

# SPIRE-EIT|2022

Summer Program for Interdisciplinary Research and Education – Emerging Interface Technologies (SPIRE-EIT)

## UNIVERSAL ADMISSIONS INTERFACE

**Project Title:** Development and Assessment of a Multilingual / Symbol Interface for non-English Speakers to Access Higher Education Admissions Information

**Short Title:** Universal Admissions Interface

### Faculty Mentors:

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### Graduate mentors:

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### REU Interns

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This project will help potential first-generation college students, including those whose families speak a language other than English at home, to navigate the process of applying to a community college or university and finding financial support. Challenges that they face include: 1) understanding the process of submitting applications, 2) finding enrichment programs that are designed for high school students of color, immigrant students, and first-generation students, and 3) explaining the information that is typically available only in English to families that may speak and/or read other languages. The goal is to build an interface accessible on a computer as well as mobile devices that would address this specific need to have access in one place to different kinds of information about going to community college or university.

The interns will be asked to research and conduct interviews to find out what resources are available at Iowa State, other universities, and community colleges to identify gaps that need to be addressed to make the admissions process available to non-English speaking families. The interns will investigate universal symbol languages (i.e., using icons and other non-text displays) that may be able to overcome some of the barriers for families who speak and/or read uncommon languages and dialects. The interns will apply human-centered design tools and integrate interactive design and gamification elements into their digital solutions.

The research team that will work with this REU group has a project with the National Science Foundation about developing STEM career aspirations among the youth in a meatpacking town in Iowa. The faculty, graduate students, and Iowa 4-H staff involved with this research will support the REU team. The graduate student mentors are native Spanish speakers and will work with the team to translate and build a multilingual interface. Some knowledge of Spanish would be welcome among REU team members.