



Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education

Goodwin College of Education Student Newsletter May 2026

Graduation caps soaring and endless possibilities ahead!
This celebratory send-off edition honors our remarkable graduating class as they step boldly into their promising futures — while inspiring every student to embrace the next extraordinary chapter of their journey with courage and purpose.

[MISSION, VISION & GOALS →](#)

The mission, vision and goals of the Goodwin College of Education students are grounded in our long history of service to Chicago's educational and diverse ethnic and racial communities.



[View GCOE Mission, Vision & Goals →](#)

MESSAGE FROM DEAN PHILION

To our graduating students: congratulations! Earning your degree from the Goodwin College of Education is a genuine achievement, and I hope you feel the pride and satisfaction that comes from pursuing a goal and making it happen. Your career choices—teaching, counseling, leadership, and health professions—matter enormously. I look forward to celebrating with many of you in person at our Spring Commencement on Friday, May 15, at Credit Union 1 Arena.

To our students who remain in pursuit of career goals, I want to highlight two outstanding opportunities that are discussed elsewhere in this newsletter. Our Goodwin College of Education Scholarships provide meaningful financial support to students pursuing careers throughout the educational professions. And our Fantástico Pre-Apprenticeship Program offers a unique, tuition-free summer experience that will connect you to a faculty mentor and put you on track to complete paid clinical experiences in the Chicago Public Schools. I encourage each and every one of you to explore these opportunities. The support is here — take advantage of it.

Whatever path lies ahead — your first job in education, your next course, or a summer of new possibilities — know that the Goodwin College of Education is in your corner as you move forward. We look forward to the difference that you will make and to the bright future that you will create for yourself and the Chicago community.

Tom Philion, Ph.D.
Dean
He/him/his/él

Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education
Office of the Dean

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Spring 2026 Commencement

Friday, May 15, 2026 · 2:00 p.m.
[Credit Union 1 Arena · 525 S. Racine Ave., Chicago](#)
 Doors for guests open at 1:00 p.m.

CEREMONY	GRADUATES	GUESTS	TICKETS
Friday, May 15 2:00 p.m. Credit Union 1 Arena 525 S. Racine Ave.	CHECK-IN Arrive noon–1:30 p.m. Gate 2 (off Harrison St.) Seated by 1:30 sharp.	Gate 3 (Racine & Harrison) Doors 1:00 p.m. · General admission Section 103 for deaf	8 per graduate · no waiting list Children under 2 free Lost/stolen not replaced

Graduation Week at a Glance

- **Monday, May 11** — Academic Honors Ceremony, 6:00–8:00 p.m., Main Campus Auditorium **(invited by email)**
- **Tuesday, May 12 — Master’s Hooding:** GCOE 5:30 p.m. · CAS & CBT 7:30 p.m., Main Campus Auditorium
- **Friday, May 15** — Spring 2026 Commencement, 2:00 p.m., Credit Union 1 Arena

At the arena, please note:

Robes and hoods must be fully visible. Caps may be decorated. Stoles, cords and medallions welcome.

No balloons, confetti, noisemakers or strollers in the arena.

“Hold on to your name card — you’ll give it to the reader as you cross the stage.”

Questions? Student Union Office · (773) 442-4630 · commencement@neiu.edu

02 FEATURED OPPORTUNITIES · FUTURE TEACHERS

Fantástico Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Tuition-free summer. Paid pathway to a classroom.

A new partnership between NEIU and Chicago Public Schools is opening doors for first- and second-year students, and transfers with fewer than 60 credit hours, to begin their pathway to teaching. [Learn more about the program →](#)

High-Need Licensure Areas

- Bilingual Elementary Education
- Special Education
- Early Childhood Education (pending approval)
- Physical Education

COURSEWORK	Tuition-free summer courses, 6–9 credit hours
COVERAGE	Up to \$7,965 in tuition and fees covered
ADVISING	Personalized advising and mentorship
PLANNING	Individual Education Plan to licensure
COMMUNITY	Cohort support & professional development
AFTER	Transition into the NEIU–CPS Teacher Apprenticeship

Apply before the final deadline.

PRIORITY DEADLINE: April 15, 2026

FINAL DEADLINE: May 1, 2026

Applications reviewed on a rolling basis — apply early for best consideration.

Directors: Dr. Wendy Gonzales · wgonzales@neiu.edu | Tracy Stillwell · tlynnstillwell@neiu.edu

[Apply Now →](#)



Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education

Fantástico Pre-Apprenticeship Program

A new partnership between Northeastern Illinois University and Chicago Public Schools.

Registered Apprenticeship path to becoming a Teacher in **Special Education**, **Bilingual Education** or **Physical Education**, **Early Childhood Education**.

↑ (Pending at this time)

Benefits for participating students:

- Tuition-free summer coursework (6–9 credit hours)
- Up to \$7,965 in tuition and fees covered
- Personalized advising and mentorship
- Individual Education Plan to guide your pathway to licensure
- Cohort support and professional development

Who should apply:

- NEIU Incoming freshman or second-year students
- Transfer students with fewer than 60 credit hours

Future Opportunity:

Students who complete Fantástico may transition into the NEIU–CPS Teacher Apprenticeship Program, where they may:

- Earn \$20/hour for classroom field experience
- Complete 384 hours in CPS classrooms
- Receive additional tuition coverage for licensure coursework



Apply Now

- 1 Priority Deadline: April 1, 2026
- 2 Final Deadline: May 1, 2026
- 3 Applications reviewed on a rolling basis.



Program Website



Application

For more information:

wgonzales@neiu.edu

Wendy Gonzales & Tracy Stillwell
Apprenticeship/Pre-apprenticeship Directors

tlynnstillwell@neiu.edu

Teacher Candidates:

You are invited to the Goodwin College of Education Summer Immersion Event, happening June 22–25 on the NEIU campus—a dynamic four-day experience designed to inspire, connect, and empower future educators like you.

This is not just an event—it is an opportunity to:

- Build meaningful connections with fellow teacher candidates and education professionals
- Gain insider insights from experienced teachers and principals
- Engage in hands-on, interactive sessions that bring learning to life
- Explore culturally relevant teaching practices that make a real impact in today’s classrooms
- Discover campus resources that will support your success every step of the way
- This immersive experience offers a valuable opportunity to gain practical insights into the profession, engage with current educational practices
- Become more familiar with the expectations and resources that will support your success as a future educator
- **Secure your spot today by registering at the Summer Immersion Event. If interested in participating, please register at [Summer Immersion Event](#).**

We cannot wait to see you there!

Dr. Kim Maljak (Physical Education Professor and TCT Summer Immersion Co-Leader)

Ms. Tracy Stillwell (TCT Director and TCT Summer Immersion Co-Leader)

Ms. Cate Wycoff (Director, Clinical Experiences and School Partnerships and TCT Coordinator)



Northeastern
UNIVERSITY

Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education

TCT Scholar Summer Immersion

Explore. Connect. Grow as a Future Educator.



Scan to RSVP:



June 22–25 | 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | NEIU campus

Earn a \$500 stipend for participating in all 4 days

Connect with fellow scholars, get familiar with campus resources, and start building a strong foundation for your college journey.

What to Expect

- Teacher Panel: Hear real stories from educators across grade levels
- Principal Panel: Learn what school leaders look for in teachers
- Guest Speaker: Culturally Relevant Teaching with Sunni Ali
- Campus Experience: Explore NEIU resources through a scavenger hunt
- Interactive experiences centered on the field of education

Questions? Contact:

Ms. Tracy Stillwell

TCT Director and TCT Summer Immersion Co-Leader

t-stillwell@neiu.edu

Dr. Kim Maljak

TCT Summer Immersion Co-Leader

k-maljak@neiu.edu

Ms. Cate Wycoff

TCT Coordinator

c-wycoff@neiu.edu



Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education

Interested in a Career in Teaching?

Join Us for Summer Immersion at NEIU!



Scan to RSVP:



Explore. Connect. Grow as a Future Educator.

June 22–25 | 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | NEIU campus

Connect with fellow NEIU students, explore campus resources, and discover what it means to become a teacher.

Open to all NEIU students interested in education or exploring teaching as a career

What to Expect

- **Teacher Panel:** Hear real stories from educators across grade levels
- **Principal Panel:** Learn what school leaders look for in teachers
- **Guest Speaker:** Culturally Relevant Teaching with Sunni Ali
- **Campus Experience:** Explore NEIU resources through a scavenger hunt
- **Interactive experiences** centered on the field of education

Questions? Contact:

Ms. Tracy Stillwell
TCT Director and TCT Summer Immersion Co-Leader
T-Stillwell@neiu.edu

Dr. Kim Maljak
TCT Summer Immersion Co-Leader
k-maljak@neiu.edu

Ms. Cate Wycoff
TCT Coordinator
c-wycoff@neiu.edu

If you have started an application for the GYO program and require a little extra time after the May 1, 2026 deadline date, please reach out to Luis Meza from GYO lmeza@gyo-il.org



GROW YOUR OWN TEACHERS
ILLINOIS

Have you always wanted to teach?



Now is your chance!

Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois (GYO-IL) is dedicated to recruiting and supporting racially diverse and community connected teachers.

GYO-IL's forgivable loan assists teacher candidates to complete an Illinois approved initial teacher licensure program.

In exchange, licensed graduates are required to teach at least five (5) years in a hard to staff school or position in Illinois.

GYO-Chicago, the oldest and largest of GYO-IL's programs, is now accepting applications from prospective teachers.

DIVERSE. ROOTED. EMPOWERING.

HOW DOES GYO SUPPORT YOU?

FINANCIAL AID

- GYO forgivable loan of up to \$25,000 in tuition, fees and books
- Funding for other education-related expenses like childcare and transportation

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

- An academic coordinator who helps you identify and overcome challenges
- Tutoring and other academic assistance for you to succeed in the classroom

WRAP-AROUND SERVICES

- Emergency assistance if life circumstances threaten to disrupt your education
- Ongoing mentorship to ensure you stay on track and graduate
- Monthly meetings that help you develop tools to advocate for yourself and your students
- Solidarity with diverse teacher candidates who are traveling the same paths as you

GYO-CHICAGO APPLICATIONS DUE:

**MAY
1st
2026**

APPLY AT
growyourownteachers.org/apply

Application requires short essays, transcripts, and references. For more information: Email info@gyo-il.org or call 773-322-7419.

03

VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT · CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Step 1 of the CPS Fall 2026 Student Teaching Application

STEP 1 DEADLINE
Friday, May 8, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

Opened: Mon, April 20, 2026

All Fall 2026 student teachers must submit Step 1 of the CPS Student Teaching Application by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 8 in order to remain eligible for Fall 2026 student teaching.

Please refer to the instructions provided by the CESP Director to ensure that you complete this requirement accurately and on time.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact cesp-dept@neiu.edu.

04

ACADEMIC PLANNING

Advance Registration for Fall 2026

[Meeting with your adviser early is the single best way to prevent scheduling issues. Registration windows are open — don't wait.](#)

STEP ONE

Book your advising appointment.

If you plan to enroll in Fall 2026 courses, schedule an appointment with your assigned academic adviser as soon as possible.

Don't know your adviser? [Find your GCOE Advisor →](#)

Or email: gcoeoutreach@neiu.edu

STEP TWO

Check the advance registration schedule.

The full Summer and Fall 2026 advance registration schedule is on the registrar's site, along with class schedules and important deadlines.

[Registrar Services →](#)

05

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

[Apply to the Fulbright U.S. Student Program](#)

NEIU graduate students and alumni interested in researching or teaching overseas for a semester or year — join the 2027–2028 cohort. Open to graduate students and alumni.

<p>MAY 04 Virtual Group Presentation Monday · 2:00 p.m. · Zoom RSVP: almontes@neiu.edu Fulbright Program →</p>	<p>OCTOBER 06 National Application Deadline Tuesday · 2027–2028 award cycle Amanda Montes, Ph.D. · almontes@neiu.edu Apply at us.fulbrightonline.org →</p>
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06 CAREER CORNER · 2026 TEACHER CAREER EVENTS

Final IASPA Virtual Job Fair of the Season — May 14, 2026 - 4pm-7pm

A great opportunity for students in teacher prep programs to meet and connect with potential school employers across Illinois. Registration is free for candidates.

★	May 15, 2026	Virtual Job Fair #3 — FINAL · Thursday, May 14, 2026 · 4:00–7:00 p.m. · Register Free
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Register free at illinoiseducatorfair.org →

Positions: Administrators, Teachers (all subjects/grade levels), Counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, Speech-language pathologists, Licensed paraprofessionals & substitute teachers.

Previous years hosted 150+ elementary, high school and consolidated districts — heavy Chicagoland concentration.

2026 Illinois Educator Virtual Job Fairs

Presented by the Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators

All Current and Aspiring Illinois Educators are Welcome at these Free, Online Events!

- Teachers, administrators, counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, speech and language pathologists, licensed paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers.
- Schools hiring for immediate placement and the '26-'27 school year.

FREE TO ALL CANDIDATES | THREE DATES

FEBRUARY 12 4 - 7 PM CT	MARCH 12 4 - 7 PM CT	MAY 14 4 - 7 PM CT
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Sign up and see participating districts
<https://illinoiseducatorfair.org>

What to expect:

- Private, 1-on-1 conversations with principals and administrators.
- No travel. Wait in line with multiple districts. Join on your own schedule.
- Leap ahead of the application process and get answers in a low-pressure setting.

07a

SUMMER OPPORTUNITY · SPECIAL EDUCATION MAJORS

[A Summer at Timber Pointe Outdoor Center](#)

Easterseals Central Illinois hires summer staff to support campers with 100+ varying diagnoses — autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, vision loss and more. Camp skills are career skills.

[Adapted adventure — for every camper, every ability.](#)

Located in Hudson, Illinois, Timber Pointe is a residential summer camp. Zip-lining, horseback riding, canoeing, archery, cooking and more are intentionally adapted so that every camper can be 100% included and 100% empowered.

[CAMP COUNSELORS](#)

Close camper support in cabins, meals and daily routines. Relationship-driven and deeply meaningful.

[PROGRAM STAFF](#)

Lead and adapt activities — zip lining, archery, canoeing, arts & crafts. Fast-paced and hands-on.

Learn More About Life at Camp

- **About the Job & Summer Schedule:**
<https://www.timberpointeoutdoorcenter.com/work/about-the-job>
- **A Day in the Life of a Counselor:**
<https://www.timberpointeoutdoorcenter.com/work/day-in-the-life>
- **Why Work at Camp? (Benefits & Perks):**
<https://www.timberpointeoutdoorcenter.com/work/benefits-of-camp>

Contact · Easterseals Timber Pointe:

If you're looking for a summer that will challenge you, grow you, and change you — we'd love to have you apply.

Start your journey here: <https://www.timberpointeoutdoorcenter.com/work> or by reaching out to our Director, Lydia Gartner at LGartner@eastersealsci.com. And;

Frankie Alcozer (they/them)

Program Manager

Timber Pointe Outdoor Center

P 309.365.8021

C 254.217.3245

20 Timber Pointe Lane • Hudson, IL • 61748

FAlcozer@eastersealsci.com

07b SERVICE/VOLUNTEER HOURS OPPORTUNITY

Service/Volunteer Hours at Peterson Elementary

About STEAM Exploration Days at Mary Gage Peterson Elementary

Peterson Elementary has launched an innovative new structure called STEAM Exploration Days. These days provide students with unique, hands-on opportunities to experience STEAM in action. While students explore and learn, their teachers engage in vertical and horizontal planning as a grade band (K–2, 3–5, 6–8) — creating both enriching student experiences and meaningful teacher collaboration.

If you are still in need of volunteer or service hours as part of your degree program, Peterson Elementary would love to host you on one of their upcoming STEAM Exploration Days!

Volunteer Requirements

- Volunteers must have their CPS Field Experience Approval Letter OR become a Level 2 volunteer for Peterson Elementary.
- Details on becoming a Level 2 volunteer are available upon request — contact Kathleen Hurley directly. **Sign Up to Volunteer**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054BAFAE2AA3F8C25-63468410-steam> →

Contact · Kathleen Hurley (she/her)

Assistant Principal · Mary Gage Peterson Elementary School
 5510 N. Christiana, Chicago, IL 60625
 Phone: (773) 534-5070 Ext. 45074 | Cell: (740) 605-8473
 Email: khurley1@cps.edu | Twitter: @KatMHurley

Oakton College - Paid Research Study for Returning Adults Interested in Teaching



Paid Research Study for Returning Adults Interested in Teaching



Are you an adult learner thinking about becoming a teacher?

Have you built skills through work, leadership, caregiving, or community service?

Do you identify as a person of color, a returning adult, or a male entering the teaching profession?

We Want to Hear from You!

Why This Matters:
 Many adults bring powerful professional and life experiences that should count toward a teaching degree. Oakton College is developing a Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) process that recognizes your skills so you can finish your teacher preparation program faster, reduce tuition costs, avoid repeating what you already know, and enter the classroom sooner. Your voice will help shape a more equitable, accessible pathway into teaching.

What You'll Do:
 Participants will take part in a brief interview or focus group to explore their professional and life experiences, motivations for becoming a teacher, barriers they've faced in returning to school, and what a fair and accessible CPL process should look like. Their insights will directly inform how colleges evaluate prior learning.

Why Participate:

- Help design a more inclusive teacher preparation pathway
- Ensure adult learners' experiences are valued
- Influence policies that reduce time and cost to degree
- Contribute to diversifying the teaching workforce

Interested in Participating?

Contact:
 Dr. Danielle Walker
 laedcons01@oakton.edu

08

SCHOLARSHIPS · MAKING EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE

Goodwin College of Education Scholarships

\$95,000+

distributed annually to GCOE students

Nine years in a row, U.S. News & World Report has ranked NEIU #1 for graduating students with the least student debt among Midwest regional universities.

Featured GCOE Scholarships

- Daniel L. Goodwin Scholarship
- Tomorrow’s Teachers Scholarship
- Merit Tuition Scholarships
- Kay Hilton Memorial Scholarship
- Mark Zinman Endowed Scholarship
- Dr. Santos Rivera ENLACE Scholarship
- Early Childhood Education awards
- Special Education & K–12 candidates
- Counselor Education graduate awards
- Diverse & underrepresented teacher candidates

External Opportunities

- Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program (ISAC)
- Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois
- Grow Your Own Illinois
- Federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program
- TEACH Grant Program

[Browse All GCOE Scholarships →](#) | Questions? gcoe-scholarships@neiu.edu

09

LICENSURE PATHWAYS

Subsequent Endorsements & Teacher Licensure Pathways

Already licensed and looking to expand what you can teach? Still working through PEL requirements? The Goodwin College maintains two resource hubs you’ll want bookmarked.

ENDORSEMENTS

Subsequent Endorsement Programs

LICENSURE

Teacher Licensure: Policies, Info & Entitlements

Pathways for licensed educators to add a teaching area — bilingual, special ed, ESL, reading and more.

[View Endorsement Programs →](#)

The comprehensive guide to Illinois Professional Educator License requirements, entitlements and endorsements at NEIU.

[Licensure Policies →](#)

10

STUDENT SUPPORT · WELLNESS & FINALS

Wellness, Final Exams & Student Support Resources

Structured support from the summer after high school through student teaching and your first years as an educator — academic, social, financial, and professional.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

- [TRIO Student Support Services](#)
- [Certifications \(Noncredit Certificate Courses-Online\)](#)
- [Student Supports](#)
- [Test Preparation](#)

SOCIAL SUPPORT

- [Student-Alumni Mentoring Program](#)
- [Student Organizations & Networking](#)
- [Team Building – NEIU Campus Recreation](#)
- [Health and Wellness Services for Students](#)

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- [Scholarships and Grants](#)
- [Work-Study Opportunities](#)
- [Loan-Forgiveness Information](#)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- [Career, Internship and Job Fairs](#)
- [Résumé & Interview Prep](#)
- [Internship and Career Resources – Students and Alumni](#)

- [Graduate School Planning](#)
- [The Leadership, Equity and Inquiry, Ed.D. is housed in the Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education](#)
- [Goodwin College of Education – Departments: Please review our great graduate programs and certifications](#)

[Explore All Student Support Resources](#) →

11

SAVE THE DATE

[2026 NEIU Homecoming](#)

[September 16–19, 2026](#)

[Wednesday → Saturday · Campus-wide](#)

- Department open houses & academic showcases
- Alumni panels and networking receptions
- Student organization activities
- Cultural celebrations & athletic events
- La Copa Soccer tournament
- Music, Food, Games and more!

12

AT A GLANCE · FULL CALENDAR

Mark Your Calendar — May 2026 and Beyond

MAY 2026

- **May 1** — [Fantástico Final Deadline · Pre-Apprenticeship applications close \(rolling review\)](#)
- **May 1** — [Nuevas Voces Submissions Due · 10th Annual Playwriting Contest & Festival](#)
- **May 1** — [Teach Plus — Chicago Change Agent Fellowship application deadline](#)
- **May 4** — [Fulbright Info Session · 2:00 p.m. · Virtual group presentation · RSVP: \[almontes@neiu.edu\]\(mailto:almontes@neiu.edu\)](#)
- **May 8** — [CPS Step 1 Deadline · 4:00 p.m. · Required for all Fall 2026 student teachers](#)
- **May 11** — [Academic Honors Ceremony · 6:00–8:00 p.m. · Main Campus Auditorium](#)

- **May 12** — [Master's Hooding Ceremony · GCOE 5:30 p.m. · CAS & CBT 7:30 p.m.](#)
- **May 15** — [Spring 2026 Commencement · 2:00 p.m. · Credit Union 1 Arena](#)
- **May 15** — [IASPA Virtual Job Fair · 4:00–7:00 p.m. · illinoiseducatorfair.org](#)
- **May 15** — [Nuevas Voces Winners Announced · Selected plays revealed](#)
- **May 22** — [Teach Plus Affinity Group Facilitator Fellowship deadline](#)

SUMMER 2026

- **June** — [Timber Pointe Training · Counselor & program staff orientation](#)
- **June** - [Goodwin College of Education TCT Summer Scholar Immersion Event: June 22–25 on the NEIU campus—a dynamic four-day experience](#)
- **August** — [Fall 2026 Classes Begin · Book your adviser appointment today](#)

FALL 2026

- **Sept 16–19** — [NEIU Homecoming Begins · Campus-wide](#)
- **Oct 1–3** — [Nuevas Voces Festival · Stage Center Theatre \(tentative\)](#)
- **Oct 6** — [Fulbright National Deadline · 2027–2028 award cycle](#)
- **2027** — [New Education Building Opening \(Construction began August 2025\)](#)

STAY CONNECTED

Important Contacts

For questions about events, programs featured in this newsletter and collaborations, please contact:
Cindy L. Jones, M.A. Outreach Coordinator, gcoeoutreach@neiu.edu
Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education, Office of the Dean

- **GCOE Scholarships:** gcoe-scholarships@neiu.edu
- **Student Support Resources:** neiu.edu/academics/colleges-departments/daniel-l-goodwin-college-education/student-supports
- **Office of Alumni Relations:** alumni@neiu.edu
- **Teacher Apprenticeship** — Dr. Wendy Gonzales: wgonzales@neiu.edu
- **Teacher Apprenticeship** — Tracy Stillwell: tlynnstillwell@neiu.edu
- **Office of Clinical Experiences and School Partnerships** cesp-dept@neiu.edu
- **Grow Your Own Teachers (GYO-IL)** - Luis Meza: lmeza@gyo-il.org
- **Commencement** - Phone: (773) 442-4630 Email: commencement@neiu.edu
- <https://www.neiu.edu/student-life/current-students/commencement>

Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education Office of the Dean

Northeastern Illinois University

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