

## Supporting Our Students

### Supporting our students during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Guest contributor, Brittany Spread

COVID-19 has upended the academic world. With colleges and universities forced to turn to online learning, students not only miss out on graduation ceremonies and dormitory life. They lose the opportunity for daily personal and collaborative learning.

Academia's physical closure can have particularly adverse effects on our nation's low-income and first-generation students. With computer labs shut down and on-campus jobs no longer available at many colleges and universities, resources that these students rely on are at a minimum.

Fortunately, resources are available to students – you just have to know where to look. The [CARES Act](#) has put student loan payments on hold through September 2020 in effort to reduce financial hardship. Additionally, many cell phone providers are giving additional data at no charge, and utility companies are suspending disconnections and providing bill payment arrangement options. Contact the companies that you pay monthly to see what they're offering to their customers during the virus crisis.

Remember that NEIU is here to help all of our Golden Eagles. If you need financial assistance due to COVID-19, please visit our [Student Emergency Fund](#) page for information on the assistance offered by NEIU. You can also visit our university's [Coronavirus Response Page](#) or email the Nontraditional Degree Program at [ndp@neiu.edu](mailto:ndp@neiu.edu) if you need support.

## NDP Students Put It All Together

The latest addition to classes developed specifically for Interdisciplinary Studies and University Without Walls majors is *NDP 301 Putting it All Together*. The course, first offered in the Fall 2019, is the brainchild of NDP instructor Sean Carey who proposed, developed, and teaches the class. As a graduate of Interdisciplinary Studies who also served a graduate assistantship in NDP, Sean knows the strengths, challenges and opportunities that returning adult students bring to their pursuit of the college degree. Below, Sean, who also teaches *WIP NDP 310 Diversity in the Workplace*, shares his insights about the course.

"I specifically wanted to come up with a class that works on multiple levels. It can work as a reintroduction to higher education expectations and cover some core academic skills such as writing, organization, and research. But, it can also work for students that are more comfortable with those skills, because there is a lot of room to expand on them and to focus on their own personal research and goals." The course content has stayed pretty consistent, but is evolving to meet the students needs. Next semester the plan will be on incorporating more collaborative learning and peer mentoring to engage the class and allow room for students to take on leadership roles. The course focuses on a research project designed and directed by each student on a current academic, personal, or career goal. For example, one student focused on graduating with their BAIS quickly and efficiently, another student researched different options, opportunities, and requirements for graduate school, and another student researched employment pros and cons in a possible career change. Students will learn or solidify basic critical reading, organization, research, writing, and presentation skills. They will also learn how to plan, direct, and execute their own personal project. The ability to be self-guided and independent is a skill that is becoming increasingly in demand in higher education and the workforce today."

## Meet Professor Alicia Ozier

We are excited to welcome NDP alumna and now NDP Instructor Alicia Ozier to the NDP faculty. Ms. Ozier teaches the Writing Intensive Program course *NDP 310 Diversity In the Workplace*. She is a graduate of Interdisciplinary Studies and completed a minor in Inner City Studies. As an undergraduate she was the recipient of the Lincoln Laureate Award. After completing her bachelor's degree she received an MA in Social Work (International Administration) from the University of Chicago School of Social Work Administration. Ms. Ozier is an agent of change and eager to share her wealth of experience and knowledge with NDP students.



Along with her role as NDP Instructor, Ms. Ozier currently works as the Deputy Director of Clinical Practice for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In this role she guides clinical and behavioral health services for children and families within the State of Illinois. Ms. Ozier has maintained a primary focus on understanding the life experiences and developing feasible solutions for underserved women, children, and LGBT adolescents who are isolated by systemic inequality. Ozier maintains a commitment to creating avenues that develop social equity for voiceless individuals within the global space.

## NDP Tutor

### Get Help with Your Classes!

The NDP program has our own in house tutor.

Gloria Ortiz is a graduate of BAIS and a graduate student with the Marriage and Family Counseling Program.

Tutoring is available for all of the courses NDP offers, but you can also see a tutor for assistance with outside courses as well.

Gloria's email address is:  
g-ortiz10@neiu.edu

## Service Learning at NDP

Nontraditional Degree Programs welcomed three undergraduate interns from the Psychology Department's Service Learning Capstone course this Spring semester. Pamela Myzek, Talia Ramirez, and Brandon Saunders joined the NDP office in order to gain valuable experiences working within the NEIU community.

The work they contributed to our department included summarizing the exceptional work of our recent UWW graduates, compiling a list of the most relevant literature on the success of nontraditional degree programs, and creating a valuable marketing tool in order to increase awareness of NDP program offerings across campus.

We are extremely thankful for their hard work and wish them the best of luck in reaching their academic goals. NDP looks forward to continuing our partnership with the Psychology Department's Service Learning Capstone students in the future.

## BAIS UWW Workshops and Prospective Student Meetings

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Prospective students please contact:

[NDP@neiu.edu](mailto:NDP@neiu.edu) to schedule an appointment for phone or video conference.

## NDP Office Staff Spring 2020

If you are new to the NEIU campus, a student looking to transfer, or already a nontraditional student, the NDP Office at B-147 is here to help.

Dr. Kim Sanborn— Director, NDP  
Lori Cuevas—Faculty Advisor, UWW  
Jennifer Blair— Program Specialist, BAIS  
Jacqueline Butler— Program Specialist, BAIS

Jason Gallardo—Office Support, NDP  
Maureen Walsh—Office Support, NDP  
Sean Carey—Instructor, NDP  
Antuanette Mester- Instructor, NDP  
Alicia Ozier, Instructor, NDP  
Erica Krueger—Instructor, NDP  
George Gerdow—Instructor, NDP  
Gloria Ortiz—Grad Assistant, NDP  
Robin Fischer- Grad Assistant, UWW

## DSST/CLEP Testing

Due to Covid-19 testing is not available until further notice. For more information, students are encouraged to check the websites:

DSST: [https://www.getcollegetcredit.com/test\\_takers/](https://www.getcollegetcredit.com/test_takers/)

CLEP: <https://clep.collegeboard.org/exams>

## Tell Us About You!

Tell us about your experiences and accomplishments and we may do a feature on you in our next NDP Newsletter! Just send us an email at: [NDP@neiu.edu](mailto:NDP@neiu.edu).