

# FYRES Students 2012-2013

**In fall 2012, the FYRES class consisted of 23 students with diverse backgrounds and interests.**

## Katy Gerber



**Major:** Environmental Science and International Development Studies

**Hometown:** Maple Grove, MN

**Campus involvement:** Creation Care/Outdoor Recreation Living-Learning Community

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "I was excited to have field experience and have the opportunity to get my foot in the door of college-level research."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Seeing fall colors from the top of the dunes."

## Sarah Harefa

**Major:** Psychology

**Hometown:** Indonesia

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "The opportunity to witness Michigan's dunes!"

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Loosing [and later finding] the stylus of the expensive GPS and many other countless awesome experiences (along with supportive mentors and classmates)."



Elaine Hilverda



**Major:** Speech Pathology

**Hometown:** Grand Rapids, MI

**Campus involvement:** Student Martial Arts Club

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "My dad was in the Geography department looking for professors from when he went to Calvin and I was tagging along. He knew the professor who Prof. van Dijk replaced. So that's why the conversation started. Then one thing led to another and FYRES was brought up. Prof. van Dijk seemed so enthusiastic that I couldn't help but be intrigued."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "The beautiful view from the top of the dunes."

Alex Kurtz

**Major:** Geology

**Hometown:** Earlysville, VA

**Campus involvement:** TCG Club and Equestrian Club

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "The ability to work outside and have our research affect the outcome of parks."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Being able to enjoy nature while doing research at Dune 8 [at Hoffmaster State Park]."



## Evan Legge



**Major:** Accounting

**Hometown:** Midland, MI

**Campus involvement:** Intramural Basketball

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "I heard about a class that gave the opportunity to go to Lake Michigan and study sand dunes every week. That sounded very interesting to me, so I applied for the course."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Using the GPS (Juno) Units to map features on a dune, and running up and down the dunes."

## Gabe LePage

**Major:** International Development and Environmental Studies

**Hometown:** Nairobi, Kenya and Lookout Mountain, TN

**Campus involvement:** Outdoor Recreation/Creation Care Floor

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "It looked like a great way to mix my developing interest in Earth Sciences with my older interest in messing about outside. And having no experience with Michigan and fearing it would be flat and boring compared to Kenya and Tennessee, this was a sure way to prove myself wrong."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "It's remarkable how high you can jump from without injury on a hill of loose sand."



## Michael Messina



**Major:** Undecided

**Hometown:** Oak Park, IL

**Campus involvement:** Ballroom Dance Club

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "I was considering a major in Environmental Science or Environmental Studies, and my advisor recommended I take this course."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "I love that we get to go to dunes for our labs. Most labs meet inside in a controlled environment, but FYRES labs are almost never like that. We do out and do actual field research. It's awesome."

## Cassie Miceli

**Major:** Environmental Geology, International Development Studies

**Hometown:** Montgomery, NY

**Campus involvement:** Photography Club

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "[The] research opportunity, [and] working outside."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** Running down the dunes!



## Josh Nieuwsma



**Major:** Environmental Studies

**Hometown:** Caledonia, MI

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "We get to go out to the dunes and use the equipment and techniques we learn about in class."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "I got to use the total station and survey part of a dune."

## Krystal Perry

**Major:** History

**Hometown:** Davison, MI

**Campus involvement:** INTRO, Photography Club, Calvin Missions, Calvin Conservatives

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "The opportunity to be [out in] the field and do hands-on experience."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Being given all this wonderful knowledge that will hopefully help me with my archaeology minor. I also love all of the lovely people I have met."



## Eleighna Prather



**Major:** exploratory

**Hometown:** Muskegon, MI

**Campus involvement:** Intramural Volleyball, 1VR activities

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "The five credits. [Also] I'm not a huge science fan, so this FYRES course seemed the most fun and interesting. I've never taken a class like it before."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Being able to work out on the dunes and being able to learn and understand techniques I never knew about."

## Veronika Schultz

**Major:** Psychology

**Hometown:** Traverse City, MI

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?**

"Growing up a half hour away from Sleeping Bear Dunes, I was familiar with sand dunes but wanted to know more. I wanted to know how they formed and why environmentalists wanted to [preserve] them."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Being able to hike on the dunes nearly every week."



## Danny Shishler



**Major:** Spanish

**Hometown:** Wooster, OH

**Campus involvement:** Campus Choir, SET team, Calvin Theatre Compant

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "Going to Lake Michigan to do research of geography."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Running down the dunes and jumping off the top of Dune 8 [at Hoffmaster State Park]."

## Jen-Li Sin

**Major:** Business

**Hometown:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Campus involvement:** Dorm service learning at Cook Library, and Business Forum

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "Lab periods! Getting out to do research work instead of just staying in science labs. [Also] practical learning."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Getting to learn how to use the total station and getting to use it in the lab period. And after that, transferring the data to plot the topography map of the dune we studied."



## Natasha Strydhorst



**Major:** Writing (tentative)

**Hometown:** Calgary, Alberta

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "The opportunity to spend time outside and actively researching every week."

**What is a highlight of your semester in the course thus far?** "The incredible views each week from the dunes to the lake. [Also] continual learning."

## Jake Swineford

**Major:** Environmental Studies, Pre-Veterinary

**Hometown:** Aurora, IL

**Campus involvement:** 1VR Outdoor Recreation/Creation Care, Ultimate Frisbee, Jazz combo

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "I wanted an outdoor aspect in class, but also something that would be contributing to something meaningful and in my major."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "The lab work has been highly enjoyable, and while it is a challenging course, it is less rigorous than other science courses."





## Lucas Vander Bilt



**Major:** Environmental Studies/ Biology

**Hometown:** East Grand Rapids, MI

**Campus involvement:** Rock Climbing

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?**

"The opportunity to get experience in research. I [also] enjoy learning outdoors."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Learning about how to use all new kinds of equipment."

## Ashley Van Wyk

**Major:** Business Marketing

**Hometown:** Grand Rapids, MI

**Campus involvement:** Young Life

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?**

"Rock candy at the FYRES information table during Passport."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "I love being able to leave campus to go out to the beach. The research we do is so much fun and interesting. It was a great way to meet new people."



## Matt Williams



**Major:** Political Sciences

**Hometown:** Denver, CO

**Campus involvement:** Intramurals

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "The hands-on learning and being able to be outside while doing research."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Going to get chi and doughnuts with our class!"

## Alek Zapata

**Major:** Geology

**Hometown:** Hudsonville, MI

**Campus involvement:** Ultimate Frisbee

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "Being able to do hands-on research in an outdoor environment. It would help me in the long run with my major."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "Every lab day in the dunes is a highlight for me."



## Jacob Zondag



**Major:** (probably) environmental studies

**Hometown:** Grand Rapids, MI

**Campus involvement:** Oratorio

**What initially attracted you to the FYRES course?** "The opportunity to learn more about the dunes on the shoreline that I love, and the opportunity to learn more about real world, hands-on research."

**What is a highlight from your time in Geography 181 thus far?** "One of my favorite things so far has been seeing the view that is unique to each day. Every time we go, the weather conditions are different and the sky is painted with different colors.

It is a beautiful, awe-inspiring atmosphere in which to research and explore."