

Student Stories Project: Miranda Knight

Audio version available at: <http://www.alumni.indiana.edu/profiles/students/knight.shtml>

[IU fight song]

Welcome to the Indiana University Student Stories Project, a production of the IU Alumni Association. I'm your host, Alana Salata. In this series, you'll get an insight into what it takes to be a student leader here at IU, from the perks –

“One of the members of the club brought the Mad Money show to campus. Now, that was a big step for both the school and the club.”

– to the hard work –

“Graduate school takes up more time and energy than you can anticipate.”

– to the memories that will last a lifetime.

“I traveled to India in the fall of 2006 with 60 students from the Kelley School of Business.”

Join me on this journey through the lives of IU student leaders.

[IU fight song]

SALATA: Today we're at IU East speaking with Miranda Knight of the New Student Orientation program.

KNIGHT: Miranda Knight. I am a freshman. I'm an English major. I'm from Greenville, Ohio. I founded the Student Association for Learning and Communities, which I'm also the president. I'm in the Humanities Club, the Honors Club; I'm a work-study for humanities and fine arts. I'm also a New Student Orientation tour guide, or as Brett calls us, “admissions ambassadors.” I have four boys that's all under ... there's 10, 6, and 3, and my husband is currently deployed in Iraq.

Tell me about a meaningful or enjoyable experience you have had at IU East.

New student orientation for Learning Community. When we did our orientation, we did the drums with Keith, and that was really fun. I think that was the most fun we had here. That and when we went to the symphony together.

What advice would you give to incoming freshmen and other students just starting out at IU East?

Make sure you have enough time for your studies. And don't drop classes. Make sure you always go to class.

Tell me a little about the New Student Orientation program.

New Student Orientation is where we speak with financial aid, student support services, tutorial services, information technology, and we've basically spread them out throughout the campus to see what the campus is like and each one of them speak about their areas. At the end, the students get to speak with advising before they even leave, and they get their class schedule right there. Before they leave campus, they know what classes they're going to take. As soon as they leave orientation, they could start class.

Tell me about a specific program event that you were involved in that you are particularly proud of.

The Learning Community. That's a program where we take a block of classes from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and we have – normally it's four classes together. We have blocks in between – time where we can study in between – and we normally end up using those times to have lunch together, study together, talk. If we get stuck on a problem in math or a concept in reading or writing, then we end up just sitting down and talking about it, and working it out ourselves. And we get more one-on-one time with the instructors, because sometimes the instructors see that we are at this place at this time every day, and so they'll come if they have their free time during that time – they'll come and have discussions with us also.

What challenges have you faced during your participation in these programs?

We were the pilot program, so we had no money. So they kept saying that we were going to have all these luncheons with the faculty and with different people, and we had one luncheon, because we had no money to pay for a lunch. So we wanted to have more luncheons and more interaction with the faculty than what we had. So that was one of the reasons why we started the student association for the Learning Community, so that we would have something to fall back on if Learning Communities needed any extra support than what they already get.

How have your leadership skills developed over the course of your participation in these programs?

I was the shy little girl that sat in the back of the class ... [laughter] ... that never talked, would not even look at you – and now I'm the president of a student association; I was asked to be a Student LEADER ... so it's kind of a total 180.

What are the benefits of the New Student Orientation program?

The New Student Orientation, as soon as you leave campus, you have your schedule and you have everything that you need so that if anything you can actually start class the following day – or the following week or whatever. And you have already met – with the New Student Orientation, you've already met the biggest part of the most important people that you need to know about on campus. Tutorial services is one of the biggest things, because if you get into the 117, the instructors encourage you to go there, because you can check your homework and

they'll give you the answers if you show your work already. And the writing lab will help you write your papers, and student support services, if you have a learning disability or if you're a first-year student, if you're the first generation to go to college, they help you out. And it just opens up a lot of the opportunities. And the Learning Community – there's just so much. You gain – you don't even realize you're gaining leadership by being in there, because none of us realized what was happening until after the semester was over. We had a lot of group projects and a lot of group interactions, and it kind of – it built a camaraderie between us. And, like, this weekend we're going to a wedding for one of our classmates from the first semester. You kind of do build upon that link that you have.

What are your future goals, and how do you think IU East has helped prepare you to meet those goals?

My future goal is to be an English professor, which T.J. Rivard, our chair, has really encouraged me about. East helped me build that, because it helped me realize that – because when I came here, I thought I wanted to be nursing because my dad's entire family is in nursing and medical, and then when I got here I realized that I was only doing that because I was always told in high school that I was a horrible writer. The instructor here was like, "What? You're kidding? You're an incredible writer!" He's like, "You're one of the best writers we've had for a while," and the confidence that I gained from my instructors – not only the Learning Community, but also my instructors after that – have helped me realize that I can be a very good writer and the love that I had for English and writing as a kid was still there. So they helped me realize that I want to do English instead of nursing.

What will you miss the most when you graduate?

The people. There's a lot of awesome people here.

We've been talking with Miranda Knight of IU East's New Student Orientation program.

[IU fight song]

This series was produced by the Indiana University Alumni Association, with special thanks to the IU Marching Hundred and director Dave Woodley. I'm Alana Salata.

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