

## Computer Science

Dear CS students,

As I was recently admiring the faculty and graduate student posters displayed near my office and the Mudd 3 northeast stairwell, I was struck by what a young and dynamic department we have built. More than half of our current faculty team joined after I did in early 2019, when EECS split into the **Department of Computer Science** and the **Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering**. And we continue to attract **star faculty**. Our culture, collaborative spirit, and cohesion around a shared mission bolsters our amazing diversity in research and scholarship.

Our many successes in 2025 belong to all of you, and it was an especially exciting year for **student achievement**. Four of our undergraduate students received **Honorable Mentions** in the 2025 CRA research competition and our **research track** continues to flourish. The **NSF REU site** led by **Zach Wood-Doughty**, assistant professor of instruction, launched successfully in the summer—introducing undergraduate students to a rigorous research environment in which they will develop the skills and confidence to conduct computer science research at the intersection of artificial intelligence, security, and privacy. And the **new AI minor** was also an instant hit, reflecting our students' enthusiasm for emerging areas of study.

Beyond the classroom and lab, students bridged the gap between academic study and industry demands, strengthening their professional portfolios and gaining hands-on experience through programs like **WildHacks** and participation in the Grace Hopper Celebration and Tapia Conference. Many

students presented papers at major conferences, earning several best paper awards. Graduate students Connie Chau, Ziyi Guo, and Gefei Tan earned **2025 Global Google PhD Fellowships**, a prestigious honor awarded to the most promising young academics in the world.

I'd like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our faculty and staff—especially **Sara Sood, Nikos Hardavellas, Anastasia Kurdia, Chris Riesbeck, Kris Hammond, Andy Fano**, and **Katie Winters**—to keep the department running smoothly.

I am profoundly grateful to the Northwestern Computer Science community. Your curiosity, ambition, and creativity continue to shape the future of our department.

Sincerely,



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