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October 2010 Newsletter

Career Center, Illinois Wesleyan University

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Beyond the Bubble

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

How did you find out about this scholarship, and why did you apply?

During my junior year at Illinois Wesleyan, I came across a flyer on campus that announced an informational meeting for Rotary Scholarship programs. I remember it had some catchy phrase that appealed to my future intentions, something like: “Want to live abroad and study a language of your choice?” After the informational meeting, I was very interested because this scholarship offered me the opportunity to study abroad during my first year after college graduation. I had no serious plans for that year, nor employment, and knew that this scholarship would be a great experience and asset.

What were the qualifications needed for this scholarship?

There are a few characteristics that Rotarians are looking for in applicants. Let me start by saying anyone can, and should, apply if they are interested. Unfortunately, the 6-month cultural scholarship (the one I received) is no longer offered. Students can now only apply for the academic year scholarship, which has more stringent requirements. First of all, the year and multi-year scholarships are for students looking to pursue graduate studies in foreign country. Typically, those courses are taken in the language of that country, so applicants must be able to demonstrate some form of linguistic proficiency. Stronger applicants have a solid academic history that includes a cohesive academic focus

Martin Ceisel
Class of 2009
Rotary Ambassadorial
Scholar '09
Bratislava, Slovakia



and good marks during university. Service – a keystone feature of Rotary and their programs – is also important to Rotarians. What is your service history? Do you volunteer? How do you help in the community? The Rotary Scholarship look for young leaders who will forward Rotary’s vision of peace and service abroad.

How long did you work in Slovakia, and what did you do there?

I lived in Slovakia for a total of 8 months. During that time my main activity was 20 hours per week of intensive Slovak language study. Outside of my studies, I tutored English, visited family friends, and made presentations at various Rotary clubs as part of a cultural exchange. My scholarship covered all of my costs (though this may vary from country to country) which allowed me the opportunity to volunteer, study, and have a good time.

How has the Rotary Scholarship helped you understand what to do as a career?

I am already looking back and realizing the impact the Rotary Scholarship has had on my life. I developed a stronger bond with Slovakia and its people, and for my own Eastern European

heritage. I learned a new language and saw a new way of life. Since being back I have honed this passion into plans for the future, and am currently amidst the application process for graduate school. When applying for a master’s program in international affairs or global studies, graduate schools are looking for students with extra international experience, language ability, and niche areas of focus. I believe the Rotary Scholarship has given me the perspective – and the edge – that I need to pursue a career in the international field.

Is there any particular experience you had in Slovakia that really stuck with you?

What always sticks with me are the daily interactions I had with Slovaks. I can speak and understand the language quite well, which gave me the chance to communicate with the people in Slovakia on a more intimate level. I wasn’t treated like a tourist or foreigner for the most part. It was remarkable how speaking the language gave me added insight; it was like Slovaks were letting me into their world. I can think of so many conversations, incidents, and little run-ins in the street that for me were unique and memorable, no matter their triviality.

Editor/Writer: Tracy Lytwyn | Director: Warren Kistner

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Career Connections

a newsletter from the hart career center

October 2010

Social Media Strategies Open New Job Markets

Some say social media is redefining our way of life. As for me, I don't know if I believe that. Oh wait. Hold on. I just got a text message notification from my Facebook account. ...oh hey! My friend, Ilene is eating cereal while watching hilarious YouTube videos! It was crucial that I knew that right now. Thank you, Facebook! Anyway, what was I saying? Oh, right. So social media is becoming increasingly important now. It's being used in everything from our daily interactions with our friends to how companies monitor their customers' activities and satisfaction with their products. I'll let L2T Media SEO content specialist and IWU alum (my Career Connections predecessor!), Dave Buesing explain while I change my profile picture to me typing up this article.

"Social media, at least in a business context, is about brands attempting to connect and engage with consumers," said Buesing. "The whole point of, say, a Facebook page for a business, isn't just to have a presence on Facebook that consumers can seek out. It's to consistently and honestly listen for consumer feedback and provide engaging online services that generate goodwill."

As more and more people flock to the Internet for their information on brand names, company profiles, or even just

to catch up with an old friend, social media becomes a quick, easy way to learn about what exactly a business is all about.

"Social media is increasingly important because of its explosive potential for growth for just about any business," Buesing said. "For example, nobody would have really connected online marketing success with men's deodorant, but a recent Old Spice Twitter campaign created a ton of goodwill for the brand. The cool thing about social media is that nobody really knows what direction it might take next. It's not so much a question of when it will take off, but where it will go."

"It is beneficial to businesses and organizations because it finally creates a two-way conversation rather than the one-way direction of traditional advertising methods," said L2T senior social media manager and IWU alum, Kyle Brigham. "Both Facebook and Twitter have seen massive growth in the past few years and are continuing to grow exponentially."

L2T Media is a perfect example of social media taking off. There, they focus on online advertising components such as pay-per-click marketing, search engine optimization, social media marketing, and video optimization. Buesing said, "My role in this involves custom creative content such as blog posts, press releases, and online articles. We write, edit, and manage approximately 600 pieces of content each month, and each plays an integral role in helping our clients establish a secure online presence."

In the ever-expanding social media market, jobs are not just limited to what L2T Media does. Brigham gave several more examples of what you can do in



Photo courtesy of www.sandra-ng.com

such a field.

"Brand managers are hired on by companies to manage the conversation with customers," he said. "They are responsible for making sure company guidelines are being followed and customer complaints are responded to in a timely fashion. Facebook programmers are hired to use the Facebook mark-up language to create custom applications for companies. Custom applications could be games, contests or even rich submission forms. The possibilities are endless, but it takes some serious technical know-how."

If social media sounds like a career path you are interested in, Brigham knew a couple of good places to start.

"I would first recommend checking out some of the leading industry publications online," he said. "There are a handful of very powerful blogs that keep you up-to-date on the latest releases in social media and online marketing. Additionally, there is some great literature out there on online marketing, you just have to be sure you are getting the most updated copy. Since online marketing tactics are constantly changing, it is important to keep abreast of the latest strategies."

Inside this Issue

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Fantastic opportunities?!

Fellowships: What They Are and Why They Matter

My favorite movie ever is *The Lord of the Rings*. When I was in middle school, I was seriously obsessed with it. Everything in my life related back to those movies. I was madly in love with the blonde Elf named Legolas whose picture covered the walls of my room, I wanted to be Frodo when I grew up (which was odd because even at 11 years old, I was much taller than him), and my friends and I created our own Fellowship of the Ring, which consisted of playing *Lord of the Rings* themed Risk, writing our own stories based off of the books and movies, and arguing over who could and couldn't beat up Aragorn. We were some really cool kids.

So naturally, when I got to college and heard that I could apply to be part of a fellowship, I began planning out exactly what I would need to fight off the Dark Lord, Sauron and bring peace to Middle Earth. Imagine my disappointment when I learned that the only things these fellowships could get me were some money for grad school, a good job, and the admiration of all my peers and professors. But if the prospects of these fellowships don't sound so bad to you, read on.

"Fellowships offer experiences that are unique and provide exposure to individuals in government or industry. These may lead to professional contacts for future opportunities," said Career Center direc-

tor, Warren Kistner. "Because they're for a finite period of time, they offer a good gap year of experience."

Recent IWU graduate, Charlie Sell, was awarded the James H. Dunn Memorial Fellowship, allowing him the unique opportunity to experience the government structure at the executive level, first hand.

"The office I work at is the state government's point of contact at the federal level," Sell said. "It's also a point of contact for the Illinois Delegation, consisting of nineteen representatives and two senators. With the Economic Recovery Act, a lot of money has been flowing from the federal level to the state level, and it's my job to track this money, see where it goes, and what it's being used for. We also monitor what programs are about to expire and plan ahead for that. My office also works as a lobbying group for the governor. We make sure the correct people within the Illinois Delegation are aware of certain programs that are set to expire and report back to the Governor's Office in Illinois."

As with all fellowships, candidates submit an application specific to that fellowship, typically including a variety of items to judge a student's eligibility.

"I had to write a couple essays, including a policy paper," said Sell. "There was also an interview process that I went



Charlie Sell '10 and Christine Gibbs '09 are both Dunn Fellows currently working in D.C.

through. For the Dunn Fellowship, you apply for one of several different positions within the governor's staff which can take you to Springfield, Chicago or D.C. I applied for the one position in D.C. because I was interested in working for the state on federal issues to get a taste of both."

After having been accepted into the Dunn Fellowship, Sell began working in Washington D.C. the following fall. Already, he can see the impact it is having on his future plans.

"The Dunn Fellowship helps most people in one of two ways," Sell said. "First, it helps you create a lot of contacts at the state and federal level. So some people approach the year after the Dunn
Continued on page 3...

Practice Interviews Make Perfect!

"Your office building is on fire, and you can only save the printer, the copier, or the fax machine. Which do you save?" Do you know how to answer this question? Of course you don't. This is why you need to participate in practice interviews.

The nice thing about practice interviews may seem very obvious – they're practice interviews. So whatever major, department, or field of study you're in, this is perfect for you. Unlike a real interview, the pressure is totally off. You can stop the interview whenever you want and ask any questions you might have.

"The purpose is to simulate an actual interview," said Career Center director, Warren Kistner. "It's offered so that students get a feel for what the interview experience is like and can hone their

responses to questions and receive feedback. It's an opportunity to hear first-hand from employers with hiring responsibility and who are able to offer constructive advice to assist students."

Before you participate in a practice interview, there are several things you should make sure you have ready. First of all, dress like you're going to a real interview. This is especially important if you're not used to wearing a suit and tie or walking around in high-heels. No one wants to be uncomfortable during an interview. So use this one to plan out exactly how you want to dress when the interview that might land you a job comes around.

Secondly, research the company or agency you're interviewing with before you go to your practice interview.

"While this is just practice, you

should research the company anyway because the employer might ask you questions about it, such as why you're interested in applying in the first place," Kistner said.

On the day of your practice interview, you should bring copies of your resume, a pen, and a notepad with you to jot down anything you want to remember. After it's over, you will be given a DVD of your practice interview to help you see any distracting tics or mannerisms you might have. With all of this rehearsing, you will be more than ready for your next big interview.

To sign up for practice interviews, use your Titan CareerLink account to access the schedule and choose a time slot. These fill up quickly so sign up early.

Fellowship with that in mind. For others, like myself, it helps gauge their interests. This is a great experience, and after the year is up, it is still possible to revise my interests and see if this is really where I want to start my career.”

For those interested in governmental affairs, regardless of major, Sell could not give enough encouragement to apply.

“Even if you’re not a political science major, apply,” he said. “It gives you direct exposure to policy and politics right out of school. With the Dunn Fellowship, I will be able to become immersed in both the state and federal level of government, see how they interact, and also how they work separately.”

If a fellowship sounds like the next step

for you, look for some that match your interests. A good place to start is a list of popular fellowships, provided by Louisiana State University at www.honors.lsu.edu/current-students/student-support/fellowship-advising/list-of-fellowships.

Living and Serving Abroad With The Peace Corps

So let’s get to what everybody’s thinking but no one is asking: Why does Tracy not have any vowels in her last name? You may say that those Sometimes Y’s are vowels, but whenever I go to the pharmacy or the bank or anywhere that draws attention to my last name, I hear, “Oh hey! Your last name has no vowels,” as if I had been searching high and low for someone to explain to me what is so foreign about “Lytwyn”. The first day of classes is always interesting, too. After hearing professors butcher my surname (“Lit-twine”, “Light-win”, or my personal favorite, “Light-wine”), I usually am asked, “Lytwyn. What nationality is that?” So here is the answer to the much-debated question... I am Ukrainian.

For most of my life, I’ve wanted to go back to Ukraine and see what it’s like there. Yes, I’m even willing to endure the freezing winters that they describe as “rather mild.” But last year, I thought about going to Ukraine for more than just a week or two. Maybe I’d stay there a little while. Maybe I’d give back to the country my grandparents immigrated from. Maybe, juuuust maybe, I’d join the Peace Corps.

The idea of the Peace Corps first sprung up when John F. Kennedy, a senator at the time, challenged students at University of Michigan to live and work in developing countries around the world, serving in the cause for peace. A year later, in 1961, the Peace Corps was officially created as a response to his speech, focusing on his three goals: to train men and women to meet the interests of other countries, to promote better understanding of Americans for other people, and to promote better understanding of these people for Americans.

“Right now, there are 7,600 volunteers serving in 77 different countries,” said Peace Corps recruiter, Rok Teasley. “There is no upper age limit, and the average age of a volunteer is 28. We currently have an 86-year-old volunteer who

is serving in Morocco.”

IWU itself has several faculty members who have served in the Peace Corps. I was able to meet with two of them and hear about their experiences in the organization.

Dr. Greg Shaw, a political science professor, served with his wife in the Dominican Republic from 1990 to 1992. When asked about his decision to join the Peace Corps, he said, “My wife and I had been very blessed, and we wanted to give back. It seemed like a great experience, both professionally and personally. We’d be living somewhere most Americans never see, as opposed to vacationing. I think at 23 or 24, I also had some arrogance. I thought that I could teach people something. But really, you learn more than you could possibly teach, especially about yourself. I never expected that, going in.”

For Dr. Pamela Muirhead of the English department, her experience with the Peace Corps began in Sri Lanka in 1970. She served from January to October of that year. “Usually, Peace Corps volunteers serve for two years, but there was an election going on at the time,” she said. “The left leaning government had a lot of anti-West sentiment, and they wanted all of the Americans out of Sri Lanka. This was during the Vietnam War so a lot of anti-American rhetoric was going around.”

“Countries tell the Peace Corps what skills they need, and we try to match volunteers with that,” Teasley said. “People have the misconception that you choose where you serve in the Peace Corps. That’s not exactly true. You don’t have much of a choice where you go, but you will be matched according to the skills you have.”

The Peace Corps also covers all expenses and safety precautions while you are volunteering. “We provide everything,” Teasley said. “There are no fees at all. And safety is our number one concern.

There is a security coordinator in every single country we have volunteers. We won’t send anyone into any bad situation. We want Peace Corps volunteers to be successful in where they are placed.”

Knowing that the Peace Corps takes care of everything makes it easier for volunteers to focus on their particular tasks while in their assigned countries. In Sri Lanka, Dr. Muirhead’s group specifically worked with children in the small town in which they served. “My group was trained [before we left] to work in institutions that serve children, such as homes for orphans and crippled children and residential schools. I was assigned to a home for crippled children.”

“One of the things we did was work with women’s groups to build firewood conserving stoves,” said Shaw. “Deforestation is a huge problem in the Dominican Republic, and this would use half as much firewood as a fire pit on the ground. It was also much safer and gave off less smoke. This really gave me an opportunity to teach project planning because when we would build one of these stoves, the entire community would participate. The Peace Corps gives you a chance to grow up through meaningful work on a more independent basis than you would get staying in your home country.”

“You begin to see American history more clearly, and you develop a more questioning mind about the rest of the world,” Muirhead said. “The Peace Corps is an important break and an opportunity to travel or do service work before living on your own. Most college loans can be deferred. You don’t own anything, you don’t have any obligations, and you’re much more flexible when you’re young. So it’s a valuable way to serve others and educate yourself.”

If the Peace Corps sounds like something that might interest you, stop by the Hart Career Center for more information, or go to www.peacecorps.com.