Information for Parents and Student Hackers about the NIU Huskie Hack: *Social Activism*

What is a hack?

A hackathon is an event with many variations but is usually a multi-day event that brings together computer enthusiasts, programmers, coders, designers and subject matter experts to sprint design a software solution to a stated problem. Hacks offer an educational opportunity for students to get hands-on experience as hackers while working together on a team with students from various backgrounds. After the set time, the teams present their hacks to a panel of judges, and the best hacks are awarded prizes.

The Huskie Hack is a 24-hour event from Noon of February 23rd to Noon February 24th. Throughout the hack, each student team will be led by an appointed university-level mentor. Students will also have access to experts in programming, design and social activism. Students can seek out these experts for troubleshooting on their project. The hack will conclude with judging and prizes.

Where and when is the Huskie Hack?

The Hack is on the first floor of the Holmes Student Center (HSC) on NIU's DeKalb campus. The Hack will last for a full 24 hours, from noon on Saturday, February 23 to noon on Sunday February 24. Students are expected to participate for the entire 24 hours with some fun breaks planned!

Students are absolutely not allowed to leave the HSC's first floor during the entire 24 hours. Once a student exits the Hack area, they will not be readmitted. If a student exits, they will not be allowed to rejoin the hack and their parent or guardian must pick up the student immediately.

If parents would like to watch the award ceremony, they are welcome to the HSC at 11 a.m. on Sunday, February 24. Parking is available in the main parking deck on Normal Road (just south of the HSC).

What should I bring to the Huskie Hack?

Bring any computing supplies that you think you might need. If you need a specific piece of equipment that you do not have access to, feel free to contact us and we might be able to score you one! We will provide you with work space, an awesome internet connection and a dedicated server with data sets for you to use. If you have an open data set that you would especially like to access, feel free to contact us to see if we can get access to the set for you. Bring any other reference material that you think might be useful.

Wear comfortable clothes! Bring a water bottle. Bring snacks, although we do provide meals throughout the Hack. Bring your cell phone, and don't worry, we are totally going to have a great photo booth. Bring chargers!

How do I fit into the Huskie Hack?

Students with all kinds of interests are invited to the Hack. We want students to experience the importance of working collaboratively with teammates who have a variety of skill sets. Students are grouped by skill so that all student teams will contain computer experts, social activists and designers. All three skill sets are needed to create a truly awesome Hack. So, if you have any of those skills, or are just interested in any of those topics, this hack is for you. Remember that we will have mentors and experts available to aid students throughout the hack!

What else is happening at the Huskie Hack?

Hacking is just one part of the NIU Huskie Hack! We provide all the meals required for the 24-hour period, starting with snacks on Saturday afternoon to breakfast on Sunday morning. You are also free to bring your own snacks for the hack and bring some to share with your new friends!

Workshops on various aspects of computer programming and social activism are also offered throughout the Hack. All workshop topics are related to the Hack theme.

Everyone at the Hack is there to learn and hack, but we also come to have fun! Fun activities will get us moving, refresh our brains and get our creativity pumping. We will have an activities room full of board games, video games, escape rooms, movies and more. Taking a break from your project may just be the inspiration you will need to come up with your best idea.

What if I have more questions about the Hack?

You can contact NIU STEM Outreach the following ways:

Call 815-753-0533. (This number will also be the emergency contact number during the Hack)

E-mail stemoutreach@niu.edu.