

# **HONORS CONVOCATION**

**Tuesday, April 7, 2026**

**5:00 - 6:30 p.m.**

**University Center - Panorama Ballroom  
Greeley, Colorado**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO**

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**College of Education and  
Behavioral Sciences**

# Honors Convocation

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Honors Convocation is a longstanding academic tradition at the University of Northern Colorado, celebrating students who have demonstrated meaningful impact both in and beyond the classroom. Each year, academic schools and departments within the college select individuals whose achievements and dedication have distinguished them among their peers.

## Special Thanks

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**Todd Sundeen - Guitarist**  
**School of Special Education**

Dr. Todd Sundeen is an accomplished singer songwriter whose music draws on a variety of influences. He was born in Minneapolis, spent nearly 30 years in Florida, and now lives in Colorado. Todd began playing stringed instruments at 9 years old when his grandmother gave him a tenor ukulele. Within a year, he had his first acoustic guitar. His musical influences range from Jimmy Buffett to John Hiatt to Buddy Guy. The resulting acoustic sound is a distinctive musical collage.

# Program Timeline

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**4:30 p.m. Doors Open**

**5:00 p.m. Welcome**  
Dr. Heather Pendleton-Helm

**Opening Remarks**  
Randy Thuesen

## Student Recognitions

Department of American Sign Language and Interpreting Studies ..... Dr. Barbara Garrett

Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education ..... Dr. Jennifer Murdock Bishop

Department of Applied Statistics and Research Methods ..... Dr. Carl Granrud

Center for Urban Education ..... Dr. Rosanne Fulton

Go On And Learn Program ..... Dr. Christina Ruffatti

Department of Leadership, Policy, and Development ..... Dr. Michael Cohen

School of Psychological Sciences ..... Dr. Carl Granrud

Department of School Psychology ..... Dr. David Hulac

School of Special Education ..... Dr. Hasan Zaghlawan

School of Teacher Education ..... Dr. Deborah Romero

**6:00 p.m. Closing Remarks**  
Dr. Heather Pendleton-Helm

# Presentation of the Honors Students

## Department of American Sign Language and Interpreting Studies

The Department of American Sign Language & Interpreting Studies, led by Dr. Barbara Garrett, prepares graduates for careers in ASL interpretation, Deaf community engagement, and teaching in diverse educational settings.

Emily Withers  
John Huddlestun

## Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education

The Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education, led by Dr. Jennifer Murdock Bishop, prepares graduates to support mental health across the lifespan in schools, agencies, and college counseling centers.

Molly Fitzgerald  
Brett Bell  
Julia Spellman  
Alexis Lucas Moore

## Department of Applied Statistics and Research Methods

The Department of Applied Statistics and Research Methods, led by Dr. Carl Granrud, prepares graduates for careers in consulting, program evaluation, and higher education training.

Sunday Aghamie  
Melanie Merchant

## Center for Urban Education

The Center for Urban Education, led by Dr. Rosanne Fulton, prepares graduates for impactful careers in education through a unique, hands-on apprenticeship program in partnership with metro area schools and communities.

Maria Salas

## Go On And Learn Program

GOAL, led by Dr. Christina Ruffatti, supports students in building independence through inclusive college courses, UNC GOAL classes, career prep, and campus involvement, focusing on academics, social skills, and self-determination.

Sarah Dahm

## Department of Leadership, Policy, and Development

The Department of Leadership, Policy and Development, led by Dr. Amie Cieminski, prepares graduates to become visionary school leaders such as principals, superintendents, and district administrators.

Abby Dong Saul  
Valyne Esquibel  
Anna Bergeron

## School of Psychological Sciences

The School of Psychological Sciences, led by Dr. Carl Granrud, offers programs in behavioral health, research, and education, including on-campus MA/PhD degrees in Educational Psychology and a fully online MA for educators.

Philip Mayhoffer  
Sara Rohani  
Clay Wollard  
Joanna Pugliese  
Adrianna Soto-Confer  
Hadley Everdeen

## Psychological Sciences Special Recognitions

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### **Marilyn Welsh Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research**

The Marilyn Welsh Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research is awarded annually to an exceptional undergraduate student who has demonstrated prowess in scholarship. Dr. Welsh, a 30-year faculty member, demonstrated fierce student advocacy by mentoring countless undergraduate students to be, like her, an excellent researcher and colleague.

Winners of this award are students who have completed a scholarly project or who have played an influential role in the research of a faculty member. Further, they are students who have been deemed by the School of Psychological Sciences Faculty to show great potential for graduate study and who embody Dr. Welsh's selfless dedication to inspire others to be excellent.

### **Melissa Balke Award for Outstanding Service to Psychology**

This annual award recognizes a student who has demonstrated exceptional service to their peers. Contributions may include tutoring, research support, mentorship, or other acts of service.

Melissa Balke, a 2023 psychology alumnus, exemplified these qualities as a student. Recipients of this award are those who, like Melissa, have gone above and beyond to enhance the lives of their fellow students.

## Department of School Psychology

The Department of School Psychology, led by Dr. David Hulac, prepares students to become school psychologists. Graduates support K-12 students' academic, social, and emotional wellbeing.

Torin Rueter  
Paige Gwaltney

### **School of Special Education**

The School of Special Education, led by Dr. Hasan Zaghlawan, prepares graduates to work with students who have a diverse range of special needs (e.g., low vision, hearing loss, learning disabilities).

Camille Stewart  
Leslie Topic  
Theresa Keller  
Clifton Lyddane  
Christine Rogers  
Elise Darrow

### **School of Teacher Education**

The School of Teacher Education, led by Dr. Deborah Romero, prepares graduates to work as teachers in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and Secondary and K-12 programs.

Brooke Clark  
Evelyn Simon  
Laura Kopetzky  
Emily Guthrie Strong  
Isa Schulte  
Alyssa Brewer