IU Northwest hosts Presidential Scholar
Portage student Bryan Norkus says Gary campus was best choice for him

When Portage High School graduate and Indiana University Northwest Hoosier Presidential Scholar Bryan Norkus began weighing his options for college, he sought out as much information as he could find about local institutions of higher learning. Norkus, who graduated fifth in his class, considered attending IU Bloomington, but he quickly decided that he would be better off remaining in Northwest Indiana.

“A friend of mine had talked about her sister and how she went down to Bloomington, and then she came back here because she said that her best opportunities were up here,” Norkus recalled. “Plus, it’s much cheaper to go here.”

Cost was definitely a factor for Norkus, 18, who had narrowed his choices down to IU Northwest and a private, residential university in the region. A chemistry major who aspires to attend medical school, Norkus eventually settled on IU Northwest. He based that decision not just on cost, but also on the quality of programs found here and on the variety of scholarship opportunities the University provides to students of his academic caliber.

During his speech, Herbert told his multi-campus audience that IU has continued to make great strides forward in its educational, research, fundraising and recruitment goals. He pointed to this year’s large incoming freshman class, and the fact that average SAT scores for freshmen at the Bloomington campus rose 10 points over last year, as proof that IU is successfully attracting high-caliber students. Herbert also noted that this year’s transfer class is the largest in IU’s history.

“Collectively, we reinforced our commitment to the transfer, articulation and partnership agreements that will create a seamless system of Hoosier higher education,” he said.

In terms of endowments, IU received $155 million in commitments to establish scholarships and fellowships. IU ranked second among public universities and ninth overall in terms of financial support received from the private sector. Other accomplishments Herbert identified included the acquisition of “Big Red,” the fastest supercomputer operated by an American university, and the naming of the IU Alumni Magazine as best in the Big 10.

“Although activities and accomplishments such as these are impressive and provide a strong foundation for the future, the achievement of our longer-term aspirations demands that we maintain a visionary outlook, a sharp strategic focus and a clear awareness of the environment in which we pursue our goals,” Herbert said.

Herbert’s speech can be viewed at www.indiana.edu/~pres/speeches.shtml.

IU President Herbert says state of the university is strong

Indiana University President Adam W. Herbert acknowledged IU Northwest for its high ethnic diversity during his State of the University address on Sept. 26.

“We can be very proud that U.S. News and World Report has ranked Indiana University Northwest fourth on the list of ethnically diverse, master’s level institutions in the Midwest,” Herbert said.

The president also commended IU Northwest and several other campuses for their successful efforts in forging international partnerships with overseas institutions.

The annual U.S. News rankings, issued in August, rated IU Northwest at the top in terms of ethnic diversity among master’s level universities in Indiana. The student body at IU Northwest is 22 percent African-American and 11 percent Latino.
Campus extends Aggrey family warm welcome

The Indiana University Northwest community gathered at the Library Conference Center Oct. 16 to give a formal welcome to Kwesi Aggrey, Ph.D., the University’s new vice chancellor for academic affairs, and his family. The occasion was marked by great food, good conversation, and a palpably upbeat atmosphere as the campus community celebrated the successful conclusion of an exhaustive search for a permanent vice chancellor to help forge the University’s academic identity.

“I’m really glad to be here,” Aggrey told the large crowd of well-wishers assembled for his reception. “I know we all understand that there are challenges, there are issues, there is work for us to do. In spite of what people would like to see, we aren’t going to be able to make changes overnight. It’s going to take a lot of work.”

Aggrey, 49, spent the previous academic year at Lockhaven University of Pennsylvania, where he served as provost and vice president for academic affairs. Prior to that, Aggrey served as vice provost for technology at Ramapo College in New Jersey. Before moving into administration at Ramapo, Aggrey taught chemistry there.

Aggrey, who began in his new position July 1, acknowledged that Ramapo had many challenges when he first arrived there, but during his 15 years at that institution the college’s fortunes improved. Aggrey credited a dedicated and unified effort by Ramapo’s faculty, staff and administration with helping to elevate Ramapo’s academic stature. He predicted that a like commitment at IU Northwest would yield similar results.

“I will be here to do it with you. We will do this together,” Aggrey said. “The Chancellor is ready to help us. He has given me a lot of support, and that support comes back to everybody.”

IU Northwest Chancellor Bruce Bergland expressed great enthusiasm for Aggrey’s appointment as academic vice chancellor. He thanked the many capable people who had filled that position on a temporary basis and said that Aggrey’s permanent status in that role heralds a new direction for the University’s academic identity.

“It’s very good to see someone permanent here,” Bergland said.

Joining Aggrey at the reception was his wife, Deborah Hamlin-Aggrey, and two of his three children, sons Brian and Gerald. Aggrey’s daughter is attending college in New Jersey and could not attend. Aggrey thanked his family for supporting him in his move to Northwest Indiana.

A native of Ghana, West Africa, Aggrey earned his bachelor’s degree in chemistry at the University of Science and Technology there. He earned his doctorate at the University of Hawaii.

Aggrey promised IU Northwest faculty members that he would make himself available to address their needs or concerns.

“When you call on me, I will be there,” the vice chancellor said. “So when I call on you, I hope you’ll be there.”

(From left) Deborah Hamlin-Aggrey and her husband, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Kwesi Aggrey, display the gifts they received Oct. 16 as part of their official welcome to Indiana University Northwest. The campus community turned out for an afternoon reception for the Aggreys and their two sons, Brian and Gerald. Aggrey said that, with vision and teamwork, IU Northwest can make great academic strides in the coming years.

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We are always looking to get the word out about awards, publications and distinctions that our faculty, staff and administrators receive. Please submit your admissions by the 15th of each month for the next issue.
'Poeticize' brings verse to IU Northwest

University student among winners honored at South Shore Arts summit

The Northwest Indiana arts community came together at Indiana University Northwest Sept. 29 to celebrate a year of accomplishments, honor the work of student poets and other area artists, and make plans for the future of promotion and support of arts in the region.

The South Shore Arts Summit was hosted by the IU Northwest Center for Regional Excellence and IU Northwest Chancellor Bruce Bergland. In addition to professional seminar and networking events organized by the arts council, the day-long event featured an awards ceremony honoring poets featured in the collection “Poeticize,” which contains 70 poems selected for publication as part of the Northwest Indiana Regional Juried Poetry Contest, a joint effort between the IU Northwest Center for Regional Excellence and Books, Brushes & Bands for Education, a children’s organization for the visual, literary and musical arts.

Top poems were selected by a jury panel of teachers, professors and graduate students who participated in an anonymous judging process. Winning poets read their works during the awards ceremony.

The awards for Best Middle School Poem and Best Overall Poem went to Elisabeth A. Kindmark of Chesterton Middle School for her amusing yet heartfelt piece entitled “Big Sister Blues.” In the contest's college undergraduate division, IU Northwest anthropology student Charlotte Noble won for “Inland on the Lake,” a stirring tribute to her father. The award for best elementary poem went to Frank H. Hammond Elementary student Ashley Angotti for her piece entitled “Imagination.” And first place for best high school poem went to Lenna Xiao Ping Peterson of West Lafayette Jr./Sr. High School for the poem “The Weaver.”

William Buckley, professor of English at IU Northwest, organized the contest, and IU Northwest English graduate Mary Nolan edited the book, proceeds from which will go to benefit the IU Center for Regional Excellence Scholarship Fund for Writers, Artists and Photographers. Buckley noted that submissions came in from schools in all seven counties of the Northwest Indiana area and even from downstate. He said the enthusiasm for the contest among educators was considerable.

“Whenever I go to a school, I have principals and teachers asking me when we’re going to do another one,” said Buckley, who is himself a published poet. “We're going to do it again in about two years.”

Nolan said the depth and artistry of the pieces selected for publication impressed her.

“I read every poem several times, and I was just amazed by how well written many of them were,” she said.

Jennifer Vinovich, special projects director for South Shore Arts, credited Myron P. Nidetz, Arts Consultant for IU Northwest Chancellor Bruce Bergland, for helping to heighten interest in the Poeticize contest and other IU Northwest arts initiatives among outlying Northwest Indiana communities. She noted that 98 contest entries came in from the Rensselaer school district in Jasper County.

“We owe a debt of gratitude to Myron Nidetz for his part in spreading the word about this,” Vinovich said. “He’s done a lot of traveling and talking to people throughout the region, and it’s really paid off.”

Michelle Golden, president and board chair of Books, Brushes & Bands for Education, said that holding the awards ceremony at IU Northwest gave younger students a chance to gain early exposure to higher education, an experience that may stick with them well into high school. All students whose poems appear in “Poeticize” were invited to attend the program and receive recognition.

“You may have kids here who have never seen a college campus before. But because they were able to come and receive an award in third grade or whatever, now they’ve been to a college campus, and they may remember that, whereas otherwise they might not have seen one until their junior year in high school,” she said.

South Shore Arts Council representatives graciously thanked IU Northwest and Chancellor Bergland for their support and hospitality in hosting the event and for supporting the Poeticize contest.

“We’re really happy that IU Northwest was willing to partner with us, because we are a grass-roots organization,” Golden said during a reception following the event.

Bergland, in a brief address, told the audience that IU Northwest is committed to supporting the arts in Northwest Indiana.

“We at IU Northwest care deeply about the arts, and about what the arts mean to you, and about how the arts can help us all in Northwest Indiana to develop a quality of life that we can all be proud of,” Bergland said. “It’s great to see so many people here who are devoted to the arts.”

See POETICIZE page 11

November 2006 Northwest News
When Chicago resident and internationally renowned artist Gerda Meyer Bernstein completes one of her many unique displays of three-dimensional social conscience, she makes good on a vow that dates back to her childhood as a Jewish girl in 1930s Germany. Bernstein lived through much of the escalation of prejudicial German violence and hatred against Jews, including the infamous Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) terror action that occurred in November 1938, and she decided then that, if her life were spared, she would devote herself to battling that sort of oppression.

"Before I left Germany, I decided that if I got out, I would speak out," said Bernstein, whose moving indictment of American racial hatred, "The Hooded March," is currently on exhibit at the IU Northwest Savannah Gallery for Contemporary Art. "If people had spoken out in Germany, Hitler wouldn’t have been able to accomplish what he did. What I am trying to say (through my art) is that it’s important to speak out. Your voice has to be heard. I want to make people think about these things and react emotionally."

Bernstein did get out, though only barely. She departed Germany at age 14, bound for London aboard one of the last "kindertransport" ships before that child-emigration program ceased in 1939. Bernstein eventually made her way to New York’s Ellis Island.

“I am very grateful to be in America,” she said.

No conventional artist, Bernstein creates large-scale “installation” pieces that address important social or political concerns. “The Hooded March,” which is receiving its first-ever public showing here, combines stark images of racial oppression — segregated restroom doors, wooden crosses, and white sheets symbolic of the Ku Klux Klan — with imposing lists of the names, dates and perpetrators of hate crimes in this country.

Bernstein, who received a master’s degree in fine arts in 1977 from the School of the Art Institute in Chicago, completed the piece in the 1980s. She was inspired, she said, by the persistent activity of white-supremacist groups, neo-Nazi organizations and other hate-based movements in this country. This sort of organized racial intolerance continues in America even today, Bernstein noted, making “The Hooded March” as relevant in 2006 as it was when she first completed it.

See BERNSTEIN page 5
Honoring lives on the Day of the Dead

“I am so happy to do this show here (in Indiana) because in the early days the KKK was very strong here,” Bernstein said in an interview with the Northwest News during an Oct. 6 reception for “The Hooded March.” “This was one of their strongholds. A lot of people don’t realize that the KKK still functions in this country in such an active way even today, and particularly now that they have become involved with the neo-Nazis.”

Most of Bernstein’s installation works take about one year to complete; with its incorporation of detailed information on hate crimes and hate groups, “The Hooded March” took her two years to finish. All of her works involve multi-faceted representations of oppressed, victimized or forgotten peoples, whether they are Holocaust victims, AIDS patients, or even American soldiers killed or wounded in Iraq and flown back to the United States under cover of night and beyond the sight of television cameras. Though now in her 80s, Bernstein continues to toil over new projects.

“It’s hard labor,” she said. “All of my pieces are labor-intensive.”

“The Hooded March” exhibit will run through November.

Opposite page photos: (Top) Doors from segregated restrooms and crosses like those burned by the Ku Klux Klan complement the detailed lists of hate crimes that are the focus of Bernstein’s “Hooded March” exhibit. (Bottom) Bernstein, at an Oct. 6 reception, explains the significance of another exhibit (pictured in a photograph) that she has done, this one relating to the Holocaust.
Navigating the ‘Blogosphere’

Academic bloggers Drezner, Hargittai discuss Web logs at convocation

For members of the Indiana University Northwest community who still need a map and compass to navigate the Internet, the concept of Web logs, or “blogs,” might seem vaguely exotic or imposing. But this online form of personal expression and public debate has become increasingly popular on university campuses and across online culture during the past several years, and chances are good that many IU Northwest students and professors maintain blogs or visit blog sites regularly.

On Oct. 13, IU Northwest invited two nationally renowned academic speakers, both active bloggers, to lend some insight into the blogging phenomenon as part of this year’s Fall 2006 Convocation: Daniel W. Drezner, Ph.D. and Eszter Hargittai, Ph.D. Both spoke on the practice, perils and future of blogging on college campuses.

Drezner, an associate professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, delivered a presentation titled “The Promise and Perils of Academic Blogging.” The former University of Chicago professor said he began posting a blog in 2002 essentially as an academic exercise, just to test out the medium and see what might come of it. His initial plan was to maintain his blog for one year and perhaps write a paper on his experience.

“God forbid, people started to read the damn thing,” said Drezner, whose blog can be found at www.danieldrezner.com. “It led to a different trajectory than what I had been planning on.”

So what does a nationally recognized academic expert on foreign affairs and global economic matters use a Web log for? Readers who visit Drezner’s blog are apt to find his ruminations on a wide variety of topics, some in reference to academic matters and some in reference to his personal interests in current events and popular culture. Drezner, for example, accurately predicted on his blog that tarnished box-office star Mel Gibson, who was publicly embar-rassed in August by anti-Semitic comments he reportedly made during a drunk-driving arrest, would wind up performing his mea culpa in a television interview with Diane Sawyer.

But in addition to serving as a venue for his observations on the cult TV show “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and other subjects, Drezner said his blog also has provided a valuable added dimension to his academic work.

“In terms of scholarship, it’s been a way to try out new ideas,” he said.

Drezner is the published author of “The Sanctions Paradox” (Cambridge University Press, 1999) and two forthcoming books: “All Politics is Global: Explaining International Regulatory Regimes” (Cambridge University Press) and “U.S. Trade Policy: Free Versus Fair” (Council on Foreign Relations). Drezner said he recently posted an electronic version of one upcoming tome to see what kind of feedback might result.

“Two weeks later I got a hard copy in the mail, with full margin comments, from a first-rate economist,” Drezner said. “I wouldn’t ask my best friend in the world to do that. And they were good comments.”

Not that all input on Drezner’s online postings comes from titled academics. “(Blogs) help me to meet non-scholars who are really smart,” agreed Hargittai, who said she also finds much intellectual value in responses that are posted to her blog topics.

“(Blogs) help me to meet non-scholars who are really smart,” agreed Hargittai, who said she also finds much intellectual value in responses that are posted to her blog topics.

“Many of these people are as knowledgeable as your colleagues down the hall,” Drezner said.

“(Blogs) help me to meet non-scholars who are really smart,” agreed Hargittai, who said she also finds much intellectual value in responses that are posted to her blog topics.

“The comments are almost always more useful than the original post,” she said.
Hargittai is assistant professor of sociology and communication studies and faculty fellow for the Institute of Policy Research at Northwestern University, where she heads the Web-Use Project. She is also a 2006-07 Fellow at the Stanford Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences. Hargittai’s research focuses on the social and policy implications of information technologies, with particular interest in how IT may contribute to or alleviate social inequalities.

Hargittai said that she often has her students maintain a blog and post comments regarding the reading assignments. This not only generates helpful online discussion about class topics, she said, but it also allows her to ascertain whether the students have done the assigned readings. She advised any instructors who consider implementing blogs into their classes to make sure they’re comfortable with the technology first and to provide detailed instructions and guidelines for the blog’s usage in their syllabi.

Drezner said that a professor’s blog can give students additional insight into their instructor, placing on display a side of the professor’s character that might not be visible in the classroom. This is not necessarily good for the teacher or the student, he said.

“The problem with a blog is that students can find about you and about how you really are,” Drezner said. “And some students may feel uncomfortable with that.”

For example, if a student reads online that his or her professor has strongly held attitudes about different social or political issues, the student might feel less comfortable participating openly in that professor’s class. Drezner said he does not encourage his students to read his blog, nor does he encourage in-class discussion about topics that appear on his blog.

Hargittai pointed out that professors must respect students’ rights of privacy with regard to blogs, meaning that individual students in a particular class should not be named or discussed on an instructor’s site.

“The interesting thing is that students can blog freely about faculty,” she said. “We just can’t blog about them. I think that’s an interesting little twist.”

In terms of tenure, hiring and academic standing, Drezner acknowledged that blogs can play a role in how scholars and their works are perceived on campus. Blogs, he said, particularly popular, well-written blogs, pose a kind of challenge to the established power structure in higher education.

For instance, blogs exist in the public sphere and outside the realm of peer-reviewed scholarship publications. Any blog postings, whether in the form of informal ideas or more formal academic theories or positions, immediately become available for public consumption, whereas traditional scholarly articles are rigorously vetted prior to publication. Blogs therefore may appear to circumvent the time-tested procedure for academic publishing, but Drezner argued that the two venues remain distinct and that one is no threat to the other.

Hargittai, who participates in a group blog, crookedtimber.org, in addition to her own at esztersblog.com, told the audience that writing blog entries helps to refine her writing skills and improve her scholarly work.

“By improving my writing, it’s also improving my thinking,” she said.

Besides, Hargittai added, just because a piece of writing is intended for the Web and not for publication doesn’t mean the writing itself should be held to a lower standard.

Another professional challenge for bloggers, Drezner said, arises from a blog’s essentially egalitarian nature. A given site’s popularity is not determined by the title, status or achievements of the blogger, but rather by the tastes and whims of the Internet audience. It’s possible for a blog posted by a non-tenured junior professor or a professor from a lesser-known institution to become highly popular, whereas blogs posted by some senior academics at nationally renowned universities might fail to capture the Internet world’s attention.

Such a seemingly topsy-turvy state of affairs might appear threatening to the higher-education establishment, Drezner said.

“There’s also the possibility that ideas and opinions expressed in the blogosphere might impact an academic’s chances at tenure for good or ill, depending on the reception those views get in that professor’s department. When Drezner began blogging four years ago, he was under consideration for tenure at the University of Chicago, which ultimately turned him down. There was some speculation in the academic community that Drezner’s blogs may have played a role in that decision, but Drezner downplayed such ruminations.

“I can’t really speak to that, because I wasn’t in the room (when the decision was made),” he said. Drezner has since earned tenure at Tufts.

At the very least, Drezner said, blogs can lead a scholar’s colleagues and superiors to question his or her seriousness of purpose. If a professor posts daily comments online, others might ask, how much time does this detract from scholarship work?

“It can lead to misconceptions about how you spend your time,” he said.

Hargittai said she recognizes that her blog postings are a reflection on her academic reputation and treats them accordingly.

“I will only post what I am willing to stand behind, in whatever context. Because what you post can be criticized, you need to have a thick skin, you really do. You have to realize that the people out there have their own issues, and it’s really not about you.”

Both Hargittai and Drezner predicted that Web log use would remain an entrenched feature of the Internet world, though Hargittai said she expects that technologies and formats will continually alter how those blogs are created and used. Drezner said that eventually the halls of academia will adapt to this new mode of communication and figure out how to incorporate its usage more fully into the standards and practices of higher education.

Blogs themselves ultimately will become a subject of intense study at the university level, he said, much the way television has.

“Twenty years from now there will probably be a department or a program for blog studies,” Drezner concluded.

With its keynote speeches from two acclaimed presenters, last month’s convocation represented an ambitious step forward in terms of the academic content of such events here. IU Northwest Chancellor Bruce Bergland told the audience during his opening remarks that this year’s program marked a significant step in the University’s process of expanding its academic character. He credited Kwesi Aggrey, Ph.D., vice chancellor for academic affairs at IU Northwest, with working to bring such high-profile speakers and events to campus.

“We’re in the process of growing this institution. I see this event as part of that growing,” Bergland said. The chancellor conceded that his own knowledge about blogs was somewhat limited, but he expressed enthusiasm for the topic.

“I’m probably not going to be the person who can fill you in on blogs and so forth,” Bergland said. “But I’m looking forward to learning about something that I don’t know much about. That’s one of the benefits of being part of the University community.”

In welcoming audience members to the convocation, Aggrey reminded them that the definition of “convocation” is “a group of people formally assembled for a special purpose.” The purpose of this year’s convocation, he said, was to “set an academic tone for the 2006-07 academic year.”

-- Eszter Hargittai assistant professor of sociology and communication studies Northwestern University Northwest News 7 November 2006
Diversity workshop earns campus kudos

Wabash prof Frederick discusses the merits of ‘multi/interculturalism’

By Ju Won Park, Ph.D.
IU Northwest Center for Teaching and Learning

Award-winning scholar Peter Frederick, Ph.D. visited IU Northwest Oct. 6 for a one-day seminar entitled “Embracing Our Diversity.” This seminar covered the issue of diversity in a higher-education environment.

The seminar's attendees included IU Northwest Chancellor Bruce Bergland, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Kwesi Aggrey, and other members of the faculty, staff and student body. Frederick is a Jane and Frederic M. Hadley Professor and the history department chair at Wabash College, where he has taught for 35 years. He is a recipient of the prestigious Eugene Asher Distinguished Teaching Award from the American Historical Association.

Frederick has taught many courses in American history, African-American history, Native American history, and Multicultural American autobiography. His pedagogical writings and workshops have focused on diversity and intercultural education. Considering Dr. Frederick’s numerous accomplishments, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and the Office of Diversity Programming felt that Dr. Frederick was a wonderful choice for an event supporting Outcome 4 of the Shared Vision.

The seminar was comprised of morning and afternoon sessions. In the morning session, Frederick addressed the group with a keynote presentation regarding his extensive diversity experiences in terms of instructional strategy and classroom management. After a lunch filled with much informal conversation, the afternoon session included a frank discussion on current diversity issues and practical strategies in classroom management for diverse student populations. Throughout the day, Frederick emphasized the reasons why multi/interculturalism is important in higher education.

CETL plans technology, service-learning workshops this month

The following is a list of discussions, workshops and events offered by the IU Northwest Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Nov. 10 — Tech to the Point (discussion groups), 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. This hands-on workshop takes a no-nonsense approach to the discussion tool in Oncourse CL. The topics covered will include how to set up a discussion board and how to create engaging discussion questions.

Nov. 14 (11 a.m. – 12 p.m.) and Nov. 15 (2 p.m. – 3 p.m.) – Understanding Service-Learning in Higher Education. What is Service-Learning? How does it function in the higher education environment? In this introductory workshop, you will learn the basics about Service-Learning (S-L) in colleges and universities. Specifically, we will discuss the principles, models and benefits of S-L. As this workshop provides fundamental information about S-L, you may discover how to incorporate S-L in your future classes as a way to mutually benefit your teaching, your students, the campus, and the community. All faculty members are welcome to this workshop.

Nov. 16 — Tech Brown Bag (“Putting a Course Online”), 12:30 p.m. — 1:30 p.m. Have you ever thought that your course might be better if it were taught online? With the added ease and convenience of technology, more and more faculty members are considering the jump to a completely online course. This session is an opportunity for colleagues to discuss the advantages and pitfalls involved in putting a traditional course online. Bring your lunch and join your colleagues in an informal discussion on this important topic.

Nov. 28 — Technology Options for Presenting Lecture Online (showcase), 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. A course would go nowhere if it weren’t for lectures, but do lectures only have to be delivered in person? Technology offers many options for delivering content online so that face-to-face class time can be spent in engaging activities. Several options for presenting lectures online will be demonstrated in this technology showcase.

Nov. 30 — Tech to the Point (Wikis and Podcasts), 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. This hands-on workshop takes a no-nonsense approach to two of the newest tools in Oncourse CL. The topics covered will include advance uses of the Wiki tool (a collaborative web pages) and the Podcast tool (a way for instructors to create, store and distribute multimedia content to site participants via an RSS feed).

To register in advance for any of these workshops, please visit http://www.iun.edu/~cetl or call CETL at (219) 980-6755.
Assessment Center aims to give students an edge

Most students graduate from college brimming with knowledge about their chosen field of study. But raw knowledge doesn’t always translate into the sort of practical job skills that grab employers’ attention and lead to post-graduate employment.

These crucial employee attributes include interpersonal communication, conflict mediation, writing, interview and presentation skills, critical thinking, leadership, and even the ability to prioritize a workload and efficiently dispense with a pile of paperwork. Job candidates who have developed these skills in class or through internships have a better chance at landing the right job quickly than do students whose education has remained largely theoretical.

Now, the Indiana University Northwest School of Business and Economics is offering its students a chance to rate their employability and identify skills they need to improve in order to enter the job market at a competitive level. The Student Development Program at the IU Northwest Assessment Center allows students to participate in a series of workshops and evaluations designed to simulate real-world work experiences and then provide feedback from instructors and from local employers and businesspeople in Northwest Indiana.

The goal, according to Jana Szostek, director of the Assessment Center, is to give students an early heads-up about what skills they need to enhance or develop so that they can incorporate the appropriate classes into their future coursework. Students who take the Assessment Center’s training will go through the program twice, once as freshmen and again as juniors or seniors. This will allow Assessment Center instructors and staff to gauge students’ progress as they move nearer to graduation and evaluate their readiness for the job market. It also provides feedback on the effectiveness of the curricula that is used to teach these skills to IU Northwest students.

“There are a variety of exercises that we have them do,” Szostek said. “In one exercise, we give them an in-basket full of paperwork. Some of it is time-sensitive and some of it is not. They have to work their way through that paperwork, decide what’s important, and take care of it. It sounds simple, but for a lot of students it’s their first time dealing with something like that. They have to learn time-management skills.”

On Oct. 6, students at the Assessment Center assembled for several different exercises, including role-playing situations in which they were asked to play the part of employers trying to resolve complaints from unhappy employees. Jonathan Berry, a freshman business student from Valparaiso, was paired with retired steelworker and Assessment Center volunteer Sam Palyok, who said he would draw from real-life experiences for his five-minute performance.

“I’ve dealt with angry employees. I’ve been in that situation, so I know what it’s like.”

During the mock interview, Palyok gave Berry what-for, complaining vociferously about a fellow employee whom he believed (according to the script) was not performing her duties adequately. Palyok wanted the slacker employee fired. Berry calmly tried to steer the conversation around Palyok’s vitriol and search for an amicable solution. Evaluators later commented on Berry’s coolheadedness, and Palyok himself gave the student credit for displaying poise under pressure.

Afterward, Berry praised the development program as something he believed would help prepare him for the workforce. “I like it,” he said. “It’s good to see the kinds of situations that I will have to deal with in a job.”

One important element of the Assessment Center’s student-development strategy is the participation of volunteer evaluators from the community. Szostek said that having actual employers critique and advise students gives the program an infusion of real-world wisdom that will pay off in greater job preparedness for graduates.

“IU Northwest freshman Jonathan Berry conducts a mock interview with Assessment Center volunteer Sam Palyok on Oct. 6. Palyok portrays an angry employee who is seeking to have a fellow worker dismissed. Berry must work to resolve Palyok’s dispute in a constructive fashion. Palyok will then evaluate Berry’s performance. Role-playing training is part of the Assessment Center’s Student Development Program, which is designed to help students fashion the kind of workplace skills they might not develop in a regular classroom setting.”

“These are actual employers. These are the people our students will be handing their resumes to when they go out and look for a job,” Szostek said. “When these people tell them they need to work on something, the kids really sit up and listen.”

The Assessment Center currently is seeking additional volunteers to contribute their knowledge to the development program. Szostek noted that professionals who dedicate their time and expertise to these students’ education can give themselves a competitive recruiting edge when those students graduate from IU Northwest and become job applicants.

“It’s possible that some of these students could apply for jobs with the same people who are doing their evaluations,” Szostek said. “Our volunteers will already know what these students’ strengths are because they will have already evaluated them. They will already have an idea about whether they’re a good fit for the company.”

For now, the Assessment Center program is open only to business students who enroll in particular career-development courses, specifically a career-perspectives class for freshmen and a career-planning class for upperclassmen. If the program proves successful with students and is able to attract sufficient volunteer involvement, Szostek said, its accessibility may expand in future years.
Noted author Vowell to speak Nov. 9

Sarah Vowell, best-selling author of “The Partly Cloudy Patriot,” and “Assassination Vacation,” will speak at Indiana University Northwest Nov. 9 as part of this year’s College of Arts and Sciences Research Conference. Vowell will deliver the conference’s evening keynote address, beginning at 6 p.m. in the Savannah Center Auditorium.

Vowell will also present readings from her works and hold a book-signing following her presentation. Vowell’s appearance is open to the IU Northwest campus and the Northwest Indiana public.

Vowell is widely hailed as one of the finest of today’s generation of young writers. Her work is a lively mixture of history, pop culture and witty personal observations about the current state of things in America. “The Partly Cloudy Patriot,” Vowell’s best-selling 2002 collection of essays, unites the author’s thought-provoking social and historical commentary with her entertaining personal recollections; her 2005 book “Assassination Vacation” is a weird, whimsical yet insightful treatment of America’s first three presidential assassinations and their lingering impact on our cultural imagination.

Vowell is the contributing editor and performer on National Public Radio’s “This American Life.” She also voiced the teen superhero Violet in the 2004 animated blockbuster “The Incredibles.” There will be a reception following Vowell’s presentation.

Nominees for leadership program still needed

The deadline is here for nominations for the Institute for Innovative Leadership’s next Leadership Development Program class. Professors who wish to nominate outstanding students for the demanding yet rewarding program should submit those students’ names immediately for consideration.

The Leadership Development Program is designed to challenge and inspire students through a series of interactive workshops, mentoring programs and presentations from successful business and community leaders. The Institute hosts two classes of tomorrow’s leaders each semester. Participants are selected by nomination only, so anyone who knows a student with leadership potential should submit that person’s name immediately.

The deadline for nominations technically was Nov. 1, but Institute officials will consider nominees through Nov. 15. For more information on the Leadership Development Program, faculty and staff may attend one of a series of question-and-answer sessions. These will be held on Oct. 30 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., Nov. 1 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Nov. 6 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Nov. 7 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. All sessions will take place in Room 115 of the Library Conference Center. A panel of current and past students will discuss their experiences in the leadership program and the rewards they have taken from it.

For more information on the program, call the Institute at (219) 981-5631. To submit a nominee’s name electronically, go to www.iun.edu/~ldrship/forms/nomination.shtml. All that is needed is the nominee’s name; Institute officials will handle the rest.

NORKUS from page 1

Of those eight, one was an IU Northwest Chase Scholarship, which will cover Norkus’ tuition and fees for his entire four years. But Norkus was in for another surprise; in August, he learned that he’d been named as an IU Hoosier Presidential Scholar, one of 60 Indiana students to receive the honor in the program’s second year.

“It was a complete surprise to me,” Norkus said.

This presidential scholarship will also cover four years of tuition and fees. Since his Chase Scholarship has already paid his direct college expenses, Norkus can use this second scholarship to meet indirect needs like transportation expenses. He can also set that money aside for future academic expenses such as medical school.

“Really, that $8,000 is ending up being like a stipend,” Norkus said.

Despite his scholarship windfall, Norkus continues to work his part-time job, proving himself to be a diligent and forward-thinking student. Norkus said his fast-food job serves as constant motivation for him to continue working hard.

“I work at Subway about 12 hours a week,” he said. “I work in the mornings. When I see people come to work there and that’s their actual job ... I mean, it’s a good job, but it’s not something I want to do for the rest of my life.”

In announcing Norkus and 59 other Indiana students as IU Hoosier Presidential Scholars, IU President Adam Herbert expressed the hope that this program, which he initiated in 2005, would encourage the state’s best and brightest students to remain as Hoosiers and contribute their talents and abilities to their home state upon graduation. The program is funded by a $10 million Lilly Foundation grant.

“These exceptional Hoosier Presidential Scholars are Indiana’s future business and civic leaders,” Herbert said. “By providing a scholarship program that is second to none, we hope to keep our state’s best and brightest students here at home where they can put their knowledge and skills to work after graduation.

“The establishment of this scholarship program with the support of the Lilly Endowment has been one of the most personally meaningful initiatives of my presidency,” he continued. “I am very proud that over the course of two years this university-wide program has grown from 32 to 60 Hoosier Presidential Scholars.”

Criterion for selection to the program includes class rank, grade point average, SAT or ACT test scores, and strength of high school curriculum. Also considered are each student’s record of activities and leadership positions, record of community service, personal statement, and recommendation from a high school teacher, guidance counselor or community member. Indiana residency is required and preference is given to National Merit Scholarship qualifiers.

Student Isaac earns U.S. achiever award

IU Northwest business student Shirley Isaac was named a United States Collegiate award-winner this past summer by the United States Achievement Academy, a distinction earned by only 10 percent of college students nationally. Isaac received her associate’s degree in business administration from Ivy Tech Community College on May 6, 2006. She is pursuing a bachelor’s degree at the IU Northwest School of Business and Economics. A Gary, Ind. resident, Isaac hopes one day to open an art gallery and wax museum in the city’s downtown district.
IU Northwest Notes of Distinction


Janice Grskovic, Ph.D. and three of her students in the graduate initial license program in Special Education in the School of Education presented the session “Data-Based Teaching Decisions” at the International Child & Adolescent Conference XIII on Oct. 12 – 14 in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Students Kim Engel, Michelle Janiga and Denise Sasser-Reese presented pilot studies they completed during the summer as part of IU Northwest course K 536.

Vernon G. Smith, Ph.D., associate professor of education, received a Metropolitan Outstanding Community Service Award from the Israel Metropolitan Christian Methodist Episcopal Church on Oct. 30, 2006 during a black-tie gala held at the Genesis Convention Center. The award was presented to Smith for what church officials called “an amazing record of service over many years.”

Also, Smith’s paper entitled “Improving Caregiver and Teacher Ration on ADHD/ADD Behaviors” has been selected to be presented during the 10th Biennial International Conference of the International Association of Special Education, which will be held June 10 – 14 in Hong Kong in collaboration with the Faculty of Education and Centre for Advancement in Special Education at the University of Hong Kong. Faite R-P Mack, Ph.D., professor at Grand Valley State University, is co-author of the paper.

Linda Delunas, Ph.D. and Chancellor Bruce Bergland, Ph.D. presented a paper titled “Growing Pains: The Introduction of Continuous Planning in a Maturing Institution,” at the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities conference on October 22 in Miami, Florida.

Economic Education Center wins two awards

The Indiana Council for Economic Education (ICEE) has awarded the Indiana University Northwest Center for Economic Education two Peter V. Harrington University Center Awards this year. These awards are given annually to the Center for Economic Education in the state that has excelled the most in its mission of economic and financial literacy.

“This year we more than tripled the number of teachers we trained,” said John Gibson, Director of the Center for Economic Education. Overall, the Center trained 312 Northwest Indiana teachers in a variety of ways.

“Area teachers spent two weeks in a graduate credit course learning economic and financial principles and how to apply them across k-12 curriculum, as well as several all-day workshops on various other topics,” Gibson said.

The Center strives to promote the economic vitality of Northwest Indiana by reaching teachers who then impact their students. Gibson said that an economically literate workforce is critical to the well being of the region.

“It is just as important as language arts, math and science,” he said. “In fact, it can be taught in tandem with these subjects. Economic and financial literacy are some of the most powerful tools we can give our children and communities.”

Additionally, the Center had extensive teacher/student involvement in ICEE programs, and four area schools received Indiana Department of Education Economic Education Grants. Overall, Gibson said, the IU Northwest Center had an outstanding program year, resulting in a significant impact on schools and students in Northwest Indiana.

The Center for Economic Education will be honored at ICEE’s Annual Awards Program Luncheon on Nov. 3 at The Fountains in Carmel, Ind. The Center will receive two award plaques and a check for $3,500 to use for advancement of economic education in the region. The award is sponsored financially by Duke Realty Corporation.

The Center for Economic Education is housed in the AACSB International Accredited School of Business and Economics at IU Northwest. The Center itself holds both state and national accreditations with the Indiana Council on Economic Education and the National Council on Economic Education.

The awards are presented in honor of Peter V. Harrington, who was the Executive Director of the Indiana Council for Economic Education from 1971-1997. His commitment and leadership built the Indiana Council into one of the strongest such organizations in the country. Indiana has 12 university-based Centers for Economic Education across the state.

POETICIZE from page 3-

On Nov. 2 through Nov. 4, IU Northwest will host the international conference “Drawing Lines: International Perspectives on Urban Renewal Through the Arts.” The event will bring together international experts with local community planners, artists and others to discuss how the arts can contribute to the revitalization of Northwest Indiana communities. To support its efforts in hosting and organizing this event, the Center for Regional Excellence was presented with a Regional Partnership Grant Award of $5,400. It was just one of many area arts and arts-supportive organizations that received grants during the program.

The South Shore Arts Council also presented its Regional Youth Arts Awards at the Sept. 29 event. These cash prizes for artistic endeavors by young people went to St. John resident and jazz vocalist Susan May and Hobart resident Haley Brewer, whose specialty is ballet.

For more information about “Poeticize,” contact Buckley at (219) 980-6570.
Current

“The Hooded March,” through Nov. 30. Gallery for Contemporary Art, Savannah Center. This art installation by Holocaust survivor Gerda Meyer Bernstein is intended to document, expose and refute racist violence. The exhibit consists of white sheets bearing the dates and locations of lynchings, cross burnings and other civil-rights violations, along with the perpetrators’ names.

“Big One-Dollar Book Sale,” 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Nov. 3, Moraine Student Center. The IU Northwest Anthropology Department will host its semi-annual book sale. Fiction and non-fiction, textbooks and more, all at $1 each.

Thursday, Nov. 2

“Drawing the Lines: International Perspectives on Urban Renewal and the Arts,” daily through Nov. 4. This conference will feature international keynote speakers, roundtable discussions, public forums, an urban poetry panel, and other events designed to analyze what role the arts can play in the revitalization of cities and towns. All events take place in the Savannah Center Auditorium.

Highlights on Nov. 2 include: the 9:30 a.m. presentation “An Idea Whose Time Has Come -- Authenticity and Standardization in Cultural Strategies of Redevelopment,” by plenary speaker Sharon Zukin of Brooklyn College; at 12:15 p.m., an urban poetry panel featuring live readings by Prof. William Buckley and other regional poets; and, at 5 p.m., the evening keynote address, “Dreams and Cathedrals: Bilbao’s Model of City Reinvention,” by Prof. Joseba Zulaika of the University of Nevada at Reno.

Friday, Nov. 3

“Drawing the Lines: International Perspectives on Urban Renewal and the Arts.” Today’s events include: Discussion panels -- “The Impact of Visual and Expressive Art on Public Policy and Public Voice” at 8 a.m.; “Cool Cities’ Through their ‘Creative Class’: A Model for Revitalizing Indiana’s Essential Cities” at 9:45 a.m.; evening keynote address, “Reclaiming the Public Sphere,” Malcolm Miles, Smart City Consulting, 4:30 p.m.

Opening Night Theatre Northwest production of “Permanent Collection,” 8 p.m., Tamarack Hall Theatre. This acclaimed play from Thomas Gibbons revolves around racial politics and is set largely in a public museum, where the discovery of some long-shelved African artifacts stirs controversy and recriminations. It is directed by nationally known theatre artist Cheryl Lynn Bruce. There will be an Opening Night reception following the Nov. 3 performance. Additional performances are scheduled for Nov. 4, 10, and 11 at 8 p.m. and Nov. 5 at 2:30 p.m., Tamarack Hall. There also will be student matinee performances at 9:30 a.m. on Nov. 2, 3, 9 and 10. Admission to the evening and afternoon shows is $10.

Saturday, Nov. 4


ALMA Endowment Scholarship Fundraiser Dinner and Dance, 6 p.m. to 12 a.m., Hellenic Cultural Center, 8000 Madison St., Merrillville. The event will include live entertainment and the presentation of scholarships from the ALMA Endowment Fund.

Sunday, Nov. 5

“Permanent Collection,” 8 p.m., Tamarack Hall Theatre. There will be a special matinee performance at 3 p.m. and an Opening Night reception following the Nov. 5 performance. Additional performances are scheduled for Nov. 6, 11, 12, and 13. Admission to the evening and afternoon shows is $10.

Thursday, Nov. 9

“Standing on the Shoulders of Giants”: IU Northwest College of Arts and Sciences’ Annual Faculty and Student Research Conference — through Nov. 10. Presentations at this year’s conference include everything from the effects of aging on corneal nerve density to HIV/AIDS in Haiti and the processes of medieval inquisitors. The conference will also feature paper presentations from other IU Northwest disciplinary units, and this year the event has been opened to presentations from faculty and graduate students from other universities. Individual presentations are scheduled from 3 p.m. until 5:45 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 9 and from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 10. The lunchtime keynote lecture on Nov. 10 features the presentation “Gravers: Deanners, Nat-Packers, Valentinos, and the Civil Religion of Dead Celebrity Icons,” by Prof. Charles Gallmeier and Prof. Stephanie Shanks-Meile of the IU Northwest Department of Sociology.

Appearance by author Sarah Vowell — 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Savannah Center Auditorium.

Vowell, author of “The Partly Cloudy Patriot” and “Assassination Vacation,” will deliver a keynote address as part of this year’s College of Arts and Sciences’ Research Conference. Vowell’s work is an engaging blend of historical commentary and pop cultural analysis that will cause readers to rethink everything from Thanksgiving Dinner to actual political figures. Vowell will present selected readings from all of her works. A reception and book-signing will follow her presentation.

21st Annual Indiana University Northwest Gala — 6 p.m., Avalon Manor, Merrillville, Ind. The focus of this signature IU Northwest event has shifted this year. No longer a fundraising vehicle, the Gala’s new focus is on donor recognition and appreciation. IU Northwest invites the Northwest Indiana community to help us honor those whose generosi- ty has contributed so much to the fulfillment of our missions of education and community involvement. Tickets for this event cost $60. Reservations can be made by calling (219) 980-6801.

Tuesday, Nov. 14

IU Northwest Health Fair — 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Savannah Center Gymnasium. This event, organized by seniors in the IU Northwest School of Nursing, is open to the community. Community agencies and university groups will participate; available services at the fair will include flu shots, lab work, health screenings, and health information. The theme for this year’s health fair is “Race into a Healthy Lifestyle.”

Saturday, Nov. 18

“Resolving Conflict” — 9 p.m. until 1 p.m., IU Northwest Library Conference Center. The Institute for Innovative Leadership at IU Northwest offers regular seminars and interactive workshops designed to bolster the leadership skills of even the most accomplished business and community leaders. On Nov. 18, presenter George Miga, business owner and adjunct faculty member at the IU Northwest School of Business and Economics, will discuss constructive methods of resolving conflicts and dealing with difficult people to produce win-win situations. Call the Institute at (219) 981-5631 to register.