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Summer Internships Remain Popular with Students

Aug. 11, 2014

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— From Hollywood to Hanoi, nearly 200 Illinois Wesleyan University students are gaining work experience and career knowledge during their summer break from classes.

“Summer continues to be the most popular season for students,” said Laurie Diekhoff, assistant director and internship coordinator at the **Hart Career Center**. “Unlike the academic year when most of the internships are in Illinois, our students are interning across the globe this summer. We have interns in positions in 15 states across the country and five countries including Argentina and Vietnam.”

Following are the experiences of a few Illinois Wesleyan interns:

Courtney Baird '15, Brand Marketing Intern, NBCUniversal

While interning at NBCUniversal in Los Angeles, Courtney Baird (Ventura, Calif.) learned the ins and outs of the entertainment industry. She assisted the brand marketing team in developing the strategy behind a film’s marketing campaign by creating sales pitches, designed PowerPoints for a filmmaker’s overview and watched new films for potential marketability.

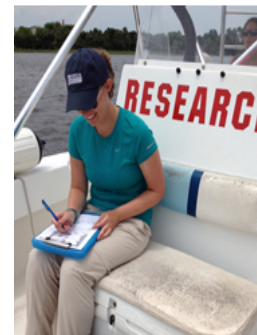


Courtney Baird

“The experiences I gained in this internship have fully prepared me for the workforce, and honestly I would not be a competitive candidate without it,” said Baird, a **business administration major**. “I made lasting connections with my coworkers that may lead to a job.”

Elyse McCormick '17, Dolphin Research Assistant Intern, University of North Florida

Biology major Elyse McCormick (Mt. Pulaski, Ill.) conducted her own research project on bottlenose dolphins through the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Her project examined the impact of an ‘unusual mortality event,’ a significant die-off of dolphins in the St. John’s River population. McCormick completed photo-ID analysis for dolphins during weekly field research gathering baseline and behavioral data on the river’s dolphin population.



Elyse McCormick

Her project was a part of the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), a program funded by the National Science Foundation that supports active research participation by undergraduate students.

“This internship was amazing. The REU gave me valuable research and hands-on experience in coastal biology,” said McCormick. “I formed connections and friendships with the people I worked with, and grew academically and personally when working there.”

Iris Sowlat '15, Dramaturgy Intern, Chicago Dramatists; Assistant Director Intern, Stage Left Theatre

While interning at both Chicago Dramatists and Stage Left Theatre, Iris Sowlat (Wilmette, Ill.) experienced the administrative, playwriting and directing aspects of Chicago theater. Her internship at Chicago Dramatists, a theatre and playwright development workshop, involved working on projects related to arts administration, development, fundraising and literary management.



Sowlat also interned at Stage Left Theatre as assistant director for a developing play, “The Firestorm.” Her responsibilities included providing feedback to the actors and director during rehearsals and helping with stage management duties.

“My internship at Chicago Dramatists made me more interested in exploring arts administration, a side of theatre I hadn’t experienced before,” said Sowlat, a **theatre major**. “My experience at Stage Left helped me gain insight into how a script develops when it is rehearsed and produced for the first time.”

Jeff Toraason ’15, Animal Care Intern, Miller Park Zoo

As an intern at Bloomington’s Miller Park Zoo, Jeff Toraason (Glenview, Ill.) experienced first-hand the hard work that’s needed to care for zoo animals. While shadowing a zookeeper for nine hours each day, Toraason helped with cleaning exhibits, feeding and washing animals and teaching the public about the animals held at the zoo. His favorite experiences were hand-feeding animals and helping visiting vets move immobilized animals during medical care.



“I learned an incredible amount about the animals I took care of,” said Toraason, a **biology major** who plans to apply to veterinary school. “This internship gave me great hands-on experience with animals and a deeper appreciation of what a zookeeper’s daily life entails.”

Theresa Ward ’15, Event Planning Intern, Advocate BroMenn Center; Event Planning/Social Media Intern, McLean County Arts Center

Writing skills were put to practice during **English-writing major** Theresa Ward’s two internships at McLean County Arts Center and Advocate BroMenn Center. Ward (Bloomington, Ill.) worked with artists exhibiting at McLean County Arts Center, helped design labels and brochures and worked directly in the galleries. She also planned and carried out art shows, festivals and other events held at the center.



At Advocate BroMenn Center, Ward was responsible for writing press releases and feature stories for Health eNews, and often interacted with physicians and other hospital staff to gather research for her articles.

“I was able to commit to both of my internships with careful planning and time management,” said Ward, who found both opportunities through the Hart Career Center’s Titan CareerLink. “My internships increased my social skills and my ability to write for a variety of printed material, as well as expanded the number of people who read my work.”

Christy Cole ’16, Development Intern, Loyola University Chicago

Christy Cole (Freeport, Ill.), a **philosophy major**, worked for a multitude of projects related to the Division of Student Development at Loyola University in Chicago. Two of Cole’s major projects included conducting research for Achieving College Excellence (ACE), a program at Loyola geared towards supporting first-generation, low-income and disabled students, and working with Loyola’s campus ministries department to develop activities for Start the Fire, a program for incoming students that promotes academic, cultural and spiritual awareness.



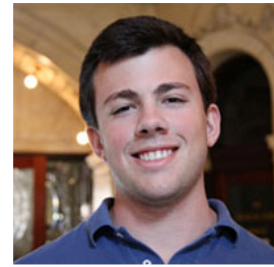
“The experiences and conversations I had while working here led me to a newfound appreciation of individuality, spirituality, culture and interpersonal interactions, and the way in which these things can intertwine,” said Cole.

Joe Ruskey ’15, Marketing/Development Intern, McLean County Museum of History

His first day of work as an intern was the first time Joe Ruskey (St. Louis, Mo.) had set foot in the McLean County Museum of History. Ruskey was studying abroad during the museum’s search process, so he interviewed via

Skype rather than in person. As he learned more about the museum's national recognition and mission to tell the story of daily life in McLean County, Ruskey realized his lack of knowledge of the museum's offerings was not unique.

"As a college student I could not help but notice the lack of involvement from my demographic," said Ruskey, an **English-writing major** who found his internship through Titan CareerLink. The museum has provided opportunities for interns for years, but outside of that group, college students are not regular museum patrons.



As part of his marketing internship, Ruskey is developing "A Date with the Museum" event Sept. 2 to help introduce the museum to his peers.

Whether full-time opportunities in the summer or part-time positions wedged around classes and extracurricular activities during the academic year, internships continue to grow in popularity at Illinois Wesleyan. The **most recent data** indicates 69 percent of the Class of 2013 participated in at least one internship during their years as students.

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