



An innovative project developed by Defiance College digital forensic science students and faculty has received multiple accolades this year. In November the project received international recognition with a second place Silver Medal at the Reimagine Education Conference sponsored by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Selected to a shortlist of nominations from more than 800 applicants, “The FAGIN Project @ Defiance College: Authentic Service Learning” was presented at the conference by Tim Wedge, associate professor of practice in digital forensic science, and Dr. Tim Rickabaugh, interim vice president of academic affairs. The project was selected by conference judges to receive the Silver Medal among all entries in the Ethical Leadership in Education category.

One of very few entries from small colleges, the project has compelling potential impact in the area of preventing human trafficking of children. The zero-cost prototype utilizes facial recognition programs to identify potential matches between minors displayed on sex trade websites and those listed (and shown) on missing person lists.

Earlier this year, the Defiance College chapter of Free the Slaves was awarded the Ohio Liberator of the Year Award at the Ohio Liberator Awards ceremony in Columbus for the FAGIN Project. The award highlights and acknowledges work against human trafficking.

The Ohio Liberator Awards are sponsored by Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution (SOAP). SOAP was founded by Theresa Flores, a survivor of human trafficking in her teens who regularly advises Ohio Gov. John Kasich, Attorney General Mike DeWine, and U.S. Sen. Rob Portman.

Defiance College students responsible for work on the project are Ashley Wilson, Wauseon; Martin Bush, Defiance; Zachary Roush,

Nashville, Ind; Chelsea Bell, Walbridge; and Jennifer Wedge, Defiance. Tim Wedge, who directs the digital forensic science program at Defiance College, serves as their faculty advisor. Other members in the DC chapter of Free the Slaves are Jennifer Meade, Defiance; Mariah Brown, Paxton, Ill; Amoy Russell, St. Mary, Jamaica; Ashley Tompkins, West Unity; and Tammy Patton, Defiance.

Ashley Wilson, one of the programmers for FAGIN, commented that the project was one of the reasons she elected to transfer to DC. “I thought it was really cool, and I wanted to help as much as I could,” said Wilson. “It was the sort of project I had always wanted to be involved with: using software for the greater good. I ended up getting involved in the anti-human trafficking efforts of Free the Slaves here at DC because of FAGIN, so the project really means a lot to me.”

AWARD WINNING CONCEPT