Spotlight: CEPS undergraduate student research

Every semester students from Eastern Illinois University’s College of Education and Professional Studies dedicate their time to conducting research in their chosen fields.

The following article is a series of interviews with five undergraduate students from CEPS: Mallory Kowaleski, Joann Wakefield, Katie Silva, Elizabeth Wilson, and Jeremy Reusch.

This is an inside look into their research.  

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Mallory Kowaleski:
“Left Brain, Right Brain... What About the thing that Holds It Together?”

1. What is your major, minor, hometown, year in school, etc?

**MK:** Special Education major, K-12 Dual Certification Elementary Education with a concentration in English; hometown is Frankfort Square, IL; and I am a senior at EIU.

I am also really involved in the Special Education Department. I am the president of Sigma Rho Epsilon-Special Education Honors Fraternity, student representative for the SPE Department Curriculum Committee, senior co-chair for the Special Olympics, and I am an executive board member for Best Buddies.

2. What is the title and the purpose of your research?

**MK:** The title of my research is “Left Brain, Right Brain.... What About the thing that Holds It Together?”

The purpose of the proposed research project is to learn more about Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum, share this knowledge with other educators, and provide ideas for intervention.

3. Who is your current research mentor and how did you become involved with this project?

**MK:** Dr. Melissa Jones-Bromenshenkel is my research mentor. I was assigned to Dr. Jones during my freshman year as one of her advisees in the Special Education Department. During the 2013-2014 school year, I was the president of Best Buddies, and Dr. Jones is the faculty advisor for that organization. We developed a close professional relationship while working together.

She was also one of my professors when I was in SPE 4900 class. During that course, students and the professors spend a lot of time together and became close.

Dr. Jones had emailed me about the opportunity to apply for the undergraduate research grant last semester. She said she had thought about me because she knew that for me my education will not stop after college. I am curious about countless topics and ideas, and I plan on gaining as much knowledge as possible.

Dr. Jones told me that a research project would be a good stepping-stone to start with, since I plan on continuing my schooling into graduate school. Perhaps this project will inspire a future thesis for myself.

4. Who or what inspired you to pursue your undergraduate research project? Why were you interested in the topic?

**MK:** My mom was the inspiration for my research topic. Back at home, she is a paraprofessional in an early childhood special education classroom. She had called me one day and asked if I had learned about Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum in any of my classes.

In one school year, two of my mom’s students were given the label of having agenesis. According to my mom’s colleagues, Agenesis is very uncommon, especially back home in my area. The fact that I had never heard about this condition made me want to learn more about it.

I passed along the information about my topic to Dr. Jones, and she told me that she had never

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heard of the condition either, and that made me want to research it even more.

5. What course work have you taken that has helped you to prepare for this project?

MK: Honestly, all of the Special Education classes I have taken thus far have helped prepare me for this project. In every class, the professors instill upon us the importance of finding evidence-based research. They have taught me how to properly search for scholarly journal articles and research. Most importantly, they have taught me to trust my instinct. When I have a hunch, I just need to go with it and find the needed information to prove my claims and findings.

6. Have you presented or published your research? Where and when? If not, do you plan to?

MK: I have not presented or published my research yet since it is still on-going. I have applied to present my findings at The Illinois Council for Exceptional Children Fall 2015 Convention. I will find out March 1st if I get to present or not.

I am currently in the process of looking for other conferences and conferences in the field of Special Education that I can present at.

7. What have you learned during the course of your research about the topic?

MK: This is hard to answer because I have learned so much. Here is a brief overview of my topic: Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum is a congenital condition in which corpus callosum of the brain is absent from birth.

The corpus callosum is the largest neural pathway in the brain, composed of over 200 million axons that interconnect the right and left cerebral hemispheres.

In Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum, this pathway can be either completely or partially absent. Development of young children with AgCC may be similar to that of other children; however, social or problem-solving skills typically do not improve as they go through elementary school.

Normally, the corpus callosum matures and becomes more efficient as children approach adolescence, allowing abstract reasoning, problem solving, and socialization to develop rapidly. This does not occur in children with AgCC; consequently, they fall behind their peers mentally and socially as they proceed through their teens and into adulthood.

There are a variety of services and interventions that can be used when working with individuals with AgCC. Some possible rehabilitative interventions are: Speech therapy (to improve child’s language and reading/writing skills; different techniques are used according to the specific deficits and skills of the subject), Physiotherapy (mainly to reduce motor problems and sequelae in complex neurodevelopmental disorders), etc.

8. What have you learned about yourself during the research?

MK: I learned that I truly have a love for knowledge! There are so many things that I have yet to learn, and I want to take in as much as I possibly can.

I designate a certain amount of time each week to my project, and I get excited when it’s time to work on it because I know I will learn something new each time.

9. What advice would you give to undergraduate students who want to pursue research? Where should they start?

MK: If you’re interested in a topic, tell someone. Faculty members are more than willing to help point you in the right direction and give guidance. It’s important to have a basic understanding of your topic before proposing a research project because you will seem more credible/reliable and genuinely interested in the topic.

If there is something that you are passionate about, start researching now. It’s never too early to start.

10. What are your future plans with regards to research? Are you thinking about graduate school? How do you think your research will help you in your future?

MK: I plan on finding conferences and conventions to apply to in order to share my findings. If research goes well, it could possibly lead to a future thesis for me.

If anything, I will be able to create a website to inform people about Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum.

I’m also thinking about submitting my findings to different special education magazines or journals to possibly publish my work. I plan on attending graduate school, and one day down the line, I hope to get my PhD as well.

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Joann Wakefield: “The Effect of Biofeedback Training on One Repetition Maximum Chest Press”

1. What is your major, minor, hometown, year in school, etc?

JW: Kinesiology and Sports Studies major with minors in Psychology and Community Health; I am from Munster, IN; and I am a senior at EIU.

2. What is the title and the purpose of your research?

JW: The title of my research is “The Effect of Biofeedback Training on One Repetition Maximum Chest Press.” And the purpose of this study is to determine if a heart-rate variability training program utilizing the emWave device can increase performance on a simple strength task, and on a one-repetition maximum chest press task.

3. Who is your current research mentor and how did you become involved with this project?

JW: My current research mentor is Dr. Amber Shipherd. I was enrolled in her Exercise Psychology course during the spring 2014 semester. In her class I participated in a physical activity intervention class project, which she later asked if I would be interested in contributing to her write up of the class project.

After aiding Dr. Shipherd with the write up she brought up the idea of undergraduate research to me. I was excited and interested from the first mention of research.

4. Who or what inspired you to pursue your undergraduate research project? Why were you interested in the topic?

JW: Dr. Shipherd and her Exercise Psychology course strengthened my interest in Exercise and Sport Psychology, in addition to participating in an undergraduate research project. Ever since I was young I had been interested in the psychological aspects of sport and exercise, especially in swimming (I have been a competitive swimmer since 2000). My love for exercise combined with Dr. Shipherd’s compelling course solidified my desire to participate in research.

5. What course work have you taken that has helped you to prepare for this project?

JW: I have taken multiple courses here at EIU that have helped me prepare for the research project. These courses include: Exercise Psychology, Exercise Physiology, Technique and Theory of Aerobic Exercise and Strength Training, Physical Fitness Appraisal and Performance Assessment, Physiology, and Anatomy.

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6. Have you presented or published your research? Where and when? If not, do you plan to?

**JW:** I plan to present my research proposal at the 2015 AASP Regional Conference and 25th Midwest Sport & Exercise Psychology Symposium (February 27-28th), as well as at the EIU Showcase (March 27th). I also plan to present my research results at the 34th Annual MidAmerica Undergrad Psych Research Conference (April 18th).

7. What have you learned during the course of your research about the topic?

**JW:** During the course of my research I have learned quite a bit about biofeedback.

Biofeedback is a method of controlling normally automatic bodily functions by monitoring and training to acquire voluntary control over them. This is not only beneficial to my research, but I can also implement some of the techniques I have learned in my collegiate swimming and in everyday life.

I have also learned a great deal about research methods, research proposal writing, and data collection. Being adept in these areas is very important since I wish to participate in a graduate program in the near future.

8. What have you learned about yourself during the research?

**JW:** The main thing that I have learned is that I am more competent at writing than I thought I was. Sometimes I am too critical on myself when it comes to academics and it was reassuring to know that my writing skills are more developed than I thought.

I have also learned that I enjoy research and would like to keep pursuing it in the future. Collecting data is exciting and I can not wait to be able to review the results at the end of the research project.

9. What advice would you give to undergraduate students who want to pursue research? Where should they start?

**JW:** The advice I would like to give undergraduate students interested in pursuing research is to get out there and do it!

Undergraduate research is exciting, educational, and most importantly it will revolve around topics that you are interested in. It allows you to get important hands on experience in your field of interest, which can set you apart from your peers when applying for internships, graduate programs, or jobs.

Talk to a professor that you have a good relationship with or a professor that specializes in your field of interest. They will be able to answer your questions about research and may even offer you a research opportunity.

10. What are your future plans with regards to research? Are you thinking about graduate school? How do you think your research will help you in your future?

**JW:** In regards to my future plans with research, I hope to have the opportunity to work on another project before I graduate. After obtaining my undergraduate degree in Kinesiology and Sports Studies, I hope to participate in a sport psychology graduate program. I believe that research will not only help me broaden my academic knowledge and experiences, but will also open up new and exciting opportunities form me in the future.
Katie Silva:
“Trade Books’ Historical Representation of Anne Sullivan Macy, The Miracle Worker”

1. What is your major, minor, hometown, year in school, etc?

KS: Elementary Education major, with endorsements in Science, Social Science, English, and Middle Level; I am from Effingham, IL; and I am a senior at EIU.

2. What is the title and the purpose of your research?

KS: The title of my research is “Trade Books’ Historical Representation of Anne Sullivan Macy, The Miracle Worker.”

For my research, I analyzed the way children’s literature represented Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan, the world’s most famous teacher. I chose these historical figures because of the important place of women’s history in the National Council for the Social Studies curriculum standards, Common Core’s demands for increase in non-fiction content for elementary students in English/Language Arts, and the increased rigor in elementary history content.

The ultimate goal of this study is to determine what is included, how it was included, and what was omitted or misrepresented in the children’s literature.

3. Who is your current research mentor and how did you become involved with this project?

KS: Dr. John Bickford is my mentor for this research. I got involved with the research because I had met with Dr. Bickford to talk about my unit topic for his class. He proposed that if I wanted to learn more about it, he would be happy to assist me in an undergraduate research project.

4. Who or what inspired you to pursue your undergraduate research project? Why were you interested in the topic?

KS: I wouldn’t have pursued my research if it wasn’t for Dr. Bickford. I hadn’t really thought about it until he asked me if I would be interested. His encouragement and constant support helped me to grow in my confidence to carry out the research.

I became interested in the topic from the social studies methods class with Dr. Bickford. We had a unit plan as an assignment, and my topic was Helen Keller. I chose her because she is a well-known historical figure, but I didn’t know very much about her. As I learned more about Keller, I also became interested in Anne Sullivan Macy. Not only because she is just as significant as Keller, but because she was her teacher.

As a future teacher, it was interesting to learn about Macy’s methods and overall approach to teaching Keller. In addition, the story of Keller and Macy and how they worked together is truly amazing.
5. What course work have you taken that has helped you to prepare for this project?

KS: My ELE 3340 class with Dr. Bickford was the driving force behind this project. Though, I would say I used skills that I have learned in other classes as well, such as ELE 3280.

6. Have you presented or published your research? Where and when? If not, do you plan to?

KS: I co-presented my research at the Illinois Council of the Social Studies Conference on March 6, and then I will be presenting my research at the National Conference for Undergraduate Research at Eastern Washington University, in Washington, DC, on April 16.

Furthermore, my research paper has been sent to the Social Studies Research and Practice journal, and is currently under review for publication.

7. What have you learned during the course of your research about the topic?

KS: I have learned so much about my topic throughout my research. Foremost, many children’s trade books misrepresent Macy within them, omitting important details. On the contrary, a majority of the books included necessary information regarding Keller. This shows that the relationship between Keller and Macy, and Macy’s contributions are minimized within the literature. Keller and Macy are each notable and neither would gain international notoriety alone.

In addition, I have learned the importance of scrutinizing trade books for historical accuracy and knowing how to supplement the literature when it is not accurate. This is really important because often children assume what they are reading is true in historical fiction or non-fiction.

Finding ways to enhance children’s literature allows for more in depth, accurate information to be learned. Supplementing also gives opportunities to create more engaging activities that incorporate informational texts, which aligns with state and national initiatives in Common Core and NGSS.

8. What have you learned about yourself during the research?

KS: I have learned that if I’m interested in something, I need to have confidence that I have the ability and the means to be successful at it, especially when I have the encouragement and support of those around me, and to trust in myself and my abilities.

I have also learned that I’m more of a risk-taker than I have presumed, and I’m starting to see that in other areas of my life as well.

9. What advice would you give to undergraduate students who want to pursue research? Where should they start?

KS: I would suggest that if someone is interested in research, they should first ask one of their professors if he or she is actively involved in mentoring research.

Another thing I would do is to look online at the faculty profiles and see what research professors have been involved with previously. If it seems that a professor has recently participated in assisting students in research that would be a good person to email or ask questions on how to get started.

10. What are your future plans with regards to research? Are you thinking about graduate school? How do you think your research will help you in your future?

KS: I have not really considered graduate school, but if I do enroll it will probably be later in life.

I am going to use the basis for my research, the methods, and the outcomes, to enhance my future classroom, as it can easily be applied to other topics. The knowledge I have gained from my experiences is invaluable in helping me become a better teacher and further my career as a professional.

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Elizabeth Wilson:
“College Students and Asthma”

1. What is your major, minor, hometown, year in school, etc?

**EW:** Health Studies major with a concentration in Community Health; I am from Bourbonnais, IL; and I am a senior at EIU.

2. What is the title and the purpose of your research?

**EW:** The title of my research is “College Students and Asthma.” The purpose of my study is to provide a better understanding of college students and their awareness concerning the severity of asthma.

3. Who is your current research mentor and how did you become involved with this project?

**EW:** My current research mentor is Dr. Misty Rhoads. She is a phenomenal mentor! My research project was actually required for two of my classes in my major. I’m happy it was required though because I have had a couple great opportunities offered to me because of the work I’ve done.

4. Who or what inspired you to pursue your undergraduate research project? Why were you interested in the topic?

**EW:** I actually was the inspiration for my research project because I have asthma.

When I was a freshman in college I was hanging out with a group of friends and I started having an asthma attack. Still to this day I remember the blank stares they were all giving me. No one knew what was going on or what to do. That situation sparked my curiosity to find out how much other college students know, or don’t know, about asthma.

5. What course work have you taken that has helped you to prepare for this project?

**EW:** I took Research Methods I (HST 2800) and Research Methods II (HST 3800). Those were the two classes that required this research project, and the classes helped me learn how to study, collect, and write research.

6. Have you presented or published your research? Where and when? If not, do you plan to?

**EW:** I have presented my research twice so far. Once for my peers at EIU (this was

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required for my Research Methods II class). The second time, was in St. Charles, IL, for The Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (IAHPERD) 2014 State Convention.

I was also asked to present my research again in Portland, OR, in April for The Society for Public Health Education’s (SOPHE) 66th Annual Meeting.

7. What have you learned during the course of your research about the topic?

EW: The question should have asked what haven’t I learned? The main thing that stands out to me is reading over all the responses I got for my survey I created and handed out for students to take. A lot of people are unaware of the severity of asthma which is worrisome because asthma can be fatal.

8. What have you learned about yourself during the research?

EW: I have always been an organization freak. I write everything down that needs to be done and the due date in three different spots. It has helped shape me into the great student I am, but it especially helped me while doing my research. If you missed a deadline that pushed all the other work back, and there was so much to be done, you couldn’t afford to do that. So I’m thankful to be as organized as I am.

9. What advice would you give to undergraduate students who want to pursue research? Where should they start?

EW: I would tell them to take some kind of a research class. I didn’t know a thing about conducting and collecting research until I went through my first research class. There is honestly so much to learn, so I would say starting with a research class would benefit you.

10. What are your future plans with regards to research? Are you thinking about graduate school? How do you think your research will help you in your future?

EW: If any more opportunities come up for me to partake in another research project I will definitely take them. It is a lot of work, but when you’re done you feel so accomplished and proud of all the hard work you’ve done.

As of right now, I do not have plans to go to graduate school any time soon. I’m focusing on getting a job when I graduate and then maybe down the road, when I can afford it, I will go to graduate school. My research will help me in my future because if any boss I have asks me to conduct research on something I already have the knowledge I need in order to tackle that assignment.

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Jeremy Reusch: “Decatur Indoor Sports Center Needs Assessment”

1. What is your major, minor, hometown, year in school, etc?

JR: Recreation Administration major; I am from Lake Zurich, IL; and I am a senior at EIU.

2. What is the title and the purpose of your research?

JR: The title of my research is “Decatur Indoor Sports Center Needs Assessment.” My research was conducted as part of my recreation administration (Rec 4740) class curriculum. The goal of our research was to perform a needs analysis for the Decatur Indoor Sports Center (DISC), a sports and fitness facility used by the Decatur, IL, population, as well as Milikin University, also in Decatur, IL.

3. Who is your current research mentor and how did you become involved with this project?

JR: The instructor of my Research in Recreation (Rec 4740) class is Dr. Michael Mulvaney, who would be considered my research mentor.

4. Who or what inspired you to pursue your undergraduate research project? Why were you interested in the topic?

JR: As a class, we decided to focus on a needs analysis of the Decatur Indoor Sports Center (DISC). While this research was a part of the class curriculum, I found it extremely rewarding to finish such a large research analysis in the short time provided.

5. What course work have you taken that has helped you to prepare for this project?

JR: One class that prepared me for this research project was my computers class. Throughout the research, I extensively utilized both Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel, both of which were covered in my computers class.

6. Have you presented or published your research?

JR: I have not presented my research on the DISC to anyone, nor do I plan to in the near future. I plan to use my research project in interviews as a reference of the quality work that I have completed, and that I am very proud of while attending EIU.

7. What have you learned during the course of your research about the topic?

JR: Through my research, I was able to conduct a needs analysis based on many different aspects of the study. I utilized literature, as well as produced a survey to the population affected by the DISC and was able to draw conclusions based on that. A couple conclusions continued on page 11
we discovered included: the population would like an indoor pool integrated into the facility, and they would like increased senior programming.

8. What have you learned about yourself during the research?

**JR:** Throughout this research project, I have learned that I work very well with others at achieving a common goal. I had the privilege of working with Kory Brown, another recreation administration major, who was also in the Rec 4740 class with me. Brown and I worked very well together, spending multiple evenings side by side in The Gregg Technology Center at EIU.

9. What advice would you give to undergraduate students who want to pursue research? Where should they start?

**JR:** One piece of advise I would give to other students looking to pursue research is to pick a very narrow topic. If the topic you are trying to research is not specific enough, it will be nearly impossible to include every aspect of the topic into your research in a reasonable amount of time.

10. What are your future plans with regards to research? Are you thinking about graduate school? How do you think your research will help you in your future?

**JR:** I do not see myself pursuing any type of further research in the near future, however, graduate school is something that I have considered, among many other possibilities, and opportunities upon graduation.

I believe this research project has served as a great learning experience for me in helping to understand all of what is demanded when conducting research. I am truly grateful that EIU, and more specifically The Department of Recreation Administration, requires such an intensive research experience as part of the curriculum.

Pictured is The Decatur Indoor Sports Center in Decatur, IL. Jeremy Reusch, a senior, Recreation Administration major at Eastern Illinois University, conducted research for the center titled “Decatur Indoor Sports Center Needs Assessment.” (Photo courtesy of The Decatur Park District, Decatur, IL.)
Dr. Nick Osborne, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Eastern Illinois University, was surprised on January 24, when it was announced that the Primary Center in Mount Vernon, Ill. was being renamed in his honor.

The honor took place at the Mount Vernon City School District 80 Board of Education annual retreat, where Osborne said he thought he was ending the retreat to speak about the Illinois Vision 20/20 Initiative, however the news he received was much more than he could have ever dreamed of.

“It’s a very tremendous honor and a very humbling honor,” Osborne said. “It’s one of those things that you really don’t have that as your goal when you take on a job. This particular project was just one part of a huge reorganization of the school district. I appreciate any time an organization or individuals appreciate my work and in this particular case I was just pleased to get a thank you. For them to go the extra step to rename an existing structure that is going to be in existence for many years is a very humbling and a very special honor.”

Osborne is a retired superintendent for the Mt. Vernon School District after working for six years in the role. Previously, he has been employed by the district as a middle school science teacher, middle school assistant principal, and district assistant superintendent.

Due to his many roles in the Mt. Vernon School District, Osborne said he felt better prepared for his transition to EIU 13 years ago. In addition to working as a professor at EIU, Osborne is the former chair for the Department of Educational Administration, and the former chair for the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Level Education.

“The years of experience as a public school administrator gave me the skill set and knowledge of running both a building at a principal level and also the knowledge and skill sets needed to be a successful superintendent,” Osborne said.

“Having that knowledge and skill set from those experiences help me to align that with the theory and research to provide quality experience and coursework for our students.”

Dennis Hoffman, President of the Mount Vernon District 80 Board of Education, said the construction of the Primary Center can largely be contributed to Osborne.

“Dr. Osborne has been instrumental in doing a number of things for Mount Vernon City Schools, the community, and the state of Illinois,” Hoffman said. “In terms of Mt. Vernon City Schools he was instrumental in building the Primary Center and he was also the main planner in reorganizing the district from neighborhood schools to attendance centers, and thirdly he helped establish a good relationship between the board, administration, and staff with establishing the communication laboratories.”

The Primary Center, a K-3 school, will be renamed the “Dr. Nick Osborne Primary Center” during a dedication ceremony in April.
The Rising Star Award

This award is for alumni who are within 10 years of graduation from Eastern Illinois University. They must have excelled in their field or in the career for which the CEPS degree prepared them.

Candice Holbrook, a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), is currently the Recreation Program Manager at the Oregon Park District. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Recreation Administration from EIU.

Katie Lewis, began her career as an elementary education teacher and nanny. After graduating with her bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from EIU, her career path prepared and inspired her to become the enthusiastic and kid savvy founder of Strollers and Stilettos.

Melissa McConaha, earned a master’s degree in Clinical Counseling in 2012 from EIU. She began a doctoral program in Counselor Education and Supervision at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. She earned her candidacy in October, 2014. Currently, McConaha is a graduate assistant for the Dean’s Office in the College of Education at Auburn University.

Dr. Leah Reynolds, currently serves as the Assistant Director of Civil Rights and Diversity at Eastern Illinois University, where among her many responsibilities she assists with both the Threat Assessment Team and diversity training. She earned her master’s degree in College Student Affairs from EIU.

Lisa Taylor, became the Decatur Public Schools Superintendent in March 2014, as the District’s youngest superintendent, with over 12 years of experience working on behalf of Decatur Public Schools. Taylor has two graduate degrees from the College of Education and Professional Studies—a master’s degree in Educational Leadership, and a specialist degree in Educational Administration from EIU.

The Leadership & Service Award

This award is for alumni who have had a significant impact in their chosen field, community, or society.

Chelsey Byers, graduated from EIU in 1999 with a bachelor’s degree in Recreation Administration with a Therapeutic Option. Currently, Byers works for the University of Illinois Extension Office as a Family Life Educator. She has presented at over 25 professional conferences.

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Carey Dahncke, has led the Christel House Academy (CHA) in Indianapolis, since 2006, assuming greater levels of responsibility as the organization has grown from one K-8 school serving approximately 450 students to a network of public charter schools at multiple Indianapolis locations. He began immediate turnaround efforts at CHA and introduced the “Our Success” school community model. Dahncke received a master’s degree in Educational Administration from EIU in 1996.

Dr. Bridgette Hensley, graduated from EIU in 1991 with a master’s degree in Community Counseling. Currently, she is a staff psychologist with Mayo Clinic Health System at Winneshiek Medical Center in Decorah, IA, working with children, adolescents and adults struggling with a broad array of mental health issues. Hensley is also a psychological consultant to the local public high school.

Andy Kistler, is the Associate Executive Director of ARC—Community Support Systems (ARC-CCS). He graduated from EIU with a bachelor’s degree in Special Education in 1992. Following graduation, he taught at South Central Middle School in Kinmundy, IL, before accepting a position at Effingham High School, in Effingham, IL.

Julie Wollerman, is the Regional Superintendent of Schools for Bond, Fayette, and Effingham counties. She earned master’s and specialist degrees in Educational Administration from EIU. Wollerman found that her EIU education helped her to mold a small classroom of six students into a regional program of two alternative high schools and two junior high safe schools program that now serve more than 110 students each year.

The Lifetime Achievement Award

This award is for alumni who have attained distinguished professional success and prominence. These honorees are living role models in their disciplines within CEPS and will be inducted into the College’s Hall of Fame.

Dr. William B. Thiel, is a distinguished professor, scholar, lecturer, author, school administrator, teacher, coach, performer, community activist, and philanthropist, who has spent a lifetime of service to the education profession since graduating from EIU with a bachelor’s degree in Physical Education in 1950. Thiel proudly served in the role of teacher, superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, and associate principal in elementary and secondary schools.
2015 CEPS Alumni Award Winners

**Carol Schramm,** earned a bachelor’s degree in Physical Education with a minor in Safety and Driver Education from EIU. She began her teaching career in Pana, IL, at the junior high school before moving to the high school in 1970. Schramm decided to devote part of her retirement life to volunteering in the community. She currently serves on the Pana Community Hospital Board of Directors and on the United Way of Christian County Board. In addition, Schramm is a volunteer coach for Pana schools’ track and field teams, and delivers “Meals on Wheels” for Pana Hospital.

**Barbara Hundley,** earned a bachelor’s degree in Physical Education from EIU in 1965. Her first teaching position was in Shelbyville, IL, at the junior high level. She drove back to EIU on nights and weekends to complete her master’s degree in Guidance and Counseling. Following state-wide budget cuts, she pursued a career as a social services counselor. In 1977, Hundley began a 30-year career at the University of Illinois, starting as the Assistant Director for Career Development and Placement. Hundley later created the Alumni Career Center in Chicago, IL.

**Dr. Richard James,** earned a master’s degree in Education Guidance and Counseling from EIU, and became a guidance counselor at Jefferson Junior High School in Mattoon, IL. While at Mattoon, he created a nationally validated Title III ESEA innovative educational program targeting underachieving students. In 1977 he made the decision to go into higher education at the University of Memphis, in Memphis, TN, where he has taught since then. He is now an Earl Crader Professor of Education.

**Chuck Balling,** served as the Executive Director of the Glenview Park District in Glenview, IL, and after 40 years of service in the field of parks, recreation and conservation, he retired in March. During his career, Balling oversaw many of the Park District facility improvement projects, was a strong proponent of environmental and historical initiatives and fostered intergovernmental cooperation. Balling received his bachelor’s degree in Recreation Administration from EIU in 1975.
1960s

Nadine Boyer ‘68, BS in Physical Education, ‘81 MS in Sports Administration, and ‘86 MS in Counseling, was presented with the 40th Annual Glenn “Pat” Holmes Award during half time of the Freeport High School’s girls’ varsity basketball game on January 30, in Freeport, IL. Boyer, was head track and field coach, and assistant volleyball coach at Freeport High School. She retired as Guidance Director from East Richland High School in Olney, IL, in 2007.

2000s

Dominic Morais ‘11, MS in Kinesiology and Sports Studies, will be a visiting professor of Sport Management at Trinity University in San Antonio, TX, in August. Morais is currently working on his PHD in Kinesiology and Sports Studies at The University of Texas at Austin, in Austin, TX. His anticipated graduation from the program is in August.

1990s

Joe Simpkins ‘91, BS in Elementary Education, is the new superintendent of River Grove Elementary School in River Grove, IL. Simpkins will move into his new position on July 1st. He has worked in public schools for the past 24 years, with his most recent job as principal of River View Elementary School in Plainfield, IL.

2000s

Brittney St. John ‘14, BS in Health Studies, married Tyler Johns on Sept. 27 in Mattoon, IL. She is currently employed at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center in the Healthy Communities Department. Her husband works as a firefighter/paramedic for the Mattoon Fire Department in Mattoon, IL. The couple started dating in 2008.

Got News?

Are you or someone you know an Alumni of the College of Education and Professional Studies? Is there information you would like to share?

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We want to know what is going on in your professional lives!