



CPE Briefing

WORLD CLASS

Gail Gilbert knows all about the benefits of studying abroad, and she's determined to expand the international options for Elmhurst students.

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Gail Gilbert
Associate Director of
International Education

Earlier this year, Elmhurst College announced it had signed on as a partner in Generation Study Abroad, an ambitious national initiative to double the number of students who participate in study-abroad experiences each year. By the end of this decade, the College plans not only to send twice as many students abroad as it does currently, but also to double the number of international students enrolling at Elmhurst, said Gail Gilbert, the College's new associate director of international education. Gilbert, who came to Elmhurst in July from Marquette University, where she was assistant director in the international education office, is tasked with helping the College realize those objectives.

"It has become so important to have a global perspective, and studying abroad is one of the best ways to do that," said Gilbert. "At the same time, bringing international students here increases the diversity of perspectives available on campus. It's great to see the College supporting

these initiatives, and I'm looking forward to being here to see the growth in our international programs."

Gilbert added that College's goals have as much to do with the quality of its international programs as the quantity of students enrolled.

"Some schools bring in more and more students from other countries, without doing enough to support them. But Elmhurst is doing this the right way," Gilbert said. She pointed to two new positions the College is adding to the CPE to work on recruiting and supporting international students "We're building an infrastructure that will make this an effective effort for students and for the College."

In the 2013-14 school year, Elmhurst students studied in 30 different countries on six continents. Some spent a few weeks abroad, others an entire year. Many volunteered their talents and labor in hospitals, high schools and Habitat for Humanity housing sites in other countries. The Institute for International Education, which is leading the

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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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Changing Lives in South Africa

International service-learning courses give students the chance to teach, serve, learn and grow.

about an hour after Jenna Stutz had arrived at the elementary school in Cape Town, South Africa, where she was to spend a week last summer working with South African instructors, one of the teachers handed Stutz a science textbook.

“You are the teacher this afternoon,” he told the Elmhurst junior.

Stutz, who had no idea she was going to be leading the class on her first day in the school, managed to improvise her way through the afternoon’s lessons. And each day for the rest of the week, the process repeated itself, with the teacher asking Stutz to prepare a lesson plan on short notice, then handing the class over to her to implement it.

“He knew I wanted to work with the students, and he wanted to push me a little,” Stutz explained. “He wanted to show me that I could do it.”

Stutz was one of nine Elmhurst students who spent two weeks working in and around Cape Town as part of a course called South Africa: Service and Interdisciplinary Study, led by Professor Therese Wehman of the education department, Professor Nancy Lee of the religious studies

department and Adjunct Professor Oliver Lawrence, a native of Cape Town.

Stutz called the class “life changing.” The Elmhurst education major had been interested in teaching very young children, but her South African experience opened her eyes to some of the joys of working with students in upper grades.

“Those kids changed my heart. They taught me more than I taught them,” said Stutz, who is now observing classrooms in a public school on Chicago’s South Side. “I’ve been given the confidence to know that I can do it. It was such a positive experience.”

This summer marked the eighth time a group from Elmhurst had traveled to Cape Town as part of the class. Elmhurst students who make the trip serve South African children in schools, daycare centers and sites run by non-profit organizations. Though their temporary quarters are among the glassy skyscrapers and tourist sites of Cape Town, their work takes them into the poverty-stricken townships just a few miles away, where thousands live in makeshift shacks. Even after studying social conditions in

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—Megan Holmes

South Africa as part of their pre-trip preparation, students can be taken aback by the poverty they encounter.

"No matter how much research you do, it doesn't really prepare you for what you see," Stutz said. "You see people living in places made of scraps of metal, and the reality hits you."

Megan Holmes, a junior psychology major, spent a week helping to feed people in need at a center in Delft Township run by the Mustadafin Foundation. She peeled potatoes, prepared red beans and rice in enormous vats, and distributed meals to hundreds of people who depend on the foundation's services.

"There would be 300 people lined up with buckets or whatever they could find to get food for their families," Holmes recalled. "It was shocking, crazy to see how much need there was. But we also saw how grateful and kind everyone was. There were so many smiles."

Her sister, Molly Holmes, also a junior psychology major, worked with disabled children at SARDA, an organization that offers riding lessons for people with disabilities at their equestrian center in a comfortable suburban section

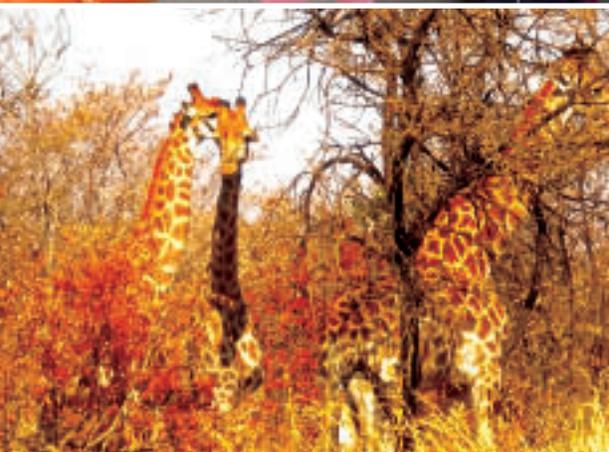
of Cape Town. Holmes said the contrast with the poorer townships was impossible to miss. "It was like visiting two different worlds. It was such a stark contrast," she said. "To see such pervasive poverty, such great need, you just want to learn more about what you can do to help, in however small a way."

While in South Africa for the course, students write every day, as part of the process of reflecting on and learning from their experiences.

"They learn what it's like to work and teach in a different culture. And they find out that, whatever the differences, kids are kids," Wehman said. "It's a really powerful experience."

The South Africa course is just one of several international service-learning courses led by Elmhurst faculty. Wehman and Mick Savage, Elmhurst's director of service-learning, have collaborated on research that seeks to measure the impact of such courses on students. In one project, they investigated how teachers in schools in Australia, Jamaica, England, South Africa and the United States

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Clockwise from top left: Megan Holmes playing with children in Delft Township, South Africa; a lion at Entabeni Game Reserve in Johannesburg; Jenna Stutz teaching at Mokone Primary School in South Africa; Megan and Molly Holmes at the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden; the Elmhurst group posing on top of Table Mountain; a family of giraffes eating in the wild.

Serving Those Who Have Served Their Country

Jeremy Giacomino knows that for military veterans, the return to civilian life can sometimes be as daunting as the perils they braved serving their country.

A veteran of deployments to Iraq as a combat photographer with the U.S. Marine Corps, Giacomino is now military programs coordinator in Elmhurst's Center for Professional Excellence, responsible for helping fellow veterans and active military personnel thrive as Elmhurst students.

As American overseas military commitments draw down and Pentagon budget cuts take effect, a surge of veterans is enrolling in colleges and universities. Giacomino said there are now about 40 veterans or current military personnel studying at Elmhurst.

"We believe that their military experience adds an element of diversity to the campus and brings a valuable perspective on the world," he said. "As more veterans return to school, we're proud to be one of their options. We'd love to

Part of Giacomino's mission is to help veterans and those now serving to succeed academically at Elmhurst, and to help keep them on track to graduate.

"I'm here to be an advocate for them. I am the veterans' voice," he said. "I'll listen to them and go to bat for them to make sure they get the most out of their benefits."

Giacomino has first-hand experience with the challenge of returning to civilian life and completing an undergraduate education. After his five years in the Marines, from which he was honorably discharged as a sergeant in 2009, he attended DePaul University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics earlier this year. While attending DePaul, he worked as a liaison between the university's administrative divisions and outside veterans agencies to provide resources and support for student



see that population grow, and we want to do all we can to help them graduate."

Veterans pursuing higher education face a unique set of challenges. Some are recovering from physical and psychological trauma. Others have difficulty adjusting to life without the sense of purpose and camaraderie they knew in the military. And almost all find it difficult to navigate the maze of Veterans Administration paperwork that stands in the way of accessing their educational and health benefits.

For some veterans, those difficulties can interfere with their educational progress. More than 1 million veterans and their families have used post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to pursue higher education. Just over half of those veterans completed their schooling, according to the Student Veterans of America. That rate is lower than the 59 percent of their non-veteran peers who earned college degrees in four years, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, but is better than the completion rate for other "non-traditional" students.

veterans there. His experience as a veteran helps him serve Elmhurst students and prospective students in his new job, which he started in October.

"I have been in their position. I used the same G.I. benefits they use, and I know how to navigate that," he said. "They can visit me if they are having issues with their VA benefits, if they need help accessing college resources, or if they are looking for career guidance."

Giacomino also wants to help veterans connect to campus and community life. He works to involve them in service activities and social events on and off campus as part of their transition to civilian life.

"I believe that aids in the transition process, because it's difficult to adapt to this new stage in life if you aren't interacting with other students outside the classroom," he said.

Giacomino wants veterans and those serving in the military to know that their talents are valued at Elmhurst.

"People who have served have shown that they are capable of great things," he said. "That shouldn't be forgotten."

He's Lovin' It

A summer internship at McDonald's gave Peter Flockencier new insights into the global fast-food giant.

Like most people his age, Peter Flockencier grew up craving the occasional Happy Meal from McDonald's. But it wasn't until the Elmhurst senior spent last summer as an intern at McDonald's corporate headquarters in Oak Brook that he really felt like part of what the company calls "the McFamily."

Flockencier, an interdisciplinary communication studies major who plans to pursue a career in advertising, said the position gave him insight into the operations and culture of one of the world's most iconic companies.

"Everyone knows McDonald's, and you might think of it as this huge monolithic corporation. But at McDonald's they say that they're the world's largest family-run company," Flockencier said. "I found everyone so willing to help you. Everyone is a member of the McFamily, as they like to say."

Flockencier worked in the worldwide operations department of the company's Restaurant Solutions Group. He contributed to an update and overhaul of the company's internal website, and was a team leader for the annual summer intern charity project. He oversaw a group of 12 interns collaborating with City Year, a national AmeriCorps service program, on projects to benefit Chalmers School of Excellence, a public elementary school in

Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood. The interns painted and did maintenance and renovation work at the school.

Flockencier also created promotional materials to support a school-supplies drive for Chalmers, including print ads designed to fit on the trays used at The Arch, the restaurant on McDonald's sprawling corporate campus, and tabloid-sized posters displayed around the campus. To make donating as easy as possible, Flockencier's materials included a QR code that, when scanned by a smartphone, linked employees to a wish list of desired supplies on Amazon.com. Flockencier said the materials were so successful they earned praise from McDonald's chief executive Don Thompson.

He also spent a day working at a McDonald's restaurant, staffing the breakfast bar during the morning rush and taking orders behind the counter.

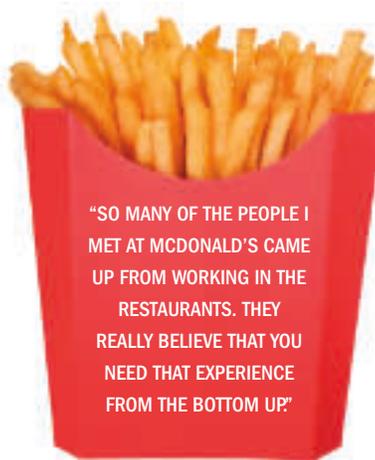
"That gave me an immense respect for the people who work there. They really have to function under pressure," he said. "So many of the people I met at McDonald's came up from working in the restaurants. They really believe that you need that experience from the bottom up."

Flockencier said his internship at McDonald's complemented one he did during sophomore year with the Marketing Store, a Chicago-based agency whose clients include McDonald's. "I really came to admire McDonald's operations there, and I wanted to see things from the client side," he said. "So my position at McDonald's was a great opportunity."

Flockencier's post-Elmhurst plans include finding a position in marketing and advertising, perhaps as an account executive. And his experience last summer has him thinking that, after gaining some experience at an agency, he might like to rejoin the McFamily at some point.

"My experience this summer only increases my respect for the company," he said. "I would love to work there someday."

That sounds like a recipe for success.



As an intern at McDonald's, Peter Flockencier felt like part of the McFamily.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The CPE helps Elmhurst students launch dynamic careers through job shadowing opportunities, mentoring, internships and more. Here are the stories of two recent graduates.

Joe Conner

Class of 2011

Assistant, Jampol Artist Management

A Music-Lover's Dream Job

I grew up loving music. I always wanted to know who sang what song, and I always wanted to learn everything I could about great music. So when I was applying to work here at Jampol Artist Management, the names of the people they work with really jumped out at me. The Doors. Otis Redding. Janis Joplin. The Ramones. Tupac Shakur. They're legends. What we do at Jampol is really specialized: We manage the estates of music legends. It's the kind of job you imagine yourself having when you think about going into music business.

Moving Fast

I love the fast pace of my job. The phone is always ringing, the schedule is always changing. As an assistant, I'm responsible for making sure the day-to-day operations here are running smoothly. People don't think about the behind-the-scenes parts of the music business, but that's important, too. And it can be really interesting.

A Semester in L.A.

I spent the last semester of my senior year in Los Angeles, doing an internship with a record label called Planet LA. It was the best way to learn the business. They let me do a little bit of everything, including going to South by Southwest [an annual music festival in Austin, Texas]. I got to meet people from all over the industry and saw for myself how the business worked.

How Elmhurst and the CPE Prepared Him

My time at Elmhurst definitely helped prepare me for what I'm doing now. It let me take my knowledge of music business to the next level. My internship at Planet LA is a great example. It was really my entry into the music industry, and it was great to be able to do that even before I graduated.

Making Connections

So much of success in this industry has to do with networking, and I learned a lot about that from all the extracurricular activities I did at Elmhurst. I was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha, the Music Business Student Union and Habitat for Humanity. I met and worked with so many different kinds of personalities. It really taught me a lot about how to connect with all kinds of people. That's so important in this industry, and in any industry.

Advice

The best way to break into this business is to get out there and do it. Learn it from the grass roots. Find an internship, or find a band to manage. Read everything you can and try to stay current—because it changes every day.



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Jameela Chaudhry

Class of 2011

Culture of Innovation Associate, Maddock Douglas

Encouraging Innovation

Maddock Douglas is an innovation agency. We work with our clients to help them cultivate their innovation capabilities. We bring them ideas that will shift their business to gain an edge. One of the services we offer focuses on creating a culture of innovation within our clients. We look at changing the ways they operate to better encourage innovation.

Play at Work

This is not your typical office. The first time I walked in, I said, "I want to work here!" We have a Lego pit, scooters, a ping pong table. We have some pretty intense ping pong tournaments! It's just a very vibrant and lively work environment. It's a relaxed place, and the people are open and collaborative. They're nuts, but in a good way! Everyone has a personality.

The Fixer

My role on the Culture of Innovation team is to support and provide logistics. I'm on the lookout for anything that's falling through the cracks on a project. And if I see any cracks, I do what has to be done to fill them in. You could say that I'm the spackle!

What She Learned at the CPE

I was a student worker at the CPE for four years. It was my first real job. It taught me what it means to be professional, to be proactive, to think for myself. And it was great to have access to such a great group of people.

Sticking With It

The first internship I ever interviewed for was at Kellogg's, and I was so disappointed when I didn't get it. I thought I'd failed. But then Holly Coffin [of the CPE] told me about

Maddock Douglas, and how they were setting up a relationship with the College where they would hire students as interns. So I decided I would just call them. As it turned out, it took a few phone calls, but eventually they asked me to come in for an interview.

A Good Start

I had no idea what I wanted to do, so that internship ended up being very helpful. I was exposed to all the different parts of the business—business development, marketing, research, even accounting. It helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses, my likes and dislikes. I could see where I fit in and where a career could start for me.



"I was a student worker at the CPE for four years. It taught me what it means to be professional, to be proactive, to think for myself."

[‘WORLD CLASS’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

Generation Study Abroad initiative, said that the number of Americans studying abroad has grown 150 percent in the last decade. Nevertheless, only 10 percent of the 2.6 million students graduating from American colleges with baccalaureate or associate’s degrees each year study abroad.

Gilbert has experienced first-hand the transformative power of studying abroad. As a global management major at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, she spent a semester studying in Spain and participated in a month-long interim-term course to the Bahamas. The experiences,



GAIL GILBERT, THE COLLEGE’S NEW ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, DEVELOPED A PASSION FOR STUDY-ABROAD EXPERIENCES AS AN UNDERGRADUATE.

she said, “changed my whole outlook. They gave me a huge sense of independence and I developed a real passion for study abroad.” Dropping her plans to pursue a position in the corporate world, she instead took a student post in the international office that turned into a full-time position after her graduation. She has been working in international education since.

In her first few months at Elmhurst, Gilbert has been impressed with the level of personal attention faculty and staff offer students. That focus on the individual often comes as a pleasant surprise to students newly arrived on campus from abroad, she said. Gilbert recalled telling a student from Spain she was advising that she had heard he had given an excellent presentation in one of his classes that morning.

“He thought it was great that people knew him and recognized his efforts,” she said. “We interact with students one on one and you get to know what’s going on with them. They appreciate that.”

That’s an advantage that Gilbert hopes more and more international students will be discovering in years to come.

[‘CHANGING LIVES’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2]

educate “at-risk” students, hoping to identify educational best practices. Wehman said findings from the project have helped shape Elmhurst’s international service-learning courses.

“Having this kind of research lends some validity to what we’ve been telling students when we describe the benefits of these courses,” she said. “It’s wonderful work.”

And, as Wehman’s students will testify, it can be profoundly impactful.

Stutz recalled the way the South African students tried to teach her to speak a bit of Xhosa, their famously complex tonal Bantu language. Even when she struggled to reproduce the clicking consonants that are part of the language, the students urged her to keep trying.

“It was like I was the teacher and the student at the same time, and I found that so affirming,” she said. “I was so comfortable in a place where I should have felt uncomfortable.”

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