

# Frequently Asked Questions: Summer 2020

This document includes the most common questions from our online programming live chats along with answers from current Northwestern students. We hope this information is helpful! Please feel free to email us at [ug-admission@northwestern.edu](mailto:ug-admission@northwestern.edu) with any additional questions.

Don't forget to subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) to receive notifications about future sessions.

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# Academics

## Does Northwestern have a core curriculum?

- *Distribution requirements are Northwestern's version of what other schools might refer to as "Gen-Eds" or "Core Classes." Each undergraduate school has a different set of distribution requirements, but they're all designed to ensure every Northwestern student gets a strong liberal arts foundation. Something I love about having distribution requirements as opposed to a specific core curriculum is that there are dozens of classes that can be used to fulfill each distribution area. For example, my friend took a computer & technology in the modern world class to satisfy his "math" requirement. You can find the distribution requirements for each school linked below. - Kayla '22*
  - [Bienen School of Music](#)
  - [McCormick School of Engineering](#)
  - [Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications](#)
  - [School of Communication](#)
  - [School of Education and Social Policy](#)
  - [Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences](#)

## What is the process for changing schools/majors?

- *It is incredibly easy to switch between majors and schools! To switch between majors, you meet with your adviser and the adviser of the major you want to transfer into. To switch schools, you meet with the adviser from the school you wish to transfer into to discuss how your requirements will change. Both are easy, common processes! - Simone '20*
- *Switching majors and even between schools is as simple as meeting with a few people and submitting a form! You need to meet with your academic adviser and the adviser for the major or school into which you are interested in entering, mainly just to make sure you will be able to accommodate any course requirements that differ from your previous major or school. People change majors and schools all the time, some even multiple times or back to what they were pursuing before! - Melana '20*
- *It's super easy to transfer between the schools! I came in as a first-year completely undecided (in Weinberg), and a couple quarters in decided to switch to the School of Education and Social Policy (SESP). It was a very straightforward process-- I just filled out a form and went to an information session. I'd also like to add that you can always double major/minor/certificate across schools without having to transfer, and you are welcome to take classes in any of the schools as well! For example, I'm double majoring in Learning and Organizational Change (in SESP) and Economics (in Weinberg). I've also taken classes in the School of Communication. My main school is always SESP, despite having these crossovers. - Mary '21*

## When do you have to declare your major?

- *Officially, you need to declare a major by the end of your sophomore year. However, you are more than welcome to add a new major, drop a major, and add/drop minors after that! I switched majors at the end of my first year and added my current major at the start of my first year. Then, I officially declared a minor at the end of my junior year, after realizing I had never officially filled out the paperwork. Then, I noticed I was one class away from a certificate the summer before my senior year, so I declared that certificate when I came back onto campus! - Simone '20*

## Do double majors or major/minor combinations have to be in related subjects?

- *Not at all! While there are some school-specific policies (e.g. the School of Communication does not allow you to double major within the school itself), you ultimately have a lot of freedom to create your own unique academic path. As a theatre major I've had classmates who combined pre-med/theatre,*

mathematics/theatre, engineering/theatre, computer science/Radio-Television-Film, and other fun combinations. It's totally up to you! - Samara '22

- *I agree with Samara! People combine so many unexpected fields of study. I know several people studying theatre on the pre-med track, which was a shock to me at first. I'm personally double majoring in Journalism and English Literature, which seem semi-related, but involve two totally different styles of writing. I love going back and forth between the very casual, fact-based style of journalistic writing and the very formal, yet creative style of literary analysis. I feel like being able to focus on both of these types of writing has made me a much stronger student! In my experience, a lot of English majors actually have some sort of STEM second major/minor. Most people in my journalism program have a double major in something completely unrelated - art history, political science, environmental studies, economics, and design, just to name a few examples! - Alena '20*
- *Double majors definitely don't have to be in related subjects! The beauty of our liberal arts academic program combined with the quarter system is that it allows the necessary flexibility to explore and complete any combination of majors you could dream of. Of course, there are certain restrictions with double counting and some schools do not allow you to double major within them, but for the most part, double majoring is really a choose your own adventure kind of thing. I'm double majoring in theatre and history, and I've found it really easy to split my academic focus between the two! - Karina '22*

What is the difference between double majors and dual degrees? Is double majoring common?

- *When you double major, you have a major in your home college and fulfill the degree requirements within that school, and additionally fulfill the major requirements of another major, but you only graduate with one degree. An example of this would be double majoring in theatre and neuroscience - this student's home school would be the School of Communication (SoC), with a double major in the Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences (WCAS). Usually, a student's second major is in WCAS. If this is the case for you, then you should apply to the more specific school, which could be SoC in my example. If you wanted to study both vocal performance and industrial engineering, then you would be looking at our dual-degree program, where students typically take five years to complete the degree requirements for both schools, and graduate with two degrees instead of one. Roughly 75% of students hold a secondary academic declaration which includes another major, a minor, or certificate! - Elizabeth '20*
- *With a double major, you are completing the graduation requirements for ONE school, and taking the major requirements for two majors. You will graduate in four years, with one degree. With a dual degree, you are completing the graduation requirements for BOTH schools, graduating in five years, with two degrees (one from each school). You can read more about it under the "Double Majors Between Two Schools" section [here](#). - Simone '20*

Can you take classes in any one of the schools?

- *Even if you come into NU having indicated a specific major, it is entirely possible and actually encouraged to take classes across different departments and subjects! I came to Northwestern with an intended history major even though I didn't really know what I wanted to study. During my first quarter, I took a history class, but also took a sociology class just because I thought it sounded fun. I ended up liking the sociology class a lot more, and during the winter of my first year, I took another history class, another sociology class, and Introduction to Psychology because I thought psychology may be something I was interested in studying. By spring of my first year, I realized history wasn't for me, and that I liked sociology and psychology a lot more! After taking even more classes in the sociology and psychology departments, I decided to pursue a major in psychology but kept taking some sociology classes here and there when I had room in my schedule. - Melana '20*
- *Yes! I'm studying neuroscience & psychology, and I've been able to take classes in 5 of the 6 undergraduate schools, including many classes entirely unrelated to my major, like the History of Rock in Bienen! The only requirement for taking a class is that students meet the prerequisites for the course,*

*which are in place to ensure that students will be successful. For example, you can't take an upper level computer science class on video games without taking fundamental computer science classes before that. There are a few exceptions where classes are for students in a certain major/program only, but I've never had any issues taking the electives I was interested in. - Elizabeth '20*

**If you apply undecided, how does NU help you choose your academic path?**

- *While I knew what I wanted to study right off the bat, several of my friends who were undecided found Northwestern's distribution requirements to be really helpful in finding their academic paths. The flexibility of the distribution requirements means that you can take courses on topics you find genuinely interesting in a variety of different academic departments, one of which you can eventually make your home department. Several professors with whom I took intro-level distribution classes were very vocal about being willing to work with students to help them find other interesting classes within the departments and talk through whether a major/minor in those departments might be a good fit. - Alena '20*
- *Northwestern advisers across the board have been super helpful in my efforts to figure out what I wanted to pursue both academically and professionally. When I was undecided coming into school, my Weinberg adviser encouraged me to take classes that simply sounded interesting, but what I appreciate most is he kept giving me that advice even after I'd decided on a major! He really has made the effort to propose new things I may want to look into, even for the spring of my senior year, to really make the most of my time at NU. [Northwestern Career Advancement](#) is very helpful for students who are unsure about how their studies and interests can translate into careers and also how their professional interests can be best supported by academics and extracurricular activities. - Melana '20*

**How do you feel about the quarter system?**

- *Coming into the quarter system can definitely feel intimidating with the thought of more classes, and therefore more assessments every year. However, it is really easy to get used to because it's the norm for every student and professor at NU. The transition from high school to college classes is already so different that coming into a quarter system can't really be compared to the timeline of a typical high school schedule, which I think really helps with learning to operate on NU's schedule! Also, all professors grade their classes differently; I've had classes with three exams, classes with no exams and only group projects, and classes with only a final paper. It's nice to not have to study in the same way for each class, and that has really helped manage my stress during exams. - Melana '20*
- *At first, the quarter system was an adjustment for me since things moved at a faster pace than they had for me in high school. But one important thing to remember is that the majority of first-year students coming into Northwestern haven't had experience with a quarter system so you won't be behind anyone, and honestly, it didn't take super long to get used to the schedule! Now, I'm really glad we're on the quarter system since it's allowed me to take more classes in subject areas I'm just interested in — but don't necessarily want to pursue as a career — than I would've been able to on a semester system and has also made scheduling easier for me on a quarterly basis. - Troy '20*
- *A quarter is a few weeks shorter than a typical semester, so this is definitely a little alarming to think about before you experience it. I remember coming in as a first-year student and thinking I would have a ton of extra work in classes like general chemistry and math because it would be at a faster rate than most schools. What I quickly realized is that students' desire to fully and thoroughly learn material is mirrored by the professors. Professors know their material and value it enough to give it the time it deserves to be taught. So, if they think that a course really does need the time of two semesters, that sequence would be three quarters long. In my experience with this, there are always adjustments made because of the quarter system schedule. Professors know they're teaching on a quarter system and will not cram things in! They care too much about your learning and retention to do that. Plus, having all of the extra quarters to take fun classes is a huge plus, too! - Tricia '21*

## Does Northwestern accept AP/IB credits?

- *Northwestern accepts IB and AP credits depending on the scores you receive on the exams. The credit policy depends on which undergraduate school you are enrolled in, and you can find information about current policies through the [Office of the Registrar](#).*

## Does Northwestern accept dual enrollment credits?

- *Generally speaking, classes taken as part of a high school curriculum (such as those taken through dual enrollment, college in the high school programs, etc.) are not eligible for transfer credit. You can read more about Northwestern's transfer credit policies for incoming first-year students [here](#).*

## How accessible are professors?

- *Professors are always happy to get to know students! I have had professors who hosted lunches if they had bigger classes in order to get to know students better in a smaller setting. I have had professors that will grab coffee in downtown Evanston with students if they have questions about career paths. In the civil engineering department (which is my major), I am super close with all of the professors and know I can go to them with any questions. My adviser always sends me emails checking in on my quarter, as well! One time when I had her for a class I emailed her to tell her I would have to miss class because I was under the weather, and she came up to me the next class to make sure I was feeling better and asked if I had any questions about what I missed. Professors really do care! No professor will turn down the opportunity to chat with you. - Tricia '21*
- *It of course depends on the size and type of class, but even in my larger lectures I've been able to get to know the professors outside of the classroom and attend office hours to help facilitate those relationships. Professors are here because they love teaching and they love getting to know their students! All you have to do is send a quick email, and you can be getting coffee with that professor within the week, or even get research positions or insights into the professional field. - Samara '22*
- *My biggest regret of college is not making the effort to get to know some of my professors, because they really are genuinely interested in forming relationships with their students and helping them beyond classwork. One of my professors held additional office hours where she asked students not to come with questions about class, but rather questions about life and current events! She held the session at a local restaurant and bought appetizers for everyone who came. The same professor, at the end of the quarter, told our large class that she would continue to be there for us, whether it be questions about careers or grad schools or things like stressors in our personal lives. During winter quarter of my senior year, I ran into my Spanish professor from my first quarter at NU in the hallway between classes, and even though we hadn't talked for many years, she remembered my name and invited me to come to her office anytime so we could catch up and talk about my post-grad plans. - Melana '20*
- *Coming from a very small high school where it was very easy to get to know teachers, I was quite nervous about how I would connect with professors at Northwestern. However, I've found that professors really care about their students and want to get to know them as people and not just as students. For example, one Medill professor I had would bake homemade cookies before her office hours each week to entice students to come talk with her, even if they didn't have any specific questions about the course. I have had three professors that I consider to be close mentors and that I plan to stay in contact with after I graduate this spring. The primary way I formed those relationships was by going to office hours and by getting involved/showing interest in their research. - Alena '20*

## What advising services and academic supports are available?

- *You have multiple advisers throughout your time at Northwestern. You're assigned a first-year adviser during the summer before you come to campus, and this adviser will help you pick fall classes and teach your fall seminar. You'll then also have an adviser for your home school, and this adviser will change if you change your school. When you declare a major, minor, or certificate, you get an additional adviser for*



each of those. Finally, many students become close with staff and professors, who act as mentors and advisers as well! - Simone '20

- When you come to Northwestern, you'll get a Peer Adviser (PA) who will be your orientation leader. In most undergraduate schools, your orientation group (or PA group) will be made up of about 15 students who you will have a class with during your first quarter. The professor of that class will serve as your first-year adviser and you'll meet with your PA and your professor to create your class schedule. That way, someone who has experienced student life at Northwestern can tell you the inside scoop about classes and a professor can give you insight into all of the programs offered at NU. Once you declare any major or minor, you will be given an adviser for each area of study. I have an adviser for my major and one for each of my minors - that means three advisers who I can go to with any questions I have about my academic progress. All of these people support me constantly and are there to help me design my class schedule each quarter and I can also go to them if anything gets tough. On top of this amazing advising system, professors are really supportive. They want students to do well and want to help students succeed inside the classroom and out. If you ever have any extenuating personal circumstances that affect your coursework in any way, professors are there to help you and give you any support necessary. - Cami '21
- There are so many systems in place to help NU students academically. On top of having advisers for each of the majors and minors you choose to pursue and an adviser for your home school, professors and TA's make themselves very available to help if you are struggling in a class or even if you just have clarification questions. Programs through [Academic Support and Learning Advancement](#) are great resources for students. For many classes, there are Peer-Guided Study groups, which are essentially course-specific group tutoring sessions led by a student who excelled in the class during a previous quarter. Some courses will also have drop-in peer tutoring if you are not interested in the more structured format of the Peer-Guided study groups. Beyond academic support for specific courses, there is [UPAL](#) (Undergraduate Program for Advancing Learning) where students meet in small groups with a peer mentor to discuss strategies for general academic success, and there is also the opportunity for individual one-on-one coaching. - Melana '20

### What's your favorite class you've taken at Northwestern?

- So many! I took Psychopathology with Prof. Renee Engeln (who you will learn is a goddess on campus) and I learned so much about different mental states and disorders. Also, Civil Rights History with Kevin Boyle is amazing - every class is like a TED Talk and he weaves this narrative together that helps you see the movement in a whole new light from what you may have learned in history class. Finally, I took a SESP class called Culture and Cognition and I got to interview my grandma about her most vivid memories. That's just a start, but truly there are so many fantastic opportunities for learning beyond your major. - Cal '21
- I took "The Russian Writer and the State" with Prof. Ian Kelly about state censorship in Russia from the era of Stalin to the present day, specifically exploring the relationship between the writer and the state and questioning whether Russia can survive without censorship. The classes were half lecture and half discussion, and our readings consisted of notable literature such as Doctor Zhivago and journal articles. It was an incredible course, and Prof. Kelly is one of the most accomplished and fascinating people I have ever met (he has worked for the US State Department and was based in Russia for a long time)! - Karina '22
- The coolest courses I have taken at Northwestern have been outside of my major and were an art course called Introduction to Black and White Photography and an environmental science course called the Ecology of Climate Change, two topics I was really interested in and so excited about. During my photography course, we learned to shoot, develop, and print using black and white film. It was one of the coolest skills I never thought I would learn, and now I have all these black and white prints of my time at Northwestern which is really awesome. The other course, Ecology of Climate Change, was a "topics in

discussion” 399 level course, which professors can teach in any discipline if they have a subject of interest. Our professors gave us really meaningful readings to learn about climate change, and also let us pick topics we were interested in for other readings. It had a large discussion component and our small class had really meaningful discussions about the readings that helped me dive into a topic I’m passionate about. - Sydney ‘20

### What are research opportunities like at Northwestern?

- Check out the full session about [undergraduate research](#) on our YouTube channel!
- [Undergraduate Research Grants](#), or URGs, are application-based and there are a few different types of grants. There are school year grants, which last for a quarter. There are also summer grants, and students apply at the end of winter quarter for the following summer. URGs are for students who have research experience (potentially by working during the school year) and want to explore their own research question. If you do not have enough independent research experience, and are looking to get started, the best option is URAP (Undergraduate Research Assistant Program), where you reach out to a professor, and work on an application and brainstorm a project with that faculty member. I personally came in as an environmental science major, but I worked at an aquarium in high school and loved it. So, I went to the office of undergraduate research and told them I wanted to work with fish. They found me a spot in a Neuroscience lab working with Zebrafish. It had nothing to do with my major or minor, but I got paid to do work I really loved. This experience helped me formulate my honors research thesis, where I received funding from Northwestern to complete my project! - Simone ‘20
- Research is really accessible at Northwestern for all students in any major, with any level of previous research experience (even if that’s none) at any point in your NU experience. You can receive funding through the [Office of Undergraduate Research](#), where the school has allotted \$3.5 million for our undergraduates to pursue their own research! The office will help you create your application through a series of meetings and feedback sessions. My second year I was able to jump onto a research project when my friend Caroline received one of these grants to research the role of a camera in filming a solo dancer. However, research doesn’t need to just be through the Office of Research, it can be through assisting professors in their labs, on their own research projects, or academic independent studies. I was able to complete an independent study where I received credit for my major to be the dancer in her film! It was incredibly easy and I have pursued multiple other independent studies since to continue research myself in a way that allowed me to receive credit, whereas the URGs allow you to receive funding. This has led me to undertake an honors thesis in my final year where I am using the skills I learned in writing a research grant proposal and also my work across past independent studies. - Jacquelyn ‘20
- Being a research assistant or doing independent research is open to all years! As a first-year, I was invited by a professor to be her assistant as she worked as the lyricist for the Broadway show Monsoon Wedding. I helped her contextualize the show within Desi/Punjabi/North Indian culture to ensure she maintained cultural integrity, and I also helped with translations from Hindi to English. All that mattered was that I was qualified to help her; my year wasn’t a factor at all. If it’s an independent project you’re looking for, many opportunities are given out by quarter, so you can start applying in your first quarter to do work in your second or third if you really want to get started early! - Samara ‘22

### What is the study abroad program like?

- We have a full session about [study abroad opportunities](#) on our YouTube channel!
- About one-third of Northwestern students study abroad at some point in their undergraduate career, but there is huge variation when people go abroad! Many students on the pre-medical track will go over the summer so that it does not interrupt one of the sequence courses that occur during the year. A lot of Northwestern students go abroad during the fall of their third year, which helps to broaden students’ choices and minimize the impact on the quarter system. If students go abroad in the fall, then they can do a full semester program study abroad, while only missing one quarter of Northwestern classes. Students

definitely go abroad in the spring as well, but it takes a bit more advance planning, since students will miss two quarters. Northwestern also operates its own study abroad programs that are one quarter long, like many of the programs in the [Global Health Studies](#) adjunct major & minor! - Elizabeth '20

- There is a huge range of opportunities for students to go abroad during their time at NU. While many students will go abroad on what most people think of as "traditional" study abroad programs, there are many opportunities for students to go abroad for service learning, research, or class projects. The [Global Learning Office website](#) has more details on the cost of and details on specific programs, and it is important to note that any financial aid you receive on campus will travel with you, making study abroad financially accessible to everyone! That being said, you don't need to have an exact idea of which program you'd like to do right off the bat; there are many study abroad advisers who are very helpful throughout the entire process, from picking and applying to programs to communications during the program itself. - Melana '20
- You can study abroad at any point during your four years, except your first quarter. Most students choose to go fall of their third year, if they are leaving for a section of the school year, but summer programs are plentiful and diverse. You can go winter/spring fairly easy, especially if you come in with AP/IB credits, but you just have to be sure you're academically ready to go for a semester long program and thus miss two quarters instead of one. There are tons of study abroad options! You can find a list of them here: [The Global Learning Office's explore page](#). However, some majors have options that aren't even listed on this page! For example, as a theatre major, I can go to Prague to study and perform with the Prague Shakespeare Company for two months in the summer, or every four years there's the Prague Quadrennial where designers and directors go to a theatre fair in Prague and present their work to a worldwide audience. - Samara '22

### Can you minor in Bienen if you aren't majoring in music?

- Absolutely! My friend Elizabeth is a General Music minor and gets to take private organ lessons. The music minor is very manageable as it is only 6 credits (your full degree requires 42-46 credits total depending on your school). Bienen also offers minors in commercial music, music cognition, music composition, music technology, and musicology. You can also still take General Music classes in Bienen as a non-major or non-minor. As a SESP/Weinberg student I took Music Theory for my formal studies requirement instead of calculus. It was harder than I expected, but my professor was lovely and I have a stronger appreciation of music now. Check out opportunities in Bienen for nonmajors [here](#)! - Henry '20

### What are the academic options for students interested in business?

- The Kellogg School of Management offers [two certificates for Northwestern undergraduate students](#), one in Financial Economics and one in Managerial Analytics. These are a great way to utilize the wonderful resources offered by the Kellogg School of Management. Additionally, many students work with Kellogg professors, either doing research or assisting them in their work. A great resource for students interested in business is our [Roads to Business](#) website, which highlights all the ways Northwestern students graduate and move into a fulfilling and successful career in that field. - Simone '20
- A lot of students interested in pursuing business minor in [Business Institutions \(BIP\)](#)! The minor's core classes include Accounting, Marketing, Leadership, and Corporate Finance. Students also choose two courses from a list of classes in various departments (I took Law & Society and Spanish for Professions), and there are minor prerequisites in Statistics, Economics, and Social Sciences. - Melana '20



## Pre-Professional Opportunities

### Does the University help students find internships?

- Check out the [internships session](#) on our YouTube channel!
- [Northwestern Career Advancement](#) (NCA) is an amazing resource that is ready to help you from day one! I went into the office during my first year on campus just to figure out what careers I might be interested in. They helped me develop a plan for networking and applying to jobs which brings me to my next point: the NU alumni network is incredibly supportive. In our alumni database you can search alumni by their career field and access their contact information to reach out and discuss their work. I did this in my first year, and someone I spoke with ended up offering me an internship position! The other popular way that students find jobs is through Handshake, our online career platform. It has tons of postings for internships and jobs that you can filter by field, as well as postings for upcoming on-campus information sessions and helpful resume/cover letter/interview tips, making it a one-stop-shop for your career needs. - Mary '21
- There are certainly career advisers available through the [NCA](#), but I also want to highlight supplemental resources outside of the career advancement center. For myself as a graduating senior, I found some of the most helpful post-graduate advice came from connecting with alumni who graduated with my major/are currently working in my field and having 1-1 meetings with my professors! Since my major classes are very small, I was able to develop very close relationships with my professors and would Zoom them at the beginning of quarantine to help navigate post-graduate opportunities. It was helpful to meet with NCA official career advisers and alumni in my field to understand the possibilities that were out there, but it was most helpful to talk to professors that knew me very well to make those final choices. - Jacquelyn '20
- I found my first internship through a career fair hosted by the Engineering Career Development office in the McCormick School of Engineering, though this is by no means the only way to do it. It was a fair just for civil and environmental engineers, which is a smaller department, and they had 16 companies for the approximately 60 students who attended. Before the career fair, they sent out a list with every company that would be present and if they were looking for interns, full-time, undergrad, graduate, etc., which was helpful because I went into the fair knowing where I was eligible. I had a couple of people in that office help me make a resume, and I was a second-year so I really didn't have any experience to put on there, but they made it super easy to feel prepared. I talked to people for about an hour at the career fair and was surprised at how far enthusiasm about the companies went, because I got a couple of interview offers and some job offers from there! So, the process of getting it was super easy once I shook the nerves and just went for it! - Tricia '21

### Does Northwestern have a pre-law track?

- Northwestern does not offer an official pre-law track, in the way there is a pre-med track - this is largely because unlike medical school, there is no specific set of course requirements to apply to law school. However, many students are preparing for law school in undergrad and they are truly studying all kinds of things, from political science to engineering to theatre. Northwestern's [Center for Legal Studies](#) in the Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences offers both a major and a minor. There are specific pre-law advisers who help students orient their undergrad experience to being a good candidate. These advisers are available through [NCA \(Northwestern Career Advancement\)](#). They offer panels with current lawyers or law students who are also NU alumni. They also offer LSAT prep help, interview help, and connect undergrads to alumni in the field for both practice and real interviews. Besides NCA pre-law advisers, Northwestern students are fortunate to have access to a world-class alumni network who are willing to help undergraduate students. There is the [NEXT Program](#), which is an externship opportunity where alumni who are willing to have a student shadow them for a day. Students apply to this program based on an area of interest and alumni available. Another popular option is Chicago Field Studies, which offers a [class in legal studies](#) every quarter, where students can intern at law firms, or in a legal position at a

variety of different companies. This allows students to gain a very in-depth understanding of the profession and see if it is right for them, or get real-world experience to give them a leg up in the law school application process. There are also a variety of extracurriculars to join, such as [Phi Alpha Delta](#), the pre-law fraternity that connects students with others interested in the same path, and other resources from alumni. Northwestern also has a [Mock Trial](#) team and a [Debate Society](#), both of which have won numerous awards and are highly recognized as top teams. These help students hone their skills that will be necessary in the legal field. There is also a [Womxn in Law Club](#) that brings in female lawyers for discussion and offers study sessions. - Simone '20

## What kind of support is available for pre-med students?

- Check out our full session about [pre-med/pre-health advising](#) on our YouTube channel!
- For those pursuing the pre-medical path, there are tons of opportunities both at Northwestern and outside of NU. At Northwestern, there are so many opportunities to get involved with research, either on the Evanston campus or downtown at the Feinberg School of Medicine. There are also lots of opportunities to engage with volunteering/community service through different student organizations. Northwestern's Health Professions Advising Office has a shadowing program available to all pre-med students that pairs students with physicians in the Northwestern Memorial Health System who are affiliated with the university. This program is an awesome way for students to get their feet wet in shadowing for the first time, especially if they're not from the area. Additionally, outside Northwestern, there are a lot of volunteering opportunities at different hospitals in the Chicagoland area like Lurie Children's Hospital. Lurie is conveniently located next to Northwestern's Chicago campus, so students can take our free intercampus shuttle from Evanston to Chicago to be able to complete their volunteering work. I volunteered at Lurie Children's Hospital in the pediatric intensive care unit, and it was a great way to supplement everything I was learning in the classroom. While each of our individual classes are shorter with the quarter system, they still had up to the length of courses required by medical schools. For example, if a year of inorganic and organic chemistry are required, then our year is the same overall length, just broken up into different subcomponents. For biology, many semester schools have 2 semesters of biology, but we have four quarters which are subdivided into: Genetics & Molecular Biology, Physiology, Cell Biology, and Biochemistry. So while they may be different in structure, they satisfy all medical school requirements. For more on these requirements, Northwestern's [Health Professions Advising Office](#) is immensely helpful. Additionally, these classes seamlessly fit into your course load, and can even satisfy major requirements depending on what you choose. As a first-year student, I took general chemistry and general chemistry lab all three quarters, as well as my two first-year seminars, one remaining math class, one remaining foreign language class, and then other classes I thought would be interesting, like Intro to Computer Programming in the McCormick School of Engineering! The Health Professions Advising Office will work with students to fit these classes into their four years with a plan that works for them and their major. This segues nicely into discussing advising here, which has been really awesome in my experience. I have met with my pre-med adviser about once a quarter throughout my undergraduate career, discussing how I'm planning to spend my summers, when I'm planning to fulfill each of my course requirements, my volunteer plans, etc. Northwestern has a lot of different support systems in place to help students navigate this path, and ultimately succeed! - Elizabeth '20

## Is the alumni community accessible and supportive of new graduates?

- We have a full session about [life after Northwestern](#) that addresses our alumni network on our YouTube channel.
- From my experience with the job recruitment process, alumni are always happy to connect with current students to find internships, research opportunities, and full time positions as well. Northwestern Career Advancement does a great job of connecting these students to alumni, and many alumni come back to NU for career fairs or information sessions as representatives of their companies. I've always found NU alumni eager to help out current Wildcats! - Elizabeth '20

- In addition to connecting with alumni through Northwestern Career Advancement and career fairs, there are also opportunities to connect with alumni through your specific undergraduate school. For example, I'm a Medill student and while I was completing my [Journalism Residency](#) in DC last winter, I participated in a program called Medill Mentors. I was paired with a Medill alumna whose career matches my interests and goals. We met several times and she even helped connect me with other prominent journalists in the area. There's also a new program called [Mentor Circles](#) (open to all Northwestern students and alumni) in which alumni mentors lead one-time or repeating group discussions about a topic of their choosing. I'm participating in my first one on Immigration Law next month! - Alena '20

Do students generally stay in or near Chicago after graduation?

- I wish that I could say all my friends were going to stay in the same place next year, but students really do spread out after graduation. Northwestern has an incredible [Career Advancement Center](#) that helps students find jobs in the fields they are passionate about, which can be anywhere. Some graduates do stay in the Chicagoland area, and often even have other Northwestern graduates as roommates, but Northwestern students get jobs across the country (and even world)! You can explore NCA's [Post Undergraduate Survey Data](#) to get a sense of what recent graduates have pursued after leaving Northwestern. - Simone '20

## Residential Experience

What percent of students live on campus? What are the housing options?

- Check out our recent [residential experience session](#) on our YouTube channel!
- Northwestern students spend at least their first two years living on campus. I waited until my final year to move off-campus because I wanted to push myself out of the dining hall nest and learn to cook for myself (which is a pretty common reason for older students to move off-campus). About 35% of Northwestern students live off-campus. - Henry '20
- The Northwestern living experience is centered around [residential areas](#). These are groups of 3-4 buildings which share common resources including live-in faculty members, study rooms, lounge spaces, gyms, and dining halls. This way, everything you need is just a short 30 second walk away! Within these neighborhoods you'll find 3 different types: residential colleges, residential communities, and residence halls. Colleges are the most structured form of living with a faculty member living directly in the building. They are centered around a common theme, such as communications, commerce, or engineering. You don't have to be studying the theme in school, just have a demonstrated interest! They'll plan events centered around the common theme, such as going into Chicago to see a performance or bringing in a speaker for the residents to hear. The next level down are residential communities, which also have a live-in faculty member but not a central theme. The faculty member will coordinate events centered around general community building. Two of my favorites were Fireside Chats and Sunday Night Ciders. For the Fireside Chats, we'd have a faculty member come speak with us about whatever they were researching while we got to eat deep dish pizza-- one professor they brought had just returned from Scotland where he was studying castles, so we got to see his beautiful pictures and learn about castles the whole time! For Sunday Night Ciders, we would come downstairs every Sunday at 10pm to fresh hot apple cider, hot chocolate, mini muffins, donuts-- the whole spread! It was a great way to bond with people in the building and take a study break. Finally, we've got residence halls. These are the least structured form of living, with no live-in faculty member. There are upperclassmen Residential Assistants on each hall who still plan small events, usually centered around food! Last year, I lived in a residence hall and my RA did Bubble Tea and Bubble Wrap for the final time, which was a great way to de-stress. The best resource on residence halls at NU is the housing guide created by North by Northwestern, a student publication! Check it out [here](#). - Mary '21

- *First-year students live all over campus. Coming in as a first-year engineer, I knew I would be spending a lot of time at the Ford Design Center and the Technological Institute, so I decided to rank housing near those buildings higher! The flexibility of being able to live anywhere on campus is really nice, and I also love that there are no first-year only residential buildings because I met a lot of really awesome people in my residential community who were a year older than me. So, in short, you can live all over campus as a first-year and you will build a community with both new and older students! - Tricia '21*
- *I loved my time living in a residence hall on campus! All of our first- and second-year students live on campus and it's a great way to meet people. There will often be events held within residential buildings with food and activities for students, but I found I got to know the other people in my building from just making the effort to hang out in common spaces! You could always find someone in our floor's lounge, any time of day or night, and the lounge had plenty of tables for studying and TVs if we wanted to watch a movie or sports game together. - Melana '20*
- *During my first year on campus, my residence hall was definitely the biggest place where I found community at Northwestern! I lived in Shepard Hall on a floor of about 40 other students, and our floor was primarily first and second-year students, while there were students of all years who lived in the building. Across most residential halls, you'll see a similar mix of students and while you might not be completely surrounded by people in the same year as you, you'll definitely have other incoming students live on your floor. For me, it was also great to have second and third-year students in the same space as me and some of the strongest relationships I built were with them! - Troy '20*

#### What is the food like?

- *Honestly? Pretty good! There are tons of options - omelet bars, grills with burgers and hot dogs, salad bars, and new dishes every day. There are even good vegan and gluten free options. The dining halls are social hubs for sure, because they're worth hanging around in - great food, great atmosphere, and lots of choices! There are also plenty of vegan and vegetarian options in every dining hall. - Samara '22*
- *The great thing is that there are many options for dining halls with different meals. One dining hall, Plex, does weekly stir-fry night, weekly burrito night, and weekly pasta lunch! There's a great salad bar at every dining hall, and of course dessert. My friends made an Instagram called "5 Star Sarge" where they shared 'gourmet' food creations in their favorite dining hall. The best thing is the variety of the food. - Cal '21*
- *One thing I love about Northwestern dining (I'm also a picky eater) is that we have several dining halls and you can look up the daily menu for each of them online. So if you're not loving what one dining hall is serving, you can head to another. Each dining hall also usually has several options, as well as build-your-own stations so you can really customize your meal. I also really like the options in the Norris University Center, where you can pay out of pocket or use Cat Cash (in contrast, dining halls are unlimited buffet-style). Norris recently got a great pizza place! The late-night options at Lisa's and Fran's cafes also come in handy. - Alena '20*

#### What does Northwestern do to keep campus safe?

- *Campus is pretty uniformly safe! They keep it well lit after dark and there are blue lights everywhere. Also just by the nature of it being a college campus, there are always people up doing something. As a young woman and night owl who loves to study in the beautiful architecture of the Deering Library, I've walked home late at night more times than I can count. Obviously you should take the precautions of staying on the more traveled pathways, but I've always felt very safe on this campus. - Mary '21*
- *Safety is a top priority at Northwestern. From health resources and medical care to campus police and security, we work to ensure that this home away from home is a safe one. Northwestern partners with Via Transportation to offer Safe Ride, a free car service for Northwestern students that provides a safe and free alternative to walking alone after dark. Northwestern also has an extensive shuttle system that provides free transportation around the Evanston campus and between the Evanston and Chicago*



campuses. University Blue Light phones are located throughout both our Evanston and Chicago campuses. Community Service Officers also provide overnight lobby staffing and monitor video surveillance cameras of residential building lobbies. Lastly, our residence halls all utilize “triple swipe” systems - students use their Wildcards (student IDs) to swipe into the building, onto their floor, and into their room. - Simone '20

## Student Life

How does Northwestern help first-years adjust to campus life and meet other students?

- There's a full session about the [first-year experience](#) on our YouTube channel!
- Northwestern does a really fantastic job with our week-long orientation program, [Wildcat Welcome](#). During orientation, you will be matched with a Peer Adviser (PA), who is a current undergraduate student who will work with new students throughout the entire year. Incoming students will receive communication from their PA in July/August and will then meet them at the start of Wildcat Welcome along with the rest of the PA Group, which consists of other new students from the same school or academic program/situation (e.g. transfer students, dual-degree students). Peer Advisers are an extremely valuable resource to new students during Wildcat Welcome and the entire first year. Wildcat Welcome discusses college transition issues, advising and course registration for your first quarter, provides opportunities to meet your entire class, and teaches you Northwestern traditions that will help launch you into your first year as a Wildcat! It is the best way to start getting familiar with your new surroundings, others in the community, and how to access resources! - Simone '20
- You'll also continue to have a lot of support after Wildcat Welcome. Like Simone mentioned, your Peer Adviser is a resource to you for your entire first year — I was a PA for two years and actually built really close friendships with many of the students in my groups, so those relationships can definitely be great to lean on. There's also a ton of other people in formal roles, from school-based and academic advisers to career advisers to professors and faculty, who help you integrate into Northwestern over time. A lot of students also find that participating and engaging with different identity-focused spaces can help them feel more at home and integrated into Northwestern. We have spaces that focus on religion like our [Sheil Catholic Center](#) and [Hillel](#), ones that focus on other aspects of identity like the [Black House](#), [Gender and Sexuality Resource Center](#), and [Women's Center](#), and others that help to ease students' transitions to NU like [Student Enrichment Services](#). Overall, there's a ton of support as you come to campus and there's also no pressure to feel like you have to fully transition into college a few weeks in, so you can take your time exploring and reaching out to different resources on campus as you decide to. - Troy '20
- Wildcat Welcome was my saving grace in my transition from high school to Northwestern. Not only did I have a great resource in my Peer Adviser, but I was able to meet, and really get to know, students I may have otherwise never come across at Northwestern. It was so nice to have a defined PA group with 14 other new students, with which we could have serious conversations about things we were struggling with in the transition to college, but we could also just as easily joke around and have a good time. Most of my big concerns in the transition to college were related to social life, and being able to develop relationships with people other than those who lived in my building or were in my classes really helped me branch out socially. Even beyond your PA group, during Wildcat Welcome, you will be able to meet so many other students in your class with PA groups pairing up to do activities and students going to programming independently of their PA groups, like a cappella shows or movie screenings. - Melana '20

Is it possible for students to participate in arts on campus without majoring/taking classes in those areas?

- **Dance:** There are a ton of dance opportunities on campus! Within the academic program you have the option to declare a [dance major](#) or [minor](#) in a modern-based program, or just take technique classes without declaring. We offer various levels and styles of ballet, modern, jazz, choreography, improvisation,



and other dance studies. You can perform with the program through their annual production Danceworks (check out the Wirtz Center [Instagram](#) for the links to this year's show), in the graduating seniors' choreography cast in the Senior Dance Concert, or through Fall Dance Concert put on by New Movement Project, a board that connects dance enthusiasts to department resources and supplemental shows! Many students also choose to dance through various theatre productions within the department. When it comes to the dance community and student groups there are almost too many groups to count. There is pretty much a group for every style of dance except for classical ballet. I would recommend checking out [Wildcat Connection](#) and searching the dance groups within there. Most groups have between 1-3 main stage performances a year, with many groups performing at smaller gigs throughout the year as well. When you first arrive for Wildcat Welcome be sure to check out Rhythm Nation where most of the dance groups perform for the first-years! - Jacquelyn '20

- **Music:** Anyone with previous band experience can join the massive [Northwestern University Marching Band](#)! Between the dozens of a cappella groups, student bands, wind ensembles, and orchestras, you are bound to find a group that resonates with you. You can check out the list of official Northwestern performance groups that are open to non-music majors [here](#). If you're like me and you aren't particularly talented musically but love to watch performances, Northwestern is definitely the place to be. In addition to the student groups who constantly seem to be performing on the weekends, many professional artists and ensembles come to perform for our community. You can read about some of Bienen's upcoming visiting artists [here](#). And if you're itching to get off-campus with some friends to enjoy live music, Northwestern also sponsors lots of trips downtown for undergraduate students. Either through my residential college or via Northwestern Student Activities, I have signed up to see performances ranging from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to Broadway in Chicago musicals like Dear Evan Hansen and Wicked. These trips were all free with my Wildcard even though I'm not a music student. But if you want to explore the music scene downtown on your own, there's always the Purple Express elevated train which has three stops along campus. - Henry '20
- **Theatre:** Any student from any background can audition for shows, or interview to work on shows as a designer, director, producer, assistant, etc. There are general auditions every quarter that focus on the shows for the coming quarter. The shows are split into two types: Mainstage and Student Theatre. Mainstage shows are directed and designed by MFA students and/or visiting guest artists. Undergrads are the only actors so you're never competing against students in the MFA acting program for roles! Undergrads can be assistants on mainstage shows, which is a great networking opportunity (I got a position assistant directing at Steppenwolf thanks to an assistant director position I had under an MFA direct on a mainstage show at NU!). Student Theatre shows are those that are done by the student theatre boards on campus. These boards are essentially clubs, but work more like mini, student-run theatre companies. These shows are completely organized, produced, directed, designed, and acted by undergraduates of any major. Ultimately it is more about the talent you bring to the table than what your major is! - Samara '22

## What are athletics and school spirit like?

- We have athletics at the varsity, club, and intramural levels! With [19 Big Ten Division I teams](#), it seems like there's always a sporting event to go to, and students get into every NU sporting event for free with their Wildcards. During the fall, football season is a big part of many students' social scene with tailgates, game-day deals at local businesses, and going to the game itself. A lot of students participate in [club sports](#) as well, which is a great way to meet people you have things in common with, as the majority of club sports are made up of people who played the sport in high school. [Intramurals](#) are so fun! I've met so many people through intramural soccer; student groups, dorms, and Greek chapters will make teams, but it's just as easy to sign up with a group of friends. - Melana '20
- Apart from athletics, another really cool way that Northwestern students like to show their school spirit is by supporting their friends involved in the 500+ student organizations. While we of course love to cheer

on our football team on Saturdays, we also love to cheer on our friends as they perform in theatre productions, lead fundraisers for charity work, transform innovative ideas into startups, and even demonstrate for causes they care about. Everyone you meet at Northwestern is passionate about something and an integral part of the NU experience is extending that school spirit to cheer on our friends and classmates as they pursue those passions. - Juliet '20

### Can you get involved with student newspapers if you aren't studying journalism?

- Absolutely! There are tons of student publications (print, broadcast, and radio) to choose from at Northwestern, and most of them are super easy to get involved with. I would say the two biggest publications are [The Daily Northwestern](#) (Evanston's only daily newspaper) and [North by Northwestern](#) (an online and print magazine focused on campus culture, lifestyle, entertainment, and more). I've been able to contribute writing to both of these publications without being on the staff, which goes to show you can really be as involved as you want to be. There are also a bunch of other publications that focus on specific topics. For example, we have [BlackBoard](#) (black student magazine), [Inside NU](#) (sports coverage and analysis), [Northwestern Business Review](#) (business and tech coverage), and [Sherman Ave](#) (a satirical comedy site). For a full list see [here](#). Another great thing about Northwestern is that if there's a publication you feel like we're missing, you can start it yourself! One of my best friends started the Queer Reader when he was a student, which focused specifically on queer feminist issues. - Alena '20

### How prevalent is Greek life?

- Roughly 40% of students are involved in Greek life, and this includes pre-professional/academic Greek life as well as traditional social groups. It is as big a part of your experience as you make it, same as the other student organizations and community involvement on campus. Something I like about Greek life here is that if you choose to be involved, that institution won't be your one defining factor but rather one of many things you are involved with and engage with during your time at Northwestern. - Jacquelyn '20
- We have deferred recruitment for Greek life, meaning that you don't join a fraternity or sorority until winter quarter of your first year. This way, students have plenty of time to meet people through their classes, student organizations, and residence buildings before rush begins. Because of that, if you do join Greek life, you'll be a part of so many other groups on campus and have friends across a variety of spaces. If you don't want to join Greek life, then you don't have to fear that rushing is the only way that you'll make friends because you'll meet people before that process even begins! - Mary '21
- I'm personally not involved with Greek life and while Northwestern's Greek life presence is strong and active, I have found you won't have trouble having a social life that has nothing to do with Greek life if you don't want to! My friends and I are all over the Greek life spectrum and it's totally up to you. - Samara '22
- I second the fact that I have friends all over the Greek life spectrum and I think that's something that's unique about NU! - Cal '21

### What is a typical weekend like at Northwestern?

- For me, a typical weekend looks like going out with friends on Friday night to a party or a theatre show, spending Saturday in rehearsal or going out to Chicago for a special event in the city, and Sunday being chill and filled with relaxing dining hall brunches and homework. However, there isn't really a "typical" weekend, because there are so many different events on campus each weekend and each person/social group has their own ideas about what to do. - Samara '22
- What students do on the weekend varies greatly depending on what students are interested in! For me, my weekend activities depend on my upcoming exams and class work. On an average weekend I try to not do any work on Friday afternoons or Saturdays. Friday afternoon I'll usually relax from the week and watch some Netflix, and then hangout with friends on Friday night, maybe attending one of Northwestern's sketch comedy shows by Titanic! Then Saturday I'll sleep in, workout, hangout on the Lakefill with friends (depending on the weather), and maybe go downtown for dinner and an activity.

*Sunday is usually a work day for me, where I sleep in a bit, head to the library for the morning and early afternoon. I usually have meetings for my extracurriculars on Sunday afternoon, after which I get dinner with friends and try to get to bed early before the week ahead! But, that's just me, and there are so many equally awesome ways to spend the weekend at Northwestern. - Elizabeth '20*

- *Like Elizabeth, I've also made it a priority to take Friday afternoons and Saturdays off of schoolwork. I usually keep Sunday as a study day and often have extracurricular meetings Sunday evenings as well. In the beginning of my time at Northwestern, I spent most of my weekends exploring Evanston and campus, whether by going to student-organized comedy and theatre shows, sporting events, or parties. Now, I find myself spending more time exploring neighborhoods or going out in Chicago. There are also plenty of low key nights hanging out with friends on the Lakefill, in residence halls/apartments, or at one of Evanston's many delicious restaurants! There's so much happening on campus and in Chicago, so there's rarely (if ever) going to be a time where you're at a loss for how to spend your weekend. - Alena '20*

## What are winters like at NU?

- *Coming from California, I was worried about the adjustment to winter. While it takes some getting used to and isn't always easy, it's worth it. First of all, winter can be incredibly beautiful when you walk out of the library after a late night of studying and see giant snowflakes falling in what looks like slow motion! But even when that snow turns to muddy slush, winter can be a great time to engage in fun indoor activities with your hall-mates or even bundle up and take a chilly walk along the Lakefill. Some might even say that social life in the form of parties becomes more present because people want ways to entertain themselves besides going outside. - Cal '21*
- *Coming from Los Angeles, seasons were a new concept to me so I'll give it to you straight and simple. Fall is really nice, normally ranging between mid-40s to mid-60s. Winter is very cold and will range between snow and rain and partly cloudy with temperatures that reflect this ranging from freezing to mid-30s. Last year we had the Polar Vortex but this year the winter has been really mild! It honestly is not that bad as long as you have the proper clothing for it. Layer up! Spring is beautiful in Evanston with nice warm temperatures from high 40s to low 70s and sunny days perfect for the Lakefill. - Jacquelyn '20*
- *You'll hear this a lot when you get to Evanston, but navigating the cold weather is all about layering and preparing for the day. Some years aren't as bad as others, and making sure your extremities are covered is key. Make sure you are properly equipped with gloves, a wind-resistant jacket, boots, and a scarf and hat and you will be all good. Northwestern's SES (Student Enrichment Services, a resource for First Generation/Low-Income students) offers winter gear for those with financial hardships, so know that you will be adequately prepared whatever your situation. As a native Chicagoan, I'm used to the bitter cold, but wasn't prepared for the crazy wind that being next to Lake Michigan brings. It took a couple weeks to adjust and really find the right amount of layers (thermal leggings will be your best friend) and find the quickest paths to class. - Diana '20*

## How do students get around campus/the city?

- *To go from the southernmost residential building to the northernmost classroom is about a 15 minute walk! You can take the shuttle if you want, and it can be a big help in the chillier times of the year, but I would often trek from said southernmost residential building to the more northern academic buildings and it was very manageable! If you live off-campus, the majority of students at most add 5-10 minutes to that walk. - Samara '22*
- *Northwestern's campus is very easy to navigate! My first year, I lived in the northernmost residential building and had my first class of the day in the southernmost building. I usually didn't take the shuttle because I didn't find the 15-20 minute walk to be too bad. Our student center is in the middle of campus, so it's a great place to spend time between classes because it'll be relatively close to where you're coming from and where you're going next. I definitely don't think you need a car on campus. Some students have bikes, which can be helpful, but again, not necessary. The commute to Chicago depends a*

lot on where you're going! Because Evanston is north of Chicago, it's pretty quick (less than twenty minutes) to get to some northern neighborhoods of the city via public transit. If you're heading to the Loop (the heart of downtown Chicago) or further south/west, the commute takes a bit longer. However, during rush hours there are express trains that drastically reduce commuting time. In all, there are lots of options for students to play around with to figure out what works for them. Many students use the "el" (elevated train) or the bus system. Some students who commute daily for downtown internships opt for a high-speed Metra pass. We also have an intercampus shuttle that runs between Northwestern's Evanston and Chicago campuses that you can ride for free with your student ID. From the Chicago intercampus drop-off, you can easily get to other parts of the city. Lastly, some students use ridesharing to get into Chicago. While you can get some good deals, this is a more costly option. I go into Chicago very frequently and have found figuring out how to navigate the commute to Chicago pretty manageable! - Alena '20

### Are there opportunities for Northwestern students to serve the surrounding community?

- There are many clubs that focus on volunteer work such as [The Campus Kitchen](#) (distributes leftover dining hall food to low-income Evanston residents), [Camp Kesem](#) (hosts summer camp for children whose parents have been affected by cancer), and [Jumpstart](#) (brings books and volunteers from the Evanston Library to local preschools to promote literacy), and so many more! You can also reach out to the [Center of Civic Engagement](#) to find volunteer opportunities around Evanston/Chicago. - Samara '22
- There's a really cool opportunity to get involved in a long-term community service project for credit called the [Civic Engagement Certificate](#). The program is offered to all Northwestern undergraduate students through the School of Education and Social Policy (SESP). My friends who have completed this certificate have raved to me about their experiences with their research and capstone projects. You have a lot of freedom in deciding which sponsoring organization you want to work with. You are welcome to take a look at the [video information session](#) about this program on their website. - Henry '20
- In addition to our academic offerings related to civic engagement or community service, some of the best ways to continue involvement is through the student groups and greater Northwestern community. There are organizations such as NUVotes, and ASG (student government) focused on civic engagement and groups like Jumpstart or Book Buddies with community service specifically for kids, but there are absolutely other options! I would also recommend looking into [ASB \(Alternative Spring Breaks\)](#), which lets students engage with social issues through service learning. - Jacquelyn '20
- There is typically a volunteer fair at the beginning of each academic year where students can learn about community service opportunities on campus and in the greater Evanston area. During my first year at Northwestern, I worked as a weekly volunteer for an Evanston nonprofit. I also think simply venturing off campus and exploring Evanston (it's a lot bigger than the area just surrounding Northwestern!) is a great way to get to know the city, and by extension the people! - Alena '20

### How much time outside of class is generally spent studying/doing extracurriculars/other activities?

- Your workload will vary a lot by major, year, and quarter. I've personally never felt crazy overwhelmed by my workload. I attribute this to good time management, as well as working well with advisers. My adviser has been a great resource for helping me balance out my schedule. For example, if I know I'm going to be in a really tough class or have a lot of extracurricular responsibilities in a certain quarter, I might take some intro-level distribution requirements or take one fewer class than usual. Because you end up taking more classes in total as a result of the quarter system, there's more room to play around with what works for you. In all, I would say the workload is challenging and rigorous, but with good planning, definitely manageable. In terms of free time, there is always something to do on campus! Students take advantage of everything from our Big 10 and intramural sports to the thriving arts scene. We have a beautiful campus, so lots of students spend free time simply hanging out on the Lakefill or other green spaces. There are also tons of restaurants, shops, and shows to explore in Evanston and Chicago. - Alena '20



- Balance is something that takes time to learn and figure out what works best for you. For me, there was definitely an adjustment period in finding a schedule and plan that allowed me to balance my academics and my extracurriculars. My peer adviser, professors, and upperclassmen students were incredibly helpful in offering advice about how they navigated that transition. This past year, I've been the Co-Director of Camp Kesem, a 130-person student organization here on campus. Extracurriculars really enrich students' academic experiences, and Camp Kesem has done just that for me. It's been tricky at times to balance all of my responsibilities, but it has helped me to learn, grow, and become a better overall student. The Northwestern community is an engaged, vibrant one and students across campus are definitely able to balance their passions and extracurricular work with academics. - Elizabeth '20

### What's your favorite Northwestern tradition?

- Primal Scream is a tradition when at 9pm on Sunday before finals week students go outside and let out a collective scream. It's cathartic and lets you know that everyone is in it together! It's a great start to finals week. Another one of my favorites is [Dillo Day](#), Northwestern's annual spring music festival. It is the largest student-run music festival in the country. Every spring quarter, Northwestern hosts musical guests on our Lakefill for an entire day. Our president, Morton Shapiro, says it's the only day that Northwestern libraries are completely empty, which shows how Northwestern students value life in and out of the classroom. The final one I'll talk about is painting the Rock. It is a rite of passage for student groups to paint the Rock to advertise for their philanthropy/recruitment/etc. However, in order to paint the Rock, someone from the organization must be at the Rock at all times, for 24 hours straight. It is the best bonding between group members - sitting in a tent blasting music at 3am is a unique experience. These are just three of many ways Northwestern's campus comes together throughout the year! - Simone '20
- Some of the best NU traditions are events put on by student groups! Three examples are A&O Blowout, Dance Marathon, and Dillo Day. [A&O Blowout](#) is one of the biggest events of fall quarter. A&O, a student entertainment group that brings speakers, comedians, movie screenings, and musical artists to campus, hosts Blowout, a free concert for students, typically in Welsh Ryan arena! [Dance Marathon](#) is an event that happens every winter, where students dance in a tent outside of Norris University Center for 30 hours to raise money for a different organization every year. DM is so important to the NU community that this year, when DM had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, students were still able to raise over \$1 million for the beneficiary! [Dillo Day](#) is the largest student-run music festival in the country and is organized by Mayfest. One Saturday every spring, Mayfest brings artists to two stages on the Lakefill. In the past, we've had Chance the Rapper, Young the Giant, Teyana Taylor, A\$AP Ferg, just to name a few. President Shapiro even shuts down the libraries a few hours early that day to encourage all students to attend! - Melana '20

### Does Northwestern have a more collaborative or competitive environment?

- I would definitely describe the overall culture at Northwestern as incredibly collaborative. This is something I love talking about, and it has definitely been a highlight of my Northwestern experience. I met a lot of my best friends in general chemistry and throughout my pre-med coursework. Whenever I didn't understand something or was having a hard time, my friends and peers were always there to support me, and I always returned the favor whenever I could. While students at Northwestern of course want to be successful, they also want to see their peers succeed and will help them do so. - Elizabeth '20
- One of the things that stuck out to me when I visited Northwestern as a prospective student was how collaborative the environment seemed and I've definitely found that to be true during my time here. So many courses I've taken have incorporated elements of group work, which I've found very rewarding. I know group projects aren't always the most fun in high school, but I've found that at Northwestern, because students are very invested in academics, they go much more smoothly and contribute substantially to my own learning. Also, through several of my internships, I've realized that learning to work effectively in a group is one of the most important skills needed in professional settings. I've felt more equipped to work in groups in the workplace because of the emphasis Northwestern places on it in



the classroom. Echoing what Elizabeth said, I also feel very supported by my friends and peers here, even if we are in the same class or field of study and could theoretically be seen as competitors. People are largely genuinely happy for each other's successes here. - Alena '20

- Driven and collaborative are the two characteristics I always use to describe NU students because I do feel like those are the two you find across the board and what really describe the community of our student body. However, beyond that, I don't think there are many common characteristics because students come from so many experiences and interests! There is no one "mold" for NU students to fit into besides being passionate and collaborative, and that really helps with getting the most of social interactions, group projects, and student groups because everyone brings something different to the table. I've found the happiest students at NU are the ones who forge their own paths and integrate their passions into everything they do. As with any experience, it can be easy to fall into patterns of doing things because you feel you have to rather than doing things because you really want to. Sure, there are going to be some things in college you are not going to want to do, but taking control of the things you can and actively making decisions to put your interests as a priority can really help with making the most of your overall experience. One example from my time at NU is I felt like I had to join tons of student groups coming into school to feel like I was really involved across as many aspects of campus as I could be. Though joining lots of groups definitely made me aware of what I wanted to stick with, I was scared to drop the groups I wasn't as passionate about, even if doing so would give me much more time to focus on what I was truly interested in. Once I finally prioritized my interests over the thought of being crazy-involved on campus, my college experience became exponentially better. - Melana '20

What advice do you have for incoming students? What do you wish you knew then that you know now?

- Something that drew me to Northwestern was the student body's level of engagement. When I went to the club fair during fall quarter of my first year at Northwestern, I immediately thought I had to get involved in everything. My biggest piece of advice would be not to do that - there is plenty of time to get involved (there are club fairs almost every quarter). I wish I had known to take fall quarter as an adjustment period and not overwhelm myself with activities while trying to balance classes. I also wish I had taken advantage of Northwestern's support systems like office hours and peer-guided study groups & tutoring earlier. The study habits that I used during high school were not the right study tools to use for my college classes, and having the time to figure out that learning curve would've been a key piece of advice. The last thing I wish I had known/piece of advice would be to take breaks and take care of yourself. When I first started at Northwestern I thought that I had to constantly be studying and doing work in order to be successful, but it was the opposite! I found that when I took breaks and had more focused study time, I was way more productive and successful. - Elizabeth '20
- My advice is somewhat twofold. First, be prepared to not be the smartest one in the room, and try to be excited about that! All NU students excelled in high school in some way or another, and a lot of us were used to being closer to the top of our high school graduating classes, taking the lead on group projects, and being involved in probably one-too-many extracurricular activities. When meeting people at NU, I was amazed and honestly intimidated by the things my peers had done in high school and how smart everyone was, but I soon came to realize I could learn so much from those around me. The second part of the advice I give students is everyone feels that way, and you have so much to bring to the table too! You wouldn't have gotten into NU had you not fit into the cohort of your class and the NU community in general, and as soon as I realized that about myself, my confidence shot up, making me able to better enjoy my college experience. Another piece of advice that is somewhat related is keep making the effort to meet new people! NU students truly are amazing, and while it can be so easy to find your group of friends early on and stay within that circle, I'd really recommend branching out socially as much as you can during your entire time at NU. - Melana '20

### What has surprised you the most about Northwestern?

- *As someone hailing from the UK where dorm life and roommates are practically unheard of, I was so pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed living on campus. I loved having a roommate, I loved having the dining hall as a communal space, and I actually took an incredible class with my faculty in residence my first year! It is a blessing to be able to return to the same place as your friends, five minutes away from your classes or meetings, at the end of the day and easily continue hanging out. - Karina '22*
- *There are so many things happening on campus all the time! I knew there were tons of groups and resources for students, but I didn't realize the extent to which there would be so many organized, cool things for students to attend. Literally every night of the week you can find some sort of event on campus, whether it be put on by a student group, an academic department, Northwestern Career Advancement, the Multicultural Center, a religious institution, the student center, or even the library! - Melana '20*
- *One thing that really surprised me once I got to Northwestern was the support. Many times throughout high school, my teachers would scare us by saying that in college, people won't be there to remind you to do something or to hold your hand. I took that to heart, fully expecting to not have any support in the transition. While the courses are rigorous, even during the first year, there are many support systems in place to help students out when they need it. As an entering Weinberg student, I was placed in a first-year seminar with a professor who was also my adviser for the quarter. He would constantly check in with the class to see how we were doing and ask if we needed any help communicating our needs to other professors or accessing support. I'm definitely not trying to say that you don't have to turn in your homework or that you can just skip class for fun, but professors are typically pretty understanding and will work with you to make sure you are adjusting and doing well. - Chris '20*
- *I was surprised by how encouraging my professors and fellow students are. I've always struggled to embrace my skills and accomplishments. I almost didn't even apply to Northwestern because I didn't think I was qualified, which luckily turned out not to be true! At Northwestern, I've had several professors pull me aside to tell me that I should submit a paper I wrote for class for an award or that I should apply to professional/research opportunities I never would've considered. As a senior, I've also had several friends send me job postings with comments like "You would be so great at this!" During my time at Northwestern, I've gained so much confidence in myself and my potential and really pushed myself out of my comfort zone, which wouldn't have been possible without the people I've met here! - Alena '20*

### What's your favorite thing about Northwestern?

- *For me, the people at Northwestern are the best thing about this place. I have met the most wonderful people and I wouldn't trade that for anything. There is something special about Northwestern being a Midwestern school that attracts a lot of people who are very down-to-earth. I am surrounded by someone here who can teach me about anything I want to know! Each one of my friends has such a different passion from the next, and it's so special to be in an environment where that all melds together and where we all can learn from one another, feel supported and have fun. Also Northwestern in the spring is the best - everyone is out on the Lakefill hanging out and sunbathing on every sunny day! - Cal '21*
- *I really love how flexible your experience can be here. During my first few quarters at Northwestern, I joined a couple different student groups that were similar to ones I'd been involved in during high school, and then later on realized I wanted to branch out more. In my second and even third years on campus, I changed my involvement and started participating in new organizations and getting involved in different aspects of campus life, and never felt like I was "behind" or was joining too late. You really have a lot of time here to explore what you want to do and there are so many opportunities to try something new or unexpected which I've really loved over the past four years. - Troy '20*
- *For me, the sheer number of opportunities available to students is the best thing about Northwestern. Since starting in 2016, I have been able to study abroad twice, learn a new language, join a club sport that I had never done before (triathlon), explore Chicago, see Broadway shows live (Hamilton and Rent),*

*learn Film Photography and access a darkroom, compete and win a Hackathon, do independent research, and so much more. I come from a low-income family, and while my mom did everything she could to expose me and my sister to different experiences, there are things I have done during these four years that I never could've imagined as a kid. There are so many opportunities for students, and it has been obvious to me how much this school wants students to take advantage of them! I am forever grateful for the opportunities I have had access to here. - Chris '20*

### What made you choose Northwestern?

- *When I was looking at schools, Northwestern was really the only place that combined everything I was looking for in one place. "AND is in our DNA" really rang true to me when I was looking at schools. I was looking for a place that was both big city and small town, which I have with our amazing location in quaint Evanston just 2 miles from Chicago city limits. I was also looking for D1 athletics and the school spirit atmosphere combined with rigorous academics, which Northwestern has certainly given me. Finally, I wanted a place where I could combine disparate academic interests, as I was interested in both business and healthcare. I knew that through the quarter system and the flexibility that it affords, I would be able to come up with a unique combination of majors/minors/certificates that I was passionate about. What keeps me here at Northwestern is hands down the people. Everyone is so driven and so passionate about every club, every class that they are a part of, yet at the same time are just college students and don't take themselves too seriously. Everyone here really builds you up and pushes you to be your best, and people are also able to just relax and hang out with you when you need a break. - Mary '21*
- *I chose to attend NU because of the opportunities and flexibility to pursue whatever you want! As someone coming into college undecided about what I wanted to study, what kinds of student organizations I wanted to be a part of, and what field I wanted to go into professionally, I was nervous about needing to make all of those decisions early on in my college career. However, with the quarter system, we have a lot of flexibility for trying out different fields of study, and you see a lot of students taking advantage of that, so you don't feel alone in doing so. In terms of extracurricular activities, NU students are truly involved across campus, in groups either completely related or entirely unrelated to their major. Professionally, NU encourages students to explore options and has great resources for finding opportunities. This sounds really cheesy, but when my mom asked me how I felt about NU, and I told her I loved it because I felt like I could do anything and everything with the resources that would be available to me, and I have found that to be more than true. My favorite thing about student life at NU is that I have been constantly surprised by the wide range of things my peers are involved in. Just imagine the most random combination of major, minor, and student group, and it is more than likely a Northwestern student is doing something similar to it. No student's NU experience is defined by what they are studying, so you really get to engage with all different types of students outside the classroom. Beyond the variety of things people are involved in during their time at NU, students come into school with different experiences and identities, that the student body is truly diverse in so many ways, which really contributes to student life. - Melana '20*
- *As an international student from the UK, it was tough to make the decision to choose Northwestern over an education with which my family and I were far more familiar. However, I ultimately felt that the liberal arts education at Northwestern presented me with far more room to play, explore, and grow in my passions without having to feel the pressure to narrow down my focus too soon. The quarter system, in my opinion, is essential to this. The idea that I can take more classes in a given year than anywhere else, and basically customize my academic course load entirely to my own preferences wasn't a model that I had seen at a UK university. Also, the amount of time and energy that students at Northwestern put into their extracurriculars is truly unprecedented. I often feel like my extracurriculars are not things I do as a supplement to my academics, but as an integral facet of my ability to learn and practice my craft in a pre-professional setting with the most passionate group of people I could have ever imagined! - Karina '22*

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