



A challenging academic environment at Defiance College is enhanced by undergraduate research, creative expression, and real-world professional experience. A rich classroom environment based in the liberal arts is the centerpiece from which students form connections and discover new ways of viewing and exploring the world.

Defiance College students are engaged in collaborative research and scholarship with their faculty members through numerous outlets including the Carolyn M. Small Honors Program, campus symposia, capstone projects within each major, and learning communities of the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity.

According to the Council on Undergraduate Research, such academic endeavors “enhance learning, develop critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and intellectual independence. CUR defines undergraduate research as “an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.”

Many students, as part of their major, will complete a higher level requirement such as a capstone project that demonstrates the breadth of the knowledge and skills gained, an internship or co-op, field experience, a research project, or senior seminar. And multiple Defiance College students enjoy research experiences that rival those of graduate students at other institutions, as they work closely with faculty, present at conferences, and have opportunities to apply theoretical concepts to the real world.

CHALLENGING ACADEMICS

In this issue of the *Defiance College Magazine*, you will find many examples of research and scholarship completed by DC students over the past two years, as well as domestic and international travel initiatives that support the academic program.

The idea of conducting academic inquiry

is introduced as soon as DC students begin their college journey. Within the new core curriculum recently approved, all students will take the course Foundations of Academic Inquiry in their first semester. The course focuses on approaches to research and the skills necessary to conduct research. Students will learn types of sources, how to acquire and judge those sources, and how to use them to prepare and support research.

The college's Honors Program allows students to enrich their education through academic challenge, professional experience, and research or creative expression. Freshmen in the Honors Program arrive on campus several days early to meet their classmates and to begin discussions with faculty about research. These incoming students are encouraged by faculty to begin thinking about what types of research they would like to do as undergraduates. An intensive two-day seminar introduces freshmen to the concepts of research and how it looks in different disciplines. There are discussions on critical thinking and how to read research.

As sophomores in the Honors Program, students delve more deeply into their research interests in their area of study. Mentored by professor Jeremy Taylor, sophomores identify internships or off-campus experiences that are aligned with their research interests.

By the end of their sophomore year, honors students have put together their own committee of faculty members and practitioners with knowledge or skills in their identified research area. The students also engage in a series of readings on their topic as they undertake a major research project during their junior and senior years.

All senior honors students give an oral presentation and complete a final submission of their honors capstone. Honors students also have the opportunity to convert a series of regular classes into honors-level classes, a designation that then is reflected on the student's transcript.

Working with the director of the Honors Program, its student executive committee meets monthly, handling communication, selecting meeting topics, conducting current events debates, discussing travel initiatives, and offering support and encouragement to the more than 60 students currently holding membership in the program.

The McMaster School for Advancing Humanity offers both honors and non-honors students unparalleled opportunities to work within an interdisciplinary learning community, conducting intensive research before and during their time 'on the ground' in an international setting. For the past several years, faculty and students have collaborated with community partners in Belize and Cambodia, and beginning this year, will also be working in Tanzania to address local needs.

Many Defiance students have the opportunity to present work within their major not only during campus symposia but also at state and national conferences.

Students in the Honors Program often submit proposals for presentations at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference. McMaster School Dean Mary Ann Studer says the competition is stiff, but DC students frequently have their proposals accepted.

Senior Kirsten Frissora and junior Melina Alexander recently joined Studer at the NCHC conference in New Orleans for a presentation on "Personal Transformations and Global Impact from Honors International Study." Senior Cord Speelman also gave a poster presentation entitled "Transforming DC" on the DC Art Box initiative that is part of Project 701.

In 2012, two Defiance students gave poster presentations at the NCHC conference in Boston. Kirsten Frissora's topic was "Nutrition and Healthy Living in Belize," and Catherine Savage presented on the topic "Education That Matters."



Alison Rifenburgh and Stephanie Singer taking a sampling of the Upper Maumee.

Students also give presentations at the state level within their areas of study. For example, criminal justice students are frequent presenters at the Ohio Council of Criminal Justice research conference. In 2013, Lindsay McDaniel, Laessa McCurdy and Kyle Barnhart presented their Capstone papers. Graduate student Jake Mulinix presented his master's leadership project and won top graduate presentation as well as top graduate paper. His paper was entitled "Validity and accuracy of risk assessment in criminal justice: An examination of the Ohio Risk Assessment System."

In 2012, seniors Treasure Bacon and Spencer Munger received top honors at the conference. Bacon was named top Baccalaureate Criminal Justice Student, and Munger was awarded the top paper in the state with his submission, "The Use of Tasers by Officers, and Tasers Within the Use-of-Force Continuum." Faculty members Dr. Don Knueve and Steve Sondergaard are active OCCJ members and accompany students to the annual conference.

Psychology major Amanda Johnson was a presenter at the 2011 Ohio Undergraduate Psychology Research Conference. Her topic was "Juror bias revealed: Effects of type and gender on juror decisions." Amanda's faculty advisor was Dr. Deborah Dalke.

And in a collaborative project with the University of Toledo, DC math professor David Stuckey along with students Brittany Michaels and Ryan Owens worked with a UT faculty member earlier this year, using computer programs and concepts from operations research to determine optimal grade assignment for students.

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Taylor Tuttle demonstrates use of a blood pressure cuff in Cambodia.

2013 Arts and Humanities Symposium

Student Presentations included:

Elizabeth Alexander - "The Leper as Savior: How Social Disability Destroys the World in the Chronicles of Thomas Covenant"

Patrick Hartman - "Hegemony: Monopolistic View on the Gaming Industry"

Jordan Heiliger - "Disability and Evil in Harry Potter"

Angela Powell - "Victorians and the Grotesque: Examining Poetry from the Elephant Man"

Ian Rollison - "The World as a Stage: A Look at Dramatism"

2012 Fall Honors Symposium

Oral Presentations included:

Joradn Heiliger - "Literature in Schools: What Is Grade-Level Appropriate?"

Stephanie Phillips - "Sustainability with a Sting"

Alexandra Smith - "Human Trafficking"

Michelle Bulriss, Beth Pienoski, Brittany Pease and

Katie Haydett - "Out of the Box: Critical Thinking Exercise"

Kirsten Frissora, Alec Pribulsky, Phoenix Golnick and

Taylor Tuttle - "Constitutional Conversation: Individual Liberties Defined in the Context of Human Flourishing"

Poster Presentations included:

Craig Parliament - "Facebook, Self-Presentation and Well-Being"

Allie Beck - "Role of Epigenetics in Adult Cardiovascular Disease"

Aaron Demecs - "Women and Men through the History of Christianity"

Paige Watkins - "Signs and Symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome"

Matthew Coons - "How Human Trafficking Relates to the IT Industry"

Lindsay Kasmer - "Identifying Global, Cultural and Personal Values"

Andrea Vorst - "A Comparison of Stress in Traditional and Nontraditional Students"

Lindsay McDaniel - "Gender Differences in Perception of Mental Illness"

Spring 2013 Poster Symposium included:

Kelsi Knisely – “Court Diversion Programs and Recidivism Rates”

Claire Turner – “The Effects of Music Education on Learning and Memory”

Shawn Merriam – “An Affinity Ponzi Scheme”

Hayley Risher – “A Scientist’s Way to Explain Activities of the Paranormal”

Bethany Brown – “The Wonders of Meiosis”

Alicia Kalik – “History of Women in Sport”

Susanna Stoepfel – “Bioremediation”

Ashley Tompkins – “Law Meets CSI: Blood Spatter”

Jordan Dagostaro – “History of Rock and Roll”

Ian Fasnacht – “The New Age of Imperialism”

McMASTER SCHOLAR PROJECTS

CAMBODIA 2012-13

Ian Fasnacht – This scholar researched and compiled training materials for NGO directors and staff to help their understanding of the components of leadership.

Melissa Russell – Melissa’s project researched theory and methods allowing her to teach Piaget’s Theory to teachers in Cambodia to build students’ critical thinking skills.

Abigail Taylor – Abby researched clean water usage in a developing country as well as setting up hand washing stations and materials.

Kari Baumgartner – This project involved researching common illnesses in Cambodia and developing methodologies to teach preventative health measures.



McMaster Scholar Catie Savage in Belize.

Kelly Beard – Kelly made connections with artisans in Cambodia to open fair trade pathways for purchase of products for the DC Art Box, a Project 701 fair trade initiative.

Lynn Beining – This scholar conducted research on the best way to train health care workers in the use of microscopes in detecting malaria.

Cali Hazel – Cali researched Erikson's Theory of Psychological Development and taught it to professionals and parents in Cambodia to help recognize and understand developmental abnormalities.

Lindsay Kasmer – This scholar researched the use of the Baum Test, a projective psychological assessment, and presented her work, along with a training manual, to professionals in Cambodia.

Dakota Keller and Taylor Tuttle – Dakota and Taylor conducted water quality analysis of local water supplies to detect contaminants in drinking water.

Michael Pignoni – This project explored Internet capabilities of Defiance College and Cambodia to support telecommunication between DC and its Cambodian partners.

CAMBODIA 2013-14

Philip Balla – Using qualitative data-gathering techniques, the scholar seeks to better understand the differences between theoretical and practical applications of Theravada Buddhism.

Cormack Lazarus – This scholar's project continues to provide training to medical professionals in Cambodia to detect tuberculosis.

Nick Naylor – Through his research, Nick will demonstrate how to perform basic computer updates and file cleaning in schools and shelters.

Elizabeth Pienoski – Elizabeth is researching the most successful programs and models of other countries with the goal of training Cambodian professionals working with street children.

Alexandra Smith – This scholar will be researching various social deviance profiling schema in order to inform and provide training for community partners in Cambodia.

Sarah Westfall – Sarah will be researching training for new professionals in identifying depression and anxiety disorders. She will train staff in how to assess these conditions.

Lindsay Kasmer – Lindsay is researching the use of House-Tree-Person projective psychological assessment and will present her findings to professionals in Cambodia.

Dakota Keller – Dakota is continuing his water quality analysis of local water supplies to detect contaminants in drinking water.

Abigail Taylor – Abby is continuing her research of clean water usage in a developing country as well as ways to set up hand washing stations and materials.

Jordan Taylor – This scholar is researching best practices and conducting training for professionals working with citizens with physical disabilities.

The Cambodia 2012-13 learning community was led by faculty fellows Dr. JoAnn Burkhardt and Dr. Fred Coulter. Associate fellow was Dr. Don Buerk. The 2013-14 learning community is led by Dr. Burkhardt and Dr. Coulter.

BELIZE 2012-13

Phoenix Golnick – This project's research consisted of both chemical and biological tests of the New River Lagoon and its tributaries, contributing to ongoing water quality analysis.

Zachary Lopez – This research compiled demographics of the village of San Carlos as a follow-up to a 2005 survey. The information will be used to assist the village in applying for grants.

Kirsten Frissora – Kirsten researched the most prevalent health risks in Belize and trained residents in preventative measures to combat hypertension, diabetes and heart disease.

Melina Alexander – This scholar's research involved testing potable water sources for biological and chemical contaminants.

Evan Allen – Evan's research was a survey of residents' current access to medical care in San Carlos.

Chelsea Bell – Chelsea researched access to technology, specifically Internet usage, comparing urban and rural areas, and introduced computers and training in a remote village.

Rachel Davis – This scholar researched the concepts of literacy versus functional literacy and taught lessons to facilitate functional literacy.

Stephanie Phillips – Stephanie researched ways to repurpose unwanted items and taught residents how to turn trash into art.

Alec Pribulsky – Alec researched the risks of skin and wound infection and conducted emergency response training providing a focused lesson on infection.

Meghan Spencer – This scholar researched business start-ups and development of a business plan to assist women restaurant owners in setting up a plan.

BELIZE 2013-14

Brock Bell – Brock is researching the feasibility of e-readers for educational purposes as an alternative to print books due to a lack of books in remote areas.

Hallie Sullivan – Hallie is researching best practices in preschool lessons and activities in order to develop a preschool model in consultation with local and government officials.

Caroline Hesterman – Caroline is conducting research among young women to assess self-esteem and confidence in young girls in San Carlos and will develop a program to support these characteristics.

Alyssa Turton – This scholar is researching components of marketing that contribute to success of small businesses and she is using this research to develop marketing materials for a local restaurant.

Chris Wade – Chris is researching approaches that a small business can utilize to diversify in order to increase its income, and he will be sharing these methods with small business owners in Belize.

Melina Alexander – This project continues research of both chemical and biological tests of the New River Lagoon and its tributaries as well as potable water sources, contributing to ongoing water quality analysis critical to remote communities.

Chelsea Bell – Chelsea is conducting research on Internet safety and appropriate use of laptop computers and the creation of lesson plans that were implemented in a village school.

Kirsten Frissora – Kirsten is conducting research through community surveys to develop a natural remedies handbook for preventative health specific to each community.

Zachary Lopez – Zach is continuing his research on demographics of the village of San Carlos as a follow-up to a 2005 survey. The information will be used to assist the village in applying for grants.

The Belize 2012-13 learning community was led by faculty fellows Mary Ann Studer and Dr. Ken Adair. Associate fellow was Mike Suzo. The 2013-14 learning community is led by fellows Mary Ann Studer, Dr. Adair and associate fellow Rena Rager.



Alec Pribulsky was a presenter at the 2013 McMaster Symposium.