

## On Fire

### Paul College program fosters alumni connections, sets students up for success

Wednesday, May 25, 2016



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They got involved in activities on campus within days of their arrival. They worked together in groups on thought-provoking projects. They were giving elevator speeches as if they were climbing the corporate ladder before they'd even finished their second semester on campus.

They are [Paul College's](#) class of 2019, the first class to take part in FIRE, [the First-year Innovation and Research Experience](#).

FIRE's mission is "to build a community of engaged student learners who value academic excellence, intellectual, personal

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and professional development, inclusion and ethical conduct.”

As Paul College alumnus Sean Stewart '13, the program's coordinator, explains, FIRE “helps students to get involved right from the start,” learning about the value of finding mentors and making connections, the abundance of clubs and activities on campus and the resources available to UNH students.

In teams of about 20 students each, the class of 2019 embarked on a game-like experience with alumni and peer mentors. They created business plans aimed at solving complex real-world problems such as colonizing Mars, powering the Northeast or surviving extreme weather. At the same time, they developed habits to set them up for success during their years at Paul College and beyond.

Several FIRE mentors and participants shared their insights about the program with [UNH Magazine](#).

Rob Drouin '07, a Paul alumnus and an IT professional, sums it up.

“The FIRE program meets a need that no classroom can,” he says. “Academics is one piece of what makes a student successful. These programs are necessary to complement the academic aspect of a student's growth with a lesson in professionalism and career-oriented teachings.”

See FIRE students and mentors in action during the past year in [this video](#).

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