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## **The Alumnae of Northwestern University Awards More than \$34,000 for Academic Enrichment**

**EVANSTON, ILL.** --- The Alumnae of Northwestern University has awarded funding for five projects that will bring guest artists and distinguished scholars and speakers to campus to enhance the experiences of undergraduate students during the 2026-2027 academic year.

The grants, totaling more than \$34,000, are funded with earnings from the Academic Enrichment Endowment, established in 1990 as one of The Alumnae's 75th Anniversary gifts to the University. These grants will help facilitate faculty-sponsored projects that: address important and timely issues related to astronomy; promote respectful and inclusive conversations between Muslim and Jewish communities on campus; commemorate a global holiday that honors the accomplishments of women around the world and support the mentorship and education of teenage girl refugees; and strengthen the University's programs in visual arts and musical theater.

"This year's grant winning projects cover a wide range of pertinent topics and issues. They also will involve distinguished guest scholars and numerous Northwestern schools, departments and programs on the Evanston campus," said Judy Moore, Chair of the 2026 Academic Enrichment Committee.

Some of the events scheduled for the next academic year are also likely to attract graduate students, faculty other Northwestern community members, and alumni. Three of the programs open to the public are expected to attract even larger audiences.

The following programs are slated for Northwestern University's next academic year:

## **CIERA**

- **“2027 CIERA Annual Public Lecture.”** *The project was proposed by Kiki Zissimopoulos, CIERA's Director of Operations.* The Center for Interdisciplinary Exploration and Research in Astrophysics' (CIERA) flagship event each fall brings a renowned leader in astronomy to campus to engage Northwestern students and astronomy enthusiasts of all ages. The event is free and open to all, including alumni and the public. Attendees may participate in-person or via live stream or watch a recording at their convenience on CIERA's YouTube Channel.

## **WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

- **“Intertwined Worlds: Judaism and Islam in Historical Perspectives,”** talk series. *The project was proposed by Maayan Hilel, assistant professor of instruction, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Jewish Studies/MENA (Middle East and North African Studies Program).* The new six-talk series (featuring two talks each quarter), seeks to foster a respectful and inclusive campus environment through thoughtful academic discussion of contested issues. It will also provide historical context to help inform contemporary debates. Designed for undergraduates, faculty and the public, the series will explore relationships between Muslims and Jews, and between Judaism and Islam, from the medieval period to the present.

## **SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION**

- **“Siluetas: Bridging Disciplines Through Multilingual Musical Theatre Creation.”** *The project was proposed by K O Olivo, associate professor of theatre, and Donald G. Robertson Director of the School of Communication's Music Theatre Certificate Program.* “Siluetas” is an innovative musical performed in English, Spanish and Arabic. It will be co-directed by visiting artists Erlina Ortiz, a Catalyst Fellow from the Dramatist Guild Foundation, and Robi Hager, a seasoned Broadway writer and performer. The duo create works that focus on immigrant and refugee experiences while expanding the linguistic and cultural boundaries of the American musical. As part of the project, the Goodman Theatre will provide the visiting director and a dramaturg for a two-week residency in October 2026, and include workshops, open rehearsals, public engagement with students, and conclude with large-scale performances (March 13- 14, 2027) by a student cast that will be open to the entire Northwestern community.

## **BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

• **Opening Program for The Block Museum of Art’s “Pasados, Presentes: Colonial Latin American and Contemporary Latinx Art” (working title) exhibition, tentatively set for 2 p.m. Saturday, February 6, 2027, at the Bienen School of Music’s Galvin Recital Hall.** *The project was proposed by Erin Northington, Susan and Stephen Wilson Associate Director, Campus and Community Education and Engagement.* The Block’s upcoming “Pasados, Presentes” exhibition, on view from February 3 through June 13, 2027, will feature four guest artists who will contextualize the exhibition and highlight the dialogue between contemporary artistic production and colonial Latin America history and visual culture. It also will support teaching and research across a broad spectrum of undergraduate and graduate courses, including history, performance studies, Latin American and Caribbean studies, Black studies, Native American and Indigenous studies, Spanish and Portuguese, and gender and sexuality studies.

## **NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY’S WOMEN’S CENTER**

• **“International Women’s Day Keynote 2027.”** *The project was proposed by Sarah Brown, Director of the Women’s Center, Provost Office.* The Northwestern Women’s Center and Association of Northwestern University Women (ANUW) will bring to campus nonprofit organizer, Adriana Garcia, who will be the keynote speaker for a Northwestern University-wide commemoration of International Women’s Day on March 8, 2027. Garcia, a Northwestern alumna and a Chicago native, is the Director of Programs and Operations for GirlForward, an organization that provides mentorship, education and community for teenage girls who are refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers in the Austin, Texas, and Chicago areas.

## **The Alumnae of Northwestern University**

The Alumnae of Northwestern University is an all-volunteer organization of women that raises funds for a wide range of projects to benefit the University, while sharing the University’s academic resources with the community through its Continuing Education Program, now in its 57th year. Founded in 1916, The Alumnae have given more than \$10.6 million to the University in the form of grants, fellowships, scholarships, endowed professorships, funding for special University projects and summer internships. For more information, visit The Alumnae’s Website at [nualumnae.org](http://nualumnae.org).

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