program at Drake/Qingdao University United College. She brings 20 years of experience as a Research Scientist at DuPont Pioneer, where she was the lead scientist that discovered a new gene for the next generation of insecticidal products in corn and soybean. Lan Zhou received her BS in Biochemistry from Peking University in Beijing, China, her MS in Biochemistry of Plant Virology from Inner Mongolia University, and her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Iowa State University. Her teaching experience include teaching Biochemistry courses at DMACC. Fun fact: Lan and her husband own a Chinese restaurant called Jade Garden in Ankeny!

Dr. Ryan Sturms awarded grant from the National Science Foundation



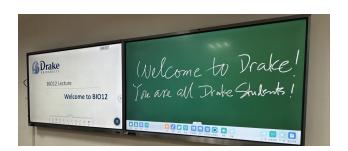
Dr. Ryan Sturms and Sydney Dvorak (B.S. 2025) at graduation earlier this year.

Dr. Ryan Sturms, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, was recently awarded a \$166,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study the hemoglobin proteins of mosses, liverworts, and hornworts. This competitive grant supports students in the Sturms lab as they examine the reactions and structures of these proteins and present their findings at national and international scientific meetings.

Additionally, the grant enables a partnership between Dr. Sturms and the Research Experience for Teachers (RET) program administered by Iowa State University. Through this collaboration, selected high school science teachers will come to Drake for summer research training in the Sturms Lab, coupled with professional development at Iowa State University. RET participants will take their research experiences and training back to their classrooms to encourage more students to enter the science fields following high school graduation.

Most recently, Dr. Sturms presented results collected by Sydney Dvorak (B.S. 2025) from the proof of concept for this grant at the 22nd International Conference on Oxygen Binding and Sensing Proteins hosted by the University of Essex.

Drake-Qingdao University United College Welcomes Its First Faculty Cohort



We are thrilled to announce the official launch of our faculty teaching in Qingdao! Just this week, College of Arts and Sciences professors have begun leading classes at the Drake-Qingdao University United College, marking an exciting new chapter in this global partnership.

Representing two departments, the inaugural faculty include **Dr. Alimoor Reza** (Math & Computer Science), **Dr. Lu Zhang** (Math & Computer Science), **Dr. Lan Zhou** (Biology), and **Dr. Nanci Ross** (Biology). Three of our colleagues have already arrived safely in Qingdao, settled into their new homes just two bus stops from campus, and met their Chinese colleagues and students in the Biology and Data Analytics programs.

With their expertise and enthusiasm, the Drake-Qingdao University United College is off to a fantastic start!

Congratulations and a big thank you to Drs. Reza, Zhang, Zhou, and Ross as they embark on this exciting journey, representing Drake University and enriching the educational experience for students in Qingdao!





Curriculum and Faculty Development Corner

The Center For Teaching and Learning is kicking off its 3rd Friday Event Series--Faculty in Community--on September 19.

Join faculty and staff colleagues to discuss teaching, scholarship, and higher education throughout the day in the Howard Hall Faculty Lounge (Room 212).

Upcoming Schedule for September 19

9:30-10:30 AM Books for Breakfast	Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning	
11:00 AM - Noon Research Talk	Dr. Sascha Crasnow , Assistant Professor of Art History, "Feminized Nationalist Imagery: Larissa Sansour's Short Films". Event will also be livestreamed on Zoom. Click to join.	
Noon-1:00 PM Teaching Brown Bag	Critical Teaching Behaviors. Event will also be livestreamed on Zoom. Click to join.	
2:00-3:00 PM Campus Conversation	Dr. Rachel Paine Caufield (A&S) and Dr. Craige Wrenn (CPHS) will discuss the landscape of open inquiry on university campuses today. This is a moderated discussion so feel free to bring questions or comments.	
3:30-5:00 PM Faculty Social	Happy Hour Refreshments	

You can find a full schedule for the upcoming month at the CTL News & Events page.



2025-2026 Faculty Development Grant Applications open through October 31

The College of Arts & Sciences offers support for research, scholarly work, grant writing, pedagogical development, and creative endeavors (submit by October 31, 2025).

Collaborative Projects (up to \$2,500) These grants are available to two or more faculty who are working on a joint project: reading groups, conference planning, curriculum revision and development, and so on. Funds may be used to purchase materials and/or compensate student research assistants.

Teaching/Scholarship/Research Projects (up to \$2,000) These grants provide faculty with support for research, creative activity, writing projects, and pedagogical development. Grants may be used to purchase materials (books, software, permissions, supplies), support project-related travel (libraries, laboratories, archives, sites, etc.), and/or compensate student research assistants.

Professional Activities Small Grant (up to \$300) This easy-to-apply-for grant provides funds for faculty to purchase items related to professional activities (e.g., books, software, permissions, instrumentation fees, facility admission, teaching/research supplies, subscriptions, honorariums, publication charges).

Access the Faculty Development Grant Proposal Form Here



Admissions Corner

Thank you for offering faculty appointments for visiting high school juniors, seniors, and transfers. We promote the opportunity for students to have a faculty appointment during their campus visit and share they must request the appointment 2 weeks in advance.

Here is some data regarding effectiveness of last cycle's Individual Visits:

Between Sept – May, 837 students attended an individual visit of which 436 were entering seniors. Of these 436 seniors, 251 **did not** have a faculty visit and 179 students **did** have a faculty visit. (41% of the visitors had a faculty appointment)

- Of the 251 seniors who DID NOT have a faculty appointment during their visit, 199 applied (79.3%) and 86 enrolled (43.2%).
- Of the 179 seniors who DID have a faculty appointment, 139 applied (77.7%) and 67 enrolled (48.2%)
- In sum, the seniors who had a faculty appointment enrolled at a 5% higher rate than those who did not.

Amy Guiter, Campus Visit Coordinator, will continue to reach out to the respective college/school/department contacts as students request faculty appointments.

Fridays continue to be the most popular day for students/families to visit. As an added enhancement, **Fridays** with **Griff**, offer morning visitors the opportunity to attend a student panel (12 – 12:30 PM) and see Griff, as well as enjoy an Admission Overview, campus tour, lunch on campus and, if requested 2 weeks in advance, a faculty appointment. Fall Fridays with Griff dates are: **September 26, October 3, October 24, October 31, November 14, November 21, December 5.**

Please consult this <u>compiled summary of Fall 2025 Admissions Visit Days</u> for a quick snapshot of events. Thank you for all the work you do to promote Drake in a positive way!



Student Support Corner

A Gentle Reminder, Meeting with Advisees

If you serve as a Faculty Mentor this semester, please send an email message as a mentor to welcome your entering first-year and/or transfer mentees, providing them with information about your office location and office hours, and inviting them for a meeting individually or as a cohort.

Send a similar message to continuing mentees, welcoming them back. Sent early in the semester, your messages will hopefully help cultivate a sense of belonging and aid in creating meaningful connections with your mentees for the rest of the academic year.

Early Alert

If you have any student concerns, please use Starfish to raise a flag. Early alerts help identify at-risk students and share that information with advisors and other student support staff on campus. Allowing for timely intervention, this has proven benefits for retention and graduation rates.

Graduation and Commencement Applications

It's imperative that faculty mentors urge students to check and verify their graduation date in the system. If the student is planning on graduating early, they must fill out a change of record form: **MyDrake**→ **Student Records** → **Change of Record Request**. With the graduation application, students will not be prompted to, or be able to see, the graduation application until the semester before their recorded graduation date in Banner and then, only if their graduation date is accurately listed. Our office and the Registrar's Office have reached out to December 2025 graduates with information on applying for graduation.

As a reminder, there will be no December 2025 commencement ceremony, but all students graduating in December 2025 will be invited to attend the May 2026 commencement ceremony.

But, they validated and are now ghosting...

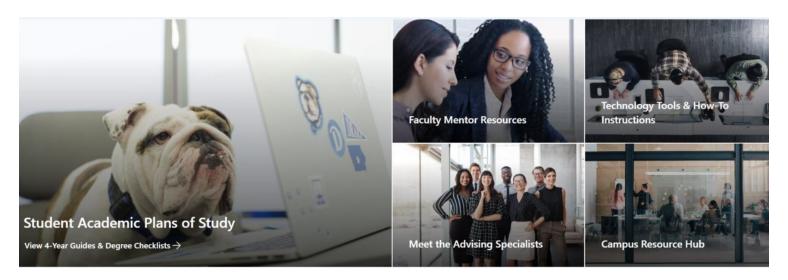
Please send the student's name to <u>studentsupport.as@drake.edu</u>. We will reach out to the student to finalize their enrollment. This is also important to make sure that the student is ok and safe.

Tutoring Services

<u>Tutoring services</u> are available for course-based support in the areas of actuarial science, accounting, biology, chemistry, computer science, economics, organic chemistry, physics, math, Spanish, and statistics. The resources of the Writing Center are also available to all students in any course. Students can sign up directly for tutoring associated with courses they are registered for via Starfish.

The Writing Center opens this week.

Students can schedule an appointment via Starfish. The Writing Center is directed by a faculty member and staffed by undergraduate students who are trained to tutor. Writing Center tutors are experienced writers and friendly critics who can help students with essays, reports, or research papers.



New Internal Advising Website!

The new website is a centralized resource for students, faculty, and staff on various advising-related topics. The site includes information regarding best practices in faculty and staff advising, resources for students and faculty mentors, and other helpful information. This is a work in progress, and the Office of Advising will continue to develop the site as the blended advising model is fully implemented and evolves. Students, Faculty Mentors, Assistant/Associate Deans, and Advising Specialists can access the website via myDrake \rightarrow Internal Sites \rightarrow Academic Services \rightarrow Advising & Mentoring or directly using this link (note that you may need to log in with your Drake credentials to access the site through the link).

First-Generation Resource:

Did you know that **First-generation students** make up 20% of Drake's new student population? Drake defines a first-generation student as a college student whose parents/legal guardians have not received a bachelor's degree from a four-year university. In an effort to make more connections between first gen students and first gen

faculty/staff, the University has a distribution list of first gen faculty/staff members to share information about opportunities to support our first gen students. **If you identify as first-generation faculty or staff and would like to be listed on this directory**, please email **Marina Verlengia**, Director of New Student and Family Programs, at marina.verlengia@drake.edu.

Reminder: Faculty Mentor Overview

A forum for new and continuing Faculty Mentors will be offered by the A&S Dean's Office on Friday, September 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in C-S 135. Second-year tenure-track faculty are required to attend. All faculty mentors are welcome and encouraged to attend. Given the many advising-related policy changes recently implemented or soon to come, we hope that each department/program can have at least one representative at the event. Lunch will be served. If you can only make a portion of the overview – that's ok, please come as your schedule allows! To confirm your space and reserve a lunch, please contact Adina Kilpatrick at adina.kilpatrick@drake.edu before Friday, September 19.



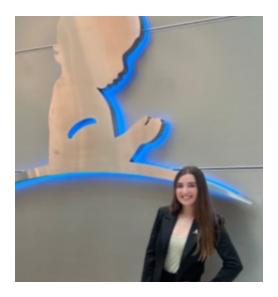
Career Services Update from Rebecca Muntz, Assistant Director and Liaison to Arts and Sciences

Bringing True Blue Skills to Life

Drake's <u>True Blue Skills</u> are a set of core competencies designed to prepare students for success in their careers, communities, and personal lives. Faculty and staff play a vital role in helping students recognize and develop these skills in real-world contexts.

Looking for a quick and meaningful way to reinforce these competencies? Use **Starfish** to give students **True Blue Skill Kudos** when you see them demonstrating excellence in any of the skill areas. Whether it's a thoughtful class contribution, a team project win, or a moment of integrity, your recognition helps students connect their efforts to lifelong skills.

Intern Spotlight: Jenna Steffl



Major: Mathematics, BCMB

Internship: Pediatric Oncology Education Student Researcher at St. Jude Children's Hospital

What was the most valuable thing you learned during your internship?

During my time at St. Jude, I gained a deep understanding of the scientific process. I participated in method development, contributed to the FDA clearance process, drafted a manuscript, and gave an oral presentation of my work. Most importantly, I became confident working in an academic research environment and learned how to effectively share my work with others.

Know a student who completed an internship this summer? Send them our <u>internship survey</u>, so we can include them in future opportunities to share about their internship with other students, faculty, and staff.

Upcoming Events		
Business & Technology Career Fair	Fri, Sep 12, 10am–12pm, Upper Olmsted	Open to all students, though focused on business and tech roles.
Design Your Path: A Career and Major Exploration Workshop	Tues, Sep 30, 4-5pm, JSC 250 Hayes Student Commons	A hands-on session to help open- enrolled and exploring students map out possible paths.

In Memorium: John Canarina, May 19, 1934 - August 25, 2025



The College of Arts and Sciences mourns the loss of John Canarina, who died on August 25. Many of you will fondly remember John as the charismatic conductor and Director of Orchestra Studies at Drake for 35 years. In his long tenure at Drake, Maetro Canarina left an indelible mark on the Drake Symphony Orchestra with his vision and commitment to undergraduate education.

John's obituary can be found here.

In a beautiful tribute to John's legacy, an alum approached the college last year with a desire to honor his former teacher. He initiated a social media campaign and raised funds to commission a portrait of John Canarina. The chosen artist was Dave Marcet, also a Drake Art & Design alum. The portrait now graces Monroe Recital Hall, a testament to John's enduring influence and the profound impact he had on his students.

In Memorium: Donald Stratton, January 6, 1941 - August 3, 2025



The College of Arts and Sciences mourns the passing of another dear colleague, Professor Emeritus Don Stratton. Don taught for many years in the Biology department, was named Ellis and Nelle Levitt Professor of Physiology, and dedicated decades of his career to Drake University until his retirement in 2005.

Professor Stratton was a beloved teacher and a passionate biomedical scientist. His commitment to education and science left a lasting impact on many generations of students. He was recognized for his excellence in teaching with the prestigious Arts and Sciences Teacher of the Year award.

Don's obituary can be found <u>here</u>. Please join me in remembering our colleague Don Stratton, his contributions to Drake, and the positive influence he had on so many students and people around him.



Upcoming Events

Drake Municipal Observatory

FALL 2025 SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 19:

The Sky (Fall & Winter)

SEPTEMBER 26:

Drake Municipal Observatory: A Century of Public Astronomy

OCTOBER 3:

The Herschels: A Remarkable Family

OCTOBER 10:

Are We Inside a Gigantic Black Hole?

OCTOBER 17:

The Hubble Tension: Why is Hubble So Tense?

OCTOBER 24:

The History of Spectroscopy: Guest Speaker Dr. Robinson Yost

OCTOBER 31:

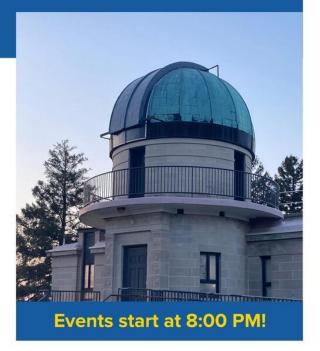
Open Topic Night

NOVEMBER 7:

Extraterrestrials: Where Are They?

drake.edu/observatory/publicevents





Come visit the Drake Municipal Observatory, located on the Waveland Golf Course!

Drake University hosts public educational events at the Municipal Observatory. Visitors can expect an Astronomy lesson followed stargazing, weather permitting. Children younger than 15 need to be accompanied by an adult Admission is free to everyone!

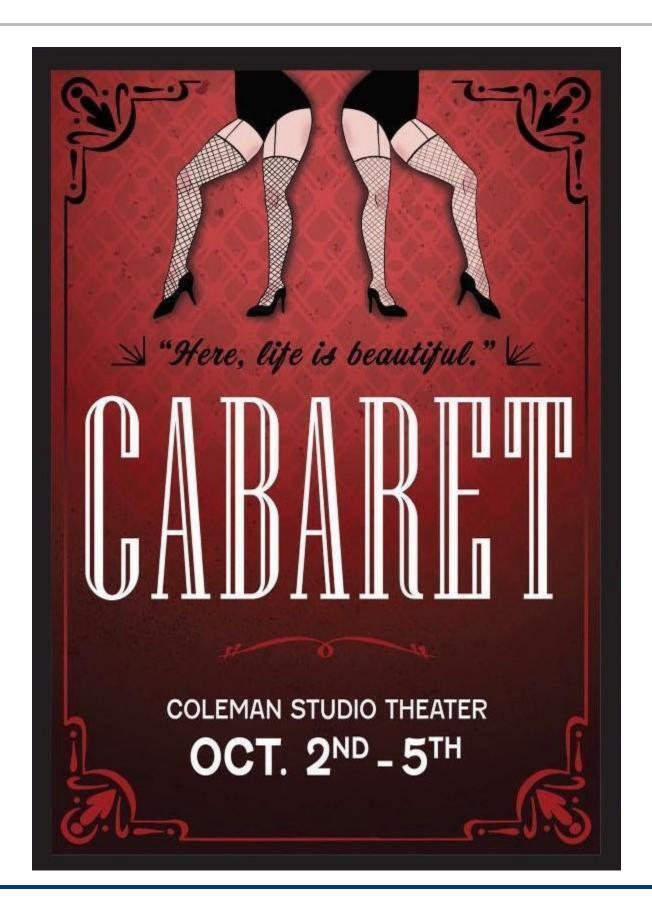
If you have any questions, please contact us at: 515-271-2174 or physics@drake.edu



AUTHOR READING EVENT: Rachel Yoder, Author of "NightBitch" followed by a MOVIE SCREENING **Cowles Library Reading Room, Followed by Sussman Theatre October 2, 2025, 6:00 PM**

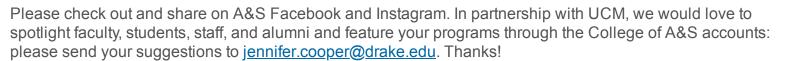
The Department of English, through the Susan Glaspell Writers and Critics Series, along with the Center for Humanities and Women's and Gender Studies, is excited to bring **Rachel Yoder**, author of "NightBitch" to Drake campus on October 2, 2025. "We are thrilled to welcome Rachel Yoder to campus. It's especially meaningful to host a writer who is part of lowa's vibrant literary community and who demonstrates the incredible depth of talent right here in our state," said **Yasmina Madden**, Associate Professor of English.

The author will be at Cowles Library Reading Room for an Author Reading event from 6:00-7:00 PM, and there will be a showing of the movie at 7:00 PM in Sussman Theatre. The book has been described as "magical satire" about the transitions of motherhood. The event is free and open to the public. Movie details in the "Events"









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