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# NORTHEASTERN

NEWS

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# rees of Connection

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Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) released the "Finance & Administration Report 2020-2021," full of updates to University Technology Services, University Police, University Budgets, Student Payment Services, Procurement Services/ Purchasing, Internal Audit, Human Resources, Facilities Management and the Controller.

# **NEIU'S 2020-2021 FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION REPORT RELEASED**

MONTY STITES, OPINIONS EDITOR

There were three departmental mergers. Student Payment Services now reports to the Office of Finance and Administration. NEIU Parking Office and Vending was integrated into University Police and Facilities Management added Property Control, Shipping and Receiving and Mail Services to its responsibilities.

During the last year, the University received a total of \$23.3 million from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund.

Of which, \$4 million was allocated to update university HVAC systems, adding personal protective equipment, installing no-touch fixtures and updated cleaning protocols. Another \$1 million was used for m

andatory fee refunds and \$7 million was "invested...in IT infrastructure and technology upgrades and provided workshops to assist faculty and staff with the transition to new digital platforms and processes." Included in these investments were upgrades for video conferencing, digital data transfer, automation software and hybrid classrooms. Additional funds were allocated to Student Health Services, "related to COVID-19 testing and the implementation of a vaccine incentive program." University Technology Services (UTS) worked to supply 250 Chromebooks and 30 Hot Spots "for students with little or no access to personal computers," as well as opening a "Mini Student Lab" in the Student Union.

UTS also upgraded eight classrooms for hybrid classes whereby in-person and remote learning may commence simultaneously. They also worked to introduce an online queue for Student Health Services, eliminating the need for a physical line. Additionally, UTS acquired hundreds of VPNs and Zoom Education licenses for facultv and staff.

University Police (UP) faced a budget reduction of \$650,000. Despite this they were able to continue operating on campus 24/7 during the pandemic closures. UP also established new ways of reporting to "provide easy access to online safety resources" and "updated the emergency alert system to allow text notifications and automatic alerts to all NEIU email accounts." University Budgets (UB) "developed budgets for \$41.9 million in federal and state COVID relief funds across five grants including distribution of \$15.9 million in direct aid to students." UB also reorganized the budget staff and transitioned to an entirely paperless management system for documents. Additionally, UB works to create strategies dealing with the expected budget shortfall as a result of "a potential 10% reduction in state appropriations and 20% decline in enrollment." UB also cut \$3.5 million in "planned, unbudgeted instruction" and supplemented a \$500,000 University Technology Services budget shortfall by creating "a \$3.7 million fund to support stabilization of critical infrastructure."

Payment Services worked to update university credit card procedures and expedite approvals by implementing "electronic requisitions, eliminating paper requisitions sent by end-user departments via interoffice mail, allowing for quicker approvals."

Human Resources (HR) completed its audit, which occurs every three years, and finished "compliance training for I9 verification with tools from US Citizenship and Immigration Services." HR also worked to assist, through information and education, university staff with "over 175 fraudulent unemployment claims."

Facilities Management (FM), like University Police, maintained their presence on campus throughout the pandemic closures and "met or exceeded all industry standards for infectious aerosols." They also installed new HVAC filters, hand sanitizing stations, social distancing markers and PPE. FM also stated that "[e]ngineers continued to work 24/7 to prepare for the safe return of students, faculty and staff" this fall.

The Controller worked to digitize much of the university systems, stating that they "increased [the] number of direct deposit accounts to 85%, reducing fraud and expediting payments to students, faculty and staff."

The Independent is working to acquire information to direct readers to an online version of the "Finance & Administration Report 2020-2021" and will post directions to access it when acquired.

# NO INFORMATION MEANS DISINFORMATION BY: ALMUDENA YEBRA ROMANILLOS

I've been waiting all day for a message, an official statement, an email or even a post on social media. What happened Sept 27 around 9 pm at The Nest was not exactly a fire drill, and we deserve an explanation as far as our safety is directly concerned.

As I returned from the library, the fire alarm in The Nest building began to sound. At first, we thought it was just a practical joke or that someone smoking in the rooms activated the smoke detector. But then I saw that WhatsApp message: a resident "is naked in our hallway with a hammer. Slamming the doors." I did not understand anything. I went to the back of the parking lot and then I saw a couple of fire engines, the police and an am-non-negligible amounts to live in a safe and healthy environment? Acting bulance. Minutes later, three police officers carried someone tied to a wheel- as if nothing had happened in a crisis situation is not an answer; it is a lack chair and covered with a sheet through the back door. One of the policemen of response. No comments regarding the incident is not a company policy; had a hammer in his hand.

I went to sleep late with an uneasy sensation after talking to the other residents about what had happened, about the different versions of what people think happened, trying to figure out a reasonable explanation. The next morning came, and I started asking the clerks at the counter, but they did not know what happened (or were unable to tell). The only information from the manager's office was a declaration to NEIU Independent, "no comment to the media," which is the company policy of American Campus Communities, the private corporation that runs The Nest. Despite having asked insistently using the official channels, as residents, the only information we have obtained in response are two posts on Instagram.

In the first, @thenestatneiu published a post with a Tik Tok video, in which a cute dinosaur dances and wags his tail with the Leasing Manager of the Nest while drawing a heart in the air with his arms. That video is certainly not what I expected to see that morning. I looked further down in the comments to see if the dinosaur was just a fun way to present less fun information. But no, it read, "Rawr in dinosaur means I love you! (emoji heart and dinosaur). "We are so excited for Resident Appreciation Week! ... "

"I don't understand anything," I told myself and turned off the phone. Hours later, when reopening Instagram, I found another post from The Nest. "Apparently, since there are no dinosaurs, it may contain more relevant information", I thought. In the post, there was a photo of the common room on the sixth floor, -yes -, where everything happened, but wait a minute ... it does not mention anything about it. It said, "Hey future teachers! (hands clapping, book) Stop by The Nest 1st Floor Lobby from 2 pm-4 pm this Thursday (9/30) for a meet and greet with the Goodwin College Education!"

This has been all the information that the residents of the Nest have obtained. Only two publications on Instagram: a dancing dinosaur for reducing the gravity of the matter and a photo of the sixth floor to show that everything is still in its place as if nothing had happened. But the problem is that something happened and it is not so easy to forget. I do not like playing that worst-case scenario game, but it is not difficult to imagine one where much more could have happened.

The policy of the company of American Campus is "no comment" to the media, but what about to the residents? To the clients who religiously pay it is a lack of policy to deal with it. Not providing relevant information to customers is not providing a service for which they are paying. No information about the incident means disinformation ... and in the meantime, we are still trying to figure out what happened. We are still waiting for an explanation or at least a simple message addressing the incident.



Two people dancing in front of the nest, one in a dinosaur costume Image provided by Almudena Yebra

# SIX DEGREES OF CONNECTION

# BY LESLIE LOZADA, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

With the new semester comes opportunities for connection. For the past year at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) and other colleges and universities, there has been a lack of in-person events to attend, for good reasons. This fall semester, if anyone has seen around campus, there have been a bountiful amount of events to attend. Whether you're an early riser, a midday seeker or a night-owl, there are plenty of events to choose from.

As a recent transfer student who has been online in the last year or so, I am taking the opportunity to connect with as many people as I can. Since I commute to NEIU, finding those opportunities is harder, but not impossible.

One of the many events offered this month, the fall Social/Networking event, was held on Sept. 21 at the Alumni Hall.

The event was hosted from 6-8 p.m. by the College of Business and Technology -

Student Advisory Council (SAC), and several of the attendees were students who take classes around this time or stay late on campus.

At only one table, there were connections ranging from the President of the Student Government Association (SGA), members of the TRIO program and anthropology and business majors.

I sat down with Edwin Medina, the President of SGA.

Edwin was one the members involved in coordinating this event. When asked as to the reason for creating this event, Medina said, "being able to connect to different people, given the last year".

This event was one of the first of many mixer-like events that will be hosted by the SAC throughout this semester (with a Tuesday date being the most likely day for said events). There is also a gala planned for later on in the semester.

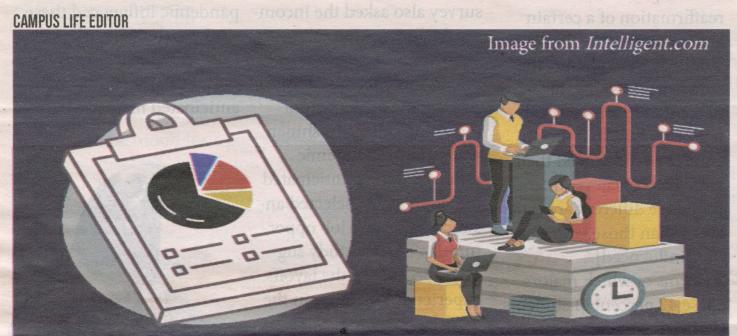
Limited seating is available.

You can find out more about these events and the SGA from their collegiate link titled: "College of Business and Technology - Student Advisory Council." The SAC can also be found on their Instagram page: @ neiu\_cbt\_sac



# HAS COVID-19 CHANGED WHAT MAJOR STUDENTS PURSUE?

BY JACK POSKUS



According to a study done by Intelligent.com, 42 percent of incoming freshmen say the pandemic has influenced their anticipated major choice. For this study, a survey consisting of 1,250 high school graduates from the class of 2021 was conducted to determine how the pandemic impacted what fields or areas of study incoming students might choose. The findings of this survey were compared to

the findings made by the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) from 2018 and 2019.

The data collected by NCES consists solely of conferred degrees, or degrees that have been completed by college students, whereas the study done by Intelligent.com simplshows "a change of interest" by the incoming freshman.

There were many key findings that were pulled from the data. One finding identified a trend that was seen in the majors that were being pursued in which various areas of interest were noticeably increasing and declining.

More specifically, according to the findings made by Intelligent.com, "Fewer students intend on studying homeland security, law enforcement, and journalism, while a greater number will pursue legal and area, ethnic, cultural, gender, and group studies."

Incoming freshman seem to be losing interest in certain majors.

When compared to the 2019 NCES data of conferred degrees, areas such as, but not limited to, visual and performing arts, business, psychology, engineering and homeland security/law-

enforcement all fell under the category of areas where "Interest declined a little (>0 to 49% decrease)." As for majors where "Interest declined a lot (>50% decrease)," many liberal arts and communications-esque areas, such as journalism, English language and general studies, fell into this category.

Conversely, there were fields that showed an increase of interest among incoming freshmen. Again, when compared to the 2019 NCES data, areas of study where "Interest grew a little (>0 to 49% increase)" consisted of education, family and consumer sciences, computer and information sciences and theology and religious vocations. Interest drastically increased (>50% increase) in some majors as well. Military technologies and applied sciences, agriculture and related processes, philosophy and religious studies and architecture have all gained significant interest

# CONTINUED FROM 5

from incoming freshmen over the last year, according to Intelligent.com's findings. Intelligent.com noted that these results could have been would want to pursue, the affected by non-pandemic related occurrences, such as the Black Lives Matter protests and the Capitol attack on Jan. 6. However, through specific quotes, anecdotes and quantitative statistics, the pandemic's influence on students' majors and areas of In terms of which majors concentration within higher education is unparalleled. Along with its findings, the article for the study also included an anecdote from a freshman student at Columbia University, Riya Goel, who used the pandemic as a means of pursuing a passion of theirs: political science.

"The pandemic solidified my interest. decision to want to be involved in politics and really advocate for the issues that I'm passionate about," Goel said. "For me, the pandemic was a call for action, and that starts with majoring in political science and seeing where I can best set myself up to make the most change."

For students like Goel who saw the pandemic as a reaffirmation of a certain area or major that they study suggests that, the 42 percent of incoming freshman who said that the pandemic influenced their anticipated majors "intend to pursue different areas of study than those who were not [influenced].".

these 42 percent of students desire to pursue, the study notes that because of the issues and topics that have risen in the last year, areas such as public administration and social services and ethnic, cultural, gender and group studies have all warranted an increase of

Furthermore, the study mentioned that this group is less likely to go into health professions, possibly because of COVID-19's influence and the traumatizing experiences endured by the health care workers in the last year. In addition to asking the 1,250 surveyees whether or not they were influenced by

the pandemic in regards to their anticipated majors, the survey also asked the incoming freshmen what other factors may have played a role in this altering decision. Among the 42 percent of incoming college freshmen who said the pandemic influenced their anticipated major, the most selected answer was "future job opportunities." As the study suggests, because of the layoffs experienced by those in the workforce, these freshmen might want to avoid a path that will result in a similar fate. In against harristness to

For the other 58 percent who said that their anticipated major was not influenced by the pandemic, the most selected answer was "I'm interested in the field." As identified by this survey, students' interest in a particular field or area is certainly still the single most important factor. While the effects of the pandemic have clearly impacted and influenced a relatively large decision made by incoming college freshmen (nearly half of 1,250 surveyed), Intelli-

.com provided thorough insight on not only why the pandemic influenced these students, but also what areas they would like to move into rather than their originally anticipated majors



# ARTS & LIFE REPO! THE GENETIC OPERA REVIEW

# BY LESLIE LOZADA

# **CONTRIBUTING WRITER**

"Let your life be your dream Integrity, honesty, its too late for me Don't look back till your free to chase the morning" From "Repo! The Genetic Opera"

Are you in the mood for a gorey cyber-punk rock opera in the not so distant future? Look no further than "Repo! The Genetic Opera"!

This film, which premiered in 2008, is an opera set in the 2050s. In a world where people's organs can be harvested from their tombs in order to produce a street-version drug called Zydrate and can have their organs repossessed by the repo man if they don't pay on time.

We follow this world through the eyes of 17-year-old Shilo -- played by Alexa Vega, from "Spy Kids" fame -- who, due to an unexplained illness, has been confined to her room for most of her life. Her father, Nathan, who is played by Anthony Steward Head, and is best known from "Buffy: the Vampire Slayer," takes care of her, while working for the corporation that runs this deranged world, GeneCo. Shilo struggles to explore the world outside of her door, and the generational-spanning conflict between her father and Rotti Largo that will determine her future. All the while, a certain contract is about to be voided, and the repo man will have to step in and take care of the situation.

There are several familiar faces throughout the opera. Joan Jett appears in one of Shilo's songs. Paris Hilton stars as one of the three children of the head of GeneCo., Rotti Largo who is played by another prolific stage star, Paul Sorvino. And the Graverobber that produces the street-version Zydrate drug, and one of the nicer characters, is played by Terrance Zdunich, who also wrote the screenplay as well as the series of short plays that the film is based on.

Each of the major characters have their own style of music when they are given a chance to shine. For example, Blind Mag, as played by Sarah Brightman, a prolific stage and music star since the early 1980s. Due to an unforeseen rule in her contract for a surgery conducted by Geneco to give her advanced eyes, She is an opera singer in the shows that GeneCo. produce to show to the masses worldwide. Her songs reflect that part of her well. There is a lot of overlap when it comes to the songs in the film; a song sung by a character will have a line repeated in another song with a different context and sound. All of which helps make it more connected as a whole, as the story is connected to two different generations and the long lasting effects of several ill-advised choices. Since this is a R-rated film, expect a lot of cursing. There is also some brief nudity, from the living and the dead. And as this involves one of the directors of the "Saw" series, there is a fair amount of gore that can be seen throughout the film.

This film can be found on Tubi, which is a free streaming service, as well as Amazon Prime, with the service or as a rental. It is also available for rental on other streaming services.



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# ARTS & LIFE PITCHFORK 2021 REVIEW: DAY ONE

# BY RYI AND PIFTRAS ARTS & LIFF FDITOR

On Friday Sept. 10, Pitchfork Music Festival returned to Chicago for its 15th time. After a year-long hiatus because of COVID-19, the festival ushered in fans, artists and vendors itching for the chance to revel in live-music.

2020 would have been the 15th anniversary of the festival and was set to feature some of the artists who performed in Union Park that first year in 2005. However, the world had different plans.

The pandemic changed many aspects of life and it meant that attending concerts and festivals would have to be postponed until the situation was a little more under control. A year and a half long wait was well worth it. Almost every artist showed their appreciation to the fans by playing most of the

hits from their catalogs.



PITCHFORK MUSIC FEST/ RYLAND PIETRAS

In turn, fans reciprocated the gesture by giving their bodies over to the music and danced, hollered and applauded at every chance. I arrived Friday afternoon just in time to catch the London-based math rock outfit black midi. Having released their debut album Schlagenheim in 2019 to rave reviews, the band is fairly new to the scene, but one wouldn't be able to tell that by looking at the crowd standing in front of the Green Stage on that pleasant late-summer afternoon.

After listening to the final few songs of their set, I wandered around the grounds to get a lay of the land. One thing that stood out to me right away was the amount of accessible areas the festival organizers put in place. Metal ramps extended for close to, if not more than, 100 feet and led to elevated platforms that allowed for persons with disabilities to see and enjoy the festival. What's more, festival volunteers were positioned in front of the platforms ensuring that someone who didn't need them didn't use them.

From there I went to find a water fill-up station to quench my thirst. It is commendable that Pitchfork had such stations in place, as most festivals don't. If, however, someone didn't bring a water bottle with them, plastic bottles of water were still available from vendors. My only grievance was that the station was constructed out of two-by-fours, a garden hose and PVC piping. I don't know where the water was being piped from, but it had a putrid smell that made drinking it difficult. The opition was nice still,

Meanwhile, The Fiery Furnaces was playing on the Red Stage. I'd only listened to their song "Single Again" prior to the festival and it was what they opened with. More so, it was the first show they played since going on hiatus in 2011, so it made sense that they opened with arguably their most popular song. Their sound is somewhere between the Detroit rock revival of the early 2000s where you had bands like the White Stripes and the Detroit Cobras who revived the garage-rock sound. Mix that with synthy rock from bands like Devo and even the Talking Heads and you get The Fiery Furnaces. Animal Collective performed on the Green Stage immediately after the Fiery Furnaces finished. It was sort of serendipitous that they played that night. Avey Tare, one of the members of Animal Collective, had performed solo the first and only time I had been to Pitchfork in 2015, so it was exciting to be able to see him and the rest of the band together on stage six years later.

I grew up listening to Animal Collective in high school and seeing them some ten or twelve years later was very nostalgic. However, I only stayed for two or three songs as Kelly Lee Owens happened to be playing at the same time on the Blue Stage not too far away and I really wanted to catch her set.

Owens is a Welsh DI that has put out two albums in the last four years, but has made quite the splash in the electronic scene. She was heavily influenced by Daniel Avery's 2013 debut album Drone Logic and from that has emerged as one of the most creative DIs of the last five years. Her stage presence was remarkable. She involved the crowd on numerous songs and when not behind the mixer, was dancing like a spring tulip in an April breeze. Big Thief was the next act

Big Thief was the next act to perform at the Red Stage. A great band is one that is composed of talented members who contribute to the whole, rather than steal the spotlight from any of the other members. Big Thief is just that; they

perform as a single unit. I would like to say that Adrianne Lenker, guitar and vocals, is what makes this band truly special, as she writes incredible lyrics, but she is merely one part of it. Big Thief's sound is definitively Midwestern. It is one part folk rock and one part indie rock. Lenker's lyrics mention such things as "cattails swaying in the wind" and "your hands are like artifacts in my mind." She has a remarkable knack for creating a visually compelling song. For me, Big Thief was the headlining act. The crowd wasn't electric as it had been for other acts, but it didn't need to be. Only at the end of each song would you hear any sound coming from a person in the crowd, but during the set, everyone was quiet and their attention was rightly focused on what lay in

Phoebe Bridgers was the official headliner, but soon after she went on, I made my way over to the record fair where I spoke with a number of vendors about what they had on display. Some were locals who ran small record labels. Some made their own clothing and others offered hundreds of second-hand records for reasonably cheap prices. I picked up three for less than \$25. Sensing the show was coming to an end, I tried making my way to the exits before everyone else, but didn't and got swallowed by the mass exodus of this

After a year and a half long hiatus from live-music, it only felt right.

year's Pitchfork attendees.



# ARTS & LIFE INTERNATIONAL PODCAST DAY, PODCASTS

# BY LESLIE LOZADA CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Podcasts have been around for a while now. In fact, the first podcast to air was actually called an audio blog and it was not until 2004 that the first podcast was heard on the internet. Thanks to two guys named Adam Curry and Dave Winer, we now have so many great podcasts to choose from. Podcasts are so mainstream that we even have an International Podcast Day. Sept. 30 is now set aside for the celebration of this very diverse media format. Anything you can imagine, from news, true crime, DYI, and all other subject matter in-between, there is a podcast dedicated to it. I have gathered a few of my favorite podcasts to listen to, but I also have some wonderful suggestions from my peers, classmates, and the general public. Give them a listen or comment on what some of your favorite podcasts are. NEIU has a diverse community and one of the greatest things about our campus is that there are so many varied tastes in all mediums. I am sure that suggestions on what podcasts to listen to will garner many wonderful suggestions.

Here are some podcasts to check out as well as a little bit about them.

Enjoy!

NEIU's own Arts & Life Section Editor of the Independent, Ryland Pietras has stand-alone episodes on Soundcloud which he has plans to turn into something else. Be on the lookout for them. Here is the link if you would like to listen to one of them. https://m.sound-cloud.com/user-982956955/house-boat-livin. I'm sure you will enjoy

his work on this piece. We look forward to seeing what else Ryland has to say.

"Crime Junkie is a weekly truecrime podcast dedicated to giving you a fix. Every Monday, Ashley Flowers will tell you about whatever crime she's been obsessing over that week in a way that sounds like you're sitting around talking crime with your best friends. The storytelling is straightforward and free of rabbit holes so the cases stay suspenseful and are easy to follow. If you can never get enough true crime... Congratulations, you're a Crime Junkie!"

Ashley Flowers, AudioChuck, www.crimejunkie.com

"The Joe Rogan Experience is a podcast hosted by American comedian and UFC color commentator Joe Rogan. It was launched on December 24, 2009, by Rogan and comedian Brian Redban, who was its co-host and producer until 2013 when he was replaced by Jamie Vernon." Wikipedia

"The Daily is a daily news podcast and radio show by the American newspaper The New York Times. Hosted by Times political journalist Michael Barbaro, its episodes are based on the Times' reporting of the day with interviews of journalists from the New York Times."

"Stuff You Should Know," an iHeartMedia podcast hosted by Josh Clark and Chuck Bryant in collaboration with HowStuffWorks. Launched in April 2008, the podcast has continuously educated listeners on a variety of topics in science, history, pop culture, urban legends, conspiracy theories, and more. Sold-out live events, a television season, a new TV show, and its riveting hosts have garnered a loyal following across the globe." https://www.edisonresearch.com/ the-top-50-most-listened-to-u-spodcasts-of-2020/

As you can see there is a full spectrum of podcasts to choose from. There is something for everyone. The appeal of podcasts is that anything you are interested in is available to you at any time. Nowadays, if you are at your local gym working out, instead of a music playlist you will find someone or you yourself will be binge-listening your favorite podcast. Challenge yourself to listen to different genres and broaden your horizons by listening to a variety of different podcasts. You might just stumble upon a new favorite. If you have some suggestions on what to listen to, please comment below so that we can give them a listen.











# Call for Submissions!

growth and change

SEEDS Literary and Visual Arts
Journal

is now accepting submissions for the Seedlings Zine

#### Theme:

How has life shifted, changed, become nwe or different from what you were used to in the midst of the Pandemic?

What are the lessons you have learned and what are you still searching for?



Scan here to submit!
Submissions close
October 31st!



# ANSWERS FROM LAST ISSUE

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1	8	7	2	4	6	9	3	5
2	4	5	9	3	1	6	8	7
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7	2	3	4	8	9	1	5	6
4	6	1	8	2	5.	7	9	3
3	7	2	1	9	4	5	6	8
8	5	9	6	7	3	4	1	2

# SUDOKU

Sudoku is a puzzle game that begins with a grid in which some of the numbers are already in place, depending on the game difficulty level.

A completed puzzle is one where each number from 1 to 9 appears only once in each of the rows, columns and blocks.

Study the grid to find the numbers that might fit into each cell.

Solution will be posted in the next issue. All the best!

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# **NEIU Events Calendar**



# **OCTOBER**

### Friday, October 1

13th Annual SCSE Student Research Symposium (Virtual, 8:30am-4:30pm)

### Wednesday, October 6

The Realities of Latin America: Mexico/Chile (Virtual, 3pm-5pm)

Im/migrant Woman =
Abundance = Entrepreneurship
(Virtual, 5pm-6pm)

# Thursday, October 7

Katherine Petersen, soprano: Condemned Cosmopolitanism (Main Campus, Recital Hall 7:30pm-9pm)

### Thursday, October 14

Future Health Professionals Informational Sessions (Virtual, 3pm-4pm)

NEIU String Orchestra (Main Campus, Recital Hall 7:30pm-9pm)

## Friday, October 15

Jewel Box Series: JIJI, Guitar (7:30pm-9:30pm)

## Saturday, October 16

NEIU Golden Gala and Alumni Awards Celebration (Virtual, 7pm-9pm)

# Tuesday, October 19

NEIU Wind Ensemble (Main Campus, Auditorium 7:30pm-9:30pm)

# Thursday, October 21

Virtual Information Session: TRIO Student Support Services (Virtual, 3pm-4pm)

Guitar Studio Showcase (Main Campus, Recital Hall 3:05pm-4:05pm)