

CeMaST Connections

A monthly digest of events and opportunities from ISU's Center for Mathematics, Science, & Technology

*205 North Main Street Campus Box 5960
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Please share your thoughts with the STEM Ambassadors! The STEM Ambassadors are students who are working to make the introductory STEM experience at ISU more equitable and inclusive. They are interested in learning from STEM faculty how they perceive their connections with students. If you are a STEM faculty member who teaches an introductory STEM course, [please consider taking their survey here](#). If you would like to hear from the STEM Ambassadors about what they've been up to the past 1.5 years, they will be doing panel discussion at the [2025 University Teaching & Learning Symposium](#) held on Wednesday, January 8 at the Bone Student Center.

The STEM IS-U talk series starts in January! The [Science IS-U Scholars](#) program begins next summer, and around CeMaST, we have high hopes for this program. It is essentially a pilot program that we hope will both simultaneously lower DFW rates in introductory STEM courses, increase persistence in our science degree programs, and enhance STEM majors' sense of belonging in their home departments at ISU. Our hope is that this program serves as a model for other units trying to do the same, which is why it is critically important to us that we have input from STEM faculty, particularly those who teach introductory courses, which is when most attrition occurs from our STEM programs. Each talk in the STEM IS-U talk series will provide both information about the program and an opportunity for attendees to share their perspectives to ensure that the program is supporting students in appropriate ways, from STEM faculty's perspectives. The first STEM IS-U talk will occur via Zoom on **January 10 at 12 p.m.** Please [register here](#). Attendance comes with **\$55**, which will be paid in summer 2025 (note that if you already have *summer* support totaling to 1.0 FTE you may not be eligible for this pay). Graduate students with teaching responsibilities are welcome to take part in this opportunity.

Sign-up for our spring book club! In the spring, we will be hosting a monthly book club to discuss the book, [Limitless Mind: Learn, Lead, and Live Without Barriers](#) by mathematics educator, Jo Boaler. The times/dates of discussions are TBD and will be determined by the schedules of those who want to participate. Participation comes with a **free copy of the book** for the first 20 participants to sign-up and **\$55** for each discussion session attended (paid in summer 2025). [You can sign up here.](#)

An engaging online seminar series! The Magnetosphere Online Seminar Series is a free seminar series available on YouTube that hosts 30-60 minute seminars on anything and everything related to magnetospheric physics (i.e., the space around a celestial body that is dominated by its magnetic field). While this may be captivating to only some of our STEM community, recently Mike Liemohn from the University of Michigan presented [Actions for an Inclusive Space Physics Workplace](#), which may be of interest far beyond those who get excited about magnetospheres. I (Bekky) found his space scientist's interpretation of bias to be super insightful, explaining how statistical bias in data and implicit bias in society are quite the same. Hope you enjoy his perspective!

Photos of the 2024 Midwest Regional Noyce Conference! Annually we host the Midwest Regional Noyce Conference for K-12 STEM educators, this year in St. Louis. You can see [photos of this event here.](#)

Looking for some holiday reading, listening, or eating? Here are CeMaST staff picks of our favorite pleasurable pastimes. We hope you all have happy holidays and a break that provides you relaxation and renewal. ♥

- [Project Hail Mary](#) by Andy Weir (Levi's pick). The book follows a former molecular biologist teaching junior high as he's recruited by the government to study microorganisms that are somehow traveling independently from Venus to the Sun in a line visible from Earth. This one is particularly captivating to listen to, if you're a fan of audiobooks.
- [Signature Café](#) (restaurant recommendation from Ashley) – A Mediterranean fusion eatery in Bloomington that has a selection of wraps, bowls, kebabs, and desserts; an affordable and healthy place to grab a bite over break!
- [The Clan of the Cave Bear](#) by Jean M. Auel (Bekky's pick) – The first in a sci-fi series about a young *Homo sapiens* girl who is raised by a clan of *H. neanderthalensis*. Its riveting first pages easily draw the reader into a unique story, and the ending leaves you scrambling to pick up the next book in the series.
- [The Lincoln Lawyer](#) by Michael Connelly (Blessing's pick) – A charismatic defense attorney operates his practice out of the backseat of his Lincoln Towncar as he uncovers deep secrets about his wealthy real estate agent client who is accused of assault. This one is packed with twists, drama, and exploration of moral dilemmas.

- [*Taft 2012*](#) by Jason Heller (Matthew's pick) – The 27th US President William Howard Taft (1909-1913) runs for President again, one hundred years after his first term. This satire explores how Taft would fair in a 21st century election as the perfect presidential candidate, loved across the political spectrum.
- [*Mastery*](#) by Robert Greene (another from Blessing) – A non-fiction journal through three transformative phases that lead to achieving genuine expertise, this book is an inspiring reminder that mastery isn't simply a gift but rather a result of practice and persistence.