

FYRES Students 2011-2012

In fall 2011, the pioneering FYRES class consisted of 13 students with diverse backgrounds and interests.

Gideon Berghuis



Major: Secondary Education

Hometown: Hudsonville, MI

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "My advisor at Passport described this new opportunity and I was interested in learning more about dunes and coastal environments."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Being able to go out to the beach and spend several hours outside each Thursday was awesome."

Rian Bylsma

Major: Undecided Sciences

Hometown: Ada, MI

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Spending endless hours climbing over dunes, my research group (Team Awesome!), the last hail/sleet/rain/snow-filled field lab, [and] post-lab Speedway runs."



Sydney Carrick



Major: Recreational Therapy

Hometown: Bonn, Germany and Asunción, Paraguay

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "Being able to do a lab out on the dune. It sounded exciting going out to Lake Michigan every week and learning about dunes (not the normal classroom setting)."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "You get to know your class very well because you spend lots of time every week with them. You also get to go off campus and see Lake Michigan, [and experience] Michigan weather while out on the dune."

Luke Cousino

Major: Geology

Hometown: Ida, MI

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "Science is meant to be a hands-on experience. What better place is there to get your hands dirty than in God's laboratory? I never thought I would do legitimate earth science research my first year of college, so when I learned of FYRES, I applied immediately."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "It was awesome (and slightly frightening) using thousands of dollars worth of equipment at the dunes."



Hannah Damsteegt



Major: Secondary Spanish Education

Hometown: Martin, MI

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?

"I needed a science credit, so I chose this class. But, I was also attracted to the outside labs."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Getting to know my classmates, driving to the dunes, [and] hanging out with my team!"

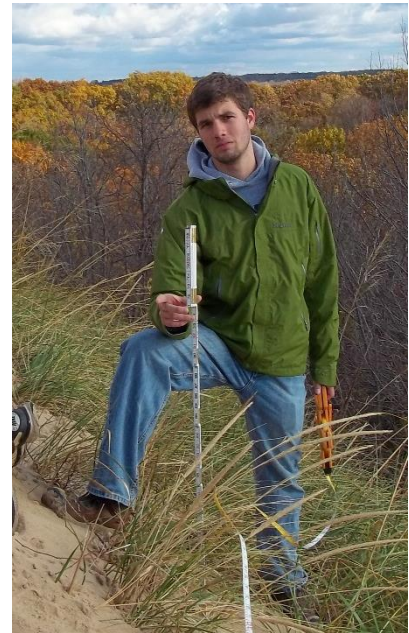
John Elenbaas

Major: Environmental Science

Hometown: Grand Rapids, MI

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "I love to be outside, and this course allowed for that as well as covering a topic that fit well under my major."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Of course going out to the sand dunes once a week was great, but it was cool to gain a deeper understanding of these spectacular features that I had visited often but didn't know much about."



Catherine Hilbrands



Major: Undecided

Hometown: Grand Rapids, MI

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "The chance to do some hands on learning and the opportunity to go to the dunes every week; experiencing what scientists really do (real life research)."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Enjoying the Michigan weather (beautiful and crazy), [and] getting to know and work with mentors and other students."

Joey Hulst

Major: Environmental Science

Hometown: Grand Rapids, MI

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "Research outside, on dunes (how much better can it get)! [It is] Important to me as a Michigan native to know and learn about Michigan dunes."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Beautiful skies and scenery during some of the labs, finishing up the [research] poster and being pleased with the finished project, [and] getting to know people in the GEO department."



James Karsten



Major: Geology

Hometown: Kalamazoo, MI

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "This course was recommended to me by Professor Stearley when I took a tour of the Geology department during a Fridays at Calvin. I have always loved Lake Michigan and the dunes that come along with it. So having the dunes as a lab was a great thing for me."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Falling flat on my face and getting a mouthful of sand on the first day. I haven't run down a dune since."

Major: Accounting CPA program

Hometown: Mekelle, Ethiopia

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "I needed the credits and my advisor recommended this course. It sounded interesting."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "When it was hailing at the dunes and we were still trying to collect data."

Timothy Nykamp



Elizabeth Stranzenbach



Major: Earth/Space science for Secondary Education

Hometown: Scotch Plains, NJ

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "[It was a] chance to get off campus. Looked fun and interesting."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Going to the dunes, [and] enjoying the beauty of nature."

Jessica Trojanowski

Major: Undecided

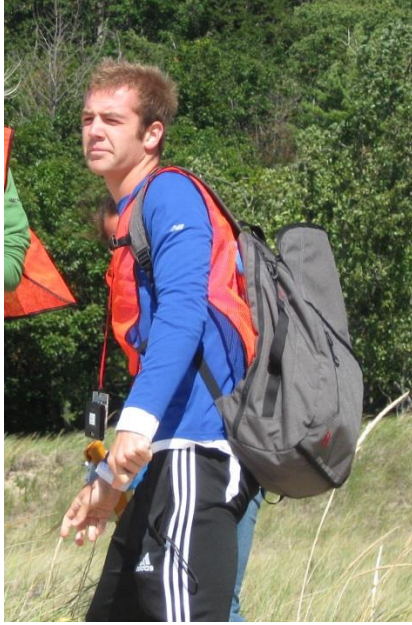
Hometown: Byron Center, MI

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "Being able to learn outside and be interactive."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "One of the first times we went out to the dunes and it was really nice and warm out. Also, the closeness of the class-we're all friends."



Sam Vannette



Major: Business and Philosophy

Hometown: Raleigh, NC

What initially attracted you to the FYRES course? "The hands-on approach to classwork, and the research aspect of the course / the time spent outside the classroom."

What is a highlight of your semester in Geography 181? "Visiting the dunes during the nice weather, [and] completing the [research] poster."