# Table of Contents

Medical Motivations—*Civic, Social & Global Engagement* ......................................................... 4

Survey(ing) Says-*Research & Artistry* ........................................................................................................ 5

NICADD Research-*Research & Artistry* ........................................................................................................ 5

#SameHere-*Civic, Social & Global Engagement* ......................................................................................... 6

Mars Rover-*Research & Artistry* .................................................................................................................. 8

AIR Strips-*Research & Artistry* ................................................................................................................... 9

Send Silence Packing-*Leadership Development* ....................................................................................... 10

STEM Leadership-*Leadership Development* ............................................................................................ 12

Lunch with the Mayor-*Civic, Social & Global Engagement* ................................................................. 13

Communiversity Gardens-*Civic, Social & Global Engagement* ............................................................. 14

ILAS 440: Leadership and Professional Development-*Leadership Development* ............................ 15

ILAS 440: Research Investigation-*Research & Artistry* ................................................................. 15

Equestrian Team-*Leadership Development* ............................................................................................ 16

NASA...In Your Orbit-*Research & Artistry* ............................................................................................... 17

Congratulations ........................................................................................................................................... 17

Building Our House, Building Ourselves ................................................................................................. 18

Behind the Scenes ....................................................................................................................................... 19

Special Thanks ............................................................................................................................................. 19
MEDICAL MOTIVATIONS
Peyton Whiston

Over the summer, Peyton was a part of the Rural Interprofessional Preceptorship program through the National Center for Rural Health Professions. The Center is located on the campus of the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Rockford. Their goal is to meet the health care needs of rural Illinois residents by focusing on recruitment, retention, and health care delivery initiatives that will positively impact these residents and their communities. Through this program, Peyton spent six weeks at St. Mary’s Hospital in Centralia, IL. Only four students were part of the program coming from four different colleges and universities in Illinois and Indiana. Peyton had first-hand experience practicing medicine in a rural setting. Each day, he was able to shadow in a variety of departments within the hospital, including time with a bariatric surgeon, a family physician, and a hospital social worker. His favorite experiences were in family medicine because of the variety of patients and conditions that they treat. This experience made him even more aware of the interdisciplinary nature of healthcare. It also affirmed his desire to pursue a career in medicine. Each Friday, Peyton and the other three students in the program were able to discuss what they had experienced throughout the week in a classroom session with a professor from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During this time, they would also discuss journal articles or watch movies related to the American healthcare system. This past summer, Peyton also applied to medical school. He completed the application process in September and is currently interviewing at various medical schools.
SURVEY(ing) SAYS!
Sarah Shapley

Over the summer, Sarah Shapley utilized her McKearn Away experience to attend a geology field camp. Sarah found this experience challenging yet rewarding. She spent long hours engaged in field work, where she implemented hands-on mapping techniques. Sarah described her time at camp as a “huge growing experience for [her] in both personal skills and group collaboration.” Sarah explained that all of the drafting projects were completed individually, which allowed her to improve her ability to synthesize bulk data. Because of this practice, she is more confident in picking the most probable interpretation of her large-scale mapped data. Her adaptation and collaboration skills were put to the test during paired field work assignments, where in partners were changed every two to three days. Although she saw marked improvement in her quantitative and qualitative data collection and interpretive skills, her largest improvement was in 3D visualization of the map area. This field work experience put into practice the basic skills required to work as a field geologist. Sarah gained the confidence to work independently in her field and views field geology as a viable career option following graduation. She is confident that she will consistently use the skills she has gained from this trip throughout her career; Sarah is grateful for the opportunity provided to her by the McKearn Away Funding. While we are confident in her academic ability and drive, the McKearn team wishes Sarah the best of luck following her prestigious nationally competitive scholarship submissions to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program, as well as, the Marshall Scholarship.

NICADD RESEARCH
Dayne Coveyou

The spring of 2018 proved to be Dayne’s self-described “most productive, taxing, and worthwhile semester yet”. Since his Spring Break Away experience in Nepal last March, Dayne has been working diligently: taking on a full course load, attending Kappa Kappa Psi fraternity service events, serving as President of the Society of Physics Students, and working as a lab assistant under Kurt Francis and Dr. Vishnu Zutshi of the Physics Department. Throughout the summer semester, Dayne worked full-time at the Northern Illinois Center for Accelerator and Detector Development (NICADD) at NIU. There, his responsibilities focused on quality control of advanced light detectors and ensuring computer systems and data collection procedures worked well in conjunction. He is hopeful that this degree of on-the-job experience will lead to an internship at Fermilab in the 2019 summer semester. Currently, Dayne is preparing for an independent research project that he hopes to conduct in the upcoming spring semester. His research interest aims to verify the functionality of silicon photomultiplier behavior in a Mu2e CRV discounter.
On October 9th of this year, Christine openly and frankly talked about her experiences living with depression and anxiety in front of 175 people at a #SameHere sit down tour hosted at Northern Illinois University. During this event, speakers and musicians focused on how to transform the way mental health is approached and discussed on college campuses. Christine was asked to be part of a discussion panel as a way to share her story and provide hope to other students who may be struggling with mental health concerns. Christine has used her leadership experiences on campus and around the community to highlight the importance of taking mental health seriously and letting others know that they are not alone. This touring event aimed to raise awareness of how mental health affects everybody and about the ways we can try to destigmatize help-seeking.

The editing team felt that the following descriptions of Christine's story should come from her own words. The following content was not edited.

Trigger warning/content warning: suicide, depression, anxiety, self-injury, sexual assault

“Today, I openly shared my personal struggle with depression and anxiety in front of a crowd of hundreds of people. When I was asked to be the student on the panel at the #SameHereSitDown event, I accepted, but with reservations. While I have talked about my struggle with depression and anxiety in front of a crowd and have written and shared on social media my struggle, it was a struggle in and of itself to bare to the world the skeleton in my closet that has sat there for almost a decade. Even though I openly talked about my mental illness, I was beginning to burn myself out. While I wanted to strive to end the stigma against mental illness through a relaunch and revamp of the #NoShameCampaign, I still struggled with shame related to my mental illness. I denied that I was depressed at the time to everyone who asked and was in denial that my depression was beginning to eat away at me. The reason why I wanted to write this is because I am done hiding.

On August 23rd, right before class started, I was admitted to the hospital. My parents wanted nothing more than to support and help me, and I voluntarily checked myself into the psychiatric ward with my parents beside me every step of the way until I walked into the psych ward. I was suicidal; had self-harmed for the first time in eight years; and was in a near constant state of anxiety. Wave after wave of panic attacks washed over me. I spent five days in the hospital, surrendering my phone, my freedom, and my autonomy in many ways. There was only one phone available in the ward and I had to write down numbers of the few friends and family that knew I had checked myself in. I was placed on anti-depressants, anti-anxiety pills, and an anti-psychotic (which was used as a sleeping pill and an augmenter, though I am not diagnosed with a psychotic disorder).

The first day was incredibly difficult for me. I wasn't used to being cut from the world in such an absolute way. I had no idea what to expect— no one ever talks about needing to go to the psych ward. My preconception of the psych ward was that it was for serious mental illnesses that had gotten way out of control and the patient had become a danger to other people, or some version of American Horror Story: Asylum. I couldn't be farther from the truth. In the following days, I befriended many of the patients, laughed with them, cried with them, and supported them through their own struggle. They were drug addicts, people with depression and anxiety, alcoholics, or some other form of mental illness— but they were all humans who were going through the toughest time of their life.
I came out of the experience with a deeper understanding of my own depression. When I was finally released, I was happy to finally breathe fresh air. But when I reconnected with the world later that day, I went into full blown panic attack mode. Going from almost total isolation to reconnection was too much for my brain to handle. But despite this setback, I was determined to kick depression’s ass once and for all. In a period of five weeks, I saw three different psychiatrists as a part of a mission to find the perfect cocktail of medicines that wouldn't make me more depressed or have terrible side effects, met with my therapist twice a week, and I made sure to let my professors know that I was going through a hard time and would be unequivocally putting myself over academics and other pressures for the first time in my life.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone who knew about my situation, especially my friends and family. They were kind, understanding, and willing to drop everything when I called or texted for help. My parents visited me almost every day, helping me clean my apartment, walk my dog, fold my laundry, and forcing food down my throat (I lost sixteen pounds in the span of five weeks). They held me when I became inconsolably depressed and sad and wiped my tears after I had sobbed into their shoulder, helped calm me down when a panic attack hit, and made sure I was taking medicine on a regular basis. I have seen a change on my entire family that I could not have imagined nine years ago when I first sought help for self-injury and suicidal ideation.

I also revealed for the first time to my family that I had been sexually assaulted four years ago. I knew that it would break their hearts, and I never want to cause more pain to my family than I have to. I have never shared this experience publicly before. I wont go into the gory details regarding the assault, but it was something I never shared because I came from a very Christian home. I was raised on the idea that pre-marital sex equals sin. I knew that if I told my family, it was very possible that many questions would have been asked: was there alcohol involved? What were you wearing? Were you alone? Did you consent to anything before hand? What signals were you giving him? Why didn't you report it earlier? Did you try to fight it? Why did you go there?

The answer to those questions is that it doesn't matter. Those details don’t matter. I was sexually assaulted, period. There are no addendums to that statement of fact. There are no other concepts attached. I did not give him consent to do what he did and yet despite my protests he did it anyway. That is the definition of sexual assault.

What I realized in the hospital was that my relapse of depression started there. I’ve been functionally depressed for the first three years of college and it steadily grew worse in my last year, to the point where I was non-functional and had developed anxiety. I was constantly trying to prove to myself that I am not and will never be afraid of men because it would give my attacker more power. What I realized was that I needed to stop trying to prove to him that he had no power over me and start proving to myself that I am stronger because of who I am. A single traumatic event does not define me.

I’m happy to say that I am in a much better place now than ever. I don’t remember feeling this good in a long time. I have good days and bad days, and the good days have now far outnumbered the bad ones. My parents, once the strict, mental-illness-doesn’t-exist stereotypical Asian parents, have now become my rock. My mother even took a two credit course in mental illness to better understand what I am dealing with. Each member of my family was obviously visibly shaken when I told them about the assault, but asked no questions like the ones I was afraid of and instead embraced me and told me that they loved me unequivocally, despite my own trauma. This meant the world to me.

In sum, hiding my depression, my anxiety, and my traumatic experiences did absolutely nothing to help me understand my mental illness and cope appropriately. In many ways, they contributed to it. In opening up completely to my family and friends, I felt liberated. This burden that only I have borne for the last nine years has been lifted off my shoulders. I am no longer ashamed of my mental illness. I am able to speak openly about my experiences without fear of judgment because others’ reactions are not validations for who I am. My mental illness does not define who I am. My assault does not define who I am. Other people’s reactions or potential reactions do not define who I am. I define who I am, and at the end of the day. That is what places me in a good place to cope with the bad roommate that lives in my head.”

-Christine
Over the summer, Todd had the great opportunity to intern in the research and development lab at Revcor Inc. in Carpentersville, IL. He was ecstatic about this internship, as he had just finished his freshman year of college. Todd worked in a lab setting, as well as one-on-one, with the engineers. At the time, a soon-to-be sophomore, Todd had “no clue about air flow or fluid dynamics, but I learned a ton after running air flow and torque tests. Overall, I didn’t imagine how much I could have learned until after the internship had already ended and I realized how much I know now. I can’t wait for next summer to be able to intern again, either at Revcor or somewhere else.”

In May of 2018, Todd was elected president of the NIU Mars Rover Team, an engineering club that designs and manufactures a Mars rover. Todd explained that being in a position that enables him to act as a campus and educational leader has been a rewarding experience. Todd found value in assisting his team members in enhancing their education through this hands-on experience and experiential learning. The NIU STEAM office invited the Mars Rover Team to represent NIU and the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology by presenting at the “Professional Development Party in Space with Author Andy Weir” international event at the innovative company, 1871, in downtown Chicago. Not only was Todd excited to present at this event, he was ecstatic to go downtown for the first time.

“It’s always fun watching teachers gawk at the rover and then being able to explain not only all the different parts of the robot, but also about the engineering process of design and manufacturing. This year is very exciting for the club as we are designing a brand new rover! I still can’t believe that I get the fantastic opportunity of being able to lead this club while we accomplish such a task.”

-Todd Durham

Pictured: Todd and the Mars Rover booth at 1871, in downtown Chicago, representing NIU and CEET
Over the summer, Emily completed an internship at Adarza Biosystems. Adarza Biosystems is focused on developing a new assay called arrayed imaging reflectometry (AIR). The technology is unique compared to other assays in the science field as it does not require a label, such as a fluorescent marker. According to Adarza’s website, the technology “enables the simultaneous detection of hundreds of analytes in a single drop of fluid.” The technology uses what is called a “chip,” which is a small piece of silicon coated in silicon dioxide. Antibodies or DNA are then printed onto the chip in very small volumes and then exposed to samples that should bind to the printed antibodies. Binding indicates that the antigen or complementary DNA strand is present in the sample, which is commonly used as a diagnostic tool in industry.

During her internship, Emily was assigned her own independent research project that consisted of testing DNA using Adarza’s platform. The main goal of her project was to determine a way to use DNA on this platform to generate readable results with minimal noise. Throughout the summer, Emily planned experiments and analyzed data to optimize the process of using DNA on the AIR platform. DNA testing using assays is very important to research because it is often used to diagnose diseases. For example, a DNA strand can be placed on this technology and then exposed to a human sample. If the human sample is positive for a given disease, the complementary DNA strand will bind to the strand placed on the technology and an increase in signal will be observed. Although Emily did not have enough time to optimize the DNA technology completely, she did make great progress! Through her experiments and data analysis, Emily was able to determine quite a few optimal conditions for the assays to be run at. In addition to this, Emily’s internship helped her develop confidence in a laboratory setting. Emily learned how to develop her own experiments based on previous data, and then analyze that data, using the results to develop more experiments. This is a skill that is imperative in any science field, and Emily is extremely grateful to be given such an amazing opportunity to develop this skill.
Cassandra Kamp is a first year McKearn Fellow and president of NIU’s mental health awareness club, Active Minds. On October 4th, she hosted “Send Silence Packing” at Northern Illinois University. Send Silence Packing is an educational traveling exhibit created by the national non-profit Active Minds to spread awareness about suicide to universities. Over 1,000 backpacks were laid out in the MLK Commons to represent the number of students that die by suicide each year. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults. Although the event was held to educate students about the rising number of suicide deaths each year, the main purpose of the event was to promote recovery and provide students with the resources necessary to help themselves or a friend. Cassandra discussed the importance of mental health and how it is often over shadowed by talk about physical health. Mental health and mental illness still carry a level of shame and secrecy, as this topic is very stigmatized in nature. Nevertheless, mental illnesses and mental health concerns are invisible diseases and need to be taken seriously. As her work showed, together we can help end the stigma of mental health concerns and provide much needed services to those in need.
“You can’t see it, but it can change a person’s world. If we don’t shift the conversation about mental health, the number of students who commit suicide will continue to rise. Events like Send Silence Packing remind students about how serious this is and that we DO see mental illness, despite that we can’t see it with our eyes. I want to continue to use my leadership role to support mental health awareness and to change the conversation. In the future, I will be creating educational presentations about mental health, holding panel discussions for different minority groups on campus to have a conversation about how the stigma affects their groups, and other events to spread positivity and encourage students to speak up.”

- Cassandra Kamp
**STEM LEADERSHIP**

**Leena Ghrayeb**

In May, Leena was inducted into Alpha Pi Mu, an honors society for Industrial Engineers. She was also elected president of NIU’s chapter, which is a great honor. Since then, Leena and the honors society have planned a plant tour for students to visit the Target distribution center, which will be a great opportunity for students to learn how a large scale distribution center operates. Additionally, Leena has organized a booth for STEMfest, a large event that promotes STEM to the community and engages kids through different activities. Leena is using her role as chapter president to develop and implement workshops for students to improve important skills like Excel and Matlab. She looks forward to planning more events with Alpha Pi Mu and watching the organization grow. Leena continued to further her academic involvement over the summer, by beginning a research project with Dr. Damodaran of the NIU Industrial and Systems Engineering department. This project focuses on scheduling a single batch processing machine, with unequal ready times and job sizes. This research is important because it will help reduce bottlenecks in production processes, which will ultimately minimize cost and production time. Through this work, Leena learned how to code in Matlab, which is a very important skill in engineering. Leena’s interest in optimization and operations research has also grown, and she is now considering a PhD in Industrial Engineering with an emphasis in operations research for healthcare. Her research project is ongoing, and she plans to publish her work within the next year.

**Matthew (Matt) McCoy**

Since the Spring of 2018, Matt packed his time with many different engineering industry related activities. This has included helping lead the NIU Supermileage Team to hit 1,888 MPG in June (winning 2nd in the world) participating in a summer internship at a top rapid prototyping company in the Chicagoland area, researching the use of organic materials for additive manufacturing, and going to International Manufacturing Technology Show (IMTS) 2018 in Chicago. The NIU Supermileage Team is a group of students from the College of Engineering that aims to design, manufacture, and implement the most energy-efficient vehicles possible. The Team continues to rapidly innovate and increase our overall energy-efficiency by developing novel engineering solutions to modify engines, electrical components, and improve our rolling resistance and aerodynamics. As the Vice President, Matt will be leading the group with their new battery-electric fuel type throughout this competition year. Matt anticipates that it will be a very challenging, yet rewarding project. The Team has proven time and again that NIU’s engineering solutions are among the best and Matt insists that his team will continue this tradition with their new vehicles. Over the summer, Matt had the opportunity to intern at Met-L-Flo, Inc., an additive manufacturing and rapid prototyping company. This allowed him to learn a great deal about the industry that he will be entering in the upcoming years. Matt described this internship as a fantastic opportunity to make industry connections and gain real-world knowledge that is unattainable in a classroom setting. Matt also works in Dr. Sciammarella’s ARMM research lab at NIU. In the spring, the lab consisted of two main components, the research side, which deals with metal additive manufacturing (direct manufacturing) and the Makerspace. The Makerspace was a great way to educate students on the capabilities and limitations of current additive manufacturing processes, as well as, assist students in developing products or solutions for personal use or senior design. Matt helped develop a new component of the lab, DMPR, which stands for Digital Manufacturing & Product Realization. This enabled the lab researchers to educate students on additive manufacturing (AM) through the Product Realization portion of the lab, as well as, work with polymers to develop new solutions for the industry.
LUNCH WITH THE MAYOR

In August, the sophomore McKearn cohort met with DeKalb’s Mayor Jerry Smith and Jason Michnick, Community and Economic Development staff member, to discuss the Annie Glidden North (AGN) Revitalization Plan, which focuses on the neighborhoods located in the northwest corner of the City of DeKalb along both sides of Annie Glidden Road. The plan seeks to identify actionable items that will improve quality of life in the AGN neighborhoods. Revitalizing AGN is critical to the well-being of the neighborhood residents, as well as Northern Illinois University and the DeKalb community as a whole. The McKearn Fellows were able to discuss their concerns and ideas regarding this intense safety project. Topics included: improving area transportation and infrastructure, parking zoning, and increasing the presence of security cameras and lighting for crime-prevention purposes.

Pictured left to right: Jason Michnick, Matthew McCoy, Alexandra Karnuth, Mayor Jerry Smith, Kylie Zawisza, Cassandra Kamp, and Todd Durham
NIU’S COMMUNIVERSITY GARDEN

During the McKearn Bootcamp in August, the sophomore McKearn Fellows volunteered at the Communiversity Gardens on campus. The Communiversity Gardens thrive with the care and oversight of a strong volunteer network of students, faculty, staff, and community members. The aims of the garden include: improving agricultural literacy by increasing access to education about sustainable farming practices and the importance of local food production, alleviating struggles associated with food deserts in our community, promoting environmental awareness and ecologically-minded lifestyles, and giving back to the community through providing access to fresh produce. The produce grown at the Communiversity Gardens is harvested and donated to the Huskie Food Pantry, which provides food options for low income and food insecure NIU students.

The McKearn Fellows worked diligently to care for the various crops in preparation for the upcoming harvest. The Communiversity Gardens was a humbling experience that connected the McKearn Fellows to their campus and community in a new way. Several students have gone back to the Communiversity Garden to volunteer on their own following the cohort volunteer event. In addition to the Communiversity Garden, during the McKearn Bootcamp, the Fellows volunteered at the DeKalb County Rehab & Center assisting with group programs; such as Bingo and parlor games, as well as, one-on-one visits with the residence providing companionship and mobility assistance.

Pictured: Sophomore cohort
ILAS 440: LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During the Fall of 2018, second year Fellows participated in a semester long course on Leadership and Professional Development. The curriculum provided an opportunity for students to study leadership principals while identifying the methods to implement such practices in their current leadership roles. Throughout the course, the Fellows engaged in thoughtful discussion, reflection and class activities which involved both individual work and collaborative opportunities that strengthened their understanding of their personal leadership approach and experiences. As part of the class, the Fellows discussed the impact of current societal events and world leaders, as well as, engaged in a critical review of leadership in film. Examples of class topics include Gender and Race in Leadership, Power and Ethics in Leadership, Building Your Network, and Neuroscience of Leadership. At the end of the semester, the Fellows were asked to write about their leadership platform. This platform serves as a touchstone, a reminder of what the Fellows feel is valuable and important to know and remember while continuing their journey as leaders in the university, community, as well as, their personal and professional realms. This project required reflection on their personal beliefs and experiences regarding leadership, as well as, current events and scholarly articles. This project was accompanied by an oral presentation.

ILAS 440: RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

During the Fall of 2018, third year Fellows participated in a semester long course on Research Investigation. Throughout the semester, the Fellows began their own research projects and submitted their own research proposals. These proposals will be carried out to completion during next semester’s McKearn research course. Throughout this semester, the third year McKearn Fellows had the unique opportunity to learn about the research publishing process as an undergraduate student, as well as, meet with Dr. Blazey of NIU to discuss his research experience in the Executive Office of the U.S. President under President Obama. The third year Fellows also engaged in multidisciplinary research investigation through class presentations based on exciting research in their respective fields. In doing so, the Fellows were able to go outside of their comfort zone and learn about their peers’ fields of interest, as well as identify how outside research impacts, explicitly or implicitly, their own professional fields.
Aspen has been riding [horses] since the age of 5. Horses have always been a consistent passion in her life. At Northern Illinois University, Aspen had the opportunity to not only continue riding, but serve as President to a growing and successful competitive Equestrian Team. As President, Aspen aids in organizing team events, completing paperwork, and ensuring all travel documents are in place. Aspen takes on a great deal of responsibility caring for the members on her team, as well as, the future direction of the Equestrian Team. Aspen works with all levels of riders: from beginner to members who have shown in the ASPCA Maclay Finals, a prestigious national horse show.

A shining moment for the competing team this past year was the “home show”. NIU’s Equestrian Team once again started hosting home shows two years ago. This year, the team hosted twelve schools, including Kansas State, Missouri State, and Southern Illinois University, among other Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) Members. In order to keep costs low, all of the show horses were donated. This successfully filled the need of riders who could not afford to own. Although the use of donated show horses was a great advantage for riders, this meant that during the show, members of the NIU team were tasked with caring for and handling the horses. This included instructing people where to go and assisting running the show. Even with the responsibility of hosting, NIU’s Equestrian Team was “High-Point Team” on both Saturday and Sunday of the competition. In addition to competing, Aspen encourages the team to engage with the community through participation in other NIU teams’ events, fundraisers, and RecWell Events. Aspen explained that not only does involvement in the team benefit her overall wellbeing, it has also enhanced her leadership skills.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADUATING FELLOW!
Christine Wang

Christine is graduating in December 2018 with a B.A in Political Science with a focus in Politics, as well as, a B.S. in Human Resource Management. Christine is on track to completing her capstone project, “Digital Media Usage in 2018 midterm elections among Illinois State Senate Elections”. Not only will she be graduating as a McKearn Fellow, Christine has also received Full University Honors.

In May of 2018, Christine took the GRE with the intent of applying to graduate school for a Master’s degree in Public Affairs. In order to prepare for this next academic step, Christine used her McKearn Enrichment Fund to prepare for the GRE. She chose to enroll in the GRE test prep course offered by NIU. Christine’s GRE scores were sent to her top choice for graduate school, Indiana University Bloomington. The School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University is the number one MPA school in the nation. Christine’s scores are very competitive with the average GRE scores of MPA students who were admitted to Indiana University. In addition to the GRE, Christine’s test prep included personalized lesson plans, practice exams, and live online instruction for the LSAT exam this past July, with the intention of applying to law school to obtain a juris doctor. Post graduation, Christine will be attending Indiana University to start their joint JD/MPA program.

NASA...In Your Orbit
Nicole Hoffmann

Nicole Hoffmann is studying electrical engineering with an emphasis in biomedical engineering, and pursuing a minor in applied mathematics. This semester, she has been spending a lot of time in NIU’s electrical lab, working on projects including binary counter/adders, auditory amplifiers, scaled traffic light controllers, and more. She will be applying this month to NASA’s Space Life Sciences Training Program at Ames Research Center in Silicon Valley (SLSTP). Incredibly, students in the SLSTP study the effects of spaceflight on living systems. These studies are conducted both on the ground and in space aboard the International Space Station and other spacecraft. This program also provides the opportunity for students to develop and operate specialized research facilities to support investigations in microgravity, partial gravity, and hypergravity.

Additionally, students in this program research and develop advanced biotechnologies that enable NASA’s current and future explorations. Nicole has known that she wanted to be an astronaut since she was young, and the McKearn team is helping her pursue this lifelong goal. She is grateful for the contributions of John and Cassandra McKearn and looks forward to all the opportunities the new year brings.
“The only thing that is truly significant about today, or any other day, is who you become in the process. Each of us are building our own house. Sometimes you might think you are building for your school, your family, your company, or your team, but you are always building your own house… I hope you build wisely”

*Chop Wood, Carry Water*

McKearn, 2018
BEHIND THE SCENCES

Eimileanne Delaney

Eimileanne Delaney is a Graduate Assistant for the University Honors program, where she assists in the planning and implementation of the McKearn Fellows Program. She has developed lecture materials, assignments, and assessment methods for the Fall 2018 course on Leadership Development and looks forward to the implementation of the Spring 2019 course focused on Cultural Competency and Community Involvement, as well as the Research Analysis and Dissemination course. Currently, she is pursuing the Marriage and Family Therapy (SMFT) specialization in Applied Human Development and Family Sciences M.S. program at Northern Illinois University. Throughout her graduate school career, Eimileanne has been working as a student Marriage and Family therapist at the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic on campus, as well as, at her private-practice internship. Her research interests include attachment theory and sexual risk-taking behaviors in emerging adulthood.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

McKearn Fellows

Special Thanks!

The McKearn Fellows at Northern Illinois University wish to express their sincerest gratitude and appreciation to John and Cassandra McKearn, without their support and high regard for undergraduate engagement in research, artistry, leadership, and community, the McKearn Fellows would not have the opportunity to enhance their scholarship through a network of innovative minds, internships, study abroad/immersion experiences, or active participation in research beginning with the development of a research question and hypothesis that is carried through to a completed manuscript.