

## ARA's 2026 Distinguished Speaker

**Prof. Penny Beuning**  
**Professor and Chair,**  
**Department of Chemistry & Chemical Biology**  
**Northeastern University**



Professor Beuning is an influential leader in her research discipline of DNA damage and repair and is recognized for her extensive efforts to promote inclusive excellence in STEM. As the 2026 ARA Distinguished Speaker, Professor Beuning's outstanding achievements in the chemical sciences are complemented by her innovations in teaching and mentoring of students and faculty. She is currently serving her second term as Chair of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Northeastern University.

Professor Beuning's research focuses on how cells respond to DNA damage and maintain genetic fidelity. Her research clarifies the molecular basis of coordinated actions of DNA damagetolerance and repair enzymes to maintain genomic integrity. Her lab also studies enzymes involved in cellular metabolism, and she translates these discoveries to improve enzyme function via protein engineering.

Professor Beuning has developed and deployed innovations in graduate and undergraduate education, mentoring and faculty professional development. While she was director of graduate studies, she received the 2018 LEAD Award that supported the development and deployment of the *Future Faculty Workshops*. These workshops offer training to faculty and graduate students to serve as mentors, support teaching assistants and their professional development, and create an outreach program to encourage students to pursue graduate studies. She has developed lab research projects for her undergraduate students that directly involve them in her work and has created a summer program to offer undergraduates from diverse backgrounds structured research experiences. Dr. Beuning is the lead author of a book, [\*Teach Better, Save Time, and Have More Fun: A Guide to Teaching and Mentoring in Science\*](#), which is used for professional development at numerous institutions. She is also an editor of a new book that highlights innovative mentoring programs for undergraduates: [\*Professional Mentoring Programs for Science Students. Career Mentoring for Students in the Physical Sciences\*](#).

Dr. Beuning is a leader in the American Chemical Society (ACS), serving on several key national committees of the American Chemical Society (ACS), particularly those focused on education and professional development. In 2020, she was named a Fellow of the American Chemical Society for her outstanding achievements, contributions to science, and her service to the scientific community. In 2021, she became a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and received the IMPACT award from the Research Corporation for Science Advancement. She was also the recipient of the Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation New Faculty Award, a Cottrell Scholar, an American Cancer Society Research Scholar, and an NSF CAREER Awardee, among other accolades.