“Work with Nu-Pak Incorporated through PACCE was an excellent learning-process for me. I am a foreign-exchange student and I came here to learn the way the Industrial Engineers communicate each other, the concepts they use and the actions they use in a company to make improvements. After the project, I learned a lot about IE concepts, teamwork, how a real company works, how to give presentations, and mostly, how the American culture works.”

Luis Peralta-Cervantes, Mexico

UWP project management class works to improve community land
By: Anne Killian

University of Wisconsin-Platteville students in Tom Hunt’s Reclamation Project Management course are applying classroom concepts to help the community. The project is funded through the Pioneer Academic Center for Community Engagement. Hunt, a UWP School of Agriculture professor, is having his class work on three different areas of land in the surrounding community, with hopes to improve the quality of the natural habitat.

The Reclamation Project Management course is designed to teach students concepts that apply to environmental and conservation-related issues and activities. Concepts include the role of a project manager, project life cycle, project control cycles, project management tools, project team and organizational factors, project planning and implementation. Leading, team building and communication skills are emphasized in the course.

To give his students hands-on experience with these classroom concepts, Hunt divided the class into three groups with each group focusing on a particular area of land in or near the city of Platteville. The entire class is acting as a workforce to support the individual groups. “Sure the focus is aimed at polishing planning, design, and restoration and management techniques as they relate to the natural environment, but the students are also exercising life lessons and leadership practices” Hunt said.

One group is looking at a piece of land located between Belmont and Darlington that is owned by private landowners. Group members are looking for ways to improve the land by removing invasive plant species. As leading, team building and communication skills are emphasized in the course, the group members have been learning how to use and perfect these skills. They had to design a plan, delegate assignments to their workforce, figure out supplies needed and coordinate with the landowners. Their final task will be writing a land management plan for the landowners to follow that includes maps and ideas for habitat improvement.

Another group is working at Ipswich Prairie, a state natural area located about five miles south of Platteville. It protects the largest remnant of deep-soil mesic prairie that once thrived in southwestern Wisconsin. The group is working to remove and treat existing woody species in the prairies and develop a management plan to prevent the spread of woody species in the future.

“By working together to achieve our goals, this project is helping us practice the needed skills of teamwork, time management and communication for our future careers,” group member Dana Clark said.

The third group is focusing on removing invasive plant species in Hardscrabble Prairie, another state natural area. Hardscrabble is located near Hazel Green and is a composite of oak openings and very diverse dry prairie land. The group is working to remove brushy bottleneck areas in order to restore the area back to its original state. They have used their skills in invasive plant management to find and implement the correct way of removing these species. The class has visited and worked on all three land areas, putting each group’s plan into action.

The goal of PACCE is for students, community partners and faculty to Experience, Grow and Make a Difference for each other through working on real community projects, in real situations with real consequences. With the assistance of PACCE and the leadership of Hunt, the project management class is truly experiencing, growing and making a difference.

UWP students update Wisconsin Badger Camp’s emergency plan
By: Krystle Kurdi

Three University of Wisconsin-Platteville senior design students are helping their community while gaining hands-on skills. Jenna Walsh, Justin Goodrich and Antonio Encinas are updating Wisconsin Badger Camp’s emergency procedure plan. The Pioneer Academic Center for Community Engagement is funding the project.

Wisconsin Badger Camp, in Prairie du Chien, serves people with developmental disabilities by providing quality outdoor recreational experiences. It strives to provide a positive...
environment where individuals with developmental disabilities can learn their surroundings and realize their full potential.

The group is working with Brent Bowers, executive director of Wisconsin Badger Camp. “He’s been really easy to work with and provided us lots of information. He’s very interested in our progress and open minded,” said Walsh.

PACCE funds are being used for the group’s travel expenses and to purchase emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, stretchers and resource material. The group is creating training modules for staff, error proofing the materials already in place and creating an updated checklist of what to do in case of an emergency.

As part of the project, the group had to research federal and state safety regulations and understand project management.

“Planning is an essential part of project management,” said Goodrich. “We definitely used what we learned in class. The project made us more aware of regulation design and the consequences if regulation isn’t followed.”

The group will complete and present their project at the end of the semester. All the students will graduate in May. They have enjoyed the small class sizes and location of UWP. Walsh said she came to UWP because of the comprehensive Women in Engineering Program.

UWP students and Platteville community volunteer for Operation Military Kids
By: Barbara Weinbrenner

According to Sue Curtis, director of the UWP Community University Partnership Program, the University of Wisconsin-Platteville has been involved with Operation Military Kids since the very beginning. With the assistance of the Pioneer Academic Center for Community Engagement, OMK continues to be an important partner in helping area children cope while their National Guard or Reserve parent is serving active duty overseas.

OMK was implemented after a real need was identified to assist National Guard and Reserve families since they usually do not live close to a military base and therefore, do not have the support network that one offers.

In small communities, a child with a deployed parent may be the only one in the school and OMK helps that child connect with other children in the same position, kids with the same fears and questions. Curtis said that some of the older children even exchange e-mail addresses.

“This program has taught me so much about strength and how strong humans can be,” Nicole Cray, UWP student and OMK volunteer, said. “This is the most rewarding program that I have ever been involved with.”

OMK is particularly important now because Wisconsin just sent the largest deployment of National Guard members since World War II. Curtis said that a large deployment could affect thousands and thousands of children in Wisconsin.

Curtis applied for and received a PACCE grant last semester and part of the funds was used to purchase 750 HERO packs.

Curtis’ business communication students are required to complete a service learning project and many have chosen to volunteer for OMK events like the one in Madison.

“It’s very heartwarming to see the students warm up to the kids,” Curtis said. “They are willing to give so much of themselves.”

One of the UWP students that volunteers, Jeremy Keene, feels that OMK is a great program because it gives kids a chance to meet other kids who can relate to them more than any adult or supervisor could.

“The group that I was in charge of was all 5-year-olds,” said Keene. “Each of my four boys had secret and unique hand shakes and I ended up being the pony for the four girls. We were able to put a smile on their little faces and that makes a person feel really good.”

Scott Salwey, who also volunteered during that weekend said, “To me, it is a chance to show those kids that there are people who appreciate their parent’s service as well as people who care about them.”

“I have gained more experience with working on real-life projects which will help me in my career. I have also been given the opportunity to apply numerous concepts I have learned throughout my four years of college to a situation I may encounter in my future work experiences. Also working in a team with four individuals has taught me a lot about teamwork skills, prioritization, and organization. My experience with the PACCE project has been very valuable and will help me greatly in the future.”

Brittany Beinborn, Industrial Engineering