Convocation ceremonies for the School of Education and Social Policy on June 17 honor the achievements of 244 graduating students. Ten PhD students, 95 master's students and 139 undergraduate students are receiving diplomas.

Nichole Pinkard (PhD98), founder of Digital Youth Network, is the keynote speaker at the ceremony for master's and PhD graduates. Arnaldo Rivera (MS07), chief policy officer for Chicago Public Schools, is the speaker for the undergraduate ceremony. Qunsia Daniel will give the student speech, and awards will recognize outstanding students and professors.

"Students of the Class of 2016 have made a very positive impact on the School and University. We're excited to see the mark they’ll make on the world,” says assistant dean Susan Olson.

When Convocation co-chairs Eric Morales and Alex Tom think about SESP, which is known as the happiest school at Northwestern, the word that first comes to mind is “community.”

Morales says, “From the beginning what stood out was the emphasis on personal attention and community.”

“Both students and advisers go out of their way to make students feel welcomed in SESP and provide extracurricular activities and events to give students a ‘second home’ at Northwestern,” Tom says. Having advisers “solely devoted to us” and a relatively small number of students in each major offers a “special feeling that made me fall in love with SESP,” Morales adds.

Morales describes SESP students as “well-rounded individuals able to analyze the world around them and be part of the community that’s built in from day one.” Tom sees SESP students as similar in that they “aim to enact change in their immediate and extended communities.”

For Morales, the campus activity that was the greatest highlight of college was his three-year stint as a SESP peer adviser. For Tom, it was chairing the SESP Leadership and Programming Board, which gave her the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Next year Morales will enter a master’s program at Kellogg School of Management, and Tom will take a job in marketing. Both will carry with them the SESP spirit for community and cause.
Campus Leaders Head Student Organizations

SESP is known for nurturing leadership abilities, and many undergraduates lead campus organizations. For example, Chris Harlow, Ian Pappas, James Keane and Sarah Thompson served on the executive board of Dance Marathon 2016, which raised $1.2 million for charity. Pappas and Jenny Halpern are next year’s co-chairs.

Sanchita Kanthadai, Yasmin Gore, Shoshana Shapiro and Abby Blachman steered the Global Engagement Summit as executive board members, and Shapiro was a fellow at the Center for Civic Engagement. Fannie Koltun, Matt Herndon and Imani Wilson started All Good Northwestern. Herndon and Christina Cilento served on Associated Student Government executive board, and Cilento was elected president for next year.

Ben Hwang is an executive board member for Wildcat Welcome, and Tori Marquez is co-founder and co-president of Mixed Race Student Coalition. Imani Wilson is president of Promote 360, the SESP student organization for minority student well-being and college access. Mira Staykova and Alex Tom served as president of the SESP Leadership and Programming Board.

Students Receive Prestigious Fellowships, Awards

Several SESP students won prestigious awards and honors. For example, Weronika Wasilewski won a Fulbright fellowship to teach at a university in Poland. A Campus Life Award went to Alexandria Bobbitt.

Undergraduate research grant winners are Spencer Carlson, Kevin Hardiman, Chris Harlow, Stacy Kim, Fortunato Medrano and Renee Wellman, who also won a Friesema Award for Environmental Leadership. Abby Durgan and Nick Medrano won travel grants while Emily Comstock, Scott Gerson, Jennifer Halpern, Su Hwang and Shoshana Shapiro won summer research grants. Allison Park received a Radulovacki Global Health Scholars Research Fellowship.

Doctoral student Cynthia Dubois received a Presidential Fellowship at Northwestern for her research on affirmative action and teacher hiring. In the Master of Science in Education Program, Dan Voss won a Knowles Science Teaching Foundation Fellowship for science teaching, and Martin Amesquita won an American Association of Teachers of German scholarship for study in Germany.

For a second year, Arianna Farmer won a spot at the Clinton Global Initiative University for young leaders. Alex Rubin won a fellowship for a semester in Israel through the Nachshon Project. Kevin Corkran, Victoria Ledford and Linda Yu won the Benjamin Gilman International Scholarship.
Leadership Board Enriches SESP

The 12-member SESP Leadership and Programming Board serves undergraduate students by planning events and opportunities that enrich their college experience. “By bringing in academic and professional resources to our students, we can all come together in one space and work on succeeding and growing as a group,” board chair Mira Staykova says. “In the end, SESP is a family, and our main goal is to keep bringing that family together!”

The board focuses on three areas: community engagement, professional opportunities and academics. For a second successful year, the mentoring program matched undergraduates with alumni to open up learning opportunities. A new event, the Professor Meet and Greet, brought SESP faculty members together with students for informal conversation. Information sessions present academic opportunities and course advice, and social events promote strong connections.

Student Athletes Excel in Many Sports

Meet a few of the SESP student athletes who excel in skill and dedication.

**Basketball** – Sanjay Lumpkin was named to the National Association of Basketball Coaches Honors Court for academics and Academic All-Big Ten.

**Cross Country** – Renee Wellman led Northwestern entrants in the Illini Open, finishing the 5K race in 18:56.8. She was Academic All-Big Ten.

**Fencing** – Mikela Goldstein had a top-10 finish at the Midwest Fencing Conference Championships and a 132-62 record. Charlotte Sands finished 15th at the NCAA Midwest Regionals in 2016, 12th in 2015 and 2013.

**Field Hockey** – Caroline Troncelliti was named second-team All-Big Ten and National Field Hockey Coaches Association first-team All-West Region.

**Football** – Traveon Henry started at safety in all 12 games and had 74 tackles his senior year. Eric Olson played right tackle and was a key member of the offensive line. Both were Academic All-Big Ten.

**Golf** – Kaitlin Park was a two-time All-Big Ten first team selection and 2013 Big Ten Freshman of the Year. She was also named Academic All-Big Ten.

**Lacrosse** – Primarily a defender, Spring Sanders tied for second in causing turnovers this season and scored two goals against undefeated University of Southern California.

**Softball** – Fran Strub, who played left field in 42 games this year, was Academic All-Big Ten and a National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) All-America Scholar-Athlete. Kristen Wood pitched in 41 games with 32 starts and made the NFCA All-Region second team.

**Swimming** – Chelsea Soderholm swam backstroke and butterfly for the Wildcats, with season-best times at the Big Ten Championship.

Photo (clockwise from top left): SESP Leadership and Programming Board members Osbeyda Navarrete, Weronika Wasilewski, Alex Tom, Sanchita Kanthadai, Benjamin Jackson and chair Mira Staykova. Not pictured: Sunny Han, Matthew Harris, Ian Pappas, Yair Sakols, Zane Waxman and Imani Wilson.
**Donor Profile: Linda Munger**

The web of connections that tie Linda Munger to SESP is deep and far-reaching. She is a SESP parent, donor and advisory board chair.

Munger and her husband, Stephen, funded the Munger Family Practicum Assistance Fund, which makes a big difference in enabling students with need to complete their practicums and student teaching. During the internship quarter, this fund can ease costs, such as for transportation, background checks and clothing. Munger stresses the importance of internships for helping students learn if they want to pursue a specific career area or not.

As chair of the SESP Board of Advisors and a SESP parent, Munger came to appreciate the School’s majors, curriculum and classes — as well as the enthusiasm she saw at SESP. “SESP grads are going into areas of passion that may not be particularly lucrative, and it’s important that those efforts remain supported,” she says. “To keep the program going takes resources.”

A 1978 Medill graduate, Munger went on to Harvard Business School and worked on Wall Street in the bond market. Becoming a founding member of Northwestern’s Council of 100 to help with career mentoring reconnected her to Northwestern. Since then, she has served in many volunteer leadership positions, co-founding two New York-based alumni groups and serving on the New York regional We Will campaign committee. She has been thrilled to be a SESP parent as her daughter Sarah “had a great four years” and graduates in June as a major in human development and psychological services. “I would tell any parent to be as involved as possible. I love SESP’s mission, and it’s another way for me to stay connected,” she says.

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**Student Entrepreneurs Flourish**

Several SESP undergraduates with a spirit of entrepreneurship and a zest for innovation are starting businesses and encouraging campus entrepreneurship.

For example, Connor Regan and his team launched a startup called Eighty Nine Robotics to build “the world’s first fly-from-anywhere indoor drone,” operated by smartphone to see what’s happening at home. SESP freshmen Lucas Philips and Brammy Geduld are starting a coffee business called BrewBike to serve cold-brew coffee from a tricycle touring around campus. Emily Comstock spearheads a nonprofit called Cranes for Courage, which sends origami cranes with messages of comfort and hope to hospitals and mental health clinics.

As a University Innovation Fellow, Garrett Goehring seeks to support students who want to engage in entrepreneurship. Jessica Tan encourages entrepreneurs as co-president of EPIC, the undergraduate student entrepreneurship group. Katie Ostazeski chairs Northwestern Student Holdings, which manages various student businesses at Northwestern.