

13th
**Annual Student Affairs
Assessment Conference**

Thu, June 25, 2026 | Norris University Center

THURSDAY 06.25.26

LEARNING LOCATION

N **NORTHWESTERN ROOM | 172**
TRACK 1: PROGRAMMING AND POLICY
Jeff Jenkins, Northwestern Career Advancement
Abby Ross & Cayce Pasko-Stanley, Fraternity and Sorority Life
AJ Delaire, Gender & Sexuality Resource Center

La **LAKE ROOM | 180**
TRACK 3: STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO STAFF BEHAVIORS
Ann Motogawa & Kim Lange, Office of Student Transitions & Operations and Services
Tony Smith, Norris University Center
Rihannon Dawson, Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs Career Advancement

Lo **LOUIS | ROOM 232**
Dr. Robert Aaron, Executive Director, Student Affairs Assessment & Planning
Amy Huntington, Associate Director, Student Affairs Assessment & Planning
Qile Chen, Data Analyst, Student Affairs Assessment & Planning

Ar **ARCH ROOM | 264**
TRACK 2: ENGAGEMENT, ADVOCACY, AND WELLNESS
Tess Benser, Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness
Garrett McAlister, Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness
Paul Hubinsky and Amanda Mueller, Residential Services

R **ROCK ROOM | 270**
TRACK 4: RESIDENTIAL OUTCOMES
Kelly Wyatt, Residential Services
Rick Cazzato Jr. & Amanda Mueller, Residential Services
Erin Hernández and Zack Mroz, Residential Services

8:30 - 9:15 a.m. Introduction

Lo **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**
WELCOME
Dr. Robert Aaron, Executive Director, Student Affairs Assessment & Planning

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
Amy Huntington, Associate Director, Student Affairs Assessment & Planning

OPENING REMARKS
Susan Davis, Vice President for Student Affairs

9:20 - 9:55 a.m. Concurrent Sessions Round 1

N **EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO ADVOCATE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS DURING THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS**
Jeff Jenkins, Northwestern Career Advancement

Ar **"WHY DOESN'T EVERYONE LEARN ABOUT THIS?" A SEXUAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT**
Tess Benser, Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness

La **GETTING TICKETS JUUST RIGHT: A GRADUATION TALE**
Ann Motogawa & Kim Lange, Office of Student Transitions & Operations and Services

R **LEADING @ HOME: EVALUATING INDIVIDUAL IMPACT OF AREA COUNCIL'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**
Kelly Wyatt, Residential Services

10:00 - 10:35 a.m. Concurrent Sessions Round 2



EVALUATING DEFERRED RECRUITMENT: IMPACTS ON BELONGING, SAFETY, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Abby Ross and Cayce Pasko-Stanley, *Fraternity and Sorority Life*



DEESCALATING IDEOLOGICAL-BASED HARM: ADAPTING NORTHWESTERN BYSTANDER INTERVENTION FOR POLITICAL CONFLICT

Garrett McAlister, *Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness*



UNPACKING THE RENTAL PROCESS AND RESOURCE USE OF THEATER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Tony Smith, *Norris University Center*



SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO NOW?": THE CLASH BETWEEN POINTS AND PERSISTENCE IN RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES

Rick Cazzato Jr. and Amanda Mueller, *Residential Services*

10:35 - 10:50 a.m. Break

BREAK

10:50 - 11:25 a.m. Concurrent Sessions Round 3



LEADING OUT LOUD: IDENTIFYING KEY METRICS FOR THE GSRC LEADERSHIP RETREAT

AJ Delaire, *Gender & Sexuality Resource Center*



BLUEPRINT FOR BELONGING: CONNECTING AREA-LEVEL ATTENDANCE WITH THE RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

Paul Hubinsky and Amanda Mueller, *Residential Services*



NOT ANOTHER NEWSLETTER! STUDENTS, STUDENT AFFAIRS, AND EMAIL COMMUNICATION (OH MY!)

Rihannon Dawson, *Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs*



FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED MINUTES: HOW DO YOU MEASURE A YEAR AS AN ARD?

Erin Hernández and Zack Mroz, *Residential Services*

11:30 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. Assessment of Tomorrow



ASSESSMENT OF TOMORROW

Dr. Robert Aaron, *Student Affairs Assessment & Planning*
Amy Huntington, *Student Affairs Assessment & Planning*

Qile Chen, *Student Affairs Assessment & Planning*

12:05 - 12:15 p.m. Wrap-Up & Gratitude



WRAP-UP & GRATITUDE

Dr. Robert Aaron, *Student Affairs Assessment & Planning*

EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO ADVOCATE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS DURING THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS

Jeff Jenkins

Northwestern Career Advancement

Through attending the “Disclosing a Disability” workshop last academic year, an important gap emerged, many students lacked the knowledge and resources needed to determine when and how to request accommodations from an employer during the internship or job search process. This lack of knowledge makes asking for an accommodation a particularly challenging decision. This insight led to the expansion of the current program, which now emphasizes helping students learn how to request accommodations and provides relevant resources to guide them through the process. During the current academic year, newly created accommodation workshops have been available to the AccessibleNU population, and pre/post workshop assessments were administered to attendees. Additionally, a competencies assessment was integrated into the workshop content allowing participants to identify top skills to translate to strengths. Pre/post assessment data measured students’ learning outcomes about the timing of disability disclosure and how to disclose a disability to an employer during a job search. The results of the first year of the workshop will be shared, and implications for future work will be discussed.

Learning Outcomes: Personal Development, Cognitive and Practical Skills

“WHY DOESN’T EVERYONE LEARN ABOUT THIS?” A SEXUAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Tess Benser

Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness

Due to a lack of national sex education standards, Northwestern students receive inconsistent sexual health education prior to enrollment. This lack of shared language or even baseline knowledge affects attitudes, behaviors, and skill sets related to sexual wellness that students demonstrate during their time as Northwestern students. Additionally, there are gaps in the assessment of cognitive and practical skills around both consent and sexual health, contributing to the dual issue of a student-level lack of shared language and an administrator-level lack of insight into the depth of the issues in this area.

We assess and educate students at Northwestern in the cognitive and practical skills in areas such as alcohol education, recognizing bias, and sexual misconduct, but when it comes to sexual wellness, students can be left to learn by trial and error. Many students will have their first sexual experiences during the years they spend at Northwestern. We have an opportunity to learn what students know and provide resources and interventions to support their overall well-being and comply with federal and state regulations for preventing sexual violence. The intention of this project is to conduct a needs assessment of students’ sexual health knowledge and skills, identify where there are gaps in knowledge and areas for growth in interpersonal skill building, and design co-curricular interventions to address these gaps and improve the sexual citizenship of Northwestern students.

Learning Outcomes: Cognitive & Practical Skills, Personal Development

LEADING @ HOME: EVALUATING INDIVIDUAL IMPACT OF AREA COUNCIL’S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Kelly Wyatt

Residential Services

Area Councils are a group of student leaders in each residential area that develop and implement community initiatives to foster affinity in the residential space. Council members are required to have regular one-on-ones with their advisors, meet weekly as a team, attend community events, and participate in three annual training sessions: The New Officers Conference, the LEAD Retreat, and the EMERGE Retreat. The goal is to offer a fruitful developmental experience tailored to all council student leaders. The assessment project focuses on team development, community affinity, and students’ confidence as leaders. Furthermore, the assessment investigates what leadership styles, motivations, and values residential student leaders are bringing to the area, and how residential student leaders practice these in their personal, team, and communal based leadership spaces. Data was collected via annual residential experience surveys, onboarding, offboarding, and post-retreat/training surveys, as well as a new winter and spring area council experience survey. Findings regarding team effectiveness in student development will be discussed.

Learning Outcomes: Interpersonal Competence, Personal Development

GETTING TICKETS JUUST RIGHT: A GRADUATION TALE

Ann Motogawa & Kim Lange

Office of Student Transition Experiences, & Operations and Services

In 2024 and 2025, approximately 45% of NU graduates ordered the maximum number of graduation tickets they could (10-14), yet 65% brought an average of only 4 or fewer guests. This large no-show rate led to higher department spending and preparation than necessary. The team had theories on the root causes but no real data, so we conducted three focus groups with graduating students - two for undergraduate and one for graduate. Our research focused on three core areas: how students determine the number of graduation tickets to order, when and how graduation travel planning conversations begin with family, and what strategies might discourage students from ordering many more tickets than they need. We were stunned by the results!

Based on the focus group findings, Graduation staff changed the language in communications and opened the 2026 ticket order site to students a month later than in prior years. We then compared this year’s ticket scan rate to that of 2024 and 2025 to determine any correlation between the changes we made and the ticket scan rate. We will discuss our results along with underlying reasons for subject behavior.

Learning Outcomes: Cognitive And Practical Skills

EVALUATING DEFERRED RECRUITMENT: IMPACTS ON BELONGING, SAFETY, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Abby Ross & Cayce Pasko-Stanley

Fraternity and Sorority Life

As institutions increasingly adopt deferred recruitment policies to support student safety, academic success, and a smoother transition to campus, questions remain about how these policies function in practice. At Northwestern University, first-year students are not eligible to join fraternities or sororities until winter quarter, with strict limitations on fall engagement and bid extension. This project explores the extent to which deferred recruitment achieves its intended outcomes, with particular attention to students' sense of belonging during their first quarter. It also examines gaps and unintended consequences, including informal policy violations, pressure to make early verbal commitments, stress and time management challenges, and limited oversight of fall recruitment-related activities. Additional considerations include the experiences of transfer students and whether delayed affiliation impacts early connection to campus. Using a mixed qualitative approach-- focus groups, informal interviews with peer institutions, and existing institutional data--this study evaluates both the effectiveness and limitations of the current deferred recruitment model. Findings and implications will be discussed.

Learning Outcomes: *Personal Development, Interpersonal Competence, Social Responsibility*

DEESCALATING IDEOLOGICAL-BASED HARM: ADAPTING NORTHWESTERN BYSTANDER INTERVENTION FOR POLITICAL CONFLICT

Garrett McAlister

Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness

As conflicts on campus mirror polarized political and ideological landscapes, traditional bystander intervention frameworks must be adjusted to address the unique barriers present in ideologically motivated conflict. To respond to these challenges, the Northwestern University Bystander Intervention (NUBI) program was expanded to intentionally integrate political and ideological contexts. This included restructuring program flow, updating educational content and slides, developing new scenarios that foreground ideological conflict, and refining assessment methods to better capture learning outcomes related to these experiences. The revised program offers students practical pathways to recognize, interrupt, and deescalate harm while navigating complex ideological environments. This session details the changes made to the program and the specific factors that influence people's decision making. Of particular interest is whether and how individuals intervene when harm, conflict, or violence is connected to ideological beliefs, including fear of social repercussions, normalization of ideological harm, and uncertainty around safety and responsibility. This session will highlight key adaptations, lessons learned, and implications for violence prevention and civic engagement work.

Learning Outcomes: *Cognitive And Practical Skills, Interpersonal Competence, Social Responsibility*

"SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO NOW?": THE CLASH BETWEEN POINTS AND PERSISTENCE IN RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES

Rick Cazzato Jr. & Amanda Mueller

Residential Services

Serving Northwestern students for over 50 years, the Residential College system at Northwestern has had several iterations since its founding in 1972. One of the core components of the residential college experience is living across class year, which is accomplished through residents earning engagement-based points and opting to return to the college. Over the last decade, residential colleges' retention rates have lacked clear stability - resulting in some colleges now providing a true multi-class year experience while others struggle to retain students. Through an examination of the student experience, we will showcase what we found contributes to higher retention across the 10 residential colleges to better fulfill one of the core components of the college program.

Learning Outcomes: *Personal Development, Interpersonal Competence*

UNPACKING THE RENTAL PROCESS AND RESOURCE USAGE OF THEATER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Tony Smith

Norris University Center

Student theatre organizations have historically relied on outside vendors to rent production equipment, often navigating costly and logistically complex processes to produce their shows. To address these challenges, Norris Technical Services launched an equipment rental program designed to increase affordability, access, and institutional support for student-led productions. After the program's first year, an evaluation was conducted to better understand its effectiveness and how student organizations are using this resource.

This session presents findings from the first year of the rental program, combining data analysis with feedback from focus groups of frequent users. The data analysis identifies patterns in equipment demand and access, while qualitative feedback sheds light on decision-making processes, and creative needs of student theatre organizations. Together, these insights will help demonstrate how students navigate university resources to support their artistic work and suggest opportunities for improving service design and student learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome: *Cognitive And Practical Skills*

LEADING OUT LOUD: IDENTIFYING KEY METRICS FOR THE GSRC LEADERSHIP RETREAT

AJ Delaire

Gender & Sexuality Resource Center

The Gender & Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC) Leadership Retreat will provide students with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and learn to lead authentically and inclusively. This project utilizes a variety of survey data and literature on how gender and sexuality impact student leadership and student experiences. It compares the impact of sexual orientation and gender on heterosexual and cisgender (dominant) groups versus groups that are not heterosexual or cisgender. The information gleaned from this data deep dive will inform the approach and content of the retreat, while the Leadership Framework will be used to structure programming and goals. With January 2027 as the expected retreat date, the findings from this analysis directly address student needs and gaps in leadership development that the GSRC Leadership Retreat aims to close.

Learning Outcome: Personal Development

NOT ANOTHER NEWSLETTER! STUDENTS, STUDENT AFFAIRS, AND EMAIL COMMUNICATION (OH MY!)

Rihannon Dawson

Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs

At some point, every Student Affairs professional has sent an email, waited for a response, and eventually wondered if it had disappeared into the void. Students say they never received it. Staff know they sent it. So, what's actually happening? Undergraduate students are navigating overflowing inboxes, often without formal instruction in professional email writing, inbox management, or the communication norms faculty and staff assume to be universal. Understanding email as a necessary skill for both personal and professional life, this presentation posits that email is not just a logistical challenge but an overlooked skill gap and meaningful learning opportunity.

This project asks: What do undergraduate students' email habits and experiences reveal about gaps in digital literacy, and what role can Student Affairs play in developing email as a professional competency? Using data from a student survey and interviews with staff, the project explores how students decide what to open, what they tune out, and what they wish the university would do differently. With a goal of moving beyond simply describing the problem, it also examines the other side of the equation, looking at how staff perceive and respond to student email behaviors in their day-to-day work and asking what Student Affairs can do about it.

Learning Outcome: Cognitive & Practical Skills

CONNECTING AREA-LEVEL ATTENDANCE WITH THE RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH PROGRAMMING

Amanda Mueller and Paul Hubinsky

Residential Services

Residential Services launched the Residential Area model in Fall Quarter 2019 to provide equity of experience across our 36 undergraduate buildings. Each of the four Residential Areas is meant to provide shared amenities, opportunities, and experiences. Additionally, the Area Leadership Team (ALT), comprised of the Faculty-in-Residence (FIR) and Resident Directors, along with the Area Councils, coordinate at least two area-level events each week that are provided at no cost to residents. Additional events, such as ASLA tutoring, are also offered at the Residential Area level.

From an assessment lens, Residential Services has been measuring the residential student experience for over a decade, began using the Student Engagement Database in 2017, and started tracking Area programming in 2019. This project aims to combine area-level attendance data with assessment data, including measures of belonging and satisfaction, to discover patterns for further exploration. This session will dive into some of the insights generated through examination of this exciting new approach to engagement and outcomes.

Learning Outcomes: Personal Development, Interpersonal Competence, Social Responsibility

FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED MINUTES: HOW DO YOU MEASURE A YEAR AS AN ARD?

Erin Hernández and Zack Mroz

Residential Services

Assistant Resident Directors (ARDs) play an integral role in the day-to-day functions of Residential Community & Support. Since 2022, the ARD role has been designed to support student well-being through crisis response and policy enforcement, supervise Resident Assistants, and aid in the development of a comprehensive residential experience for our on-campus students. Over the last few years, more than 25 graduate students have served as Assistant Resident Directors, each with varying experiences prior to, in, and after the role. Our goal is to assess the learning of current and former ARDs, examining not only what individuals are learning while in the role, but also the ways in which that learning occurs.

Learning Outcome: Cognitive and Practical Skills

Northwestern | STUDENT AFFAIRS