



# CPE Briefing

## A WORLD OF LEARNING

**International students at Elmhurst find a new home on a welcoming campus—and share their global perspective with their classmates.**

Celine Santos (top) came to Elmhurst from Thailand. Alice Niziolek helps give international students a warm welcome on campus.



Celine Santos doesn't really mind when her American friends ask the inevitable questions about what it was like to grow up in Thailand.

"People will sometimes ask if we had the Internet there. Or they'll ask if I lived in a hut," she says, laughing. In fact, Santos, a senior psychology major, grew up in a condo in central Bangkok, near the busy malls and buzzing nightlife of one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities. "I don't get offended or anything. I see it as a learning experience—my chance to help them learn."

That's the way it works for Elmhurst's international students. They come to the College for a world-expanding education, and in the process, they end up helping to broaden horizons for their fellow students, too.

Santos is part of the biggest cohort of international students to study at the College in decades. Her class of 2013 includes 12 international students; overall, international students at Elmhurst represent 26 countries on six continents. As a group, they have helped shape campus life, taking on leadership positions in student organizations, thriving academically and adding their diverse cultural backgrounds to the campus mix.

"We've never had this kind of group together," said Alice Niziolek, Elmhurst's associate director of international education and international student services. "They've made a big impact on campus."



Santos, for example, is president of the College's chapter of the International Club and Phi Beta Delta, the honor society for international scholars. And she says that part of her role on campus is to give students a glimpse into how the rest of the world thinks and lives. "It's my duty to teach people about my culture," she said. "It's all about cultural awareness."

That, Niziolek said, is good news for other Elmhurst students, who benefit from the exchange of cultures that happens on campus.

"Our international students have a lot to share," Niziolek said. "They give us a view onto the rest of the world, onto social differences."

The College wastes little time in making its international students feel at home.

The welcome begins the minute they get off the plane, when Niziolek is likely to be there to greet them. International students attend new-student orientation during the week before classes begin, just like their American classmates. But in the ensuing weeks, they also may attend a series of workshops presented by the Center for Professional Excellence, on topics ranging from U.S. classroom culture to campus safety. Elmhurst College staff from the various student-services offices are available to help them with questions about government regulations, money matters and wellness.

And if international students have questions that only another student could answer, they get help there, too. Not long after they arrive at Elmhurst, they meet peer mentors—

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**TRUE  
PROFESSIONALS**

Established in 1997, the Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) helps deliver the Elmhurst Experience, a framing of liberal learning that helps students determine who they will be and what professional field they will pursue. 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.

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## International Treasures

*During their four years at Elmhurst College, the international students of the Class of 2013 have helped enrich campus life and broaden the horizons of their fellow students. They've also become close friends and had a lot of fun in the process. We are pleased to introduce you to three members of the remarkable Class of 2013.*



**Celine Santos**  
PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

Bangkok, Thailand

### SIGHT UNSEEN

Unlike most students, I'd never seen the campus before I came to school here. My uncle, who lives in the area, took a tour for me and said it was great. I was really excited to find how pretty the campus was.

### SELF-DISCOVERY

It was LeaderShape that made me realize I wanted to make a career of helping children. LeaderShape is all about self-discovery. The first question you are asked is, "What are you passionate about?" I'd always been good with children, but answering that question helped reaffirm my thinking. I want to counsel kids and help them become the best version of themselves.

### GLOBAL VILLAGE

Asia isn't so different from America, at least not in the big cities. People ask me why I speak such good English. They don't realize English is such a prominent language everywhere. Living in Bangkok is like living in New York. It's a city that never sleeps.

### AFTER GRADUATION

I'd like to do graduate studies here, then go back to Asia and work in child psychology. There is a need for psychologists there, and too many kids that need help slip through the cracks. Psychology is a little bit of a taboo in Asian culture. It's not like here, where everyone talks about their therapy.

### "HOW ARE YOU?"

One of the things international students don't get at first is the way everyone asks, "How are you?" as a greeting. They don't understand that you don't really need to say how you are. It's like, "Wait, I want to tell you how I am, you asked."



**Morrison Stewart**  
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS/FINANCE MAJOR

Taiwan/Hawaii

### GLOBETROTTER

My parents were missionaries, so our family lived in Taiwan, then moved to Kona, Hawaii. I didn't know English when I moved there, and I was in this new environment and needed to learn the language and everything. What helped was playing sports. Basketball, track, what-not. That's how I made friends.

### GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

I think to Americans, I look Asian. But in Asia, I look American. Being brought up in such a diverse background has made me more open-minded. When I come up against problems, I think I can see a little more globally. That's an advantage.

### FINDING ELMHURST

The truth is, I found Elmhurst through a random search. And I applied because there was no application fee. I didn't even know for sure where Elmhurst was. But it has turned out to be such a good experience and it has worked out so well. So I feel like I'm supposed to be here.

### STUDY ABROAD

I studied abroad, for one semester in Shanghai and one in Hong Kong. I'd never been to China before, but I got to brush up on my Mandarin and learn more about Asia. It made me more culturally adapted. I really encourage students to study abroad. College is the best time to get that kind of experience.

### AFTER GRADUATION

I want to be a financial planner. I'm doing an internship with Ameriprise Financial, learning to prepare financial documents for clients and to educate clients about money. It has been great training.



“Living in Bangkok is like living in New York. It’s a city that never sleeps.” – Celine Santos

“When I come up against problems, I think I can see a little more globally. That’s an advantage.” – Morrison Stewart

“I was more excited than nervous. I was ready to explore new things.” – Mavic Maranan



### EXPLORER

I went to an international school in Manila, which exposed me to a lot of different cultures and nationalities. That definitely made it an easier adjustment for me when I came to Elmhurst. I had never even been to the U.S. before. But I was more excited than nervous. I was ready to explore new things.

### LAUNDRY: THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

The biggest changes for me have been the same as for any college student. Learning to take care of my own laundry. Learning to clean up. Learning to get around on public transit.

### AFTER GRADUATION

I’ll start working toward my master’s degree here next year. I’m going to be part of the first class of students doing the new master’s degree in speech pathology at Elmhurst. I feel great about that, because I really like it here.

### HOMEcoming

I hope to go back to the Philippines someday. The need for speech pathologists there is so great. I want to provide services for the people who need them. I’d like to open a clinic there someday, but I hope to work here for a while first.

### GOOD ADVICE

It’s important to know that there is more of the world to see and learn about. If you get the chance to study abroad, go ahead and get out of your comfort zone a little. You will learn so much.



[“WORLD OF LEARNING” CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

fellow international students, or students who have studied abroad, who can help international students make the transition to American campus life.

Niziolek said that the new arrivals are grateful for the attention to detail. “They are usually just so excited to be here,” she said. “We hear from them how much they appreciate it.”

Some international students from the Class of 2013 plan to return to their home countries to launch careers there. Others will stay close to Elmhurst, at least for a while, after graduation.

Morrison Stewart, an international business and finance major who grew up in Taiwan and Hawaii, said he plans to stay in the Chicago area and hopes to become a U.S. citizen.

“I call America my home now,” he said. “I feel comfortable here now. I like it here.”

But no matter where they go after graduation, Santos said the experience of studying at Elmhurst gave her and her classmates a richer understanding of what the world has to offer.

“You come to the States to get a better education so you can pursue what you want to in life,” she said. “But it also makes you appreciate your own background more.”





# Learning by Serving

Students in Elmhurst's Service-Learning Programs learn about themselves and their world.

Matt Rohde spent part of January in San Miguel, El Salvador, as leader of a group of 12 Elmhurst students helping the service organization Habitat for Humanity build homes for families in need. Rohde, a senior economics and management major, did all the sawing and hammering and painting typical of such projects. But the most challenging part of his job may have come after the day's manual labor was complete and the tools had been put away. In the evenings, he led discussions in which students reflected on the work they had done that day. For Rohde, that reflection was as important as the work itself.

"You hope some kind of light bulb goes off for people," Rohde said of the discussion sessions. "You ask questions about why we do service, and what responsibilities each of

Elmhurst's Service-Learning Program is entering its 20th year. Savage says that from the beginning, the program was driven by students interested in serving others. "Service-learning was initiated by students and faculty, it was not something forced on them," he said. "It has always been about their desire to give back to the community."

Some service projects have become well-known campus fixtures. For nearly two decades, Professor Judy Grimes of Elmhurst's music department has been taking groups of Elmhurst students to Jamaica every January to work in classrooms in the financially challenged schools around Montego Bay. They collaborate with Jamaican teachers, tutor students, and donate musical instruments and school supplies that have helped launch and sustain

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*"Doing this work helped me understand that we all have a responsibility to contribute to the building of society."* — MATT ROHDE

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us have. Doing this work helped me understand that we all have a responsibility to contribute to the building of society."

Nearly 400 students participate in service-learning projects at Elmhurst College each year. They tutor grade-school students, work with children with special needs, serve homeless people in shelters, and work in orphanages and hospitals, among many other types of projects. They serve not only in Chicago and the suburbs, but in distant locations such as South Africa, Jamaica and Bolivia. The experiences are diverse, but they share a common goal: that by serving others, students will come to understand more about themselves and their world.

"Reflection is key to the experience," said Mick Savage, director of Elmhurst College's Service-Learning Program. However valuable the work itself is, he said, its ultimate importance lies in the questions it provokes in the students. Why, they ask, is there a need for this kind of service in the first place? What are the underlying inequities that create need—and what can be done about them? "It's not just going and doing something that will make you feel good; it's also talking and writing about the experience and reflecting on what it means to you and to others."

music programs there. Grimes says that her students do more learning than teaching during their stay in Jamaica.

"This is really an international exchange, both culturally and academically," she said. "We work side by side with wonderful Jamaican teachers. My number one goal is that the students develop a respect for the dignity of another culture and not just think that Americans have all the answers."

A similar service-learning course in Cape Town, South Africa, provides students with opportunities to work in orphanages and teach in the first post-apartheid kindergarten. That course is led by Dr. Therese Wehman and Dr. Nancy Lee.

In 2011, Elmhurst received an Open Arms Volunteer Service Award from Exodus World Service, a nonprofit group that serves refugee families. The award recognized Elmhurst students' work in serving 56 refugee families from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burundi, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Myanmar, Russia and Somalia over a five-year period. Students greet families upon their arrival in their new homes, present them with essential household goods, and offer practical assistance in setting up house. In the process, students gain insights into how conflict and political unrest can impact ordinary families.

"Service-learning really reflects the core values of the College," said Savage. "Part of our mission at Elmhurst is to develop responsible citizens, and service-learning activities can be life-changing experiences for some students."



# Making Connections

Participating in CPE programs helped lead Kevin Scheibel to a great career opportunity.

"I chose Elmhurst for that special feeling of community you find here, and I really feel that community when I'm at work at the CPE."

—Kevin Scheibel



Kevin Scheibel's job-searching philosophy is a simple one. But it has already proven effective for the senior business major from Glen Ellyn.

"When you try to do it alone, you don't get anywhere," Scheibel says. "But when you branch out and get involved and meet people, it really pays off."

You don't have to take Scheibel's word for it. For proof, look no further than his new job. Just a few weeks after his graduation from Elmhurst, Scheibel is set to begin training at the retail giant Target, as an executive team leader.

The new position at Target was attractive enough to make him the envy of his job-seeking friends. And the story of how Scheibel landed the job serves as evidence that his job-search philosophy really works. Scheibel says the job would have never come his way if he hadn't first walked through the doors of the Center for Professional Excellence.

Scheibel, who credits the CPE both with helping him thrive in college and prepare for life beyond graduation, said he took advantage of CPE programs whenever possible. At one career information session he attended last fall, he interviewed with Kendal Cross, an Elmhurst alumnus now working for Harris Bank. Cross noticed that Scheibel had worked on Habitat for Humanity service projects at Elmhurst, just as she had during her student days. She was so impressed with Scheibel that she put him in touch with associates at Target, who called him in for interviews and eventually offered him his new job.

"I never would have made that connection without the CPE," he said.

Even before he had started on his new job, Scheibel was learning lessons at the CPE that he could apply at work. He is a regular attendee at the CPE's STEP (Student

Enrichment and Training Program) sessions. Scheibel said he especially appreciated one recent session that focused on dealing with dissatisfied customers.

"I figure that if I'm going to be working in retail, I'll be dealing with my share of angry people," he said. "I learned a lot about how to listen and deal with the problem without provoking them."

The CPE even helped fund Scheibel's education. As a student-worker in the College's Honors Program, which is based in the CPE, Scheibel was responsible for maintaining and circulating the weekly calendar of events for honors students (a Humans vs. Zombies tag game was on his radar recently) and managing special projects. Scheibel said the job helped hone his organizational skills. But just as importantly, he said working at the CPE reminded him of why he came to Elmhurst in the first place.

"I chose Elmhurst for that special feeling of community you find here," he said. "And I really feel that community when I'm at work at the CPE."

Scheibel's work ethic doesn't stop at vacation time. Over the past several years, he also has helped coordinate Elmhurst's annual Alternative Spring Break service expeditions. In 2013, he led a crew of students to Mobile, Alabama, where they worked with Habitat for Humanity to build affordable housing for people in need. The experience, he said, built his confidence in his own abilities. And that's a great feeling for any recent graduate making his way into the world of work.

So does Scheibel have any advice for college students on the lookout for career opportunities?

"Sure, stop by the CPE," he says. "They have so many resources. It really helps you figure out what you want to do."

## A FIRST STEP TOWARD STUDYING ABROAD

Exchange agreements with overseas universities offer opportunities for Elmhurst students.

For students planning to study abroad, a successful trip begins with a simple step—attending the Center for Professional Excellence's biannual Study Away Fair.

The fair, held each September and February, gives students an opportunity to find answers to some of the most common questions about studying in other countries: Will studying abroad affect my progress toward graduation? How do I convince my parents to let me do this? And how in the world do I pay for this?

Nearly 100 students attended the most recent fair, in February. On hand to provide

answers were staff from the CPE and Elmhurst faculty leading short-term study-abroad courses, as well as UMAIE Consortium representatives. Affiliated program providers were also on hand to provide information on long-term international study courses for Elmhurst students. The event is an important first step in students' planning for international study.

"The most successful experiences are the ones that have been well planned in advance," said Alice Niziolek, associate director of international education at Elmhurst. Students who study abroad for

a semester or more are required to take a quarter-credit course that addresses some of the practical concerns related to international study, like health, safety, insurance and, of course, what to pack. "The student who has thought this out is going to have the best experience."

And there was another important benefit for those in attendance: the chance to enter a raffle for a \$100 credit toward study-abroad expenses.



## Events

# Gaining Access to Employers

For job seekers in a tight employment market, it can be difficult to even score a job interview with an employer, let alone land a desirable position.

The good news is that a series of events at the Center for Professional Excellence, including the campus career fair, is making it easier for Elmhurst students to secure interviews with employers—interviews that in some cases lead to attractive job offers.

About 125 students participated in the EConnect Career Fair in the Founders Lounge on March 12. “With the economy on the rise and employers interested in Elmhurst College for their recruiting needs, it was time to bring this event back,” said Annette Coduto, who together with Holly Coffin coordinated the event. Students met with representatives of 22 companies, including Illinois Tool Works, Havi Global Solutions and Sears Holding Corporation, as well as Elmhurst-based employers like the Elmhurst Park District, Elmhurst Memorial Healthcare, and the City of Elmhurst.

“It’s a great opportunity for students to get in front of employers,” said Holly Coffin. She said that for some students, participating in the fair paid off almost immediately. Within weeks of the fair, some students had already been offered full-time positions or internships by employers they had met there.

For others, the connections made at the event may produce results later in the job-search process.

“These are opportunities for networking and making connections that will be beneficial in your career pursuit,” Coffin said.

Elmhurst students, resumés in hand and dressed in their professional best, also met employers at the Illinois Small College Placement Association (ISCPA) CareerFest

in February. The ISCPA is a consortium of 25 small liberal arts colleges from around the state that combine resources to improve career opportunities for students and alumni. At this year’s CareerFest, a number of Elmhurst students were among 591 college students who met with representatives from companies in a wide range of fields, including transportation and logistics, finance and banking, health-care, accounting and many others. Among the companies represented were Baxter Healthcare, CH Robinson, Navistar, Walgreens and Calamos Investments.

“The employers come because they appreciate the great diversity of students they find at these colleges,” Coffin said. “And for students, it’s an excellent opportunity for access to top companies. Everyone wins.”

In the weeks before the event, the CPE offers preparation sessions with tips on how to research companies and prepare for successful interviews. And Coffin urges students not to forget to follow up with employers after interviews.

“People sometimes forget the follow-up, but it is critical,” she said. “You want to make sure you have made a positive impression that they will remember.”

Job-seeking students can even practice their interview skills at the CPE. Each fall and spring, the CPE hosts a mock interview event during which students meet with visiting professionals for a 30-minute dress rehearsal that simulates a typical job interview. The mock interview is followed by a 15-minute critique, with suggestions on how the students can improve their chances for success. “It’s invaluable information,” Coffin said. “We want students to think of this as part of their professional development, so that when they get an opportunity for an actual interview, they are prepared.”



Holly Coffin co-coordinated this year’s EConnect Career Fair.

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