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Career Center, Illinois Wesleyan University

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Beyond the Bubble

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

Alumni Profile: Lisa Dieter Math/Music Major, Class of 2002 Investment Manager Mesirow Financial Inc.

Any further education beyond IWU?

Since IWU, I became a Certified Financial Planner; the requirements are completing a course of study, passing a 10-hour exam, and verification of 3 years of industry experience involving the financial planning process.

Talk a bit about your company.

I work in the Investment Advisory division of Mesirow Financial Investment Management Inc. as an Investment Manager for the Krantz/Dieter team. Founded in 1937, Mesirow Financial is a diversified financial services firm headquartered in Chicago. We are employee-owned and privately held with 91.5% employee ownership. As of June 30, 2009, the firm has \$30.8 billion in assets under management and revenues of \$467 million for fiscal year ending March 31, 2009.

Did this job come to you immediately after graduating IWU?

Upon graduating from IWU, I began working for Bank One (now Chase Bank) in their management training program. After completing the program, where I transitioned from personal banker to assistant branch manager to branch manager, I decided to move into the financial advisor role, still within the retail bank. While working for Chase Investment Services Corp. in that capacity, I obtained my CFP® certification and began to explore partnership opportunities at other firms. In April 2007 I came to Mesirow Financial, where I now work with my partner, Scott Krantz.

What are some of your responsibilities?

Our team serves as registered investment advisors to both high net worth individuals and company benefit plans (largely 401(k) and profit-sharing). Specifically, I am responsible for making investment and allocation

field?

I have always had a deep passion for mathematics and also for working with and helping people; this role incorporates both. Another key factor in my decision was that I like to be independent – I prefer an entrepreneurial environment where I can control my destiny and my income. Although I am a Mesirow Financial employee, my paycheck is driven by our team's revenues alone; meaning that my compensation is exactly equal to my success in bringing on new clients and in investing the funds that my clients have entrusted to me. The other aspect of this field that appealed to me is how dynamic it is. The markets, my client's needs, and investment opportunities are constantly changing – no two days are exactly alike.

What have been the most rewarding and challenging aspects of your work?

Giving my clients peace of mind about their money is the most rewarding aspect of my work. How well I perform my job directly impacts how well my clients can live in retirement – it's a lot of responsibility but also very satisfying to exercise my analytical side in such a meaningful and practical way. The most challenging part, which surprised me, is how difficult it is to hear "no" when we ask someone to become a client. Developing a thicker skin and not becoming discouraged has been the greatest personal challenge.



decisions for our accounts, preparing for and attending client meetings/reviews, and prospecting for new clients. During a typical day, we will meet with at least one current client or prospective client. These meetings are often at our office but we occasionally have to travel as well. For example, I recently flew to California to meet with a client on the personal side as well as with the participants (employees) of one of our larger 401(k) plans.

How did you decide to go into this

{Beyond the Bubble continued on Pg. 2}

Editor/Writer: David Buesing | Director: Warren Kistner

www2.iwu.edu/ccenter

Career Connections

a newsletter from the hart career center

November 2009

Hit a Home Run With a Career in Sports

When I was 10 years old, I wanted to be the next Michael Jordan. At 13, I set the more practical goal of becoming the next Steve Kerr. And if that didn't work out, I could always take on the role of Jud Buechler (I was already becoming very good at warming benches. I'd even practice my technique in the park sometimes). Point is, my career goals hinged around one thing: playing basketball for the Chicago Bulls.

At some point in high school, though, I realized that I was whiter and softer than most marshmallows, with the vertical leap of a paralyzed quad squirrel. The thought crossed my mind that perhaps a career playing basketball wasn't for me.

Perhaps some of you have had similar experiences, but can not shake that overwhelming desire to stay involved in the sport(s) you love after graduation. Can you combine your future career with a passion for sports?

For Karl Pierburg '98, an IWU Titan football player, sports and job have merged smoothly since 2002 when he began working for the Chicago Bears as the IT Manager for Football Systems.

A math/computer science double major, Pierburg describes his role with NFL organizations as "wherever 'nerd' and football intersect." This ability to merge knowledge of technology with the football side of business has helped Pierburg

in his current position as Director for Football Systems with the Atlanta Falcons.

Said Pierburg, "It's such a fun a role to be in. At its core, it's not unlike a lot of other internal business systems used at every other company in the world - we manage data, make sure it's correct, and provide it to key decision makers in a concise format. What's fun here is that I get to merge my passion of systems with a passion for football and the NFL."

In getting involved with the NFL, Pierburg said it was his connections from previous jobs that really helped lead him to positions. "As with so much of sports (and probably life in general), it's not so much what you know, but who you know," said Pierburg.

One excellent way to network is to get an internship with a professional team. This feat can be accomplished during the school year at IWU with the likes of the Bloomington PrairieThunder hockey team or the upstart Normal CornBelts baseball team, among others.

Melinda McNeil, a senior English major, currently works as a community relations intern for the Normal CornBelts. Some of McNeil's responsibilities include writing creative press releases, promoting season ticket sales, and building relationships with companies, schools, and charities in the area.

Said McNeil, "My favorite part about this internship is working within the community [in charity events and fundraisers]. This experience is very rewarding, and thankfully I have been given the opportunity to plan and run some of



Senior Melinda McNeil dressing up as "Corny."

these events."

Despite the positive experience, McNeil admitted, "The hours, especially with a team that is new, are very demanding." Added Pierburg, "You need to be able to work your way up the ladder so to speak. I see a lot of people working for ridiculously low amounts of money and ridiculously long hours just for the opportunity to gain experience. If you want to get in to sports, plan on doing that."

What other skills can help get your foot on the proverbial career field? Kyle Kreger, Assistant General Manager for the CornBelts, said there is only one: "A willingness to learn!" Added Kreger, "The common goal associated with all of our internships is teaching students what it takes to succeed in a professional setting. Students who are truly willing to learn have a huge advantage in obtaining an internship with us."

If you are ready to dedicate yourself to a career in sports, some good sports-career resources can be found at www.iwu.edu/ccenter/students/Morewebsites.shtml#SPOR.

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What's the Career Insider?!

Beyond the Bubble {Continued from page 4}

How have you seen the downturn in the economy affect your industry?

My industry has been at the epicenter of the downturn of the economy. On a personal level, my team's revenue comes from fees based on the size of the accounts we manage. Although we were down less than half as much as the broad markets in 2008, our revenues were still affected negatively. On the positive side, our revenues have benefitted from the more than 50% run-up since the market bottomed in March as well.

How did your undergraduate experiences at IWU help prepare you?

The most relevant way my undergrad experiences prepared me for the "real world" was by giving me the opportunity to take a leadership role through clubs

and organizations. Specifically, I served as treasurer and student senator to my sorority, AOII, student manager of the Starbucks coffee shop, and through my internship with United Way. On the academic front, a Topology course I took with Dr. Jeter confirmed for me that I can think creatively enough and work hard enough to figure out even the most opaque problem.

Any advice you'd like to give to current IWU students?

Network, network, and network. Especially in such a challenging market, it's really important to leverage any contacts you might have. As a college student, these contacts might be people your parents and relatives know, the parents of kids you were a camp counselor for, IWU

alumni, or Greek alumni. You might be surprised at how willing these people are to assist you if you just ask.

Of course, you should also take advantage of the career center at IWU. I thought I wanted to be a high school math teacher until a crisis moment my senior year – Warren Kistner and the rest of the staff at the career center were instrumental in helping me figure out what other career paths would best suit my strengths and in helping me find those opportunities in a difficult market.

Mesirow Financial Investment Management Inc is an SEC registered advisor

Major (and minor) Keys to a Career in Music

It would seem that some majors are just tougher to tie to a particular profession.

If you're an English major, you've undoubtedly heard the smarmy standard, "What are you going to do with *that* major? Write a book?" You then of course reply, "Well, I darn well might, father! You've never supported me! Always work, work, work. You never even made it to the championship tee-ball game!" "Well I had busine..." "You were the coach, father! How do you expect seven and eight-year-olds to manage themselves? Horribly? Because that's how it happened. We had four second basemen at one point and all of them were drawing dinosaurs in the sand!"

Or, you know, you might say something like that. Not that exactly, but probably something along those same deeply personal lines. Music majors, in particular, may experience similar perceived limitations with their major.

As is the case with all majors, though, a music education will open up a wide array of opportunities. Few would know this better than Dr. Angela Beeching, director of career services at the New England Conservatory.

As a Fulbright Scholar with a doctorate in cello performance and her own book entitled, *Beyond Talent: Creating a Successful Career in Music*, Beeching has a

wealth of knowledge about the field.

According to Beeching, most classical music undergraduates go to graduate school, but after that she recommends finding your "niche in the professional world." This could mean auditioning for orchestral playing or work as vocalists, or establishing a private studio. In some cases, music majors may want to consider both at the same time.

Another option Beeching advocates is a lot of the music-technology related work available.

Said Beeching "That's the thing that's changing so quickly and if people are open-minded and sort of curious about what's out there, there really is a lot." In particular, Beeching references the work Harmonix began with its Guitar Hero® video games franchise.

Likewise Beeching mentions that for Pandora, a company that utilizes user preferences to create custom content radio, "it's musicologists who analyze the music listening habits to help figure out what you're more likely to enjoy."

Before graduation becomes a reality, though, Beeching suggests there's much current IWU music majors can do to prepare themselves. "What seemed to make the most difference in the long run for [alumni I spoke with] was having a mentor," said Beeching. "Having some-

body who could challenge them or get them thinking specifically about what it is that they want to do and their possibilities."

Fortunately, the Hart Career Center offers just that sort of luxury with our Alumni Mentoring Program. Through the Mentoring Program students can connect with alumni who have volunteered to help. The program is easy to use and can be accessed through your Titan-CareerLink account, which all students have. Just visit titancareerlink.experience.com.

Beeching also advises students to be aware of the fact that "their career has already begun." Said Beeching, "You're already establishing your reputation among your peers and you don't realize you're going to bump into these same people. It could be fifteen years after you graduate and you're suddenly sitting at a conference and there's this person you snubbed 20 years ago or you last saw them at a drunken party."

Keeping Beeching's advice in mind, the Hart Career Center does offer quality resources. For a great career resource to explore music internships, jobs, and audition information, check out Bridge: Worldwide Music Connection. Bridge can be accessed from the all-new Career Insider (see 'Insider' on Pg.3).

Alumni Law Panel Shares Their Experience

Ask a cynic what they think of lawyers and you'll likely get a raunchy, inappropriate answer that you wouldn't dream of using as a lead in a civilized article about an alumni law panel.

Although this negative stereotype seems to surround the profession, during this past Homecoming weekend five current lawyers and IWU alumni gathered to share their time and participate in the Alumni Law Mentoring Panel. Jordan Ault '04, Todd Bugg '87, George Vinyard '71, Guy Gephardt '69, and Bill Roberts '64 generously offered their years of experience and unique specializations in sharing their legal knowledge with attending students and alumni.

Roberts, in particular, suggested that current IWU students interested in the profession should take advantage of the related opportunities at IWU. "If you've got the opportunity to take a law class, it helps just to become familiar with the terminology, with the lexicon of the business. If you can familiarize yourself, it's a leg up."

Fortunately, IWU does offer many

classes that could effectively give interested students this leg up. The Business department's Business Law courses and the Political Science department's Constitutional Law courses are a good start, but by no means the only resources available. Stop by the Hart Career Center sometime for a copy of the Pre-Law Handbook, a terrific guide for aspiring law students at IWU.

It's important to note, too, that there is no specific best major for students interested in law school. Said Vinyard, an English major at IWU, "When I went to law school they really kept it open to all majors." The panel added that although a substantive knowledge of a specific area of law creates an advantage when applying to law schools, it is certainly not a necessity. "You don't need to specialize in any area of law going in," said Vinyard, "Or even necessarily once you're there [in law school]."

The panel's advice on selecting a law school was simple. "If you can get into a top law school, do it," said Vinyard. The big name law schools are well-known

known for a reason and offer more of a range of opportunity. As Vinyard put it, "larger enrollment means there are alumni everywhere."

Of course, just because you can get into law school does not mean it's a wise choice. "I would not recommend going to law school figuring out what you want to do. It's expensive," said Gephardt. Indeed, tuition for three years at a top 30 law school is generally in excess of \$100,000. Ault added that he saw some of his friends going to law school for all the wrong reasons. "They either didn't have job offers, wanted to make a lot of money, or didn't know what they wanted to do."

If law school sounds like the right career path for you, or if you're curious about the field, visit the Hart Career Center and talk with one of our excellent career staff members. They may be able to help you explore the field with a great legal internship. Or, in addition to the pre-law handbook, take a look at the wide array of law-related publications in our career center library.

The Ancient Wisdom of the Insider

Many of you may think you know all there is to know about the Hart Career Center. You know we offer terrific career guidance, a vast career resource library, and a great alumni mentoring network. You also know that we offer friendly service, internship and job fairs, and the best newsletter in the history of mankind.

BUT, there is a secret, dark and mysterious place within the Career Center that even some of us staffers don't dare explore. They say that the knowledge within this place is so enlightening, so potent, that merely glancing at it can cause instant face-melting a la "Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark."

This holy place is... the Career Insider!

If you are now thinking to yourself, "These secrets must be mine," do not worry. Although the dangers of traversing the Career Insider are many, they also say that its hostile defenses will fade away when a Titan who is pure of heart and

really needs help with their career search approaches. Should this description ring true, venture into <http://www.iwu.edu/ccenter/students/insider/index.shtml>. The username you will need is 'iwustudent' and the password is 'CareerResource!'.

Do not wander into the Insider unprepared, though. Your first mistake could well be your last!

Some of the best resources within the Career Insider include:

VAULT -- Unique career content and services include continually updated "insider" information for more than 6,000 companies, 200 industries and 400 professions. You also will have access to a vast array of career guides on professions such as screenwriting, video game animating, and sports marketing.

BRIDGE -- An on-line job searching tool for those in the field of music. Be

sure to check out all the great opportunities (jobs, internships, audition information) posted by going to Opportunities -> Opportunity Search.

User: iwusuccess Password: my09bridge

GRADUATE JOBS -- A series of online bulletins for early career jobs. The subscriptions available are the Liberal Arts, International, Writing/Editing/Communications, Art, Management & Business, and Performing Arts.

User: illinoiswes Password: cc61702

INTERNSHIPS USA -- This is the largest internship site on the web with more than 3,000 organizations offering internships for college students.

User: work Password: credit

ENVIRONMENTAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES -- Positions ranging from political advocacy to scientists.

User: wkistner Password: tree