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 Ascunción, 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."

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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."

Timothy Nykamp

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."
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."