

News Release

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City serves as college campus for Maymester class

KOKOMO, Ind. — Parvaneh Alipour is now an expert on her adopted hometown.

As a student in the Maymester “Getting to Know Kokomo” class at Indiana University Kokomo, she walked the Wildcat Walk of Excellence, watched glass being made at Kokomo Opalescent Glass, learned about the city’s automotive history at the Elwood Haynes Museum, and asked questions about city government during a meeting with Mayor Greg Goodnight.

“I moved here 13 years ago from Iran, and I didn’t know a lot of the important places here,” Alipour, who will graduate at the end of the summer session, said. “I’ve really enjoyed learning about Kokomo. Now, when my family comes to visit, I will know the places they need to see.”

Cindy Ison, senior lecturer, developed the class after Interim Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke challenged faculty to create something completely different than anything they have taught before.

“I started thinking about Kokomo, and all the hidden gems we have,” Ison said. “We have been looking at all the positive attributes this city has to offer.”

The class met three days each week during Maymester, exploring the city. They combed through the archives at the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library, ate in the Crystal Tea Room, learned about architecture in the Silk Stocking neighborhood, and watched beer being brewed at the Half Moon Restaurant and Brewery.

In addition to the field trips, students wrote weekly essays, took photos, drew pictures, made videos, and worked in groups to develop final projects, complete with 20-minute presentations. Projects included a visitor’s guide, a restaurant guide, and a city history. They plan to donate their work to the city when complete.

Joelynn Marconi, a senior psychology major from Peru, helped write the restaurant guide, which features the Half Moon.

“We wanted more people to know about the locally owned restaurants we have in town,” she said. “I was surprised during this class by how much there is to see and do that I didn’t know about before. I didn’t know that you could tour the Seiberling Mansion, and I didn’t know glass is made in Kokomo. This has been a great experience.”

Alipour’s group compiled the history, and she focused on the old buildings.

“We have some beautiful old homes in Kokomo, and I wanted to know the stories behind them,” she said.

Her son, Alireza Zeinalpour, a junior informatics major, was surprised to learn that the city was named for a Native American chief. He liked the historic buildings, especially the Seiberling Mansion.

Ison said the Seiberling Mansion had to be included, because it was IU Kokomo’s first home.

“We are looking at where we are going, and where we have been,” she said.

IU Kokomo’s new Maymester program offers students a chance to earn three credits in a short time period, in an immersive class. A few other offerings include a summer blockbuster class, in which students study cinematography and editing through viewing and discussing current movies; an art class that will culminate in building a class sculpture, and a creative performance class that includes creating and producing a play.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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