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80th  
CONVOCATION CEREMONY  
August 20, 2026 | 4:00 p.m.

# PROGRAM

## Processional

Patrick Cheetham  
*Bagpiper*

## Academic Procession

Cynthia Burns Martin, MBA  
Fran Chelland, MTS  
*Faculty Marshals*

## Welcome

Jennifer Militello, PhD  
*Program Director, MFA in Creative Writing*

## Opening Remarks

Wayne F. Lesperance, Jr., DLP  
*President*

## Board of Trustees Remarks

Lex Scourby, BA '75, MBA  
*Chairman of the Board of Trustees*

## Robert A. Kilgore Faculty Award

James Chase  
*Associate Professor, Art*

## Student Government Remarks

Karl Koch, Jr. BA '28  
*Student Government President*

## Closing

Wayne F. Lesperance, Jr., DLP  
*President*

## Recessional

Patrick Cheetham  
*Bagpiper*

# ROBERT A. KILGORE FACULTY AWARD

Presented to a member of the faculty whose distinguished service to the teaching profession is recognized by students, staff, and fellow faculty members

## 2026 HONOREE JAMES CHASE

*Associate Professor, Art*



James Chase is an artist, educator, and community arts leader with more than 24 years of experience in the arts. He is an Associate Professor of Art at New England College, where he also serves as Director of Art at French, overseeing community arts education and programming in Manchester. In 2026, Chase was named New England College's Faculty of the Year and promoted to Associate Professor.

Chase is the founder of Arts Build Community (ABC), a nonprofit dedicated to connecting artists and communities through murals, workshops, public art, and creative experiences. His work has been recognized with the New Hampshire Business Committee for the Arts' Artrepreneur Award, the New Hampshire Union Leader's 40 Under Forty, the President's Volunteer Service Award, and the NH Campus Compact President's Good Steward Award.

Previously, Chase served as Director of Community Education at the New Hampshire Institute of Art and as an Arts Commissioner for the City of Manchester. He holds an MFA from Texas Tech University and a BFA in Interdisciplinary Art from the New Hampshire Institute of Art.

## CONVOCATION

NEC celebrates the start of each academic year with an Academic Convocation ceremony, which represents many new beginnings, new academic pursuits, new friendships, and new opportunities for students to grow as leaders and civically engaged citizens. The ceremony also welcomes first-year students as the newest members of NEC.