





COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dean: Dr. Katrina Bell-Jordan
Associate Dean: Dr. Sudha Srinivas
Associate Dean: Dr. Timothy Libretti

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Placeholder for Executive Summary

Annual Report 2021 – 2022

Submitted by Lesa Davis

I. Executive Summary

The Anthropology Department provides a robust and relevant academic program emphasizing student success and field and research opportunities across the three subfields of anthropology: cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, and archaeology. As the study of what it means to be human, anthropology combines humanistic, interpretive, and scientific approaches with methods and theories of the natural and social sciences, and the humanities. Anthropology faculty and instructors bring their research expertise from the field and lab into the classroom.

Faculty

During the 2020-2019 academic year, anthropology had four tenure line Anthropology faculty members, all full professors: Tracy Luedke (cultural anthropology), Jon Hageman (archaeology), Lesa Davis (biological anthropology), and Russell Zanca (cultural anthropology). Anthropology is interdisciplinary and by nature and our faculty serve key roles in other programs as well:

Luedke continues as the founding Coordinator of the Global Studies (GS) program and teaches GS and Honors Program classes in addition to anthropology courses. She also plays an active part in NEIU's CHEC grant.

Hageman serves as the Coordinator of the University Honors Program, teaching for

both UHP (fall) and ANTH (spring).

Davis serves as chair of the combined Anthropology, English Language Program, Global Studies, Philosophy, TESOL, and SAELL Department.

Program Activities

This year anthropology was invited to showcase biological anthropology in the 5th Annual Women in Science Conference sponsored by Chicago CHEC, Center of Health, and NEIU. Instead of highlighting one researcher Davis and Luedke worked to bring in three whose work addressed both natural science and social science issues. Jill Pruett, Ph.D. (behavioral ecologist working on a unique population of chimpanzees in Senegal); Jada Benn Torres, Ph.D., genetic anthropologist noted for her decolonizing approach in genetics, spoke on health disparities and genetic ancestry of peoples of African peoples in the Americas; and Ann Ross, Ph.D., forensic anthropologist who ardently critiques common approaches to estimating ancestry in human bone. The three scientists each had separate visits and not only gave a public talk, but also met with students to talk about careers in biological anthropology. Each talk was set as a webinar so students and faculty could Zoom in from around the globe. Each visit was a wonderful success and we are grateful to Chicago CHEC staff for their generosity in funding the events.

II. Program Plan

A. Long term goals

NEIU Anthropology's long-term plans are underway to reshape our program and curriculum to highlight the connections across the three subfields. We believe the strength of anthropology and its utility in the world lies within the perspective that draws from all three subfields, instead of three distinct perspectives. The benefits of this approach were first realized in the team-taught course developed by Luedke and Davis, *ANTH 343 Anthropology of the Body*. This unique and successful course looks at topics related to the body and considers them from both cultural anthropology and biological anthropology perspectives.

Our plans to implement our online Anthropology major are well on their way. It will feature the above-described cross-subfield connections with the added experience of internships and field experiences in the student's area of choice. These two components of an online degree will set the NEIU Anthropology online degree apart from all other online anthropology degrees in the U.S. and has the potential for drawing in student scholars and lay people interested in anthropology alike. We made great curricular strides this year and next year will re-focus on building the archaeology component in the coming year. Our goals are in sync with President Gibson's commitment to creating more online degrees at NEIU and our new program is well-articulated with the Baccalaureate Goals, and the University Mission, Vision, and Values. While we regularly modify, adjust, and update our program and add new courses, we have not undergone a wholesale program revision since 2004 when we shifted focus towards balancing our program requirements equally across the three subfields. Our current efforts to highlight connections between the subfields in an online modality is equally as big and exciting.

B. Projected needs

1. Faculty: Archaeologist with expertise in historical archaeology, urban archaeology, or similar. Specifically, we would like to hire an archaeologist who could develop an archaeological field school in the Chicago area. Archaeology, like the rest of anthropology has many natural connections with other fields of study and a combined hire in Archaeology and History or Art or Environmental Science would serve Anthropology and the University quite well.
2. Equipment: The media console and technology in our dedicated classroom (BBH 156) needs significant updates.
3. Other Resources: Renovation for the Anthropology Lab (BBH 125) to include separated workspaces, plumbing, and venting for both faculty and student research.

III. Accomplishments

A. Faculty Research/Creative Activities

3. Articles and Abstracts, Local Exhibitions or Performances Zanca

R. 2021. "Writing about Peoples: the Good of Anthropology for Central Asian Studies," *Central Asian Survey* 40:4, pp. 523-538

4. Conference Presentations, Group Shows

Zanca, R. 2022. Invited Keynote Speaker, 5th Workshop of the Heritage Alliance of the New Silk Road at Nazarbayev University, Astana, Kazakhstan (Nov. 4-5)

6. Service

Luedke: Editorial Board *Journal of Religion in Africa*

Annual Report 2021-2022

Submitted by Kim Ambriz

Executive Summary

The Art + Design Department continues to provide a comprehensive liberal arts degree in Art (BA), with concentrations in Studio Art, Art History and Art Education, as well as a professional degree in the applied field of Graphic Design (BFA). We also offer an array of minors that focus on fine and applied art and art history (Interaction Design, Photography, Graphic Design, Studio Art, Art History). As a small department in a public university, we house a full range of disciplines with studios and faculty to match, and have earned the university accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). The department was scheduled to undergo a ten-year comprehensive accreditation review in Fall 2021, and has since moved the visit to Fall 2022.

As the university returned to in-person operations this year, the main focus of department efforts in FY22 was instruction, student support and the continued

implementation of studio safety protocols in relation to Covid-19. In Fall 2021, we welcomed our students back to the department and successfully resumed in-person instruction, which took some review and planning. Since we held select Hybrid classes with in-person instruction during the remote 2020-2021 academic year, we were prepared to engage with our faculty and help them navigate a full return to the studios. Most of our dedicated spaces already had Covid-19 studio safety policies in place and we were able keep and update those precautions as well as review and produce safety plans for spaces that were not used during 2020-2021. The Art + Design department was also a resource and offered insight and guidance to other departments as they navigated a return to in-person instruction.

During the academic year, we did not completely dive back into community connections and off campus activities and instead concentrated on returning a sense of community back into the department; our energy was focused on our students first and foremost. An immediate goal was to foster community and through consistently showcasing student work, we created a dynamic visual presence in the department. We immediately reinstated the scholarship exhibition each semester as well as encouraged faculty to mount class exhibitions of current work produced in the studios. The department also participated in the **Week of Joy/Joy and Wellness Series** by setting up the **Art Lounge**, an event that was initially planned to fully take place outdoors on the University Commons and eventually had some aspects moved inside due to weather. The main event at the Art Lounge was an outdoor projection mapped slideshow of artwork onto the BBH building. Facilitated and designed by graphic design faculty member, Lauren Meranda, a university-wide call for artwork went out and the resulting submissions were assembled into a slideshow and designed specifically to project onto the façade of the BBH building. The remainder of the event was held indoors and included food as well as a group of students and faculty deejaying an all vinyl set in the Golden Eagles room.

After closing in March 2020, **The Fine Arts Center Gallery** reopened in Fall 2021. The gallery is an extension of the department and serves as a direct resource and compliment to the curriculum and we were excited to be able to revisit the gallery biannual visiting artist program. For one week during the Spring 2022 semester, artist Lydia Diemer worked with three classes to produce a collaborative piece on one wall of the gallery as part of her overall exhibition. Students interacted with a professional artist, gained new studio skills, worked collaboratively and were able to be part of a professional exhibition. A few students even contributed to the artist talk that accompanied the exhibition.

In FY 22, we continued to be involved in the **Illinois Higher Education Art Association** (IHEAA) and attended the annual meeting that brings together representatives from Illinois two-year and four-year institutions. The department also continued to work in an advisory capacity to the **North River Commission** and has plans to collaborate on future community-based projects with the NRC Arts committee. The department continued its relationship with the **Artists' Cooperative Residency and Exhibitions (ACRE)** and the **Alumni Scholarship** offered through the organization. This scholarship covers the cost of attendance for one alum to attend a two-week artist residency. This residency award is competitive and provides studio time and room and board to complete work and to conduct studio research and experiment,

all in a setting free of interruptions. **James Welch (BA '18)**, recent MFA in New Media from University of Kansas - Lawrence, completed the residency this year.

The **Summer 2022 Mural Painting Class** installed a public mural in River Park along the North Shore Channel Trail, underneath the bridge over the Chicago River at Foster and Albany Ave. In collaboration with The River Lab and supported by Alderman Andre Vasquez in the 40th ward, the mural was inspired by native plants and wildlife of the surrounding area since the City of Chicago has invested in the area to revitalize the ecosystem. Many bird species have returned permanently to the area such as the Black Crown Night Heron, Bank Swallow, Downy Wood Pecker and Red Winged Black Bird and these species, along with native plant life, are included in the mural design.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, faculty continued to return to exhibiting work and participating in professional artistic activities, as many of these activities were beginning to shift back to an in-person environment. Along with faculty, our students continued to engage and participate in research and creative activities as well. **Graphic Design student Pedro Castillo** mounted a solo exhibition at Marwen that focused on his original typeface dedicated to and inspired by the Puerto Rican graphic artist, Lorenzo Homar. This year, the end-of-the-year department activities were truly celebratory and included a lively and well attended reception for the **Annual Student Art + Design Juried Exhibition** and for the pop-up exhibitions that were part of **Artravaganza**, an annual open studio and exhibition event that coincides with the juried show. One group of students held a live screenprinting event where they produced and sold tote bags onsite, and used the proceeds to purchase frames and supplies that fellow students are now able to sign out for exhibitions in order to keep costs down. Along with these end-of-the-semester activities, we had twenty-nine students mount senior capstone exhibitions across all disciplines and these same twenty-nine students presented at the **John Sargon Albazi Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium**. The department also continued its support of a student run website that fostered much needed community among students.

In Fall 2021, the department continued to see steady enrollment at 116 active majors and in reviewing our retention rates for Fall 2020 to Fall 2021: Art 83.8%, Graphic Design 100%, Graphic Design pre-major 90.9%, we are proud that we were able to support our students and help them progress in their programs throughout the last few tumultuous years. We continue to work on recruitment plans to bring us to the attention of students who seek a degree in Art or Design and are looking forward to reigniting recruitment plans that will include an Art + Design Saturday Open House, Saturday workshops for high school students, onsite workshops/visits to high school art classes and the two-year college juried art exhibition. In Summer 2022, the department took part in the **College of Art and Sciences Dual Enrollment initiative** and had a handful of high school students join the Drawing I class for college credit.

2021-2022 Academic Year Gallery Season Summary

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Fine Arts Center Gallery held eight exhibitions and a sale of student work in ten months (August 2021-June 2022). This summary will

focus on the programming and exhibitions of the last academic year and the continued goals of the gallery. All exhibitions (with the exception of the student sale and juried student exhibition) included a gallery talk and/or workshop given by the exhibiting artist(s). 1,491 visitors came to the gallery during the Fall 2021-Summer 2022 (through June) gallery season.

The gallery continues to be dedicated to expanding its outreach on and off campus with a special emphasis on reaching out to NEIU Art + Design Alumnae, continued collaboration with other departments and presenting the most current movements and practices occurring in contemporary art.

The Fall 2021 schedule began with the Exhibition ***What You Can See/Be*** by the Chicago Design Archive and the Chicago Design Club. The exhibition included work from a diverse pool of Chicago designers that charted their journeys from students to professionals. This show was designed and curated by NEIU Graphic Design students.

The second exhibition of the season was ***WDWM: On Love, Rage and Roses by Charles Ryan Long***. This was the second iteration of an ongoing project that is concerned with “what the artist saw as the crumbling of the settler colonial state and its attendant poisons: white supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy. This exhibition continued that invocation and hoped to provide the guideposts of LOVE, RAGE & ROSES as markers of how we continue towards the path of our collective liberation.”

The third exhibition of the fall season was by ***Katelyn Patton and Beth Reinke***. The collaborative project showcased immersive installations that mimicked the format of a natural history museum. The audience was invited to consider how contemporary society's values and actions will influence the future evolution of species.

At the end of the fall semester, the gallery hosted its annual ***Student Art Sale***. The popular sale provides students with the opportunity to have their work shown in the main gallery on campus and learn how to present, price and sell their artwork. Many people from all areas on campus come to the gallery at this time thus broadening our outreach to the university community.

The Spring 2022 gallery calendar of exhibitions opened with the ***Anything Can Be a Dragon, Anything Can Be a Snake***, a two-person exhibition of work by Kristin Abhalter Smith and Kristin McWharter. This multimedia exhibition was followed by ***Transparencies Also Cast Shadows by Lydia Diemer***. Lydia Diemer creates drawings, prints and installations that explore the entanglement of humans and nonhumans at the peripheries of built space. In collaboration with NEIU Art + Design students, Diemer used her collection of remnants, found and constructed, as a starting point to articulate the agency of nonhuman matter and compiled reflections on stasis, sheltering and precarity. She also gave an artist talk about her work as well as worked on a collaborative piece that was constructed with Art + Design students from three separate classes.

The gallery then hosted the ***Annual Juried Student Art + Design Exhibition***, a yearly juried exhibition of work in all media created by NEIU students with a declared major or minor in Studio Art or Graphic Design. This exhibition introduces students to

the process by which they will submit their work for exhibitions upon graduation and teaches students the practical aspects of presenting, pricing and selling their art for a profit. The exhibition was juried by Chicago artist Kristin Ablhalter-Smith.

The final exhibition of the Spring semester was ***Fracture: Data, Diagrams and the Material World***, curated by Millicent Kennedy and featured the work of Yoonmi Nam, Giovanna Pizzoferrato Ribeiro, Jonah Hoffman and Christina Kang. This exhibition featured four artists who measure, mediate, negate and reflect on our relationship to objects and the information compiled from them.

Finding Space by Yoonshin Park closed out the summer season at the gallery. Both sculptural and installation in nature, Finding Space is a close investigation of the relationship between anonymous individuals and their surrounding space. Drawing on her journey as a foreigner in different places, the installation is about experiencing invisibility within space and the vulnerability of being anonymous.

The gallery also welcomed a new Gallery Director in March of the 2022 season. Millicent Kennedy accepted the position and looks forward to collaborating with the department gallery committee on exhibition planning in the coming academic year.

Art + Design Department Student Merit Awards

Criterion: Art + Design students are given this award based on the evaluation of a work of art selected for the Annual Juried Art + Design Student Show. Each year a different juror is chosen from among Chicago area artists, critics and educators. This year's juror was Kristin Abhalter-Smith. Awards are based on technical ability, conceptual depth and/or aesthetic achievement. **Award:** Monetary

Recipients:

Best in Show: Brian Garbrecht
Best 2D: Alexa Ziemainin
Best 3D: Eva Naser
Honorable Mention: Mary Sheehan
Honorable Mention: Daniel Gomez

I. Program Plan

A. Long term goals

- Continue to update studio areas in response to contemporary trends in disciplines;
- Investigate options for an online/low residency Master of Arts in UI/UX; • Receive a tenure track position for a critical Art + Tech faculty hire; • Recruitment for all areas with a focus on the BFA in Graphic Design and Art Education;
- Plan for our Fall 2022 accreditation visit from the NASAD and successfully

- receive 10-year accreditation;
- Officially add the BFA in Graphic Design to our NASAD accreditation;
 - Provide updated technology and equipment to areas that need to remain current in the field;
 - Offer summer programming for high school students as well as programming during the traditional CPS high school schedule (weekends, spring breaks, etc.);
 - Put in place eight-week Saturday workshops for high school students (in planning stages with CAPE office);
 - Increase community-based initiatives;
 - Strengthen our Visiting Artist Program in the department;
 - Continue to review and propose curricular changes and new courses to better serve students and strengthen the program;
 - Continue to review Studio Safety Plans and continue to revise and keep up-to-date individual area safety manuals;
 - Move Studio Safety student contracts to a digital signature and access system via D2L; the studio safety “course” will be shared among faculty and students for ongoing access to safety materials;
 - Increase enrollment via recruitment efforts by actively reaching out to all two year institutions and area high schools via snail mail and digital outreach;
 - Continue recruitment efforts on and off campus with a focus on a Saturday Open House with activities each semester;
 - Foster community among Art + Design majors;
 - Continue to improve advising in the department;
 - Improve alumni relations and better tracking of alumni.

B. Program Plan Requirements/projected needs/short term

goals 1. Faculty

Art + Tech

An Art + Tech FT/TT is a priority and critical hire in the department. The Art + Tech area is embedded into our Graphic Design program and it is quite worrisome to be without a TP in this area. Many Art + Tech courses are part of the curriculum in the BFA in Graphic Design and in order to keep that area in the degree consistent, we absolutely need a replacement hire. The Art + Tech curriculum includes both studio and applied topics and all interactive web-based courses, courses that focus on digital arts and fabrication technology, motion based graphic design and UI/UX design. The Art + Tech TP works closely with the Graphic Design faculty to deliver contemporary content that directly relates to career readiness in the applied arts. While we have been getting by with adjuncts in the field, we need to have FT/TT faculty member in the position in order to successfully direct the Art + Tech area through planning, vision, expertise and full dedication to the program.

Ceramics/Painting & Drawing

As mentioned in the previous reports, each studio discipline in the department

has a FT/TT faculty member as the area head and the **Ceramics** area has been without a faculty member since 2011. The **Painting and Drawing** area has also been without a FT/TT faculty member since 2014. It is very important to have someone as the key faculty member since along with course load, each studio faculty member is responsible for their area and oversees anything from daily maintenance to improvements and updates. An area faculty member also serves as a point person and advisor to students in a given area. The ceramics concentration serves the studio art concentration, is a K-12 requirement and general education classes in ceramics are traditionally full. The painting and drawing concentrations are also without an area faculty member and enrollment and curriculum in the concentration has suffered as a result.

2. Equipment and Space

Additional Design Lab

The department continues to struggle with dedicated lab space for our Graphic Design program. We were fortunate enough to receive funding to purchase a mobile classroom of 22 laptops and this has helped enormously with scheduling. What we have found is that while we are now able to meet the demand of our course rotations and curriculum across the department programs that use Adobe CC and other discipline specific software, we are still falling short of open lab time for students to work on projects outside of class. Even though we have reconfigured spaces in the past, we have reached the end of that prospect and will need to expand beyond the space we have now. More and more curriculum) incorporates digital technologies and this is necessary to remain current in the field and to better prepare students as they graduate. We hope that the past space study will yield possibilities for an extra room to be granted to the department, specifically on the second floor of the FA building.

Adobe Creative Cloud Software

The department requests that the funding of the Adobe Creative Cloud software subscription the university has supported for the past two years with CARES/HEERF funding to be continued into FY23 and beyond. The CARES/HEERF funding has run out and we request university support on Adobe CC going forward as it is used across a handful of programs and is industry standard software for multiple disciplines. It is not feasible to cover the cost of the software through department budgets and we request that the university continue to support the yearly subscription.

Adobe Creative Cloud is the industry standard software in our entire BFA in Graphic Design, which is the professional degree in design at the undergraduate level. Over 75% of the BFA in Graphic Design relies on Adobe CC as an integral part (if not the basis) of the curriculum. Other areas in the department also rely on the software to deliver content and these include Digital Foundations, Photography and Art + Technology as well as a variety of studio areas that now infuse technology into the discipline.

Similar to CMT, the department had licenses that Academic Affairs has always supported and these licenses were tied to machines in our dedicated design labs.

Not only was this a more expensive model than the package the university purchased yearly over the past two years, but licenses were only available to students while in the lab and students and faculty continually ran into problems with logging in. With the remote model we have used over the past two years, students and faculty are very happy with the structure and it will be very hard to move back to the old model of licenses living only in labs. The department also has a mobile classroom that serves foundations, photography, graphic design and art + technology courses. The license structure we have had over the past few years allows this flexible mode of scheduling and option of scheduling classes outside of our labs, which currently cannot accommodate all courses that need to use Adobe CC.

II. Accomplishments

A. Faculty Research/Creative Activities

1. Books, National/International Exhibitions or Performances

Carreño, Dubhe

This Quiet Dust Ceramics: (Functional Ceramics by Dubhe Carreño),
Smithsonian Craft Show, Washington, DC.

Krueger, Deanna

48 Stunden Neukölln, Gallery UNO Projektraum, Berlin, Germany

Moreno, Sal

FILE Festival: Electronic Language International Festival, São Paulo, Brazil

Porterfield, Mary

Solo Exhibition, Phoenix Institute of Contemporary Art, Phoenix, AZ
(virtual) In Good Company, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art,
Scottsdale, AZ

Rosenheim, Nancy

Painting at Night, Collar Works, Troy, NY

Sačić, Vida

Residency:

Artists Print invitational residency, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT),
Rochester, NY

2. Book Chapters, Regional Exhibitions or Performances

Irwin, Todd

Southern Graphics Council International Publishers Fair, Madison, WI

Published Work:

Power Washer Zine Number 8, Published by Directangle Press, Bethlehem, NH

Porterfield, Mary

Rock Island Art Guild Exhibition, Figge Art Museum, Davenport, IA 5th Annual National Juried Exhibition, Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art, Wausau, WI

Award:

Honorable Mention, 5th Annual National Juried Exhibition, Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art, Wausau, WI

Xu, Shencheng

Gourd Man III and Fly, 2021-2023 CRE8IV Sculpture Biennial, Rockford, IL

3. Articles and Abstracts, Publications, Local Exhibitions or Performances and Awards:

Carreño, Dubhe

This Quiet Dust: "One-of-a-Kind Show," Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL This Quiet Dust Ceramics: (Functional Ceramics by Dubhe Carreño), Festival of the Trees Benefit, Northbrook, IL

This Quiet Dust Ceramics: (Functional Ceramics by Dubhe Carreño), Markets for Makers, Chicago, IL

Irwin, Todd

Flatstock 74, Pitchfork Music Festival, Chicago, IL

Bespoke Prints, The Other Art Fair, Chicago, IL

Commissions

White Mystery: Poster design and printing, Thalia Hall, Chicago, IL

Bethany Thomas: Poster design and printing, Fitzgeralds, Berwyn, IL

Bethany Thomas, Ted Leo, Material Flats secret show: Poster design and printing, Chicago, IL

United States Artists: Tote bag printing, Chicago, IL

Krueger, Deanna

FreshLens Chicago Benefit: Focus on the Future 2021, Hairpin Arts Center, Chicago, IL

Mathews, Nate

Year Nine, Side Street Studio Arts Gallery, Elgin, IL

Meranda, Lauren

Chicago Design Through the Decades, Art on theMart Projection Mapped Installation, Chicago, IL

The Happening, Projection Installation, sMART Museum, Chicago, IL

Applied Graphic Design Work:

Belonging: Place, Power, (Im)possibilities, Exhibition Design, Chicago Justice Gallery, Chicago, IL

National Public Housing Museum (Graphic & Exhibition Designer), NPHM, Chicago, IL
Just Action Equity (Interactive website / toolkit), Chicago United for Equity, Chicago, IL
Inequity for Sale (Interactive Database + Website), Tonika Lewis Johnson, Chicago, IL
Legally Stolen Podcast (Branding + Collateral), Tonika Lewis Johnson + Tiff Beatty, Chicago, IL
Chicagolandia Oral History Archive (Branding + Website), Antonio Ramirez, Chicago, IL
Energy Impact (Interactive Storytelling Website), Elevate, Chicago, IL

Lecture:

“It’s Friday with Lauren Meranda,” Elgin Community College, Elgin, IL

Moreno, Sal

PolyPlay, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL
Relay Freedom, Co Prosperity, Chicago, IL
Supersynthesis, Mu Gallery, Chicago, IL
A New Digital Deal, Ars Electronica, Chicago, IL
End of New Media Residency Show, Mana Contemporary, Chicago, IL
(virtual) *Relay Freedom*, Goethe Institute, Chicago, IL
Intertwined, Mana Contemporary, Chicago, IL
My Mother Was a Computer, New Media Caucus (virtual)

Residencies:

BOLT Residency, Chicago Artists Coalition, Chicago, IL
New Media Residency, Monira Foundation, Mana Contemporary, Chicago, IL

Grants and Awards:

Individual Artist Program Grant, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Chicago, IL
The Judson-Morrissey Excellence in New Media Award, New Media Caucus

Porterfield, Mary

10th Annual Art Competition, Bridgeport Art Center, Chicago, IL
Courage, Devonshire Cultural Center, Skokie, IL

Articles/Reviews:

Marc Vitali, *New Art Exhibition in Skokie Showcases Work of First Responders*, WTTW, March 14, 2022.
Lover’s Eye Press, Issue 2, November 30, 2021.

Rosenheim, Nancy

Sculpture Invasion, Koehline Museum of Art, Des Plaines, IL
Faculty Exhibition, Robert T. Wright Community Gallery of Art, Grayslake, IL

Sačić, Vida

Typeforce 12, Co-Prosperity Sphere, Chicago, IL
SEQUENCES, ITERATIONS, AND PERMUTATIONS (SIP), Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL
Vanderbeek Mural, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL
Press & Clay (solo show), Robert F. DeCaprio Gallery, Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills, IL
Snacktime Collective, Keep in Touch, Terrain Biennial 2021, Chicago, IL

Xu, Shencheng

Happy Family, Ronan Sculpture Park, Chicago, IL
Super Power #1 (Public Sculpture), Ek Automotive, Chicago, IL
Peace on Earth, The 20th Annual Chicago Sculpture Exhibit, Chicago, IL

6. Service

Mathews, Nate

Illinois Higher Education Art Association Board of Officers
Illinois Higher Education Art Association, Webmaster

Meranda, Lauren

Board of Directors, Chicago Design Archive

Sačić, Vida

Steering Committee, Letterpress Educators of Art and Design

Sieger, William

Peer review panelist, National Endowment for the Humanities Awards for Faculty Program

Xu, Shencheng

Board of Directors, Chicago Sculpture International

C. Alumni News

Graduate School

James Welch (BA '18) graduated from the MFA program in Expanded Media at University of Kansas, Lawrence. James received full funding for the duration of the program.

Katrina Ramirez (BA '19) graduated from the M.A. program in Clinical Psychology at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

Rabia Tayyabi (BA '19) is in her second year in the MFA program (New Media studies) at University of Illinois, Chicago.

Ashley Obmann (BA '20) is in her second year of graduate school at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology and is enrolled in the ADA Therapy program.

Christopher Tasior (BA '20) graduated from the MFA program in Sculpture at Columbia College, Chicago.

In other alumni news:

Samra Bashir (BA '22) mounted a solo exhibition at the Franklin Gallery at the Niles-Maine District Library.

Eloise Heinrich (BA'16) is an adjunct instructor in ceramics at Harper Community College.

Millicent Kennedy (BA '14) is currently the Curator of the NEIU Fine Arts Center Gallery, Co-Director of Parlour and Ramp Gallery and teaches printmaking classes at the Evanston Art Center.

Rachelle Hill (BA '14) is the Coordinator of Studio Programs and Labs as well as a Teaching Artist at **Marwen**. She is also on the board of the Chicago Printer's Guild.

Todd Irwin (BA '11) continues to run Bitmap Press, an independent, small screenprinting business in Chicago.

Will Velez (BA '09) is a general manager at Blick Art Materials. **James**

Welch (BA '18) completed an artist residency at ACRE in Steuben, WI.

Students with positions in the applied field of Graphic

Design: Felicia Akus (BA '16): Graphic Designer, ETi Solid State

Lighting, Inc. **Kristin Best (BA '11):** Graphic Designer, Art Institute of Chicago

Erica Briggans Jones (BA '14): Senior Designer, Retail + Experiential Design TULA Skincare

Christa Forgione (BA '16): Designer and Product Manager at Litera

Microsystems **Joey Grant (BA '16):** Senior Designer, Freeosk, Inc

Lou Newton (BA '14): Art Director, Publications International Ltd.

Sofia Park (BA '14): Senior Graphic Designer at Northwestern University - Kellogg School of Management

Rebecca Lang (formerly Price) (BA '14): Graphic Designer, Oak Park Library

Damian Loma (BA '16), Graphic Design Instructor at NEIU and Designer at

Aon **Rebecca Deimler** (BA '16), Loft Lucia, Manager and Designer

Lidiya Mutafchieva (BA '18), Marcom Manager - Graphic Design, Richard Wolf
Medical Instruments Corporation

Kate (Ryzhenko) Cherevko (BA '18), Visual Designer, Avande

Vitalii Emelianov (BFA, '20), Associate Graphic Designer, Art Institute of
Chicago

Thomas Wallace, (BFA, '19), Digital Production Designer & Animator at
SOCIALDEVIANT

Annual Report 2021 – 2022

Submitted by Jennifer Slate

I. Executive Summary

As one of the largest departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Biology was proud to teach at three campuses (Main Campus, El Centro, and Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies). During the Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer 2022 terms, biology courses generated nearly 6000 student credit hours (SCH), of which over 2000 were from general education courses that served students not only within our program but across NEIU. These courses were taught by a total of twenty-four full-time tenure-track faculty and Instructors, of which seventeen have taught at NEIU for at least a decade. Our faculty also taught courses for other programs, including Environmental Science, Public Health, Nontraditional Degree Programs, and Math, Science, and Technology for Quality Education (MSTQE).

Exemplary Faculty and Staff

We take great pride in the accolades received by biology faculty. **Dr. Pam Geddes**, a leader in the implementation of culturally relevant STEM pedagogies, was named the 2022 Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Professor. **Dr. Aaron Schirmer**, who has received national press on his research about the impact of sleep-wake cycles on behavior and physiology, earned the 2022 Bernard J. Brommel Distinguished Research Professor award. **Dr. Cindy Voisine**, who investigates aging and neurodegenerative diseases such as ALS and Parkinson's with the model animal *Caenorhabditis elegans*, was promoted to Full Professor with Exceptionality in the Area of Research. **Dr. Cheryl Park**, who led efforts to provide safe, in-person laboratory classes during the pandemic and who is currently providing career development workshops for students, received the

Senior Instructor designation.

Faculty were also awarded sabbaticals and internal research grants. In his sabbatical, **Dr. Jorge Cantú** will study neurofibromatosis, which causes brain tumors and affects 1 in 60,000 people, by modifying the gene that causes this disorder in an animal model, zebrafish. **Dr. Cantú** also received a Committee on Organized Research (COR) award. In her sabbatical, **Dr. Marijo Readey** will finish her book on the biological roots of bullying and other violence, in which she will explore why aggressive behaviors have evolved. **Dr. Emina Stojković's** sabbatical will focus on light-sensitive phytochrome proteins with medical significance due to potential to be used as fluorescent markers of protein activity in mammalian cells. **Drs. Elyse Bolterstein, Tom Campbell, Beth Reinke, Michael Stern, and Cindy Voisine** obtained grants from the Student Center for Science Engagement, through which they each mentored small groups of undergraduates conducting research projects throughout the summer of 2022.

We welcomed three new staff members to the department, who in their short time at NEIU have already contributed greatly to our program. **Israel Contreras Avila**, Administrative Aide, has enhanced both our social media outreach and our ability to collect and analyze data on student enrollment and retention. **Sara Crow**, Natural Sciences Technical Assistant, takes pride in working with faculty behind the scenes to prep laboratory exercises and train student workers to understand the science behind the equipment, solutions, and materials they help prepare. Our new Naturalist, **Martha Lopez-Salazar**, was hired from an extremely competitive field of over fifty applicants, filling a three-year vacancy. She manages NEIU's Gensburg-Markham Prairie, a designated Illinois Nature Preserve and a National Natural Landmark. We are very appreciative of the long-term, dedicated service to the Biology Department of **Tina Pennekamp** as Administrative Aide, who retired after more than thirty years at NEIU.

Academic Excellence and Innovation

Dr. Kara Nuss, with support of the Title V CASA grant from the National Science Foundation, led the implementation of Learning Assistants in foundation courses for the major: General Biology I (BIO 201) and General Biology II (BIO 202). In weekly training sessions, the Learning Assistants discussed articles and videos on topics including culturally relevant pedagogy, imposter syndrome, mindset, and inquiry-based learning. These upper-level undergraduates supported the classes by assisting with interactive lecture and lab activities. For example, after an icebreaker in which students shared regions of the world they were familiar with, either from living there or having family members there, the Learning Assistants developed a presentation that related those different regions to the ecological biomes students were learning about. The Learning Assistants also contributed in areas beyond instruction. They shared note taking and studying techniques, talked about events on campus to attend, and connecting personally through common background, such as by making other students who were also fasting during Ramadan feel comfortable. The Learning Assistants thus helped build an inclusive community. Dr. Nuss obtained IRB approval to collect data on how having a Learning Assistant in the class impacted students' mastery of material and their feelings about studying biology, and we look forward to using those data to further develop the program.

A committee of four biology faculty (**Drs. Elyse Bolterstein, Emily Rumschlag Booms, Tom Campbell, and Cheryl Park**) worked with Dr. Hector Morales from Teacher Education and Dr. Laurie Fuller from Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies to revise the curriculum of Essential Skills for Biologists (BIO 250). Taken by all incoming transfer students as well as students new to the major, this cornerstone course has the goal of setting up students for success in upper-level courses. The purpose of the revision was to align the course objectives with Vision and Change in Undergraduate Biology Education and to integrate culturally relevant pedagogy. The committee developed modules that allow faculty to teach laboratory techniques and data analysis through topics that are meaningful to students' daily lives. For example, in a module on diabetes, students conduct a database analysis of health disparities in Illinois and then do a lab-based experiment to test the impact of dietary supplements on diabetic fruit flies. In another module, students investigate and publicly report on the chemical composition of local waterways used for recreation and wildlife habitat, to understand how water pollution may disproportionately affect some communities. Assessment practices are student-centered (e.g., proficiency-based grading and flexible submission deadlines) to account for different needs. The goal is to increase student engagement and feelings of inclusivity and community amongst students new to the biology major, which will lead to greater retention and student success.

We also successfully submitted multiple curricular improvements through governance. **Drs. Jennifer Slate and Aaron Schirmer** worked with Drs. Emma Turian and Lidia Filus in the Department of Mathematics to create a Biomathematics Minor. Although any student can complete the minor, it is designed to particularly attract students majoring in mathematics, biology, and environmental science. The minor utilizes already existing courses and provides a mechanism for biology and environmental science students to strengthen quantitative ability and for math students to apply their skills to biological problems in health and environmental fields. **Dr. Joel Olfelt** developed a new course, Botany of Desire (BIO 306), to fulfill a need for ELE-X courses in STEM, and to utilize the greenhouse for teaching students from across the university. **Dr. Beth Reinke** collaborated with Lauren Meranda in the Department of Art & Design to elevate Design in Nature (BIO 302) from the 200- to 300-level and to cross list as ART 302 and STAM 302 to make it easier for students to find this ELE-X course in the catalog.

Finally, the entire department worked together to assess the integration of core competencies throughout our curriculum, to write DEI statements for courses, and to update course descriptions and prerequisites. We began this effort in the fall of 2021, in response to the visit of Dr. Ascan Koerner, who was invited by the College of Arts and Sciences to speak at the Faculty Institute on Core Competencies for Career Readiness. Nearly all biology faculty (a total of twenty TT faculty and instructors) reflected upon how they integrate ten core competencies into each of their courses, allowing the creation of a table that provided a visual guide for how we address these competencies throughout the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. This revealed a need to reflect further on how we engage diversity in our courses, prompting a department-wide effort in spring 2022 to write DEI statements for nearly 50 courses. During this process we also updated the course descriptions of 37 courses (many of which had typos and misspelled words from when descriptions were originally typed into the electronic

catalog), and reviewed and updated the prerequisites for 45 courses.

Enhanced University Operations

The hiring of a Naturalist allowed us to reestablish maintenance and restoration work at Gensburg-Markham Prairie. Located in Markham, Illinois, this 110-acre tallgrass prairie remnant is a Dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve and a National Natural Landmark. NEIU co-owns and co-manages Gensburg-Markham Prairie with The Nature Conservancy, with whom we recently updated our Memorandum of Understanding. NEIU and The Nature Conservancy worked together in the 1970s to save Gensburg Markham Prairie from development, and it now serves as an outdoor education laboratory for students and brings community connections to NEIU. In just a few months on the job, **Martha Lopez-Salazar** has coordinated with Chicago Academy of Sciences to monitor snake populations, with the Friends of the Chicago River to monitor bat populations, with the Field Museum of Natural History to preserve a fifty-year collection of rare insect specimens, and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to hand pollinate the endangered Prairie White Fringed Orchid. Martha has also led more than 100 people, including NEIU groups, local school children, and the public, on tours of the Gensburg-Markham Prairie. Martha says, “I enjoy connecting with people and building bridges between communities of color and nature. I am very happy to have joined the Biology Department’s team to preserve the prairie and include different groups of people in the process.”

Improvements to Biology Department space enhanced functionality and community. The expanding research program of **Dr. Jorge Cantú** necessitated new infrastructure, and we are grateful to Chicago CHEC for funding a new aquarium system to house the zebrafish that Dr. Cantú is using to study genes associated with human disease. To provide the necessary space, we retrofitted BBH-105, which was being used for storage, as a research lab. We also converted the underused computer lab in BBH-342, in which half of the decade-old desktop computers were broken, to a Biology Community Room where students, faculty, and staff can gather. This allowed us to move biology advising from a room that was only accessible via stairs to a welcoming environment where all could enter. Outside of advising hours, the room is used for by students for study groups, by faculty and staff for meeting with students, and by all as a break room. In a survey given shortly before the pandemic, 60% of students said that feeling a sense of community with the Biology Department was “important” or “very important” to them, and it is gratifying to now have a space for that community building to occur. We thank **Kip Conwell** (Biology Lab Manager), **Sara Crow** (Natural Sciences Technician) and **Israel Contreras Avila** (Administrative Aide) for working with the student prep staff to make these space improvements happen!

We reestablished in-person events. At the popular plant sale, which attracted over 100 people from NEIU and the neighborhood community, we sold a wide variety of plants for the garden and home. All of the plants were grown in the Biology Department’s greenhouse and we raised over \$3000. For in-person student recruitment events, **Drs. Olfelt** and **Habib** led activities in our greenhouse and cadaver lab. Over eighty students from Von Steuben and Senn high schools visited. Drachler Scholarship Award winner Helena Puccini de Castro also led students from Harper Community College’s Honors

Program on a tour of the department, during which she demonstrated her research with nematode worms with the fluorescent microscope. **Drs. Emily Booms, Tom Campbell,** and **Beth Reinke** participated in in-person recruitment events at Triton College in which they shared information about our program and about the research opportunities available to transfer students at NEIU. **Dr. Beth Reinke** also led students on an Alternative Spring Break trip to Miami, Florida, for a week-long service learning project on urban gardens and coastal environmental issues.

Finally, we continued the Biology Department Seminar series, with a mix of in-person and Zoom talks that each attracted more than fifty students, faculty, and staff. Dr. Seth Magle, Director of the Urban Wildlife Institute at Lincoln Park Zoo, spoke on Zoom about, "The Urban Wildlife Institute: Exploring Wildlife in Chicago and Around the World." **Dr. Emina Stojković** presented a virtual seminar on her research, "Light Control of Cell Development: Structural Insights from Transient Intermediates in the Phytochrome Photocycle." The MARC grant sponsored the virtual keynote talk by Dr. Sam Halsey at the SCSE Symposium, "Using the Past to Inform the Present and Future in both Career and Research." MARC also sponsored two in-person seminar events. **Dr. Jorge A. Cantú** spoke on, "Rewriting The Ancient Code: Genome Editing with Crispr/Cas9." Dr. Gustavo Arrizabalaga visited from Indiana University School of Medicine to speak on, "*Toxoplasma gondii* and its shape-shifting mitochondrion."

Fiscal Strength

We continued our successful fundraising efforts for the Drachler Biology Scholarship, with social media and email campaigns that included video and student testimonials. NEIU alum Dr. Mickey Drachler, who established the scholarship, generously doubled all gifts, allowing us to raise a total of \$7800 for #GivingTuesday and #ProudToBeNEIU. This addition to the fund's principal allowed us to double the number of scholarships, and to also reinstitute biology student awards. We gave two \$1000 scholarships to academically talented students with financial need. We also gave an Outstanding Biology Student Award, an Excellence in Service Award, and three General Biology Awards to accomplished students, each of whom received a copy of the book The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, signed by all faculty.

Biology faculty continued their success in obtaining and administering external grants, with awards totaling over \$5 million. These grants are described here and in the following two sections (Student Success and Urban Leadership). **Dr. Pam Geddes** is P.I. of a Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grant (\$275,000, United States Department of Agriculture), with Dr. Ken Voglesonger from Earth Science and Dr. Ken Nicholson from Chemistry. They funded the summer 2022 internships of four NEIU undergraduate students, who were placed at the National Soil Erosion Research Laboratory in West Lafayette, Indiana and at the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria, Illinois. **Dr. Emina Stojković** continued her work on the BioXFEL grant (\$256,000, National Science Foundation), which allowed two undergraduate students (biology major Isaiah Thomas and chemistry major Viridiana Leon) to travel to Stanford University in February 2022 to use the Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS) X-ray to analyze protein structure. The BioXFEL grant also supported the research of graduate student Denisse Feliz, who successfully defended her M.S.

thesis in the Department of Chemistry in August, 2021. **Dr. Aaron Schirmer** (co-P.I.) and **Dr. Cindy Voisine** (Senior Personnel) received an incubator grant with Dr. Nicholas Miller from Illinois Institute of Technology and Dr. Molly McDonough (\$75,000, National Science Foundation). With this grant, Dr. Schirmer developed two Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences (CUREs) that utilize the KBase data platform to analyze novel microbial genomes. A CURE is a project that engages a whole class of students in addressing a research question that is of interest to the scientific community, and Dr. Cindy Voisine is surveying the students who are conducting the CURE projects within their classes to assess growth in their scientific skills and attitudes as scientists. Finally, **Dr. Beth Reinke** received a \$7000 award from the Animal Behavior Society to develop a Peer Mentoring Circles workshop for graduate students and early career researchers in minoritized groups.

Student Success

Biology faculty were honored that three of their nominees were chosen for prestigious awards. **Kimberly Nu-Tall** (B.S. Biology, 2022) was named Student Laureate by the Lincoln Academy of Illinois, an honor given to only one graduating senior each year for extraordinary service, academic success, and extracurricular achievements. In addition, Kimberly was chosen for NEIU's Future Alumni Leader Award. We are also very proud of **Isaiah Thomas** (Expected B.S. Biology 2023), who received the Dr. Wamucii Njogu Outstanding Student Award and was honored at NEIU's 20th Annual Black Heritage Awards ceremony. Finally, **Dr. Samniqueka Halsey** (B.S. Biology, 2011) received NEIU's Outstanding G.O.L.D. (Graduates of the Last Decade) award. After graduating from NEIU, she obtained an M.S. degree from Chicago State University and a PhD degree from University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Halsey is now an Assistant Professor at University of Missouri. In addition to an impressive record of eleven publications in highly regarded peer-reviewed journals, Dr. Halsey conducts community outreach to engage young people in STEM. Dr. Halsey was also the keynote speaker at the NEIU Student Center for Science Engagement 13th Annual Research Symposium.

The Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC) program graduated four biology students who matriculated into PhD or postbaccalaureate programs. The MARC grant (\$1.35 million, funded by the National Institutes of Health) provides financial support and training for undergraduate students in biomedical and/or behavioral research, and is directed by **Dr. Emina Stojković** (with Dr. Breckie Church from Psychology and Dr. Joe Hibdon from Mathematics). Of the four graduating MARC scholars (all first generation college students who identify as Hispanic), three began PhD programs in Fall 2022 and one is in a postbaccalaureate program. All of these students conducted research for at least two years in the laboratories of biology faculty. Rogelio Alvarado (mentored by **Dr. Cindy Voisine**) is in the Interdisciplinary Biological Sciences PhD program at Northwestern University. Rut Ortiz (mentored by **Dr. Elyse Bolterstein**) is in the PhD program in Pathology and Mechanisms of Disease at Columbia University. Erica Belloso (mentored by **Dr. Jennifer Slate**) is in the Plant Biology Ph.D. program at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Christina Rouhotas (mentored by **Dr. Jorge Cantú**) is in the Chem-H postbaccalaureate program at Stanford University.

The *Agua en Comunidades Experimentales* (ACE) program (\$1.5 million, funded by the

National Science Foundation) enabled first-year students who placed into developmental math, writing and/or reading courses to conduct scientific research. Directed by **Dr. Pam Geddes** (along with Dr. Ken Voglesonger from Earth Science and Dr. Shannon Saszik from Psychology), the students designed and conducted an original research project to lower nitrate pollution in water. Introducing students to research early in their college career teaches essential scientific and quantitative skills while fostering a sense of belonging and self-identity as a scientist. More than half of the students who participated in ACE during the 2021-2022 academic year went on to summer internships (e.g., with the Shedd Aquarium and with the United States Department of Agriculture) or continued on to do additional research in a faculty mentor's lab.

Urban Leadership

Biology faculty are working with future and current teachers in high-needs Chicago Public Schools on STEM pedagogy. **Dr. Joel Olfelt** (along with Dr. Huseyin Colak of Educational Inquiry and Curriculum Studies and Dr. Matt Graham of Mathematics) is co-directing the Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program (National Science Foundation, \$1.45 million). This collaboration with Truman and Wright community colleges recruits and trains STEM students to become science and math teachers. The program is designed to enhance cross-cultural skills, with weekly seminars on STEM teaching techniques that emphasize perspectives from cultures traditionally underrepresented in the sciences and monthly community meet-ups to connect Noyce Scholars with current teachers. Thirty-five NEIU students have been served by the program, many of whom are now teaching in Chicago Public Schools including Von Steuben, Lane Tech, and Senn. **Dr. Jorge Cantú** developed further connections between NEIU, Chicago Public Schools, and local non-profits as a Senior Faculty Advisor for a Noyce capacity building grant (National Science Foundation, \$121,000). Their team worked together to submit a Noyce Master Teaching Fellowship proposal to NSF, which if funded will create a mentor training program and a new certification program at NEIU for highly skilled Mentor Teachers in STEM+Culture. The goal is to develop a cadre of middle and high school science and math teachers with deep STEM cross-cutting pedagogical content knowledge and leadership capacity to implement culturally relevant and sustainable pedagogy, thereby improving STEM teacher retention rates and student performance.

Two biology faculty also played key roles in the Title V HSI Grant, Creating Access to STEM for All (CASA) grant (\$3 million, Department of Education). CASA was created to close achievement gaps for Hispanic, low-income students majoring in STEM. First time, full-time freshmen are enrolled in cohorts in which they take STEM general education courses together in a learning community, engage in experiential learning, and obtain academic support. In its second year, the program served 34 students in the second-year cohort. **Dr. Pam Geddes** (Key Personnel) and **Dr. Kara Nuss** are both part of the Professional Learning Team. This past year, they worked in an Assessment Working Group (along with Dr. Sandra Beyda-Lorie of the Center for Teaching and Learning, Dr. Samantha Brown-Xu in Chemistry, Dr. Alex Peimer in Geography & Environmental Studies, and Dr. Andrew Young in Psychology) to create tools for assessing cultural responsiveness and equity in teaching.

Drs. Reinke and **Schirmer** developed and co-taught NDP 321: Correspondence on

Current Biology Topics at Stateville Correctional Center. This was the first time that a natural sciences course was made available through the University Without Walls program for incarcerated people. The course covered biological topics and experimental techniques, with a focus on impacts to health, society, and the environment. It was taught in modules that focused around students' interest and current news, and the students said that they found the material so compelling that they felt the need to share the information with others around them. Eleven students from Stateville completed the correspondence course, which was supplemented with Zoom instructional sessions. Five of those students recently graduated from NEIU with a B.A. degree! **Drs. Reinke** and **Schirmer** gave a presentation to the NEIU community, "Stateville: Learning Under Lockdown," in which they shared their positive experiences and encouraged other faculty to teach in the program. They reported how satisfying it felt to discuss the nuances of topics as varied as evolution or climate change in response to students' thoughtful questions, and said that they were touched by the students' hunger for knowledge and ability to apply what they learned to their lived experiences.

II. Program Plan

A. Long term goals

Align undergraduate course requirements with student need Fifteen years ago, we conducted a comprehensive review of the undergraduate curriculum and implemented a major overhaul of the biology major. Much has changed since then, and it is time reevaluate our undergraduate program, especially in light of declining enrollment. The Enrollment Services audit reported that students are seeking to understand what their education represents, and that a key "decision segment" on the minds of aspiring college students are job prospects. Thus, we need to develop flexible "tracks" or course plans that students can take to prepare for desired careers (e.g., health professions, conservation biology, or lab technician). Other Chicago-area universities (e.g., DePaul, Loyola, and North Park) publicize curricular concentrations on their biology program websites, and we need to do the same. The goal will be to clearly articulate the value of a biology major at NEIU. This will require that we critically evaluate course requirements and make changes in light of current student need.

Enhance the structure of the graduate program

The university's recent approval of the Accelerated Program Policy has opened an opportunity for us to develop a 4+1 Biology B.S./M.S. degree, for which we believe that there will be a strong market. About one-third of students in our graduate program obtained their B.S. degree with us, and an accelerated degree option would likely increase those numbers. An M.S. degree increases job prospects, and students are also looking for a pathway to enhance their academic record before applying to Ph.D. or health professional programs. However, preliminary discussions on how to develop a 4+1 degree have revealed a need to increase the structure of our graduate program. We can be more intentional in our course offerings (and increase the number of graduate courses) by cross-listing 300-level and 400-level courses. We can also make the portfolio requirement more meaningful to students by creating a capstone course that provides instruction and a feedback structure for portfolio contents. These potential

improvements to the structure of the graduate program will be the focus of the January, 2023 departmental retreat.

Survey alumni to obtain feedback

We currently have a list of about 700 alumni email addresses, to which we send a newsletter each semester and reach out to raise money for biology scholarships. The success of those efforts indicates that alumni wish to be in touch. Thus, we have developed a survey to send to alumni. Our goal is to gauge interest in attending events such as seminars, career panels, or social activities, and to obtain feedback on how the experiences of alumni in our program have impacted their current careers. We will also establish a departmental LinkedIn page to expand our list of contacts and make it easier to reach more alumni.

B. Projected needs

1. Faculty

The Biology Department currently has 28 full-time faculty and staff. When remote learning and work was necessary due to COVID, we kept in regular touch through monthly social and teaching support meetings over Zoom. Now that NEIU has fully reopened, we need to create opportunities to build community with one another, by continuing outdoor summer picnics, reestablishing the winter holiday gathering, and starting a monthly social hour at a local establishment. Discussions at recent department meetings also revealed a need to update our bylaws, to intentionally be inclusive and value the ideas of all.

2. Equipment

Rising prices, coupled with a lack of increase to commodities and contractual budget lines, threaten our ability to give effective educational and research experiences to students. Common equipment used in nearly every classroom laboratory (e.g., micropipettes, high-precision balances, hotplates, spectrophotometers, microscopes, pH meters) often require replacement. We also need to keep a balance of tens of thousands of dollars in case a large item such as the autoclave breaks down. Thus, after a detailed review of current and projected laboratory needs, we raised course fees. Although we were hesitant to do so, course fees had not been adjusted for inflation in more than a decade. Our average course fee is still lower than that of feeder schools such as Oakton Community College, and if budget lines aren't increased then course fees will need to be raised again soon. It is crucial that we are able to provide laboratory experiences for students that will prepare them for success in jobs or post-graduate study.

3. Other Resources

The hiring of a Naturalist for Gensburg-Markham Prairie, after a 3-year vacancy in the position, makes it possible to update and execute a management plan. Gensburg Markham Prairie is unique in being a 110-acre tallgrass prairie remnant that has large portions that have never been plowed. Thus, it is one of the highest-quality prairie sites in the Midwest, and supports rare plant and animal communities that aren't found in more highly disturbed prairie restorations. The management plan for Gensburg

Markham Prairie will be based on accepted ecological principles and will include prescribed burning, with the goal of protecting biodiversity. Input will be sought from stakeholders, such as The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and city of Markham. The management plan will balance environmental conservation with research and educational uses of the prairie.

III. Accomplishments

Throughout, the names of biology **faculty members** are in bold, names of undergraduate students are underlined, and names of *graduate students* are italicized.

A. Faculty Research/Creative Activities

1. Regional Exhibitions or Performances

Reinke, B. A. Chicago Museum of Ecological Progress. Collaboration with artist Katelyn Patton. Exhibit hosted at Northeastern Illinois University Art Gallery. Local. Associated website: www.speciesreplacement.com

2. Articles, Peer-reviewed and Invited

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Qazi, S., and **M. Readey**. 2021. Fundamental Behavioural, Sociological and Evolutionary Understanding of Covid-19 as a Pandemic: An Introductory Review. *Journal for Environmental Peace*.

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3. Conference Presentations and Invited Talks

Cantú, J. You are swimming in it: adapting academia for a scientist with a spinal cord

injury. Inspiring Awareness Seminar, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA. November, 2021.

Geddes, P. Decentering whiteness in science courses: some strategies and examples. Invited Talk, NEIU Faculty Institute, Chicago, IL. August 2021.

Geddes, P., K. Voglesonger, S. Saszik, and M. Erber. Towards increasing the participation of underrepresented minority students in STEM: ACE Program. Invited Talk, NEIU Faculty Institute, Chicago, IL. August 2021.

Leon, V., M. H. Singer, and **E. Stojković**. Photomorphogenesis of *Myxococcus macrosporus*: new insights towards light regulation of cell development. 47th Annual International Meeting on the Biology of Myxobacteria, Murcia, Spain. May 29-June 1, 2022.

Readey, M. Economics and health concerns: a two-factor catastrophe model for human and politics behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic. 5th International Conference on Emerging New World: Valedictory Session. Tradepreneur Global Academic Platform, UK. CT University Ludhiana, India. July 28, 201.

Reinke, B. Why are painted turtles painted? Triton College. Chicago, IL. 2021.

Schirmer, A. Social jetlag, chronotypes, & performance. Loyola Neuroscience Journal Club, Chicago, Illinois. November, 2021.

Stojković, E., S. Westenhoff, and M. Schmidt. Structural basis for light-control of cell development: new insights from bacterial phytochrome proteins. 19th Congress of the European Society for Photobiology, Salzburg, Austria. August 30-September 3, 2021.

Stojković, E. and M. Schmidt. Myxobacterial phytochrome as a model system for x-ray free electron lasers. PACIFICHEM Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii. December, 2021.

Stojković, E. Light control of cell development: structural insights from transient intermediates in the phytochrome photocycle. NEIU Biology Department Seminar Series, Chicago, Illinois. November, 2021.

4. Funded grants

Butts-Wilmsmeyer, C. (P.I.), M. Villamil (co-P.I.), A. Lipka (co-P.I.), M. Bohn (co-P.I.), and **P. Geddes** (collaborator). Preparing undergraduates for new frontiers in data analysis: experiential learning in applied statistics (ELIAS) Fellows program. USDA Agriculture for Research Initiative (AFRI) Competitive Grant/National Institute of Food and Agriculture. April 2019 - March 2023, \$378,765.

Cantú, J. (Senior Faculty Advisor) Developing a mentorship training program for STEM teachers that is place-based and culturally conscious. Chicago STEM teaching collaborative, NSF Noyce Capacity Building Grant - Track 3. February 2021 – February 2022, \$124,978

Church, B. (co-P.I.), **Stojković, E. A.** (co-P.I.), and J. Hibdon (co-P.I.). NIH Maximizing access to research careers (MARC): 2 T34 GM105549-02 NU-STARS

Northeastern Illinois University's undergraduate student training in academic research (NU-STAR). National Institutes of Health. 2019 – 2024. \$1,350,000.

Geddes, P. (P.I.), K. Voglesonger (co-P.I.), and K. Nicholson (co-P.I.). A bridge to USDA research for HSI STEM undergraduates. USDA Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grant/National Institute of Food and Agriculture. September 2020 - August 2024, \$275,000.

Graham, M. (P.I.)...and **P. Geddes** (Key Personnel). Department of Education Title V HSI Grant; Creating Access to STEM for All (CASA). Fall 2020-Fall 2025, \$5,000,000.

Kolack, H. (P.I.), **J. Olfelt** (co-P.I.), and M. Graham (co-P.I.). University and community college collaboration for STEM teacher education: Northeastern Illinois University & City Colleges of Chicago Noyce Mathematics and Biology Scholars Program. National Science Foundation. Spring 2017 - Spring 2022 (plus a 1 year no-cost extension in 2022-2023), \$1,450,000.

Lo, T.-W. (P.I.), **M. Stern**, (co-P.I.), and **C. Voisine** (co-P.I.). Signaling specificity mediated by the *C. elegans* FGF receptor tyrosine kinase. National Institutes of Health. 2017-2022, (\$165,000 NEIU component).

Miller, N. (co-P.I.), **A. Schirmer** (co-P.I.), M. M. McDonough (co-P.I.), and **C. Voisine** (Senior Personnel). RCN-UBE Incubator: StRoNG Net: Stem Research on Non-model Genomes Network. National Science Foundation. \$74,975.

Reinke, B. A. (P.I.). Peer-mentoring circles in animal behavior workshop for graduate students. Animal Behavior Society. \$7,000.

Srinivas, S. (P.I.)..., **P. Geddes** (Faculty Fellow), and **E. Reinke** (Faculty Fellow). Advancing Research and Career Opportunities in STEM (ARCOS). Department of Education Title III HSI. 2021 - 2026, \$4,996,879.

Stojković, E. A. (P.I.) and M. Schmidt (collaborator). Z/E isomerization in phytochromes from myxobacteria. National Science Foundation BioXFEL Science and Technology Center Awards. 2019 - 2021, \$256,000.

Voglesonger, K. (P.I.), **P. Geddes** (co-P.I.), S. Saszik (co-P.I.), and M. Erber (co-P.I.). Building capacity: a longitudinal research-based learning community to address critical transitions of underprepared freshmen in STEM. National Science Foundation HSI Program. October 2018 - December 2023, \$1,500,000.

Voisine, C. (P.I.). International Visiting Scholar Award (Internationale Gastwissenschaftler Award) Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany, 2021.

5. Service (office holders for academic organizations, editorial boards, and school boards)

Bolterstein, Elyse

- Co-chair of the Education, Student, and New Investigator Committee for

the Environmental Mutagenesis Society.

Cantú, Jorge

- School District 75 STEAM Foundation (Mundelein, Illinois).

Geddes, Pam

- BETO BRIDGES National Review Board of the Educational Programs Office at Argonne National Laboratory and the Bioenergy Technologies Office of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Reinke, Beth

- Animal Behavior Society Social Media Team.

Schirmer, Aaron

- District 72 School Board Member (Skokie, Illinois).

Voisine, Cindy

- Board of Directors for National Organization BREWMor, a network of teaching and research faculty dedicated to increasing undergraduate experiential learning. • Co-organizer of March 2022 Chicago Society for Neuroscience meeting as Executive Secretary.
- Invited Guest Editor for the journal *Frontiers in Aging, Metabolism and Redox Biology*.
- Editorial board member of *Journal of Visual Experimentation* and recipient of their Thought Leader Award, 2022.

B. Student Achievements

1. Presentations, conference papers, symposium participation, publications.

13th Annual Student Center for Science Engagement Research Symposium, 1 October 2021:

Cullen, Sean, Beth McDonald, **T. Campbell**, Francisco Iacobelli, Rick Ree, Ryan Fuller, and Matt Von Konrat. Uncovering hidden biodiversity using machine learning.

Evans, Nkosi, Emily Clark, Zoe Ryan, Joslyn Nichols, Maya Mahoney, Beatrice Cundiff, Matt Von Konrat, and **T. Campbell**. Creating distribution models for Midwest bryophytes.

Freese, Danielle, Juanita Marty, and **J. Cantú**. Revealing gene expression patterns of TP53-induced gene 11 (PIG11) paralogs, a family of tumor suppressor protein in zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) using wholemount in situ hybridization.

Frale, James, **J. Slate**, Maria Hernandez, and Michael Rhomberg. Corn processing: environmental monitoring risk and assessment.

García, Samantha and **P. Geddes**. Artificial floating wetlands improve habitat quality for aquatic macroinvertebrates in urbanized rivers.

Garcia Montes de Oca, Melissa, Claudia Sofia Rodriguez, Claire de la Cova, **C. Voisine**,

Te-Wen Lo, and **M. Stern**. Quantifying ERK activity along the EGL-15 pathway in *C. elegans*.

Johnson, Griffin and Panagiotis Ntziachristos. USP7I and glucocorticoids in t-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (T-ALL).

Khan, Mohammed Faizaan, Dan Stille, Joshua Westgor, Jessica Garber, Francisco Iacobelli, Naomi Singleton, and David Velasquez. Configuration interface for an intelligent tutoring system.

Khatoon, Shagufta and **C. Voisine**. Cellular stress response pathways that influence neuronal proteinopathies in *C. elegans*.

O'Connell, Hayden, Kirsty J. MacLeod, and **B. Reinke**. A phylogenetic analysis of iridescence in squamates.

Ortiz, Ruth, Lauren Haertjens, Colleen Fullenkamp, Keith Garcia, Nicolas Scalora, and Munir Tanas. Elucidating the interaction of the TAZ-CAMTA1 fusion protein with epigenetic modifiers.

Parral, Jennifer, Michelle Vargas, and Shannon Saszik. Using as a novel feeding methodology as an indicator of apathy in neurological disease models.

Perez, Alexa, Lydia Sabbah, Summer Kelly, and **S. Mungre**. Effect of thawing on the stability of lactoferrin and sIgA in donor milk; effect of human lactoferrin on viability of hela cells

Puccini de Castro, Helena and **C. Voisine**. Impact of phosphatase activity in *C. elegans* expressing TDP-43, an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis associated disease protein.

Rouhotas, Christina, Ashely Mcpeek, and David Ferguson. The influence of postnatal growth restriction on heart morphology.

Sabbah, Lydia, Alexa Perez, Summer Kelly, and **S. Mungre**. Do all donor milk samples from the milk bank provide the same level of secretory immunoglobulins to infants?

Singleton, Naomi, David Velasquez, Dan Stille, Joshua Westgor, Mohammed Faizaan Khan, Jessica Garber, and Francisco Iacobelli. Using constructivist strategies to train an intelligent tutoring system for breast cancer education.

Stille, Daniel, Francisco Iacobelli, Jessica Garber, Mohammed Faizaan Khan, Naomi Singleton, David Velasquez, and Joshua Westgor. Intelligent tutoring system for breast cancer survivors.

Vargas, Michelle, Jennifer Parral, and Shannon Saszik. Using histamine to view the impact in the ON and OFF response in an ERG: asserting the role of the centrifugal fibers in modulating retinal signals.

Westgor, Joshua, Naomi Singleton, David Velasquez, Dan Stille, Mohammed Faizaan Kahn, Jessica Garber, and Francisco Iacobelli. Integrating speech in an intelligent tutoring system for low literacy breast cancer survivors.

Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) National Diversity in STEM Conference, Long Beach, California. 18-22 October, 2021:

Garcia Montes de Oca, Melissa, Claudia Sofia Rodriguez, Claire de la Cova, **C. Voisine**, Te-Wen Lo, and **M. Stern**. Quantifying ERK activity along the EGL-15 pathway in *C. elegans*

Khatoon, Shagufta and **C. Voisine**. Cellular stress response pathways that influence neuronal proteinopathies in *C. elegans*.

Puccini de Castro, Helena and **C. Voisine**. Impact of phosphatase activity in *C. elegans* expressing TDP-43, an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis associated disease protein.

Singleton, Naomi, David Velasquez, Dan Stille, Joshua Westgor, Mohammed Faizaan Khan, Jessica Garber, and Francisco Iacobelli. Using constructivist strategies to train an intelligent tutoring system for breast cancer education.

Roosevelt University & NEIU McNair Conference: Sharing Experience and Knowledge, Chicago, Illinois. 5 November 2021:

Leach, Alexis and **J. Slate**. Algae as a wastewater treatment.

Rouhotas, Christina and **J. Cantú**. Characterizing apoptosis in the spinal cord of PIG11A^{BBH1} zebrafish knockouts.

Torres, Christian and **J. Cantú**. Characterizing the apoptotic role of PIG11 during the embryonic development of zebrafish.

Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS). 10-13 November 2021:

Alvarado, Rogelio, Debabrata Chakravarti, and Austin Holmes. TCAN-095 – Investigating transcriptional regulation of the androgen receptor by MYC in prostate cancer cells.

Belloso, Erica Natalie and Younsuk Dong. TENG-287 - Understanding the change in irrigation methods, farms, acres, irrigation education sources, and the barriers faced in efforts to conserve water, over the last 15 years.

Leon, Viridiana, Ping Wang, and Hasaan Hayat. WCEL-158 - Artificial intelligence analysis of PET/MRI of cell transplantation in mice models.

Ortiz, Rut and Munir Tanas. TCAN-113 - Elucidating the interaction of the TAZ

CAMTA1 fusion protein with epigenetic modifiers.

Rouhotas, Christina and **J. Cantú**. TDEV-246 - Characterizing apoptosis in the spinal cord of PIG11a^{BBH1} Zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) knockouts. **Best Presentation Award in Developmental Biology and Genetics.**

Thomas, Isaiah F., Tetyana Perchyk, **E. Bolterstein**, and **A. Schirmer**. WPHY-467 - Effect of photopollution and temperature on the activity of *Drosophila melanogaster*.

Torres-Lopez, Christian Daniel and **J. Cantú**. FDEV-255 - Characterizing the apoptotic role of PIG11 during the embryonic development of Zebrafish.

Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Program (ILSAMP) Conference, Chicago, Illinois. 25-26 Feb 2022:

Leach, Alexis, Cassandra Ceballos, Kuldip Kumar, Martin A. Gross, Zhiyou Wen, and **J. Slate**. The use of benthic wetland algae for tertiary wastewater treatment in Chicago, Illinois. **2nd place, Poster Presentation, General Biology.**

Torres-Lopez, Christian and **J. Cantú**. Characterizing the apoptotic role of PIG11 during the embryonic development of zebrafish. **1st place, Poster Presentation, Molecular Biology.**

Parral, Jennifer and Shannon Saszik. Indicating apathy using persistence to detect early symptoms of Parkinson's disease. **3rd Place, Oral Presentation, General Biology.**

Vargas, Michelle, Victoria Orduno, Jennifer Parral, and Shannon Saszik. Using histamine to view the impact in the ON and OFF response in an ERG, asserting the role of the centrifugal fibers in modulating retinal signals. **2nd Place, Oral Presentation, General Biology.**

Puccini de Castro, Helena and **C. Voisine**. Impact of phosphatase activity in *C. elegans* expressing TDP-43, an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis associated disease protein. **1st Place Oral Presentation, Molecular Biology.**

Northeastern Illinois University's Student Research & Creative Activities Symposium. 6 May, 2022:

Block, Jason and **E. Booms**. Battle of the biotics: inhibition of the amphibian chytrid fungus using biotic and abiotic factors.

Brito, Jocelyn, Lucas Moskiewicz, Erica Natalie Beloso, Christian Dones, Kristen Mack, George Maku, Eligio Simeti, and **J. Kasmer**. Nutrient concentrations in the North Branch Chicago River, the North Shore Channel, and below their confluence.

Ceballos, Cassandra and **J. Slate**. Monitoring the nutrient removal and algal community structure of a novel wastewater treatment system. **Best Oral Presentation Award.**

Gallagher, John and **J. Cantú**. Generation and profiling of a mosaic zebrafish (*Danio Rerio*) neurofibromatosis type IIb knockout line.

Gattis, Jared and **E. Booms**. Effects of soil microbial communities on seed germination and seedling growth of *Raphanus sativus* (Raddish) via application of aerated vermicompost water extracts.

Leach, Alexis, Cassandra Ceballos, and **J. Slate**. The relationship between algae and microbial communities found in treated wastewater.

Orduno, Victoria, Jennifer Parral, and Shannon Saszik. Are you in or out? Analysis of social behavior in zebrafish shoals.

Puccini de Castro, Helena and **C. Voisine**. Impact of phosphatase activity in *C. elegans* expressing Tdp-43, an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis associated disease protein.

Best Oral Presentation Award.

Torres, Christian and **J. Cantú**. Characterizing the apoptotic role of PIG11 during the embryonic development of zebrafish.

Additional regional, national, and international venues:

Belloso, Erica Natalie, Millenia Jimenez, Cassandra Ceballos, **J. Slate**, Kuldip Kumar, and Martin Gross. Examining the impact of algae on microbial communities in wastewater. 75th Annual Meeting of the Phycological Society of America, July 2021.

Ceballos, Cassandra, Erica Natalie Belloso, Millenia Jimenez, **J. Slate**, Kuldip Kumar, and Martin Gross. Use of algae in a novel wastewater treatment system. 75th Annual Meeting of the Phycological Society of America, July 2021.

García, Samantha and **P. Geddes**. Artificial floating wetlands improve habitat quality for aquatic macroinvertebrates in urbanized rivers. Joint Aquatic Science Meeting, Grand Rapids, Michigan. May 2022.

Leach, Alexis, Cassandra Ceballos, **J. Slate**, Kuldip Kumar, and Martin Gross. The use of benthic wetland algae for tertiary wastewater treatment in Chicago, Illinois. Wisconsin Wetlands Association Conference, February 2022.

Puccini de Castro, Helena and **C. Voisine**. Impact of phosphatase activity in *C. elegans* expressing TDP-43, an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis associated disease protein. Midwest Stress Response and Chaperone Virtual Conference, January 2022.

2. Acceptance to graduate or professional school; other honors or awards

Sarah Abdulameer (Expected B.S. Biology) was accepted into the College of Pharmacy at Roosevelt University.

Tariq Abutaleb (B.S. Biology 2022) accepted into University of Illinois Chicago Dentistry

School.

Sandy Aeso (B.S. Biology 2022) accepted into Roosevelt University Pharmacy School.

Manerva Awriany (B.S. Biology 2022) accepted into Roosevelt University Pharmacy School.

Erica Natalie Belloso (B.S. Environmental Science 2022, with minor in Mathematical and Statistical Modeling of Complex Systems) was accepted into the PhD programs in Plant Biology and in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Cassandra Ceballos (M.S. Biology 2022) received a \$1000 Grants in Aid of Research award from Sigma Xi to fund her M.S. thesis research.

Cassandra Ceballos (M.S. Biology 2022) was accepted into the Ph.D. program in Freshwater and Marine Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and received a Graduate Research Scholars Fellowship.

Derek Epiney (B.S. Biology 2019) was accepted to Univ. of Oregon's PhD program in Biology.

Nkosi Evans (B.S. Biology 2021) was accepted to University of Wisconsin-Madison's Plant Biology PhD Program with a research fellowship.

Odmaa Grammenos (M.S. Biology 2018) was accepted into the Master of Science in Nursing program at North Park University.

Gina Ishu (M.S. Biology 2021) was accepted to the Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine and Midwestern University's College of Dental Medicine.

Inga Ishu (Graduate Student at Large) was accepted to the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health.

Georgina Jaimes (B.S. Psychology 2021, with minor in Biology) was accepted to Northwestern University's Ed.S. School Psychology Program.

Viridiana Leon (B.S. Chemistry 2022, with a minor in Biology) was accepted to the University of Chicago's Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP).

Rut M. Ortiz (B.S. Chemistry 2022) was accepted into Columbia University's PhD program in Pathology and Mechanisms of Disease.

Usaid Mahmud (B.S. Biology 2021) was accepted into medical school at the Univ. of Arkansas.

Will Peiser (expected B.S. Biology 2023) was accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science.

Christina Rouhotas (B.S. Biology 2022, with minors in Chemistry and in Mathematical and Statistical Modeling of Complex Systems) was accepted into the Chem-H Postbaccalaureate program at Stanford University.

Tyler Rose (B.S. Communication, Media, & Theater 2021, with minor in Communication) was accepted into the Master's Degree program in Secondary Education in Biology at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Christian Torres (Expected B.S. Biology 2023, with minor in Mathematical and Statistical Modeling of Complex Systems) was awarded the Society for Developmental Biology Choose Development! Fellowship.

C. Alumni News

Luis Aldama (B.S. Biology 2021, with minors in Chemistry and in Mathematical and Statistical Modeling of Complex Systems) successfully completed the 1st year of the PhD program in Biophysics at Harvard University.

Nene H. Bah (B.S. Biology 2018) successfully completed the 2nd year in the College of Pharmacy, University of Illinois-Chicago, IL.

Jacob M. Ballasch (B.S. Biology 2019, with Secondary Education Certification in Biology) is a Biology and Environmental Science Teacher at Von Steuben High School.

Melissa Carrillo (M.S. Biology 2020) successfully completed the 2nd year of the PhD Program in Nanotechnology at Paul Scherrer Institute in Switzerland.

Jack Eckhorn-Martinez (B.S. Biology 2021) completed an internship at the Denver Zoo working with elephants.

Jason Garcia, PhD (B.S. Biology 2016) is a Senior Scientist at Abbott Laboratories.

Kelsey Littrell (B.S. Biology 2021) received a job at The Science Museum in London, UK.

Mario Medrano (B.S. Biology 2021, with minor in Chemistry) received a job at STAT Analysis Corporation.

Moraima Noda (B.S. Biology 2020, with minor in Mathematical and Statistical Modeling of Complex Systems), successfully completed the 2nd year of the PhD program in Pathology at Indiana University.

DeElegant Robinson, PhD (M.S. Biology 2015) is a Genomic Analyst at Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

Juan Sanchez (M.S. Biology 2019) successfully completed the 3rd year of the PhD program in Biophysics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Tom Vega (Student at Large, 2015-2019) is nearly finished with the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program at Ross University and will begin clinicals in Fall 2023.

Annual Report 2021 – 2022

Submitted by Kenneth T. Nicholson

I. Executive Summary

The B.S. degree program in Chemistry at Northeastern Illinois University meets the needs of a diverse student body achieve their academic goals while also preparing them for careers in the government, industry and academia. The program is accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS) and meets the standards established by the ACS committee on Professional Training. The Chemistry Department has submitted the 2021-2022 annual report to indicate its compliance with the guidelines established by the American Chemical Society (ACS) Committee on Professional Training. The Department has also submitted the Periodic Report in order to renew the accreditation, as of June 30.

The Department of Chemistry returned to more in-person instruction during this academic year. Most undergraduate courses, both lower and upper level, met in person, especially for all laboratory meetings. We have kept our laboratory preparation and cleaning protocols, instituted during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to keep the laboratory environment as safe as possible. We have a “mask welcome” policy in the Department. Faculty continue to wear masks and encourage students to wear them as well since long-term close contact is really unavoidable in a laboratory setting. Masks are available upon entry to the lab, free of charge, to all students who wish to wear one

Faculty are continuing established research projects with both undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Chemistry. Ken Nicholson, Greg Anderson (Physics), and John Kasmer (Biology) have begun investigating the presence, identity and quantification of “forever chemicals”, specifically per-fluorinated alkyl substances in water. These compounds are residual from plastics and other industrial processes and have been deemed unhealthy, even at low concentrations. This project was born in the interdisciplinary Methods in Environmental Science course. Students presented their findings at the John Sargon AlBazi NEIU Student Research and Activities Symposium. Ken Nicholson and Emina Stojkovic (Biology) are developing a new project that involves searching for the presence of secondary metabolites formed during the growth and development of myxobacteria. These projects, and others, have led to the acquisition of a high performance liquid chromatography mass spectrometry (HPLC-MS) instrument, funded by the College. This instrument was purchased at the end of FY 22 and was installed in Fall 2022.

Samantha Brown-Xu is working with undergraduate students with the goal of using density functional theory and other semi-empirical methods to model electron transfer and to predict spectroscopic signatures of monomers that can be polymerized into multifunctional materials. She has also begun in person laboratory work with undergraduate students. The results have been presented at local conferences.

Stefan Tsonchev, with undergraduate and graduate students, have been working

elucidating the properties of newly designed carbon nanodots intended for a variety of applications in the detection of heavy metal contaminants in the environment and improved HPLC columns' efficiency for molecular separation. He also collaborated with scientists from Loyola University Chicago on studies of activity of tetracene surfaces and fluorescence decay of new materials. The Department had three projects funded by the by the Student Center for Science Engagement Summer Research Program during the Summer of 2022. Each produced student presentations at the annual Fall Symposium hosted by NEIU. Some of the students presented their work at the national SACNAS conference as well.

Denana Miodragovic also continued her research program in collaboration with Northwestern University involving the design and development of platinum prodrugs that will deliver arsenic trioxide as a targeted therapy for breast cancer. She has received funding from the NIH Chicago CHEC program for a pilot grant and has begun this work with both graduate and undergraduate students. She is also preparing to apply for a NEIU core grant to do some additional work on the NEIU campus involving the newly acquired HPLC-MS.

II. Program Plan

A. Long term goals

1. Increasing the number of research opportunities for our undergraduate and graduate students

This goal is directly connected to our most pressing need (See B), the hiring of additional tenure line faculty. With only three tenure line faculty, after two recent retirements and one departure, the time and availability of faculty to mentor students is severely strained. Simply, we have more students who want to do research than our faculty can reasonably accommodate.

2. Increase our recruiting efforts (Graduate)

The Department of Chemistry has revised its methods to recruit and retain graduate students, particularly international students. This involves developing an application for graduate assistant position, an opportunity for graduate students to obtain valuable working experience while earning financial support. We have updated the website to include information that will hopefully encourage more applicants.

We have also created a pathway for graduate students to do their first year of graduate study completely remotely and/or online. We hope this will encourage more applicants who work full-time during the day or international students that live abroad to our program.

3. Increase our recruiting efforts (Undergraduate)

We are working on developing an accelerated program for the Department of Chemistry. In this program, students can earn both a B.S. and M.S. in Chemistry in approximately three years after completing an Associate's Degree in Science at any community college. We have also revised our recruiting materials provided to

community colleges that have updated research interests of our faculty. Furthermore, the Department has developed a mock class to be offered to visiting students interested in the sciences.

4. Increase the number and quality of our research instrumentation

We have modified our laboratory fee structure to raise funds to maintain our current instrumentation and purchase new instrumentation as needed.

B. Projected needs

1. Faculty

We have a pressing need for at least two new tenure line faculty. Ana Fraiman (Organic Chemistry and Chemical Education) and S. John Albazi (Analytical Chemistry) have recently retired. As of May 2022, Jing Su (Medicinal Chemistry) left NEIU to pursue other career goals. Their teaching and research expertise are severely missed by our students. We have more students (graduate and undergraduate) that desire a research mentor than we can accommodate well. Luckily, we have two full time instructors who have shouldered some of this load. Furthermore, our teaching professionals have accepted some overload assignments to accommodate research activities.

The Department worries this way of making things work in paltry times is not sustainable. First, it limits our abilities to do service to the college and the University. Next, the ACS accreditation process hinges on the presence of tenure-line faculty members in each of the major subdisciplines of chemistry: analytical, inorganic, organic, physical and biochemistry.

2. Equipment

a) Upgrade HPLC -MS. Need an air to nitrogen gas converter to eliminate the need for liquid nitrogen (\$20,000)

b) Upgrade to Atomic Force Microscope (~ \$9000)

c) Upgrade Fluorescence Instrumentation (\$15,000) – Current instrument is old and runs on unsupported software.

3. Other Resources

1) ChemDraw Software for Organic Chemistry, WIP, and Spectroscopy

courses 2) Adobe Illustrator for Department Flyers, Newsletters, Publications

3) Simulation software for laboratory courses

III. Accomplishments

Accomplishments that don't fit into one of the categories below can be included in the Executive Summary.

Articles and Abstracts, Local Exhibitions or Performances:

Samantha Brown-Xu is a Co-author of: Excited-State Bond Contraction and Charge Migration in a Platinum Dimer Complex Characterized by X-Ray and Optical Transient Absorption Spectroscopy

. Phys. Chem. A 2021, 125, 40, 8891–8898

Denana Miodragovic is a Co-author of one manuscript: Iodide Analogs of Arsenoplatins—Potential Drug Candidates for Triple Negative Breast Cancers”

Molecules 2021, 26(17), 5421; <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules26175421>

Conference Presentations, Group Shows

Amber Rojas presented at the biannual Undergraduate Research Symposium organized by the Iota Sigma Pi, Chicago Chapter, Aurom Iodide, on April 9, 2022, at Lewis University.

Amber Rojas and Denana Miodragovic, Investigation of the stability of arsenoplatins in saline solution using high-performance liquid chromatography, Lewis University, April 9, 2022.

SYNTHESIS AND USE OF NEW CARBON NANODOT MATERIALS FOR DETECTION OF CONTAMINANTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT, Mohammad Aref, Mike Pommer and Stefan Tsonchev , 14th Annual SCSE Symposium, NEIU

Service

Kenneth Nicholson and Stefan Tsonchev have served as referees for American Chemical Society (ACS) Journals

Ken Nicholson designed a mock class for the Environmental Sciences to recruit students
Ken Nicholson participated in the TIDES conference and follow up discussions at

NEIU Jing Su reviewed journal articles for several ACS and biomedical publications

Jing Su served as a reviewer for journals Water, Materials , and Pharmaceutics

Jing Su is the Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative, Research and Education Core Co-Lead

Stefan Tsonchev worked with The Graduate School at Northwestern University to interview and recruit NEIU students for their SROP program.

Stefan Tsonchev led the chemistry club.

Samantha Brown Xu continued working with the Title IV: CASA professional learning team April 2021 developing assessments of program success and of faculty use of

culturally relevant pedagogy

Samantha Brown Xu joined the working group to design a new nursing program at NEIU

Review of, "Teaching relativistic quantum mechanics using a nonrelativistic approach," by Luis E Grave de Peralta. for Academia Letters by Stefan Tsonchev

Nanoscience presentation to high school students in a Summer Program including many high schools called After School Matters. (Stefan

Tsonchev) **B. Student Achievements**

Publications and Conference Presentations

1.

SYNTHESIS AND USE OF NEW CARBON NANODOT MATERIALS FOR DETECTION OF CONTAMINANTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT, Mohammad Aref, Mike Pommer and Stefan Tsonchev , 14th Annual SCSE Symposium, NEIU

Kristen Mack, Kenneth T. Nicholson et.al, Analyzing Water Sources Along Southern Lake Michigan for PFAS Compounds using High Performance Liquid Chromatography, Annual SCSE Symposium

2. Acceptance to graduate or professional school; other honors/scholarships/awards, but only if from organizations other than NEIU.

Amber Rojas received HCIR Margaret Messer Student Research Grant in 2022.

Annie Fritz (University of Texas) Awarded Illinois Platinum Membership Award Vanessa DaSilva (UIUC)

Andrea Valenzuela (University of Michigan)

Winnie Jiang (Loyola)

Sergio Escobar was accepted to the Post-Baccalaureate Research Education Program at the Biological Science Division, the University of Chicago

Rima Rebiai continues her Ph.D work at UIC

C. Alumni News

Alexis Gonzalez (graduated May 2021) is working at BS as Scientist II – Analytical Chemistry

Samra Ali (graduated May 2021) is working at Stepan Company as a Laboratory Technician

Nicholas Pyzel (graduated May 2021) entered a Master's degree program at IIT

Nevzad Mujakic (graduated May 2021) is working at Weber Flavors as a Laboratory Technician

Joren Villapando works at Abbott Laboratories

Lynnette Murphy works for the Monroe County Storm Team
Chris Craddock is a NIH IRADCA Fellow
Steven Jerome is the Director at HIT Discovery
Keith Arntson is a chemist at Pharmaceutical and Medical Device
Industries Oscar Herrera is a Researcher at INX International
Daniel Westcott is Sr. Protein Lead at Climax Foods
David Hu is a Process Manager at Superior Graphite
Yulia Lifshis is an Analytical Scientist at AbbVie
Steven Ryan is a Sr. Scientist for PPD at Baxter
Peter Carrizales is an Inpatient Pharmacist at Edward Hines
Umesh Chaudary is a Chemist at Sasol
Sarah Nasserri is a Research Scientist at AMRI
Ninorta Damno is a General Manager at VitaLife
Sarah Vorpahl is a Senior Energy Policy Specialist at Washington
State Zain Malik is a Clinic Manager at US Medical Labs

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES EDUCATION PROGRAM (CASEP)

Annual Report 2021-2022

Submitted by Jeremy Babcock

Executive Summary

The College of Arts and Sciences Education Program (CASEP) marked its twenty-first year of teaching, guiding, and inspiring freshman and sophomore students interested in becoming teachers. After 21 years, CASEP retains much of its original mission. Using a cohort model, careful selection of courses and teachers, as well as support services for students—CASEP continues working to increase student success. This success includes: retaining students at Northeastern, whether they ultimately select Education as their major or not, and decreasing time to degree by encouraging 15 hours of study a semester beginning no later than a first-year student's spring semester. CASEP's ultimate objective, however, is to establish, retain, and foster a diverse group of determined and sagacious students to enter Northeastern's Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education to pursue their goal of becoming teacher-leaders in an urban/suburban environment.

CASEP's Three Main Goals:

1. Increase overall retention at Northeastern Illinois University
2. Create high-quality candidates for the Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education, who profess to being committed to teaching as a profession
- 3.

Decrease time to graduation

CASEP began the 2021-22 academic year with 19 first-year, full-time students. Of the 2020 freshmen class, 22 of 24 students returned for their sophomore year in fall 2021, and in keeping with CASEP's history, **our retention rate of 92%**, no doubt, played a large role in the overall retention rate of mainstream freshman at Northeastern. The CASEP cohort model continues to exemplify a steadfast solution to increasing the retention rates at NEIU. The students in our program feel a sense of belonging and experience a level of engagement that inspires them to move forward with their studies at NEIU.

A return to in-person learning at NEIU

Our Fall 2021 semester at NEIU saw a return to in-person learning for the majority of our program students. In order to accommodate as many of our incoming first-year CASEP students as possible, we continued our Freshman Orientation virtually by way of Zoom Video Conferencing. The event was well attended and introduced students to CASEP faculty, staff, and alumni of the program. We will continue to blend online and in-person platforms to connect with our students, and remain as intentional as possible with our community building efforts. From increased email communication, to taking the time at the start of a number of our CASEP courses to check in, honoring the true essence of the cohort model was of the utmost importance to sustaining the "family" feel that CASEP strives to maintain.

- How has the switch back to in-person learning impacted your experience at NEIU?



As displayed in the graph above, we know that the switch to in-person learning was a welcomed way of experiencing NEIU for the majority of our program students. Even with this preferred way of learning, we still were mindful to discuss the anxiety that students were feeling around masking, social distancing, and changing expectations to accommodate for the return to learning on campus.

How to Assess Student Learning and Engagement in the Program? CASEP students are administered a comprehensive survey toward the end of the Spring semester. The survey consists of twenty questions to assess course offerings, social events, advising, and overall experience and satisfaction with the program. Much of this

information will be shared throughout this annual report to highlight student voice, and ensure that it remains a guiding force in how decisions are made with regards to the future direction of CASEP.

The nature of past surveys measured student expectations about CASEP and to determine whether or not those expectations were met. The overwhelming consensus among first-year CASEP students was that:

- smaller class sizes allowed them to feel more comfortable and participate more;
- friendships were fostered among CASEP cohort members;
- faculty teaching in CASEP provided additional academic support;
- the general education courses were well chosen, especially because they could count towards any major at Northeastern;
- CASEP helped students determine whether education was their right path.

Certainly, implementing cohorts is not a panacea. However, elements of involvement (by professors and advisors) as well as methods of teaching (experiential and creative) seem to have a positive effect on our students. All elements must be implemented in an environment where those involved are *genuinely concerned about student success and welfare*. **We are successful because of the people involved in our program.**

Proctoring a student survey in the Spring has become a staple of the program to determine if students in our cohort are receiving the necessary support to be successful in the program. Our questions include an intentional focus on CASEP courses and initiatives to get a feel for overall satisfaction, and also changes that might need to be made to strengthen our program.

STUDENT VOICES

CASEP students are quality students. Throughout the report, a number of program initiatives are highlighted. From these events and CASEP courses, students have shared feedback and we continue to share these thoughts in our annual reporting. CASEP values and truly appreciates what our students have to say and it will continue to inform the direction of our program.

Included in this 2021-2022 Annual Performance Report are a few responses of note from our Spring 2021 student survey. The survey was administered anonymously so that students could feel inclined to share in a more open and honest way.

• *What do you feel is the strongest/best part of being in CASEP?*

- ⇒ “The best part of being in CASEP is that you start friendships with students who are in the same position you are in. As a CASEP community, we can relate to every situation and make strong bonds from it. It is also best for those students who need scholarships or teaching opportunities because we are given great resources and advantages.”
- ⇒ “The strong sense of community has helped me navigate my first year of college. Seeing familiar faces in the halls from CASEP is a nice feeling.”

⇒ “I really enjoyed getting to know other students who are considering to going into the same career that I plan on going into. Even though we are majoring into different education careers, we are all still planning on majoring into the same career and it is a good way to connect with other future educators.”

• ***What advice would you give to first-year students who are considering joining CASEP?***

⇒ “I would advise joining CASEP because we learn so much about teaching and what to expect when becoming a teacher as future educators. It’s very student based and all activities are done for the student's benefit. I really enjoy CASEP and I’m glad to have joined.”

⇒ “Join! CASEP Power Hours are always fun and it is nice to be a part of a cohort. It makes you feel like less of a stranger to everyone.”

⇒ “If they are thinking of becoming a teacher they should definitely join because they won't find the same quality of help/support anywhere else.”

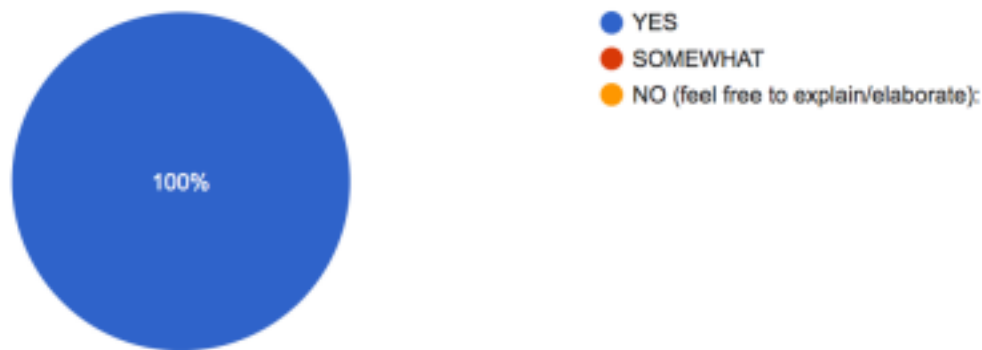
• ***What advice would you give to professors who teach CASEP courses?***

⇒ “All is going well. Keep up the motivational talks and student engaging activities!!”

⇒ “I would say that continuing to bring the lessons back to being a future teacher and allotting time for students to reflect on what they have learned and how it connects back to teaching.”

⇒ “Keep being you! Y'all are awesome!”

• ***Do you feel that CASEP is supporting you on your path to becoming a teacher?***



Grade Point Average

CASEP cohort students tend to maintain a high GPAs throughout their time in our program, and it is our hope to begin to highlight and document the number of students who maintain a 3.0 or higher in our annual reporting. **66% of the students in our fall 2020 cohort achieved an overall 3.0 GPA or higher at the end of the Spring 2021 semester. Our 2021 cohort had 77% of students with a 3.0 GPA or better at the end of the Spring 2021 semester.**

We plan to highlight and document the number of students who maintain a 3.0 or higher in our annual reporting. An idea that has been discussed, and a possible long term goal is to explore the possibility of a CASEP Honors Cohort. This information would be valuable in examining the feasibility of that initiative.

Annual Teacher LEADERSHIP RETREAT

In addition to employing an effective cohort model, CASEP focuses on connecting students to engaging and relevant community building experiences. It is this thoughtful preparation that assists with the higher retention rates, and creates a vibrant community of learners. Taking the time to reflect on the profession of teaching remains an important aspect of the CASEP program. Our Spring 2022 Teacher Leadership Retreat focused on “how” we teach.

Our retreat took place over NEIU’s Spring Break on Monday, March 14, 2022 in Alumni Hall from 9 AM-3 PM. In addition to a luncheon and experiential learning activities, we welcomed a guest teaching artist from the Old Town School of Folk Music who led us in a West African drumming circle. Over forty future teachers participated in this CASEP sponsored event highlighting the need for opportunities for students to connect in creative environments that allow for deep and critical thinking.

CASEP remains committed to challenging the way we think about the teaching profession. Rooted in respect for all teachers, we strive to develop ways to develop content that engages and inspires students to be lifelong learners. Integrating the arts into lesson plans and teaching to multiple learning styles was present throughout our daylong teacher leadership retreat. NEIU students in attendance remained engaged throughout, participated in thoughtful discourse, and kicked off their NEIU Spring

Break in a playfully productive way.

CASEP Monthly Future Teachers Seminar

The 2021-2022 academic year for CASEP saw the continuation of our monthly seminar for future teachers called, “Power Hour!” The idea for Power Hour was inspired by students in our program looking for an event that occurred on a regular basis to connect and learn from luminaries in the field of education. We offered 6 virtual sessions that were well-attended by students and NEIU staff/faculty.

The process of inviting the speakers is quite organic and adapts to the needs of our program students. Depending on the time of year and from surveying students, we were proud to invite a number of engaging speakers to address our future teachers.

Guest Speakers for the 2021-22 CASEP “Power Hour” Seminars included:

- ***Alderman Samantha Nugent and Erika Wozniak***
49th ward Alderman and her Chief of Staff/Former CPS teacher
- ***Irma Ortiz***, Director of NEIU’s Center for College Access & Success • ***Shireen Roshanravan***, Executive Director of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion @ NEIU
- ***Luis Meza from Grow Your Own***, a teacher preparation program focused on excellence and diversity in the teaching force
- ***Billie Diaz***, Director of NEIU’s MSTQE Cohort, a program designed for future Math & Science Educators
- ***Jenny Zuluaga***, Chicago Public Schools Post-Secondary Specialist

Power Hour continues to be an important addition to the CASEP program this year. Not only does it maintain consistent attendance, but the students are **actively engaged** in the conversations and activities. In addition to the overall popularity of the program, it has also served as a venue to collaborate with other programs at NEIU focused on future teacher preparation. Golden Apple Scholars, Grow Your Own, MSTQE, and TRIO, to name a few, have attended the sessions on a regular basis, and been integral in connecting our students to scholarship information and opportunities to aid them in their path to becoming teachers.

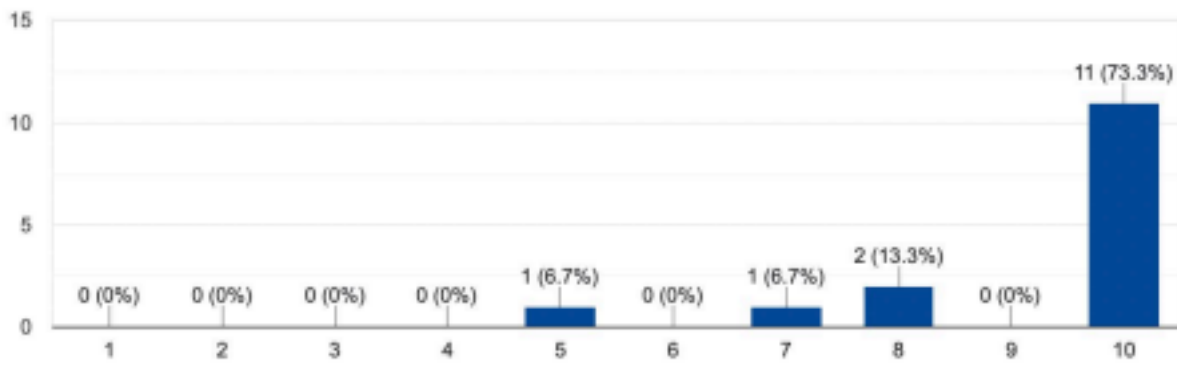
The monthly seminar has also been an important outlet to remain engaged with CASEP alumni, and also NEIU students interested in teaching, but maybe not officially listed as a CASEP student. Our “Friends of CASEP” list is growing and the support will most definitely add to program success and contribute to the positive reputation that CASEP has been built over many years of collaboration.

CASEP Advising

Kendra Stern, CASEP Advisor, is an integral part of our program success. In addition to her thoughtful advising sessions with our students, she serves as a thought partner for innovation within the CASEP program. We have established a weekly check-in meeting between the CASEP Coordinator and CASEP Advisor where there is a concerted effort to seek out and implement additional student leadership opportunities for our students. With a shared goal to offer the highest quality programming and advising as possible, the relationship between coordinator and advisor remains one of the keys to CASEP’s success at NEIU.

Consistent, clear communication aids in the process of intentional student support, and has launched a number of new program initiatives. A good example of this collaboration is the aforementioned monthly seminar for future teachers where we provide food, cooperative learning experiences and guest speakers to keep our students abreast of current educational trends. Kendra co-facilitates these seminars and provides invaluable advising information to our students.

- **On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not satisfied, 10 being very satisfied) How satisfied are you with the advising you receive within the CASEP program for GenEds/CASEP Courses?**



In addition to email communication sent out by the CASEP coordinator, Kendra stays abreast of important dates with regards to financial aid deadlines, advising information, and sends celebratory emails to CASEP students when grades are released. CASEP advising is approachable, engaging, and a main component of retaining students in our program and at NEIU. The goal of graduation continues to motivate the work, and the belief that all students are capable of success, no exceptions.

Intentional CASEP Course Design

A highlight for CASEP's first-year students enrolled in the Introduction to Theatre course in the Fall of 2021, was the opportunity to connect with a number of notable guest speakers, including Sarah Fabian, Managing Director of NEIU's Stage Center Theatre, and Abigail Madden, Managing Director of A Red Orchid Theatre.

A Red Orchid Theatre is an ensemble of artists dedicated to "the proliferation of live theatre in the modern world. We believe that theatre is the greatest sustenance for the human spirit and approach our work with a palpable sense of social compassion, aesthetic rigor, and honesty. By presenting new plays from all over the world and by reviving insightful works from the past that bear new relevance today, we aim to seek out and build new audiences for the modern stage."

Abigail has years of managing experience and shared her knowledge of strategic planning, fundraising, event planning, marketing, and budget oversight with our students. We are planning on continued collaboration, and in discussions to get our NEIU CASEP students to A Red Orchid Theatre, with a focus on arts integration within the field of education.

Sarah Fabian shared her knowledge and expertise in the area of design. Students were able to hear about the process of designing a set, from model to construction, and took part in a robust question and answer session at the end of her presentation.

Sarah earned her MFA in Stage/Scenic Design from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, where she received a full-ride scholarship. Her design work has been recognized regionally by the American College Theatre Festival, nationally by the JFK Center for the Performing Arts, and internationally at the Prague Quadrennial exhibition held in the Czech Republic.

CASEP's second-year students continued the exploration into the teaching profession in their Educational Foundation courses by looking at the philosophy and historical foundations of public education, education and individual differences, and finding their teacher voice in the CASEP section of Public Speaking.

Public Speaking focuses on the development of research, organization and delivery of various types of speeches. During the unit focused on Persuasive Speaking, students selected issues pertaining to the teaching profession, and how to educate others on the importance of being proactive when it comes to issues pertaining to education policy and reform. This unit was well-received by our students who were able to produce high quality persuasive presentations.

The courses that our program students take together as a cohort continue to be the cornerstone of the CASEP experience. This is where the students develop an understanding of self and each other as a collective group of future educators. Our instructors are mindful to incorporate pedagogy that is relevant to our budding teachers. Public speaking is not simply getting in front of the class to present. There is an intentional connection to the future classrooms that each student will be speaking in on a daily basis. Additionally, it is important to mention the benefits our students reap as a result of taking a designated First-Year Experience (FYE) course as incoming Freshmen.

During our recruitment and advising sessions for our incoming CASEP Freshman in the Fall of 2021, we encouraged students to take TESL 109A, *Chicago Speaks: Helping Immigrants Communicate*. This course is taught by Courtney Francis, former school principal, who has become an important CASEP professor. Through collaboration with the TESOL department chair, we have now made this a CASEP required course, open only to incoming first year students in our program.

Chicago Speaks: Helping Immigrants Communicate (TESL 109A). This course introduces the structure of the English language and methods of teaching it to speakers of other languages. This involves investigating the pronunciation and grammar of English as well as looking at ways to teach these subjects along with listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to English Language Learners (ELLs). The course will involve a service learning component in which students will tutor ELLs in various sites throughout Chicagoland. As students study the basics of teaching English as a second language, they will develop academic skills that will contribute to their success in college and beyond.

There continues to be intentionality on linking courses and communication among our instructors in the program. CASEP's first-year students enjoyed taking Introduction to

Communication linked to ENGL 101 and U.S. History linked to Introduction to Theatre. The link between theatre and history provided new opportunities to include reading plays that further highlighted important points in history. Seeing connections between theatre and history allows future teachers to see how elements of one discipline can inform another. In addition to play analysis, students in Introduction to Theatre engaged in teaching theatre games and activities that could be incorporated into lesson plans. It is worth noting that the instructors in our program go above and beyond in catering lessons for future teachers, and meeting with each other to make sure they are providing our students with the supports needed to be successful.

Collaboration Across Colleges and Success Programs

The continued collaboration with the Goodwin College of Education has proven to be instrumental to ensuring a smooth transition for our CASEP students who choose to apply and accepted into the GCOE. Staying abreast of the changes that occur in requirements and adding to the overall innovation of GCOE initiatives was at the forefront of the work in the 2020-2021 academic year.

The CASEP Coordinator meets regularly with the Dean of the Goodwin College of Education (GCOE), and also attends the monthly GCOE academic advising meetings. The intentionality on building and sustaining relationships is truly a cornerstone of what makes CASEP successful. There are a number needs that arise for our students at any given time, and we continue to stay connected to a large number of faculty and staff who have the best interest of our students in mind. It truly is a team effort to ensure that our students are successful and matriculate through to graduation.

On that note, the 2021-2022 academic year marked the continuation of an important initiative. ***The Teacher Preparation Collaborative Committee*** was formed in the Fall of 2020 to ensure that programs at NEIU invested in future teacher preparation were working collaboratively and sharing best practices. This committee is made up of representation from CASEP, TRIO, MSTQE, NOYCE Scholars, GCOE, and Academic Advising. With monthly meetings, we are able to share upcoming events and focus on working together to better serve our students who are interested in the field of education as a potential career.

In addition to the collaboration with the GCOE, CASEP also continues to remain in close communication with a variety of success programs on campus. Project Success, Proyecto Pa'Lante, TRIO and Wentworth Scholars all have been supportive of CASEP and keep our program in mind where there is crossover with students who are planning on becoming teachers. As stated before, all of these programs have participated in the monthly "Power Hour" sessions and have been instrumental in sharing information during recruiting and registration.

One of the biggest areas of collaboration between the College of Arts & Sciences and the Goodwin College of Education during the 2021-2022 academic year, was the development and implementation of a living learning community housing scholarship program for students in both colleges. The inclusion of underclassmen and upperclassmen in this LLC inspired organic mentoring, and displayed a level of

innovation leading to a successful year for our students.

Future Teachers Living Learning Community

The Fall 2021 semester marked the inaugural year of the Future Teachers Living Learning Community (FTLLC), a housing scholarship program for up to 24 future teachers to live in the Nest at NEIU with full financial assistance.

The Future Teachers Living & Learning Community (FTLLC) is open to NEIU students planning on a career in teaching, and also interested in living on campus with peers who are on a similar path. The goal of the FTLLC is to bring together a cohort of first and second year students interested in teaching and more advanced students enrolled in teacher education programs. Selected students will be enrolled in cohort classes, take part in monthly success seminars, and participate in an annual future teacher leadership retreat. Students will demonstrate a desire in determining if teaching is the right career choice as they matriculate through university toward graduation from NEIU.

Students expressing an interest in the on-campus housing initiative will complete an application, and participate in an interview session with the selection committee prior to the Fall semester. To receive and remain eligible for the award students must:

- Be admitted to NEIU currently majoring in, or planning to pursue, a degree in education
- Have a FAFSA (or RISE Act State Alternative Application) on file with NEIU
- Maintain a full-time course load of at least 12 credits per semester
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 during their first year at NEIU
- Be enrolled in cohort classes both fall and spring semesters
- Meet regularly with a program-designated academic advisor
- Returning award recipients may be eligible for additional support in subsequent years, subject to availability of space and funds.

Jeremy Babcock, CASEP Coordinator and Instructor will be a co-lead for the FTLLC program. In addition to teaching courses, and developing and implementing CASEP programming, Jeremy also recruits incoming students to join CASEP at NEIU. The opportunity of an on-campus housing award will be highlighted in CASEP recruiting efforts, and many existing CASEP community building initiatives will coalesce and be integrated into the Future Teachers Living & Learning Community. Cate Wycoff will be the co-lead for the FTLLC program representing the GCOE. Cate is the Director of Clinical Experiences & Student Teaching, with expertise in school-university partnerships, multi-cultural education, and educational policy.

Throughout the 2021-2022 academic year, FTLLC students took part in a number of academic and social outings, culminating in an end of year celebration where students from all of the living learning community programs at NEIU were invited to attend. Students presented on individual LLC highlights, shared a meal, and closed out the year on a high note.

I. Program Plan

A. Long term goals

The future of the CASEP program will be grounded in building and sustaining relationships. Student input will help to guide and ensure that teaching methods remain relevant and engaging. Instructors in our program continue to design and facilitate curriculum relevant to future teachers. There is an understanding for all parties involved that this program is designed to deliver high quality teaching candidates to the Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education.

There are a number of initiatives worth noting that add to the overall appeal and impact of the CASEP program. Here are three areas that offer insight into the future success of our highly-esteemed program:

- **Future Teachers Power Hour** is a monthly seminar where all CASEP students are invited to connect and learn from guest speakers. This program will continue to grow and bring in guest speakers to share expertise with our students.
- **Annual Teacher Leadership Retreat** will remain a mainstay in the program. The overnight experience at Camp Duncan is a bit costly, but through partnerships and grant funding, we plan on continuing this annual tradition where students can take the time to reflect on a career in teaching.
- **Freshmen Orientation** is offered in August before the first day of classes at NEIU. The main focus is to introduce students to CASEP faculty, staff, and students, and also ensure that they are feeling prepared to begin classes the following week. Orientation is a community building event to set the tone for the Fall semester.
- **Collaboration with the Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education** continues to be strong and an important element of the CASEP program. There is an Innovation in Teacher Preparation Team that is involved in a number of exciting initiatives to bring more teaching candidates to NEIU. Through partnerships with area high schools, there is a concerted effort to showcase the high quality GCOE program offerings, and promoting NEIU as a place where *all* future teachers should commence their studies.
- **Observation opportunities** will be more prevalent and intentional moving forward. A number of our Early Childhood Education students work at NEIU's Childcare Center and it has been beneficial to their development as future educators with hands-on experience. Our hope is to connect with area schools to offer opportunities that are specific to individual Education Majors through a number of smaller, more focused field trips.
- **CASEP Student Leadership Council** is an idea that we plan to bring forth where stand-out students can join and help inform the direction of the program in a more intentional way. This would include officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary) and the team would assist with monthly seminars, events and bring forth new ideas with guidance from the CASEP coordinator.

- **Marketing of CASEP** benefited greatly from an overhaul to our website, creating of a Facebook page, and additional marketing materials. The teaching profession is admirable and in need of passionate young people to keep pushing the boundaries of what it means to “teach.” Our branding needs to match that energy. This year marked a poster campaign of “**Find Your Way to the Classroom.**” Students have responded well to the posters and like the idea that everyone has a different path, but the CASEP cohort brings future teachers together and support the journey. Marketing will continue to grow and adapt to student needs and trends. We have also added CASEP “merch” with specially designed t-shirts and water bottles. Additionally, a CASEP newsletter entitled “Hall Pass” will be launched in the Fall of 2021.
- **Annual CASEP Scholarship** discussions are in the works as we have had a number of generous donations from our founder, Jim Blair. We currently have \$3000 in our foundation account and are exploring ways to fundraise and diversity revenue streams before we begin awarding scholarships. The plan is to have a 20-year celebration in the Spring of 2022 to announce the scholarship and also raise funds for the CASEP scholarship fund, too.
- **Living Learning Community** housing scholarship program benefits our students by cultivating a community of learners and providing financial assistance for students who choose to live on campus in the Nest. We will continue to advocate for our involvement in this program at NEIU. Not only is this an important recruiting tool for our incoming CASEP freshmen, but it also adds to strengthening our retention, leading to increased student success.

B. Pillars of the Program

For CASEP, there are 3 areas of focus that are mainstays and will continue to inform our practices: a focus on retention of students at Northeastern; help students who are determined to enter the Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education succeed in that desire; and devise qualitative and quantitative assessment tools to measure program success.

Retention:

Though the cohort structure is affirming and supportive of students, for some, it is intimidating. Each CASEP first-year cohort is inherently different, and although our retention rate has remained steady in the 70-85% range, there is a level of unpredictability. The cohort model works. However, we will continue to document and explore why some of our students don't return for the following Fall semester. Financial needs? Issues outside of school? It is important to observe the trends to adequately address the needs of our students.

And, even with more focused attention on students' individual needs, the fact remains that despite the wealth of success services offered to students, Northeastern has yet to discover the right approach to retaining students. With that said, the current CASEP coordinator attends the Success & Retention Directors meetings, and is highlighting the cohort model and the success of the CASEP program with regards to retention rates.

Applying to the Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education:

Beginning in their first semester in CASEP, students become aware of the necessary qualifications to apply to the Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education. Because all CASEP first-year students must test into ENGL 101, most of them meet that requirement after their first year of classes.

With the recent development of new legislation affecting initial teacher licensure programs, the basic skills test (either Test of Academic Proficiency; TAP, ACT or SAT) is no longer required as an entrance exam for admission to your program or to the GCOE. This is an important development for our CASEP students and continues to be a point of conversation in advising. Students still need to take their content area exams and we are connecting students to support programs (such as TRIO's teacher prep program) to assist with preparing for these exams.

Assessment:

As mentioned earlier, CASEP was able to develop and implement our Spring 2020 survey as an assessment tool to measure student learning and experience within CASEP. Here is the list of questions that were asked of our program students on the survey:

- *How well do you get along with the students in your CASEP cohort?* • *Overall, do you feel the CASEP classes are engaging and beneficial for future teachers?*
- *What advice would you give to the professors who teach CASEP classes?* • *What additional support, if any, do you need to be successful in your coursework?* • *Which of the following CASEP sponsored activities have you attended?* • *Do you have any suggestions for themes or future guest speakers for the monthly Power Hour sessions?*
- *What social/community building activities would you like to see CASEP offer in the future?*
- *What has been the biggest obstacle for you with regards to attending CASEP activities?*
- *How likely are you to apply to the College of Education?*
- *Do you feel CASEP is supporting you on your path to becoming a teacher?* • *What additional information do you feel you need to determine if teaching is the right career choice for you?*
- *How satisfied are you with the advising you receive within the CASEP program for GenEds/CASEP Courses?*
- *How well do you feel supported by CASEP staff/faculty?*
- *What advice would you give to first-year students considering joining CASEP?* • *What do you feel is the strongest/best part of being in CASEP?*
- *What, if anything, do you feel needs to be improved within the CASEP program?* • *How likely would you recommend joining CASEP to an incoming freshman who was planning on becoming a teacher?*
- *Additional thoughts/ideas?*

Our rate of participation in our Spring 2022 CASEP survey was a bit lower than

expected. We did offer incentives this year for survey completion (a free CASEP t-shirt or water bottle). Moving forward, we hope to streamline the questions and promote the survey more intentional with the return to in-person courses and events on campus.

C. Projected Needs/Concerns

1-Faculty/staff: CASEP has one coordinator who is also an instructor in the program. The Coordinator teaches at 50% during the academic year and recruits/helps advise new CASEP students during the school year and in the summers (in addition to many other responsibilities). **CASEP will have difficulty growing as a program or attain its retention or assessment goals in its current incarnation.** Most, if not all student support programs at Northeastern have administrative staff, e.g. Project Success, Proyecto Pa'Lante, and the Honors Program. Therefore, CASEP requests an *at least* half-time position to assist the Coordinator with student-centered activities:

- Contact and coordinate CASEP alumni to form an advisory group for current CASEP students
- Create a database of past and current CASEP students for the purpose of:
 - documenting students' achievements and
 - beginning a process of fundraising for scholarship purposes
- Assist with orientations in the summers
- Assist with monthly seminars and event planning

2-It's worth noting that the title of "Coordinator" does not serve the overall program with regards to outward facing social capital. Similar success and cohort programs have "Directors" and "Assistant Directors" heading up their respective programs. CASEP is included in promotional materials, shared websites, and the like. The title of "Coordinator" reads like an entry level position, and does not serve the nearly twenty - year program well or reflect the director-level responsibilities. CASEP should have an institutionalized Director who leads the program.

3-The ability to choose faculty who teach our CASEP courses is an important aspect of our program, specifically faculty who specialize in working with incoming freshmen students. Due to lower enrollment numbers and a decrease in the number of course sections offered, we have had difficulty confirming our preferred CASEP faculty to teach our classes. This has been particularly problematic in our ENG 101 and ENG 102 CASEP sections. Professor Olivia Cronk is a beloved CASEP collaborator who is no longer assigned to teach in our program. As stated before, we are successful because of the people in our program. Not having Olivia to teach our courses is a huge loss.

4-We have a number of students ask if they can "work" for CASEP. This is a good sign of their dedication to our program. Perhaps future hiring of interested/qualified CASEP students as they move on to their Junior year might be a good idea to keep alumni engaged and also promote the program. Perhaps internships? Student Aides? We have been fortunate to have support from an assigned FYE mentor, but CASEP specific student worker positions would be an intentional way to engage students and help to grow the program.

5-We have a diverse student body, **but need to continue to engage and recruit more students of color to join the program.** The CASEP coordinator is seeking

out ways to be more intentional with regards to recruiting a more diverse student pool. Not only will this strengthen the cohort, but also assist with diversifying the future teaching force, which is definitely worth prioritizing. We also need to be more intentional about diversifying our CASEP faculty who teach our courses.

6-For events such as the overnight Future Teacher Leadership Retreat to continue, we will have to assess the CASEP budget and possibly increase so that this can become “institutionalized” as an annual event. Currently, we are able to hold this event with funding/partnership from the Title V grant. This grant will be ending next year, which means we will have to look for alternate funding sources or increase the CASEP budget.

With CASEP nearing our 25th year in operation, we plan to mark this important milestone with an event in the future. We will begin to assemble an event committee to discuss the possibility of launching a scholarship, reaching out to pertinent alumni, and ensure that we offer a comprehensive event to honor and celebrate CASEP.

**Submitted by
Jeremy Babcock**

Communication, Media
and Theatre

Annual Report 2021 – 2022

Submitted by Cyndi Moran

I. Executive Summary

Overview

The Department of Communication, Media and Theatre (CMT) links three creative and demanding disciplines, all of which take as their focus social interaction, technology, and performance. Students in the CMT program acquire proficiency in the theory and practice of communication, media, and theatre and develop an appreciation of differing values and perceptions of the world. Our department also focuses on personal and professional development that students need to compete in today’s workforce.

CMT is again proud to be one of NEIU’s top 10 majors (#9). This is the twelfth year we have maintained a top-ten distinction. This is due to the talent and dedication of our faculty and staff and to the interest and enthusiasm of our students.

Undergraduate Program:

- B.A. in Communication, Media and Theatre
- Minor in Communication, Media and Theatre
- Minor in Communication
- Minor in Media
- Minor in Theatre Design, Technology and Management
- Minor in Theatre Performance
- Minor in Journalism

Graduate Program:

- M.A. in Communication, Media and Theatre

Curriculum Information

Our undergraduate major in CMT and our six minors integrate technology and a liberal arts curriculum. CMT’s graduate program provides an in-depth study of the principles and practices of communication, media, and theatre and is designed for students interested in advanced corporate, non-profit, and government positions, those preparing for positions in higher education or further graduate study, and teachers already at the elementary or secondary level who want a master’s degree.

In the **2021-2022** academic year, we had **154** undergraduate CMT majors, **60** minors, and **19** graduate students. Undergraduate degree conferrals have been proportionally strong, with **57** bachelor’s degrees awarded in 2021-2022, and **7** master’s degrees. Our retention rates are strong; 86.2% for our undergraduates, and 82.2% for our graduate students. CMT enrollment and student credit hour (SCH) production both remain comparatively high, with **5,120** SCH for the 2020-2021 academic year.

| 2021-2022 | Main Campus/Remote | Online | El Centro | CCICS | CASEP |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Summer 2021* | 10 sections | 4 sections | 0 sections | 0 sections | 0 sections |
| Fall 2021** | 48 sections | 5 sections | 1 section | 1 section | 1 section |
| Spring 2022 | 40 sections | 8 sections | 1 section | 0 sections | 2 sections |

*Data Digest lists a total of 16 sections; two Public Speaking classes were Dual Enrollment courses, which “count” as two sections each but are really only one course each.

** Data Digest lists a total of 58 sections; two graduate classes had separate “contract course” sections, which “count” as two sections each but are really only one course each.

CMT works hard to offer a program that is timely and relevant, continues to be grounded in the best practices of our discipline, and meets the needs of NEIU’s diverse student population. **Our department regularly offers courses across Main Campus, El Centro, and online.** As the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions eased during the 2021-22 academic year, we moved many of our synchronous classes back from remote to in-person meetings. We are carefully surveying student demand and

suitability of courses for remote offering, and to aid with accessibility, plan to continue offering a portion of our classes in this mode. We offered our first Winter Session course during its inaugural run, and will monitor student interest in this term as well. Faculty directed internships, service-learning experiences, and hands-on work in our Theatre, Communication, and Media areas (at both the undergraduate and graduate level) continue to be essential elements of our curriculum and hallmarks of our students' experience in the program. CMT student and alumni achievements continue to reflect their positive experience in the program, as well as the high quality of instruction, advising, and support for professional development strived for by our faculty.

CMT also continues to contribute to the **University Core Curriculum** in several ways. We offer **General Education (Distributive Learning)** program with two regular course offerings in the Fine Arts (CMTT-130: *Introduction to Theatre* and CMTM-160: *Introduction to Cinema*), one course in the Humanities (CMTC-100: *Introduction to Communication*), and one FYE course (CMTM 109A: *FYE: Chicago Video*). These courses emphasize effective oral and written communication skills and prepare students for more advanced study in the CMT program and at NEIU. CMT also offers seventeen **Engaged Learning Experience** courses: ten courses in the **Discipline Specific (ELE-DS)** area and seven courses in the **Boundary Crossing (ELE-X)** areas. Finally, CMT regularly offers a rotation of 22 of our courses **entirely online** with an additional ten courses regularly offered in **hybrid format**.

CMT continues its involvement and commitment to the **College of Arts and Sciences Education Program (CASEP)**, most prominently through three CASEP-specific General Education courses, CMTC-100: *Introduction to Communication* and CMTT 130: *Introduction to Theatre*, and CMTC-101: *Public Speaking*, one of CMT's core courses. CMT has contributed to other CAS initiatives as well, such as inclusion in the co-taught course ZHON-191 *Honors Introduction to the Arts*, the development of STAM 300: *The Performative Self*, for the **Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM)** initiative, and participating in the **Jump Start Initiative**, the high school dual-enrollment program. CMT also continues to contribute courses to the **Women and Gender Studies (WGS)** major/minor as well as the minor in **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Studies**. We regularly offer CMTC-313: *Communication, Gender and Identity* and CMTM-377: *Gender and Media*, and offered *Queer Theatre* in Fall 2021 in the CMTT-334 *Special Topics in Theatre* class. These courses contribute to an interdisciplinary approach to studying the lives, histories and cultures of women and LGBTQ communities and their allies. Courses in history, culture, health, politics, justice, education, literature and the arts reflect a commitment to understanding and representing the contributions of LGBTQ individuals and communities.

Other curricular highlights include the first offerings of four new courses, CMTC-306 *Special Topics in Communication: Environmental Communication*, CMTM-350 *Podcasting and Audio Documentary*, CMTT-446 *Arts Administration*, and the aforementioned CMTT 334: *Queer Theatre*. During this reporting period CMT developed online versions of seven more of our courses. We participated in an IAI review of four CMT classes, and reviewed 37 courses for transfer articulations. We also worked collaboratively to develop and assess policies and language, including welcoming messages and DEI statements for potential inclusion in our syllabi. This will continue as an ongoing process.

Faculty Information

CMT faculty engagement is a hallmark of the CMT program and is directly related to the quality educational experience the program is able to provide our students. CMT faculty contribute significantly to their scholarly disciplines, professional and local communities, and the university.

CMT faculty continued significant service to the College and University. They participated on General Education and Shared Governance Task Forces, and they continued to serve in key roles on critical NEIU constituencies such as the NEIU Faculty Senate, the University Personnel Committee, and the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Affairs Committee. They participated in important University initiatives such as the University Without Walls, the annual NEIU Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium, the NEIU Diversity Council, and the NEIU Faculty Research and Creative Activities Symposium, and University-level search committees. Finally, CMT faculty serve their professional, local/community and state organizations as officers, members of professional editorial boards, facilitators of professional workshops, and in various key leadership roles. A specific enumeration of 2021-2022 CMT faculty research/creative activities and service is presented in the “Accomplishments” section of this report.

Although we maintain a successful track record, for being a comparatively large department with three disciplines we are understaffed in tenure-track faculty members to teach necessary courses, direct student productions, advise students, and execute our curriculum.

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 2021-2022 | 8 TP Faculty | 10 Instructors | 5 Adjuncts |
| Sections Taught | 39 sections | 77 sections | 6 sections |

These numbers make it clear that our large department is in critical need of additional tenure-track faculty members, who also take on an average 42% of the student production assignments, and nearly all of our individualized instruction assignments. In addition to teaching courses, our tenured/tenure-track faculty members regularly advise a combined 228 majors and minors within our department. We were delighted to have Dr. Yejin Shin join CMT as an assistant Professor in August 2021. Her addition means we now have eight (including the chair) tenured/tenure track faculty. Due to three recent retirements, we now have only ten full-time and part-time instructors who teach the overwhelming majority of our classes each year. As a result, we often have to rely on additional adjunct instructors to fill in the gaps, and this has ranged from three to ten adjuncts depending on the needs of the particular year. The need for additional faculty lines (particularly in Communication and Theatre) continues; Dr. Shin raises the total of tenure-track faculty in the Communication discipline to only two.

Finally, we reiterate in our reporting each year the importance of advising in the retention of our students. CMT seeks to meet the ongoing advising needs of our majors and minors, by providing extensive program information, course planning, and professional consultation. We are often required to advise potential majors, potential

incoming students, and even students from other programs who have difficulty reaching their own advisors. CMT faculty make advising accessible to our students, whose busy and demanding schedules sometimes make advising a challenge in relation to their work-school-life balance. To be sure, we remain focused on how intentional advising, together with strong curriculum, attractive course offerings and careful scheduling are all best practices for encouraging the retention of students. Our advising load on each faculty member is relatively high with each undergraduate advisor serving an average of 48 students (majors and minors) at any given time throughout the year. Maintaining such high numbers can make it difficult to provide substantive one-on-one advising to students. Additional tenure-track faculty members are needed to be able to divide this advising load in a more manageable and intentional way.

Program Activities and Accomplishments

Major department activities and accomplishments during the 2021-2022 academic year included:

- Presenting our 2019-2021 (extended due to COVID-19) **IBHE Program Review** to the Provost/University.
- Reorganizing the CMT main and faculty offices, refreshing all computers and support technologies, and creating new promotional materials as part of the **return to campus activities** to welcome back our students and staff.
- Expanding our alumni tracking and organization and participating in our **annual fundraising effort** via #GivingTuesday.
- Continuing to produce engaging theatrical productions with the **Stage Center Theatre** and **Children's Theatre Workshop** despite COVID-19 adjustments. • Administering seven **CMT Brommel Student Scholarships** and \$44K in **CMT Talent scholarships**.
- Inducting 13 new members into our university chapter of the **Lambda Pi Eta Honors Society for Communication**.
- Holding our first in-person **CMT Day Celebration** and **NxNE (North by Northeastern) Media Festival** since the COVID-19 shutdown.
 - Receiving over \$15K in **support of our curriculum** through important equipment acquisitions from the CAS Verizon Equipment Fund.
- Providing continuing and *responsive* **access to video/audio production equipment and software to our students** in light of COVID-19 and changes in students' needs.

All of these activities and accomplishments tie to our recruitment and retention goals. We seek to recruit and retain CMT majors and graduate students by offering an effective and relevant curriculum, an interactive learning environment, and opportunities for students to develop skills that will provide them professional success and personal satisfaction.

IBHE Program Review

In Fall 2021 CMT presented our 2019-2021 (extended due to COVID-19) **IBHE Program Review**, produced under the supervision of CMT's Dr. Shayne Pepper, to the Provost/University. We were able to report that our study met all the goals, and that CMT is in good standing. As reported last year, our self-study revealed that our enrollments have remained proportional to overall enrollment at NEIU, and we have

maintained a stable position as one of the top ten majors at the university. Our program keeps up with disciplinary and employment trends and remains a vital area within a liberal arts education. Our rates of degree conferral, internship participation, employment placement after graduation, and alumni success all demonstrate the effectiveness of our department. Our program goals and learning objectives are carefully mapped out, aligned, and measured, and we continue to assess these regularly. Our cost per credit hour demonstrates that we maintain a very cost-efficient delivery of our program, and student demand for our courses, major, and minor remains quite high despite downward trends in Illinois higher education more broadly.

We reviewed for the Provost and Deans that we had already begun to act on goals set as a result of the self-study with respect to curricular work and career development strategies, and took the opportunity to lobby for staffing and resources to better serve our students. We made a particular pitch for University support for a new Theatre building.

Return to Campus

Fall 2021 saw the “official” return to campus movement, due to changes in COVID-19 restrictions. CMT had had no dedicated office staff for years, but was fortunate to be given a 75% Office Support Specialist position effective for fall. CMT alum Susanne Pawlikowski was hired and oversaw a massive cleanup and organization of CMT’s main and faculty offices that had been unused during the years of remote pandemic work. As we reorganized, we transitioned many of our processes to efficient paperless system, e.g., developing digital forms and files for advising, scholarship and internship applications, student computer and video equipment loans, and other paperwork. We refreshed and made new promotional materials and banners, posted schedules, made internship bulletin boards with QR codes, and created a welcoming space for our students, faculty and staff.

Alumni Outreach, Fundraising on #GivingTuesday

As part of our return-to-campus organization and clean-up, we undertook a thorough organization of our alumni records and contacts. This feeds our fundraising efforts, too, and we raised just under \$1,000 in the Fall 2021 #GivingTuesday fundraiser. The money raised goes directly to students who need financial assistance. In the past year, we have been able to provide microgrants ranging from \$30-\$350 to each student. These are small but meaningful amounts to students who need funds to buy textbook codes, equipment, pay honors society membership dues, or to help with paying a remaining tuition balance in order to graduate or accept another scholarship.

Stage Center Theatre

A hallmark of the Stage Center Theatre and CMT’s Theatre program is our integral role in NEIU’s liberal arts education. The Theatre introduces students to all aspects of theatre: from the technical, organizational and management skills needed for success in the theatre world, to the conceptual and artistic elements needed to understand the theatre arts. In addition to the many students taking academic courses in our theatre program, each year we involve more than 150 students in every aspect of production including performing, designing, writing, directing, and many other roles.

In 2021-2022, the Stage Center Theatre planned to present four shows via the main stage and two new works in development in partnership with Chicago Dramatists and

Chicago State University. For 2021-2022, the usual Children's Theatre Workshop productions were on hiatus due to the ongoing challenges of bringing CPS students to campus during heightened Covid-19 protocols. Our season offered the audience a broad range of plays, and provides students an opportunity to read, produce, and watch both classical and contemporary productions:

- Fall 2021: 5th Annual **Nuevas Voces**: A 10-Minute Playwriting Festival and Contest with direction by CMT Instructor John Bliss
- Fall 2021: **Water by the Spoonful** by Quiara Alegria Hudes with direction by Assistant Professor Adam Goldstein
- Spring 2022: **Babel** by Jacqueline Goldfinger with direction by CMT Senior Instructor Dan Wirth
- Spring 2022: **Derek McPhatter: 3 short plays** at Chicago State, with direction by Chicago State University Professor Kamesha Khan in partnership with NEIU, CSU, and Chicago Dramatists.
- Spring 2022: **Metamorphic** by Dolores Diaz at Chicago Dramatists, with direction by CMT Professor Adam Goldstein partnership with NEIU, CSU, and Chicago Dramatists.
- Spring 2022: **Tiny Beautiful Things** by Nia Vardalos and Cheryl Strayed with direction by CMT Instructor Leslie Hull

In 2021-2022, the total attendance for our Main Stage shows was over 500 for in-person attendance and over 500 for recorded or live-stream attendance. The attendance for our partnered events listed above totaled over 110 in small scale reading events.

Unfortunately, due to ongoing Covid-19 challenges, Children's Theatre Workshop was internally focused in the class this year and will re-tool going forward to bring CPS students back to campus in 2022-2023.

During the report period, we worked to encourage increased student involvement and self-governance across the range of Stage Center and CMTT areas. The Student Theatre Council really took off in 2019-2020 and we continued to find new outlets for student work in 2021-2022. This group comprises declared theatre minors and Stage Center Theatre frequently participating students. This cohort meets monthly or bi-monthly and engages in a number of supporting initiatives for Stage Center operations as well as conceptualizes and organizes student driven theatrical activities such as recruitment tables, artistic projects, etc. Additionally, this group serves as a collaborative governance space in which students with a passion for theatre review all stage center policies and season planning processes prior to implementation. While the body does not yet have official "voting" in place, students are able to discuss and evaluate all theatre planning and to voice their interests and concerns to Stage Center leadership. Through this model, students now have an active say in the plays and programs implemented in a given season as well as the engagement activities for those programs. We have seen student participation in theatre activities steadily increase through the formation of this organization and look forward to growing the group, forming a formal self-governing structure for students, and building pathways for student driven work and culture in the theatre spaces at NEIU.

One major event this year that arrived as a direct result of the Student Theatre Council was the development of the first student driven theatrical production in some time at

Stage Center. An intrepid group of student leaders worked to build, and will self produce on our stage, a musical theatre showcase of contemporary works called **CONNECT!** We are very excited to see the evolution of student involvement in the theatre.

Our theatre program prepares students to meet current workforce demands through hands-on training and experience in production, design and performance – skills that are all highly transferable to numerous fields. Our students have worked at Albany Park Theatre Project, The Miracle Center, Steppenwolf Theatre, Goodman Theatre, the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts and the Lyric Opera; they have produced and/or performed at the Greenhouse Theatre and Circle Theatre; they have earned advanced degrees in Theatre and now teach at institutions around the country; and they learn from faculty who are accomplished, award-winning and highly-respected members of professional theatre.

Children's Theatre Workshop

The Stage Center Theatre's Children's Theatre Workshop continues to provide a valuable theatrical experience to Chicago area students, many of whom have little access to the theatre arts. Children's Theatre productions typically bring hundreds of children from over 20 Chicago-area public schools to NEIU each semester (reaching an average of 1,100 elementary/middle school students and teachers). Unfortunately, due to ongoing concerns regarding Covid-19 on both the NEIU and CPS sides of the equation, 2021-2022 saw CTW work digitally only in internalized processes. We will however be bringing audiences back to campus during the 2022-2023 Children's Theatre Workshop season!

Theatre Programming: Looking Forward

While 2021-2022 saw (masked) live performances return to Stage Center, 2022-2023 will serve as a wonderful transitional season for Stage Center Theatre and CMT as a whole. We look forward to re-engaging a full production calendar of in-person experiences as well as resuming our dynamic work in the classroom throughout building F. With the campus shifting back toward a larger degree of "normalcy" Stage Center will work to echo the campus guidance as well as the professional theatre industry in evolving our protocols to provide safety for both audience and performers while bringing back the dynamic relationships that are built in our theatre space. We look forward to an activated season of social justice focused work, an expansion of our community and professional partnerships and the return of Children's Theatre Workshop to our stage.

CMT Day/North by Northeastern Media Festival

April 2022 saw the exciting, in-person return of our (until interrupted by COVID-19) annual celebration of our students, CMT Day. It was held in our own Stage Center Theatre, with an attendance of approximately 70. We celebrated our six CMT Distinguished Student and our 4 Anna Antaramian Excellence in Theatre award winners, and presented them with gifts and certificates. Our seven CMT Brommel Scholarship winners were recognized, and we announced the nine Fall 2021 and inducted the four new Spring 2022 members of the Lambda Pi Eta Honors Society for Communication. We also celebrated the contributions of Dr. Shayne Pepper who had chaired CMT the previous four years. CMT M.A. student Erin Lindstron delivered an abbreviated version of her Central States Communication Association presentation,

“Connecting Over Fat Talk: An Interpersonal Phenomenon.” We also saw the return of our in-person NxNE (North by Northeastern) Media Festival; we screened 10 videos and two audio programs created by CMT students. The celebration included a reception in our beautifully decorated theatre lobby.

Lambda Pi Eta Honors Society for Communication

To reward academic achievement in Communication and to further engage our students, CMT relaunched our chapter **Lambda Pi Eta Honors Society for Communication** in Fall 2020. To become a member, students must have earned a minimum of 60 credits hours with at least 12 in CMT, and have an overall GPA of 3.0, with a minimum GPA of 3.25 within CMT. In Fall 2021 CMT inducted 9 new members, and four more in Spring 2022. Students who required financial assistance for the membership fees were funded by the CMT Foundation.

Verizon Fund Equipment Purchases

CMT received support for three important equipment proposals during this reporting period through the College of Arts and Sciences annual Verizon Equipment Funding call. Our theatre program was able to purchase an array of mannequin heads, wigs and makeup packages in assorted skin tones and features for makeup design and practice. Our media production classes and students will be well-served by the acquisition of several LED lighting kits and a variety of microphones to supplement the University pool of video/audio production gear. And we are especially grateful to be granted funds to purchase a wireless microphone set-up (for 12 performers) for the Stage Center Theatre productions. These acquisitions required financial support that exceeded the department’s own budget.

Media Production Lab

While we were teaching all production classes remotely, CMT facilitated the University’s purchase of Adobe Creative Suite individual licenses to provide 54-62 students with access to digital tools to work from home each term. CMT also provided loans of CAS and CMT purchased computers, as well as prosumer production tools such as gimbals, audio recorders and microphones, and tripods for students to use to augment their own cell phone cameras and other production tools while Media Services loans were unavailable. As we returned to in-person offerings, we have lobbied for and continue to use remote software licenses and offer greater flexibility with equipment options to our students. We strive to navigate the desire for students to use the best tools possible while recognizing that the digital terrain is changing rapidly, and while understanding that commuting distances can impact what might be the best choices for our students, even if that puts a greater burden on instruction to support a greater variety of tools.

A critical component of the Media Lab is the work of student tutors. The hands-on learning experience CMT students gain from use of the Media Lab as both students and tutors is invaluable. This opportunity responds to their professional development needs and foregrounds the program’s curricular focus on student success, academic excellence, and innovation. Student tutoring took place both in-person and via Zoom during this reporting period as we strive to be as accessible as possible to our students.

Partnership with Chicago Film Society

We are pleased to continue the CMT-sponsored partnership between NEIU and the Chicago Film Society; 35mm archival film screenings returned to the NEIU Auditorium

in Spring 2022 following a pandemic hiatus. The Chicago Film Society is a non-profit organization that educates the public about the cultural history of film, and this partnership has continued the thirty-year tradition of local theatres providing the Classic Film Series to the Chicago area arts community. This film series partnership complements NEIU's existing academic and arts programming; offers increased engagement with the local Albany Park and North Park communities; garners audiences across the Chicago area; and provides opportunities for internships and other student learning experiences in the technical aspects of film exhibition, rights acquirement, publicity and social media management. We plan our film studies courses accordingly to take advantage of the films they showcase.

Scholarships

Thanks to the continued generosity of Professor Emeritus Bernard Brommel, the CMT Department now offers six annual scholarships. With these scholarships, Dr. Brommel has endowed more than \$200,000 to the Department, which provides important financial assistance to our students. In this reporting period, we had a tie for one category, and used CMT Foundation funds to offer a seventh Brommel award.

We are also continuing to award a "Communicating Sexualities" scholarship established by two CMT alumni: Carrie Reffitt (B.A., 2011; M.A., 2016) and Nikki Nigl (M.A., 2014). This scholarship is available to CMT, Sociology, and Women and Gender Studies students.

CMT Talent Scholarships are also critical to supporting our students. We awarded a little over \$44,000 in tuition waivers to CMT students for their work throughout the year building sets and props, making costumes, taking on theatre management, performance and technical roles, tutoring students in the media lab, filming and editing performances to support the department's needs, etc. These scholarships serve as recruiting and retention tools in addition to providing financial relief to our students.

II. Program Plan

A. Long term goals

CMT has identified the following goals for the upcoming academic year: •

Request new tenure-track hires in Communication, Theatre and Media Production

- Continue to expand our CMT alumni relations, fundraising, and outreach •
- Strategize and prioritize improvements to the Stage Center Theatre infrastructure •
- Develop a student content creator position using our work study funding •
- Develop outreach and recruitment tools with department chairs at local community colleges and area high schools

B. Projected needs

In order to maintain our successes and continue to grow, we have several clear needs: Three Tenure-Track Faculty Members, Equipment Needs, and Infrastructure Upgrades for the Stage Center Theatre.

1. Faculty and Staff Needs

Office Administration

In August of 2021, CMT was finally able to hire a dedicated Office Support Specialist, housed in CMT, who serves CMT (75%) and the Philosophy Program (25%). We are grateful for this position and especially with the “return to campus” in Fall 2021, this was a critical and timely addition. Nevertheless, we will continue to have the recurring need for administrative support in the Theatre area, and we have pointed this out in our annual report every year for the past twelve years. The Stage Center Theatre’s Main Stage, Summer Theatre, and Children’s Theatre have long required additional support personnel in the form of an administrative/business management staff member. Currently, graduate assistants who seek work in theatre-related contexts after graduation do this administrative work. However, the challenges related to yearly turnover in this area call for a more permanent staff assignment to assure consistency and oversight of administrative and business issues in the Theatre area.

Family Communication Faculty Member

Fall 2019 saw CMT begin to rebuild our Communication program when Dr. Maura Baron joined us as our sole tenure-track faculty member, and we were grateful to have Dr. Yejin Shin join us in Fall 2021. Now we hope to utilize the over \$400,000 in funds generously set aside for the Brommel Endowed Faculty Position to request that we hire a third Communication faculty member with expertise in the areas of Family and Interpersonal Communication. The combination of these three Communication faculty members will allow us to support our graduate and undergraduate curriculum, individualized instruction, development of internship and service-learning opportunities, and student advising and get our Communication area back to the minimum number of faculty needed to execute our curriculum.

One Theatre Faculty Member

2019 saw the retirement of our most senior faculty member, Rodney Higginbotham (Professor of Theatre). This means that only two pre-tenure, junior faculty members are tasked with overseeing all activities of the Stage Center Theatre, supervising talent scholarships and theatre internships, advising theatre students, and executing the theatre curriculum. The minimal number of faculty and the lack of a Ph.D.-holding faculty member in the theatre area will adversely affect student advising and retention, especially students who want to make theatre a primary focus both at the undergraduate and graduate level. We hope to be granted a search again to address this critical need to support our B.A. and M.A. program with a search for an Assistant Professor of Theatre History/Dramatic Literature and Criticism.

Theatre Shop and Design Technical Director

Two tenure-track faculty simply cannot continue to support every aspect of a working theatre as well as the theater academic program and curriculum. It is essential for safety and technical reasons to meet industry standards by having at least one part-time, dedicated staff member to oversee the theatre scene shop, control booth, lighting grid and instruments, and other sound, projection and AV equipment. There is currently no University staff support whatsoever; the University has staff technical director positions for other University performance spaces, but not for the Stage Center Theatre. Currently faculty members, piece-meal hires of former student, talent scholars, the department chair, and volunteers cobble together an insufficient system for maintaining equipment and the space. This needs to be a priority as we build enrollments coming out of the pandemic.

One Media Production Faculty Member

With the faculty needs in Communication and Theatre being desperate for the last several years, the Media Program has quietly but significantly responded to industry and student demand by expanding its offerings in Journalism and Media Production without adding any new tenure-track lines, or adequate facilities and equipment upgrades. As our external reviewer pointed out, with the move of Professor Moran into the role of chair in July 2021, this need becomes critical to sustain and adequately offer instruction and continuing professional opportunities for our students.

2. Equipment Needs

Computers and Adobe Software Licenses

Between university and CMT purchases, we have worked the last couple of years to provide adequate computers for faculty and the CMT office. While we have repurposed some of computers for student use, we also would greatly benefit from a small number of new MacBook Pros that could be used for our students in production and design classes. Additionally, we urge the university to continue funding the licensing of Adobe software for our students. The Adobe software suite is vital to execute our curriculum in classes such as Introduction to Video Production, Digital Video Editing, Introduction to Audio Production, Multimedia Storytelling, Podcasting and Audio Documentary, Foundations of Theatrical Design, and others. Having licenses students can use from *any* computer (and not just in our own lab spaces) provides them with critical access and flexibility.

3. Other Resources

Space and Infrastructure

The CMT Department has long been confronted with space and infrastructure challenges in the F-Building Theatre area. We maintain that an entire renovation (replacement!) of the Theatre would have a significant and positive impact on the CMT program and the NEIU Arts, and it is long overdue. Summer 2022 saw some significant infrastructure improvements in the F-wing, for which we are profoundly grateful. A new ventilation system and asbestos abatement has made our F-110 scene shop safer, but the space is still too small for construction needs and our two large saws are in dire need of replacement. The installation of new lighting, asbestos mitigation, and a Marley floor in the F-109 theatre classroom has improved our ability to teach performance classes, but in dividing the room to accommodate the costume shop we have limited class size and with no real wall between the spaces, the costume shop has limited hours of operation. The computer and projection needs for F-109 are still unmet – there is no installed projection screen and the projector placement provides a view for only half the class. Renovations to the lobby, including new lighting, paint, carpeting are wonderful and provide a nice entry point as it is the first thing the general public sees when coming to a play at NEIU. However, a track for hanging posters has yet to be installed, and there is no official signage at all on the building and lobby, making Stage Center Theatre difficult to find. The long-term needs of adequate cooling, sound-proofing, and access issues in the theatre itself are still unmet. Likewise, the HVAC system that serves our Digital Media classroom in E-112 has a barely-functioning unit that fails often, and floods the room occasionally. These areas impact the health and safety of our students, faculty and

staff as well as the production of shows for the Stage Center Theatre and Children's Theatre Workshop.

We continue to struggle with ongoing issues of storage for equipment, props, and materials, as well as instructional space for technical theatre courses and office space for Theatre faculty. We also face ongoing issues with flood damage to valuable props, costumes and essential stage equipment currently stored in the F-109 classroom as well as the F-Wing and Fine Arts Building basements. While we are grateful for the ingenuity of our Theatre faculty who face these ongoing constraints, significant upgrades to the theatre space, scene shop, and theatre classroom are necessary. Again, while we are grateful for recent improvements, it cannot be stated emphatically enough that what is actually needed for CMT's theatre and media programs to enter the century that is now twenty-three years old is the funding and construction of the long-promised new building. Period.

III. Accomplishments

A. Faculty Research/Creative Activities

2. Book Chapters, Regional Exhibitions or Performances

Cherney, Maura:

Cherney, M. R. (2021). Instructor- and student-created video to increase social presence in asynchronous online courses: Practical steps for effective use. In S. Kelly (Ed.) *Online Instructional Communication*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

3. Articles and Abstracts, Local Exhibitions or Performances:

Cherney, Maura:

Ruppel, E. K., **Cherney, M. R.**, Quinn, S. F., & Richards, R. J. (2021). Effects of mediated communication on conflict behavior, resolution, and affect in romantic couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 38, 3633-3645. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075211040806>

Fabian, Sarah:

Fabian, S. (Scenic Designer). (2022, April 14-16, 20-23) *Tiny Beautiful Things*. Live Performance at Stage Center Theatre, Northeastern IL University, Chicago, IL.
Park, Joonhee.* (Assistant Scenic Designer). (2022, May). *Lookingglass Alice*. Live Performance at Lookingglass Theatre Company, Chicago, IL.

Note: Professor Fabian now uses her given Korean name for her professional billings.

Goldstein, Adam:

Goldstein, A. (Director). (2021, July 30-31) *Urinetown*. Live Performance for Actors Training Center at Highland Park Community House, Highland Park, IL.

Goldstein, A. (Director). (2021, November 11-20) *Water by the Spoonful*. Live

Performance at Stage Center Theatre, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL.

Goldstein, A. (Dramaturg). (2022, March 3-6). *The Truth*. Live Reading at MATC Conference, Cleveland, OH

Goldstein, A. (Dialect Coach). (2022, March 8-April 8) *In Every Generation*. Live Performance at Victory Gardens Theatre, Chicago IL

Pepper, Shayne:

Pepper, S. “Cultural Programming and the Early History of HBO’s Signature Style, 1978-1988.” *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 61.5 (2021-2022), 86-112. [[Open Access Link](#)]

Rubinowitz, Edie:

Rubinowitz, Edie. “Ice Cream and the Cone: Teaching Solutions Journalism and Working With Community Media,” Solutions Journalism Educators Academy 2.0, July 14-15, University of Oregon, Portland campus, Portland, OR.

4. Conference Presentations, Group Shows

Cherney, Maura:

Cherney, M. R. (2022). Screenshotting for evidence of social information processing theory. G.I.F.T. presented at the annual meeting of the Central States Communication Association, Madison, WI.

Goldstein, Adam:

Goldstein, A. “The Truth by Ada Change.” Mid-America Theatre Conference, 3-6 March 2022, Marriott Cleveland Downtown, Cleveland, OH. Playwriting Symposium Process and Presentation.

Mun, Seung-Hwan:

Mun, S. (2022, March 2). *Racial discrimination survey report: Korean Americans in Chicagoland*. The 2022 Biannual Forum of Hansa Institute. Online.

Pepper, Shayne:

Pepper, S. “Nostalgia, AIDS History, and HBO’s *It’s a Sin*” *Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference* (Chicago - Virtual) April 1, 2022

6. Service

Mun, Seung-Hwan:

- Board Member, *Hansa Institute* (2017 - Present)

Pepper, Shayne:

- Graduate Student Faculty Mentor Program – Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference (April 2, 2022)
- Reviewer, *Choice Magazine- American Library Association* (2000- Present)

B. Student Achievements

1. Presentations, conference papers, symposium participation, publications.

Lindstrom, E. C. (2022). Connecting over fat talk: An interpersonal phenomenon. Presented at the annual meeting of the Central States Communication Association. Madison, WI.

2. Acceptance to graduate or professional school; other honors/scholarships/awards, but only if from organizations other than NEIU.

Nicole Anderson, (B.A. 2019) began her Master's in Journalism at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York (CUNY)

Anthony Guerrero (M.A. 2020) began his Ph.D. in Media, Cinema, and Digital Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Rolando Ithier. (B.A. 2010) began his Master's in Public Administration at Northern Illinois University.

Chuck Sipps (B.A. 2020) began his M.F.A. program in film at the Ohio University School of Film.

C. Alumni News

Ata Younan (B.A. 2019) was hired as the Public Relations Director for the Goodman Theatre, Chicago, in Spring of 2022.

Leslie Hurtado, (B.A. 2020)), published in the Chicago Reader, and working as a producer with the Change Agents podcast

Ryland Pietras, (B.A. 2022) began writing for City Bureau Documenters program.

Earth Science

Annual Report 2021– 2022

Submitted By: Nadja Insel

I. Executive Summary

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Earth Science program underwent a program review. We continued to offer online and hybrid classes, even as in-person instructions resumed. Our program review suggests that the switch to remote classes during the height of the pandemic led to declines in student numbers and course offerings, but online courses were in demand during the 2021-2022 academic year. We continue the

intensive integration of technology into our courses (at the General Education level as well as advanced 300-level classes) and explore new models for instructional delivery. We continued work on external grants and secured additional funding, and were involved in college and university-wide initiatives. We hired an excellent adjunct instructor to strengthen our General Education teaching and student experiences in the Earth Sciences and continued revisions and development of our curriculum to ensure inclusive excellence for current and future Earth Science majors.

Student Success: Advance student success from recruitment through graduation by engaging all members of the Northeastern community.

The Earth Science Department had 7 majors in Fall 2021 and graduated 4 students in the fiscal year 2021-2022. Students who graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Earth Science are versatile and qualified for a wide range of careers. NEIU's rigorous educational approach affords our students with good employability and salary potential in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and/or provides competitive applications for graduate programs. At least one of our most recent graduates is involved in tutoring with NEIU's 21 Century Community Learning Center for STEAM projects for students in 4th-6th grade.

We offer numerous interdisciplinary training and research opportunities for undergraduate students to participate in field and laboratory projects. Restrictions imposed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have led to canceled internships, workshops, and conferences and limited student opportunities to engage in some of these experiences. Nonetheless, Earth Science students were involved in out-of-state field trips with Dr. Insel to Baraboo, WI, Badlands National Park, SD, Dillon area, MT, and Yellowstone National Park, WY. On-campus research with undergraduates involved investigations into igneous petrology/volcanology with Dr. Head.

Additionally, our program plays a critical role in the education of students that are not majors in our program. Through our participation in the general education curriculum, we provide non-majors with a broad and societally-relevant education in the geosciences, and bring to light the importance of issues related to resource use, energy, natural disasters, climate change, and Earth materials (if you can't grow it, then it has to be mined) and how these issues are related to our everyday lives.

In June, Katharine Izzo (B.S. Earth Science, current student) was selected as an Outstanding Teaching Assistant from the National Association of Geoscience Teachers. She was nominated by Dr. Brill for her work as a Teaching Assistant in ESCI 121: Introduction to Earth Science and ESCI 123: Environmental Geology. Katharine is also the President of the Earth Science Club and served as a TA for most of the other courses offered by the Earth Science Department during the 2021-22 academic year. NAGT recognizes outstanding teaching assistants in geoscience education with up to 30 awards annually. Both undergraduate and graduate teaching assistants are eligible for the award. Award winners receive a one-year membership in NAGT, which includes an online subscription to the 'Journal of Geoscience Education' and our 'In The Trenches' quarterly magazine.

Academic Excellence and Innovation: Implement and support curricular and pedagogical best practices aligned with the mission of the institution, student needs,

the standards of the disciplines, and career and civic engagement opportunities.

From Fall 2021 to Summer 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic continued and kept impacting teaching and learning environments, strategies, and approaches. We have adapted our classes to a changing workforce and the changing face of geosciences in general by exposing students to real-world applications, including in-class student research, increasing student proficiency in digital technology from Excel to climate modeling programs, increasing the interdisciplinarity of our courses, and providing more opportunities for students to both work in and lead groups. We continued to implement new pedagogical innovations, advanced online tools, active learning, spatial thinking, and personalized learning environments for our students. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic allowed a combination of face-to-face, remote, and online learning formats with in person and virtual lab and field components. We have found that many of the virtual tools we embraced during the pandemic are great additions to our lessons, even for in-person learning, and have decided to retain these within our curriculum.

In courses with field components (ESCI-303: Environmental Methods in the Field, ESCI 390: Field Geology) we continued to implement online alternatives with Google Earth data and landscape provisions, 360-degree interactive panoramas, field videos and photo collections, and other resources. At the same time, we pursued in-person field trips whenever possible and designed a new multiple day field-trip to Baraboo, WI in ESCI 330: Structural Geology.

Courses that involve strong analytical skills and problem-solving components (ESCI 307 and ESCI 347 – both climate change courses, ESCI-330: Structural Geology) enhanced the learning approaches and method application by exposing students to numerous technological online resources and models, including web-based modeling tools to simulate system behavior in earth and environmental applications and joining an ocean research cruise to become part of a scientific drilling expedition. Students were exposed to science from the scientist perspective by providing them with opportunities to generate and evaluate relevant geoscience data. Research-based pedagogies allow for equity and inclusion of all student populations as students gain a better understanding of career prospects and analytical methods. In class-based research projects, students heard from scientists who led research projects through video interviews about how they got started, what motivated them, and what advice they have for undergraduate students interested in scientific careers.

All Earth Science classes - taught face-to-face or online - also enhanced transferable skill development. In particular, learning objectives focused on team skills and encouraged students to better organize, learn effective time management strategies, manage distractions, navigate help for apps and devices, and online communications with peers and instructors.

We implemented an augmented reality (AR) sandbox in our General Education courses (ESCI 121 and ESCI 211), which serves as a visual aid in the classroom during discussions of, and labs on, topography, geomorphology, and rivers and erosion. This tool helps to increase student spatial skills for 3-D problem solving, which has been identified as a critical skill undergraduates need to attain for success in the modern workforce.

In December, Dr. Brill attended a webinar put on by the Introducing Geophysics for Urban and Near-surface Applications (IGUaNa) project, which was sponsored by The Science Education Resource Center (SERC) at Carleton College and the Incorporated

Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS) that presented lessons and training in how to incorporate geophysical data and instruments into undergraduate introductory geoscience courses. As a result of this webinar, the Earth Science Department was able to borrow two different instruments from the Portable Array Seismic Studies of the Continental Lithosphere (PASSCAL) Instrument Center: a seismic nodal array for active seismic surveying and a Noggin Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) cart. These instruments were demonstrated to and used by students in Dr. Brill's ESCI 121 classes during the end of the spring semester and ESCI 123 course during the summer 1 session. Dr. Brill and Dr. Insel also held a 1-day workshop for upper level Earth Science students to give students hands-on experience with these state-of-the-art tools.

Urban Leadership: *Build upon Northeastern's tradition of community partnership and engagement by collaborating with educational, social service, governmental, philanthropic, and business organizations in Chicago and the region.*

Through the National Science Foundation-funded Agua En Comunidades Experimentales (ACE) program, co-PI Ken Voglesonger and other senior personnel developed a collaboration with the Shedd Aquarium that resulted in the placement of three NEIU Students in paid internship opportunities that began in early summer 2021. The collaboration continues to develop and we fully expect to continue placing students in paid internships with the Shedd.

In partnership with four other Chicago-based Universities, co-PI Nadja Insel was awarded an NSF grant to build the Metropolitan Chicago Data-Science Corps (MCDC) to partner with community organizations on data driven projects. One of the main goals is to support communities by connecting non-profit organizations with students, faculty, and mentors at different Universities to share, analyze, synthesize, and visualize data to enhance problem-solving and critical thinking skills and address specific project outcomes the community partner is interested in. In spring 2022, MCDC practicum students worked with community partner Jo Daviess County and Computer Science Professor Francisco Iacobelli on exploring ways to reduce food insecurity in the county.

Through the USDA-funded Bridges program (co-PI Ken Voglesonger), four NEIU students were placed in 10-week internships at USDA Agricultural Research Service Laboratories. This collaboration will continue for the next three years, and will place 3 - 4 students per year in these positions.

Exemplary Faculty and Staff: *Invest in and support faculty and staff to foster a nationally recognized urban university and create a thriving work environment that makes Northeastern an employer of choice.*

The Earth Science program is committed to building an antiracist and pro-diversity community to offer a welcoming place for students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds and identities. Earth Science faculty have been active participants in several of the Center for Teaching and Learning's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) workshops. We are continuing to listen and learn about, and then implement, best practices for creating an inclusive and safe learning environment for all of our students. Our aim through these efforts is to create an environment that is not only welcoming for our students, but also to attract faculty and staff from historically excluded groups. In line with our efforts to make the Earth Science program a destination of choice for students

from these groups, we want to do the same for geoscientists and educators.

We have also attended several workshops focusing on earth science pedagogy with organizations such as the National Association of Geoscience Teachers and the Science Education Resource Center at Carleton College. Through these efforts, our faculty remain current with the evolving nature of geoscience education. In addition, Dr. Insel and Dr. Brill received Quality Matters (QM) certification for successfully completing QM workshops of 'Creating Presence in Your Online Course' and 'Assessing Your Learners' in January 2022. In spring 2022, Dr. Insel successfully completed the online course 'UDL101: An Introduction to Universal Design for Learning' through CAST that is designed to equip participants with the ability to evaluate, create, and recreate lesson plans that ensure the engagement and participation of varied learners within a high standard-based curriculum. Dr. Brill also completed the Virtual Instruction for Online Learning Training Opportunity offered by the NEIU Center for Teaching and Learning, a two-part online training which combined a two-week course, Designing Your Online Course (DYOC) delivered by Quality Matters, and a four-week Online Teaching Fundamentals and Tools course delivered by NEIU's Center for Teaching and Learning. Over the summer, Dr. Brill participated in the Affordable Course Materials (ACM) Summer Program 2022, which was put on by the Affordable Course Materials Committee and consisted in a 3-day workshop at the start of the summer followed by a course redesign of ESCI 123 with the goal of keeping course materials to a total of less than \$40.