



# CPE Briefing

## A Protégé Becomes a Mentor

Recent graduate Geoff Steele passes tips along to the next generation.



Geoff Steele didn't limit himself to the mentoring program—he took advantage of virtually all of CPE's resources.

He's only a year out of Elmhurst. But Geoff Steele '09 had such a good experience in the Center for Professional Excellence's mentoring program that he now comes back to campus to share tips with Elmhurst undergraduates.

Steele, a Downers Grove resident who majored in business with a marketing specialization, said being mentored was “eye-opening and enlightening. It prepared me for how things would be on the outside.”

Steele played football at the College and now works with Bluejay kickers and punters as a part-time assistant coach. Previously, he was general manager of the DuPage Dragons, a Lisle-based baseball team that plays in a collegiate summer league.

At Elmhurst, Steele worked with mentor Stacey Troha, a donation coordinator for Gift of Hope, an organ and tissue donor network based in Itasca and a student finishing her degree in organization development and management at DePaul University.

Troha was paired with Steele because her background in marketing dovetailed with his interest in sports marketing. “I learned a lot about sports from Geoff, so he was teaching me while I was mentoring him,” she said.

Troha asked Steele questions about his major, suggested resources and networking contacts he may not have considered, and helped him improve his résumé.

At Elmhurst, it doesn't take long for a graduate to start giving back. In this issue we look at ways in which young alumni are reaching out to help undergraduates launch their careers

“Stacey and I had a great relationship,” Steele said. “With her background in marketing, she could give me tips. It was nice to talk to someone who had been through the interviewing process. That helped me realize that interviewing was not as scary as I had thought.”

Steele didn't limit himself to the CPE's mentoring program—he took advantage of virtually all of the CPE's resources. “My junior year, I pretty much lived in the center, doing job shadowing, being mentored, meeting with [mentoring coordinator] Julie Nearing,” he said. “The CPE is an excellent tool that a lot of students don't use to their advantage.”

Now, Steele is mentoring a younger student—Jonathan Stramaglia, a sophomore from Chicago majoring in marketing. Stramaglia said that, because he hopes to go into sports marketing like his mentor, the mentoring relationship is a good fit.

“He's a great kid and very motivated,” Steele said of Stramaglia. “He's passionate about [sports marketing] like I am.”

Nearing said Steele's experience makes him good at what he does: “Geoff was a protégé himself as a student, and knows the value of mentoring.”

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.

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## Mentored as an Undergrad, She Now Gives Back

*Tess Golcher coaches students to be “polished and professional.”*

Giving back to her alma mater has become an article of faith for Tess Golcher '04, who frequently returns to campus to offer career advice and counsel students, both one-on-one and in classroom settings.

Golcher, who majored in business management with a concentration in human resources management and entrepreneurship, also earned an Elmhurst MBA in 2007. For the past three years she has served as human resources director at WBBM-TV, CBS 2 television at its downtown Chicago headquarters. She said her education and the good interviewing skills she learned through the College's Center for Professional Excellence helped her land the job.

“This school has given me so much that I feel it's my responsibility to give back,” she said. “Elmhurst made many opportunities available that were really useful.”

As an undergraduate, Golcher worked with a mentor who took her to different businesses to meet female entrepreneurs. She also attended seminars that taught her how to conduct herself in an interview and at a business dinner. “Now I speak at some of those same seminars,” she said.

Golcher, who has hired several Elmhurst students as interns at CBS 2, also has mentored Elmhurst students and taught interviewing skills in classes offered by the CPE. In particular, she has spent a number of sessions with students in a for-credit course that helps first-year students assess their skills, research possible majors, and even explore professional and graduate school possibilities. She also teaches new students how to make the most of the career services offered by the CPE.

“I tell them to do their research and come [to the interview] prepared,” Tess said, “and to dress to impress—look polished and professional.”

Peggy Killian, director of career education for the CPE, said it has been fascinating to watch Golcher transform from student to professional. “She's very mature, but at the same time very down-to-earth,” Killian said.

Tess said Elmhurst has been the key to nurturing the entrepreneurial drive within her. “My goal is to continue to progress with corporate America and in editorial media,” she said. “I have both Elmhurst and CBS to thank.”

“This school has given me so much that I feel it's my responsibility to give back. Elmhurst made many opportunities available that were really useful.”

Tess Golcher '04, human resources director, WBBM-TV



# Building a Pipeline

**A job seeker not long ago, Michael Lenardi now interviews Elmhurst students for positions at Harris Bank.**

When Harris Bank arrived on campus in October to interview students for entry-level positions, the interviewing team included Michael Lenardi '07, who had gone through the same process as a student himself less than four years earlier.

Lenardi, who majored in general management at Elmhurst, joined Harris immediately after graduation and now works in the bank's downtown Chicago headquarters as a financial analyst.

In recent years, Harris has hired a number of Elmhurst students. Lenardi went through the Harris training program with three others from Elmhurst. He credits the Center for Professional Excellence for helping him with his job-search techniques, including mock interviews and résumé preparation.

"There are a lot of Elmhurst graduates at various levels at the bank," he said.

Lenardi added that he expects the bank to continue to grow its relationship with the College. In fact, Lenardi himself is playing a big role in that growth; he and his team



Michael Lenardi '07, a financial analyst at Harris Bank, now interviews Elmhurst students who are candidates for positions at the bank.

interviewed 10 Elmhurst students when they visited campus in October. Students' Elmhurst educations, which benefit from small classes and one-on-one relationships with professors, make them "well prepared for the job market," Lenardi said.

Joan Vilim, associate professor of business administration in the Center for Business and Economics and Lenardi's former teacher and advisor, agrees. "Our students have done well at Harris," she said. "We deliver a student who knows how to maneuver in the marketplace."

"Mike is a shining star for us in many ways," Vilim added. "He's a bright young man who was a resident

assistant here and really supported other students in that role. And at an informational session [on campus] earlier this fall, he gave a wonderful presentation about Harris Bank."

Added Annette Coduto, employer relations specialist in the CPE: "Mike is always willing to give back to the school. He really connects with the students when he interviews."

**160**  
STUDENTS

**142**  
PROFESSIONALS

## Inside Elmhurst's Mentoring Program

The CPE's Mentoring Program matches professional volunteers with students who are considering their career options. Currently 142 professionals and 160 Elmhurst students participate in the program.

### How does the mentoring program work?

Protégés get the benefit of working with an experienced professional who is focused on their personal and professional development. Together, mentor and protégé work as a team to identify the student's short- and long-term goals and develop an action plan. Not only can the student learn from

the mentor's life and work experience, the mentor helps build the protégé's self-confidence and professional skills. The mentor helps the student address life, school and work balance issues; weigh career options; develop networking skills and tap the right resources.

### How does a professional become a mentor?

Complete a professional profile and submit it to the CPE Mentoring Program. The profile may be accessed on the College's web site via BlueNet and

submitted online. Each fall, the CPE holds orientation for new mentors. Not all professionals in the program provide one-on-one mentoring; some help students with informational interviews and job shadowing.

### How do students sign up for mentoring?

Students submit a protégé profile and agreement to the CPE, which searches for an appropriate mentor. Students then attend an orientation for protégés or meet with the program coordinator for an overview before being matched with a mentor.



# The Power of Internships

**Gragnani twins burnish their résumés and gain key contacts.**

If having fun while you're learning is one of the payoffs of an internship, then Elmhurst seniors Matthew and Michael Gragnani hit the jackpot.

The twin brothers from Berwyn, both interdisciplinary communication studies majors with an emphasis on public relations and advertising, worked as interns during the Fall Term at WMAQ-TV Channel 5 in downtown Chicago. They each worked about 15 weeks, or 350 hours, at the station.

The brothers would like to pursue careers in advertising and know that their internships will enhance their résumés and provide them with valuable contacts.

Matthew worked in station relations three full days a week. His duties included going out into local communities and participating at neighborhood events such as the African Festival of the Arts in Chicago's Washington Park.

"He's very aggressive and seems to adapt to our busy workplace," said Deborah O. Brown, director of station relations and community affairs and Matthew's supervisor. "You don't have to give him detailed instructions."

Michael, who kept the same hours as his brother, worked in advertising sales. He recently went on a Gior-dano's Pizza commercial shoot and ended up appearing in the TV spot along with Chicago White Sox infielder Gordon Beckham.

"They came to me last fall—months in advance—and said they had an opportunity to apply (at NBC)," said Holly Coffin, internship coordinator in the Center for Professional Excellence. "I helped them get their résumés ready."

Matthew said the twins got an interview through a family friend in the station's human resources department. "They told us we had some of the best résumés they'd seen," he said.

Coffin worked with the twins on an earlier internship last spring, when they worked at Giving DuPage, a public/private initiative that promotes volunteerism and giving in DuPage County.

The twins' mentor, Jim Regan '56 praised them for "innovative ideas, excellent thought processes, and their desire to make the world a better place." A former attorney, Regan works as a chaplain for Adventist Hospitals in the Chicago area and has connected the Gragnanis with contacts in the not-for-profit world.

Coffin says the twins' internships showed them the big picture of life at a television station. "They've been introduced to many departments at NBC," she said. "It should help them learn to network."



Michael Gragnani, left, and his brother Matthew, worked as interns during the Fall Term at WMAQ-TV Channel 5 in Chicago. The brothers both plan to pursue careers in advertising.

## Get Your Application In!

Earl Thompson helps students seeking prestigious scholarships.



**W**hen Elizabeth (Libby) Glass '10 was named winner of a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship earlier this year, few were more delighted than Earl Thompson.

Dr. Thompson, who in 2007 retired as chairman of the College's Department of Languages and Literatures [now World Languages, Literatures and Cultures], was asked by CPE Executive Director Larry Carroll to take on a role in the Center for Professional Excellence.

"Larry is very persuasive; it's hard to say no to him," jokes Dr. Thompson, professor emeritus of Spanish at the College. "And I didn't." So for the past three years, Dr. Thompson has served as major scholarship coordinator in the CPE.

Dr. Thompson works with a list of about 20 highly competitive scholarships, of which Elmhurst students have applied for five. He said the College has had success with the Aachen University Summer Research Program in Germany, the Gilman Scholarship Program that funds undergraduate study abroad and the Fulbright, which funds a year's study abroad for students who have completed their undergraduate degree.

Dr. Thompson receives scholarship recommendations from faculty members and CPE staff. He then meets with the recommended students and reviews their activities, volunteer work and other interests to determine what kind of scholarship would be the best fit.

"This is a wide-ranging conversation, more of a chat than an interview," Dr. Thompson said. He suggests possible scholarships but adds that he doesn't push the students. "They need to be motivated."

You don't have to talk to Dr. Thompson for long to hear the passion about his post-retirement role. He was particularly enthusiastic about Glass' Fulbright Scholarship, which has taken her to Panama to teach and serve the community.

Dr. Thompson began working with Glass in May 2008, when Mary Kay Mulvaney, director of the Honors Program, suggested her as a candidate for a Fulbright.

Dr. Thompson edited her application and kept her on track. "In Libby's case we went through four drafts in the editing process," he said. "This is not unusual—some students go through as many as seven drafts."

Glass, a double major in English and Spanish, taught English as a Second Language classes and tutored in Ecuador's Galapagos Islands during her junior year. This experience, in addition to a January Term course in India, supported her Fulbright application.

In January, Glass began a 10-month program at Universidad Latina in Panama City, where she is teaching conversation courses, tutoring students and serving in the community outside the classroom.

"My overall role is to ensure that when the application portfolio comes to the committee, it's in good shape," Dr. Thompson said. He said the committee serves as a second set of eyes on an application, making sure the criteria of the specific scholarship have been addressed and that the grammar and syntax measure up.

Dr. Thompson, who counsels students to begin planning for graduate scholarships early in their college career, points to Glass as a good example. "Too often, undergraduates wait until late in their senior year to apply, in some cases missing deadlines," he said.

Libby Glass' overseas experience helped her application for a Fulbright Scholarship. In January, she began a 10-month stint at Universidad Latina in Panama City, where she is teaching conversation courses, tutoring students and serving in the community.





**Meet Julie Nearing**, coordinator of the Mentoring Program and assistant for the Honors Program. A 2001 Elmhurst graduate in management, she received a master's degree in industrial/organizational psychology from the College in 2006. She began in the CPE's Mentoring Program as an intern in 2005 and became its coordinator the following year. Her role includes finding mentors in areas that match students' interests. To find mentors, she spreads a wide net, contacting colleagues in the College's development and alumni offices and others in the CPE. "The whole College gets involved in the process," she said, adding that a recent email sent to alumni within a 50-mile radius brought in 70 new mentors. She's even enlisted her pastor as a mentor. "Working with the students is my joy," she said. "Hearing their stories, seeing them grow—it feels good."

## 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.

## WHO TO CALL

### Internships

Holly Coffin 617-6457

### Career Education

Peggy Killian '94 617-3625

### Mentoring and Shadowing

Julie Nearing '01 617-3188

### Service-Learning

Dr. Mick Savage 617-6488

### International Education

Dr. Wally Lagerwey 617-3604

### Professional Bridges

Julie Nosal '03 617-3440

### Intercultural Education

Dr. Russell Ford 617-3104

### Employer Relations

Annette Coduto 617-3190

### International Student Services

Alice Niziolek '99 617-3296

### Honors Program

Dr. Mary Kay Mulvaney 617-6479

### Executive Director

Dr. Larry Carroll 617-3114

All phone numbers are 630 area code.

