

Student Stories Project: Katie Warren

Audio version available at: <http://www.alumni.indiana.edu/profiles/students/warren.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 Southeast speaking with Katie Warren, an orientation leader.

WARREN: My name's Katie Warren, and I'm an orientation leader here at IU Southeast. My major is communication, and I'm a senior originally from New Albany, Indiana. In my spare time I like to scrapbook, go to the movies, and have dinners with friends.

Why did you choose to attend IU Southeast?

Originally I transferred from another university when I was considering a major that wasn't offered at that university, and when I came to IU Southeast I was confronted with a lot of people who cared to get me started in the right way. They would look to find things that I needed – they weren't just going to tell me the answer to get me out of their face.

Tell me about a meaningful or enjoyable experience you've had at IU Southeast.

I'd have to say that – when I got involved, my very first involvement was with career services, and the very first event that I did was a job fair, and so they kind of put me at a table and had me checking people in. And I just really felt like a part of the university. I know that they could have functioned without me, but it felt like I was really important to them at that moment, and so that made me decide to get involved a little deeper.

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

I would say to go to orientation. [laughter] That would be the biggest thing, because when you get started at a school you need a chance to kind of dip your feet in before you jump in, and this is a great way to meet people, to get connected with other students, and to view the campus.

Tell me a little about being an orientation leader.

As an orientation leader, what we do basically is we are at orientation and we lead the students to and from the places that they're going, and also we're there if they have questions or if they are a little bit nervous. We're there to kind of talk to them and ease their fears. So basically what we do is cater to the students during orientation so that they feel comfortable and they can adjust.

How did you find out about being an orientation leader, and why did you decide to become involved?

Actually, I was serving as an intern in the Office of Campus Life during the time that they were recruiting orientation leaders, and my boss asked me if I'd like to be an orientation leader because I was going to be working with them, so she thought that it might be nice if I got involved *as* an orientation leader. That's how I heard about it. And then I decided to do it because when she was talking to me, I had served as an ambassador – which was giving tours to incoming students – and so I thought that this would be an interesting way to be a part of an additional step of becoming a student at IU Southeast.

Tell me about an orientation leader event or program that you were involved in that you are particularly proud of.

Well, I helped Kathy Meyer, who is the coordinator of orientation, plan the welcome banquet for the new orientation leaders. So I helped set up, make the decorations, and send out the invitations and things like that. So when everyone came together, it was nice to feel like I had helped foster this environment of getting to know the people that we're going to be working with in our campus involvement throughout the summer. So I was really proud to be a part of that.

What challenges have you faced during your participation as an orientation leader?

It's actually interesting to be an orientation leader because you get to meet such a diverse crowd, and sometimes people aren't always as happy about what needs to happen during orientation as others. So I would say that the difficulties I have faced is just explaining to people why we kind of do it the way we do it, because they think maybe it should be done another way. But what they don't realize is that they're coming in new and they have no idea what to expect, and we have experience. I guess then we just try to ease their mind and let them know that really we're doing this because we know it's best for them.

How have your leadership skills developed over the course of your participation as an orientation leader?

Well, I attended LeaderShape earlier this year, and at LeaderShape we kind of talked about how to develop yourself as a leader and to lead with integrity. And so I would say that the biggest thing I took from that is leading with integrity. So I bring that to the table as an orientation leader, and I always try to be honest with people and to let them know in advance what's going to happen and that we're not going to hide anything from you and then spring it on you. So I would have to say that: integrity, definitely.

What have you gained through your interactions with IU alumni?

Well, my mom is actually a graduate of IU Bloomington, so when I was discussing colleges with her, she urged me to consider state universities – because a lot of people think they just need to get out of the state; they want to go as far away as possible – and my mom kind of opened my eyes to the benefits of staying in-state. In addition to in-state tuition, you can really connect with where you come from, and if you plan on coming back to the area, for example, if you went to another university in another state and you wanted to come back to this area after you graduated, you would have been disconnected. But if you go to a state university, then you're here the whole time and you're still growing your identity as a member of this area of the country and you're not out of touch with what's going on, and it makes the transitions just a lot easier.

What other organizations are you a part of here at IU Southeast?

Well, I'm a student ambassador, which, those are the people that give tours to incoming students and show them around, and I'm also a mentor, which is actually the next step after orientation – some of the new students join the mentoring program. And what the mentors do is just give them a current student that they can ask questions and to show them where their classes are and to just kind of help them feel welcome to the university and have kind of a go-to person. And then lastly, I do something in career services called "career services investigator," which is just helping the career services office market themselves with a student eye.

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

Well, my ultimate future plan is to complete my master's degree in communication and then also my doctorate degree in communication and become a professor. My dream would be to be a professor here at IU Southeast, and hopefully I'll be able to recognize that someday. But I feel that my time here has really shown me what kind of impact professors can have on your lives. If you have a good professor that really connects with you and shows you that even a subject that you might not like can be interesting, then that person is going to be someone that you remember for the rest of your life, and I'd really like to be that person for somebody ... or more than one person.

What will you miss the most when you graduate?

I think I'll miss the general feel of the university the most. I just love being here, because everyone likes being here. There's a lake which you can go and sit and just relax between classes, and they're remodeling the student organization area, so there's going to be all kinds of activity there. Even though we're a commuter campus, I feel like the climate here is such that you feel welcome between your class breaks.

We've been talking with Katie Warren, an orientation leader at IU Southeast.

[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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