One of the hallmarks of the University of Northern Iowa is the practical, service-learning opportunities afforded to students through community engagement projects. These experiences positively impact our community and also make our students better future professionals and better people. Because UNI believes in the tremendous impact of these experiences, the university has made Community Engagement a pillar of its 2017-2022 strategic plan.

Veridian Credit Union is a founding partner in UNI’s community engagement work. The Veridian Community Engagement Fellowship awards, started more than a decade ago, have provided a model for how public institutions, the private sector and nonprofit agencies can work together to improve lives.

The Veridian Community Engagement Fellowships continue to inspire meaningful partnerships between the university and the Cedar Valley — partnerships like the 2016 UNI-House of Hope collaboration: “The Giving Back Hope Commemorative Art Project.” For this project, UNI art education students helped mothers create art symbolizing how the House of Hope empowered them during their time of transition. Mosaic tile pieces containing the art will be displayed in House of Hope’s new building to serve as an inspiration to new mothers.

As this report highlights, Veridian’s 25 years of investment in UNI — through the signature Veridian Community Engagement Awards as well as other partnerships — is an investment in our students and in the greater Cedar Valley.

On behalf of the University of Northern Iowa and our local service organizations, we thank you for your leadership, commitment to students and relentless dedication to bettering the Cedar Valley. As we continue this important work, Veridian will be a valued partner in advocating for the underserved and supporting agencies who work to solve our community’s toughest challenges.
In 2006 Veridian Credit Union and the University of Northern Iowa, in partnership, introduced the Community Engagement Awards. The purpose of the awards is to recognize outstanding contributions by UNI faculty in the community. Today the fellowship awards continue to inspire meaningful partnerships among faculty, students and community organizations. To date, $53,500 has been awarded to a total of 44 faculty projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>College/Department</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Wilson</td>
<td>College of Business Administration</td>
<td>International Economic Development in the State of Iowa</td>
<td>Peoples Community Health Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michele Devlin (Yehiel)</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Service Learning Courses (Public Health Agencies)</td>
<td>Black Hawk County Health Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gretta Berghammer</td>
<td>College of Humanities and Fine Arts</td>
<td>Service Learning Courses (Theatre and High School Students)</td>
<td>Sturgis Youth Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Czarnetzki</td>
<td>College of Natural Sciences</td>
<td>The STORM Project</td>
<td>Cedar Falls Kiwanis Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Allen Hays</td>
<td>College of Social and Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>Community Outreach Partnership Center</td>
<td>Family and Children’s Council</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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</tbody>
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Veridian Credit Union is a valued employer of UNI students and alumni. Veridian offers part-time and internship opportunities to the current students who will go on to become tomorrow’s leaders and professionals.
VERIDIAN ENGAGEMENT AWARDS BY COLLEGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Service Learning Courses (Iowa’s Farming Community)</td>
<td>Practical Farmers of Iowa</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Using Art to Address Social Issues</td>
<td>Quakedale</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Community Collaboration for Language, Literacy and Learning</td>
<td>UNI Spanish Department &amp; YWCA’s English Language Class</td>
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<td>College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Achieving Maximum Potential</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Infusing Forgiveness Education into Hope</td>
<td>Hope Trees Across Summer Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Business Administration</td>
<td>Renew Waterloo Small Business Retention &amp; Expansion for North Waterloo</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total = $53,500**
A Community Engagement Fellowship award of $5,000 from Veridian in 2016 supported Jennifer Cooley, professor of Spanish, and her ongoing collaboration with YWCA of Black Hawk County to integrate UNI students into the YWCA’s weekly English language courses in Waterloo. It’s a collaboration that stretches back more than five years and continues to this day.

“I think we can have a much more positive impact on the community by having an ongoing partnership like this,” Cooley said. “Because your partner agency knows they can depend on you; they know you’re not going to be there one week and gone the next. … You get a lot more synergy out of that.”

Each semester, between 40 and 50 UNI students supervise lessons and serve as conversation partners for approximately 20 YWCA students. The UNI students are studying English, Spanish, a combination of the two, or other languages, such as YWCA students. The YWCA students come from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. The YWCA students are preparing to become teachers of those disciplines. The YWCA students come from a variety of backgrounds such as Burma, Bosnia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some have been in the United States for years, others for a few weeks.

“Maybe I can go to college too,” said Jessica Christman, the Waterloo AMP Council Facilitator.

“Veridian has been very supportive of the foster care system and initiatives to help underserved populations,” Christman said.

“ ‘We empowered them to come up with their own story,” Sutton said. “If you’re not happy with your own story you have you can either use this project to tweak your story or make peace with parts of your personal story … You can redefine who you are.”

Each AMP participant worked with UNI art history students to illustrate an individual Tarot-like card recounting or reimagining their origin story.

“I do know that my kiddos seemed to benefit from interactions with college students because it opens up the possibility for them to think about: ‘Maybe I can go to college too,’” said Jessica Christman, the Waterloo AMP Council Facilitator.

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A UNI archaeology professor and his students combed a small plot of soil on the Hartman Nature Reserve over the course of four field seasons beginning in 2008. What they found has since become woven into the historical tapestry of Black Hawk County.

“Our focus was a prehistoric site from 1,500 years ago,” said Donald Gaff, professor of archaeology and lead for the Hartman project. “We found it was a Native American resource collection campsite.”

Gaff and his 30 students used archaeological maps drawn by the Reserve’s namesake, John Hartman, to place the Reserve campsite in the historical context of the broader Cedar Valley — Native American villages dating to roughly 400-600 A.D. had dotted the area of west Waterloo into Cedar Falls.

“(Based on the map) it looked like there had been villages where John Deere is now and burial mounds up and down Rainbow Drive,” Gaff said. “It’s possible the Hartman site served as a late-winter gathering camp where a tribe or family would temporarily reside before moving on for a spring hunt.

Thousands of artifacts, ranging from arrowheads to pottery and fire-cracked cooking rocks, led Gaff and his students to believe the site was prime for tapping maple trees for syrup — a process that’s as important to the Reserve today as it was 1,500 years ago.

For more than 30 years, the Maple Syrup Festival, held the first weekend of March, has been a hit with nature-goers who enjoy mountains of pancakes with thick syrup freshly tapped from Hartman maple trees.

Ed Gruenwald, director of the Hartman Reserve, said the maple syrup hypothesis sweetened the tale of Hartman’s history.

“That continuity through the generations is a great story,” Gruenwald said. “Because of Dr. Gaff’s work we can say that maple syrup was processed in this spot centuries ago. It’s amazing he’s been able to unweave that story out of the soil.”

Veridian recognized Dr. Gaff’s work with a $1,000 award donated to Hartman Reserve in 2010. That money was used to further youth activities at the Reserve.
Thank you