

CPE BRIEFING

RUSSELL G. WEIGAND
CENTER FOR
PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE



SPRING
2017

— ELMHURST COLLEGE —

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PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

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the Center for Professional Excellence and professor of business administration. “Russ understands that we’re doing something here that serves all majors—that we’re engaged to help all of our students, and alumni too.”

Elmhurst College President Troy D. VanAken announced the Weigands’ gift, along with several others, during his inauguration ceremony on Saturday, October 22.

“The College has no truer or more steadfast friends than Russ and Joyce Weigand, and their gift exemplifies philanthropy of the highest order because it shows their lasting commitment to our students and their success,” President VanAken said.

A MAJOR GIFT FOR THE CPE

Trustee Russell G. Weigand '64 has pledged \$2.25 million to support the College's Center for Professional Excellence.

For Russell G. Weigand '64, Elmhurst College was instrumental to launching a successful career. In return, the longtime Elmhurst trustee and his wife, Joyce Slone Weigand, are making a significant gift to support the College in helping other students reach their professional goals.

The Weigands have made a \$2.25 million commitment to create an endowment for the College's Center for Professional Excellence. In honor of the Weigands' gift, the CPE will become the Russell G. Weigand Center for Professional Excellence.

The gift “is a real tribute to the faculty and staff, and the value that we provide to students,” said Lawrence Carroll, executive director of

Additional gifts announced at the inauguration included a \$150,000 pledge from alumnus and Trustee Edward Momkus '74 and his wife, Betsy Goltermann; and a \$100,000 gift from Trustee Hugh McLean and his wife, Mary Beth. Both donations will support student scholarships.

“I am deeply grateful to Ed, Betsy, Hugh and Mary Beth for the dedication and generosity they have shown to Elmhurst College,” VanAken said. “Their gifts will support our students' goals and dreams for years to come.”

Continued on page 2

TRUE PROFESSIONALS

Established in 1997, the Russell G. Weigand Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) connects Elmhurst students with opportunities that will help them explore their passions, discover their world and reach their full potential. Through mentoring, shadowing, service-learning, international education, career development and more, the CPE prepares students to launch successful careers and become effective contributors to society.

IN THIS ISSUE

A Major Gift for the CPE
Presenting on a National Stage
Prestigious Fellowship for Recent Graduate
From Intern to Full-Time Employee
Meet Our Staff

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PRESENTING ON A NATIONAL STAGE

Elmhurst students and faculty traveled to Seattle to present at the National Honors Conference.

When the National Collegiate Honors Council held its annual conference in October, Elmhurst College was proudly represented in presentations by three Honors Program students and one faculty member.

The conference, held this year in Seattle, highlights student and faculty research from across the nation, and provides training and development for honors program administrators. This year's event featured a talk by best-selling author and poet Sherman Alexie.

The Elmhurst contingent included Mary Kay Mulvaney, professor of English and director of the Honors Program, and students Konrad Malinowski '18, Olivia Prvulov '17 and Kathryn Panzica '17.

"Presenting at the NCHC conference is always a great experience for our students," said Mulvaney. "The experience looks very good on applications to graduate school, and it's a good way to help them understand the value of being able to communicate research results to a diverse audience."

Prvulov and Panzica, seniors with majors in psychology, presented research that explored the links between anxiety levels in children and overcontrol in parenting. In conducting their research, the students observed videos of parent-child

dyads and analyzed the relationship between parental overcontrol and child anxiety.

Malinowski, a double major in jazz studies and music theory/composition, presented research that compares and contrasts two different performances of *Philomel*, a 1964 composition by Milton Babbitt that combines synthesizer with the human voice. The work drew on Malinowski's interest in the intersection of music theory and literary criticism.

Mulvaney, who was named a National Collegiate Honors Council Fellow last year and served on the NCHC board for many years, presented the results of her work on the long-term impact of study abroad on Honors Program alumni.

The national submission process for the NCHC annual conference is highly selective, with hundreds of students and faculty submitting proposals each year.

While they were in Seattle, the Elmhurst students explored the city and learned about honors programs at other colleges and universities.

"I had the amazing opportunity to travel to a new city and experience the culture while at the same time presenting my research," wrote Olivia Prvulov in an essay about the trip. "NCHC was one of the best Elmhurst College experiences that I have had. I would love to do it again, as I formed so many new friendships and met many new professional contacts that will benefit me if I continue to expand my research."

PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP FOR RECENT GRADUATE

Lee Borocz-Johnson '16 is pursuing a master's degree at Cambridge University with the help of a prestigious award.

One of the things Lee Borocz-Johnson learned during his semester studying at Oxford University in 2014 was that he felt right at home in the high-powered intellectual climate of one of the world's oldest centers of learning.

Now the 2016 Elmhurst graduate has crossed the Atlantic again, this time to pursue a master's degree in political thought and intellectual history at Gonville and Caius College of Cambridge University. His studies are supported by a \$5,000 fellowship from the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. Borocz-Johnson was one of just 51 students in the United States to earn the prestigious award.

"I'm excited about going back," Borocz-Johnson said in an interview last summer. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to devote myself to studying full time."

In fact, his studying began well in advance of the start of his Cambridge term in October. In between shifts of his summer job cleaning gutters and washing windows, Borocz-Johnson did what he calls "some preliminary reading" into English history of the 16th and 17th centuries.

That kind of diligence is standard operating procedure for Borocz-Johnson. During his semester at Oxford two years ago, he said, "I studied as hard as I ever have in my life." He said he appreciated the intellectual workout that comes with studying in "such a high-octane academic atmosphere."

For his master's degree, he is focusing on the life and writing of Edward Hyde, an English statesman who figured prominently in the political turmoil of the years leading to the English Civil War. Borocz-Johnson encountered Hyde's work in the course of his studies at Oxford in 2014.

An English and philosophy major at Elmhurst, Borocz-Johnson applied for the Phi Kappa Phi fellowship at the

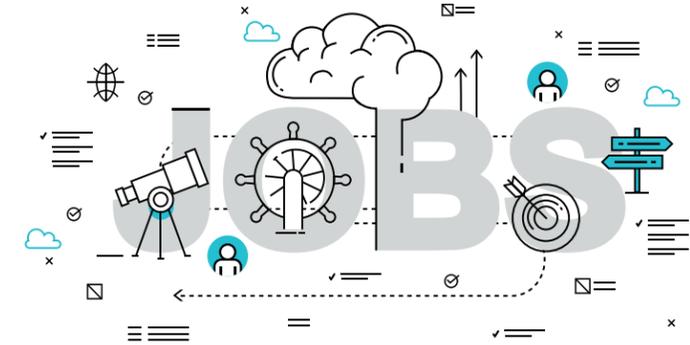


urging of Professor Dianne Chambers. During his undergraduate semester at Oxford, he was one of three Elmhurst students in the Middlebury College-CMRS Oxford Humanities Program, which is associated with Oxford University's Keble College. Every year Elmhurst students participate in the program, joining about two dozen other American students.

Cambridge's Gonville and Caius College, where Borocz-Johnson is doing his master's work, was founded in 1348.

The school's alumni include 13 Nobel Prize winners. Borocz-Johnson plans to pursue a career in academia, inspired partly by the example of his professors at Elmhurst and partly by his experience at Oxford.

"One of the epiphanies I had there was that I could make meaningful contact between my work and the concerns of the real world," he said. "I'm interested in uncovering ways to think about today's political discourse."



FROM INTERN TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE



For international student Sasha Kachanov '16, a computer science internship led the way to a full-time job in the United States.

As an international student, Sasha Kachanov knew it might not be easy to land a full-time job in the United States after graduating from Elmhurst College. After all, international candidates can't work in the United States for more than a few years without an employer-sponsored visa—and not every employer is willing to go to the extra effort.

Kachanov, who was born in Kharkov, Ukraine, transferred to Elmhurst from Oakton Community College. A math major with a minor in computer science, he began his job search with actuarial companies—and soon hit a brick wall.

"A lot of large actuarial companies had a disclaimer on their application forms saying, 'If you will ever require a visa sponsorship please do not apply; we do not sponsor visas for this position,'" Kachanov said. "But finally, I was lucky enough to get a first interview with a company that did not have a disclaimer through ISCPA (Illinois Small College Placement Association)."

Kachanov did well on that interview and was scheduled for a second one when things fell apart.

"The CPE suggested that I should be upfront about my status, so I called the company and told them that I would require sponsorship after three years," he said. "The next day, I got a call saying that they were canceling the interview."

But when Kachanov shifted his focus to computer science, his employment prospects began to look up. On the advice of one of his professors, he applied for an internship with americaneagle.com, a web development company that has a strong record of hiring Elmhurst College students.

"I was lucky enough to get the internship, and it was a great experience," Kachanov said. "I learned a ton of technical skills that made me a better programmer, because I worked on real-world projects and I was able to talk with my direct supervisor often to review my code, my strategy and my understanding of concepts. I also learned about how a business is run, which standards are acceptable in today's IT world, and what is expected from an employee."

At the end of the internship, americaneagle.com offered Kachanov a full-time position. More recently, the company offered to apply for a work visa on his behalf. Today, he says he appreciates his employer's support, and he's enjoying his new career as a web applications developer.

"I like the atmosphere, I like the people, and I learn something new every day," Kachanov said. "Whenever I can't figure something out, I am offered help and guidance."

Kachanov credits Elmhurst's Center for Professional Excellence with helping him at every step of his career path.

"The CPE was really great," he recalled. "There were tons of workshops, presentations, one-on-one meetings and more that helped me improve myself. I learned a lot—it was constructive, but it was also fun."

MEET OUR STAFF

The CPE relies on the hard work of a dedicated staff of experienced professionals, and we'd like to share their stories with you. In this issue of *CPE Briefing*, we introduce Gail Gilbert and Julie Gonzales. Check out future issues of the newsletter to meet the rest of our staff!

Gail Gilbert

As director of international education, Gail facilitates study-away programming, supports international students and works with partners across campus and beyond to advance international initiatives.

As part of her responsibilities, Gail travels to partner institutions around the world to establish and evaluate study-away programs. In September, she visited University College Dublin (UCD), where seven Elmhurst College nursing students were studying. As a result of that visit, the partnership with UCD was expanded beyond nursing and is now open to Elmhurst students in any major.

Gail also attended the European Association for International Education (EAIE) Conference in Liverpool, England. During that conference, she stayed on the campus of Liverpool Hope University, another new study-abroad site that serves students interested in art, business, music and service.

Gail has worked in international education for 12 years and has made significant contributions to the field. She has presented on a wide range of topics, including managing student workers, responding to overseas emergencies, working with parents, and health and safety in education abroad.

In October 2016, Gail presented at the NAFSA (Association of International Educators) Region V conference in Milwaukee. She was the co-facilitator of the Study Abroad 101 Workshop for professionals and offered a session on operational budgets for study-abroad programming.

In addition, Gail recently completed a four-year term as health and safety content coordinator with NAFSA's Education Abroad Knowledge Community. Currently, she serves on the Academic Council for IES Abroad.



Julie Gonzales

As assistant director of education enrichment programs, Julie works with Elmhurst College students assisting them in their professional and personal development. She does this through career advising, exploration and mentoring. The advisor to ECHO (Elmhurst College Honors Organization), she works closely with ECHO student leaders by providing mentoring in the fulfillment of their duties to their fellow ECHO members. ECHO is the largest student organization on campus.

Beyond campus, Julie remains active in professional development and within her community. She is a board member of the International Mentoring Association (IMA) and sits on the association's accreditation committee, assessing and assisting other mentoring programs applying to receive accreditation from the IMA.

She also stays active in her community through outreach and service. One of her main passions is "Easy" Care, the after-school program she founded in 2009 and continues to serve as director. "Easy" Care provides free after-school care for middle school youth for working families in the Bensenville community who otherwise could not afford after-school care for their kids. Elmhurst College students staff the program, providing tutoring and supervision while gaining valuable experience working with youth.

