Exploration and Discovery

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Northern Illinois University
Dynamic Campus Experience

Northern Illinois University provides a living-and-learning environment that fosters the kinds of transformational experiences we’re known for.

New and remodeled residence halls. Division I athletics. A 10,000-seat arena presenting top entertainers. A Student Recreation Center with 125,000 square feet of play and workout space. Expanded Wi-Fi access.

• NIU opened a new 1,000-bed residence hall complex in the fall of 2012. The complex features two residential buildings where students can live in small group clusters of 12. It offers students a greater level of independence and privacy.

• NIU is renovating current residence halls in response to the needs of today’s students. Additions will include food courts and coffee shops.

• NIU’s baccalaureate review will produce not only skilled members of tomorrow’s work-force but active, responsible citizens.
With 17 departments, two divisions, 33 degree programs and more than 6,000 students, Liberal Arts and Sciences is the largest of the six undergraduate colleges at NIU.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences boasts 11 Ph.D.-granting programs.

NIU has one of the largest biological sciences programs in the state, with more than 600 undergraduate biology majors.

The Master of Public Administration program is ranked fifth nationally in the specialty field of city management and urban policy and 12th in the specialty of public finance and budgeting by U.S. News and World Report.

The new Anthropology Museum offers premium museum exhibition space and a training ground for undergraduates and graduate students. The museum holds more than 12,000 artifacts, with regional strengths in Southeast Asia, New Guinea and North America.

The American Chemical Society (ACS) has ranked the NIU Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry among the top producers of ACS-certified bachelor’s degrees.

The Department of Communication has been ranked by the Communication Institute for Online Scholarship as a “top 10 research department” in nine research specialties with noted “research strengths” in nearly 30 areas.

NIU’s student newspaper, The Northern Star, has twice won “Best Online Newspaper” in the nation for the Web version of its daily paper. The Star also holds two “Pacemaker Awards,” considered the Pulitzer Prize for college newspapers nationwide.

The Department of Computer Science is offering a certificate in mobile-device programming, teaching students how to write apps for the iPhone, Android, Windows Phone and other mobile-device platforms.

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures is one of the largest foreign language departments in the country, offering instruction in 16 languages, including Burmese, Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Khmer, Malay, Russian, Tagalog and Thai.

The Department of Geography was the first program in Illinois to offer a certificate program in Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

The Department of History have been highly decorated for their research scholarship with prestigious fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Fulbright Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

NIU’s undergraduate program in meteorology is the oldest undergraduate program of its kind in Illinois and one of the largest undergraduate-only meteorology programs in North America.

Scientists in the Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences have been at the forefront of Antarctic research for more than four decades. Their work has helped document ancient climates on the continent and is shedding new light on contemporary issues of global climate change.

NIU’s History/Social Science Teacher Certification Program has been judged one of the best in the nation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Professors in the Department of History have been highly decorated for their research scholarship with prestigious fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Fulbright Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

NIU’s world-renowned Center for Southeast Asian Studies boasts one of the nation’s largest concentrations of expertise in the region’s history, politics, people, geography, art, literature and languages. It is one of only a few federally funded national resource centers for study of the region.

U.S. News and World Report ranks the Department of History’s Ph.D. program among the top 100 programs in the country.

The Department of Mathematical Sciences traditionally has been one of the country’s largest programs for certification of secondary mathematics teachers. The department also has one of the nation’s largest middle school mathematics endorsement programs.

The Department of Philosophy is ranked second nationwide by the Philosophical Gourmet Report among philosophy departments offering terminal master’s degree programs.

Both faculty members and students in the Department of Physics conduct research at nearby Argonne National Laboratory and Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, as well as at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland.

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Life-changing Learning Experiences

For students in NIU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the educational setting isn’t necessarily confined to a classroom—or even our college campus.

Aided by faculty members who strive to create engaged-learning opportunities, our students learn by doing. They work in schools, non-profit organizations and federal laboratories. They intern with local, state and federal officials and with top companies in the Chicago region. They study foreign cultures, unearth ancient artifacts worldwide and literally go to the ends of the earth to study global warming. They even co-author scientific studies, organize academic conferences and make presentations on the national stage.

Such engaged-learning activities are at the heart of the NIU experience. They don’t just foster creativity and intensify learning—they change lives. They open students’ eyes to unimagined possibilities and help them achieve goals that they never dreamed possible.

Types of Engaged-learning Opportunities

• Internships
• Service learning
• Undergraduate research experiences
• Living-learning communities
• Study abroad
• Clinical teaching experiences
• Nationwide academic competitions

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

“As a political science major at NIU, I had the opportunity to take part in internships, campaign volunteer positions and study abroad programs, all of which truly enriched and strengthened my baccalaureate experience.”

—NIU 2011 Lincoln Laureate Nora Lindwall, winner of a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue her graduate degree in the Netherlands.
Students as Explorers


Faculty members in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at NIU conduct cutting-edge studies in all of these areas and more. But what’s even more amazing—so do our undergraduates.

Our students work alongside scientists in university laboratories and at two nearby prestigious federal labs, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and Argonne National Laboratory. Some even win grants to travel the globe to conduct their research.

For undergraduates, we nurture research opportunities through special programs such as Huskie Research Rookies, which pairs students with faculty mentors ranging from world-renowned archaeologists to award-winning physicists.

It’s all part of the NIU philosophy: Students learn best by doing—and by discovering their own talents along the way.

More info: www.niu.edu/engagedlearning/research
Live and Learn

Our Living Learning Communities strengthen connections between students and faculty within a chosen area of study. These dynamic learning communities have added benefits, including:

- Formal and informal out-of-class interaction with professors
- Increased opportunity for career information, internships and professional networking
- Access to special facilities and equipment in a supportive-learning environment
- Educational programs that enhance classroom learning
- Social and cultural activities with students and faculty

Types of Living Learning Communities

- Honors House
- Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) House
- Teacher Education and Certification House
- International House
- Foreign Language Residence Program
- Exploring Majors House
- Journeys of Spirituality and Meaning Floor
- Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC) Floor
- Transfer House

More info: www.niu.edu/housing/llc

Themed Learning Communities

Themed Learning Communities (TLCs) allow groups of students to take two or three classes together. The classes examine a common theme and require students to draw upon concepts from other TLC courses.

Advantages of TLCs:
- Students engage deeply with a course theme
- Learning is connected across courses in collaborative and active ways
- Students develop intellectual and social relationships with their peers and faculty, easing the transition into college

More info: www.niu.edu/engagedlearning/
Challenge Yourself through University Honors

Looking for a challenge on your college journey of exploration? Check out the University Honors Program.

University Honors provides enriched, creative and challenging educational experiences for motivated students of high intellectual potential. More than 40 percent of the university’s honors students are from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. (Many departments within Liberal Arts and Sciences offer discipline-specific honors programs as well.)

Benefits of University Honors participation:

- Access to smaller, interactive honors-only courses
- Priority registration for courses each semester
- Opportunities to compete for honors-only scholarships, tuition waivers, student staff positions and study-abroad and research-project support
- Personalized interactions with honors faculty and staff
- Honors-sponsored academic, social and service events
- Retreat for new freshmen
- Honors Centers with supportive staff, computer lab and study and meeting spaces
- Peer mentor program for new honors students
- Individualized honors academic advising (in addition to college-specific advising)
- Option to reside in the Honors House living-learning community
- Significant credential for graduate school and the job market

More info: www.honors.niu.edu/honors/

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

“The Honors Program allows students to work closely with professors through smaller classes, special workshops and events, and the capstone independent project. Getting to know your professors is very important and will give you an advantage when applying for internships, jobs and graduate programs.”

—Computer science major Arnulfo Arroyo
Study Abroad: Expanding Your Horizons

Learning need not be confined to a classroom—or even a country. At NIU, we encourage our students to explore the world.

NIU’s Study Abroad Program provides opportunities that:
- Suit any major
- Include 75 different countries
- Fit any schedule, from 10 days to a full academic year

A large number of study abroad trips are led by experienced NIU faculty members, who turn textbook lessons into real-life experiences in such destinations as Cambodia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, England, Ireland, Malaysia, Sicily, Sierra Leone, Spain, Tanzania and Thailand.

More info: www.niu.edu/studyabroad

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

“I owe this place so much. Who I am now is a direct result of the experiences I’ve had, the people I’ve met and the love I’ve found for Salamanca.”
—Kristen Roenfanz, who studied abroad in Salamanca, Spain

“I had the time of my life. And I learned so much. And there is so much you cannot even think of prepare for or expect until you go. It is an incredible opportunity.”
—Jacob Buckrop, who studied abroad in Uganda and Rwanda
The World is Their Classroom

Many faculty members in NIU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are internationally celebrated teachers and scientists. They publish articles, edit journals, write books, win awards and earn headlines with their discoveries. They also guide students on adventures in the classroom and around the world, engaging them in the practice of asking questions and finding answers.

• Heide Fehrenbach is a world-renowned historian of post-World War II Europe and winner of many awards for her research, including the prestigious Guggenheim.

• English Professor Amy Newman is among the most original poets writing in America today. Her works have won critical praise, national awards and international attention.

• Professors Jeff Chown and Laura Vazquez have helped the NIU Department of Communication earn a national reputation for documentary filmmaking. They also have inspired thousands of students, many of whom have gone on to work in the film industry and at prestigious universities nationwide.

• Dan Gebo is an internationally renowned anthropologist and paleontologist whose discoveries have graced the front pages of such publications as the New York Times, the Washington Post, USA Today and the Chicago Tribune. His research focuses on the locomotion and evolution of primates.

• Meteorology Professor David Changnon is one of the nation’s leading scholars in applied climatology, but at NIU he is best known for providing hands-on learning opportunities to his students—dozens of whom have interned with Chicago’s WGN-TV weather guru Tom Skilling. What’s more, nearly 40 percent of Changnon’s published articles were co-authored by, you guessed it, his students.

• The American Psychological Association presented Professor Angela Grippa with the Award for Distinguished Early Career Scientific Contribution to Psychology. The honor recognizes groundbreaking research by Grippa and her students into the association between depression and cardiovascular disease in animal models.

• Dhiman Chakraborty leads a group of NIU physicists and student researchers who are members of the ATLAS collaboration at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland. CERN is the world’s leading laboratory for particle physics. Chakraborty and his team have made important contributions to scientific understanding of the subatomic world and to the discoveries of the top quark and Higgs boson.

• Geologists Ross Powell and Reed Scherer are well known internationally for their Antarctic investigations, which are providing information vital to predicting how ice sheets and sea levels will respond to projected warmer temperatures.

• Professor Elizabeth Gaillard, who holds joint appointment at NIU in chemistry and biology, leads a group of scientists and student researchers who are developing high-tech diagnostic tools that could vastly improve detection of blinding diseases, such as age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.
NIU Alumni: Leaders in all walks of life

Many of our alumni contribute to the fabric of the Chicago region, while others are found in positions of influence across the country and around the world. Together they bear witness to a core value of NIU: Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow.

- Anies Rasyid Baswedan, president of Paramadina University in Jakarta, Indonesia
- Tim Bennett, former president of Harpo Productions
- Mark Brown, Chicago Sun-Times columnist
- Zerrie Campbell, nationally known educator who served as first African-American woman president of Malcolm X College
- Ned Colletti, general manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers
- Diantha Ford-Kee, the first female athletics director in the history of Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, the first historically black institution of higher education in the United States
- Elena Haliczer, product director of social news, The Huffington Post Media Group
- Thomas R. Karl, director of the National Climatic Data Center
- Robert Katz, Hollywood producer whose film credits include “Crash,” winner of the 2006 Oscar for Best Picture
- Mary Katherine Krause, vice president for communications, College of American Pathologists
- John Landgraf, executive vice president of global nutrition for Abbott Laboratories
- John P. McKearn, renowned scientist and former head of discovery research at Seattle/Pharmacia, holds more than 50 patents, primarily in the areas of cancer treatment and inflammatory disease
- Thomas J. Near, associate professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and curator of ichthyology at the Yale University Peabody Museum of Natural History
- Jerry Rich, computer-industry entrepreneur and owner of Rich Harvest Farms, ranked among the nation’s top private golf courses
- John P. Sall, executive vice president and co-founder of SAS Institute Inc., the world’s largest privately held software company, twice ranked number 1 in the annual Fortune listings of “Best Places to Work”
- Manuel “Manny” Sanchez, founding partner of Sanchez Daniels & Hoffman LLP, one of the nation’s largest minority-owned and controlled law firms
- Paul Sereno, world-renowned paleontologist, University of Chicago
- Jolene L. Skinner, senior consultant at Towers Watson, a leading global professional services company
- Raymond G. Smerge, former executive vice president of Centex Corporation, a nationwide homebuilding and construction products corporation
- William F. Tate IV, Edward Mallinckrodt Distinguished Professor in Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis
- Michael Turner, Atlanta Falcons running back
- Kristina A. Valaitis, executive director of the Illinois Humanities Council
- Gary Watson, former president of Gannett Company Inc.’s Newspaper Division
- Jeffrey M. Yordon, founder and chief executive officer of Sagent Pharmaceuticals, a specialty pharmaceutical company
Make-a-difference majors

Most college students today aren’t simply searching for careers to make money. They want to make a difference.

With that in mind, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences spearheaded the creation of new research centers that oversee two interdisciplinary majors that have proven to be in high student demand:

- **The Environmental Studies major** provides students with broad-based knowledge of key 21st century environmental issues, such as climate change, water conservation and development of alternative energies. Program graduates are prepared to meet environmental and energy challenges via careers in industry, small business, academic research, nonprofit organizations and federal, state and local governments.

- **The Community Leadership and Civic Engagement degree program**—one of the few of its kind nationwide—provides training to students who will lead, work for and collaborate with nonprofit organizations, government agencies and socially responsible businesses.

Interdisciplinary Centers and Institutes in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

- Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability and Energy
- Center for NGO (Non-Profit) Leadership and Development
- Center for Southeast Asian Studies
- Institute for Nanoscience, Engineering and Technology
- Northern Illinois Center for Accelerator and Detector Development
- Public Opinion Laboratory
- Center for P-20 Engagement
- Center for Biochemical and Biophysical Studies
- Center for Secondary Science and Math Education
- Center for Latino and Latin American Studies
- Women’s Studies
- LGBT Studies
Areas of Study in Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Majors

Anthropology**
- Biological Sciences**
- Chemistry
  - Biochemistry
  - Chemistry
  - Chemistry for Pre-Professional Students
- Environmental Science Teaching**
- Secondary Teaching**

Communication Studies
- Media Studies
- Organizational/Corporate Communication
- Rhetoric and Public Communication

Community Leadership and Civic Engagement

Computer Science
- Computational Software
- Enterprise Software
- Software Development

Economics**
- English**

Environmental Studies

French
- French Language and Literature**
- Translation and Business French

Geography**
- Geology and Environmental Geosciences**
- Global Studies
- Geography

German
- German Language and Literature**
- Translation and Business German

History**

Psychology**

Sociology**

Spanish
- Spanish Language and Literature**
- Translation and Business Spanish

** Teacher certification available. Students planning to teach in senior or junior high schools must major in a subject area.

Undergraduate Minors

Actuarial Science

Anthropology

Applied Probability and Statistics

Biological Sciences

Chemistry

Chinese Studies

Classical Studies

Cognitive Studies

Communication Studies

Comparative Literature

Computer Science

Economics

English

Environmental Studies

French

Geography

Geology and Environmental Geosciences

German

Historical Studies

Italian

Japanese Studies

Journalism

Latin/Latin American Studies

Linguistics

Mathematical Sciences

Medieval Studies (concentration)

Philosophy

Physics

Political Science

Professional Communication

Psychology

Public Administration

Russian

Sociology

Southeast Asian Studies

Spanish

Urban Studies

Women's Studies

Why choose the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Northern Illinois University?

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the heart of Northern Illinois University, with 17 departments and seven academic centers that span the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. Students can choose from more than 30 majors, ranging from physics to philosophy, chemistry to communication and economics to environmental studies, as well as numerous minors, certificates and specialized training programs.

What distinguishes the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are the people – the 400 faculty and 200 staff and the opportunities that those dedicated individuals create for our students. Our faculty members are experts in their fields who are actively involved in creating and applying knowledge through teaching, research, scholarship and service. Guided by and working alongside these experts, our students undertake their own journeys of discovery, directly sharing in—and benefitting from—the creative process. Along the way, our students gain experiences and insights that prepare them to be civic and corporate leaders, educators, researchers and scientists.

In all Liberal Arts and Sciences disciplines, we stress engaged-learning activities such as internships, undergraduate research, service learning, student teaching and themed living-learning environments. These activities connect the classroom to real-world experiences and sharpen critical thinking, creativity and communication skills needed for 21st century careers and lives.

Ultimately, an NIU liberal arts education produces informed and engaged citizens who think clearly and deeply, express themselves effectively, and pride themselves on being lifelong learners who are able to adapt and flourish in any setting.

Christopher K. McCord
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Smerge Endowed Dean's Chair