LEARN
SERVE
RESEARCH

ENGAGE.

OFFICE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - 2014

Northern Illinois University
The Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning (OSEEL) is dedicated to providing opportunities for undergraduates to engage in active learning. Through undergraduate research, service projects, learning communities, and other High Impact Practices, NIU students develop strong intellectual and practical skills by applying their skills to real-world problems. These hands-on learning opportunities augment the college experience and lead to student career success.

OSEEL works collaboratively across university divisions and colleges to create student-centered programming that utilizes experiential learning, both in and out of the classroom, to promote and sustain student success. Our focus continues to be on growing High Impact Practices to provide more opportunities for students to learn, serve, research, and engage in the classroom, on campus, in the community, and around the world. Such growth includes:

- Participation of over 350 first-year students in Themed Learning Communities
- Engagement of 500 students in undergraduate research
- Completion of almost 7,000 hours of service by Huskie Service Scholars
- Attendance of more than 120 students at graduate school preparation workshops
- Involvement of over 140 faculty mentors and instructors engaging students in and out of the classroom in OSEEL programs

We have also focused on the development and implementation of campus-wide high impact initiatives, including the PLUS Task Force, First-Year Composition Peer Advocate Program, alumni mentoring, internships, and more.

Each of our initiatives align directly with the 8 Student Learning Outcomes of the Baccalaureate Review as we seek to enhance the cognitive, social, and academic skills of our students to prepare them to be life-long learners and responsible citizens in our ever-changing, global society.

Go Huskies!

Julia Spears, PhD
Associate Vice Provost for Engaged Learning
Director, Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning
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Themed Learning Communities (TLCs) consist of 2-4 courses linked together around a specific theme. Students in TLCs connect learning across courses in collaborative and active ways, exploring a common theme integrated throughout assignments, readings, and activities.

TLCs include cohort enrollment of 25 students or fewer which allows students to develop relationships with peers, faculty, and an upperclass Peer Leader, easing students’ academic and social transition to college. TLC students participate in hands-on learning opportunities that augment integration such as field trips and speakers.

TLC instructors receive additional professional development as well as a stipend to develop integrative assignments, communicate amongst TLC instructors, and more.

**Retention rate of first-year students from fall 2013 to spring 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-TLC</th>
<th>TLC</th>
<th>Comparison Group*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>89%</td>
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**Average first semester GPA for first-year students entering in fall 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-TLC</th>
<th>TLC</th>
<th>Comparison Group*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Equivalent Comparison Group created through stratified random sample based on admissions criteria (ACT & HS GPA) to match TLC students*
Peer Leaders Provide Extra TLC

Peer Leaders assist TLC students with their academic and social transition to NIU, including becoming acclimated to the university and time management for course work completion. Peer Leaders attend at least one TLC class, attend a staff meeting, and host at least one study session and/or community activity each week.

In addition, the 16 Peer Leaders benefited from working with a TLC as they:

- Improved interpersonal and communication skills
- Developed leadership and mentoring skills as they support 25 first-year students
- Attended professional development workshops, including resume building and professional communication
- Established relationships and networked with faculty, staff, peers, and TLC students

TLCs Beyond the Classroom

Experiential learning opportunities connect classroom learning to the real world, taking advantage of NIU’s location by drawing on the local community, Chicago, and other regional treasures. This year’s field trips included:

- Touring the National Veterans Art Museum in Chicago, IL
- Exploring Kishwaukee Hospital in DeKalb, IL
- Visiting the DeKalb County Court House in Sycamore, IL
- Meeting with a nutritionist at HyVee in DeKalb, IL
- Traveling to the Wisconsin State Capital in Madison, WI
- Engaging in service at a regional food pantry
TLC Faculty Institute

The TLC Faculty Institute is a two-day training institute that provides support to TLC teams as they develop their theme, integrative assignments, experiential learning opportunities, and communication strategies.

45 TLC instructors and staff received instruction from OSEEL staff and a keynote speaker who also assisted in the facilitation of subsequent workshops and team time.

94 percent of faculty surveyed agreed that they felt supported by the university to develop a TLC as a result of the institute.

“These 2 days were very conducive to meeting new people, making connections, and learning from each other.”

2014 TLC Faculty Institute Participant
Course Transformation Project

Course Transformation Project (CTP) courses are lower level, large lecture classes that have been transformed to offer an engaging alternative to the traditional large lecture format. CTP sections often include less lecture time which allows for more interactive experiential activities.

The first cohort of CTP fellows and CTP-Lite fellows completed their course transformation in summer 2013 and collectively taught a total of 14 redesigned courses for the first time in fall 2013 and spring 2014.

The second cohort of CTP fellows and CTP-Lite fellows spent the 2012-2013 academic year redesigning and transforming 10 additional courses.

CTP Fellows
- Laura Steele: Classical Mythology
- Joseph N. Scudder: Organizational/Corporate Communication
- Matthew Wittrup: Intro to Public Health
- Cathy Carlson: Adult Health Nursing 2
- Jeremy R. Groves: Principles of Microeconomics
- Courtney M. Gallaher: Intro to Physical Geography

CTP-Lite Fellows
- Michael Konen: Introduction to Physical Geography
- Emily McKee: Anthropology and Human Diversity
- Lucinda Alwa: Classical Mythology
- Janet Reynolds: Introduction to Sociology

24 CTP courses
14 Peer Leaders
1206 students enrolled in CTP courses
Undergraduate Research

Connecting Classroom to Real Life

Students conducting undergraduate research at NIU are able to gain relevant skills while expanding their opportunities, both academically and professionally. OSEEL provides several venues for undergraduate research.

Students can begin hands-on, faculty-mentored research as early as freshmen year with the Huskie Research Rookies program and have an array of opportunities throughout the course of their undergraduate years. Programs such as Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry & Research (USOAR), the Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) or Undergraduate Research Assistantships (URA) are open to all undergraduate students with a drive to pursue original ideas.

Allowing students to share their efforts with the NIU campus and community is an important part of the research process. The annual Undergraduate Research & Artistry Day (URAD) showcases the achievements of our students and their faculty mentors.

Total number of students participating in OSEEL undergraduate research experiences since 2010

1,400 students have participated in OSEEL research opportunities since 2010
Research Rookies

Huskie Research Rookies (RR) links students with faculty mentors in their major or area of interest to conduct a small-scale research project. As a Research Rookie, students:

- Learn what research looks like in their field of study
- Learn how to write a formal research proposal
- Gain experience working alongside talented faculty
- Attend professional and academic enrichment activities
- Present their work at the annual Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day

39 Research Rookies worked with 34 faculty mentors comprised of Deans, Department Chairs, Board of Trustees Professors, Presidential Research Professors, Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors.

Research Rookies is the perfect way for highly motivated students to connect with one another as well as with supportive faculty and staff.

“Being a Research Rookie means linking up and learning from an experienced and seasoned faculty member to work on a research project in my field of interest. It means learning what it feels like to investigate a wide range of issues within a certain field.”

Anthony Roberts, 2013-2014 Research Rookie
Continuing Research Rookies

Gabriela Arriaga, Physics  
Mentor: Yasuo Ito

Natalie Cincotta, History  
Mentor: Heide Fehrenbach

Kiran Gill, Political Science  
Mentor: Artemus Ward

Mason Hayward, Physics  
Mentor: David Hedin

Miguelangel Marchan, Electrical Engineering  
Mentor: Mansour Tahernezhadi

Kyle Mondron, Chemistry  
Mentor: Jim Horn

Bailey Rhoads, Biological Sciences  
Mentor: Sherine Elsawa

Hannah Savage, Biological Sciences  
Mentor: Linda Yasui

20 departments are represented by this year's Research Rookie cohort

6,200 hours spent by this year's cohort conducting research in the program

New Research Rookies

Antonio Aguilar, Mechanical Engineering  
Mentor: Nicholas Pohlman

Lauren Anglin, Actuarial Science  
Mentor: Adam Yore

Sara Briseno, Sociology  
Mentor: Simon Weffer

Thomas Bunge, Psychology  
Mentor: Amanda Durik

Thomas Cowden, Mechanical Engineering  
Mentor: Jenn-Terng Gau

Andra Dobbel, Biological Sciences  
Mentor: Sherine Elsawa
Continuing Research Rookies

Named after Jaymie and Harry Simmon, whose gift provides scholarship and program support for students in STEM or health fields, Simmons Scholars are awarded this honor for their academic performance and commitment to the Research Rookies program.

* denotes Simmons Scholar

**Simmons Scholars**

Rebecca Dominguez, Chemistry  
Mentor: Narayan Hosmane

Colin Fritz, Electrical Engineering  
Mentors: Martin Kocanda & Ibrahim Abdel-Motaleb

James Gorman, Biochemistry  
Mentor: Jim Horn

Zachary Howard, Biological Sciences  
Mentor: Barrie Bode

Zharfan Irawan, Accountancy  
Mentor: Ann Dzuranin

Rory Johnson, Psychology  
Mentor: Lisa Finkelstein

Ashley Kyle*, Nutrition & Dietetics  
Mentor: Sheila Barrett

Charles Moore, English  
Mentor: Michael Clark

Jeffrey Moore, Chemistry  
Mentor: Marc Adler

Lydia Moore*, Biological Sciences  
Mentor: Sherine Elsawa

Aidan Osterby, Psychology  
Mentor: Joseph Magliano

Megan Pieterick, Illustration  
Mentor: Kevin Wu

Sterling Pollard, Chemistry  
Mentor: Timothy Hagen

Anthony Roberts*, Biomedical Engineering  
Mentors: Martin Kocanda & Ibrahim Abdel-Motaleb

Lizbeth Roman, Community Leadership & Civic Engagement  
Mentor: Simon Weffer

Ashley Sands, Psychology  
Mentor: Laura Pittman

Maria Senf, Psychology  
Mentor: Larissa Barber

Gagandeep Singh, Pre-Nursing  
Mentor: Jie Chen

Tyler Stringer, Physics  
Mentors: David Hedin & Laurence Lurio

Quy Tran, Nursing  
Mentor: Mary Koren

Kathryn Voight, History  
Mentors: Vera Lind & Heide Fehrenbach

Matthew Woodall*, Mechanical Engineering  
Mentor: Meung Kim

Giulia Zanini, Psychology  
Mentor: Alecia Santuzzi
The McKearn Summer Fellows Program is a distinctive summer academic enrichment and professional development program administered by the Provost, University Honors, and OSEEL. Supported through a gift from John and Cassandra McKearn, 10 of NIU’s top students participated in the program which emphasized three main themes: research and artistry; leadership development; and civic, social, and global engagement.

Throughout the summer, the McKearn Fellows completed faculty-mentored, independent research and artistry projects. These projects were showcased at the inaugural Summer Research Symposium in August 2013.

In addition, the McKearn Fellows attended numerous workshops, field trips, personal and professional development seminars, and other experiential learning opportunities. Many NIU alumni hosted the McKearn Fellows throughout the summer.
Lauren Boddy, Psychology  
Risk Factors for Sleep Problems in Early Childhood  
Faculty mentor: David Bridgett

Jeffrey Kamholz, Marketing  
Building a Nonprofit Fundraising Model in the Community of DeKalb  
Faculty mentor: Emily Cronauer

Juliana Leprich, Communication  
A Study of the Creative Arts’ Impact on Youth with Disabilities: An In-Depth Look at the Penguin Project  
Faculty mentor: Randy Caspersen

Ashley Palin, History/International Politics  
Opposites Attract: How NGO Penetration Affects Repression  
Faculty mentor: Ben Bingle

Patrick Price, Fine Arts, 2-D Studio  
Shifting Perspectives: NIU through the Eyes of an Art Major  
Faculty mentor: Kim Martens

Kathryn Rupp, Psychology  
Creating Causal Chains across Multiple Documents from Expository Texts  
Faculty mentors: Anne Britt & Patricia Wallace

Linnea Scherer, Marketing  
Disjointed: A Video Game Concept Featuring the Positive Portrayal of a Female Protagonist  
Faculty mentor: Bart Woodstrup

Sarah Stuebing, Biological Sciences  
Evaluating the Role of Frontal Cortical Structures in Spatial Orientation during Spontaneous Exploration  
Faculty mentor: Douglas Wallace

Brittany Warner, Speech Pathology  
A Literature Review on Transcranial Brain Stimulation for the Treatment of Aphasia  
Faculty mentor: Jamie Mayer

Melissa Woodall, Illustration  
Project Title: Visualizing Psychological and Personality Disorders  
Faculty mentor: Cynthia Hellyer-Heinz

2013 McKearn Summer Fellows
Summer Research Opportunities Program

The Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) gives 10 undergraduate students at NIU the opportunity to conduct paid, faculty-mentored research during the summer months. The 8-week program offers participants the chance to develop personally, academically, and professionally through a variety of workshops, field trips, and activities.

SROP provides students with the opportunity to:

- Learn what research looks like in their field of study
- Develop competence in writing a formal research proposal
- Gain experience working alongside talented faculty
- Attend professional and academic enrichment activities
- Receive housing, meals, and a stipend

“This program has had a significant impact on my academic experience. I was able to experience how to gather research and use knowledge I have learned over the years and apply it to real world problems.”

CASEY HEUER, GEOGRAPHY MAJOR AND 2013 SROP PARTICIPANT
Research Experience for Undergraduates

In partnership with the REU grant team, OSEEL provided administrative support for NIU’s Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program. NIU’s REU program focuses on energy, environment, ethics, and economy. The 8-week summer program, called Operation ETank, provides 11 non-NIU students (supported by National Science Foundation (NSF) grant funding) and 2 NIU students (supported by the Vice Provost) with the opportunity to explore the broader issue of sustainability. Students conducted research on NIU’s campus and in the community, attended excursions, and presented at the Summer Research Symposium.

11 Non-NIU students
2 NIU student
4 Projects

2013 SROP Participants

**Gabriela Arriaga**, Physics
*Study of a Ferromagnetic La0.67Sr0.33MnO3 Crystal Through Electron Diffraction*
Faculty mentor: Yasuo Ito

**Usman Beg**, Electrical Engineering
*Pathway for the Biosynthesis of Coenzyme Q Precursor, 4-Hydroxybenzoate from Tyrosine*
Faculty mentor: R. Meganathan

**Thomas Bouril**, History
*Access for All: Higher Education Accessibility for Europeans with Disabilities*
Faculty mentor: Nancy Castle

**Casey Heuer**, Geography
*Coral Decline in the Caribbean Sea: A Temporal Comparative Analysis between Sea Surface Temperature and Coral Loss in Belize and the US Virgin Islands*
Faculty mentor: James Wilson

**Zachary Howard**, Biological Sciences
*The Effects of Metformin, Rapamycin, And Sorafenib on hepatocellular Carcinoma*
Faculty mentor: Barrie Bode

**Jacob Lawrence**, Community Leadership and Civic Engagement
*NGOs on the Prairie: An Analysis of Illinois’ Nonprofit Arts Organizations and Accountability*
Faculty mentor: Alecia Schatteman

**Laura Rodriguez**, Public Health Administration
*Level of Depressive Symptoms Between MSM and Non-MSM by Ethnicity and Nativity*
Faculty mentor: Arlene Keddie

**Sumeet Sandhu**, Economics
*Fairness and Salience in Taxation*
Faculty mentor: Jeremy Groves

**Joshua Stevens**, Physics
*Computer Modeling of Phospholipid Membranes*
Faculty mentor: Laurence Lurio

**Evan Wittke**, Biological Sciences
*Evaluation of ASCT2 Expression in the Simulated Tumor Microenvironment*
Faculty mentor: Barrie Bode
The Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research (USOAR) program provides funding for student-generated research projects. Students participating in the USOAR program complete their research and artistry projects on NIU's campus, in the local community, nationally, or internationally.

In 2013, 20 undergraduate students received funding totaling $33,000 to conduct their research and artistry projects, with 3 students traveling abroad to complete their project.

Faculty mentors included presidential research professors, department chairs, professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and instructors.

“The USOAR program provides an opportunity for undergraduate students to take charge of their education and to develop skills for success in the global market...this project provided me with a unique opportunity to apply my knowledge in a practical, real-world situation.”
Evan Wittke, Biological Sciences USOAR recipient
2014 USOAR Recipients

**College of Education**

**Robert Budde**, Kinesiology  
*Popular Energy Drinks and the Effects on Performance*  
Faculty mentor: Amanda Salacinski

**Ian Gwaltney & Nick Kramer**, Athletic Training  
*The Effects of Low Level Light Therapy on Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness*  
Faculty mentor: William Pitney

**Matthew Stiefel**, Athletic Training  
*Best Practices for Sports Medicine Management at the Intercollegiate Level*  
Faculty mentor: William Pitney

**College of Engineering & Engineering Technology**

**Corey Buzzard**, Electrical Engineering  
*Biological Sound Detector for Real-Time Functional Movement Analysis*  
Faculty mentor: Martin Kocanda

**Kyle Corn**, Mechanical Engineering  
*Modeling and Visualizing of Contact Points for Railroad Simulations*  
Faculty mentor: Behrooz Fallahi

**Erik Desch, Daniel Flynn & Daniel Greenberg**, Mechanical Engineering  
*Aero Design Team 2013-2014*  
Faculty mentor: Nicholas Pohlman

**Kevin McNary**, Mechanical Engineering  
*NIU Robotics- Autonomous Ground Robot*  
Faculty mentor: Martin Kocanda

**College of Health & Human Sciences**

**Hajer Al-Hamden**, Medical Laboratory Sciences  
*Comparison of a Point of Care Method to a Traditional Tube Method to Determine DEA 1.1 Antigen in Healthy Canine Pets to Increase Transfusion Safety*  
Faculty mentor: Cristine Fior Clemente Dos Santos

**Carla Scholpp**, Medical Laboratory Sciences  
*Comparison of the Presence of Enteric Pathogenic Bacteria in the Saliva and Stools of Healthy Dogs Fed Traditional and Commercial Raw Diet*  
Faculty mentor: Cristine Fior Clemente Dos Santos

**College of Liberal Arts & Sciences**

**Usman Beg**, Electrical Engineering  
*Coenzyme Q Biosynthesis: Role of UbiX in UbiG Expression*  
Faculty mentor: R. Meganathan

**Karissa Kessen**, History  
*Violence, Memory, and Commemoration: Representations of Genocide in South American Memorial Museums*  
Faculty mentor: J.D. Bowers

**LeRoy Reinko**, Biological Sciences  
*Harvesting Algae for Biofuel Production*  
Faculty mentor: Gabriel Holbrook

**Bailey Rhoads**, Biological Sciences  
*Regulation of GLI3 by TLR4*  
Faculty mentor: Sherine Elsawa

**Jessie Shattuck**, History  
*A New Disciplinary Approach to Merovingian Gender Studies*  
Faculty mentor: Valerie Garver

**Ramona Terwedow**, Biology  
*Modernization of the NIU Herbarium: Keeping up with the Joneses*  
Faculty mentor: Melvin Duvall

**Jamison Thorne**, Professional Physics  
*Shaping Relativistic Electron Mirrors for Production of Intense X-rays*  
Faculty mentor: Philippe Piot

**College of Visual and Performing Arts**

**Melissa Woodall**, Illustration  
*Visualizing Chiropractic Motion Palpation Techniques*  
Faculty mentor: Kim Martens
The Undergraduate Research Assistantship (URA) program provides opportunities for undergraduate students to work on faculty-mentored research. The URA program supports approximately 15-20 students during each semester and is available year round, with students conducting research in the fall, spring, and summer.

URAs are able to work 10 hours per week under the guidance of a faculty member in a position that is directly related to their career path and/or academic discipline.

The Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP) is funded through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) Dean’s Office. URAP supports undergraduate students in CLAS that conduct faculty-mentored research projects during the fall and spring semester.

On behalf of CLAS, OSEEL coordinates the URAP program and is responsible for program marketing, the application process, communication with faculty and students, program evaluations, and assessment.
Research Travel Scholarships

The purpose of the Undergraduate Travel Scholarship is to support undergraduate students who are traveling to conferences, artistic competitions, or other applicable events to present the results of their faculty-mentored research or creative projects.

Students can receive up to $300 from OSEEL and must get matching funds from college, department, or other source equal to the amount requested.

Travel scholarships were awarded to a number of students to attend the following conferences:

- **Critical Reflections An Undergraduate Philosophy Conference, University of Windsor, Canada**
  - Kaylie Provenzano

- **SAA 79th Annual Meeting, Austin, TX**
  - Lindsey Komes

- **American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA**
  - Jesslyn Truesdale

- **2013 ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition, New Orleans, LA**
  - Joel Dennison

- **National Association of School Psychologists, Washington, DC**
  - Nelly Bonilla

- **AAC&U Diversity, Learning & Student Success, Chicago, IL**
  - Lauren Boddy

- **Association for Psychological Science, San Francisco, CA**
  - Kelly Polz
  - Falak Ishaque
  - Jared Gerstenkorn
  - Mary Baggio
  - Taylor Koegel
  - Emily Beshansky
  - Leanna Rosinski
  - Jonathan Lopez

Funding was also provided to groups of students to attend or present at:

- Adella De La Torra
- Fermi Lab
- Society for Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

5,621 awarded to students to travel and present their work around the country

Michael Dhesse presents his poster at the Great Lakes Athletic Trainers' Association Winter Meeting
Many NIU students had the opportunity to present research and artistry not only on campus, but also across the country. 16 NIU students traveled to Lexington, Kentucky to present at the National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR) in early April, 2014. Over the course of the 3 day conference, NIU students presented 18 different projects through posters and oral sessions. OSEEL promotes, coordinates, supervises, and funds the annual trip to the National Conference for Undergraduate Research, with additional financial support of honors students from University Honors.

A visit from a Chinese Delegation on campus in fall 2013 provided an opportunity for NIU students to share their research findings. 10 NIU students presented their research and artistry projects in an effort to develop a relationship with the campus and community. OSEEL coordinated and hosted the symposium in Altgeld Hall.

In July 2013, participation in NIU’s first-ever research-round table, which highlighted the strength and quality of faculty and student research to our nation’s leaders, occurred in Washington, D.C. Discussions focused on NIU’s advancement of world-class fundamental research, commitment to integrating and applying the knowledge created to promote economic and social well-being of the region, and engagement of students in these processes.
Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day

Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day (URAD) provides students with the opportunity to present their faculty-mentored research or artistry project. Posters and presentations are judged, and prizes are awarded in two categories: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and Art, Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AEHSS).

This year, 300 student presenters participated as they showcased 200 posters. 150 faculty mentors from 36 academic departments provided mentorship to students during the research and presentation process. Over 500 people attended URAD.

Total number of students participating in URAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY11</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY12</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY13</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY14</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2014 URAD Award Winners

Art, Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences

First Place
Maria Senf, Psychology
Sleep and Boundary Management Around Technology Use
Faculty mentor: Larissa Barber

Second Place
Thomas Bouril, NGO Leadership & Development
Access for All: Higher Education Accessibility for Europeans with Disabilities
Faculty mentor: Nancy Castle

Third Place
Barbara Ohata, Psychology
Effects of Vestibular Pathology on Spatial Orientation in Mice
Faculty mentor: Douglas Wallace

Honorable Mention
Juliane Totzke, Chemistry
A Comparison of the Gender Distribution in STEM Fields at NIU
Faculty mentor: Courtney Gallaher

People’s Choice
Lauren Nale, Nursing & Health Studies
Mixed Methods of Study on Treatments/Services for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Faculty mentor: Lucy Bilaver

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

First Place
Amany Abdel-Motaleb, Chemistry & Biochemistry
Investigation of the Chemical Composition of Human Retinal Lipofuscin in Relation to Age Related Macular Degeneration
Faculty mentor: Elizabeth Gaillard

Second Place
Patrick Wendling, Chemistry & Biochemistry
The Modeling of Aging and Inflammation in Bruch’s Membrane through Modified Fibronectin and their Effects on ARPE-19 cells
Faculty mentors: Elizabeth Gaillard & Mai Thao

Third Place
Kevin McNary, Audrey Pearson, Ryan Riddel & Martin Zon, Electrical Engineering
Autonomous Robot with Artificial Vision
Faculty mentor: Ji-Chul Ryu

Honorable Mention
David Beamish and Adam Krejci, Electrical Engineering
Electronically Controlled Programmable Continuously Variable Transmission
Faculty mentors: Brianno Coller & Martin Kocanda

People’s Choice
Joshua Ott and Derek Seaton, Mechanical Engineering
Twin Chamber Valveless Pulsejet Engine
Faculty mentor: Nicholas Pohlman
Faculty Mentor of the Year

Faculty mentors are nominated by their mentees participating in URAD. Candidates for the Faculty Mentor of the Year are evaluated on their ability to foster student participation in research and artistry activities, support critical thinking, and develop a mentoring relationship.

**Dr. Heide Fehrenbach** is a distinguished research professor in the Department of History within College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS).

Dr. Fehrenbach's research interests include:
- Modern Europe (Germany)
- Cultural/Intellectual
- Gender
- Sexuality and Women
- Nationalism and Identity
- Race and Ethnicity

"**Dr. Fehrenbach** has gone above and beyond in supporting my development as a researcher, a student, and a historian. She continually sets high, but reasonable, expectations to ensure I work to the best of my ability."

---

**Mentee of Dr. Fehrenbach**
The Huskie Service Scholars (HSS) program strives to provide support for first-year, low-income and/or first-generation students at NIU. Fellows develop peer networks and relationships with mentors as they engage in service work on campus and in the community.

Throughout the 2013-14 academic year, 16 fellows and 5 peer mentors dedicated 300 hours to service work, mentoring, reflection, and training opportunities. Fellows served with one of 6 campus partners, including:

- Center for Black Studies
- Environmental Studies
- Latino Resource Center
- Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
- Student Involvement and Leadership Development

HSS and NLAs facilitated a service opportunity for Filipino and Chinese students participating in the NIU Winter Camp 2014 hosted by the International Training Office. The students made newborn baby hats out of recycled t-shirts which, in collaboration with NIU Anthropology Club and Muslim Student Association, were donated to Syrian refugees through Helping Hand for Relief and Development.
Civic Reflection

Civic Reflection (CR) helps NIU students, faculty, and staff come together to discuss and relate a piece of literature or media to their civic engagement experiences. Through CR, NIU is able to educate both its students and faculty alike through meaningful discussion.

Students, faculty, and staff were trained to facilitate CR discussions during 2 separate day-long trainings. Facilitators led discussions around impactful and often controversial topics such as service to others, racism, religion, politics, change, body image, education, the importance of voting, and more.

16 facilitators were trained to lead CR discussions
13 discussions were led by trained CR facilitators
113 students participated in CR discussions

Interfaith

NIU is proud to participate in the Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge launched by President Obama in the spring of 2011. The university partners with local service providers such as Feed ‘Em Soup, Hope Haven, and the Voluntary Action Center to help relieve hunger in the community.

On the national level, students can be involved in two organizations. The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships works to build bridges between the federal government and nonprofit organizations. Students can also be involved in the InterFaith Youth Core which promotes religious and non-religious tolerance on campuses, as well as a core value of all faiths: service to others.
AmeriCorps VISTA

In collaboration with Illinois Campus Compact and OSEEL, the AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America) strives to find new ways to enforce new and existing strategies to support low-income and first-generation college students (FGCS). As part of this mission, the VISTA oversees the Huskie Service Scholars program and the FGCS committee: First-generation Aspire to Succeed Together (FAST).

The VISTA also works to share the importance of college with middle school and high school FGCS and their families in the local community.

Current partners that the VISTA works with include Kishwaukee United Way, Kishwaukee College, and Sycamore School District 427.

“VISTA provides great opportunities to raise awareness on vulnerable populations on campus and in the community.”
Lucero Martinez, Americorp VISTA
First-Generation Aspire to Succeed Together

First-generation Aspire to Succeed Together (FAST) is a student group, initiated and led by the VISTA, that strives to improve college access and success among first-generation college students (FGCS) at NIU, as well as in the DeKalb and Sycamore area middle schools and high schools.

The Illinois Campus Compact-VISTA and FAST members visit these schools to provide college readiness information with future FGCS. At these visits, students are presented with activities and materials that will both engage them and have a positive impact on their educational career.

FAST also helps educate parents in the local community through Parent University. Parent University consists of a series of informational sessions pertaining to college readiness information.

4 campus partners assisted with Parent University
2 community partners including Sycamore School District 427 and Kishwaukee College
5 participants from NIU make up the FAST group
“Growing” Partnerships

Communiversity Gardens

The Communiversity Gardens were developed for those interested in growing food that is tasty, healthy, and directed to local food pantries. The gardens are intended to inspire greater nutritional health for the NIU population and to provide a basis for general and multidisciplinary research.

Huskie Service Scholar Garden

HSS cares for their own garden as a project of civic engagement. The HSS garden provides a continuous and sustainable opportunity for volunteerism and educates students on the importance and benefits of locally grown food. A variety of vegetables and herbs, including cucumbers, carrots, summer squash, peppers, and basil, are grown and harvested from the garden, then donated to community sites in need of fresh produce.

“The HSS Community Garden project has provided students with a unique opportunity to learn about the significance of locally grown food. Students have cared for and donated over 100 pounds of produce just in its first year. As a HSS participant, I have grown just as much as the HSS garden itself, learning how to care for it and experience the impact it has on the community.”

Kathryn Olson, Huskie Service Scholar Cohort Leader
Community Engagement Showcase

New in 2014, the Community Engagement Showcase provided an opportunity for undergraduate students to present the results of their community engaged outreach initiatives in 2013. 22 students presented community engagement projects based around their participation in community-based service or research, including work completed through a service-learning course, internship, or student organization.

Programs represented by the students at the Showcase included STEM Outreach, Huskie Service Scholars, and Huskie Alternative Breaks.

SERVICE Committee

The Student Experiences and Responsible Volunteering in Community Engagement (SERVICE) committee was developed for the 2013-2014 academic year to streamline communication in an effort to strengthen cohesion and support among campus offices and community agencies. The SERVICE committee focuses on enhancing collaboration for programs and activities across divisions to broaden outreach and expand opportunities for students. The committee works to share NIU students and resources to address community needs.
Graduate School Preparation Seminar

The Graduate School Preparation Seminar (GSPS) is hosted twice a year, in October and February. The goal of GSPS is to increase the number of students applying for Graduate school through providing information about the application process.

The seminar gives students the opportunity to speak with educators about popular programs, admissions requirements, and financial aid options.

GRE Basics Workshop

The GRE Basics Workshop offers two weeks of workshops focused on helping students become familiar with the Graduate Records Exam (GRE). Each of the sessions reviews a different section of the GRE, from introducing students to the test itself to sessions on verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and writing.

GRE Basics is also provided twice during the academic year, and is facilitated by knowledgeable graduate students from NIU.

OSEEL Initiatives

20 sessions provided
53 students participated in GRE Basics workshops
70 students participated in the fall and spring GSPS

90 percent of students surveyed felt more prepared for graduate school after attending a seminar or workshop.
Northern Light Ambassadors

OSEEL, along with the Office of Student Academic Success, coordinates the Northern Lights Ambassadors (NLA) program. NLAs are a select group of students chosen based on their academic leadership and excellence, as well as involvement in engaged learning activities.

NLAs represent their respective colleges on campus and in the community and focus on promoting increased retention, engaged learning, fund development, public relations, outreach, and special events.

Throughout the past year, NLAs were present in the President’s Tent at home football games, represented their colleges at open houses, and passed out ribbons during Huskies Say Thanks to increase donor awareness on campus.

NLAs have gone on to become:

- Lincoln Laureates
- REU participants
- USOAR recipients
- Forward, Together, Forward scholars
- NCUR presenters
Mentoring Initiatives

OSEEL assisted with a pilot alumni mentoring program and aided in the implementation of a “mentor” website by compiling mentor programs on campus. The website creates a space where opportunities for mentoring are easily accessible for students. Mentoring is designed to help connect NIU students with a peer mentor through an academic or co-curricular program. Programs partner an undergraduate at NIU with an experienced student who is academically successful, involved on campus, and a positive role model. Peer mentors help teach each mentee how to build leadership skills and grow to be successful both academically and professionally.

OSEEL Initiatives

- **36 peer mentors** in OSEEL office
- **70 peer mentor professional development meetings**
- **1600+ students** received mentorship

**FYComp Peer Advocates**

First-Year Composition (FYComp) Peer Advocates are undergraduate student mentors paired with Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and Instructors in the English Department to help students with their First-Year Composition course and their academic and social integration into the NIU community. OSEEL helped support the peer advocate program by assisting in trainings, weekly meetings, receptions, and more.
Internships

OSEEL internships

The OSEEL internship provides students with the opportunity to develop professional abilities, to explore career options, and to test their classroom skills in real-life learning situations. As an OSEEL intern, students learn skills necessary for programmatic support, gain experience working alongside OSEEL staff, and receive a notation on their transcript, marking participation in an OSEEL opportunity.

Campus internships

Completing an internship is the number one predictor of student career success. NIU makes internship opportunities available to all students. Many NIU students work in on-campus jobs that develop professional skills and may be eligible for internship credit, academic credit, or transcript notation. OSEEL has been strongly involved in assisting in campus-wide internship initiatives to promote the benefits of internship completion. Students can speak with both their employment supervisor and academic advisor to determine if their on-campus job is eligible for internship credit.
Engaged Learning Publications

We are also publishing our work to share the NIU experience with the higher education community. These publications include:


Engaged Learning Conferences

Over the past year, representatives from OSEEL have participated in multiple conferences centered around engaged learning, allowing OSEEL staff to connect with colleges and universities around the country.

Multiple OSEEL staff members presented on current OSEEL/NIU initiatives at these local and national conferences, in addition to attending sessions on student engagement trends. Some of these conferences included:

Our Community Partners

- Angel Outreach
- Argonne National Laboratory
- Boys and Girls Club
- Centro sin Fronteras
- DeKalb County Community Gardens
- DeKalb County Court House
- DeKalb County Youth Services Bureau
- DeKalb School District 428
- Egyptian Theatre
- Feed ‘Em Soup
- Feed My Starving Children
- Fermilab
- Goodwill DeKalb
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hope Haven
- Kishwaukee College
- Kishwaukee Community Hospital
- Kishwaukee United Way
- Lovell Federal Health Care Center
- New Hope Church
- Northern Illinois Food Bank
- PAWS Animal Shelter
- Relay for Life
- Salvation Army Food Pantry in Dekalb
- Shiloh Baptist Church PADS location
- Sycamore School District 427
- TAILS Humane Society
- University Village
- YMCA

Our Campus Partners

- Academic Advising Center
- Accounting Office
- Alumni Association
- CHANCE Program
- College of Business
- College of Education
- College of Engineering & Engineering Technology
- College of Health & Human Sciences
- College of Law
- College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- College of Visual & Performing Arts
- Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships
- Document Services
- Facilities Planning & Operations
- Faculty Development & Instructional Design Center
- Financial Aid
- First- and Second-Year Experience
- FYComp
- Geology & Environmental Geosciences
- Holmes Student Center
- Housing and Dining
- Human Resources
- Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, and Energy
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Latino Resource Center
- LGBTQ Resource Center
- Media Services
- NGOLD Center
- Office of Assessment Services
- Office of Research Compliance & Integrity
- Office of Student Academic Success
- Office of the President
- Office of the Vice Provost
- Orientation & Family Connections
- PROMISE Program
- Registration & Records
- STEM Outreach
- Student Involvement & Leadership Development
- Student Group: TEDX
- Student Group: Communiversity Gardens
- Technical Transfer Office
- Testing Services
- The Asian American Center
- The Center for Black Studies
- The Graduate School
- The Graduate Student Research Association
- The NIU Foundation
- The Northern Fund
- The Office of the Bursar
- The Orientation Office
- The Scholarship Office
- The Study Abroad Office
- Transportation Services
- University Honors Program
- University Libraries
- Women’s Resource Center