

Educational Psychology NEWSLETTER

Fall 2026

DEPARTMENT HAPPENINGS

- Emma Ferns - Intern of the Year
- Jacquie Bassford – Dissertation Grant

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

- 10/23-10/25 AZPA
- 11/5-11/6 AASP

UNIVERSITY DATES

- 10/27 Spring 2027 Enrollment Begins
- 11/11 Veteran's Day

CAMPUS EVENTS

- 10/3 – Disability Resources Fair
- 10/8 – Depression Screenings
- 10/15-10/17 - Homecoming
- 10/15 – Free Haircuts

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

- Professor Samantha Giordano
- Dr. Samantha Russell

Intern of the Year – Emma Ferns

Emma Ferns, a new graduate of the Combined Counseling/School Psychology PhD program, spent the last year as an intern at the University of Alabama Birmingham. She was selected as the C.J. Rosecrans Intern of the Year. This award is voted on by the Internship Training Committee and is awarded to one intern per year for excellence in performance. Emma shared some advice for those applying to internships in the future. “I was really nervous to move so far away, but I had a fantastic training year. I encourage everyone applying to internship to push past their comfort zone (if possible) and pursue training experiences that will challenge them as clinicians! For example, although I got to work with my preferred population this year (people with ASD and IDD), my entire final rotation has been in consultation/liaison psychology, which is an area I have no experience in! I truly learned so much by pushing myself and am so thankful for the opportunities afforded to me at UAB.” We are excited that Emma is coming back to Arizona now to start her postdoctoral fellowship at Phoenix Children's Hospital!



Dissertation Grant – Jacquie Bassford

Jacquie Bassford, a current Combined Counseling/School Psychology PhD student, was awarded a dissertation grant from Arizona Psychological Foundation. Congratulations Jacquie!

Please submit pictures and announcements you would like featured in the newsletter to EPSPracticumClinic@nau.edu



Earn Your Ed.S. in School Psychology Through NAU's New Distance Cohort, Funded by Arizona Project CAN!

AZ Project CAN is a grant funded partnership between NAU, the Coconino County Education Service Agency, and the Arizona Department of Education. Here are some of the program benefits:

- Up to 75% tuition support, plus technology and professional development stipends.
- Online coursework, with two in-person summer residencies on the Flagstaff campus (free room & board).
- Practicum and internship placements in or near your home community

Eligibility: Candidates must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and live or work in Coconino, Yavapai, Mohave, Navajo, Apache, Gila, or La Paz County.

The first Project CAN cohort begins in Spring 2027. When applying, candidates must select the distance-delivery program option. Applications open 10/5/25 and are due 12/1/26.

Interested? Fill out our [interest form](#) receive news and updates about the program!

Questions? Contact Austin.Guida@nau.edu & Britt.Landis@nau.edu



Upcoming Conferences

- The [Arizona Psychological Association convention](#) will be held October 23-25 in Fort McDowell at the We Ko Pa Resort.
- The [Arizona Association of School Psychologists hybrid conference](#) will be held November 5th and 6th in Phoenix at the Desert Willow Conference Center.

Academic Dates + Deadlines

- 10/27 Spring 2027 Enrollment Begins – Classes are viewable now. Remember to enroll early!
- 11/11 Veterans Day – University Closed

Campus Events

- 10/3 [Northern Arizona Disability Resource Fair](#) – From 1 to 4 pm at the High Country Conference Center | Free admission and refreshments available.
- 10/8 [National Depression Screening Day](#) – From 4 to 5 pm at the Health and Learning Center | Free anonymous depression and anxiety screenings with feedback.
- 10/15-10/17 [Homecoming](#) | Downtown events, bonfire, carnival and more.
- 10/15 [Free Haircuts with ClipDart](#) | From 12 to 5 pm at the Union Fieldhouse. | Free haircuts for students.



Happy Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month!



NAU
Events

Flagstaff
Events

Phoenix
Events

Tucson
Events

Yuma
Events





FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

Professor Samantha Giordano

Before joining Northern Arizona University, Professor Samantha Giordano worked as a school psychologist in the Phoenix area, primarily serving elementary schools and preschool settings. Ready for a new challenge, she found her next step in higher education at NAU.



“I wanted to continue my work of supervising students and fostering their love for school psychology and special education,” Giordano shares. “I was ready for a change in my career and taking on a new challenge, so teaching at NAU seemed like the best next step for me!”

Today, Professor Giordano works across the Educational Psychology and Educational Specialties departments, with a primary focus on the School Psychology and Early Childhood Special Education programs. She especially enjoys supervising, mentoring, and advising students at every stage of their academic journey.

“My goal is to encourage students to become competent professionals who are ready for the day-to-day life in a school-based setting,” she explains.

In her classes, students can expect a combination of research, theory, best practices, and real-world application. Professor Giordano strives to help students understand not only what they are learning, but also how that knowledge can be applied in Arizona schools and in their future careers.

Outside of NAU, Professor Giordano brings a love of adventure and exploration to her new home in Flagstaff. Originally from Indiana, she moved to the Phoenix area in 2017 and lived there until 2025. She and her husband then spent a year living in Japan, where they had the opportunity to explore Japan and other parts of Asia.

After a series of moves around the world, Flagstaff has been a perfect fit. When she isn't teaching or mentoring students, Professor Giordano enjoys traveling, hiking, camping, and spending time outdoors.

Welcome to NAU, Professor Giordano! We're excited to have you as part of our community.





FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Samantha Russel

For Dr. Samantha Russell, joining the NAU faculty is a meaningful full-circle moment. In 2015, she earned her master's degree in Clinical Health Psychology at Northern Arizona University. Although the program no longer exists, her experience left a lasting impression and fostered a deep appreciation for the NAU academic community.



“I had such a positive experience in that program and left with a true appreciation for the academic environment at NAU,” Dr. Russell shares. “I have for years thought about how wonderful it would be to teach here. And here I am now!”

Today, Dr. Russell teaches therapists and psychologists in training and provides supervision to doctoral students in School Psychology and Counseling Psychology. One of the most rewarding aspects of her work is mentoring students as they develop their skills and prepare for their professional careers.

“I enjoy mentorship so much,” she says. “It is incredibly fulfilling.”

Dr. Russell is also looking forward to further developing her research program in perinatal mental health. Her research will explore ways to better support mothers and young families during the perinatal period, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for children.

Outside of her work at NAU, Dr. Russell loves spending time outdoors and is an avid reader. Her ideal getaway would be a week in a cabin in the woods with plenty of books and a cozy fire. But she knows she wouldn't want to stay away from her family for too long. She loves getting outside and exploring with her three children and husband.

“My life is very full, and it's pretty great!”

We're excited to welcome Dr. Russell back to NAU and look forward to the impact she will continue to make through teaching, mentorship, and research.

Welcome back to NAU, Dr. Russell!

