



# CPE Briefing

## Unlocking a Treasure Trove of Resources

**Professional Bridges and other initiatives help students get a leg up.  
CPE events lends a hand to alumni looking for work.**



**T**he Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) supports students as they travel the Elmhurst Experience—the journey in which they determine who they are and what they hope do to in their careers. The CPE through its five anchor programs: Career Education, International Education, Intercultural Education, Honors Program and Service-Learning encourages students to explore their interests and test new ones.

However, the CPE, now in its 13th year, goes well beyond these five core disciplines. In this issue of *CPE Briefing*, we will look at other initiatives through which the center can be an invaluable resource for Elmhurst students as they prepare for a world beyond the campus. The center even offers help for alumni who seek to re-enter the job market.

### PROFESSIONAL BRIDGES

This program provides an opportunity to bridge the gap between what students have learned in the classroom and what they will do in their profession after graduation.

For example, senior honors student Danielle Littrell spent her summer studying at sea, exploring new subjects and seeing the world at the same time.

### STUDENT TRAINING & ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

S.T.E.P. sponsors workshops for student workers to help them deal with practical issues they are likely to face in the workplace such as identity theft, business etiquette and even nutrition.

### ECCONNECT

This widely used web site enables Elmhurst College students and alumni to get assistance in interviewing, networking, résumé writing and other skills and resources to gain a competitive edge in the job market.

### CAREER TRANSITION CENTER OF CHICAGO

A recent addition to College services, this cooperative venture between the CPE and the Office of Alumni Relations provides assistance to mid-career alumni who want to return to the job market.

### STUDENT WORKERS

Senior Mary Joyce Lagatao is one of 700 student workers on the Elmhurst campus who juggles studies and work. A senior nursing major, Mary Joyce got a taste of the workplace as she assumed more responsibility during her time as an office assistant at CPE.

**TRUE  
PROFESSIONALS**

Established in 1997, the Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) aspires to build true professionals. What does that mean? It means students who take advantage of the many services and rich experiences offered by the CPE will be better prepared for their future careers—as well as being effective contributors to society. The CPE is proud to connect mentors and organizations with students from one of the top tier master's universities in the Midwest (as ranked, repeatedly, by *U.S. News & World Report*). It is one of the many ways that Elmhurst College demonstrates its synergy between liberal-arts learning and professional preparation.

## In This Issue

**Bridging the Gap** page 2

**A STEP in the Right Direction** page 3

**Campus Job Offers Taste of the Workplace** page 3

**A Lifeline for Unemployed Alumni** page 4

**Penguins, Icebergs and Lazy Seals** page 5

## Bridging the Gap

Program enables students to explore their major fields outside the classroom

*Spending a semester on a classroom ship that visited eight countries on three continents...Securing the funding and producing a Tennessee Williams play...Meeting foreign visitors in a Chicago hostel as part of a program in social psychology...Presenting research papers at professional conferences.*

These are just a few of the events and activities Elmhurst students have experienced through the Professional Bridges program.

Professional Bridges provides an opportunity to bridge the gap between what students have learned in the classroom and what they will do in their profession after graduation.



Senior Danielle Littrell, pictured here with Professional Bridges administrator Julie Nosal '03, studied ecology as part of a sea voyage that visited eight countries in 10 weeks.

In this program launched in 2001, students may attend conferences, undertake a project, organize an event or propose other possibilities.

"This is a chance for students to further explore their major field, network with professionals in their area and continue to develop the skills they will need to succeed," said Julie Nosal, administrator of the program for CPE.

Bridges opportunities are provided through connections with faculty who submit a letter spelling out the nature and purpose of the professional activity on behalf

of one or more students. To win approval and funding, students must then submit a statement that explains what they hope to derive from the experience.

One of the most intriguing recent experiences was senior honors student Danielle Littrell's 10-week summer "Semester at Sea" ship voyage. The trip took her to eight countries—Canada, Spain, Italy, Greece, Croatia, Turkey, Egypt and Morocco.

"Semester at Sea" is administered by the Institute for Shipboard Education, a nonprofit educational corporation based in Charlottesville, Virginia. Danielle said more than 250 schools were represented on the ship.

"I was able to use what I learned in class and apply it to the countries we visited," said Danielle, a pre-med student majoring in biology with minors in medical humanities and chemistry. Danielle, who has been studying biomes (communities of plants, animals and organisms, often referred to as ecosystems) in ecology, recalled, "I was able to go snorkeling at the Medes Islands in Spain to see the biomes up close and personal."

Danielle's courses on shipboard included global studies (history), ethnomusicology (music) and ecology. "It literally was a floating campus with 700 students, faculty and staff from all over the world," she added.

Another ambitious Professional Bridges star was Michael Manocchio '10, who last year produced the Tennessee Williams play, *Out Cry*, on campus. (See *CPE Briefing*, Spring 2010). With the help of Professional Bridges, he secured the rights to the play and raised money from campus organizations to produce it. He also recruited a student director as well as students and alumni to work as set designers.

Professional Bridges also enables students to attend professional conferences, such as the Concordia Reading Conference for those who plan to enter teaching. To be reimbursed, students are required to write a reflective paper on how the experience helped them meet personal and/or professional goals and what they learned about their own development.

For Nosal, Professional Bridges' strengths include its flexibility and its embrace of creativity and innovation. "The experience can be as broad or as narrow as is needed to fit the needs of the particular student or an entire class," she said. For more information on the Professional Bridges program, contact the CPE.

## STUDY AWAY

## Penguins, Icebergs and Lazy Seals



Far and away the most unusual and exotic study away destination has been Antarctica, where students traveled as part of the course, "Penguins, Icebergs and Tropical Jungles: Understanding Climate Change Across the Globe." The three-week voyage during January 2010 (J-Term) also included stops in Argentina and Costa Rica.

The course was part of an international program administered by the Upper Midwest Association for Intercultural Education (UMAIE), a consortium of six colleges and universities that Elmhurst has belonged to since 2000, according to Dr. Wally Lagerwey, who directs International Education for the CPE. Two Elmhurst students were among the 12 who participated in the program.

Students in the course, which was taught by a physics professor at St. Catherine University in Minnesota, studied the water and air temperatures in Antarctica and Costa Rica. They also charted ultraviolet rays from the sun in both locations, and took readings of electromagnetic forces.

Their ship from Argentina took them through the stormy Drake Passage to the Antarctic Peninsula. "We crossed the roughest seas in the world and spent four days rocking back and forth," said



senior Erin Hennessy of Oswego, an elementary education major. "Many people were sick, but it was all worth it when we saw Antarctica's beauty.

"We saw more penguins than we could count. Most of the time, we could smell them and hear them before we could see them. This trip has given me the thirst to take another adventure."

Said senior Joe Re of Elmhurst, a jazz studies major:

"We were surrounded by icebergs and ice-covered mountains at all times, with penguins by the hundreds just hanging out close to the shore with their funny wobbles."

Joe Re

Jazz Studies Major



"We were surrounded by icebergs and ice-covered mountains at all times, with penguins by the hundreds just hanging out close to the shore with their funny wobbles. Whales would show themselves every day, and there were times when we got to take little motor boats right next to lazy seals resting atop the icebergs. When we went ashore, we had to be careful not to step on the penguins, there were so many of them."

One advantage of visiting Antarctica in January: It's summer. "Our teacher had his computer and checked the weather reports from Minnesota, and more often than not, it was warmer in Antarctica than in the Midwest," Erin said. "One day, we had an

outside temperature of 46F, and it was in the single digits back home."



## Career Connections Are a Click Away

**Q.** What do 3,953 Elmhurst College students and alumni have in common?

**A.** They use [www.ECconnect.com](http://www.ECconnect.com)

ECconnect is a web site that provides vital career information and resources to Elmhurst College students and alumni. Site users can:

- Gain 24-hour access to full-time, part-time and seasonal jobs and internships
- Use the search agent feature to receive e-mails when positions matching criteria are posted
- Upload résumés, cover letters, writing samples, reference letters and other documents to aid in the application process
- Get information and RSVP for upcoming career events, such as on-campus

interviews, information sessions, mock interviews and workshops

- Access informational brochures for immediate assistance with résumé and cover letter writing, interviewing dos and don'ts, job search techniques, networking and internship guidelines
- Link to The Vault's Career Insider, OneWire and other career-oriented web sites to get information on companies and industries

"ECconnect can safely house student and alumni résumés," said Annette Coduto, the site's administrator. "There's no limit

to the number of résumés or cover letters a person maintains on the site. A staff member critiques every résumé, and it must be approved before a student sends it on to a prospective employer."

An impressive list of potential employers (see sidebar) are on the site, and many of them have hired Elmhurst students and alumni for full-time and part-time jobs and internships.

"I would like to see every student registered on ECconnect," Coduto said, "because this web site helps us stay connected."

## A Sampling of Employers on EConnect

AFLAC  
Ambit Energy  
Catholic Charities  
CBS  
ConAgra  
Elmhurst Memorial Healthcare  
Federal Sign Corp.  
Harris Bank  
Kellogg Co.  
Maher Publications  
Menards  
MetLife  
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney  
Northern Illinois Food Bank  
NYK Line  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Vector Marketing  
WMAQ-TV  
World Trade Center - Chicago  
104.3-FM Infinity Broadcasting



“The College relies heavily on its student workers. Almost every department hires them, and it gives the students a taste of the workplace”

Annette Coduto  
Chair, Student Training  
and Enrichment Program

## A STEP in the Right Direction

Elmhurst College student workers listened intently as representatives of Citibank and the Elmhurst Police Department discussed the financial chaos that can result from a lost credit card or social security number.

The program, Are You Safe from Identity Theft?, captured the students' attention, said Annette Coduto, chair of the Student Training & Enrichment Program (S.T.E.P.), which sponsored this workshop. “A lot of them were not aware of all the perils out there.” Among other areas covered at the seminar were how to protect yourself at the ATM, the importance of shredding important papers and avoiding too many credit card applications.

The seminar on identity theft was just one of many workshops produced by S.T.E.P., which was launched eight years ago. It conducts seminars for students who work on campus—a group that currently numbers about 700.

Students work in the cafeteria, the Roost and in campus offices. “The College relies heavily on its student workers,” Coduto said. “Almost every department hires them, and it gives the students a taste of the workplace. For many, it's their first job.” The students are paid at hourly rates from the minimum wage upward, and some of the jobs are funded through the Federal Work Study Program.

The S.T.E.P. workshops help students develop their professional and personal lives and gain valuable work information and skills before leaving school to join the workforce.

### *Among recent programs:*

- Professionalism in Today's Workplace
- Preparing for Future Employment
- Dealing with Personal Issues in the Work Environment
- Budgeting & Tax Preparation
- Business Etiquette
- Proper Nutrition in Stressful Times

Coduto noted that the nationwide organization, the National Student Employment Association, celebrates student workers on campuses each April. S.T.E.P. uses that opportunity to do the same with Elmhurst student workers with an all-campus party including raffle prizes, cake, ice cream and music. “It's our way of saying ‘thank you’ for a year of dedicated work,” Coduto said.

## Campus Job Offers Taste of the Workplace

For senior Mary Joyce Lagatao, working for the Center for Professional Excellence enabled her to get an early taste of the workplace and develop skills that complement the knowledge she's acquired as a nursing major.

Lagatao has worked part time as an office assistant for the CPE since her freshman year. She is one of approximately 700 student workers on campus, including about 15 in the CPE.

Mary Joyce admits that when she worked as a receptionist, she was nervous greeting people coming into the office. But early on, she got comfortable with her role as the point of first contact for visitors. She gradually assumed more responsibility, and became known as the office's creative expert. For

example, she produced artistic posters for the department's display cases.

“It has been a pleasure watching MJ grow into her present role at the CPE,” said Annette Coduto, student worker supervisor.

The logistics of the job worked well for Mary Joyce. She commutes every night to her home in Franklin Park, so “working in the CPE quickly gave me a feel of campus life.” She also appreciated the flexible working hours—particularly important with a rigorous major like nursing. CPE enabled her to work between classes, which isn't an option for students who work off campus. Mary Joyce's own work schedule

### **Mary Joyce Lagatao**

She now trains younger student workers



[CONTINUED ON PAGE 6]

## TRANSITIONS

# A Lifeline for Unemployed Alumni



For unemployed mid-career professionals, the job search is often disheartening and demoralizing.

Workers age 45 and older were hit hard by the recession and represent a disproportionate share of the long-term unemployed—those who have been out of work six months or longer, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

To aid alumni who find themselves in this situation, Elmhurst College in July joined Career Transitions Center of Chicago (CTC), a non-profit organization that provides training and support to facilitate the job searches of its unemployed clients.

In this cooperative venture between the Center for Professional Excellence and the Office of Alumni Relations, Elmhurst pays a fee to the CTC that enables Elmhurst College alumni to obtain a discount for the center's services. This includes job coaching workshops and participating in peer support groups that feature speakers and offer networking opportunities. Also, clients can use cubicles at CTC's Chicago facility equipped with computers, internet connections and phones.

"We've only been part of CTC for a short time, but several of our alumni already are using their services," said Samantha Kiley '07, director of alumni relations. The CTC recently worked with three Elmhurst alumni who were seeking positions.

In operation since 1997, the CTC also serves alumni of Loyola, DePaul, and Roosevelt universities, Columbia College, John Marshall Law School and Adler School of Professional Psychology.

Anita Jenke, executive director of CTC, said during the past year, her organization worked with 540 job searchers, 72% of whom were 40 to 70 years of age. "These are mid-career people, many of them rusty in their job-search skills, who are going back to their schools for help," she said.

Jenke said that a 2009 survey of clients found that 60% reported they were employed, while a 2010 survey, still recently in progress, showed an 80% employment rate among clients. "People are finding more jobs more quickly this year," Jenke said. She added that most are getting jobs through networking rather than online job postings.

According to Kiley, College alumni in search of jobs normally first turn to the Office of Alumni Relations. Her office usually directs the job seeker to the Center for Professional Excellence. CPE then assesses the situation. Career Education Director Peggy Killian said, "We try to help them [alumni] as much as we can in-house, but sometimes they need more intense services." It is in those cases that alumni are directed to CTC.

Added Kiley: "We want to look after our alumni for life. From day one, we care about them."



"We want to look after our alumni for life. From day one, we care about them."

Samantha Kiley '07  
Director of Alumni  
Relations

[‘CAMPUS JOB’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3]

varies between four and 10 hours a week, and she also has worked for the CPE over the summers.

Another advantage was the ability to participate in workshops offered by the CPE’s Student Training & Enrichment Program (see related story on page 3.) She has taken workshops on stress management and nutrition.

“Students who are focused on their studies need to take care of themselves and make sure they don’t get rundown,” she said.

Mary Joyce’s enthusiasm for her job also manifests itself in another way: She now trains incoming freshmen to be student workers in the Center.

## A Sampling of CPE Events

- **Internships** in business, entertainment, education and politics
- **Career Expo**, a chance to learn about different professional fields
- **A Study Abroad Panel** to hear the experiences of students who have been overseas
- **TeacherFest**, a teachers’ job fair
- **Networking events**, most job opportunities happen through networking, not help-wanted ads
- **International Education Fair**, which promotes opportunities to study abroad
- **Service-Learning opportunities**, to strengthen the community beyond campus
- **Interviews**, the practice variety, in front of a camera, and the real thing
- **National Foreign Language Week**, to learn where languages can take you
- **Culture Fest**, a celebration of diversity
- **Guestship Lectures** celebrating women, Latinos, African Americans and members of the L.G.B.T. community.



Meet Employer Relations Specialist Annette Coduto, the liaison to employers interested in recruiting EC students and alumni for career opportunities. She also serves as chairperson of the Student Training and Enrichment Program (S.T.E.P), the program that sponsors workshops for student workers. She also is administrator of the ECconnect web site, and is treasurer and a member of the Employer Development Committee of the Illinois Small College Placement Association, of which Elmhurst has been a member since 1988.

## WHO TO CALL

<b>Internships</b> <b>Holly Coffin</b> <b>617-6457</b>	<b>International Education</b> <b>Dr. Wally Lagerwey</b> <b>617-3604</b>	<b>International Student Services</b> <b>Alice Niziolek '99</b> <b>617-3296</b>
<b>Career Education</b> <b>Peggy Killian '94</b> <b>617-3625</b>	<b>Professional Bridges</b> <b>Julie Nosal '03</b> <b>617-3440</b>	<b>Honors Program</b> <b>Dr. Mary Kay Mulvaney</b> <b>617-6479</b>
<b>Mentoring and Shadowing</b> <b>Julie Nearing '01</b> <b>617-3188</b>	<b>Intercultural Education</b> <b>Dr. Russell Ford</b> <b>617-3104</b>	<b>Executive Director</b> <b>Dr. Larry Carroll</b> <b>617-3114</b>
<b>Service-Learning</b> <b>Dr. Mick Savage</b> <b>617-6488</b>	<b>Employer Relations</b> <b>Annette Coduto</b> <b>617-3190</b>	<b>All phone numbers are 630 area code.</b>

