Convocation 2017 Celebrates SESP Graduates

Deborah Bial, president and founder of The Posse Foundation, and Jane DiRenzo Pigott, founder and managing director of R3 Group LLC, will deliver keynote speeches during the 2017 School of Education and Social Policy (SESP) undergraduate and graduate Convocation ceremonies, respectively.

The Class of 2017 features a record-high 269 expected graduates, including 145 undergraduates, 116 master’s and eight PhD candidates. Damilola Arowolaju, a social policy major, will give the student speech during the ceremony, and outstanding students and faculty will be recognized. The event is co-chaired by SESP seniors Emily Kahn and Kayla Jones.

Students Bid Farewell to Dean Peterson

The 2017 Convocation ceremony will be bittersweet for Dean Penelope Peterson, who will retire on Aug. 31 after serving as dean for two decades.

Peterson, the Eleanor R. Baldwin Professor of Education at Northwestern, has been dean of the School of Education and Social Policy (SESP) since 1997 and is currently Northwestern's longest-serving dean as well as the longest-serving dean in School history.

During Peterson's tenure, the School of Education and Social Policy has increased undergraduate enrollment by more than 33 percent, and undergraduates consistently express great satisfaction with their experience in the School.

Nearly half of School of Education and Social Policy full professors have been elected to the National Academy of Education — the most prestigious institution for educational researchers in the world. The School's endowment has increased from $900,000 to more than $46 million. And nearly 4,500 new alumni have joined the community since Peterson began as dean 20 years ago.

As dean, Peterson also has created and sustained a number of innovative and impactful initiatives, including Northwestern Academy, a multi-year college preparation and enrichment program for diverse, academically motivated students in Chicago Public Schools.

“Graduation is a special time for our graduates and their families who feel proud, nostalgic and excited all at the same time,” Peterson said. “They are proud because of what the graduate has achieved, nostalgic for how the years have flown by, and excited for the graduate to be starting a new phase of his or her life.

“I feel the same way as I step down as Dean of SESP,” Peterson added. “Proud of what we have achieved over 20 years, nostalgic for all the good times we shared, and excited to move to Seattle and begin again. We wish everyone the best of luck as we make this important transition together!”
From Fulbright to Presidential Fellowship, Students Win Prestigious Honors

Two days after graduation, Christina Cilento will head to Asia as a Luce Scholar, where she hopes to work on climate issues, particularly deforestation. Cilento also received a Campus Life Award for her activism and commitment to sustainability initiatives across campus and the community. Tamar Eisen and Arielle Ticho will also move overseas as Fulbright English Teaching Assistant fellowship winners. Eisen will teach English in India, and Ticho will teach in Colombia.

Alexander Rubin will be living in Los Angeles as a Machar Fellow, a two-year leadership development program for recent college graduates who are interested in exploring Jewish professional careers.

Jordyn Ricard, Imani Wilson, Jared Zvonar, and Hannah Whitehouse received summer Undergraduate Research Grants from the Northwestern University Office of the Provost to study everything from marital conflict to paranormal folklore podcasts.

Human Development and Social Policy doctoral candidate Mollie McQuillan received a Presidential Fellowship for her research on the impact of educational policies and school climate on the stress levels and health of LGBTQ students and a 2017-2018 National Academy of Education/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship. Kalonji Nzinga, who is pursuing a PhD in Learning Sciences, received the Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship for 2017 from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. In the Master of Science in Education Program, Mason Rocca received a five-year fellowship from the Knowles Science Teaching Foundation.
Donor Profile: Beth and Ryan Garino

Beth and Ryan Garino experienced the Center for Talent Development (CTD) firsthand when their two older children attended classes. Now, their generous gift to the School of Education and Social Policy will help sponsor five middle school girls in the Cathy Coughlin STEM Scholars, a selective CTD summer program.

Though the Garino family never met the late Cathy Coughlin, who advocated to increase STEM opportunities for girls, they share her mission and passion.

“The CTD program is close to our hearts because of the transformative impact it can have on the lives of children,” said Beth Garino (BS99). “The courses not only develop students’ specific academic skills but also their confidence and creativity, attributes that will be equally important for ongoing success.”

The Garino family returns to campus several times a year for football games, alumni events, and to mingle with current students. Ryan (WCAS ‘98) and Beth have both served on the board of the Northwestern Alumni Club of Chicago.

Beth Garino credits her SESP practicum with inspiring her to seek out pro bono legal work after attending law school.

“SESP is where I learned to think critically about how laws, policies, and social norms shape our everyday experience and how those same social constructs can be augmented to bring about change in our world,” she said.

Student Athletes Shine

SESP student athletes show their dedication both in the classroom and on the playing field. Here’s a partial list of their accomplishments:

**Basketball:** Nia Coffey was selected in the first round of the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) draft by the San Antonio Stars, the highest pick of any Northwestern University basketball player, male or female, in school history.

**Soccer:** Nikia Smith was part of a defensive group that allowed the lowest goals against average (.29) and highest shutout percentage in the entire country. Hannah Davison and Kourtney Scott were named Academic All-Big Ten.

**Football:** Linebacker Anthony Walker Jr., an All-American and All-Big Ten selection, was picked in the fifth round of the 2017 NFL Draft by the Indianapolis Colts. Godwin Igwebuike ranked ninth in the country with six solo tackles per game and was Academic All-Big Ten. Nate Hall, Tom Hruby, Kyle Queiro, Walker, and Matthew Harris also were named Academic All-Big Ten.

**Volleyball:** An Academic All-Big Ten selection, Maddie Slater’s .307 career hitting percentage ranks second all-time at Northwestern. She reached 300 career blocks including a record 14 in a single game.

**Field hockey:** Dominque Masters was named second-team All-Big Ten; and Ashley Ko was named Academic All-Big Ten in cross country.
Postcard from Finland

Dean Penelope Peterson recently traveled to Helsinki, Finland, to observe how two schools there are implementing the FUSE program. Designed by School of Education and Social Policy (SESP) Professor Reed Stevens, FUSE engages students in science, technology, engineering, arts/design, and mathematics (STEAM) “hands-on” design problems while fostering the development of important 21st century skills.

In a FUSE studio in Siltamäki, Peterson observed sixth graders working with second graders on FUSE challenges. Typically, students are pre-teens or teens when starting FUSE, but these Finnish second graders were highly engaged in FUSE challenges with their sixth-grade mentors.

For example, in the solar car challenge, Finnish students learned how to design and build a small race car that runs on solar energy or light. Since Finnish students score the highest on achievement of any students in the world, Peterson was proud to see the Finns adopt this educational innovation developed by SESP researchers.

Peterson learned that FUSE fits right in both with the new interdisciplinary core curriculum adopted by Finnish schools and with the centuries-old tradition of Finnish schools having “workshops” where all students learn to use tools to design and build things. Also, all Finnish students, including those with special needs, pursue courses in “handicrafts” and learn to use a sewing machine by the end of third grade.

Peterson returned home delighted to see how SESP is advancing its strategic goals to foster engaged learning communities around the world. You can help SESP continue to excel and expand its reach by supporting the School of Education and Social Policy before the current fiscal year closes on Aug. 31. As the 2016-17 academic year and Dean Penelope Peterson’s tenure draw to a close, please consider making a gift. Your gift, of any amount, makes a difference and helps SESP continue to improve the learning and education of students locally and globally.

Please make a gift today:
Go to http://wewill.northwestern.edu/ sesp
Call 800-222-5603
Or mail your check to SESP Development, 1201 Davis, Evanston, IL 60208

Convocation Co-Chairs Give Back to SESP

Like many of their fellow 2017 graduates, Convocation co-chairs Emily Kahn and Kayla Jones transferred into the School of Education and Social Policy (SESP), drawn in by the tight-knit community, their adviser’s open door policy, and of course, the pizza parties.

“I was passionate about education in high school and wanted to be around people who had that same interest in the world around them,” said Kahn, a Minneapolis native who will work for Boston Consulting Group in Chicago after graduation.

“As soon as I heard (SESP advisers) talking about the passion, the ability to be involved and that SESP was a place for making change, I thought, ‘this is everything I’m looking for.’”

For Jones, SESP helped focus her career path. “I always enjoyed children and teaching in different ways,” said Jones, a learning and organizational change major who minored in African-American studies. “Being here opened up different opportunities and exposed me to different fields of education in general.”

Jones said she volunteered to co-chair Convocation to give back. She advises her fellow graduates to welcome change. “Don’t be fearful of the transitions and new experiences you’re bound to have after graduation,” she said. “The most growth and the best lessons come during periods of uncertainty.”