



*The Phi Beta Kappa Society  
Beta Chapter of Nebraska*

# **New Member Initiation**

**SPRING 2026**





# 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 more than 290 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

## Christopher H. Adame-Hernandez

Chris is a senior biology and Spanish major from Columbus, Nebraska. He is very thankful for his four years at Creighton, where he has been heavily involved on and off campus. At Creighton, he has been a part of Relay for Life where he serves as involvement chair, Beta Theta Pi where he has held several chair positions, and Candlelight Choir where he sings at 9 p.m. Mass every Sunday. He has also served his Creighton community both at home and abroad as he has worked as a chemistry and biology lab teaching assistant and has participated in several Creighton-ILAC programs such as Encuentro Dominicano and the Summer Health Program. Chris is involved in undergraduate exercise science research, studying slip studies and balance recovery with Corbin Rasmussen, PhD, and he has also been a part of the Residential Life staff working as a resident advisor for the last two years. After graduation, Chris plans to do a year of service before applying to medical school.

## Madeleine Amspaugh

Maddie is a psychology major and theology minor from Johnston, Iowa. At Creighton, she has been involved in study abroad, psychology research, weekly service, and leading both a service and justice trip and the Encounter with Christ retreat. She has also worked as a teaching assistant and a decurion. Maddie enjoys singing in the Tuesday night choir and leading a Christian Life Community through Campus Ministry. After graduation, she is excited to pursue a year of service with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Maddie is deeply grateful for her mentors, friends, and parents who have taught her how to love and live generously during her time at Creighton University.

## Lauren Marguerite Ancheril

Lauren is a senior from Broomfield, Colorado, majoring in public health with minors in justice and peace studies, health administration and policy, and biology. She is a student leader in the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice (SCSJ), leading service at Siena Francis House, a homeless shelter, each week. Additionally, she has gone on four service and justice trips organized by the SCSJ during her time at Creighton, leading two of them. She is also the president of her sorority, Delta Delta Delta. She has been an attached tutor for general biology for two years and the head TA this past year. During her time at Creighton, she was also involved in Dance Marathon, research in the biology department, and New Student Orientation. She also had two influential experiences abroad through Creighton when she spent a summer at ILAC doing the Summer Health Program and a Faculty-Led Program Abroad centered on healthcare in Austria and Hungary.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Annika Eve Anderson**

Annika is a junior from Eden Prairie, Minnesota, studying psychology with minors in Spanish and biology on the pre-medicine track. In her three years, she has been a part of the Creighton Pre-Professional Scholars Program, the Dean's Fellows Program, and serves as the Vice President of Administration for the College of Arts and Sciences Student Senate. She enjoys giving back to her community through volunteering at the Latino Center of the Midlands as a teaching assistant for both citizenship and English classes where she has developed a passion for serving immigrant and Spanish speaking populations. She also enjoys serving as a department assistant in the UNMC Emergency Department. Annika is involved in research under Kimberley Scott, PhD, in the School of Physical Therapy studying Pediatric Physical Therapy Education and will be participating in the Minneapolis Heart Institute Clinical Research Internship Program this summer. She also loves staying active through being a part of the Women's Club Basketball Team.

### **Jeevita Ashokprabhu**

Jeevita is a senior from Centennial, Colorado, majoring in economics with minors in biology and cognitive and behavioral neuroscience. At Creighton, she is actively involved in Scott Scholars and the Creighton Pre-Professional Scholars Program. During her senior year, she co-led the Creighton Business Symposium and worked as a physiology teaching assistant for Angela Rivera, PhD. Jeevita has conducted research in Dr. Vanessa Minervini's lab focusing on pain management and in Dr. Afshin Salehi's lab at UNMC studying pediatric brain tumors. She also works as a tutor supporting student-athletes in strengthening their academic skills. She is currently collaborating with Mythily Winter, JD, to launch a mental health nonprofit aimed at improving awareness and access to resources within the South Asian community. In her free time, Jeevita enjoys working out, playing pickleball, and training for a half marathon. After graduation, she plans to work as a clinical research coordinator before applying to medical school.

### **Lorelei Auen-Ryan**

Lorelei is a senior from Des Moines, Iowa graduating with a double major in sustainability and political science on the pre-law track. She is a member of the Dean's Fellows Program and Alpha Sigma Nu. During her time at Creighton, Lorelei was involved in the New Student Orientation program as an RSP decurion. She has worked at Brick Gentry Law and Fraser Stryker Law and volunteered with the Refugee Empowerment Center through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. Her junior year, she spent a semester studying marine biology in the Galapagos Islands. A few of her favorite and most impactful courses at Creighton include Cultural Communications, taught by Dr. James Leighter, and Philosophical Ideas, taught by Dr. Jeanne Schuler. After graduation, she plans to begin law school in the fall of 2027 and pursue a career in environmental law. She is most grateful for her parents' diligence and support which made her education at Creighton possible.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Kelly Ann Bach**

Kelly is a senior from Woodbury, Minnesota studying psychology and political science on the pre-law track. A member of the Honors Program, she has spent the past two years conducting social-psychological research with her advisor, Dr. Guenther. Kelly currently works as a teaching assistant and has been actively involved in campus life through Theta Phi Alpha sorority, where she served as an executive assistant. She also previously worked as a Welcome Week executive with Student Life, helping welcome new students to the Creighton community. During her time at Creighton, Kelly studied abroad twice, spending six weeks in Paris, France and a semester in Rome, Italy. She has a deep love for travel, film, music, and her friends. She has immensely enjoyed her time here at Creighton and is grateful for all of the memories she has made and people she has met.

### **Ellie M. Becicka**

Ellie is a senior biology major with a studio art minor from Maple Grove, Minnesota. During her time at Creighton, she has been involved with the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, where she served as a service trip coordinator. She is also a member of Delta Delta Delta and Alpha Sigma Nu, the Jesuit honor society. During her junior year, she studied abroad at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Ellie has also served as a teaching assistant in the biology department for both general and upper-level labs. After graduation, she will attend Creighton University School of Dentistry and is excited to spend another four years as a Bluejay!

### **Erin Buglewicz**

Erin is a senior from Omaha, Nebraska, studying history and French with a minor in legal studies. During her time on campus, she served as the pre-law representative for the Creighton Pre-Professional Scholars Program, the administrative chair for the Dean's Fellows Program, and a decurion for the Ratio Studiorum Program. She was also heavily involved in Mock Trial, acting as the logistics chair for two years before becoming president her senior year. While in the club, her team earned multiple awards, and she received several honors for her role as an attorney. Erin also regularly volunteered through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, tutoring English language learners, and recently, she presented at the Clayton M. Lehmann Student History Conference, where she was awarded for her research. In addition to Phi Beta Kappa, Erin was inducted into Alpha Sigma Nu (Jesuit Honor Society) and Pi Delta Phi (National French Honor Society) while at Creighton. After graduation, Erin plans to attend Samford University's Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Alabama.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Jenna Bui**

Jenna is a senior biology and Spanish major from Roseville, California. On campus, she is a teaching assistant for general biology lab and is involved in auditory research with Allison Coffin, PhD, the Honors Program, and Alpha Sigma Nu. She has enjoyed volunteering through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, Learning for All as an ESL tutor, and volunteering at the Douglas County Health Center. She also works as a medication aide at a memory care facility, which has furthered her desire to serve others as a primary care physician. After graduation, she will take a gap year before applying to medical school.

### **Noah Christensen**

Noah is a senior majoring in political science and Spanish and Hispanic studies, and minoring in history. Noah is a member of the Honors Program, in which he has served as a class representative. He is also a captain on the Mock Trial Team. In that role, he has won awards as both a witness and an attorney, most notably being named an All-Region Witness in 2024. He served as the team's vice president and organized the Bluejay Invitational Tournament. In his time on the team, Noah balanced his own role as a competitor with his coaching responsibilities. Noah is currently interning at Monument Legal in Washington D.C. as part of the Capitol Hill Internship Program. In this role, he drafts motions and reviews discovery for a growing defense firm in DC.

### **Tyler S. Christensen**

Tyler is a senior majoring in biology with a minor in studio art. During his time on campus, he was involved in Beta Theta Pi, CSU Program Board, undergraduate research, the Dean's Fellows Program, and the Encuentro Dominicano Program. These experiences allowed him to build meaningful friendships, grow as a leader, and serve alongside others on campus, in the Omaha community, and abroad. He is especially grateful for the mentors and communities who shaped his college years and challenged him to think more deeply and serve more intentionally. Tyler values the balance he found between science and creativity in his studies and carries those lessons forward as he looks ahead to the next chapter. Following graduation, Tyler will attend the Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa to pursue his MD.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Maria A. Christoffersen**

Maria is a senior from Golden, Colorado majoring in psychology with minors in biology and English. She conducts psychological research with Dr. Jill Brown regarding the cultural logic of sharing in Namibia, Southern Africa and engages in forensic psychological research with Dr. Matthew Huss. On campus, she has been involved with the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, assisted with new student orientation as a peer leader, and served as academic chairman for her sorority, Delta Zeta. She has worked as a teaching assistant for the department of psychological science, was a student athlete tutor, and holds membership in the Alpha Sigma New and Psi Chi honor societies. Her research in applied psychology and experience conducting a case study in Namibia have fostered her interest in multicultural considerations within psychological services. After graduation, she will work as a research assistant in developmental psychology and apply to PhD programs in counseling psychology.

### **Mya Taylor C. Dagdagan**

Mya is a senior from Honolulu, Hawaii majoring in biochemistry with a minor in studio art. Over the past four years, she has enjoyed meeting people through her involvement in Hui 'O Hawai'i club and Alpha Phi Omega. She has also worked as a teaching assistant for general chemistry and organic chemistry labs. Through interning for the Hawai'i State Department of Agriculture and volunteering with the Queen's Dental Clinic, Kountze Food Pantry, and Habitat for Humanity, Mya has connected more with the communities in Hawaii and Nebraska. In her spare time, she loves painting, crocheting, and spending time with her friends and family. After graduation, Mya will attend Creighton University School of Dentistry.

### **Ella Belle Day**

Ella is a senior from Wisconsin majoring in biology with minors in Spanish and environmental science. Her academic tenure is distinguished by extensive research contributions, including work with Dr. Mackenzie Taylor, which she presented at the SURF and Ferlic Scholar Colloquia and collaborative efforts on the Iowa Loess Hills project under Dr. Joseph Phillips. A committed mentor and leader, Ella serves as a microbiology teaching Assistant for Dr. Marie Adomako, a campus greenhouse hand, and the president of the Women's Club Basketball team. Her global perspective was enriched by a formative semester in Sevilla, Spain, and a term as a New Student Orientation Guide. Following a gap year dedicated to agroecological volunteerism in Iceland and Brazil, Ella intends to pursue graduate studies in ecological restoration, continuing her dedication to environmental stewardship and scientific inquiry.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Lillian Ruth Duda**

Lily is a senior majoring in biochemistry with minors in women's and gender studies, Spanish, and biology from Omaha, Nebraska. During her time on campus, she served as president of the Native American Association and the Aquarium Club, and as vice president of the Spanish Pre-Health Society. She was also involved in Blue Crew and the Dean's Fellows Program. She volunteers through OneWorld to provide free health services to immigrants in the community. In 2024, she attended a medical service trip to Cusco, Peru. She worked as a medical scribe in the UNMC emergency department and currently works as a teaching assistant for organic chemistry while teaching math to students K-12. Lily was the recipient of the 2025 Kali Rose Mann Iron-Jawed Angels Award. She plans to work during a gap year after graduating in the spring before attending medical school.

### **Shayla M. Edwards**

Shayla is a senior from Stilwell, Kansas, studying exercise science and psychology. She has greatly enjoyed her four years at Creighton, where she has been a member of and recently captain of the Creighton Rowing team, a student hospitality worker at Campus Ministry, and a member and vice president of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She is also a member of the Honors Program, Alpha Sigma Nu, National Society of Leadership and Success, CPPSP, and Psi Chi. She has thoroughly appreciated Creighton's commitment to service and research, which allowed her, through work with Boys Town, RISE, and other great programs, to reach populations of which she had little knowledge previously but is now passionate to serve. After graduation, Shayla plans to pursue a Doctorate of Physical Therapy at Creighton as she believes that their Jesuit values will be integral in learning to optimize her the holistic care she can provide to patients.

### **Cameron Elias**

Cameron is a senior from Overland Park, Kansas, studying political science with a minor in public health. Her involvement with journalism ignited her passion for justice, and she was the scene editor for the Creightonian for two and a half years. Since high school, Cameron has promoted organ and tissue donation awareness with a non-profit organization in the Kansas City area called Gift of Life. As a member of the Creighton's political science department, she has researched measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccination rates and vaccination policy in the United States. In her spare time, Cameron is involved in sorority life at Creighton as a member of Delta Delta Delta. She is very grateful for all her family and friends that have supported her during her time at Creighton. After graduation, Cameron will start law school in the fall at the University of Kansas and possibly pursue healthcare law.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Emma J. Fredstrom**

Emma is a senior Spanish and biology double major from Lincoln, Nebraska. Her years at Creighton have served to refine her interests as they pertain to her life beyond undergraduate education. Her passion for contributing to the growth of others led her to the roles of dance instructor for community youth, decurion with the RSP program, and attached tutor for general biology and genetics. Her commitment to serving others led her to give her time locally to the efforts of OneWorld Community Health Centers and Royal Family Kids, a mentoring program for foster children, and internationally to service-learning abroad through Encuentro Dominicano and MEDLIFE programs. She has also found joy in working with the elderly in assisted living and in research in the chemistry department with Angela Devlin, PhD. After graduation, Emma plans to attend medical school to continue serving her community in a new capacity.

### **John Marc Garavalia**

John is an academic senior from Antioch, Illinois. He is majoring in cultural anthropology with minors in history, theology, and classical and near eastern studies. Additionally, he has been a member of the College of Arts and Sciences Honors Program and the Creighton Pre-Professional Scholars Program. John's research interests have revolved around government law. For his senior capstone paper, John researched the cultural formation of tribal courts and conducted observation and interview fieldwork at Santee Sioux Courthouse. Outside of curricular work, John has been an instrumentalist in Music Ministry's Evensong Choir and a student supervisor for the Creighton University Makerspace. After graduating, John will attend Creighton School of Law and pursue a career in government law. He will be a Creighton Law Dean's Fellow and apply for the JD-MS Government Organization and Leadership dual-degree program during his second semester.

### **Anna K. Garofalo**

Anna is a junior from White Bear Lake, Minnesota with a major in neuroscience and a minor in Spanish. She plans to utilize her Spanish proficiency to care for underrepresented individuals. Anna is a member of the National Honors Society for Neuroscience alongside MEDLIFE and is passionate about assisting those with neurodegenerative disease. She enjoys weekly volunteering at Nebraska Medical Center and spends her spare time hiking and playing piano. She is thankful for the lessons she has gained from immersing herself in the cultures of the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Spain where she volunteered with children with congenital disorders and developed a broader understanding of global issues. After graduation, Anna will attend medical school to pursue her dream of becoming a neurologist. She is thankful for her mentors and peers at Creighton whose dedication have given her the confidence to succeed.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Alyssa N. Gove**

Alyssa is a senior from Lincoln, Nebraska studying economics and finance in the Heider College of Business. She is a member of the Honors Program and has traveled to the Dominican Republic twice to participate in service with the Bluebox Project and other initiatives focused on environmental, educational, and economic development. Throughout undergrad, she has also assisted professors Dr. Ernie Goss and Dr. Charlie Braymen in various research engagements, including evaluating the economic impact of professional athletics in Omaha and simulating best practices for retirement investment and withdrawals. On campus, Alyssa participates in the CFA Research Challenge, is a committee member of the Creighton Student Sustainability Action Fund and works in the Career Center assisting students with professional development. Following graduation, Alyssa will be working as a Mergers & Acquisitions Analyst prior to applying to finance PhD programs.

### **Sydney Hall**

Sydney is a senior from Buffalo, Wyoming studying art history and cultural anthropology with a minor in studio art. She's in the Creighton Honors Program and the president of the Kappa Pi Art Honors Society. She was a part of the 2023 Scheerer Scholar cohort and was accepted into the Scheerer Fellowship Program, which focuses on the intersection between art and social justice. She interned at the Joslyn Art Museum during her junior year to help plan and lead tours for local K-12 students. She was awarded a summer research and creative fellowship last summer with a focus on ancient Cypriot altars. Her favorite memories at Creighton include eating lots of good food, travelling with friends, and researching topics she enjoys in both of her majors. After a gap year working at her sister's bakery, she plans to apply to graduate school and continue her research.

### **Paige E. Harty**

Paige is a senior from Sacramento, California, studying exercise science with minors in Spanish and business administration. She is grateful for the love and support from the Creighton community in developing all aspects of herself. She devotes herself to learning, particularly about sports injury prevention and recovery, and how she can help make information about women's-specific exercise science more widely available. As a captain of the rowing team, she is dedicated to improving every day and supporting her teammates. She also enjoys volunteering as a mentor and support system for students in North Omaha. She cherishes volunteering in hospice, where she serves as moral support to patients in their last few months of life. At Creighton, she conducts research in a neuroscience laboratory and is a Dean's Fellow. Paige will take a gap year before attending medical school and would like to thank her family, friends, and professors for all of their love and support throughout her entire Creighton experience.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Ella Hiddleston**

Ella is a senior from Omaha, Nebraska majoring in Spanish and English with minors in education and philosophy. She is part of both the Honors Program and Alpha Sigma Nu. Throughout her time at Creighton, she has been involved in Campus Ministry as a team lead and the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice as a service and justice trip coordinator. She serves as a Spanish tutor through the Success Center and works with students in all levels of Spanish classes, and she studied abroad in Spain on the Camino de Santiago. Ella is passionate about environmental justice and is on the Creighton Student Sustainability Action Fund committee that funds student-led sustainability projects. She conducted research through the UNMC Munroe Meyer Institute working with clients with autism and currently works as a Gallery Teacher at the Joslyn, both of which have helped her discern her love of teaching. After graduation, she plans to pursue a Master of Secondary Education while teaching high school Spanish.

### **Christian Daniel Hu**

Christian is a senior from Phoenix, Arizona, studying biology with a minor in theology on the premedical track. His academic work reflects a commitment to integrating faith and medicine. He is a member of the Jesuit honors society, Alpha Sigma Nu, and Theta Alpha Kappa, the national theology honor society. At Creighton, Christian serves as vice president and recruitment chair of his fraternity and leads a weekly men's Bible study. He also mentors elementary students in Omaha through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. Christian is involved in research on suffering, resilience, and whole person care among patients and medical students, presenting this work at conferences hosted by Baylor University, the University of Southern California, and Creighton. He is currently engaged in research examining the social determinants of health affecting Native tribal populations in Arizona. He will begin medical school at Creighton in Phoenix this fall.

### **Eshan Jain**

Eshan is a senior from Sioux Falls, South Dakota majoring in neuroscience and minoring in sociology. During his time at Creighton, he's immersed himself in various facets of both the Creighton and broader Omaha communities, experiences that have shaped him into the person he is today. He has done physical therapy research in Dr. Kimberley Scott's lab as well as sociology research with Dr. Ryan Wishart. Additionally, he's been involved in several extracurricular activities, student government, volunteering, and assorted leadership roles. He is and will be eternally grateful to the phenomenal people he's met as an undergraduate student here, people that have helped him through his journey. He will be attending medical school in the fall.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Anjali Jayan**

Anjali is a senior from Omaha, Nebraska, double majoring in psychology and Spanish, with a minor in biology and a concentration in undergraduate research and scholarship. She is involved in undergraduate research studying riboswitches in Dr. Julie Soukup's lab and has completed a Dr. and Mrs. Randolph Ferlic Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship in 2024 and 2025. She also works as a teaching assistant in the chemistry department and is a member of the Honors program, CURAS Ambassador program, Creighton Students Union, and Psi Chi. Beyond Creighton, Anjali enjoys connecting with the Omaha community as an ESL volunteer for immigrants and refugees at Learning for All and as a certified nursing assistant at Heritage Communities, where she provides care for elderly residents. She is grateful for all of the support she has received at Creighton and plans to apply for medical school after graduation.

### **Thomas Kennedy**

Thomas is a junior from Kansas City, Kansas majoring in medical anthropology. During his freshman year, he developed a strong interest in community health through service trips to Anthony, New Mexico and Cusco, Peru. Reflecting on these experiences, he was inspired by the capacity for individual stories and connections to spark social change. With this inspiration, he worked to cultivate the same sense of meaning in his own work. Following a semester abroad through the Encuentro Dominicano program, Thomas designed an assessment to clarify health needs for Batey Dos, a vulnerable community in the Dominican Republic. On campus, he enjoys working for the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, where he leads programming for students to critically examine social determinants of health. After graduating, he hopes to attend medical school and continue building a skillset to more meaningfully serve the vulnerable members of his community. He is deeply grateful for those who have accompanied him with support, advice, and opportunities while at Creighton.

### **Alexa Krishanthi Kozlak**

Alexa is a senior from Mahtomedi, Minnesota, studying medical anthropology with minors in global health equity and biology. Throughout her time at Creighton, she has served as the founder and president of Creighton's Students Against Trafficking, worked on the Best Buddies executive team for three years, and is a member of the South Asian Student Association and the Dean's Fellows Program. She is also a certified nursing assistant at QLI, a brain and spinal cord rehabilitation center, and volunteers with Make-A-Wish and Siena Francis House. Alexa conducts undergraduate research in Dr. Carol Fassbinder-Orth's lab, studying the relative levels of honeybee pathogens and hormones in different parts of the world and incorporating AI and vibroacoustics to predict colony death. She also serves as a biology teaching assistant at Creighton University. Alexa plans to apply to medical school in the upcoming cycle and would like to thank her family, friends, and teachers for their continuous support.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Elizabeth Mark**

Elizabeth is a senior in the honors program from Shawnee, Kansas. She is studying psychology and minoring in biology and classical languages. She works as a research assistant in Dr. Dustin Stairs' behavioral neuroscience laboratory where she studies the addictive effects of Delta-8 THC and CBD. She was a 2024 Welcome Week executive, volunteered as a reading mentor in Omaha Public Schools, and since her freshmen year, has worked as a tour guide in the admissions office, where she loves meeting prospective students and families. She is a part of sorority life, Alpha Sigma Nu, the classical languages honors society, the psychology honors society, and women's club lacrosse. Outside of Creighton, she volunteers weekly in the pediatric ICU at the Nebraska Medical Center. After graduation, she will be attending the University of Kansas School of Medicine to pursue her career as a physician.

### **Leah M. McEvoy**

Leah, a junior from Honolulu, Hawaii, is double majoring in environmental science and biology with minors in theatre and Spanish. A member of the Honors Program, she serves on their Mental Health Committee, works as an environmental science TA, and is a 1:1 peer buddy with Best Buddies. Since her freshman year, she has worked backstage for almost all of Creighton Theatre's and Creighton Dance's performances and has been conducting independent research under Mackenzie Taylor, PhD, on the relative efficacy of various floral resources in maintaining native pollinator communities. During her sophomore year, she served as an AmeriCorps member with Conservation Nebraska on Creighton's campus, working with the Office of Sustainability Programs to meet waste reduction goals and increase student involvement. After graduating, she plans on pursuing a master's in ecology before returning home to work in ecosystem conservation.

### **Kathryn Anne McGovern**

Kathryn McGovern is a Senior from Chicago, Illinois, studying theology and justice and society with a minor in education. During her time at Creighton, she has been involved with the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice and Campus Ministry. She has participated and facilitated three service and justice trips to Cleveland, Axtell, and El Paso and led weekly community service in the local Omaha community. Kathryn is a singer in the Sunday night Candlelight Choir and co-directs the Tuesday night Pathways Choir, as well as attended and led multiple retreats. She is part of the Honors Program and Alpha Sigma Nu and studied abroad for a semester in the Dominican Republic through Creighton's Encuentro Dominicano program. Kathryn will be a part of ACE after graduation, receiving her master's in education from Notre Dame while working for two years at an underserved Catholic school.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Payton Mlakar**

Payton Mlakar is from Fort Collins, Colorado. Throughout his time at Creighton, Payton was an active leader in the Black Wolves Battalion Army ROTC program, participating in the Ranger Challenge and Ranger Buddy competitions while leading the Northern Warfare Challenge and Bataan Memorial Death March teams and serving as Battalion Commander his senior year. In Summer 2024, Payton graduated from the U.S. Army Basic Military Mountaineering Course at Ethan Allen Firing Range. In his time at Creighton, Payton also served as the president of the Model United Nations club and worked in the history department as a research assistant with Dr. Britta McEwen and Dr. Betsy Elliot-Meisel. Payton will graduate as a Distinguished Military Graduate, majoring in history with minors in military science and political science. Following graduation, he will attend the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course at Fort Benning, Georgia and serve in the U.S. Army as an Infantry Officer.

### **Gabriel J. Murphy**

Gabe is a senior from Ankeny, Iowa, majoring in exercise science with a minor in science and medicine in society. During his time at Creighton, he has conducted multiple research projects in aging populations with Mitchel Magrini, PhD, focusing on strengthening, mobilizing, and ultimately increasing independence in the elderly. He has also been part of Best Buddies, a teaching assistant for human anatomy, a student representative for the Assistant Professor Search Committee, a running guide for Fr. Larry Gillick, SJ, and a member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the Jesuit honor society. Most recently, Gabe has started OmaHats LLC, a student-led brand licensed by the university to sell official Creighton apparel. Gabe is working closely with the athletics department, providing designs and product giveaways to boost student attendance to sporting events. This winter, he worked alongside graduate students to plan the 2026 Spring Memorial Service for the anatomy donors. Outside of Creighton, he works as a medical assistant at ENT Specialists PC, which has strengthened his commitment to serving vulnerable populations. Upon graduating, Gabe plans to attend medical school.

### **Matthew Nelson**

Matthew is a senior biology major and classical languages minor from Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. At Creighton, he has been involved in the Pre-Dental Society and the Creighton Pre-Professional Scholars Program for Dentistry. He is especially grateful for the opportunities to volunteer with the Creighton dental clinic that these programs have given him. Additionally, he has spent time volunteering at various local places including the Siena Francis House and other service through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. These experiences as well as Creighton's Jesuit values have deepened his commitment to serve others throughout his future career. In his free time, Matthew enjoys traveling, working out, and spending time outdoors. After graduation, Matthew will attend dental school in the fall.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Christopher J. Nicholas**

Christopher is a biochemistry major and Spanish minor on the pre-medical track from Pewaukee, Wisconsin. He is building a strong foundation for a future career in medicine through both his classes and hands on experience. One of the most important parts of Christopher's college journey has been his research with Dr. James Fletcher. The group's work focuses on the antiseptic properties and photodecomposition of triazolium salts, a project that has strengthened his curiosity and problem-solving skills. Through this research, Christopher has learned how to experiment, analyze data, and work closely with others in a lab setting while contributing meaningfully to the group. His Spanish studies add another layer to his education, helping him better understand different cultures and communicate with a wider range of people in both academic and social settings. Thoughtful, hardworking, and motivated, Christopher continues to prepare himself for medical school and the opportunities ahead as he works toward a career centered on service and scientific understanding.

### **Carly Anne Nowoj**

Carly is a senior from Naperville, Illinois, majoring in biochemistry with a minor in Spanish. Over the past three years, she has been involved in undergraduate research in Dr. Lynne Dieckman's lab and was honored to receive the Honor's Program Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship in 2024. She has served as the attached tutor for Dr. Eric Villa's general chemistry class for three years. Carly is the Honors Program's vice president of programming, where she plans and coordinates events that foster intellectual engagement and connection among Honors students. She enjoys volunteering at Hillcrest Hospice, OneWorld Omaha, and Siena Francis House and is deeply thankful for all the mentors, friendships, and opportunities she has found at Creighton. Outside of academics, she is an active yogi and plans to apply to medical school after graduation.

### **Hannah Madeline Pflum**

Hannah is a senior from Columbus, Nebraska, majoring in neuroscience with minors in studio art and biology. She works in the lab of Annemarie Shibata, PhD, researching the role of long non-coding RNAs in microglial gene expression during viral-induced demyelination. Due to her research, Hannah is the recipient of the INBREScholarship and the Goldwater Scholarship. Outside of research, she is a member of the Creighton Honors Program, NuRhoPsi National Neuroscience Honors Society, and Kappa Pi International Art Honors Society. On campus, she works as a RSP decurion helping to mentor incoming freshman and is the vice-president of programming for the Neuroscience Club. After graduation, Hannah plans to attend graduate school to get her PhD in immunology and would like to thank her family, friends, and teachers for their support throughout her undergraduate journey.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Shawn Anthony Ramachandran**

Shawn is a senior from Omaha, Nebraska, majoring in public health and minoring in biology. Throughout his four years at Creighton, he has been involved in undergraduate research, particularly in Dr. Julie Soukup's lab and at the University of Nebraska Medical Center through the Nebraska INBRE program. On campus, Shawn enjoyed serving on the Welcome Week executive team, being a peer leader and decurion, working as a chemistry lab teaching assistant, and being a member of the Dean's Fellows Program and Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Honors Society. Shawn has also been heavily involved in community service at Creighton's Magis Clinic, as well as service trips to Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. One of his favorite experiences at Creighton has been living alongside and serving rural communities in the Dominican Republic through the ILAC Summer Health Program. After graduation, Shawn plans to attend medical school in Omaha.

### **Philip Gregory Richardsen**

Philip is a senior Honors student from Fulshear, Texas, double majoring in biochemistry and biomedical physics, with minors in biology and classical & near eastern civilizations. A member of the Jesuit Honor Society Alpha Sigma Nu, he has served as a local community engagement team leader at the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, a general chemistry laboratory teaching assistant for more than 200 students, a tutor in general, organic, and physical chemistry, a Campus Ministry retreat leader and coordinator, chaplain of his church choir, and vice president of the Honors Program student advisory board. Philip has conducted research in single-molecule biophysics at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and in nanotoxicology with the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory's 711th Human Performance Wing. His scholarship has produced peer-reviewed publications and textbook chapters, and he was named a national Goldwater Scholarship finalist. After graduation, he will matriculate into UT Southwestern Medical School's prestigious Perot Family Medical Scientist Training Program to pursue an MD and PhD concurrently.

### **Claire Robertson**

Claire is a junior from Denver, Colorado, studying philosophy and public policy. She is a member of the Creighton women's rowing team and she enjoys participating in service opportunities offered by the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. Throughout her time at Creighton, Claire has volunteered with Jesuit Academy, Siena Francis House, and Yates Illuminates, as well as Catholic Charities of Omaha. Claire loves being involved in the philosophy department as a tutor, as a student teacher for Philosophy 4 Children, and as a member of Dr. Kevin Graham's undergraduate research group. She also participated in Creighton's Encuentro Dominicano program, where learned Spanish, contributed to the ILAC water quality projects, and participated in weekly service with Hospicio San Vincent De Paul in Santiago de los Caballeros, DR. Claire is grateful for her Jesuit education as well as the support of her family, friends, and professors who inspire and challenge her.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Sydney P. Roepke**

Sydney is a senior studio art major from Minneapolis, Minnesota who will be attending Creighton's dental school in the fall. As a member of the Global Scholar's Program, she has spent a lot of her time at Creighton studying abroad in places such as Italy, the Dominican Republic, South Korea, and Australia, and continues to maintain an active role in the program as the executive chair. She also enjoys spending her time volunteering through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice service and justice trips and their 402 Program. Alongside this, she works in Dr. Kimberely Scott's lab, focusing on physical therapy intervention fidelity. In her spare time, she loves creating art and music while spending time with her friends, family, and pets.

### **Maggie K. Schaefer**

Maggie is a senior from Yankton, South Dakota, majoring in ACS chemistry with a minor in English and a creative writing certificate. At Creighton, Maggie fully immersed herself and loved all of her involvements, which included serving as chemistry club president, College of Arts and Sciences' vice president of membership, RSP decurion for Dr. Erin Gross, chemistry research student with Dr. Destino, SCSJ's DREAMS volunteer, chemistry tutor and TA, and Magis Clinic volunteer. She also founded Gut Feelings, a club devoted to fundraising for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation (CCF). Beyond Creighton, she served as a member of the CCF's National Council of College leaders and as a camp counselor for the CCF's Camp Oasis. She is also a member of the Creighton honors program, Alpha Sigma Nu, and Sigma Tau Omega, Creighton's English honor society. After graduating, Maggie will attend medical school at either Creighton or UNMC.

### **Dexter Shogrin**

Dexter is a senior from Council Bluffs, Iowa, studying political science, with minors in economics and classical languages. He is a member of the International City/County Management Association and the Pi Sigma Alpha political science honor society. During his time at Creighton, he has worked as a tutor in the Success Center, assisting students with a variety of subjects, including math, statistics, calculus, economics, and foreign languages like Latin and Greek. This past summer, Dexter interned at his former high school, Creighton Prep, helping the school update and maintain its database of fiscal and personal information. Dexter is currently conducting undergraduate research through the political science department, with a focus on trying to statistically explain the results of historical presidential elections; he will be presenting this research at the Midwest Political Science Association conference in April. Dexter hopes to land a job in a data-related field after graduation.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Katherine L. Soule**

Katherine is a senior from Overland Park, Kansas, and is majoring in biology with a minor in behavioral and cognitive neuroscience on the pre-dental track. After graduation, she is planning to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to complete their Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) program. During her time at Creighton, she has been a member of the cross country and track teams for four years, earning All-Big East Academic honors. She is also passionate about community service, with a majority of her hours spent volunteering with underprivileged Omaha youth through the SAVE Program on Creighton's campus. Katherine has enjoyed being involved in the College of Arts and Sciences, specifically the biology department, and served as a teaching assistant for Dr. Angela Rivera in the physiology laboratory. She is grateful for her professors, coaches, friends, and family for supporting her journey and is excited for what is to come.

### **Sam R. Steensen**

Sam is a senior from Urbandale, Iowa, majoring in chemistry on the biochemistry track with a minor in philosophy. For the past three years, he has been actively involved in undergraduate biochemistry research with Dr. Clifford Gee, using protein-observed fluorine NMR to study bacterial peptide transporters. Sam has enjoyed working as a teaching assistant throughout the chemistry department. He is a member of the Creighton Honors Program and Creighton's Alpha Sigma Nu chapter. He has also participated in multiple service trips through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. Additionally, he is active in the greater Omaha community as a weekly volunteer at the Healing Gift Free Clinic and Kountze Memorial Food Pantry. Sam also serves as the vice president and a captain for the Creighton Club Quadball team. Following graduation, Sam will attend the Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa.

### **Samantha Grace Teeter**

Samantha is a senior from Victoria, Minnesota, studying Biology and Spanish. In her time at Creighton, she has served on the executive council for her sorority, Alpha Phi, is a member of the College of Arts & Sciences Honors Program, Student Senate, and Alpha Sigma Nu, as well as participated in service through the Latino Center and an SCSJ Service & Justice trip. Samantha researched genetic drivers of various cancers in the Medical School's Department of Pharmacology & Neuroscience under Dr. Stessman, PhD. She had the opportunity to spend a semester abroad in Seville, Spain where she was able to broaden her knowledge of Spanish language and culture. Samantha plans to take a gap year before medical school and is a Fulbright Scholar Semifinalist for an English Teaching Assistant award in Spain.

## *Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

### **Grace Louise Titus**

Grace is a senior from Omaha, Nebraska, double majoring in chemistry and philosophy. During her time at Creighton, she has been a member of the Dean's Fellows Program and has enjoyed participating in research with Dr. Erin Gross in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, developing and studying portable electrodes for accessible, electrochemical testing. She is a member of the Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Honors Society and is on the executive team for the Chemistry Club. Grace has served as an organic chemistry lab teaching assistant and through Creighton's study abroad program, she studied at the University of Glasgow for a semester in Glasgow, Scotland. When she is not on campus, Grace is a folk singer-songwriter who performs music at various Omaha venues. After graduation she plans to spend time in pursuit of a career in music.

### **Nora Welker**

Nora is a junior from Tabor, South Dakota, majoring in biology with a minor in medical anthropology, and is a member of the Lambda Alpha National Anthropology Honor Society. Nora has made the most of her time at Creighton, actively engaging in opportunities available beyond the classroom, from campus activities and organizations to Bluejay athletics. Over spring break, she traveled to Memphis on a service trip through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. Nora currently works as a Nutrition Tech at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, where she enjoys supporting patients and contributing to their care. Over the summer, Nora will continue her work at Madonna while taking courses to prepare for graduate studies. In addition, she will participate in a research opportunity at Creighton. In the fall, Nora will serve as a teaching assistant for the biology department. She will graduate in December and intends to apply to graduate programs in medical nutrition. In her free time, she enjoys reading, pickleball, and taking advantage of all that Omaha has to offer. Nora is deeply grateful for the opportunities Creighton has provided and for the meaningful relationships she has built with faculty, as well as the lifelong friendships she has formed along the way.

### **Keegan Wenande**

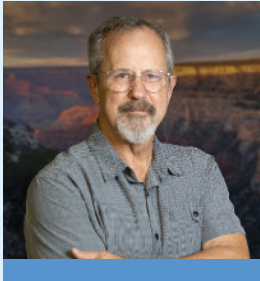
Keegan Wenande is a senior from Sioux Falls, South Dakota graduating with a degree in social work. Keegan is also minoring in sociology and has taken over 20 credits in psychology at Creighton. His primary academic interest is learning how social structures and institutions affect and reveal themselves in human behavior. Recently, Keegan was a visiting lecturer at the 2026 Legislative Day conference for Nebraska's schools of social work, presenting "Reconciling the Past: Social Work's History of Complicity in Oppression." Currently, Keegan is a behavioral health technician at a drug rehabilitation facility in downtown Omaha. He will continue working in this role after graduation, with plans of applying for an accelerated nursing program. Keegan is also a member of the Alpha Sigma Nu and Phi Alpha national honor societies.

*Proposed Members-in-Course continued*

**Logan Yogi**

Logan is a senior from Honolulu, Hawai'i, majoring in history and economics, with minors in environmental policy and legal studies. He is a class representative in the Honors Program, vice president of Alpha Sigma Nu, Student Senator, former Core Team member, and student coordinator of C.R.E.W for Environmental Justice with the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. Throughout his time at Creighton, his most meaningful experiences consist of participating and coordinating seven service and justice trips, his work creating the Maximillian-Bodmer Expedition digital archive for the Joslyn Art Museum, his participation on the Creighton Mock Trial team, and his Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship in Australia. After graduation, Logan will be doing a year of service in Portland through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest. He would like to thank all the incredible faculty, staff, and students who have endlessly inspired and shaped who he is and who he is becoming.

# Alumni Initiate



## Thomas D. Kirsch, BA'80

Dr. Thomas Kirsch is an emergency physician, humanitarian, and author who spent his career in academic emergency medicine and responding to disasters and humanitarian crises on six continents. He served as Professor of Medicine, Public Health, and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University and also as a Professor at George Washington School of Medicine.

Tom is a renowned disaster scientist and educator with almost 200 academic publications, and has also written essays for the Atlantic, Washington Post, Health Affairs, and JMWW Literary Magazine. He has testified before Congress, served on numerous Federal and National Academies panels, and consulted for the WHO, CDC, FEMA, and a dozen other organizations.

President Obama honored him at the White House in 2014 as a 'Hero in Healthcare Fighting Ebola.' Other awards include the Disaster Science Award from the American College of Emergency Physicians, the American Red Cross Clara Barton Award for Leadership, Creighton University Alumni Merit Award, and the UNMC Distinguished Alumni Award.

He is trained in emergency medicine and preventive medicine and a Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians. He received a BA in fine arts from Creighton University, MD from the University of Nebraska, and an MPH from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

# 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.