

students

BECOME LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

Defiance College provides a wide range of opportunities to help graduates stand out from the crowd

by Kathy Punches '96, Director of Public Relations and Marketing

Graduates depart college campuses every spring, freshly-minted diplomas in hand, headed for the job market and graduate school. To help its students stand out in the marketplace from all those individuals with similar degrees, Defiance College adds tremendous value to its brand of education with a multiplicity of real-world experiences.

The **DEFIANCE** Resumé

is a reflection of each student's accomplishments upon graduation – it includes not only the academic elements of a degree program but activities like internships and other work experiences, leadership in extracurricular organizations, hands-on practical experiences, and domestic and international travel. A Defiance Resumé emphasizes a world of opportunities that few colleges provide. The unique elements of a Defiance education can provide students an advantage in the job market and when applying to graduate school.

“DC aims to give students the tools they need to become life-long learners and to make distinctive contributions to a changing world,” says President Mark Gordon. The college achieves this through: a broad-based liberal arts education; innovative programs that link what goes on in the classroom with the realities of the outside world and gives students hands-on experience in relevant fields; international and domestic travel opportunities; exposure to diverse cultural experiences; the use of technologies to bring the world into the classroom; and unique service and research opportunities.

Some of the initiatives that have been implemented to create quality work experiences for students while they are enrolled include the Work Experience Program and the Partnership for Jobs program (see insets). In addition, national advisory boards created in many academic majors consult with and advise the college on issues impacting their professions and provide advice on how students can be competitive in the job market and in applying to graduate school upon graduation. These advisory boards are comprised of local, regional and national professional experts in their fields.

Following are stories about recent DC graduates and the ways their distinctive DC experiences helped them succeed after graduation.



LYNN HALLER

For recent graduate Lynn Haller, her career goal of becoming a partner in a CPA firm shines brightly as she attends graduate school at the University of Notre Dame. She says that the many opportunities she had at DC gave her courage and confidence.

“Part of what I learned during my time at Defiance College was not to pass up opportunities,” she says. Beyond a rigorous academic schedule, Lynn seized nearly every opportunity that came her way, from a leadership position in Project 701 to domestic and international travel to numerous service projects.

Lynn’s impressive resume includes: chief financial officer of Project 701, employment with the Defiance Area YMCA, grant writing, academic tutoring, scholarly writing, sorority officer, Honors Program officer, two honors trips to Europe, McMaster Scholar to New Orleans, business student trip to Portland, Oregon, and service with Ohio Benefit Bank, Big Brothers Big Sisters, United Way, Caring and Sharing Food Pantry, and Soup Kitchen.

“With the experience and knowledge that I gained at Defiance College, I also gained a confidence that I didn’t have before,” she says. “This confidence has allowed me to not only trust my own instincts but has also given me the courage to take risks that I wouldn’t have taken before. Now, I feel confident in my abilities to be a successful student at Notre Dame and in my future career.”

Her advice to students considering Defiance College is to utilize opportunities that are “numerous and around every corner.” Its small size allows faculty to engage in one-on-one learning experiences that may not be possible at larger institutions.



AMBROSE KROUSE

Ambrose Krouse values the benefits that Defiance’s small campus provides. As a restoration ecology major, he worked closely with his professors, getting to know them well, and feels that a larger college or university doesn’t have this advantage.

After graduating in December, Ambrose landed a job as a contractor with the Great Basin Institute, doing work in Nevada for the Bureau of Land Management. His job is to assess the recovery of areas affected by wildfire, something that “falls right in line with my degree,” he says. Some of the sites are reseeded while others are left to repopulate naturally. His work focuses on gathering data that will help determine what is the better method for recovery. At the same time, he is monitoring wild horses and reporting on conditions of the herds.

Ambrose is confident that his real-world experiences at DC gave him a leg up for future employment. He spent large amounts of time at DC’s Thoreau Wildlife Sanctuary and was also involved in environmental issues with the Ecology Club. “I believe having the diverse background of people from all walks of science in the club exposed me to a lot of different ways of thinking about environmental issues,” he says. “The same thing applies to my job in Nevada. We have geologists who work on mining issues. We have people who work on cattle and grazing ... on sage grouse populations to see if they will become an endangered species, and people like me who are working on wildlife concerns. We are all looking at the same land but with very different ideas. I like how my time at DC got me in the groove of thinking this way, and I appreciate the different ideas that come up with environmental issues.”



BRITTANY COATS

"Everything I have done during my four years at Defiance College never ceases to amaze me. I have learned that I can do anything I put my mind to."

Because of her DC education, the world has opened its doors for Brittany Coats. Five international trips during her four years at DC set her on a career path in international education. She is pursuing a master's degree at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont. Her goal is to work with college students to conduct research-based projects abroad helping those in need. Simultaneously, she intends to continue her own science-based research in community health.

Brittany's intellectual curiosity and adventurous spirit made a perfect match for Defiance College where faculty, administrators and staff recognized her potential and gave her the tools to see what she could do in the world.

As a three-time McMaster Scholar, Brittany traveled twice to Cambodia and once to Belize where she was able to utilize and broaden her scientific knowledge. She learned how to break down communication barriers and think quickly on her feet.

As a founding manager of Project 701's Defiance Cares Free Clinic, Brittany took on the task of helping to lead a collaborative effort with the Defiance Clinic and ProMedica Defiance Regional Hospital to provide a free monthly primary care clinic for people in the Defiance area in need of health care. "This has perhaps been one of the richest, most educational, and rewarding experiences of my life," reflects Brittany. Working with a team of students, doctors and nurses, the clinic served 117 individual patients (183 check-ins) in its first year, reflecting one in every 14 uninsured adults in Defiance County.

Brittany says that when she attended a National Collegiate Honors Council conference in her senior year, she came to the realization that Defiance College was far ahead of other schools across the nation in learning opportunities for its students. "As I was sitting in various sessions listening to what other institutions had to share about their programs, I thought, 'We already have that,' 'Our design is better,' and 'Defiance College combines all of the bits and pieces of what these schools have into one.'"

Defiance College Partnership for Jobs

The Defiance College Partnership for Jobs program is a unique partnership with local businesses and non-profit organizations.

If a local business hires a student for a pre-professional experience, the college reimburses the employer for half of the minimum wage, up to 10 hours a week.

The program has grown significantly over the past two years, helping place numerous students in both income-producing and experience-creating jobs.

A list of 2012 employers who posted positions include:

General Motors
Henry County Hospital
Sherwin-Williams
Steyer and Co.
First Call for Help
Defiance Vet Clinic
YMCA
Harbor
Putnam County Library
Anytime Fitness
Metalink Technologies
Village of Fayette
St. John's Lutheran Office
Tigers Den
State Bank and Trust
Family Video
Kelly Mansfield
Defiance Mausoleum Association
Twist It Yoga Studio
Fastenal Defiance
SRI Tax Consultants
R Bike Shop
Color Canvas
KMI
Beilharz Consulting
Van Wert YMCA
Town & Country Pets
Keller Trucking
DCTV
Habitat for Humanity
First Federal Bank

GENE SNYDER

One of the founding businesses within Project 701, DC PC Solutions, was organized and led by Gene Snyder of the 2012 graduating class. The business provides computer repair and related services to the community at little or no cost.

Gene considers DC PC Solutions one of the college experiences that helped him most to develop invaluable leadership, time management and budgeting skills, not to mention his participation as a Service Leader and member of the men's soccer team. He says he was able to cite many of his DC experiences in an interview that landed him a job in his field of interest.

As a Service Leader, Gene had several travel opportunities including trips to Costa Rica and Richmond, Va. He also traveled with the Criminal Justice Society to Detroit and Washington, D.C.

He credits much of the individual attention he received from Professor Gregg Gunsch as instrumental in preparing him for his field. "I have encountered 99 percent of the concepts he taught, and the things he showed us," says Gene.



TODD ODELL

Long before Todd Odell walked across the stage to accept his Defiance College diploma, he had a job in his field securely in hand. His successful completion of DC's rigorous forensic science program landed him a position as a lab technician in the blend testing services division of Lubrizol. He hopes to eventually move into criminal investigation with either the FBI or the Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

As a student, Todd's classroom knowledge was enhanced with two quality forensic science internships including 100 hours with the Stow Police Department in Stow, Ohio, and 120 hours with the Toledo Crime Lab. In addition to all of his co-curricular activities, he also had the opportunity to travel with the college's Criminal Justice Society on its trip to Washington, D.C.

"Defiance College has given me a lot of opportunities to make myself a more well-rounded individual," he says. "Working with professionals on a one-on-one basis has given me a lot of valuable knowledge."

BRITTANY HEATON

Also a forensic science major, Brittany Heaton, decided to pursue a graduate degree and was accepted at University of Illinois-Chicago where she is studying forensic science via the biology/DNA concentration. She hopes to become a forensic scientist in a crime laboratory.

Brittany feels that her Defiance College education helped "to broaden my horizons of what the outside world looks like and how it operates." She availed herself of many opportunities during her four years at DC. As a two-year McMaster Scholar, Brittany traveled to Belize where she completed projects on water quality testing for pesticides and E. coli. As a member of the Carolyn M. Small Honors Program, she took part in a spring break trip to Italy. She was also a student board member and vice chair of the board of Project 701.

Brittany sees Defiance's small size and individual attention as two of its greatest strengths. She encourages others headed to Defiance to "take advantage of any and all opportunities to travel with DC, because there are so many ways to go abroad."

CHARLENE WILLIAMS

When Charlene Williams arrived on the Defiance College campus from her home in Jamaica, “I had to grow up really fast,” she recalls. “I came here by myself and walked into the entire college experience.”

Her college experience became an impressive list of accomplishments thanks to all of the opportunities that Defiance offers. Charlene immersed herself in as many distinctive experiences as possible. As a Service Leader, she took part in a homeless experience in Cincinnati and traveled back to Jamaica with fellow students to build a home for a family in need. As a business student, Charlene was a member of Students in Free Enterprise and was the manager of Buzz Mart, a student endeavor in running a small business. She also traveled with fellow business students to Cincinnati.

During her senior year, Charlene was a McMaster Scholar to Cambodia, and she also took part in the college’s Alternative Spring Break trip to points of interest in the southern U.S. that were part of the Civil Rights movement.

Charlene is midway through her graduate assistantship in the Defiance College admissions office. Her long-term career goal is to hold a marketing position with a multi-national organization that would enable her to travel and work “all over the world.”

She feels confident in her future because of her liberal arts education and travel opportunities. “My experiences have helped me to be a more well-rounded person. As a McMaster Scholar in Cambodia, I learned to think on my feet and adapt to various situations and environments. I absolutely believe that,” she says.



THOMAS STUDER

As a two-time McMaster Scholar to Belize, Tom Studer had the great opportunity to pursue his own research. He performed water quality analysis, discovering that wells in the village of San Carlos had dangerously high levels of nitrates. After presenting his findings to the residents, his data was forwarded to the Belizean government which resulted in purified water being trucked into the village during the dry season and installation of a new well by the government.

In addition to his travels as a McMaster Scholar, Tom was also an active member of the Carolyn M. Small Honors Program that afforded him many opportunities for domestic and international travel. The

honors program provided valuable peer-to-peer interactions and allowed him to hone his debate and presentation skills.

Tom is pursuing a master’s degree in biology where, based on his DC experiences, he earned a coveted teaching assistant position and scholarship funding at Bowling Green State University with the goal of becoming a public aquarist at a zoo or aquarium. While at BGSU he will work in the Laboratory for Sensory Ecology which deals with how organisms perceive their world by examining sensory input as well as behavior responses to environmental changes.

“Defiance College has helped me not only forward my academic goals but has also allowed me to advance in the global community and my understanding of the world,” he says. “I have gained priceless hands-on experiences, and I have been able to apply what I have learned in the classroom to real-life circumstances. “Even before I graduated, I was able to make a difference in my own life as well as the lives of countless people. I have made a difference in ways that I never thought possible.”





BRYANT GREEN

As a high school senior, Bryant Green was unsure of what he was going to do after graduation. He recalls that he didn't excel academically, and he came to Defiance College looking for direction and motivation. He loved the intellectual stimulation that he encountered in the college classroom and was soon looking for more challenging opportunities.

Those opportunities came in many forms – from leadership positions in the Criminal Justice Society and the Carolyn M. Small Honors Program to numerous trips both domestic and international. As a criminal justice major, he investigated a cold case for the Wayne County (Detroit) Prosecutor's Office. With support and encouragement from college staff, he organized a string ensemble on campus.

Bryant traveled to Washington, D.C., Italy and Central Europe and was a McMaster Scholar to Belize. As a McMaster Scholar, he was instrumental in helping a group of Belizean women start their own restaurant.

Now Bryant's goal is to practice international law in the nonprofit arena, hoping to make a positive impact in people's lives based on his experiences through the McMaster School.

When he contacted the law school he wanted to attend, he was discouraged from applying because his LSAT score was too low. But Bryant was determined and scheduled an interview with an admissions counselor. "During the visit I shared with her what I had done at DC. Once she learned about my international work and all of the unique experiences I had at DC, the counselor encouraged me to turn in my application right away and wanted me to know that my accomplishments and personal statement were phenomenal," he says. Not only was he accepted to law school, he also received a \$10,000 scholarship.

"The opportunities available at DC are unlike those at other schools," he adds. "Your successes are measured by more than just the classroom. At DC you gain a once-in-a-lifetime education that gives a clear advantage when competing with others for jobs or graduate school." ♦

Work Experience Program

With this year's incoming class, DC is inaugurating the new Work Experience Program which is geared toward giving Defiance College students another way to stand out in the job market. Students already have many opportunities to craft, and then implement, job strategies that can position them to excel in the job market or in applying to graduate and professional schools. It all starts with working with incoming freshmen on their Personal Success Plans and helping incoming students develop their Defiance Resumes. The hands-on learning experiences that students can receive through initiatives in many majors, unique service opportunities through our entrepreneurial student-run non-profit (Project 701), and the networking through our national advisory boards are just a few of the other ways DC helps students to stand out upon graduation. The new Work Experience Program adds to these, providing even more deliberate on-campus employment and training opportunities for freshmen and sophomores that can then be used to leverage off-campus employment experience (through the Defiance College Partnership for Jobs and other efforts) as juniors and seniors.