



Summer 7-22-2016

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University Communications  
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### **Recommended Citation**

University Communications, "Students Interning Across the Globe this Summer" (2016).  
*News and Events*. 2979.  
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/2979>

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# Students Interning Across the Globe this Summer

July 22, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Nearly 200 Illinois Wesleyan University students are interning this summer in [locations around the globe](#), from California's Silicon Valley to a hospital in Kenya.

"Summer internships are the ideal time for students to gain work experience and career knowledge in places far from home, and in work settings far outside what they might experience locally or in Illinois," said Laurie Diekhoff, associate director for career engagement at the [Hart Career Center](#). "It's exciting to hear about their internships and to know that students are not only gaining valuable experience, but also putting their critical thinking skills and adaptability to work for employers."

Experiential learning, whether through an internship, research with a faculty member, or study abroad, is a hallmark of an Illinois Wesleyan [liberal arts education](#). Nearly 70 percent of Illinois Wesleyan students complete at least one internship during their time on campus.

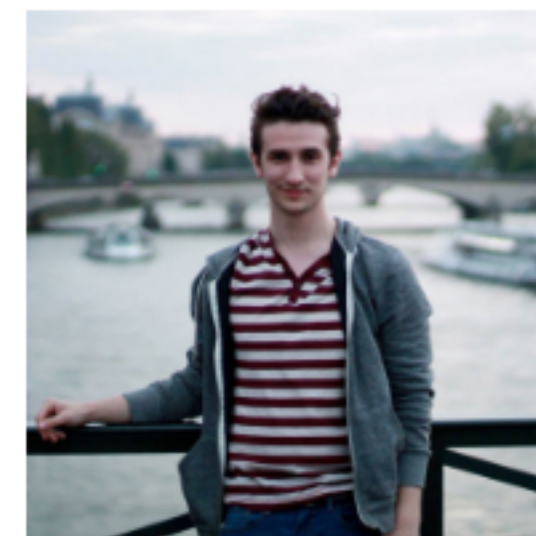
Following are the summer experiences of a few Illinois Wesleyan interns:

## **Thomas Bravos '17, Peoria Symphony Orchestra**

Seeking administrative experience in a music-related position, Thomas Bravos '17 sought the advice of Hart Career Center staffers in applying for an internship with the Peoria Symphony Orchestra administrative office.

"I assist with promotional events, organize the music library, create advertisements and help with mass mailings," said Bravos, a [contemporary musicianship](#) major from Saint Charles, Ill.

"I've learned a lot about how a musical entity operates. Even if I don't end up with a similar position (after graduation), I think assisting with the administrative operations will benefit me with any job I may end up having."



Thomas Bravos '17

## **Emily Brown '17, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)**

One of Emily Brown's tasks as an intern in the Governor's Environmental Corps (GEC) program has been to design materials for the IEPA booth at the upcoming Illinois State Fair.

"This responsibility has allowed me to do research on topics I find interesting and can potentially reach a very large audience about things they probably don't know, such as what kinds of plants can purify the air in your home and how long certain items take to decompose in a landfill," said Brown of West Chicago.

Brown has also learned how the IEPA permit process works, and she cited a field trip to an oil refinery as especially eye opening. She has also observed staffers in the Office of Site Evaluation on a field trip, using GPS to find soil samples.

She learned about the competitive internship through the Hart Career Center and then talked with [Associate Professor Laurine Brown](#), her professor in the course "Health and the Environment."

A [physics](#) and [international studies](#) double major, Brown is interested in environmental law and policy and hopes to continue to learn about those areas in graduate school.

"I'm interested in environmental justice, so it's been beneficial to learn how the EPA works and the research that goes into it. GEC interns also have the chance to meet the IEPA director multiple times, as well as many different people in different areas of the agency and the programs it sponsors. The networking opportunities are great."



Emily Brown '17



### **Veena Hamill '18, Research & Development Internship, AbbVie**

Veena Hamill is combining her interest in chemistry with her passion for helping those in need through her internship in research and development at AbbVie, a leading biopharmaceutical company. Hamill is designing new molecules for new medicinal therapy in treating tuberculosis.

"Currently, TB patients require four different drugs across a 6-month period," said Hamill, a [chemistry](#) major. "This is not a viable option for those living in remote areas or without regular access to a physician, especially in developing countries." She noted AbbVie's TB research is part of the Gates Foundation TB Drug Accelerator consortium.

She said the internship has helped her perfect her lab technique and allowed her to make valuable connections in the pharmaceutical industry. "The solid background in chemistry gained at IWU has prepared me well for this internship and I am really enjoying applying skills learned in the classroom to these real-world issues," said Hamill, a native of Glenview, Ill. She is considering medicinal chemistry as a career.



Veena Hamill '18

### **Paxton Johnson '18, Marketing Intern, Aeris Communications**

Paxton Johnson describes the Silicon Valley business atmosphere as "intense." Her liberal arts background, however, has helped her acclimate to a marketing internship at Aeris Communications, a Santa Clara-based leader in the market of the Internet of Things (IoT).

Aeris is an operator of end-to-end IoT and machine-to-machine (M2M) services and a technology provider. The technology allows businesses to transform unconnected products to a data internet that can be sold as a service, Johnson explained.

"I am completely foreign to working in the technology and IoT industry," said Johnson, an [English-writing](#) major and native of Paxton, Ill. Her liberal arts background has widened her worldview and helped her adapt to new ways of thinking and writing, she said. Her marketing tasks have included writing [blog articles](#) for the company website and an online trade magazine, researching statistics to create infographics, and tracking potential customer leads.

"I am learning an incredible amount about the IoT/M2M industry," she said. "The innovation in a burgeoning industry like the Internet of Things moves incredibly quickly, which means there is no one right solution to the many questions or problems that I come across in my day-to-day work."



Paxton Johnson '18



This question often comes as a shock to students accustomed to the U.S. cultural norms surrounding childbirth. Honduras' predominantly Catholic and patriarchal culture makes many contraceptive methods frowned upon and, therefore, increases the likelihood very young women may already be pregnant or mothers. This is one of the many cultural factors that make these trips so eye opening for IWU students. Before even seeing patient consults with physicians, students have the opportunity to broaden personal beliefs and perspectives and to engage in a culture different from that to which they are accustomed. This is the liberal arts in action. In every single one of my Spanish, general education, and science courses, IWU professors encourage the liberal arts mindset of fostering creativity, effective cross-cultural communication, critical thinking in all situations, a spirit of inquiry and a perpetual desire to learn in ways beyond traditional classroom knowledge acquisition. By presenting us with cultures, norms, languages, socioeconomic statuses and so much more that is different from our own way of living, the GB trips to Honduras provide us with the opportunities to challenge ourselves, enrich and further personal growth, and reinforce the aspects of the liberal arts education that are so importantly stressed in the classroom.

After completing the triage station, patients are helped immediately by medical professionals or pass to the line for general consult, depending on the severity of their condition. We faced a number of ulcerous wounds this year, which are surprisingly common in Honduras, especially on the lower extremities due to the lack of proper footwear and the lack of medical care available when wounds are initially inflicted. Luckily for us, Dr. Kerr is also a specialist in wound care and has traveled with us on each of my four brigades. She brings wonderful insight into cultural situations and is an exceptional resource for working with students in terms of teaching about cultural differences, competency, medical skills, healthcare systems, and so much more.

In her work with wound patients, Dr. Kerr teaches them how to dress their different kinds of wounds and ensuring they have an understanding of their condition, the steps necessary to heal and enough supplies to ensure dressings can be made well into the healing process to keep the area clean and on the road to recovery. Simultaneously, she gets students involved in these patient encounters, giving them an equally enriching opportunity to learn.

Meeting with a general practitioner, each patient receives anti-parasitic medications to combat the common parasite infections and their related symptoms including stomach and intestinal distress and bloating, as well as frequent headaches. Additionally, each patient receives multivitamins, and most receive either acetaminophen or ibuprofen as appropriate for chronic pain and occasional headaches or other body aches. Beyond this, patients have the opportunity to discuss their primary symptoms with physicians and the students shadowing them, and receive the appropriate treatments.

When IWU brings physicians who are English-speaking, an IWU student works closely with them as their translator — a job I have had the pleasure of holding for three of my four brigades. In addition, two to three students will shadow each physician, whether they are Honduran or physicians who traveled with the brigade. This is another favorite station among IWU students, as they have the ability to obtain hands-on experience with patient interviewing and patient care, practice Spanish with the patients and/or physicians, and get any questions answered by the physicians regarding specific patient cases or regarding diseases and processes as a whole. It also provides students with insight into the healthcare system of Honduras, as patients often share experiences with clinics, hospitals, or insurance, or more commonly, the absence of these services.



Meaghan Mormann '16 takes a blood pressure reading in the triage station in El Robledal, Honduras.