CAS CONNECTIONS

Fall Term | Issue 21 | December 9, 2025

FROM THE DEAN

Greetings, CAS Community,

It's that time of the year when we often hear the wishful phrase "peace on earth and good will toward all."

Admittedly and unfortunately, you don't have to look too hard at the world these days to conclude that phrase is more aspirational than descriptive.

In the College of Arts and Sciences, we take heart in knowing that, as a public institution committed to advancing the public good and improving the lives of the students and communities we serve, we stay on course in trying to realize this typically seasonal aspiration all year long—anytime and anywhere.

And we take heart in knowing that our community supports this mission as well. Last Giving Tuesday, you—our generous community—demonstrated your commitment to our work by donating nearly $30,000 to the College of Arts and Sciences, among all its programs and initiatives. These funds will help us support and create opportunities for our students, help faculty do the work they need to do to serve students, and advance our work in improving lives and communities in this region we serve. We are incredibly grateful for this support and validation of the work we do, and for your participation in this work! We do truly see this generosity as an expression of good will to all, to the public good.

And as for peace on earth, well, the CAS keeps working. Next Spring 2026, the CAS will host a Human Rights Themed Semester, featuring dozens of courses and a rich schedule of programming exploring the many dimensions of human and civil rights from a range of perspectives across the Fine Arts, Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and STEM disciplines. This themed semester is an evolving enterprise, so please feel free to make suggestions for activities or programming related to the theme. We hope to foster an ongoing discussion that persists, as it should, well beyond the Spring 2026 semester.

Keep your eyes peeled for events and programming from the CAS, and, as always, let us know how we can support you and your communities with the resources we have.

Most of all, we wish you a happy holiday season with your family, friends, and loved ones.

All the best,

Tim Libretti
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences



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STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

Lo Coffman

Linguistics M.A.



What are your career goals?

To help create more resources for/in endangered and/or minority languages. Resources could be language learning tools, educational materials, descriptive linguistic grammars, and other materials like books, movies, etc. Currently, the majority of linguistic data relies on less than 1% of the world's languages and there are about 40% of the world's languages that are considered endangered. Many of the endangered languages are the ancestral languages of indigenous peoples' across the world (including tribal languages within North and South America), which hold important knowledges about land stewardship, social justice, and kinship. I aim to use my linguistic knowledge to advocate for the research and skills development of these languages.

What do you like about NEIU so far?

The community that NEIU brings! I relocated to Chicago to attend NEIU and I, thankfully, have met some of my dearest friends through classes and activities at NEIU.

What is something interesting we should know about you?

I have lived on three different continents (North America, Europe, and Africa)! This has led me to study more than a handful of languages, like Sepedi and Lakota. The privilege to be able to travel and live across the world is what has inspired my linguistics career!

Anything else you'd like to share?

As we just celebrated Native American Heritage Month and the National Day of Mourning (a.k.a. Thanksgiving), I ask you to always keep the indigenous peoples of wherever you live or travel to in the back of your mind. Truly ask yourself how you can uplift and advocate for the sovereignty of their existence and the knowledge that their people have held within that space for thousands of years.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT



Sarah Qasim Abdulameer, PharmD
B.S. in Biology

What are you doing now?

I am currently working as a licensed pharmacist with Walgreens and completing my MBA to further expand my career opportunities. I graduated in May 2025 with my Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) from Roosevelt University, while also completing my bachelor's degree requirements through NEIU.

What did you like about NEIU?

NEIU will always hold a special place in my heart — it's where my journey truly began. I loved the strong sense of community and the personal, supportive relationships with professors.

My Human Anatomy & Physiology course was a turning point for me. My professor not only taught and challenged me, but also believed in me before I fully believed in myself. His encouragement that I would one day be a great pharmacist helped motivate me through the toughest moments.

NEIU never felt like "just school" — it felt like a family cheering me on, until this moment.

Do you have any advice for current students?

Believe in your dreams, even if they feel far away. The hard work is always worth it. Be curious — step outside your comfort zone, try new things, and allow yourself to grow in unexpected directions. Never underestimate the power of asking questions or seeking mentorship; the faculty here are truly invested in you.

I came to the U.S. as an immigrant, unsure of what the future would hold — and now I am holding a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. If I can do it, you can too. Your story is still being written, and every long night of studying has purpose.

Is there anything else we should know about you?

I completed my pre-pharmacy coursework at NEIU and was accepted into an accelerated 3-year pharmacy program. I finished both degrees at the same time (yes it was hard but worth it!) that moment of walking across the stage twice in May with 1 week apart was one of the happiest and proudest days of my life. I am incredibly thankful to NEIU for the foundation, confidence, and support that helped make my goals a reality.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT



Dr. Denana Miodragovic

Chemistry

What do you research and how did you end up doing it?

I received my PhD in Chemistry at the University of Belgrade in Serbia. During postdoctoral studies at Northwestern University, I fell in love with anticancer research and have been doing it ever since. I stayed in academia because it is a creative work environment.

What is your favorite thing about NEIU?

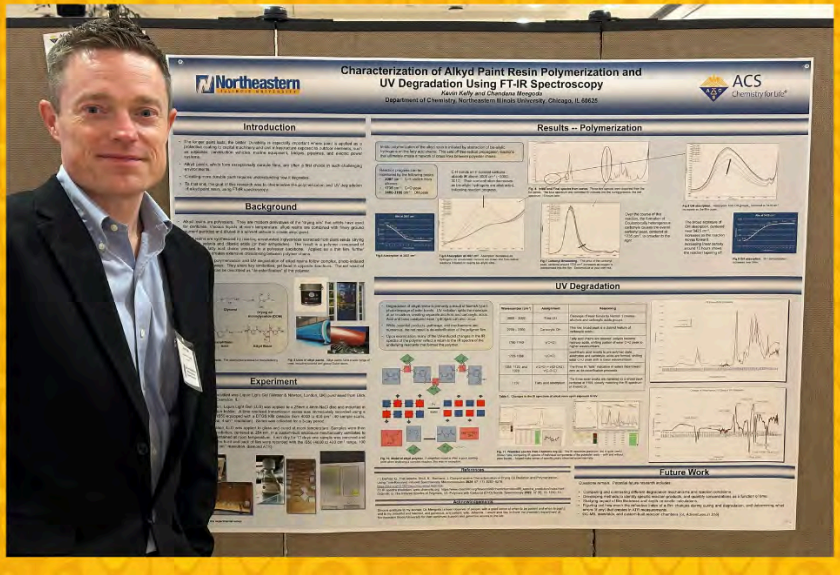
What I like most about NEIU is our students. Hardworking students, many of whom work full- or part-time while studying, inspire me. They also make me a better person and instructor every day. The NEIU CAS is preparing them well to lead the world.

I also like that the CAS offers so many research opportunities and scholarships for undergraduate students.

Anything else we should know about you?

As you can see, I am a dog person (featuring Rex here). In my free time, I like biking, swimming, playing tennis, and enjoying classical music, jazz, and blues. My favorite places in the world are Makarska and Tucepi beach in Croatia.

AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE



Kevin Kelly

Characterization of Alkyd Paint Resin Polymerization and UV Degradation Using FT-IR Spectroscopy

On November 8th, Kevin Kelly presented his poster, "Characterization of Alkyd Paint Resin Polymerization and UV Degradation Using FT-IR Spectroscopy," at the 10th Annual East Central Illinois Undergraduate Research Conference of the ACS.

"Dr. Meegoda was my advisor on this independent research project," Kevin said when asked about his experience. "It was his strong suggestion that I present at this particular conference, and plan the research work around the conference deadlines. I agreed to do it, but was initially luke-warm on the idea. Turned out his advice was golden.

I'm happy to share my experience with other students here. Doing the research, analyzing the results, distilling it into a final package for presentation at the right conference...all concrete methods for precipitating a potential scientist into an actual one."

Congratulations Kevin on your excellent work!



Staying the Course for Human Rights: From Awareness to Action

a College of Arts and Sciences themed semester

SPRING 2026













Join the College of Arts and Sciences this spring for our themed semester, Staying the Course for Human Rights: From Awareness to Action, by taking a course from our curated list.

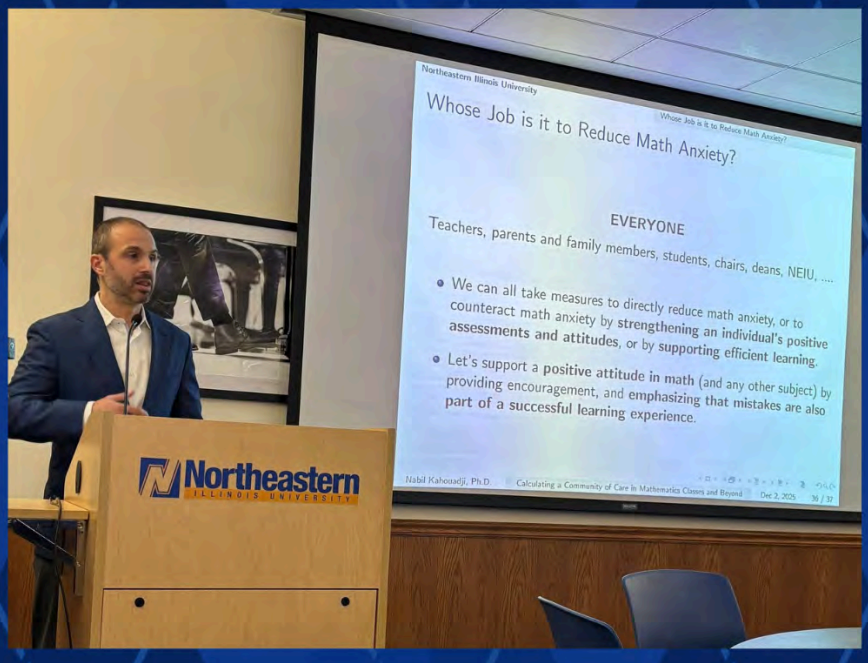
For the Spring 2026 semester, the College of Arts and Sciences has created a curriculum with an emphasis on human rights that brings together courses from across our programs and disciplines.

Human rights have always been relevant, but in this political moment, it is critical that we notice and understand what is happening in the world around us. Through observation and study, we can discover where our time and energy are best spent in the pursuit of protecting human rights.

The courses and co-curricular activities in this program aim to explore these issues from a diverse range of perspectives and disciplinary lenses.

Click here to learn more

Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award Lecture



Dr. Nabil Kahouadji

On December 2nd, Dr. Nabil Kahouadji of the Math Department gave the Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award Lecture. His lecture was titled, "Calculating a Community of Care in Mathematics Classes and Beyond."

He began his talk with sobering facts from psychological studies about math anxiety and how it can affect students. He then shared with the audience some strategies for mitigating math anxiety, with concrete examples from his teaching experience.

Dr. Kahouadji said about his experience, "I am honored and happy to be at NEIU, a university that promotes and champions excellence in teaching. I would be happy to talk to YOU about how you can create a community of care in your classes and beyond to mitigate math (science, technology, engineering, etc.) anxiety. Everyone can, and should, do their part."

Thank you, Dr. Kahouadji, for your insight and for giving such a successful lecture!


UPCOMING EVENTS
IN THE CAS

Northeastern
ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



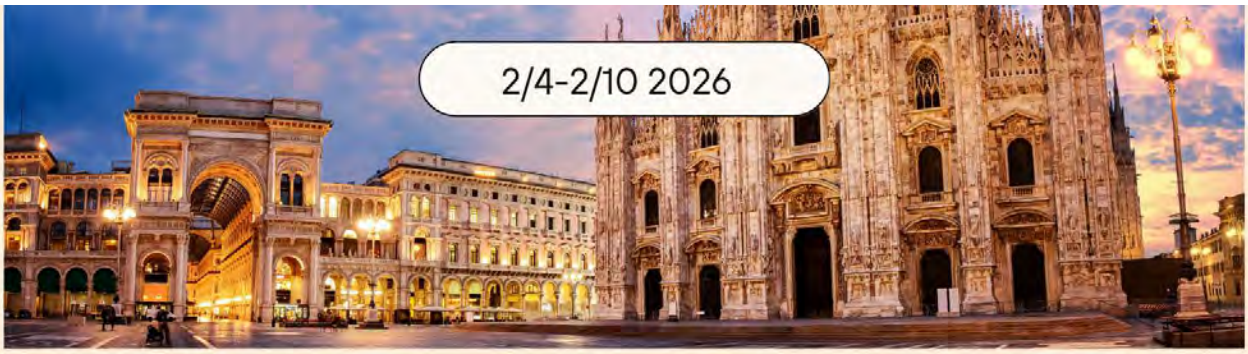
Congratulation Class of 2025!

Share your feedback about on your NEIU experience and help us learn more about your post-graduation plan

Complete the Graduating Student Exit Survey

SCAN HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY

Survey remains open until December 19th, 2025



STUDENT STUDY TOUR

EXPLORING FOOD, SUSTAINABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ROME.



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- LODGING
- BREAKFAST & LUNCH
- MUESUEM ENTRANCE FEES
- FIELD TRIP TO WINERY

$2400/PERSON - 6 DAYS 5 NIGHTS

OVERESTIMATED COST OF TRIP

Save the Date!

SAT. FEB. 28, 2026

8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

29th Annual



Friends of the Chicago River

Chicago River Student Congress

at Northeastern Illinois University

Come celebrate the Chicago-Calumet River system!

- Free event, snacks and t-shirts
- For students 5th grade to college
- Teachers, siblings and entire classrooms welcome

Discover our rivers as a living classroom and as a source of inspiration. Learn about:

- College preparedness
- Career planning
- Volunteer opportunities
- Live animals

Attend – Present a workshop – Display your ideas, research or river artwork. Registration opens in January.

Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

chicagoriver.org/education/student-congress

SUMMER 2026

STUDY TOUR TO

TURN THE WORLD INTO YOUR CLASSROOM

DISCOVER ECUADOR ON NEIU'S SUMMER 2026 STUDY TOUR

ECUADOR

JUNE 14 – 27
(APPROXIMATE)

CUENCA AND CAÑAR

SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE



Approximate Dates:
June 14-27, 2026

Approximate Cost:
$2200-2400 (includes all expenses)

Co-leaders:
Dr. Amanda Montes
amontes@neiu.edu

Dr. Tracy Luedke
t-luedke@neiu.edu

PRIDE ALLIANCE 2025

A welcoming & safer space for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community & allies to connect, learn, & make our voices heard

Students, Faculty & Staff welcome

Every Thursday from 3-4p in LWH 2071



Get a locker on the 3rd floor of BBH!

Lockers can be reserved for the semester, at no cost. If you would like a locker, then please scan the QR code below to fill out the locker reservation form. Lockers will be assigned first-come, first serve.



tinyurl.com/BBHLOCKERS

SCAN ME

If you have any questions, email icontre2@neiu.edu or stop by BBH-358G.

Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

History of Chicago

A graduate class about the Second City

Learn about the history of Chicago at Northeastern Illinois University! Why is it called the Second City and Windy City? How did the Chicago fire influence a path for change and innovation? In this class, you'll experience a high level and intellectual discourse about the city in which we all live.



Whether you're pursuing graduate school or not, see what graduate studies are like in a small classroom setting, led by an expert in the field. NEIU offers a diverse and welcoming higher education environment.

Class details

History of Chicago is an in-person class held each Wednesday from 7:05-9:45 p.m. on NEIU's Main Campus. The class runs from Jan. 21-May 6, 2026. History of Chicago is a single one-time course. You don't have to be enrolled in NEIU's master's degree program in History. There are no prerequisites. No prior knowledge required.

In this class, you will:

- Read and discuss historical studies of Chicago
- Interact with visiting Chicago history scholars
- Examine archival materials
- Complete an original Chicago history project of your own

Did you know...

You do not need to be a degree-seeking student to take this class. Pique your intellectual curiosity and expand your fascination with Chicago into a meaningful and serious study of its history and many unique facets.

Apply to and enroll at NEIU to begin your studies!

1. Complete a Graduate Student-at-Large (non-degree) application at **neiu.edu/apply** by Dec. 15, 2025.
2. Send in official transcripts.
3. Register for the History of Chicago class at **neiuport.neiu.edu**.
4. Pay the class tuition and fees: $1,432.59 (plus $30 application fee).

Connect with us

For more information about the History of Chicago class, contact Dr. Josh Salzmann at j-salzmann@neiu.edu.
For general or application questions, contact Dr. Nikolas Hoel at n-hoel@neiu.edu.

SPRING 2026 COURSES
GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL COURSES

GES 104 World Geography
GES 150 Introduction to Environmental Studies
GES 205 Physical Geography
GES 302M Regional Geography: Russia & Central Asia
GES 303 Geography & Disability: Space, Place & Power
GES 308 Conservation Psychology
GES 315 Economic Geography
GES 319 Environmental & Natural Resources Policy
GES 361 Urban Planning
GES 374 Research Methods
GES 390 Remote Sensing & Digital Image Processing
GES 391 Introduction to GIS
GES 392 Geospatial Analysis

GRADUATE LEVEL COURSES

GES 413 Advanced Research Methods
GES 450 Seminar in Urban Planning
GES 490 Remote Sensing & Digital Image Processing
GES 491 Introduction to GIS
GES 492 Geospatial Analysis

KAPLAN | Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

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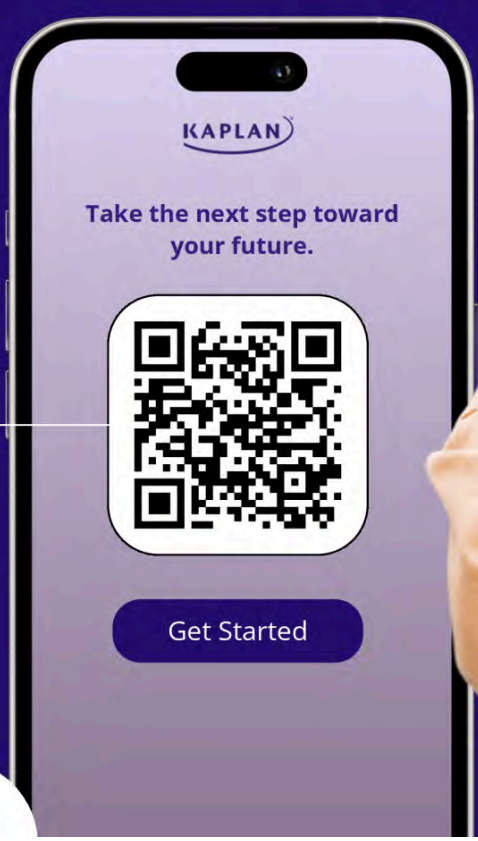
As a Northeastern Illinois University student, you can now take advantage of free access to the most realistic and comprehensive test prep available for grad school, licensure, and career exams. Planning your next move? This is the perfect place to start.

Start preparing today: Go.Kaplan.com/Illinois





Administered by ISAC Illinois Student Assistance Commission

Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Post-Baccalaureate

Certificate in Pre-Health

catalog.neiu.edu/arts-sciences/biology/post-baccalaureate-certificate-pre-health



The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Pre-Health at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) is tailored for career changers with a bachelor's degree who need to complete the prerequisites for health professional programs. This comprehensive certificate fulfills the core requirements for admission to health professional programs, including:

Medicine • Dentistry • Optometry
Physician Assistant • Physical Therapy
Pharmacy • Veterinary Medicine

Why complete the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Pre-Health at Northeastern?

- Dedicated Pre-Health Advising
- Personalized Support
- Intimate Learning Environment
- Faculty-Mentored Research Opportunities
- Hands-on Laboratory Experience
- Networking and Leadership Opportunities
- Pre-Health Events
- Entrance Exam Preparation
- Tutoring Services

Admission Requirements

- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university
- Cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above.

David Nissim-Sabat
Director of Pre-Professional Advising
College of Arts and Sciences, BBH 148A
dnissim@neiu.edu | (773) 442-0000

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Pre-Law Minor

The Pre-Law minor supports undergraduate students pursuing law school, as well as those interested in understanding the design and impact of our legal system. Acquire skills and knowledge relevant to legal careers, while drilling down into areas of law most fascinating to *you*. With course offerings across eight different NEIU programs, the Pre-Law minor will help you see our legal system in a whole new, interdisciplinary light!





Required Courses

JUST-205: Law & Society

Law permeates every aspect of our lives, permitting and banning, safeguarding and prosecuting, legitimizing and stigmatizing. This course concerns the roles that laws play in all of our daily lives. We will examine theories of law and justice, the role of legal actors and institutions in constructing and enforcing laws, the main types of law, how the law shapes and is shaped by inequality and social change, and pathways into legal careers.

PHIL-201: Logic I

Introductory course in symbolic logic, dealing with propositional calculus, quantification theory and the logic of relations and classes.

PSCI-320: Constitutional Law

The role of the Supreme Court and its impact on the constitutional development of the due process clause, civil liberties, First Amendment freedoms, and the equal protection of the law are traced with particular emphasis on the assessment of the role of the Supreme Court vis-a-vis the states and the national government in protecting and restricting civil liberties.

Plus 3 Pre-Law Electives

The three electives should be taken in at least two different programs, with eight programs to choose from!

Learn More

Contact

Pre-Law@neiu.edu

Requirements & Electives

View requirements of the Pre-Law minor, plus our many electives, by scanning the QR code below!

Apply for the

Undergraduate Merit Tuition Scholarship

Applications for Summer 2026 are due

February 1st, 2026

The College of Arts and Sciences provides a limited number of Merit Tuition Scholarships for interested and deserving undergraduates (Second Bachelor's candidates are not eligible) within the College of Arts and Sciences. **These scholarships are generally granted for three to six credit hours and students *must* be enrolled at least half-time.** Scholarships will be granted on the basis of the student's intended major, status, intended Career/Educational Goals, transcripts and/or ACT/SAT scores, and letter of recommendation.

To be considered for selection, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Transfer and NEIU continuing students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25.
- Students who have earned 45 credit hours at NEIU must be declared majors in the College of Arts and Sciences. Transfer students with over 45 total hours must declare their major in the College of Arts and Sciences by their second semester at NEIU.
- Entering Freshmen must be in the top 15% of their graduating class or have a minimum ACT score of 24 or SAT of 1110.

Applicants must submit a complete application including:

- The name and email address of a faculty member who has agreed to complete a faculty recommendation form.

This award may be withdrawn in instances of substantiated academic misconduct or other violations of University standards pertaining to proper student conduct.

Application Deadlines:

- **Fall:** May 15
- **Spring:** October 1
- **Summer:** February 1

The College Merit Tuition Scholarship Committee will review all applications and notify applicants approximately one month after the application deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Awards to prospective and declared majors in the College of Arts and Sciences are highly competitive with the College intent on awarding to the most deserving students.

Click here to learn more

Join the CAS Student Advisory Board!

Northeastern Illinois University's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has assembled a Student Advisory Board to provide the Dean's Office with insights into student experiences in the CAS and to raise issues/concerns regarding processes on campus.

The board consists of up to 15 undergraduate students (and two alternates) representing a variety of CAS majors and life experiences. The advisory group will meet approximately three times a semester with the CAS Deans and may be asked to provide feedback on urgent matters between meetings. Advisory board members are also expected to be available a few times a semester to promote the college and provide a student voice at various events during the year.

The Student Advisory Board provides students with leadership opportunities, centers students in CAS decision-making, affirms and acknowledges student experiences and allows students to help share and improve processes. Students should be able to commit to one academic year and will not be able to serve more than two years on the board.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and new board members will be announced every September.

Click here to apply!

Donate to CUSP

What is CUSP?

CUSP stands for College Undergraduate Scholars Program. The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) is raising money to provide students with valuable research and creative opportunities they would not otherwise have. We empower students on the CUSP of success!

What does the CUSP do?

Each year, the College of Arts and Sciences funds dozens of student-faculty research projects and creative endeavors and sends our students to national conferences and exhibitions to present their work. Our students routinely win awards at these events, receiving recognition for their work and standing out from students from all over the nation.

What's the benefit?

These research and creative opportunities build confidence and capacity in our students and help them realize they can positively impact the world through the learning they are doing with College of Arts and Sciences faculty.

Why donate?

We want to create a sustainable funding stream to support student research projects, creative endeavors, student conference and exhibition travel, and more. With enough support, we can fund any project a student can dream up!

Donate here!

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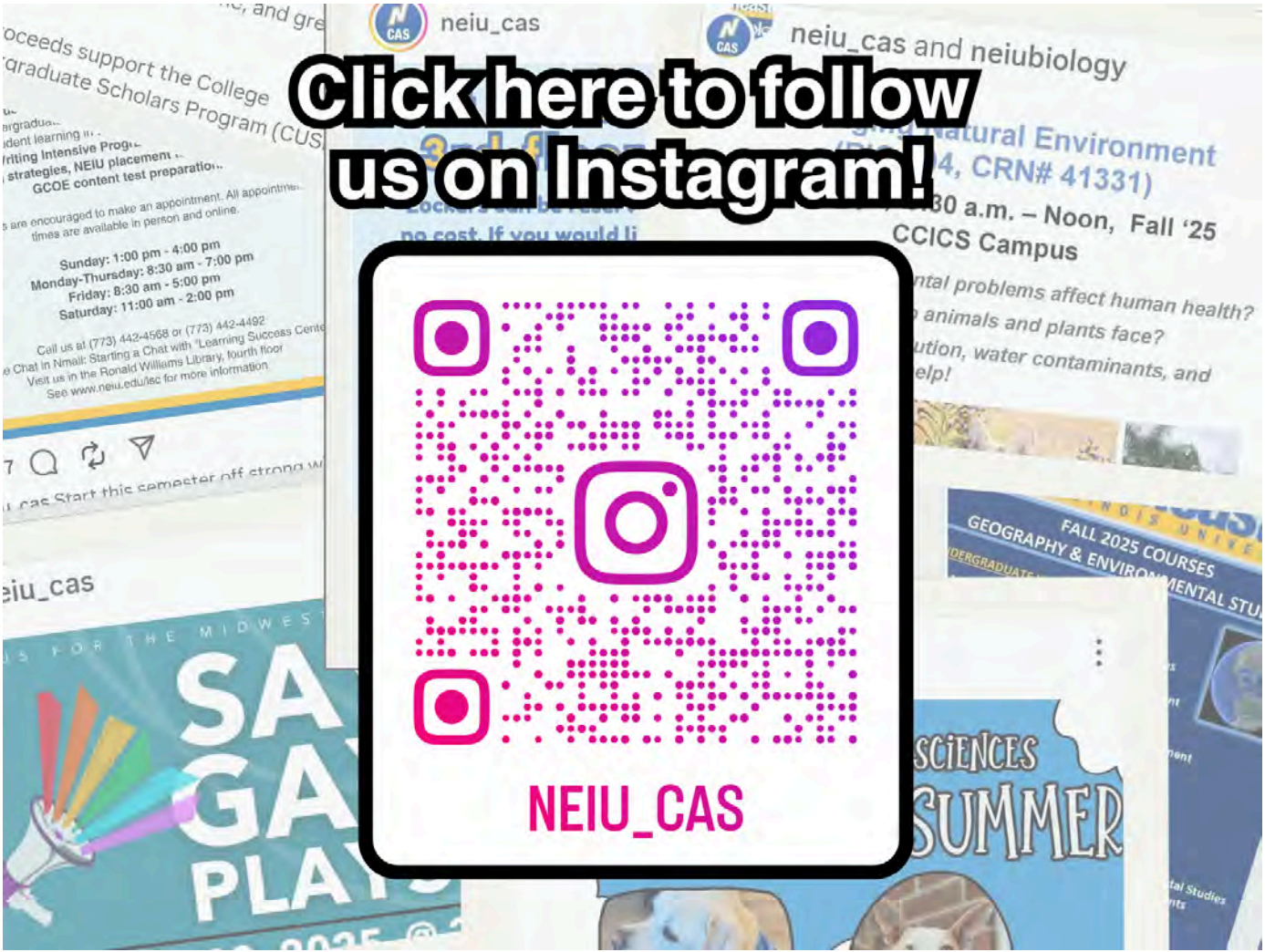
Pre-Professional Advising information

CAS Website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Sunday: 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Monday-Thursday: 8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Friday: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday: 11:00 am - 2:00 pm
FALL 2025 COURSES
SUMMER

NEIU College of Arts and Sciences

Just now ·

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