Huskies BELONG: Informational Overview

Bryan Dallas, Ph.D., CRC, LCPC, Associate Professor, bdallas@niu.edu
Becky Griffith, STEAM Educator, NIU STEAM, rgriffith2@niu.edu
Mary Miller, Huskies BELONG Graduate Assistant, mmiller@niu.edu
The Program

- Huskies Building Effective Learning Opportunities and Network Guidance (Huskies BELONG)
  - One-year college immersion experience at NIU launched in 2023
  - Funded by the Illinois Community College Board
The Program cont.

- Illinois high school students with disabilities (SWDs)
- Transition to 4-year degrees
  - STEAM majors (i.e., science, technology, engineering, arts, math).
- Spring orientation
- 5-day summer residential immersion program
- Fall of Senior Year
  - Essential Employability Skills (EES) online course
  - NIU STEM Fest
  - Apply to college and FAFSA
Transition to College Experiences

- First-year academic performance is key
- **Huskies BELONG**
  - 20 H.S. Juniors with disabilities
  - College bound
  - Interest in STEAM
Huskies BELONG

• Goals
  – Increased understanding of STEAM career opportunities
  – Increase knowledge in establishing postsecondary disability supports and accommodations
  – Access resources for admission, financial aid and enrollment
  – Increase self-efficacy in establishing postsecondary disability supports and accommodations
HB Partners

- NIU
  - P-20 Center
  - STEAM
  - Disability Resource Center
  - Recreation Center
  - Career Services
- Donka, Inc.
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- Horsepower
- RAMP Center for Independent Living
- Kishwaukee Special Recreation Association
Engagement Methods

- In-person
- E-mail, telephone, Zoom
- Moodle Learning Management System
  - Announcements
  - HB Materials
  - Camp Photos
  - Essential Employability Skills modules
HB cont.

• Spring of Junior year
  – Needs assessments
    • Career interest assessment
    • Assistive Technology Evaluation
  – Family Fun Day at NIU

• Summer
  – 5-day residential college immersion program
HB Summer Camp

• Integrated Residence Halls and Dining
• Academic Supports and Accommodations
  – Interactions with Faculty and Students Role Play
  – Undergraduate Panel of Current SWDs
• STEAM exploration and activities
  – Engaging with NIU faculty
  – Career interest assessments
• Integrated Recreation and Socialization
  – Recreation Center
  – Esports gaming
Residence Halls and Dining
STEAM Exploration and Activities
Cyanotype (Sun Print)
Minecraft Education Edition - Coding

```javascript
player.onChat("Agent!", function () {
  agent.teleportToPlayer()
})

player.onChat("Dance!", function () {
  for (let index = 0; index < 100; index++) {
    agent.turn(RIGHT_TURN)
    agent.turn(LEFT_TURN)
  }
  for (let index = 0; index < 4; index++) {
    agent.attack(FORWARD)
  }
})
```
Tynker Cad – 3D Printing
Green Screen – Marketing

Ready For

Takeoff
“Chopped” Cooking Competition
“Chopped” cont.
Recreation and Socialization
Esports Gaming
Fall HB

• Fall of Senior year
  – Family Fun Day at NIU STEM Fest
  – Essential Employability Skills (EES) online course
• Mock Job Interviews
  – Big Interview
## Essential Employability Skills

### Essential Employability Skills: Module 2

**Module 2 Career Videos**

Module 2 should take approximately 40 minutes to complete.

- **Assignment**
  - Not available unless:
    - The activity **Assignment** is marked complete.
    - The activity **Label** is marked complete.

Complete the Career Video Check List worksheet and submit your response.

### Essential Employability Skills

#### Teamwork & Conflict Resolution

- **Verbal:** Students can use their understanding of English grammar and public speaking, listening, and responding, convey an idea, express information, and be understood by others.
- **Written:** Students can use their understanding of standard business English to ensure that written work is clear, direct, courteous, and grammatically correct.
- **Digital:** Students can use their understanding of email, keyboarding, word processing, and digital media to convey work that is clear, direct, courteous, and grammatically correct.

#### Communication

- **Problem Solving:** Students can use their critical thinking skills to generate and evaluate solutions as they relate to the needs of the team, customer, and company.

#### Decision Making

- **Critical Thinking:** Students can use their understanding of logic and reasoning to analyze and address problems.

#### Adaptability & Flexibility

- **Initiative & Self-Drive:** Students can use their understanding of goal setting and personal impact to achieve professional goals and understand personal impact.

#### Reliability & Accountability

- **Cultural Competence:** Students can use their understanding of diversity and inclusion to communicate and work effectively across a multitude of abilities, cultures, and backgrounds, to ensure that professional team functions properly and meets collective goals.

- **Planning & Organizing:** Students can use their understanding of time management to plan effectively and accomplish assigned tasks.
• Assist with college and FAFSA applications
  – Illinois Student Assistance Commission
  – RAMP CIL

• Referral to Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services

• Help identify college supports
Comments

• Comments:
  o “I loved doing art outside”
  o “Very fun and engaging, so glad I'm a part of the program!”
  o “I found out what to do better relating to my disability”
  o “I have a lot of fun in the huskies belong program it gave me a lot of knowledge about what college life is like”
  o “I learned new things”
  o “It was fun to meet new people, I gained 3 new friends”
• “I was hesitant at first because I haven’t had this type of opportunity before... I gained experience advocating for myself and working with personal care attendants, and I learned I can live on my own and go to college. I am glad I did it and I would encourage other kids to give it a chance.”

• “My favorite part of the camp was connecting with people I wouldn’t normally meet and seeing we have a lot of commonalities we didn’t expect.”

• "I was the only camper with a physical disability. It didn’t matter, we all just hung out and had fun...It felt good to be in a place where I was seen as a person first rather than my disability.”