EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Fall 2026 Newsletter





Chair's Corner

Dr. Dianne Timm

Greetings from the new School of Human Development! Over the past year there has been some reorganization happening across campus. The College of Education and The College of Health and Human Services has merged to become the College of Education and Health and Human Services. Several other departments have merged, including ours. Our new school is made up of several undergraduate and graduate programs as well as several minors.

The undergraduate programs include Human Services both online and in-person. We have several minors including financial literacy, early childhood program administration, human services, and aging studies. Next fall we will enroll students for the first time in our newly developed Bachelor of Social Work program. This is still under review for accreditation but we are making progress.

We have the largest population of graduate students at EIU now. Our graduate programs include Clinical and School Counseling, Higher Education and Student Affairs, Aging Studies, and Human Services. We are developing an 18 Credit hour graduate certificates and potential interdisciplinary graduate degrees. We are also developing accelerated graduate programs which means you begin taking your graduate coursework while completing your Bachelors degree.

Our faculty and students are engaging in many exciting opportunities and we invite you to reach out to find ways to connect and support our programs and services. It's a great day to be a Panther in the School of Human Development!

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DID YOU KNOW



Important Dates

10/16/2026: Fall Break
11/23 - 11/27/2026: Thanksgiving Break
12/11-12/2028: Last Day of Class!
12/14-18/2028: Final Exams
12/19/2026: Commencement
12/21/2026: Semester Closes



Apply for Graduation: Fall 2026

November 3, 2026: The last day to apply for graduation for the Fall.
Applications may be obtained through the Paws System. After signing on to Paws, click on the Records tab to arrive at the application.
November 6, 2026: Order cap and gown by **10:59 p.m**.
December 19, 2026: Commencement day (click this website for more details)
Graduation general info websites: Undergraduate Students and Graduate Students



Planning on taking the NCE Spring 2027?

If you are interested in taking the NCE Exam in the Spring semester 2027, please email CHE Office Manager the following information to be placed on the Department roster, which is submitted to NBCC:

- Legal first and legal last name (no nicknames or shortened names- must match ID)
- EIU email address
- degree track (clinical or school)
- expected graduation date (month/year)

*Reminders will be emailed to everyone regarding deadlines.
**Please note, the Department Roster ONLY certifies with NBCC that you are eligible to register for the NCE. You will still need to register for the exam and payment is required at the time of registration. The cost is approximately $335.00 to take the NCE.



"Think Tank" - our snack pantry

Stop by the Think Tank in Room 2148 for a quick snack! Inspired by the office's fish tanks, the Think Tank offers a variety of snacks for students to enjoy.

Let us know about any dietary restrictions or preferences so we can keep your needs in mind. Please save gluten-free options for those who truly need them.

Thank you for helping us keep the pantry accessible to everyone!

DID YOU KNOW (continue)

Accerlerated Programs: Start Your Graduate Degree Early!

Accelerated Graduate pathways allow eligible undergraduate students to apply up to 9 graduate credits toward both their bachelor's and master's degrees.

Benefits:

- Save time and reduce the overall cost of your education
- Get a head start on your graduate degree
- Enter the workforce sooner

Programs:

- M.S. in Human Services – Open to Human Services majors/minors, Financial Literacy minors, and Aging Studies minors
- M.S. in Aging Studies – Open to students in all majors
- M.S. in Higher Education + Student Affairs – Open to students in all majors

Eligibility:

- 3.25+ cumulative GPA
- 15 completed major-course credits
- 60 completed undergraduate credits

Apply: go.eiu.edu/acceladmit

New Bachelor of Social Work Program Coming Fall 2027!

We are excited to announce our new Bachelor of Social Work program! We plan to begin our first cohort of students in Fall 2027. If you are curious about the classes, careers, or application process, please join us for an Information Session. You can register using this link: eiu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5zHOso6dctjEp5Y or QR Code

Applications for **Fall 2027 will be accepted January 15 – March 1, 2027.** If you are interested, please participate in an Information Session this fall.

eiu_socialwork

Graduate Certificate in Health and Human Services Administration:

An Interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate Program of the MS in Human Services and the MS in Health Promotion

Description:

The online Graduate Certificate in Health and Human Services Administration is geared towards individuals who are interested in advancement in leadership, supervisory, or administrative roles at social service agencies, public health agencies, social and community service agencies, non-profit, behavioral and mental health agencies, youth, family, and aging services, and government agencies.

The online certificate program can be completed in **one year** (or three semesters) by earning the two micro-credentials: **Leadership and Policy in Health and Human Services, and Operations and Performance Management in Health and Human Services.** The micro-credentials can also be earned individually as a stand-alone credential. If both micro-credentials are completed, the student will earn a Graduate Certificate in Health and Human Services Administration.

All courses taken toward the completion of the Graduate Certificate in Health and Human Services Administration can be counted toward the Master of Science in Health Promotion or the Master of Science in Human Services.



DID YOU KNOW (continue)

6th Annual Play Therapy Conference at EIU: Neurosequential Therapeutic Approach to Play and Play Therapy for Children Suffering Traumatic Experiences



Date: November 6, 2026
Time: 8:30-4:00 (check in starting at 8:00am)
Location: MLK Union Ballroom
Speaker: Dr. Rick Gaskill, who is recognized for his work in integrating neuroscience with play therapy, trauma-informed care, and advancing early childhood mental health.

Price Information:
$85 for professionals
$40 for students

What You'll Learn:
Research shows that trauma, neglect, and social-emotional experiences can significantly affect brain development and functioning during childhood. This workshop will explore how understanding brain development and trauma can help play therapists select interventions tailored to the areas of the brain affected. Participants will learn key neurobiological concepts, the 6 R's of successful play therapy, trauma-informed interventions, and the regulate, relate, reason framework. The workshop will provide 6 NBCC CEs and 6 APT CEs upon completion of the required evaluation.

Register here:

https://www.eiu.edu/counseling/events.php

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

Dr. Chris Maniotes



Can you tell us a little about your career path and what led you to EIU?

My path to EIU began in undergrad, when I took a course on relationship science and instantly fell in love with the field. I enjoyed the academic environment as well, so I pursued a PhD at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, knowing I wanted to teach and make a difference for couples and families. When a position opened in the Human Services department while I was on the job market, I was drawn to EIU by its students, who bring real curiosity and genuine interest to human development and the helping fields.

This year I'm teaching Human Development; Family Advocacy, Policy & Law; and Research Methods. In the spring I'll add a new course on romantic relationship development.

How do you approach designing a class?

I design courses so the material is accessible to students with different backgrounds and goals, distilling complex ideas into straightforward concepts through lectures and activities. I look for ways to tie assignments to students' everyday lives, because connecting a new concept to something familiar is one of the easiest routes to mastering it.

What are your current research interests?

My research focuses on romantic relationships: how people form them, maintain them, and sometimes end them, with projects across each of those stages. I've always been curious about why dating and relationships are so complex when they seem simple and are embedded in everyday life, and about what helps people build healthy, lasting partnerships. Those questions still drive my work today.

"What I enjoy most about being faculty at EIU is giving students information that directly helps them further along in their professional journeys. Sometimes that means introducing an undergraduate to a human development career they didn't know existed, and sometimes it means helping a graduate student build skills to move up in their current position or transition to an adjacent field"

What advice would you give to our students?

My advice is to follow your curiosity about people and test it early through internships, volunteering, or conversations with professionals in human development and the helping fields. Interests often deepen once you start doing the work, and mentors and supervisors can point you toward paths you didn't know existed. That curiosity about people and life creates a sustainable energy that carries you through a career that ultimately feels rewarding.



Dr. Justin Schuch

Alumni from the College Student Affairs program

Current Role and Typical Day

As Vice President for Student Success at Western Illinois University, Dr. Justin Schuch says no two days look alike. His role spans student affairs, enrollment, athletics, marketing and communications, public safety, and community relations. His days may include discussing university policy, attending student events, reviewing scholarship packages, and responding to student situations. He values working alongside professionals across the Division of Student Success who are dedicated to supporting students.

Career Path

Before becoming Vice President, Dr. Schuch served as Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment. During his 12 years at WIU, he has held several roles, including Executive Director of Student Success and Retention Initiatives, Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and Assistant Director of Residence Life. Before joining WIU, he worked in housing at Southern Illinois University as Coordinator for Residential Leadership and Engagement and as a Hall Director.

Dr. Schuch also credits community involvement as an important part of his professional development. He has volunteered with organizations such as the Macomb Chamber of Commerce and serves as an Alderman on the Macomb City Council. He encourages student affairs professionals to build strong connections within their communities.

EIU Experience and Career Preparation

Eastern Illinois University helped set the stage for Dr. Schuch's career. His experiences in research, leadership, thesis work, and presentations strengthened skills he uses regularly in research, writing, training, and professional presentations. He especially values his thesis experience and the opportunities to develop and deliver presentations throughout the program. He emphasizes that while assignments may sometimes feel routine, the skills developed through them can be just as valuable as the content itself.

Staying Connected with EIU

EIU remains important to Dr. Schuch. His niece is currently a first-year student at EIU, and he maintains relationships with professional staff in Student and Academic Affairs. Since EIU is near his family, he often passes through Charleston and enjoys revisiting familiar places, eating, or reflecting on his time there. For Dr. Schuch, the strongest connection to a campus is ultimately its people rather than its buildings and spaces.

"The best advice I can give is to take advantage of opportunities and remember that opportunities often look like more work. When you're presented with a new experience and aren't sure whether you will be professionally interested, try it.

I thought for sure I would be a housing professional for my entire career, but an opportunity to work in student conduct opened up, and I jumped at it. Had I not done that, I would not have been exposed to new areas of the field.

Don't shy away from committee opportunities or chances to work alongside people outside your usual bubble.
Say yes to opportunities that allow you to learn more"

STUDENT SHOUTOUT



Leilani Islam *(Human Services Master's Student)*

Can you tell us a little about your background and what led you to EIU?
Hello everyone! My name is Leilani, and I am from Danville, Illinois. I graduated from EIU in Spring 2026 with a Bachelor's in Human Services and a minor in Financial Literacy, and I am continuing my education here in the Master's of Human Services program. I originally chose EIU not only for its strong academic community, but also for its affordability and generous scholarship opportunities for incoming freshmen.

What are you involved in on campus or within the EIU community, and what has been a meaningful experience for you so far?
I currently serve as a Graduate Assistant within the Human Services department, represent our graduate body on the Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC), serve on the University's Grade Appeal Committee, and have recently stepped into the role of Graduate Student Dean. During my undergraduate years, I was heavily involved with my chapter (#GoKD). Looking back, the most meaningful part of my time at EIU has been cultivating lifelong friendships and community, and connections that I will carry with me long after graduation. A piece of EIU will always stay with me.

What are your goals for your studies and your career after graduation?
After completing my master's degree, I hope to begin my career in higher education, specifically within academic advising, career services, or student affairs. My long-term goal is to earn my Ph.D. and ultimately become a university professor, supporting future generations of students just as mentors have supported me here.

What advice or encouragement would you give to other students in the program?
My biggest piece of advice is to remember that by being here, you are part of something much bigger than yourself. Only around 11% of women and 8% of men earn a master's degree, and as EIU students, we are actively shaping that statistic. When coursework or schedules feel overwhelming, take pride in the space you are carving out and keep pushing forward.

Kiera Murphy *(Clinical Mental Health Counseling Master's Student)*



Can you tell us a little about your background and what led you to EIU and the Counseling program?
I'm from St. Louis, MO, and attended undergrad at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. I found EIU during my search for graduate programs, and fell in love with the department at my interview. I knew it was a perfect fit for me, and I was right!

How would you describe your theoretical orientation or approach to counseling, and what are some of your areas of professional interest?
I haven't chosen a theory with which I align yet, but I think I will fall into the humanistic category. I am predominately interested in working with children, and hope to become a Play Therapist! I also enjoy working with postpartum parents and their mental health.

What are you involved in on campus or within the EIU community, and what has been a meaningful experience for you so far?
I am a Graduate Assistant working in Eastern's Human Services department. I have really enjoyed getting to know and work with the faculty and undergrads so far!

What are your goals for your studies and your career after graduation?
After graduation, I hope to become a Registered Play Therapist. I will likely practice counseling for a bit before I consider going back to school for my PhD.

What advice or encouragement would you give to other students in the program?
As I've started grad school, I've found it very helpful to create a routine for myself, as well as asking for help when I need it. This applies to both schoolwork and my mental health. I highly encourage others in the program to do the same! We can do this.



CAMPUS EVENTS (October)

Date	Event	Time	Location
Oct. 8	Fall Job & Internship Fair	1–2 PM	MLK Union Grand Ballroom
Oct. 10	Small Business Fest	10 AM–5 PM	Library Quad
Oct. 11	Choral Concert	4:00 PM	Dvorak Concert Hall
Oct. 18	Basket-Weaving Workshop	1:00 PM	Lincoln Log Cabin
Oct. 20	Jazz Combos	7:30 PM	Doudna
Oct. 21	Spirit Doll Workshop	4:30 PM	Tarble Arts Center
Oct. 23	Eastern Symphony Orchestra	7:30 PM	Dvorak Concert Hall
Oct. 23–24	Homecoming 2026	—	EIU Campus

LIGHTS, CAMERA, PANTHERS!

Homecoming Week | October 19–24
Mon., Oct. 19: Pantherazzi Kickoff • Homecoming Royalty Coronation
Tues., Oct. 20: HOCO on the Go! • Lip Sync Battle
Wed., Oct. 21: Faculty & Staff Blue-B-Que • Pantherchella Quad Party
Thurs., Oct. 22: HOCO on the Go! • Panther Gala
Fri., Oct. 23: Volunteer Luncheon • Awards Reception & Dinner • Pep Rally
Sat., Oct. 24: Pancake Breakfast • 2.5K Run/Walk • Homecoming Parade • Billy's Backyard • Homecoming Football Game

Join us for the **Homecoming Tailgate** on **Saturday, October 24** at **11 a.m. at O'Brien Field.**

Check out the full schedule of Homecoming activities on the EIU Homecoming website: https://www.eiu.edu/homecoming/





CAMPUS EVENTS (November-December)

Date	Event	Time	Location
Nov. 1	Panther Marching Band Concert	4–6 PM	Dvorak Concert Hall
Nov. 3	Percussion Ensemble	7:30 PM	Doudna
Nov. 6–7	Opera Performance	7:30 PM	Doudna Recital Hall
Nov. 8	Jazz Studies Benefit Concert	7:30 PM	Doudna
Nov. 12–15	James and the Giant Peach	7:30 PM; 2 PM Sun.	Doudna Theatre
Nov. 13	Wind Symphony & Concert Band	7:30 PM	Dvorak Concert Hall
Nov. 17	Jazz Lab Band	7:30 PM	Doudna
Nov. 28	Lincoln Thanksgiving Event	10 AM–4 PM	Lincoln Log Cabin
Dec. 3	Jazz Ensemble Concert	7:30 PM	Doudna
Dec. 4	Annual Holiday Concert	7:30 PM	Dvorak Concert Hall
Dec. 5	Holiday Wreath Workshop	1:00 PM	Lincoln Log Cabin
Dec. 6	Old-Fashioned Christmas	1:00 PM	Lincoln Log Cabin
Dec. 7	Symphonic Band	7:30 PM	Dvorak Concert Hall
Dec. 8	Jazz Combos	7:30 PM	Doudna
Dec. 10	Student Recital	7:30 PM	Doudna Recital Hall