



CPE BRIEFING

RUSSELL G. WEIGAND
CENTER FOR
PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

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“I’m excited about working with a mission-driven institution filled with wonderful faculty and staff dedicated to the success of their students,” Gahbauer said.

Before transitioning to higher education, Gahbauer worked in marketing and advertising with clients such as Kellogg’s, Bright Start, Hallmark and Shedd Aquarium. He has a bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master’s degree in higher education from Loyola University Chicago.

At Elmhurst, Gahbauer will lead the Weigand Center’s efforts to help students identify, shape and define their career goals, and to connect them with professional resources and opportunities for career development and exploration.

“I am looking forward to working with Marty as we implement the Elmhurst College 2021 Strategic Plan, knowing the Weigand Center for Professional Excellence will continue to play a critical role in the continued success of Elmhurst College and the students we serve,” said April Edwards, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty.

WEIGAND CENTER WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Martin Gahbauer has joined Elmhurst College as the new executive director of the Russell G. Weigand Center for Professional Excellence.

Gahbauer, who officially started at the College on June 4, previously served for several years as associate director of the

Career Development Center at Loyola University Chicago. He also has been an active volunteer and participant at Career Transitions Center of Chicago, a volunteer-driven nonprofit organization that provides job placement services to the unemployed and underemployed.

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, career development and more, the CPE prepares students to launch successful careers and become effective contributors to society.

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CONTINUING THE CONNECTION

Mentor Mitch Langelier '87 has had a dynamic career in marketing, sales and hospitality. Now, he appreciates the opportunity to give back to his alma mater.



Mitch Langelier graduated from Elmhurst College in 1987 with a degree in interdepartmental communications with a strong interest in advertising and marketing. So, he went to work for a biomedical distributor in a marketing role—a job that took him all over the country to set up trade shows and support the company's sales team.

That experience got him interested in sales, and he took a job with an executive recruiting firm. "It was a 100 percent commission environment," Langelier recalled. "I had no base salary at all, so I had to figure out how to manage lean months versus strong months. It was a valuable learning experience."

When the recession hit in the early 1990s, Langelier decided it was time for a more stable career, so he went to work at a restaurant—waiting tables, then bartending, then training and finally management. "I tell people all the time: everyone should wait tables at some point in their life," he said. "The things you learn about teamwork and how to prioritize translate into any career."

Eventually, Langelier translated his hospitality experience into a job as a recruiter for a restaurant franchise in Colorado, and from there into corporate hotel and restaurant roles. Today, he's VP of talent and culture at SMASHotels, a hotel-management company that specializes in boutique properties.

He attributes his career success in large part to the support he found at Elmhurst College.

"Going to Elmhurst was a defining time for me," said Langelier. "I started college at Illinois State, but I floundered

there. It was too big, too disconnected, too hard to make connections. At Elmhurst, I was captain of the tennis team, I had incredibly positive relationships with my professors, and I found all the support I needed."

In 1999, when Langelier was invited to work with Elmhurst students as part of the College's mentoring program, he immediately said yes. Since that time, he's worked with dozens of Elmhurst students, offering career guidance and helping them expand their networks.

"Elmhurst was such an important move for me, so I appreciate the opportunity to continue that connection," he said. "I enjoy helping students who are in the same position I once was. Graduating from college can be an incredibly scary time, and if I can reduce that fear a bit, that's very rewarding."

Langelier said he also was inspired by his uncle George Langelier, a 1949 Elmhurst graduate who taught biology at the College and served on the College's board of trustees.

"My uncle was always encouraging me to pay it back and stay involved with Elmhurst, and that's something he modeled, too," said Langelier. "He was incredibly engaged with the College well into his 80s."

George Langelier passed away in 2017, but Mitch has some unique mementos to remember him by: his uncle's Founders Medal, which the College awarded him in 2013, and his treasured microscope. Dating back to the 1860s, the microscope was one of the first manufactured by Bausch & Lomb and held a place of pride in George's home.

"The microscope has a custom-made case and still has all the original lenses," Mitch said. "It's a stunningly beautiful device, and it's in impeccable condition."

WHEN PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF

When CBS turned down senior Christian Canizal's application for a sports journalism internship, he didn't let that stop him. Christian, an interdisciplinary communication studies major from Aurora, followed up with CBS to find out what his application lacked—and then set out to fill in the gaps. We spoke to Christian to find out what he's learned.

How did you first connect with CBS?

CBS came to a career fair at Elmhurst in the fall of my junior year. I was very interested in working there, so I applied for a sports journalism internship. I went through the whole process of interviewing and everything, but they didn't hire me.

What did you do next?

I followed up with the supervisor who interviewed me to find out why I didn't get the internship so I could do better next time. I was told that my interview was great, and they really liked me, but the other candidates had more experience. At that time the only experience I had was working as a sports columnist for the Leader—I had no experience in an office setting. So I started looking for an internship to build up my resume.

I got an internship at Free Range Office, a co-working space in Wicker Park, where I created YouTube videos for the business and posted them on social media. After that, I studied abroad in Barcelona and worked at a startup e-sports company called eStreams.tv. That was pretty cool—as an e-sports journalist, I created content and did some marketing. It was a startup company, so as an intern I wore a lot of different hats.

When did you reconnect with CBS?

All that time I had stayed in contact with the supervisor at CBS who had interviewed me when I first applied. We exchanged emails over the summer, and she sent me an email about a scholarship for aspiring journalists. Then, in the spring, she encouraged me to apply again for an internship. I went through the process, and this time they offered it to me.

So how's the internship going?

It's going great. The best part is going to Cubs and White Sox events and interviewing managers, players, even owners. It's been crazy—I've interviewed Joe Maddon, Javier Baez, Tom Ricketts, Anthony Rizzo, Tim Anderson—all the most prominent players of both teams. I also get to watch sports for my job.

How do you get access to all those high-profile people?

After a game, the team's manager meets with a group of reporters—there might be 20 or 30 journalists in the room, from CBS, ABC, Fox and other channels. I usually let the beat writers go first, then I ask my question. A couple of my questions have made it on the air, and some have gotten mentioned in the Chicago Tribune. I don't get credited, but it's cool to see my work on the air and in print.

How does it feel to interview Chicago sports legends?

It's kind of nerve-wracking. Growing up in the Chicago area, I've always been a huge Cubs fan—and Joe Maddon is the coach who

took them to the World Series for the first time in more than 100 years. So when we're talking to Joe Maddon, I get kind of nervous and let three or four people go by before speaking up.

What else does your internship entail?

I also get to shadow the producers who are in charge of making the show for the sports section. I see how they edit and what clips they use, and I get to pick their brain about why they chose this clip over that one. I'm also in charge of looking up stats, doing research and writing headlines for the scores that scroll at the bottom of the screen.

How has your internship prepared you for what's next?

Working for CBS has given me the professional experience I need to move forward as a journalist. Working for a company with instant name recognition will help me get the attention of potential employers too—and it gives me the confidence to work at another company, big or small.





From Intern to Branch Manager

“I had an internship with Enterprise during the summer after my junior year. I got involved with all stages of the business, from customer service, to sales, to marketing, to managing business relationships with body shops and dealers. I learned a lot about how to run a business—how to look at your numbers and understand where you’re generating revenue and where you’re spending. You’re not pushing papers, you’re fully involved right away.

“At the end of the internship I got an offer on the spot for a full-time job after graduation. It was a big relief to have a job lined up going into senior year.

“I started my full-time job as a management trainee a week before graduation. Enterprise offers opportunities to move up right away, so I was promoted to assistant manager in November 2016 and then got promoted to a bigger operation the following April. Then I got another promotion this spring, and now I’m the branch manager of a location in Morton Grove. It’s been a great learning experience.”

Joe Camiliere '15
Branch Manager, Enterprise



THE POWER OF A PARTNERSHIP

Innovative partnerships with area businesses lead to internship and job opportunities for Elmhurst students.

In today’s volatile business environment, employers often face challenges in recruiting, training and keeping the best candidates. It can take months to get a new employee up to speed, and an interview doesn’t provide much insight into whether a candidate is a good fit.

At the same time, graduating college students face challenges in finding the right job, too. You have to have experience to get a job, but how do you get experience without, well, a job?

The Weigand Center has created two innovative partnership programs designed to tackle both sides of that dilemma. Participating companies hire Elmhurst students as interns, then provide those interns with the training and experience they need to qualify for full-time roles after graduation. The organizations get well-trained employees, and the students get a strong start on their careers. Everybody wins.

The Center currently has partnerships with Byline Bank and Enterprise, and plans to build additional partnerships in the next year.

A New Generation of Credit Analysts

The Weigand Center’s partnership with Byline Bank dates back to 2014, when Holly Coffin, Elmhurst’s assistant director of internships, called what was then Ridgestone Bank to explore the possibilities of working together.

“I knew people in the financial world who said Byline would be a good fit for us,” she said. “So I sat down with some people there to talk about setting up a partnership.”

Coffin said she sees the partnership as a kind of pipeline: students start out as interns, get the training they need to take on broader roles, and eventually accept full-time positions.

“Companies are looking to form this kind of partnership,” she said. “It’s expensive to onboard and train employees. One way to save costs is to train future employees while they’re still in college, and then promote them once they’re ready for full-time work.”

The bank was receptive to the concept and took on its first Elmhurst intern in 2014: an international student who transitioned into a full-time role and still works at the bank. In the years since, the bank has taken on more than a dozen interns and employs 10 Elmhurst graduates full time.

“We started this partnership for a simple reason: the banking industry is experiencing a shortage of credit analysts,” said Ninel Struzska, vice president and senior underwriting manager at Byline. “This model allows us to hire college students and train them in the field.”

The students begin as credit analyst interns, attending credit meetings and getting a close look at how to put together a loan approval. Students who stay with the bank then become junior credit analysts and eventually move into full-time roles as full-fledged credit analysts.

For students, the internship provides valuable insights into what it’s like to work at a bank. “It’s good training and exposure to our process,” Struzska says. “But it’s beneficial on our side as well, because it allows us to evaluate candidates over a period of time. We can evaluate their work ethic, their communication skills and how they integrate into our culture—traits that don’t always emerge in an interview.”

She adds that Elmhurst interns have solid professional preparation—but that’s not all they have. “Elmhurst students are eager to learn more,” she says. “They participate in our continuing education program, for example, where students from other colleges might say no. We’re looking for people who want to expand their horizons, so that’s important.”

Leadership Lessons

Holly Coffin had known Drew Butts, Chicago-area group talent manager for Enterprise, for many years. But it wasn’t until 2014, when she invited him to a career fair on campus, that the partnership between the College and the company blossomed.

“We had been recruiting from larger universities, but when we visited Elmhurst College we found that we had very talented people right here in our backyard,” said Butts. “So we went back to recruit graduating students, and when we started an



An Introduction to Banking

“I started my internship at Byline Bank during the summer of 2017, then continued through the school year. It’s a very hands-on type of internship—they really trust interns to take on important tasks. For example, twice a week all the senior managers get together to talk about loan deals in the pipeline. All the interns participate—we observe how the leaders come to conclusions, and we take the minutes. It’s a great way to enhance your listening and writing skills, and typing up the notes later gives you an opportunity to reflect back on what the senior managers were talking about.

“For me, the internship has been a great introduction to banking, and it’s definitely prepared me to adapt quickly to a fast-paced environment. After graduation I’m going to work for BMO Harris, and I’m grateful to have learned so many transferrable skills.”

Rosalie Navarrete '18



A Hands-On Experience

“In January 2015, I started working at Byline Bank as a credit intern. I stayed through the summer and the following fall, and then in January they offered me a full-time job. I started working for Byline full time after graduating in May 2016, and have been here ever since.

“The internship was really hands-on. The bank puts a high premium on interns learning the process, from loan origination to closing. I had the sense that my manager wanted to keep me around. They challenged me with other responsibilities that interested me.

“I’ve been full time for nearly two years now, and I’m still learning a lot. I’m still building on everything I began to learn as an intern.

“There are a lot of Elmhurst grads at Byline, which shows they’re serious about hiring their interns. They see a future in the students they bring on.”

Anthony Patricelli '16
Credit Analyst, Byline Bank



internship program for our truck division, we turned to Elmhurst.”

Since then, Enterprise has hired eight interns from the College, five of whom stayed on as full-time employees. The partnership has worked so well, that in 2016 the company started recruiting Elmhurst students for its accounting department as well as its management operations department.

“Our Elmhurst College interns do a fantastic job for us,” notes Butts. “They’re coachable, and they know how to lead and motivate. They’re ready for leadership at an early age because of the opportunities for leadership they’ve had at Elmhurst, whether in athletics or other activities.”

Butts points to Holly Coffin’s relationship with the College faculty as pivotal in the success of the program. “Holly and her staff interact with faculty very well,” he says. “That means they can work with faculty members to get our message out to students and find good candidates for us.”

For Coffin, it all comes down to making sure students have the tools they need to thrive. “I want to prepare our students so that when they take that next step they’ll shine,” she says.

“Internships allow students to explore careers, find out whether a company is a good fit, see the big picture—and prepare for a bright future.”

LARRY CARROLL REFLECTS ON 21 YEARS AT THE WEIGAND CENTER

After 21 years of leading the Center, Carroll will return to the Elmhurst faculty full time.



More than 20 years ago, Larry Carroll spearheaded the launch of what would become the Russell G. Weigand Center for Professional Excellence. At the

end of June, he will step down from his leadership role and rejoin the full-time faculty.

“When Larry began his work with the Center, he essentially started with a ‘lump of clay’ and molded it into a key part of the Elmhurst College experience,” said Elmhurst College Trustee Russell Weigand ’64, in whose honor the Center was renamed last year.

“It took thought and hard work, but the Center has emerged as one of the most distinctive programs of the College. I have appreciated his dedication and leadership over these many years.”

Carroll will resume full-time teaching duties in the College’s Department of Business and Economics this fall.

“My passion is to help people learn,” Carroll said. “When I agreed to lead the Center back in 1997, I made it clear that at some point I wanted to go back to the faculty. I’m looking forward to working with students to help them not only learn the principles of business, but also develop their own philosophy of leadership and integrity.”

Carroll came to Elmhurst in 1970 as a part-time faculty member in the business department, and joined the full-time faculty in 1974. In 1996, he worked closely with then-President Bryant Cureton to create what was then called the Center for Professional Excellence—a comprehensive academic center devoted to building true professionals. He and his team integrated career services with service-learning,

Honors and study-away programs to build a seamless experience for students.

“Our goal has always been to work with students from the time they set foot on campus to graduation to prepare them to become professionals in whatever they went on to do,” Carroll said.

Under Carroll’s leadership, the Center has dramatically expanded opportunities for students to engage in professional experiences, study abroad and serve the community. Internship participation has quadrupled since 1997, for example, while study-abroad programs have expanded to include opportunities in more than 60 countries.

Today, nearly 70 percent of students participate in at least one Weigand Center program during their time at Elmhurst, with more than half of participants taking part in more than one program.

“During my time at Elmhurst College I had the opportunity to shadow HR professionals and consultants, work side-by-side with a veteran VP of HR as a mentor, and take on four-plus internships,” said Sarah Clarin ’04, vice president of human resources at SunSource. “None of these experiences would have been possible without the encouragement, coaching and guidance of Dr. Carroll.”

Looking back, Carroll said he takes pride in how well the Center has served students over the years. “We’ve substantially increased the number of students who participate in our programs, as well as the quality of the experiences they engage in,” Carroll said. “We constantly hear from employers how well prepared our students are for their internships.”



Confidence at Work and Beyond

“I first connected with Enterprise at a career fair at the College. I walked up to the Enterprise table and gave my resume to Drew Butts, and he set me up with an internship interview that same week!”

“As an accounting intern, I helped the accounting team in preparing financial statements, reviewing/sending out reports, and analyzing information to assist the Enterprise daily rental team. For three straight months I immersed myself in the corporate world, making presentations and communicating with colleagues. The experience gave me confidence at work and even outside of the work setting.

“My experience with the internship program prepared me to take on a leadership role and work toward my first promotion as soon as I started here full time. It’s exciting to see other students find success here at Enterprise too. Elmhurst College has continually produced ambitious and effective leaders, and I am happy to be among them.”

Emily Heimerdinger ’16
Accounting Supervisor, Enterprise



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