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The Alumnae of Northwestern University Awards Seven Academic Enrichment Grants

EVANSTON, Ill. --- The Alumnae of Northwestern University has awarded funding for seven projects that will bring guest artists and distinguished scholars and speakers to campus to enhance the undergraduate experience during the 2024-2025 academic year.

The grants, totaling more than \$29,000, 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 artificial intelligence, astronomy, engineering, physics (relativity and gravity), visual and theater arts, music, Asian American studies, and more.

"The funding from The Alumnae of Northwestern University this spring will help to support diverse programs that will nurture the intellectual, artistic and creative abilities and interests of Northwestern undergraduates," said Judy Moore, chair of the seven-member 2024 Academic Enrichment Committee.

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

The following projects are slated for Northwestern University's 2024-2025 academic year.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

- **Gabriel Kahane, “February House” Residency, proposed by Tanya Palmer, Assistant Dean, School of Communication, and Executive Artistic Director, of the Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts.** The Wirtz Center, in association with the departments of theatre and dance, the Music Theatre Certificate Program and the Bienen School of Music, will host a weeklong artist's residency at Northwestern for composer Gabriel Kahane, in conjunction with the Wirtz Center's production of his musical, “February House.” Kahane will attend rehearsals, visit classes offered through the School of Communication and the Bienen School, in composition, musical theatre writing and/or theatre orchestration. He also will participate in a moderated public conversation focused on his work, civic practice and artistic creation.
- **“AI and Machine Learning for the Arts,” proposed by Shireen Dickson, Managing Director of the SLIPPAGE Lab, School of Communication, department of theatre.** The grant will cover the honorarium for three guest artist-researchers in Professor Thomas F. DeFrantz's annual spring (2025) “Performance and Technology” class. They will share their methods and achievements in working with three Artificial Intelligence-generated structures and Machine Learning designs to investigate urgent and provocative performance installations and critical thinking. SLIPPAGE is a think-tank and interdisciplinary performance research group that explores connections between performance, history, theater and emerging technology.

WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

- **“2025 CIERA Annual Public Lecture,” proposed by Kari Frank, CIERA's Director of Operations, and Research Assistant Professor, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences.** CIERA's (Center for Interdisciplinary Exploration & Research in Astrophysics) annual October lecture -- held on Homecoming Weekend -- features a prominent speaker in the field of astronomy, who speaks on a timely topic. These free public lectures are open to audiences of all ages interested in astronomy. Northwestern undergraduates, especially students in physics and astronomy courses, are given special consideration.
- **“Public Lecture and the 34th Annual Midwest Relativity Meeting,” proposed by Zoheyr Doctor, CIERA Board of Visitors Research Assistant Professor, Weinberg College, department of physics and astronomy and CIERA.** CIERA has been invited to host the 34th Annual Midwest Relativity Meeting on behalf of the American Physical Society. Grant funding will help to support a world-leading guest expert on relativity to give a public lecture that is accessible to Northwestern undergraduate and graduate students and the public.

WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (Cont'd.)

• **“Spatial and Place-Based Learning about Chicagoland Asian American Communities,”** proposed by **Helen Cho, visiting assistant professor, Weinberg College, Asian American Studies Program.** This three-part series on space and place-based learning about Asian American communities builds on Northwestern undergraduates’ enthusiastic engagement with learning about Asian American communities through the built environment. The first part of the series includes a panel of scholars and practitioners with expertise on Asian American “suburbanization.” Grant funding will cover the honoraria for up to six guest speakers. The series will be held in conjunction with a new Asian American Studies course debuting in Spring 2025, titled, “Space, Place, and Asian America.”

MCCORMICK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE

• **“Mechanical Engineering Alumni Seminar Series,”** proposed by **Jeremy Keys, assistant professor of instruction, McCormick School of Engineering, department of mechanical engineering.** Launched in Fall 2023, this seminar series aims to invite successful alumni speakers to campus on a quarterly basis. To maximize the impact of this series, speakers are invited from varied engineering fields to ensure that the prospective interests of all Northwestern undergraduates are met. Guest speakers will also schedule meetings with many of the McCormick faculty and student engineering teams, who can use this opportunity to identify opportunities for research collaboration and sponsored projects.

MARY AND LEIGH BLOCK MUSEUM OF ART

• **“Artist Talk: Jordan Ann Craig,”** proposed by **Erin Northington, Susan and Stephen Wilson Associate Director, Campus and Community Education and Engagement, Office of the Provost, The Block Museum of Art.** Guest speaker, Jordan Ann Craig, is an emerging Northern Cheyenne artist who talk about her exhibition of new large-scale paintings, prints and painting-inspired installations, debuting at The Block in winter 2025. It will be an opportunity for Northwestern students and faculty, and the public to hear directly from the artist in conversation with the exhibition’s curator and affiliates of Northwestern’s Center for Native and Indigenous Studies. The project aligns with The Block’s ongoing commitment to Indigenous art and artists as part of an exhibition program that centers diverse perspectives, enriching the co-curricular experience of Northwestern undergraduates. The “Jordan Ann Craig” exhibition will be on view from January 25 to April 6, 2025, in the Block’s Alsdorf Gallery.

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 55th year. Founded in 1916, The Alumnae has given more than \$10 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 (nualumnae.org).

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