

FIRE

First-year Innovation & Research Experience

FIRE is the new Peer Advising Program in Paul College. Through a two-credit, yearlong course upper class peer advisors guide entering students through their transition to college life with high importance placed on raised academic expectations. Students will be immersed in a yearlong academic challenge project designed to serve as the foundation for engaging them within groups and to provide greater meaning to the assignments and the Peer Advising Program as a whole. Watch the FIRE Introductory [Video](#).

Academic Challenge

The academic challenge largely guided by the choice between five different high level problem statements has been divided into four manageable phases. In each of the phases individuals will have an opportunity to develop project management, research, communication, and presentation skills by taking on different roles. In subgroups students will be asked to look at the problem through a variety of interdisciplinary lenses to increase their awareness of how extensive problems are solved.

Game Component

A game framework will combine together life skill lessons, mini games and the academic challenge. This game framework will serve to keep students engaged over the course of the yearlong program and to help teams establish identities. Points and prizes will be earned through quality participation mini-games, life skill competitions, and the academic challenge. At checkpoints throughout the year, groups and individuals will be rewarded for quality participation and high achievement.

Achievement

Teams will present their plans at the UNH Undergraduate Research Conference (URC) to be judged by a panel of faculty, peers, and alumni. Teams will compete in different categories and an overall winning team will be announced. A \$500 academic achievement prize will be awarded to each member of the winning team.

Mentorship

In the FIRE Program, peer advisors will guide groups through the transition to UNH, lead the academic challenge projects, make students aware of campus resources, and help students construct realistic academic plans. In addition alumni group mentors, will teach students basic career readiness skills such as networking, email etiquette and business presentations. And finally, challenge mentors will assist in providing relevant guidance to the teams once the challenge topics are finalized. All mentors will work as a team to help students discover the link between passion and success. By increasing awareness through the early intervention from experienced professionals, we hope to help first-years identify the skills necessary to succeed early in their academic careers.

Group mentors will be on campus to meet their assigned groups twice a semester and will review some work through online resources. Challenge mentors can choose their level of involvement; this may include a presentation on a specific topic, a meeting to assist a specific group or a skype conversation to suggest resources and/or provide feedback.