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ARC Students Engage With Community

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Ten Illinois Wesleyan University students had an active summer this year interning and making contributions to the Bloomington-Normal community. Katie Rose Brosnan, Veronica Watson, Maggie Maddox, Danielle Jauregui, Celeste Borjas, Lizzie Egan, Zach Meyer, **Matt LaLonde**, Cameron Blossom, Mark Gianni participated in IWU's Action Research Center's (ARC) Community Partnership Program (CPP).

ARC, founded in 2003, by Professor of Sociology James Sikora and Chair of Political Science James Simeone, provides students with a set of experiences and skills necessary for applied research projects in the community. According to ARC's website "ARC's internal research indicated that many IWU students miss or resist the "professional golden road" of medical school, law school, and the CPA exam. ARC helps capture the passion of these neglected students by showing them the "civic golden road" of life-long leadership, whether on not-for profit boards, citizen groups, or firms in the private sector."

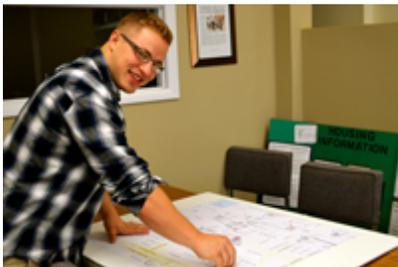
Community Partnership Program collaborates with State Farm Insurance and local not-for profit organizations to help give students an active learning and working experience outside the IWU community. Students intern at State Farm for three days a week and work with not-for profit organizations, working in areas of their interests, for two days.

Brosnan, a senior political science major from Park Ridge, Ill. in speaking of her experience of working at State Farm Learning Operations subset of the Learning and Developments Department and for the Chief Executive Officer of YWCA Jane Chamberlain, said, "It was a great opportunity to connect with people and groups. I got to interview the board members of the YWCA, which basically meant interviewing these amazing women committed to racial justice."



Katie Rose Brosnan

As part of her work with the YWCA, Brosnan helped develop a training program for early childhood educators, to prepare them for the culturally diverse group of students they will be teaching in the future. " By 2020 almost 40 percent of the preschool children are going to be non-white, where as around 80 percent of the teachers will continue to be white middle-class women. I worked to develop a program which will enable these teachers to understand the culturally diverse backgrounds of the students, which will hopefully make it easier for the students in their educational experience."



Cameron Blossom

Blossom, a senior majoring in business marketing and sociology from Flanagan, Ill, worked in the Human Resources Employment Activities Department at State Farm and for the West Bloomington Revitalization Project (WBRP). The West Bloomington Business development project, in collaboration with the Economic Development Council of Bloomington-Normal, consisted of interviewing 25 business owners in West Bloomington to develop ideas for consumer attraction, business retention, and business growth in the area. The project also included a presentation outlining how various stakeholders in the community could provide support and what can be done to work toward improving the business climate of the local community.

Blossom has been involved with the WBRP since January 2012 as part of the Board of Directors. In talking about the project Blossom said, "The ARC project allowed me to work on something that I could call my own." It provided me with the autonomy to make my own decisions, and work with community members and students to develop strategies to make a difference in the community." Blossom will continue the project this semester through the Action Research Seminar course taught by Deborah Halperin, ARC coordinator.

Jauregui, a senior Hispanic studies and sociology double major from Darien, Ill. who worked with the American Red Cross of the Heartland, organized the third bilingual blood-drive for the Hispanic community of Bloomington-Normal, an initiative that was begun last year by IWU senior and ARC intern Alex Monzón. According to Jauregui, "There is low participation from Latino blood donors in blood drives, however they are a highly desirable donor population because so many Latinos have Type O blood (which is the universal donor that can be given to anyone in an emergency)." She has also collaborated with the IWU student organization Spanish and Latino Student Association (SALSA) to arrange a blood drive at IWU in October, during the Hispanic Heritage Month. Speaking about her experience this summer Jauregui said, " I would recommend interning, but especially interning through the CPP, because it is a truly unique



Danielle Jauregui

experience to be a part of both the corporate world and not for-profit world."



Veronica Watson

Watson, a junior international studies major from South Elgin, Ill, worked for the Multicultural Business Development Group of State Farm. Her primary project was the analysis of cultural competence training for associates and agents. Watson worked with the not-for-profit organization Marcfirst that helps people with disabilities. "At Marcfirst the work you do directly impacts and helps people out there," said Watson. "It was a very humbling experience for me. It made me realize how I want to spend my future. I want to be somewhere, where I can make change and really help develop the work that is done."

Watson also helped develop the transition program, which is a program to help adolescents with developmental disabilities make the transition from high school students to adult life.

The ARC is now recruiting for the Summer 2013 program, for additional information visit the ARC website at www.iwu.edu/action.

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