

COLS Dean's Symposium to highlight research

by Mandy Potts - Monday, November 19, 2012

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/23176/cols-deans-symposium-to-highlight-research/>

Each year, students, faculty and staff at the state's third-largest university devote time to research, and what they discover has tremendous value to entire industries, professions and, often, local and state government.

On Nov. 28, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh College of Letters and Science will hold a Dean's Symposium giving faculty a forum to share their research and discoveries with the University and regional communities. The event combines lunch with a presentation, providing a social setting for interaction and discussion among colleagues at UW Oshkosh.

The symposium is entitled, *Sources of Information that Influence Social Service Policy Decisions: A Context for Actively Engaging Students in Social Science Research* and will feature a presentation by Fredi Giesler, associate professor of social work.

In the fall of 2010, Giesler began working with two students employed through the Student Titan Employment Program (STEP) to explore the factors that influence the decisions made by county level policy makers regarding local social services.

UW Oshkosh's STEP program offers students quality educational experiences while providing faculty and staff members with needed assistance.

"I could not have done this without the help of STEP students. They do the leg work, the library work and that takes a lot of time to do," said Giesler. "Plus, the work they do enhances their ability to analyze information and apply it."

For their research, members of the 72 Wisconsin County human/social service boards were surveyed via mail and electronically. Of the 581 potential participants, 223 county human/social service board members responded to the survey.

The STEP students and Giesler presented the results of their research at the National Rural Social Work Institute in the summer of 2012. In January of 2012, a manuscript detailing the results of this research was submitted to the *Journal of Policy Practice*. This manuscript was accepted for publication with no edits and will be available in the December 2012 issue of the journal.

Giesler said it's very rare for research to be accepted into a journal with few or no changes. She said it speaks volumes to the quality of research and writing her students did.

"It's extremely important for students to be a part of research to gain skills and collaborate with faculty and staff," said Laura Hall, a social work graduate student who worked with Giesler on the months-long project. "By being involved in these projects, students are able to gain transferable skills that will be of

benefit no matter the field of study or career path they venture out on after graduation.”

Lori Weaver, who recently graduated with a degree in social work, also found the work with Giesler beneficial. Weaver now works as a social work supervisor for a human service agency, she said.

“The research project provided me with a greater understanding of the hows and whys of the decisions made by my county’s human service board,” Weaver said.

Giesler will discuss the research findings and the benefits of engaging students in research at the Dean’s Symposium, on Nov. 28 from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. in Reeve Union 202.

“The STEP program is a good investment in our students,” Giesler said.

Lunch is available at the symposium; \$5 for faculty and staff and \$3 for students. RSVP for the symposium by calling the Dean's Office at 424-1222.

Learn more:

- [Dean's Symposium via Beyond Classroom Walls](#)
- [College of Letters and Science](#)
- [Research features on *UW Oshkosh Today*](#)