Convocation Brings Diplomas and More

A sea of purple gowns, mortarboards, diplomas and proud families will be the scene at Cahn Auditorium on June 17 when the School of Education and Social Policy holds its annual Convocation. This year 172 students are graduating from the School – 101 undergraduates, 66 master’s students and five doctoral students.

Convocation is most memorable as the occasion for awarding degrees as well as the final ceremony for the School. Graduates will hear a talk by recognized education scholar and teacher educator Gloria Ladson-Billings, the Kellner Family Professor in Urban Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and former president of the American Education Research Association. A SESP senior representing the Class of 2011 also will deliver an address, and alumni awards will be presented to both undergraduates and graduate students.

“It’s a stellar class of students who are going to make a big impact,” says Susan Olson, assistant dean of student affairs.

Since you are a supporter of the School of Education and Social Policy, we would like to share with you the latest news about the wonderful students in our School. We encourage you to join us in celebrating our student graduates and support us in being able to continue to nurture and develop the talented students who come to our School.

Dean Penelope Peterson

Convocation Co-Chairs Call SESP Home

As Convocation co-chairs Colleen Antas and Rosey Martinez recall their college years, one word they use to describe the School of Education and Social Policy is “homey.”

“The small community makes you feel at home,” says Martinez, a double major in social policy and sociology. “People know you at a personal level. Professors care about you and want you to succeed – not just on a classroom level but also in your life.” SESP also stands out for diversity awareness, according to Martinez, who recognizes Dean Penelope Peterson for starting diversity programs, recruiting minority faculty and listening to student experiences.

“It’s really unlike any other school. It’s its own little school. You really get to know professors and classmates,” says Antas, who majored in human development and psychological services and interned as a hospital child life specialist for her practicum.

She emphasizes her close relationship with her adviser and the uniqueness of the dean inviting students to her home. “You never feel lost at SESP,” she maintains.
Leadership is a grand tradition at SESP – so much so that this year five of the 22 members of Deru, the university’s most prestigious honorary society, were SESP students.

The head of Associated Student Government this year was SESP senior Claire Lew. She says, “Thanks to Northwestern, I’ve found that my truest passion is building organizations that improve other people’s lives. It’s the reason I am a learning and organizational change major, it’s why I was student body president, and it’s what continues to drive me as I look to help start a company once I graduate this June.”

Merrie Aaron was president of the leadership council for Hillel, the center of Jewish life on campus. Candise Hill was president of Residence Hall Association, which, she says, “allowed me to serve my peers and help bring students across campus together as well!” As president of Multicultural Greek Council, Judith Landeros says, “I have been able to engage what I learn in the classroom … and bring up issues that I am passionate about.”

Other seniors who have headed campus organizations include Samantha Reed, Center for Civic Engagement; Stephanie Arias, Public Interest Program; Rosey Martinez, Promote 360; Erin Bishop, Amnesty International; and Emmaline Pohnl, SEED environment group.

“A lot of people want to make a difference,” says Michael Alperin, who has been co-chair of Northwestern Community Development Corps.

Outstanding students have been honored with awards that recognize their work and support their studies.

Senior Julie Kornfeld received a Princeton in Asia Fellowship for work in Uganda with the Lutheran World Federation.

Meixi Ng won a Princeton in Latin America Fellowship to do research and work with teachers in rural Mexico.

Megan Luczak, a senior in social policy, received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, most likely to study in the University of Salamanca’s Master’s of Public Policy and Social Services program.

Senior Michelle Sauber won the National Student Employee of the Year Award for her work with the Center for Student Involvement.

April Bowman and William Wong, students in the Master of Science in Learning and Organizational Change program, won Education Pioneers Fellowships to work on education entrepreneurship projects over the summer.

Learning Sciences doctoral students Jessica Andrews and Elizabeth Dyer were awarded prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships to support their dissertation research for three years.
Following a SESP Tradition, 12 Seniors Join Teach For America

When Teach For America teachers enter classrooms this fall, 12 SESP seniors will be members of this select corps working to improve education in low-income communities.

“TFA is a great way to have an impact in their first job after college and work for something that’s important to them and to the country,” says SESP senior Amanda Haase, a campaign coordinator for Teach For America. The SESP seniors selected for Teach For America include the following students:

• Michael Alperin will teach in New York City.
• Colleen Antas will teach Spanish in Chicago.
• Rebecca Crook will teach bilingual education in San Francisco.
• Theresa Gillespie will teach special education in Chicago.
• Amanda Haase will teach mathematics in Detroit.
• Candice Hill will teach early childhood education in Baltimore.
• Judith Landeros will teach early childhood education in Chicago.
• Callie Lauesen will teach early childhood in Chicago.
• Kathryn Schoedel will teach middle school science in Chicago.
• Talia Seidman will teach general/special education in New York City.
• Rebecca Swan will teach special education in St. Louis.

Among mid-sized colleges, Northwestern is the top source of Teach For America teachers. “One of the great things about Northwestern is that the students are socially conscious, so most recognize that educational equity is an issue,” notes Haase.

Student Athletes Score Big

In classrooms and in sports arenas, SESP student athletes show their skill and dedication.

**Football** – Junior Brian Peters, one of two Most Valuable Players, led the Wildcats in tackles and earned a second-team All-Big Ten selection by conference media, plus Academic All-Big Ten honors.

**Cross country** - Junior Rachel Kaminski won the 800-meter run at the Chicagoland Championships and was awarded Academic All-Big Ten.

**Soccer** – Senior midfielder Colleen Antas earned the Big Ten Sportsmanship Award and was awarded Academic All-Big Ten.

**Basketball** – Junior John Shurna, who averaged 14 points a game, led the Wildcats in scoring and rebounding. Coaches and media named him an all-conference second-team selection.

**Wrestling** – A member of the Big Ten championship team, sophomore Levi Mele qualified for the 2011 NCAA Wrestling Championships.

**Softball** – Senior Robin Thompson appeared in every game with 46 starts at third base. She was named Big Ten Distinguished Scholar and Academic All-Big Ten.
Northwestern University’s School of Education and Social Policy ranks number seven in the nation, according to the new 2012 ranking of graduate schools of education by *U.S. News & World Report*.

**Support SESP:**

**We Need You!**

As the 2010–11 academic year draws to a close, SESP needs your support — please consider making your gift to the School of Education and Social Policy Annual Fund before the current fiscal year ends on August 31.

Your gift today will greatly enhance our ability to offer outstanding learning experiences for SESP students in the coming year. Gifts to the Annual Fund provide resources for need-based scholarships, faculty recruitment, academic innovations and unparalleled learning opportunities — including work with new instructional technologies, intensive research projects and immersive field studies that integrate theory and practice. Every dollar counts. Please make a gift today:

- Go to www.giving.northwestern.edu and give online.
- Call 800/222-5603 to give with a credit card.
- Mail your check to SESP Development, 2020 Ridge Avenue, 4th Floor, Evanston, IL 60208.

Thank you!

With their typical enthusiasm for inspiring minority kids, students in Promote 360 showed 90 Waukegan middle school students what college is like during a campus visit. Promote 360 is a SESP student organization dedicated to the empowerment and support of minority students.

The goal of the May 3 event, which was co-sponsored by the Office of the President, was to inspire middle schoolers from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue college. Activities included icebreakers, discussions, lunch in a dining hall, bridge building with engineering students and performances by student groups.

Promote 360 has plenty of experience mentoring students. This year the group worked with students from Cabrini Connections, John Marshall High School and Evanston Township High School, as well as fifth-grade pen pals from Orchard Place School in DesPlaines.

**Undergraduate Students Have Unique Supreme Court Visit**

Nine students in Cindy Conlon’s Supreme Court class traveled to Washington, D.C., to hear oral argument at the Supreme Court and meet with Justice Sonia Sotomayor. “Our trip to the Supreme Court was definitely one of the most remarkable experiences I’ve had as an undergraduate,” says SESP senior Nathalie Rayter.

Conlon’s SESP class had studied the case of McNeill v. U.S. in preparation for hearing oral argument in the case on April 25. They met with lawyers defending O’Neill and attended the briefing for lawyers conducted by the Clerk of the Court in the lawyers’ lounge.

The highlight of the day, however, was a private meeting with Sotomayor, described by students as genuine, articulate, intelligent and personable. As on past trips, Conlon and her students met with the court librarian and staff at the National School Boards Association who work to influence educational policy by filing briefs in Supreme Court cases. In addition, SESP graduate Julie Karaba (BS10), an intern at the Supreme Court, guided the group on a private tour.