



For Immediate Release

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Ten Northwestern Students Granted STEM Scholarships By The Alumnae of Northwestern University

Evanston, Ill.—The Alumnae of Northwestern University has selected ten students to receive the 2025-2026 Alumnae STEM Scholarships, which are awarded to students who excel in a STEM discipline -- science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Criteria for selection include academic excellence, honors achieved, and financial need. The intent of this scholarship is to free rising juniors from work commitments so they may more vigorously pursue their chosen area of study and other university projects.

“The Alumnae of Northwestern are proud to support these talented, hard-working students pursuing STEM related studies in order to realize careers in diverse and highly competitive fields. The selection process is time-consuming and difficult in that there are so many deserving students whose talents and diligence all deserve recognition,” note Sue Bernstein and Dee Hanlon, co-directors of the selection committee.

The upcoming academic year’s STEM scholarship recipients are:

Abby Wertz, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, from Pittsburgh, PA, a member of the class of 2027, is seeking a degree in Biological Sciences: Human Health and Disease and Global Health Studies. Her goal is to become a cardiothoracic surgeon, a specialty that comprises only 9% women. Abby has a special interest in women's health. As a junior in high school, she was selected by the American College of Cardiology to be a “Young Scholar,” attending their meetings to learn about research and technology.

Barkot Simegh, McCormick School of Engineering, is from Aurora, CO. A member of the class of 2027, he is majoring in mechanical engineering. A first-generation college student and the first engineer in his family, he credits his coming to Northwestern to his teachers (from elementary school through high school) who “believed in pushing kids forward” and spent extra time after school helping him. He is ever grateful for their support and in turn he wants to

“become that support for future engineers” by teaching underprivileged kids essential skills that will enable them to face engineering challenges and succeed.

Erika Ruiz-Yamamoto, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, comes from South Bend, IN, and is a member of the class of 2027. She is pursuing a bachelor of science degree and intends to obtain her MD. Her objective, through her future research, is to inform public health policy and to improve delivery on a global scale. In addition to numerous academic awards, Ms. Ruiz-Yamamoto demonstrates her awareness of social impact by editing a forthcoming anthology of incarcerated women’s writings.

Grace En Xie, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, came to Northwestern from Lawrence, KS, and is a member of the class of 2027. She believes majoring in Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences (MMSS) and Data Science are important in attaining her goal of improving mental healthcare. Since her freshman year, she has held a work-study position as a research assistant in the Spatial Thinking and Representations (STAR) Lab at Northwestern. In that position she contributed to a meta-analysis on mental rotation in young children. This led to an opportunity to make a presentation on how stimuli influence children’s spatial performance at a Midwestern Psychological Association Conference. Grace is also an active leader and participant in several student-run dance organizations at Northwestern.

Jamie Zhou, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, comes from Whitestown, IN, and is a member of the class of 2027. She is pursuing a bachelor of arts degree with a goal of becoming an MD/PhD, specializing in ophthalmology. Her objective is to find early indicators of neurodegenerative disease in order to intervene before disease progression. Ms. Zhou’s internship work has already resulted in a presentation at an industry leading organization. Her many academic awards are indicative of her high commitment to furthering healthcare advances.

Jayden Wool, McCormick School of Engineering, is from Gilbertsville, Penna. A member of the class of 2027, Jayden is majoring in computer science, physics, and computer engineering. He is in a combined BS/MS program and will be receiving both a bachelor of science degree as well as a master’s degree. To accomplish this, he has carried an overload of courses while working three jobs. Jayden wants to contribute to the rapidly changing world of computing.

Jordan Thanh Vo, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, is from Arlington, TX. A member of the class of 2027, his long-term goal is to pursue an MD-PHD in epidemiology and cancer research. Hoping to help underserved communities, he is particularly attuned to minority children of low-income families without ready access to health care. He has mentored younger students through community outreach programs and developed a “deep commitment to learning and service.” His experience in two very prestigious, competitive summer research programs has strengthened his resolve to focus on this field.

McKayla Kruger, McCormick School of Engineering, comes from Litchfield, MN, and is majoring in biomedical engineering while pursuing minors in global health studies and materials science. Her goal is to “design affordable, adaptable medical devices” that will help improve outcomes, with special interests in diabetic innovations and biometric devices for athletes – as she is passionate about ultrarunning (running distances beyond the marathon - 26.2 miles). Her

minors are essential to achieving her “long term vision of creating biomedical solutions that are globally accessible and socially responsible.”

Pranav Inampudi, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, from Naperville, Ill., a member of the class of 2027, is seeking a degree in biological sciences, global health, and the science of human culture. Pranav is a recipient of the Elk's Most Valuable Student Semi-Finalist Award, selected from over 22,000 applicants nationwide. Upon graduation Pravan hopes to work with a Illinois state representative to expand substance prevention and recovery programs. He also plans to release *ParentSMART*, a digital intervention he helped develop, into rehabilitation centers nationwide.

Sachleen Kaur Tuteja, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, a native of Long Grove, Ill., is majoring in statistics, economics and data science. She believes that to maximize the results of innovation, especially in the health care area, it must be based on well-designed and well-executed data. She sees data not as figures, but as representing real people with real problems. As a result of a research project on colorectal cancer she designed and executed in the laboratory of Feinberg Professor Theresa Walunas, she was invited to make a presentation at the 2025 American Society of Clinical Oncology’s annual meeting - “a rare accomplishment for an undergraduate,” according to Professor Walunas. Sachleen states, “I want to be part of a generation of builders who design with care, connection, and community in mind.”

The Alumnae of Northwestern University is an all-volunteer organization of women that raises funds for a wide range of projects to benefit Northwestern University, while sharing the University’s academic resources with the community through its Continuing Education program. Founded in 1916, The Alumnae has given more than \$10.5 million to the University in the form of grants, fellowships, scholarships, summer internships and endowed professorships. For more information, visit The Alumnae’s website (nualumnae.org) or its Continuing Education website (nualumnaecourses.org).

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