SESP Celebrates 2013 Graduates

Graduation day will long be remembered as a proud moment for graduates of the School of Education and Social Policy (SESP). Of the 204 graduates, 124 are undergraduates, 68 are master’s students and 12 are doctoral students.

At the June 21 SESP Convocation, the featured speaker will be Kelly O’Keefe-Boettcher, an English teacher at Rufus King International School in Milwaukee. She is a 2013 winner of the Northwestern University Distinguished Secondary Teacher Award, nominated by SESP senior Jessica Holden. The student speaker will be Monique Brown.

“The Class of 2013 has made a very positive impact on the School and the University. We’re excited to see the impact they’ll make on the world,” 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.

CONVOCATION CO-CHAIRS REFLECT ON FOUR YEARS AT SESP

“SESP has a way of taking people who are excited and passionate about making change in the world and giving them a realistic viewpoint on how to do that,” says Caitlin Ahearn. With Jessica Holden, she is Convocation co-chair.

For both seniors, what stands out most about SESP is the people. “Everyone here has so much to say and has interesting views of the world,” says Ahearn, a social policy major. She and Holden agree that a major strength of SESP is its diversity — with students having a mix of majors, interests and backgrounds. “There are many great leaders and role models, so I was forced to step out of the box,” says Holden, a learning and organizational change major.

Both also appreciate the supportive advising, approachable professors and flexible curriculum. “The advising I’ve gotten is amazing. It’s so individualized, so personalized,” says Ahearn.

Ahearn also feels lucky to have had the opportunity to work with two professors and see how social science research is conducted. Next year she will continue that work as a full-time research assistant for professor James Rosenbaum. A highlight for Holden was the Civic Engagement Certificate Program, where she focused on an intergenerational project with older adults. This fall she will begin a master’s program in human resources.

What is the typical SESP student like? “They’re passionate about the world around them and selfless about how they want to go out into the world,” says Holden.
Several students have received major awards that honor their accomplishments. Aria Fiat won a Fulbright fellowship to teach in France for the 2013-14 school year. Levi Mele and Melissa Brown received Campus Life Awards for positive student engagement.

Karen Wilber won a Benjamin Gilman International Scholarship, and Daniel Nissani was selected for the Leadership Alliance Summer Research program. Madeline Aden was named an Urban Prep Fellow, and Alexa deLyra won the Gene Schmidt Alumni Award. Seven students won Undergraduate Research Grants: Victoria Romba, Birong Wang, Aria Fiat, Mallory Mattimore-Malan, Morgan Purrier, Nicholas Kazvini-Gore and Kiley Naas.

Master’s students Peter Leonard and Allison Parker won Education Pioneers Fellowships for projects to improve education. Doctoral student Matthew Shirrell won a National Academy of Education/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship, and Lindsay Till Hoyt was named a Robert Woods Johnson Health & Society Scholar for health research. Izabel Olson received American Education Research Association awards for best student paper and a journal article.

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Meet a few of the SESP students who have distinguished themselves as leaders by heading a campus organization, starting a nonprofit or business, or inspiring others.

Lauren Ackerman played on the varsity softball team and heads her own consulting business. Hailey Danisewicz finished second in the world paratriathlon championships in New Zealand; she hopes to compete in the 2016 paralympics.

Joan DeGennaro served as co-chair of Global Engagement Summit, a Northwestern initiative to develop leadership for solving global problems. Kameron Dodge was the co-chair of the CATalyst freshman pre-orientation program and a committee co-chair for Dance Marathon.

Aria Fiat is the co-founder of Supplies for Dreams, a nonprofit that provides school supplies and enrichment activities to Chicago schools. Fiat sees the nonprofit as a way to “open doors for students.”

Jessica Holden was the chapter president and a student representative for the national board of her sorority. Kate Mattax served on the board of directors for Wildcat Welcome, and was a peer adviser and committee co-chair for Dance Marathon. Mallory Mattimore-Malan was director of SHAPE, a Northwestern peer education program.

Daniel Nissani was co-president of the Northwestern Quest Scholars Network and a teaching assistant for the Mathematics Department and the Center for Talent Development. Ellyn Pena served as secretary of GOLD, an organization focused on the empowerment Latino males.

Becca Portman coordinated two civic engagement programs: the UVote Project and the Northwestern University Public Interest Program. Adriana Stanovici was co-president of Rotaract, which promotes leadership for world understanding.

A.J. Tomiak served as vice president of public relations for Interfraternity Council, director of development for A&O Productions and a peer adviser. Fred Tye was program director for Alternative Student Breaks, which organizes service trips for Northwestern students.

Karen Wilber is president of Promote 360, the SESP student group committed to minority well being and increasing minority student access to college. Tim Zachas was president of the Northwestern Speech Team and started a nonprofit.
Opportunities Fund Helps Students Put Education into Action

Conferences, service trips and volunteer efforts — SESP students with special projects such as these can look to the SESP Opportunities Fund. The fund was set up by parents of former SESP students to encourage undergraduates in their initiatives beyond the classroom.

This year, the fund supported four conferences led by SESP students. The Nonprofit Leadership Conference debuted in 2013, designed by the student organization Supplies for Dreams to build skills for leadership in the nonprofit arena.

Likewise, the Opportunities Fund supported three other conferences to enlighten students and build their skills. The Global Engagement Summit helps delegates implement projects around the world to bring about change. Leaders in global health and social policy speak at the GlobeMed Summit, which this year focused on young people as agents of change. The Northwestern University Conference on Human Rights raises awareness of human rights issues around the globe.

In addition, the fund supported NU Gives Back, an annual Northwestern service day when about 300 students volunteer at sites in Evanston and Chicago. Individual SESP students also received assistance with service travel, internships or a class trip to the Supreme Court.

Student Athletes Excel for Northwestern

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

**Football** – Team captain Tyler Scott was selected honorable mention All-Big Ten by league coaches and media. He was Northwestern's defensive Most Valuable Player, a member of Northwestern's 12-player Leadership Council and Academic All-Big Ten. Will Studlein was a linebacker and Evan Watkins a superback on the 2012 team, which had a 10-3 record and won the Gator Bowl.

**Soccer** – Sophomore midfielder Niki Sebo was an Academic All-Big Ten honoree and tied for second in scoring.

**Fencing** – Senior Chloe Grainger amassed 13 wins and finished third at the NCAA Midwest Regional.

**Wrestling** – A nationally ranked wrestler, Levi Mele was Big Ten Distinguished Scholar in 2012 and consistently an Academic All-Big Ten honoree. He was also vice-president of Northwestern's Student Athlete Advisory Committee.

**Softball** – Senior Meghan Lamberth started 27 games as pitcher and appeared in 16 games in relief. She was named Academic All-Big Ten.

**Tennis** – Senior Kate Turvy was a first-team All-Big Ten selection for three seasons and a qualifier for the NCAA singles championship two years in a row.

**Rowing** – Courtney Schepeler has been a member of the Northwestern rowing team and its executive board for four years. This year she was women's captain.
New Student Affairs Office Features Social Media Wall

Student tweets and photos regularly flash onto the three-screen video wall in the renovated SESP Student Affairs Office. Giant video screens give SESP students a new way to interact and build community through social media streams.

The video wall highlights Instagram photos, a Twitter feed and campus event listings that students submit. In addition, student news keeps undergraduates and graduate students up to date.

These are the newest innovations in the Student Affairs Office, which was revamped in 2012 as a high-tech, student-centered space. Cutting-edge technology includes iPad kiosks and collaboration stations, and advisers’ offices are close at hand. “It’s warm and welcoming but infused with technology,” says associate dean Coleen Coleman. “We’re modeling excellent student services and support, and we are doing it in a model space.”

Donor Profile: Kristen Hertel

As a SESP graduate concerned about young people, Kristen Hertel (BS86) wants students to reach their potential. As the mother of five young daughters, she also understands the hurdles that can accompany learning.

Because of these experiences and her interest in education, Hertel was drawn to the Project Excite program at SESP’s Center for Talent Development. Project Excite provides enrichment to gifted Evanston minority students from third to eighth grade.

Project Excite has an impressive track record for student achievement and honors class placements. However, SESP saw the need to continue supporting these talented students after eighth grade. “I can really appreciate the problems in continuing the path to excellence,” notes Hertel, a member of the SESP board of advisers.

A gift from Hertel and her husband, Muneer Satter, will support an academic adviser for Project Excite graduates at Evanston Township High School. “They don’t stop needing help and encouragement,” says Hertel. “We’re trying to make a difference one kid at a time.”

Your Gift Gains $5,000 in Donor Challenge

As the academic year draws to a close, a dedicated SESP friend has issued a special “challenge” to increase donor participation. If 175 alumni contribute to the School of Education and Social Policy Annual Fund by June 30, she will donate a $5,000 matching contribution.

“I am pleased to have received a SESP education and to see the difference the School is making for students today,” says Mary Jo Potter (MS73), a member of the SESP advisory board. I am involved with SESP because we are preparing the next generation of leaders who will improve lives through their work in the classroom, business and not-for-profits. Our giving sends a powerful message of support to students and gives the School the resources it needs to prepare them well.”

Here’s how to give today:
- Give online at www.giving.northwestern.edu
- Call 800/222-5603
- Mail your check to SESP Development, 1201 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 60208

Thank you!

Donor Profile: Kristen Hertel

Kristen Hertel talks with Project Excite students Randy Foreman, Sarah Williams, Clayton Daniels and Larenz Brown outside Evanston Township High School.

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