

## BAIS High Achieving Student

**Mary Dohm Wurtzbach** came to the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies at NEIU in Fall 2011. "I've always been trying to go back to school. My goal was also to get my children an excellent education." Navigating the complexities of family life and employment, Mary maintained a 3.88 GPA. The English Department faculty, Chair **Tim Libretti**, Professors **Julie Kim** and Mary's mentor, **Tim Scherman**, allowed Mary into advanced courses.



After her first semester, only the Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning requirement worried Mary. She resisted taking the Math Placement exam for three years. Finally, Mary enrolled in MATH 090 for the Fall 2013 semester. At the end of the term, Mary emailed NDP:

"I will be registering for Math 113 this Spring. Surprised?! I had enrolled in Math 090 with trepidation, anticipating math nightmares of doomed failure. Lo and behold—I completed the course in less than a month. I finished 091 in record time."

With Instructor **Anna Kupiec's** advocacy and Coordinator **Tom Blackburn's** support, Mary enrolled and earned "A" grades in all three courses. She is the first NEIU student to complete MATH DEV 090, 091, and 092 in one semester.

Interdisciplinary students who have postponed taking the math placement test can speak with a BAIS advisor about how to prepare for it or visit the Tutoring & Enrichment website at [neiu.edu](http://neiu.edu).

## UWW Faculty Advisors

University Without Walls faculty advisor **Shelley Bannister** identifies an academic advisor for each program participant. In recent semesters, the following faculty have served as academic advisors for UWW students:

**Anthony Adams**  
**William Sieger**  
**Zada Johnson**  
**Erica Meiners**  
**Robin Heggum**  
**Maribel Lopez**  
**Jennifer Slate**

**Conrad Worrill**  
**Patricia Hill**  
**Catherine Korda**  
**Jackie Anderson**  
**Lance Williams**  
**Linda Williams**  
**Luis Ortiz**

Academic advisors help UWW students develop and assess a Learning Contract which outlines the students' individualized curriculum.

## Alpha Chi Inductees

Ten Interdisciplinary Studies students and one University Without Walls student were inducted into the Illinois chapter of Alpha Chi, an honor society that recognizes college and university students for academic excellence and exemplary character. BAIS student **René Talbot** was inducted to the office of Secretary at the ceremony November 19, 2013.

Pictured below with **President Sharon Hahs**, **Provost Richard Helldobler**, and **NDP Director Kimberly Sanborn** are inductees **Dayani Pieri** in the upper left and **Milton Lancaster** in the upper right. Sitting, from left to right, are inductees **Victor Montanez**, **Linda White**, **Audrey White**, **René Talbot**, and **David Vachon, Jr.**



Other NDP inductees are **Mary Dohm Wurtzbach**, **Irene Ronin**, **Sharone Heard**, and **Eric Sherman**.

Alpha Chi provides its members with opportunities for continued growth and, as a phrase from its constitution suggests, seeks to assist in "making scholarship effective for good."

## Remarkable BAIS Alumnus

Interdisciplinary Studies alumnus **Sam Chou** began his studies at NEIU in 1986. Sam is legally blind and has disabilities that affect gait and coordination. After 20 semesters, in August of 2011, Sam graduated from NEIU with a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Sam credits NEIU, especially Student Disability Services, the Interdisciplinary Studies advising staff, and his professors for his success. His advisors highlight "Sam's persistence and depth of character."

Before and after completing his degree, Sam volunteered to tutor grade school, high school, and college students. His specialties are mathematics, quantitative reasoning, and sociology. Recently, he was hired as a tutor in Harold Washington College Learning Resource Center. Sam is guided by his faith, his family, and his desire to help others.

## Prior Learning Assessment

Credentialing skills acquired outside of the classroom are increasingly seen as central to college education attainment, especially among adult students. The award of credit for prior learning is central to this effort. This alternative mode of academic credentialing, known as **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)**, responds to the national urgency to meet the learning demands of the current knowledge-driven economy as well as efforts to raise the numbers of college graduates. This is especially important given the findings of a recent George Town University study which predicts a shortage of at least 3 million college degrees by 2018.

The Interdisciplinary Studies Major at NEIU offers adult students a variety of options for prior learning assessment:

- American Council on Education (ACE), recommended Military Education credit
- Credit by exam (CLEP and DSST)
- Completion of a Prior Learning Portfolio.

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning reports that adult students who earn prior learning assessment credits show better persistence, higher graduation rates, and shorter time to degree attainment in comparison with their peers who do not earn prior learning credit.

Students interested in applying for PLA may stop by B-147 or call (773) 442-6030 to make an appointment with a BAIS advisor.

## Adult Learners as Peer Tutors

Four Interdisciplinary Studies students are WIP Peer Tutors for the Spring 2014 semester. BAIS majors **Terrie Albano** and **Evan Roig** tutor NDP 310. **Erica Krueger** (BAIS and Human Resource Development) tutors HRD 325, and **David Vachon, Jr.** (BAIS and Health & Wellness) tutors PEMT 316.

According to the Center for Academic Writing at NEIU, "WIP peer tutors are not only good writers but also understand how to write within their discipline."

## Prospective Student Meetings

Students interested in Nontraditional Degree Programs may attend a Prospective Student Meeting for either of our two programs:

### Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (BAIS)

March 24, 2014	6-8 pm	SU 003
April 8, 2014	6-8 pm	SU 003
April 22, 2014	2-4 pm	SU 214

### University Without Walls (UWW)

March 26, 2014	6-8pm	SU 218
April 22, 2014	6-8pm	SU 217

## Prior Learning Portfolio Facts

Examination of 93 portfolios that the Bachelors of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (BAIS) at NEIU assessed in the last twenty years shows that:

- 93 students earned portfolio credit
- Students earned credit in 54 academic categories
- 49 students earned credit in more than one category
- The award average was 18 credit hours for a portfolio.

The largest total hours were in:

- Fine and Applied Arts (163 hours)
- Computer Science (140)
- Education (128)
- Law Enforcement (122)
- Public Affairs (121)
- Spanish (66).

The three largest award were 81 hours, 57 hours, and 47 hours.

The most popular disciplines were Computer Science, Education, Communication Media and Theater, Letters, and Law Enforcement.

Students most often earned language credits in Spanish, however NEIU's diversity and the wide-ranging experiences of Interdisciplinary Studies students is evident in the earning of credits in Polish and Finnish.

Students also earned portfolio credit in construction, hospitality, and aviation.

Interdisciplinary Studies Program offers Prior Learning Portfolio workshops every semester. Contact the NDP office for more information.

## Nontraditional Learners

Nontraditional Degree Programs (NDP) at NEIU recognizes the challenges and potential of nontraditional learners. The NDP staff understand that adult students may experience anxiety from being away from school for many years, from former negative experiences in educational settings, and from competing demands of work and family. The staff acknowledge these constraints but are also aware that nontraditional learners are capable of:

- Complex thought processes
- Contextual thinking
- Task oriented and collaborative work
- Examine an issue from different perspectives
- Synthesizing various approaches.

To smooth nontraditional students' transition back to college and to foreground their learning potential, NDP offers flexibility in course selection, provides support through academic counseling, and the opportunity to reevaluate life experiences and specialized knowledge and training.