

Northwest University's Student Magazine

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NU STUDENTS DIVE DEEP

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Photo credit: Dr. Eric Steinkamp



This fall, twelve Northwest University undergraduate students joined the underwater world of scuba diving, earning an open water certification through Underwater Sports Seattle. Under the supervision of Dr. Eric Steinkamp and Dr. Jim Heugel, these students learned the fundamental skills of scuba diving and had a unique, adventure-filled experience.

Dr. Steinkamp's life philosophy is to "do what you love and take your friends along with you." It was this thinking that led him and Dr. Heugel to start offering NU's open water certification class six years ago after they discovered their shared love for scuba diving.

Dr. Steinkamp has been hiking, jumping out of helicopters, and scuba diving since he was a young adult. The summer before his sister went off to college, Dr. Steinkamp and his family earned their open water certifications together and went on one last family vacation to Florida. The Steinkamps fell in love with the sport and, with their new certifications, spent their vacation diving in the warm waters of Florida. That was nearly forty years ago, and since that time Dr. Steinkamp has logged hundreds of diving hours and is now a certified Dive Master.

Dr. Heugel wanted to dive ever since he was a little kid and he achieved that dream in 2003 when he earned his open water certification. Six years ago he earned his Dive Master certification alongside Dr. Steinkamp. They now go diving together about twice a month. Dr. Heugel loves how scuba diving is "exciting, relaxing, extreme, and peaceful all at the same time." He has a deep respect for the oceans and loves to share that passion with students in the certification course.

The two-week course consists of five evening classes at Underwater Sports Seattle's pool in North Seattle and one weekend of skill testing and certification at Alki Cove in West Seattle. Enrolled students had the option to receive either one or zero credits for taking the pass/fail course.

The open water certification course is designed for beginning divers with little-to-no experience diving. In the first phase of the class, students learn how pressure affects the body while underwater, tips on choosing gear, and how to thoroughly plan dives. Students are also taught several important practical skills, including how to set up diving gear, clearing one's mask of water, and hovering. Finally, students put their skills to the test with open water adventure dives in the Puget Sound. Upon completion, students are certified to dive anywhere in the world, as long as they dive fewer than sixty feet and are with a diving companion.

If there is enough interest, Dr. Steinkamp will lead a trip to Hawaii over spring break this March. Students would have the opportunity to earn up to three course credits learning about the ocean's unique ecosystem in a tropical paradise. To join the fun, interested students would need an open water certification before departing. If you are interested in the Hawaii trip or future open water certification classes, contact Dr. Eric Steinkamp for more information.

