



July 12, 2008

Dear Colleague,

In July 2008, NIU established a STEM Outreach Office to coordinate NIU's outreach activities in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. As the new STEM Outreach Coordinator, I would like to introduce our mission and myself. For many years, various NIU departments and colleges in the STEM disciplines worked with schools and communities for purposes of increasing STEM literacy and interest in STEM fields as career choices. The STEM Outreach Office coordinates school presentations, university visits, summer camps, professional development for teachers and other activities, so that you can easily access them.

At NIU, we recognize the importance of reaching out to young people so that we may change the trends in STEM education that impact global competitiveness.

At a time when the Illinois economic infrastructure needs innovation and a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, slightly more than half of high school graduates have the mathematics and science knowledge needed to be successful in post-secondary education or to secure livable-wage jobs. – *Keeping Illinois Competitive* (NIU, 2005)

During six years as NIU's Physics Outreach Coordinator, I made physics presentations to thousands of students in more than sixty schools across the region. Schools found these presentations, which combine my experience communicating with people of all ages, my excitement for the sciences and my pursuit of interesting demonstrations, to be highly motivational for students and have invited me back year after year. As the new STEM Outreach Coordinator, I am expanding the focus of these presentations and other outreach programs such as NIU's *Haunted Physics Laboratory* to address more concepts in additional sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

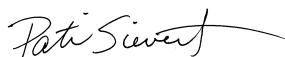
The new *Frontier Science Road Show* is available for presentation in schools starting in Fall 2008. This program brings the flash and sizzle of new science and NIU's cutting edge research in demonstrations appropriate for elementary and middle school audiences. All programs are designed to help students meet Illinois Learning Standards. References from regional educators are available on request.

NIU's STEM Outreach web site, <http://www.outreach.niu.edu/stem>, contains information on the programming available to schools, including the fees when applicable, but here is a sample of what we have to offer:

- ❖ Our ***Frontier Science Road Shows*** are each designed to grab students' attention with exciting demonstrations while introducing them to the wonders of our world through science. We developed a variety of demonstration packages, from our program for K-2 students, ***It's Not Magic, It's Science***, to several packages for older elementary and middle school students, each emphasizing related science concepts. Schools may choose from these packages or work with us to customize programs for their particular needs and audiences. The standard fee for a full day of four hour-long presentations is \$500.00. A half-day fee of \$300.00 covers two presentations. Pre-show and post-show materials for teachers are included. Schools are encouraged to add teacher workshops and evening presentations for families. Fees for workshops and evening presentations range from an additional \$100 up to \$500.00 depending on the scope of the programming requested. If necessary, we will work with you to help find funding from outside sources.
- ❖ ***NIU's haunted Physics Laboratory***, a.k.a. ***NIU's Physics Phun Lab*** during spring semester, our largest scale hands-on science exploration program can visit your school for as little as \$1500.00. This covers 75 interactive displays set up at your location for a four-hour open house style event.
- ❖ We are expanding our offerings of summer residential STEM camps both on our main campus and at the Lorado Taft Campus. We can also provide consultation, support, and curriculum for your own Saturday STEM Camps or Spring Break STEM Day Camps. Fees would depend on the scope of NIU's involvement.
- ❖ NIU will continue to offer ***New Ideas in Science*** conferences for teachers, student competitions in the STEM fields, host the ***Regional Science Fair***, and support area science teachers' groups.
- ❖ We encourage teachers to contact our office to arrange a visit from STEM faculty or student volunteers to your classrooms to share their enthusiasm and research efforts with students or a visit to NIU's STEM laboratories and other facilities. We are pleased to be able to offer these arrangements without a fee.

Getting students excited about their world through science and the other STEM fields is a passion for me. I'm looking forward to working with the wonderful educators I have met in the past six years and meeting more of you. Please feel free to contact me at (815)753-1201 or [psievert@niu.edu](mailto:psievert@niu.edu) for further information.

Sincerely,



Patricia Sievert  
STEM Coordinator