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## Illinois Wesleyan Students Interning Across the Globe This Summer

Aug. 1, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – From Fortune 50 companies to nonprofits to a medical clinic in Peru, approximately 180 Illinois Wesleyan University students are gaining valuable experience through internships this summer.

“Internships provide the relevant experiences employers are looking for,” said Laurie Diekhoff, assistant director and internship coordinator of Illinois Wesleyan’s Hart Career Center. “They allow students to learn about an industry, make professional contacts and develop concrete skills in preparation for a future career.”

Experts say networking is still the best way to find a job and the same can be said for finding an internship, especially in a tight market. Several Illinois Wesleyan students interviewed for this story found their positions through contacts with faculty, alumni or Wesleyan’s Hart Career Center. Following are the summer experiences of four Illinois Wesleyan students:

### **Patrick Nevels '14, Software Development Engineer Intern, Amazon.com**

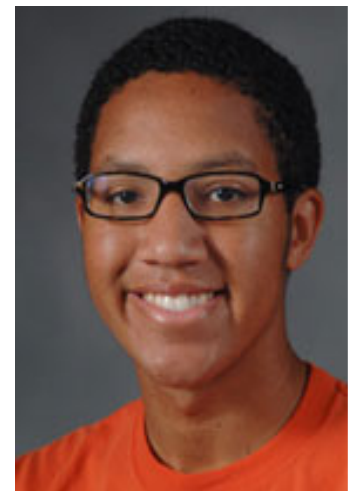
The positive experiences of two former interns (now full-time employees) at Amazon.com in Seattle influenced computer science major Patrick Nevels to apply for an internship at the online retailing giant. He is spending 12 weeks writing software to help vendors reach a wide audience as a member of the Disc-on-Demand team.

“Some DVD and CD orders through Amazon are actually created and packaged after the order is made, hence the ‘on-demand’ name,” explained Nevels. “We work with big vendors like Warner Bros. and MTV, but we also work with independent musicians and filmmakers.”

Outside of work, Nevels often sees the two former interns (Kate Siebels '13 and Ammar Malik '13) who work at Amazon, and has enjoyed exploring the Seattle area. On the job, the internship experience has reinforced his choice of careers.

“This internship is my first real-world software development project, and I can see myself happily doing this sort of thing for the next 20 years.”

Patrick Nevels '14



### **Jenn Oswald '15, Costume Intern, Great River Shakespeare Festival (GRSF)**

Oswald, a theatre arts major, is in Winona, Minn., learning first hand what it means to stage a professional production in less than four weeks with almost no budget. In addition to its mainstage productions, GRSF puts on an intern-run production — this year it's *Macbeth*. Oswald is the show's costume designer, in addition to her other responsibilities on the main productions.

"Designing *Macbeth* has been the most exciting part of the summer," said Oswald. "From the beginning, it was stressed (to the interns) that this was an extra opportunity that goes on top of our other responsibilities within the company. But it's given each of us constant opportunities to learn and remind ourselves how incredible theatre can be when everyone is as committed as those at GRSF."

The festival is well known to Illinois Wesleyan theatre students. Wesleyan Costume Shop Supervisor Jeanne Oost worked at GRSF for several years, connecting many Wesleyan students, including Oswald, with the company.

After earning her degree, Oswald hopes to work in theatre, balancing costume design with acting. She said her internship experience has provided a true glance into the process of professional theatre within the comfort of a nurturing environment.

"The reality of long hours and extremely hard work is rewarded by creating a world that has the power to transform, if for only three hours at a time," she said.

### **Michael Heaton '14, Sales and Marketing Intern, The Horton Group**

The Affordable Care Act's impact on the insurance industry and one company's business clients has been the most significant lesson of Michael Heaton's internship at The Horton Group in Chicago.

A finance major, Heaton learned of the internship opportunity through the Hart Career Center. After researching The Horton Group, one of the largest privately held insurance brokers in the nation, Heaton applied and was hired as an intern in New Business Development. Heaton's tasks include updating the prospect database and utilizing demographics to suggest social media and advertising options to target prospects.

"I have come to learn how vital it is to bring in new business for The Horton Group to sustain itself and prosper," said Heaton.

He said his internship has also increased his interest in the insurance industry as

Jenn Oswald '15



Michael Heaton '14



a possible career. “Regardless of my career choice, this internship is serving as a tremendous learning experience that will enhance my business acumen.”

**Brian Sorich '14, Research Intern, Northwestern's McCormick School of Engineering**

Brian Sorich hopes someday to work in the renewable energy field, and he's currently taking an important step toward that goal.

Brian Sorich '14

Sorich is a research intern in the mechanical engineering lab at Northwestern University, where his tasks include operating a 3D optical modeling printer. Sorich prints two-millimeter high springs that are designed to resonate at low frequencies to capture the energy of ambient vibrations. Graduate students in Sorich's lab, including Evan Baker '11, design the springs for use in vibrational energy harvesting, a process where energy is derived from solar, wind, kinetic or other renewable sources and then stored for small autonomous devices.



“One possible application is for pacemakers, so they can power themselves and not require surgery to replace the battery,” said Sorich.

It was Baker who informed Wesleyan Assistant Professor of Physics Bruno deHarak that interns were needed in Northwestern's engineering lab. DeHarak told his students, and Sorich first secured a position in the summer of 2012, returning this year for a second stint.

A student in Wesleyan's pre-engineering 3-2 program, Sorich has finished his three years at Illinois Wesleyan and will move on to the University of Illinois in August to complete two additional years of engineering courses. Upon completion of this popular five-year program, students earn both a bachelor's degree from Illinois Wesleyan and a second bachelor's degree in engineering from the cooperating institution.

“This internship is providing useful and immediate experience in the field I will study in the fall,” said Sorich. “Plus, the value of gaining some experience in the alternative energy field cannot be overstated.”

Networking is as important to the Hart Career Center as it is to job seekers. Hart Center staff reaches out to alumni, parents and on-campus recruiters to develop internship possibilities for Wesleyan students. Job and internship fairs, one-on-one meetings with Career Center staff, alumni presentations and panel discussions and electronic job postings give students multiple opportunities to network and find the internship that is the best fit for their skills and interests.

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