Convocation 2015 Honors SESP Graduates

The Convocation of the School of Education and Social Policy on June 19 honors the accomplishments of 261 graduating students. This year 136 undergraduates, 115 master’s students and 10 doctoral students are receiving diplomas.

Convocation speaker Margaret Beale Spencer, who is being awarded an honorary doctoral degree by Northwestern, is professor of urban education at the University of Chicago. Isabel Garcia and Avi Small will give the student speech, and awards will recognize outstanding graduate and undergraduate students.

“Students of the Class of 2015 have made a very positive impact on the School and the University. We’re excited to see the mark 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 (SESP), 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 Explain Essence of SESP

“Fundamentally SESP is people who major in people,” says Convocation co-chair Grace Casimer. She and her co-chair, Nicole Reed, agree that SESP draws like-minded students who want to connect with people and make the world a better place.

Reed describes SESP as “a small-knit community within the larger Northwestern community,” where advisers help out and provide personal connections. “I feel like everyone’s adviser is my adviser,” Casimer notes. Small classes and great professors are another plus, according to Reed.

The SESP practicum stands out as a peak experience for the students. Reed’s internship as a high school academic adviser made her realize she wanted a career in school counseling, and now she’ll start a master’s program in the fall. Casimer, who student-taught in English at a Chicago high school, feels her secondary teaching classes—taught by practicing teachers—prepared her for the classroom. She also appreciates the encouragement from SESP to be involved in the community, which led her to tutor in Chicago. Both seniors want to help kids, and both intend to bring the SESP personal connection to their careers and communities to make a difference.
Numerous SESP students took leadership roles as they served fellow students and the university. Campus Life Awards recognizing contributions to student life went to Frances Fu for her work on inclusion as president of the Panhellenic Association, master’s student Lucas Xiao Chen for service to international students and Malik Dent for organizing successful campus events.

Anisa Mian served as co-chair of the Global Engagement Summit, a five-day training conference for global change. Samantha Yi was the executive director of Supplies for Dreams, which provides resources and opportunities for Chicago schoolchildren. Jason Smith has been a senior admission counselor with the Office of Undergraduate Admission. Karen Wilber and Rabeya Mallick led Promote 360, the SESP organization for promoting minority well-being. Alex Tom chaired the SESP Leadership and Programming Board, and Elisa O’Neal served on the Wildcat Welcome Board of Directors. Alayna Held, Lizzie Kreitman and Augusta Blanford were executive board members for Dance Marathon, which raised $1.13 million for charity. Sarah Watson served on the Black People Making History Committee. Nikita Ramanujam co-founded and co-chaired TEDx Talks at Northwestern.

Many SESP students won prestigious honors this year. For example, Fulbright fellowships went to Izora Baltys, Brenna Ledvora, Rabeya Mallick and Karen Wilber for teaching abroad—in South Africa, Germany, France and Vietnam, respectively.

Isabel Garcia received a Princeton in Latin America fellowship to work with an education policy organization in Mexico, and Luke Cianciotto won a Princeton in Asia fellowship for Hong Kong. Qiddist Hammerly received the Harry S. Truman Scholarship for graduate education in public service. Renee Wellman was the first Northwestern student in five years to win a Udall Scholarship. Jonathon McBride received the 2015 Circumnavigators Travel-Study grant; he will travel to four continents to examine the response of universities to sexual assault. After receiving the Kabiller Award for Excellence in Character, Commitment and Community, Blake McHugh traveled to Jamaica to impact children’s lives through lacrosse.

The Office of Undergraduate Research awarded research grants to Cara Conway, Abby Durgan, Halimah Jones, Stacy Kim, Caroline Levy, Nick Medrano and Samantha Yi. Sarah Watson won the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratorical Contest held at Northwestern.

Twelve SESP students received grants for internships last summer through the Summer Internship Grant Program: Robert Bourret, Catherine Chung, Isabel Garcia, Brandon Hill, Jenny Kwon, Adriana Lopez, Maria
Student Athletes Excel in Many Sports

Meet a few of the dedicated and talented SESP athletes who excel for Northwestern.

**Basketball** – Alex Cohen was named to the 2015 Allstate WBCA Good Works Team, and was also named Academic All-Big Ten. She ranks 11th in the conference in field goal percentage (.509) and fourth in program history with 160 blocks.

**Football** – Matt Harris started all 12 games at cornerback and tied for 13th in the Big Ten with nine pass breakups; he finished third on the team with 70 tackles. Last year wide receiver Christian Jones started all 12 games, catching 55 passes and leading Northwestern with 668 receiving yards, which was ninth in the conference. After missing the 2014 season with an injury, he is primed to return in the fall.

**Golf** – Kaitlin Park has twice been an All-Big Ten first team selection, earning the honor in both 2012-13 and 2013-14. She was 2013 Big Ten Freshman of the Year.

**Softball** – Rightfielder Andrea DiPrima was named All-Big Ten second team selection two years in a row and this year had a 17-game hitting streak batting .475; she is a Big Ten Distinguished Scholar and Academic All-Big Ten. Kristen Wood had 31 starts as pitcher and 221 strikeouts in 2015; in 2014 she won the Big Ten strikeout crown, was a regional second-team selection and ranked 18th in the NCAA. Outfielder and pitcher Olivia Duehr started in 37 games this season and earned Big Ten Player of the Week after hitting four home runs over three games.

**Swimming, Men’s** – Van Donkersgoed, who is Academic All-Big Ten, ranked in three events on Northwestern’s top times list. He had the Wildcats’ fastest time of the year in the 200 breaststroker.

**Swimming, Women’s** – Sophomore Lacey Locke, who earned Academic All-Big Ten, was Northwestern’s top backstroker. She also led off both top medley relays, breaking pool and school records. With only one exception, she was undefeated all year in the 200 backstroke.

**Wrestling** – Jake Berkowitz competed at the Big Ten Championships and posted a 12-17 record last year. This year while wrestling as an individual during his redshirt season, he had a 4-4 record.

---

**Arianna Farmer Participates in Clinton Global Initiative**

Junior Arianna Farmer’s proposal for HIV education in Chile earned her a spot at the Clinton Global Initiative University, the global conference launched by President Bill Clinton for young leaders to develop solutions to global problems.

“I wanted to be part of the Clinton Global Initiative University because I think it provides undergraduates with a unique opportunity to follow through on a commitment that they are passionate about,” says Farmer. President Clinton and Chelsea Clinton hosted 1,100 students from more than 300 universities as they attended workshops and networked.

A global health advocate and social policy major, Farmer plans to address the HIV crisis in Santiago through workshops this summer. Her efforts are based on research project she helped to conduct while studying abroad in Chile.

“A global health advocate and social policy major, Farmer plans to address the HIV crisis in Santiago through workshops this summer. Her efforts are based on research project she helped to conduct while studying abroad in Chile.

**Prestigious Awards (continued)**

Marquez, Anisa Mian, Hannah Ongman, Gabrielle Parsons, Natalie Sack and Jacqueline Soria.


---
Philanthropy Class Offers Lessons on Giving

Several TV news stations featured a video with lessons on charitable giving from students in the SESP philanthropy class taught by Dean Penelope Peterson. The news video featured Jackie Edelson, JoAnna Frazier and Sarah Watson.

Students in Learning Philanthropy discover important lessons as they give away $50,000 to $100,000 to charities that work to improve health, education, economic well-being and youth development. The class learns about the history and practice of philanthropic giving and researches Chicago nonprofits in preparation for donating funds. The laboratory component is made possible by the Once Upon a Time Foundation.

“Doing the front-end work to figure out why you want to give and what type of organization you want to give to is really important,” Watson advises in the video.

Donor Profile: Steve and Sue Wilson

The power of a college education is an enduring value for Northwestern alumni Steve and Sue Wilson. To increase the opportunity for talented young people to have a superior college education—the kind they’re proud to have had at Northwestern—they made a gift of $1 million to Northwestern Academy for Chicago Public Schools. A SESP program, the Academy prepares select high-ability students from Chicago’s neighborhood high schools for success at selective colleges.

Both Sue and Steve graduated from Northwestern in 1970, and Steve earned an MBA from Kellogg School of Management in 1974. He applied his learning as he built CF Industries Holdings, Inc. into a global leader in fertilizer manufacturing and distribution. He is the retired chairman, president and chief executive officer, serving 10 years as CEO. After graduating in journalism, Sue had an eight-year public relations career from which she retired to focus on raising their children.

Steve is a Northwestern Trustee, and the Wilsons have demonstrated extraordinary loyalty to Northwestern through their leadership philanthropy. Their gift to Northwestern Academy reflects their family’s longstanding interest in education. Sue served as a volunteer at the Evanston Public Library for many years, and Steve was a director of the Chicago Foundation for Education. Also, the Wilsons’ daughter, Elizabeth, is a mentor of teacher and student teachers, and their son, Jeffrey, who earned an MBA from Kellogg in 2008, is an educational consultant.

“We support Northwestern’s commitment to expanding opportunities for Chicago Public Schools students,” says Steve. “Like nothing else, education can alter the future.”