



The Phi Beta Kappa Society
Beta Chapter of Nebraska

New Member Initiation

SPRING 2025





History of the Phi Beta Kappa Society

On December 5, 1776, a group of young men who were then studying at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, met to create a secret society, at once intellectual and social in purpose. The president's greeting to new members in 1779 reads in part: "Here...you are to indulge in matters of speculation, that freedom of inquiry that ever dispels the clouds of falsehood by the radiant sunshine of truth. ..." In their clandestine meetings, the members seriously debated a host of questions, such as "Whether a wise state hath any interest nearer at heart than the education of the Youth." The establishment soon afterward of chapters at Yale and Harvard insured that Phi Beta Kappa would survive the arrival of General Cornwallis' troops at Williamsburg.

A little over a century later, more than 25 branches of the society were in existence, and it was felt that a national structure was needed to bring together the scattered chapters into some uniformity. In 1883, the organization known as the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa was founded; it has its headquarters today in Washington, D.C. From its offices come most of the ongoing programs and publications described in your Handbook for Members. In 1875, Phi Beta Kappa enlarged its membership to include women. The society now more than 500,000 living members, elected over the years by the 270 chapters at colleges and universities throughout the country. In addition, more than 50 local alumni associations lend the society their support and provide members an opportunity for a lifelong relationship with Phi Beta Kappa and its activities and goals on the community level.

Phi Beta Kappa continues to take great pride in its origins. It retains a number of the symbols that were devised for it at the time when the American Republic was coming into being. The present Phi Beta Kappa key, for example, virtually reproduces the design originated by the young founders of the Society at William and Mary. On the front, it bears the Greek letters ΦΒΚ, the initials of the words **Φιλοσοφία Βίου Κυβερνήτης** meaning "Love of learning is the guide of life." The three stars in the upper left-hand corner on this side symbolize the aims of the society: Friendship, Morality, and Literature (or Scholarship). A pointing hand in the lower right-hand corner stands for aspiration. On the reverse side are

inscribed the letters S and P, which stand for the society's second motto, the Latin words *Societas Philosophiae*, meaning "philosophical society." Below them appears the date of the founding of the first chapter: December 5, 1776; the member's name and electing chapter are engraved above.

Although Phi Beta Kappa ceased to be a secret society over 150 years ago, tradition has preserved two "secret" signs, which are shared with initiates. When members met, they greeted each other by drawing the backs of the index and middle fingers of the right hand across the lips from left to right; thus, apparently, affirming that their lips were sealed. They followed this sign with a handshake, one of the traditional forms of which will be revealed to you at the end of this ceremony of initiation. The society's symbols and purposes are now well known across the land. These purposes were eloquently summarized in the following statement by one of the society's most eminent members, Charles Evans Hughes, the late Chief Justice of the Supreme Court:

The particular interest of Phi Beta Kappa is in liberal education. ...Intensive critical study of educational aims and methods has found nothing to take its place. It means the development by careful training of the capacity to appreciate what has been done and thought, the ability to make worthwhile appraisals of achievements, doctrines, theories, proposals. It is liberal because it emancipates; it signifies freedom from the tyranny of ignorance, and, from what is worse, the dominion of folly... [Phi Beta Kappa] holds aloft the old banner of scholarship, and to the students who have turned aside from the easier paths and by their talent and fidelity have proved themselves to be worthy, it gives the fitting recognition of a special distinction.

Creighton's application to shelter a chapter was approved at the 43rd Triennial Council meeting in August 2012 in Palm Beach, Florida. The chapter, Beta of Nebraska, was installed November 29, 2012.

Proposed Members-in-Course

Allison M. Benjamin

Allison is a senior from Woodbury, Minnesota, majoring in Spanish and Sociology with a minor in Music. Passionate about social justice, particularly in healthcare and immigration, she co-founded Creighton's chapter of Students for a National Health Program as a freshman. It is the first combined medical student-undergraduate chapter in the country, and she was the first undergraduate to serve on its National Board. Her senior sociology research on medical debt also inspired a bill in the Nebraska Legislature. A fluent Spanish speaker, Allison has studied abroad in Spain twice and loves connecting with people and cultures—whether exploring South Omaha, dancing salsa, chatting in Spanish, or listening to Bad Bunny's new album on repeat. After graduation, she plans to pursue a year of service or teaching in Latin America, and eventually attend medical school. She is deeply grateful to her family, friends, professors, and mentors for their support.

Nicholas Bloor

Nicholas is a junior from Overland Park, Kansas double majoring in Data Science and Computer Science. He is also minoring in Mathematics, Classical Languages, and Classical and Near Eastern Studies. Nicholas is involved in the Creighton Honors Program and is vice president of the Classical Honors Society, Eta Sigma Phi. On campus, he is employed as a Resident Advisor in Swanson Hall and is a teaching assistant for the Computer Science department. He is also involved as a Sports Program Supervisor within the department of Recreation and Wellness. Nicholas is involved in computer science research, specifically in the field of artificial intelligence, with Dr. Steven Fernandes. Nicholas is looking forward to his senior year, where he hopes to get involved in more research opportunities and continue the search for graduate programs.

Dylan Bui

Dylan is senior chemistry major from Roseville, California. During his time at Creighton, he served as an undergraduate research assistant in a lab studying brain cancer and as a teaching assistant for general chemistry labs. Additionally, he has enjoyed volunteering in the Omaha community with Learning For All, and with the service and justice trips program through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. In his spare time, he enjoys listening to music, knife-sharpening, and cooking. He plans to apply to medical school after graduation.

Callaghan Cavanaugh

Callaghan Cavanaugh is a senior from Omaha, Nebraska double majoring in Political Science and Studio Art. Her sophomore year, Callaghan was selected to be a fellow in the Scheerer Scholars in the Arts program. As a Scheerer Fellow, Callaghan organizes and leads creative workshops at the Siena Francis House Miracles Addiction Recovery Program and engages with artists throughout Omaha. In 2023, she worked at Holy Name Housing Corporation, a local low-income housing provider, which inspired her Political Science senior capstone project on the efficacy of U.S. inclusionary housing policies. In 2024, Callaghan spent eight months in Washington, D.C., working as an intern on Capitol Hill. She participated in Creighton's Capitol Hill Internship Program and worked in the office of Senator Tammy Duckworth. She remained in D.C. independently over the summer and worked in the office of Congressman Colin Allred. Callaghan has also held leadership roles on Creighton's campus. She served as the Vice President of Membership for her sorority, Delta Zeta, as well as on the executive team of Creighton College Democrats. Callaghan recently opened "Points of Contact", an art exhibition of her work that she and a fellow Scheerer Scholar co-curated and produced. After graduating, Callaghan looks forward to returning to D.C. and pursuing a career where she can continue to be an advocate for affordable housing access.

Carson B. Convery

Carson, a junior in Creighton's Honors program, is double majoring in Spanish and neuroscience with a biology minor. Originally from Cottage Grove, Minnesota, he is grateful for opportunities such as studying abroad in the Dominican Republic through the Encuentro Dominicano program and coordinating the Summer Health Program there. As a certified medical interpreter and Mental Health Recovery Specialist at Telecare Recovery Center, Carson has gained invaluable experience connecting with patients. He has also worked as an ESL aide for Spanish- and non-Spanish-speaking immigrants at the Latino Center of the Midlands and Yates Illuminates. At Creighton, Carson is involved in the Candlelight Choir and is a member of Nu Rho Psi and Alpha Sigma Nu Honors societies. He has also contributed to Vanessa Minervini, PhD's neuropharmacology research lab, studying drug mixtures for improved pain relief with reduced addictive effects. This summer, Carson will apply to medical school, hoping to use his medical interpreting skills to serve bilingual populations.

Emily Ekstrum

Emily is a senior from South Dakota majoring in biology and minoring in data science with a concentration in undergraduate research. She is involved in undergraduate research under Dr. Lynne Dieckman at Creighton and is a scholar in the NE-INBRE program. Emily has spent the past two summers doing

Proposed Members-in-Course

biomedical research at Creighton University and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Throughout her time at Creighton, Emily has volunteered through the Creighton University Presidential Scholars program, served on the CSU Appropriations Committee, participated in the CSU Presidential Fellowship, and helped coordinate service and learning trips abroad with the Creighton MedLife chapter. She is grateful for all the friends and mentors she has met at Creighton University. After graduation, Emily plans to continue researching within biomedical sciences by either pursuing a Ph.D. in computational biology or working at a research company.

Abigail M. Goodrum

Abby is a senior from Denver, Colorado, majoring in studio art with a minor in behavioral and cognitive neuroscience on the pre-OT track. She is grateful for the faculty and staff who have encouraged her to pursue a unique path of study. She is passionate about her involvements, especially her participation in Best Buddies. She has also greatly enjoyed her time as a member of both Theta Phi Alpha and Kappa Pi. She has volunteered at various places, such as Heartland Hope, Siena Francis House, and Felius Cat Cafe. Between her experiences volunteering and time abroad, she has developed a deeper sense of empathy and passion for helping others. Because of her experience in Best Buddies, Abby hopes to work with people with disabilities after she graduates.

Hannah Jean Graff

Hannah Graff is a senior from Winona, Minnesota, triple majoring in Mathematics, Musical Theatre (BFA), and Data Science. Hannah is a Goldwater Scholar, Clare Boothe Luce scholarship recipient, and member of the Creighton Honors Program. She is also a member of Alpha Sigma Nu (Jesuit Honors Society), Alpha Psi Omega (Theatre Honors Society), and Pi Mu Epsilon (Math Honors Society). At Creighton, she has been involved in campus ministry, relay for life, the creighton dance company, community kitchen, and pep band. Hannah researches at Creighton with Dr. Kunin and is a published author in the professional journal "Algebraic Combinatorics." In the arts world, Hannah has performed professionally in Omaha with BLUEBARN Theatre, the Rose Children's Theatre, and the Great Plains Theatre Commons. She was a semifinalist for the American Pops Orchestra's NextGen Voice competition and is a recipient of the Grace Kennan Excellence in the Arts scholarship.

Noah M. Greenwood

Noah is a senior from Parker, Colorado, who is majoring in Biomedical Physics with a minor in Classical and Near Eastern civilizations. He is a proud member

of the Honors Society and actively participates in both campus and community activities. At Creighton, Noah has served as an organic chemistry TA and held leadership roles in the Bodybuilding Club and Partners in Health engage. Beyond campus, he mentors high school students through the Northstar Foundation, volunteers with the Holy Family Community Center, and serves as a hospice companion with CHI health. As a published researcher under Dr. Soto, Noah studies prion proteins, the molecular hallmark of a group of fatal neurodegenerative disorders. Noah is also a proud member of the Jesuit Honors Society, Alpha Sigma Nu, and he will begin medical school in the fall after graduation.

Nathan Khai-Minh Jobalia

Nathan is a senior from San Jose, California, majoring in History with a minor in Biology and concentration in Undergraduate Research. As an Eagle Scout, UNMC SURP and Creighton SURF Ferlic Fellowship Alumnus, member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the Creighton Honors Program, and CPPSP in Medicine, Nathan has been involved with countless organizations while at Creighton. These organizations include being a leader and retreat coordinator for Creighton Campus Ministry's Encounter with Christ Retreat, Head Photo Editor of The Creightonian Newspaper, and CURAS Ambassador. Nathan has also conducted biomedical research on gastric cancers and history research on bioethics and human experimentation, both of which have culminated in various prestigious presentations including at the University of South Dakota's 60th Annual Clayton M. Lehmann Student History Conference, the Big East Research Symposium, and 2025 NCUR Conference. After graduation, Nathan plans to take a gap year before pursuing his MD while maintaining his passion for the history of medicine.

Alessandra Hussam Kakish

Alessandra is a junior from Bennington, Nebraska, majoring in biochemistry and minoring in Economics and Global Health Equity. Alessandra is involved in undergraduate research in Dr. Julie Soukup's lab and has completed a Dr. and Mrs. Randolph Ferlic Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship in 2023. This past summer, she enjoyed doing research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center as part of the INBRE program and was awarded the Richard Holland Future Scientist Award. She also worked as a certified nursing assistant in an ICU step down unit and is passionate about caring for others. While at Creighton, she is involved in the CURAS Ambassador Program, Honors Program, Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Honors Society, and enjoys volunteering at a local emergency department and the Siena

Proposed Members-in-Course continued

Francis House. She is thankful for all the support she has received from everyone at Creighton and plans to apply to medical school this summer!

Sophia Virginia Kash

Sophie is a senior from Naperville, Illinois, majoring in Exercise Science with a minor in Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience on a pre-Physician Assistant track and is a member of the Jesuit honor society, Alpha Sigma Nu. She has been involved on campus as the president of the pre-Physician Assistant club, an active member and 2023 philanthropy chair of Gamma Phi Beta, a member of the Dance Marathon executive team, and an anatomy lab TA. She has made it a priority to serve the Omaha community beyond the Creighton campus at shelters for people experiencing homelessness, reading to students at local elementary schools, and working at QLI, a brain and spinal cord rehabilitation facility, as a CNA. She has also spent a summer in the Dominican Republic as a volunteer through the ILAC Summer Health Program. After graduation, she plans to apply to Physician Assistant graduate schools and gain more clinical experience in the Chicagoland area

Gabrielle Kay

Gabrielle Kay is from Chandler, Arizona, majoring in Biology with a minor in Health Administration and Policy at Creighton University. She is a student leader at the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, organizing community engagement initiatives, and has traveled to Ecuador and Costa Rica with MED-LIFE to assist in mobile clinics and community development projects. She works as a phlebotomist at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and engages in research in Dr. North's laboratory. In addition, she volunteers as a coordinator for an afterschool reading program, supporting literacy and mentorship for young students. Gabrielle plans to attend medical school following graduation.

Isabel Anne Kidd

Isabel Kidd is a senior from Dallas Center, Iowa, majoring in Neuroscience with a minor in biology. She is currently involved in research with Kayode Oshin, PhD, in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry and with Maya Khanna, PhD, in the Department of Psychology. Isabel has been the co-president of Nu Rho Psi since her junior year. She was the academic chair of the Delta Zeta Theta Eta Chapter during her sophomore and junior years. She was also involved in Students for National Health Programs (SNaHP) and MedLife. She enjoys volunteering, serving meals at Siena Francis House, and painting nails at the Magnolia neighborhood at Hillcrest Health and Rehab. Isabel works at the University of Nebraska Medicine as a patient attendant and on-campus as a biology and chemistry tutor. Following graduation, Isabel plans on attending Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa.

Cole J. Krudwig

Cole is a junior from De Soto, Kansas, and is majoring in Economics, Data Science, and Mathematics with a minor in Spanish. During his time at Creighton, he has conducted research in Artificial Intelligence with Steven Fernandes, PhD, working on a variety of projects including computer vision, quantum neural networks, and large language models. Additionally, he collaborates with Charles Braymen, PhD, to research momentum in international markets. Cole has contributed to multiple research papers, presented at national conferences, and developed a math education app for underprivileged communities in the Dominican Republic through the BlueBox service group. He currently works at a startup developing multi-agent AI systems and plans to pursue graduate studies to further pursue his research interests. In his free time, he enjoys running and cooking, and aspires to publish a book.

Hannah Ladwig

Hannah is a senior from Hutchinson, MN majoring in biology with a minor in cognitive and behavioral neuroscience and a concentration in undergraduate research and scholarship. She is involved in research in Dr. Julie Soukup, Ph.D.'s biochemistry lab studying riboswitches as well as being a member of the INBRE Scholars Program and a CURAS Ambassador. Hannah is also a member of Creighton's Alpha Sigma Nu chapter and the Honors Program, where she occupies a position on the Student Advisory Board. She also enjoys mentoring younger students, serving as a New Student Orientation peer leader and decurion and as a TA/tutor for general biology labs, general biology lecture, and physiology lab. Hannah currently serves as the president of the Women's Lacrosse Club and co-president of the Relay for Life club. She enjoys giving back to the Omaha/Council Bluffs community as a Hospice volunteer and phlebotomist. After graduation, Hannah plans on attending medical school.

Maximus Lauritsen

Maximus Lauritsen is a senior from Omaha, Nebraska with a major in Neuroscience and minor in Biology. While at Creighton, Maximus spent his time leading Campus Ministry retreat initiatives, coordinating several of the Freshman Retreats as well as service trips and 402 programs through the SCSJ. He served as a teaching assistant for two neuroscience labs and researched impacts of the Klotho protein on Alzheimer's and hearing loss in Dr. King's lab for three years. A member of the Alpha Sigma Nu Creighton chapter and a dedicated volunteer, Maximus shares his time weekly as a companion for individuals at Hillcrest Health Services. Maximus plans to attend the UNMC College of Medicine in the fall, and is thankful for his parents, mentors, and dedicated friends he formed along the way. For Maximus, Creighton has been a place fostering his drive for excellence and pursuit of a healthy, learning-filled lifestyle.

Riley James Link

Riley is a mathematics major from Pflugerville, Texas. At Creighton, he has worked in the Chemistry Department as a work-study for four years, served as a Mathematics Teaching Assistant for three years, and supported students as a Resident Advisor for the past two years. Beyond the classroom, Riley actively volunteers with DREAM Scholars through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice and is a member of the Pi Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honor Society. Outside of Creighton, Riley participated in applied mathematics research at North Carolina State University, which led to his recognition as a national Goldwater Scholar, and completed a Signal Processing Engineering Internship with a government research center. After graduation, Riley will be pursuing a PhD in applied mathematics.

Mackenzie Jane Madsen

Mackenzie is a neuroscience major from Pleasant Hill, Missouri. She has been actively engaged in with Dr. King's lab researching Klotho in the choroid plexus for a year and a half. Her presidency of Active Minds for a second year allowed her to attend the national conference to receive an award on behalf of her chapter's advocacy efforts. She is also a member of Nu Rho Psi and the vice-president of Phi Sigma Tau. Her volunteering experience includes four years of involvement with Harbor Hospice, tutoring for Northstar with local high school students, and working with the healing gift free clinic at Kountze. She has worked with Recreation and Wellness since her freshman year, promoting holistic wellness. She is concluding her second year as the Honor's Resident Advisor for Residential Life from which she was given the Cura Personalis award in 2024. She also nominated for the Student of the Year award and won the Impact award from Student Life for her significant impression across various departments and nominated in 2024. She is anticipating medical school where she will deepen her love of research and further her medical education with interests child and adolescent psychiatry and ophthalmology.

Catherine Claire Nikodem

Catherine is a senior from St. Louis, Missouri majoring in biology and minoring in science and medicine in society. During her time at Creighton, she has been involved in service with the SCSJ, a member and leader for the MEDLIFE chapter where she helped set up mobile health clinics for the communities in Costa Rica and Peru, a hospice volunteer, and an undergraduate navigator at the Magis Clinic. She has conducted research with Dr. Minervini in a behavioral pharmacology lab studying polysubstance abuse, and was a 2024 Summer Undergraduate Research and Fellowship (SURF) recipient. She has worked as a teaching assistant for the Biology Department and as a lead tutor for the Academic Success Center. She is a member of the Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Honor Society as well as the Gamma

Phi Beta sorority. She is thankful for the opportunities and individuals that she has met at Creighton. After graduation, Catherine will be attending medical school in the fall.

Aditya Sundaram Pillai

Adi Pillai is a student at Creighton University's Heider College of Business, pursuing a double major in Economics and Classical Languages while on the pre-law track. Passionate about public service and the law, he aspires to become a prosecutor and serve as a Judge Advocate in the US Marine Corps. He has spent multiple summers training with the Marines, pushing through grueling physical training, learning military tradition, and developing leadership skills in high-pressure environments. In addition, he spent a year interning at the Douglas County Courthouse. Beyond academics, Adi has been involved in Mock Trial, History Club, Chess Club, and the South Asian Students Association. He has also spent a summer abroad at John Cabot University in Rome, Italy, where he deepened his appreciation for classical history. With a strong foundation in economics, history, and philosophy, Adi is dedicated to serving his country by pursuing a career in military law.

Greer L. Porter

Greer is a senior from Denver, Colorado majoring in biochemistry with a minor in biology. Throughout her four years at Creighton, she has been involved in undergraduate research under the guidance of Dr. Michael Nichols, PhD where she was also given the opportunity to take part in the IDEA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence program. She has participated in weekly service through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, served as a Welcome Week executive, and aided fellow students as a laboratory and teaching assistant in the Department of Chemistry. Currently, Greer is a member of the Honors Program, Alpha Sigma Nu, and Pickleball for Beginners. After graduation, Greer will be attending Creighton University School of Medicine in the fall and is grateful for every family member, friend, professor, and advisor who made that dream a reality.

Emily Noelle Rogge

Emily Rogge is a senior from Kansas City majoring in psychology and criminal justice, with minors in German and justice & peace studies. She is an undergraduate research assistant in Dr. Matthew Huss's forensic psychology lab, where she examines treatment outcomes for sex offenders in Iowa. She also works with Dr. Jill Brown on a cross-cultural study of distributive justice in Namibia, collaborating with researchers from the University of Namibia. She has presented her research at Creighton's St. Albert's Day Research Conference and is preparing to present at the American Psychology-Law Society (APLS) conference. Outside of research, Emily serves as a teaching

Proposed Members-in-Course continued

assistant for psychology courses, helping mentor students. She is a member of Delta Zeta sorority, Psi Chi psychology honor society, and volunteers through the Schlegel Center for Social Justice. In her free time, she enjoys rock climbing, ice skating, and crocheting. After graduation, she plans to pursue graduate studies in forensic psychology.

Lauren Ross

Lauren is a senior from Minnetonka, Minnesota, majoring in Neuroscience with minors in Mathematics, Biology, and Biological Physics. Throughout her undergraduate studies, she has found joy in seeing the connections between multiple disciplines of science and their applications to the healthcare field. Lauren is an active member of Creighton's chapters of Nu Rho Psi and Theta Phi Alpha. She has conducted undergraduate research under Lynne Dieckman, PhD, on the inhibition kinetics of novel anti-tuberculosis compounds. She has also held leadership positions as the president of the Pre-Optometry club and the external relations executive of Theta Phi Alpha. Lauren has contributed to her community through service at Heartland Hope Mission and by helping organize Creighton Brain Day. Last summer, she traveled on a FLPA to Austria and Hungary, where she learned about holistic healthcare, an experience that hugely impacted her perspective and helped her define the quality of care she hopes to provide in the future. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, running, and spending time outdoors. Following graduation, Lauren will attend Ohio State University to obtain her Doctorate of Optometry.

Paige K. Saluri

Paige is a senior majoring in biology and minoring in musical theatre on the pre-medicine track! Paige LOVES all things Creighton and is active in many student organizations on campus including the Theatre honors fraternity Alpha Psi Omega, CHAARG, the Creighton University Blue Crew, and Haddix Deans Fellows. Paige has also been in many productions at Creighton over the last four years including Ruthless, Monstersongs, Spring Awakening and Twelfth Night! Over the summer she participated in the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship program, conducting research on the native prairie species *Penstemon grandiflorus*. Paige currently works at CHI Mercy Hospital and is planning on taking a gap year for medical school come graduation. Her favorite thing about Creighton is the love and sense of community she has felt throughout all four years. Truly there is nothing better than being a Bluejay! GO JAYS!

Jakob R. Schmit

Jakob is an undergraduate junior student majoring in neuroscience and psychology with a minor in biology on the pre-medicine track. He is heavily involved with research, Biology and Neuroscience club leadership, drop-in and lead tutoring for biology in the Student Success Center, and volunteering

with the SCSJ at local elementary schools with Completely Kids as well as on school break service trips to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Morton, Mississippi. He is also currently working as a CNA for both Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital as well as a CHI Family Clinic. Jakob is also a member of Psi Chi (Psychology Honors Society), Alpha Sigma Nu (Jesuit Honors Society), and Nu Rho Psi (Neuroscience Honors Society). Jakob plans to attend medical school right after graduating and seeing what path that takes him down!

Jinann A. Shoshara

Jinann Shoshara is a junior from La Grange, Illinois, majoring in biochemistry and minoring in theology. At Creighton, she is a member of Michael Nichols, PhD's research lab, analyzing the effects of oxygen depletion on squamous cell carcinoma cultures. She is also involved in research with the psychiatric department of Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, where she works with a team studying pediatric mental health decision making. Since her sophomore year, she has been involved in the Cortina Community where she currently leads a service group that volunteers at the Micah House childcare center. She works as a resident assistant in Heider Hall, where she creates programs focused on engaging her residents and fostering a welcoming community. She is looking forward to enjoying the rest of her time at Creighton and hopes to attend medical school after graduation.

Brecken Kay Van Baale

Brecken is a senior from Harlan, IA, studying Biology and Spanish and Hispanic Studies. During her time at Creighton, she has worked as a teaching assistant with the Department of Biology, held leadership roles in her sorority, Pi Beta Phi, been involved with Campus Ministry, been president of Bluejay Women's Club Basketball, and served as a student leader in the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. She is also a member of Alpha Sigma Nu. Brecken has studied abroad in Spain and will participate in the Creighton ILAC Summer Health Program in July of 2025. Brecken has been on Service and Justice Trips to Denver, CO, New Orleans, LA, and El Paso, TX. Her involvement as a participant and coordinator led to her leadership role as a Core Team member, organizing student formation meetings for two cycles of the SJT program. After graduation, Brecken plans to apply to medical school.

Kaylee L. Van Handel

Kaylee is a senior from Westminster, Colorado, majoring in Data Science on the Advanced Computer Science track with minors in Computer Science, Digital Humanities, and Applied Information Technology. During her time at Creighton, she has been involved in the Honors Program, iJay Practicum, Pi Beta Phi, and DREAM Scholars volunteering program. Additionally, Kaylee completed two internships and served as a teaching assistant for Introduction to Data Science as well as Computers and Scientific Thinking for several semesters. She is active in undergraduate research focused on Artificial Intelligence with Dr.

Proposed Members-in-Course continued

Steven Fernandes. Research projects have ranged from developing chatbots for nursing students to practice patient simulation to creating algorithms to identify and count hair cells in cochlea images. After graduation, Kaylee plans to pursue a career in the tech industry and later transition to teaching Computer Science.

Adele Frechette Varley

Adele Varley is a senior from Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is a member of the Honors Program majoring in English and Spanish with minors in Classical and Near-Eastern Civilizations, Classical Languages, and Theology. Adele currently works as a team leader for the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, serving migrant populations in Omaha. She also serves as the co-director for Candlelight Choir and is an active participant in Music Ministry. During her time at Creighton, Adele has found a love for creative writing. She began research for a historical fiction novel during her Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship and wrote a poetry collection entitled "Home, Elsewhere" for her English senior project. Adele is also involved in Kappa Kappa Gamma, New Student Orientation, Pathways Choir, and the Service and Justice Trips program. She is a member of three other honors societies on campus: Sigma Tau Delta, Eta Sigma Phi, and Alpha Sigma Nu. After graduation, Adele will coordinate the ILAC Summer Health Program in the Dominican Republic and plans to take a gap year before applying to graduate school.

Andrew J. Wegner

Andrew is a senior from Leawood, Kansas. He is double majoring in chemistry and biomedical physics. While at Creighton, he has been involved in undergraduate research as a member of Erin Gross, PhD's lab, as an IDEA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence program scholar. His research involves creating cheaper, faster, and more accessible genetic testing methods for medical applications. He has been a member of the Honors Program and has enjoyed participating as a cellist in the Creighton University Orchestra since his freshman year. He also founded the Creighton Body Building Club to support student health and wellbeing on campus. After graduation, Andrew plans to help develop technology at Elemental Scientific to improve the efficiency of research labs around the world. He also plans to pursue higher education in materials science and engineering for sustainable applications in environmental science.

Alumni Initiate



Mimi Feller, BA'70

Mimi Feller was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska. She graduated as valedictorian from Marian High School in 1966. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the Creighton University College of Arts and Sciences in 1970 and received her Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown Law in 1981.

Feller began her corporate and legislative career in Washington, DC, with the U.S. General Services Administration. She worked for the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works; in the U.S. Treasury Department; and was Chief of Staff to Rhode Island Sen. John Chafee. In 1986, Feller joined Gannett Co., a leading international and national newspaper publisher and broadcaster, where she oversaw public affairs and government relations. She retired as a senior vice president of Gannett in 2003.

She served as board chair for the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association, as an officer for the Gannett Foundation and served on the board of The Media Institute. For nearly five decades, Feller has provided meaningful counsel to Creighton University. She is a member of the Creighton Society and Heritage Society. In honor of her late parents, Feller established the Milly and Lloyd Feller Volunteer Service Fund to support students in the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. From 1993 to 2017, Feller served as a Creighton University Trustee. She has been a member of several University committees, contributing to presidential searches, campaign steering leadership, University governance and compliance, and has hosted University events. In 1987, Feller was named the Creighton College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Merit honoree, and in 2017, received Board trustee emerita status for exceptional service to Creighton University.

Honorary Initiate



Eileen Wirth

Dr. Eileen Wirth is professor emerita of journalism at Creighton. She received her B.A. and M.A. in journalism from the University of Nebraska and an M.A. in political science from the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Nebraska. Dr. Wirth was a reporter at the Omaha World-Herald and a public relations writer for Union Pacific Railroad before joining Creighton's Department of Journalism and Mass Communications in 1991. She chaired the department from 1997 until her retirement in 2016.

At Creighton, Dr. Wirth's honors include the St. Ignatius Award, the Creighton University Faculty Service Award and College of Arts and Sciences Awards for advising, service and dedication to mission. She also is a member of three Nebraska journalism Halls of Fame and holds the National Press Women's Communicator of Achievement Award.

As the author of 14 books, Dr. Wirth specializes in writing about regional and local history with a focus on women's history. Her book "The Women Who Built Omaha a Bold and Remarkable History," received the 2023 Best Biography Award from the Nebraska Center for the Book. She is active at St. John's Church at Creighton and wrote its history, "We Belong Here the Story of St. John's Church and Its People." She's also a former president of the Omaha Public Library Board and the OPL Foundation which she started as Library Board president. She and Dr. Carol Zuegner raised the funds to start the JMCAwesome Innovation Fund to promote curriculum innovation in their department.

Chapter Officers

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Thank You

Our sincere gratitude to the faculty, staff, administration and students of the Creighton community for dedicating time and talents to this collaborative effort.

Creighton
UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences