

A Competitive Edge

Elmhurst students gain experience, connections and professional confidence through internships at nonprofits, Fortune 500 companies and beyond. Here are some of their stories.



Scoring Career Goals

SHALYN BRADY '19 is a diehard Blackhawks fan who dreams of pursuing a career as a sports journalist. So when she found out that NBC Sports Chicago writer Charlie Roumeliotis had graduated from Elmhurst, she reached out right away.

"I connected with him on LinkedIn and sent him some articles I wrote for my sports blog," says Brady, a sport management major from La Grange Park. "He liked my work, so he encouraged me to apply for an internship at his company and promised to name-drop me."

Brady got the internship and spent fall 2018 tracking NBC Sports Chicago's social media analytics, helping craft messages, and engaging with audiences at giveaways and other events.

"I worked with some really cool people at NBC Sports, and through Charlie I've met lots of other sports writers too," Brady says. "The connections I've made will really open up doors for me."

Then Brady came across another opportunity: Second City Hockey, a blog site run by sports media network SBNation, was recruiting new contributors. She had a lot going on—in addition to her own blog, she had recently launched a hockey-focused podcast—but decided to apply anyway. Within a day, she was hired as a staff writer.

Brady writes 12 to 15 articles a month for the site, covering everything from game previews to in-depth stories about trends and statistics. Her internship ends in May, but she'll continue writing for the blog throughout the summer.

"The blog has 15,000 followers on Twitter and a significant number of readers, so it's both nerve-racking and fun," she says. "The best part is that I'm earning money doing what I want to do as a career."

A Foundation in Finance

For many students, an internship confirms that a particular role is a good fit. For **JOSH MAYER '19**, a pair of internships offered valuable insights on what he *didn't* want to do.

For his first internship, in the summer of 2018, he worked as a financial project analyst at MasTec Network Solutions in Itasca, Ill. Working on the company's finance team, he reviewed costs and revenues, confirmed payments and facilitated communication between teams.

Then he landed a Spring Term internship as a credit analyst at Byline Bank, running reports, examining appraisals and taking notes during committee meetings.



"It was really cool to be in meetings with high-level executives deciding whether to accept a loan," he says. "But as a credit analyst, it takes a long time

before you can take on a client-facing role—which is what I want to do."

Armed with that insight, Mayer focused on a career path that would involve more interaction with clients. In April he accepted a full-time job as a performance analyst with Marquette Associates, an investment consulting firm in Chicago.

"At first I'll be working mostly with data, but eventually the position will grow to include communicating with clients about investments," Mayer says. "I start in June, and I'm pretty excited."

ABOUT THE WCPE

The mission of the Russell G. Weigand Center for Professional Excellence is to prepare Elmhurst College students and alumni for an ever-changing world by igniting their professional curiosity, competencies and purpose. Through career guidance, mentoring, internships and more, the WCPE readies students for a successful launch into their careers and to become effective contributors to society.

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A Beautiful Path

ALISSA BULAON '19 has always had an interest in the cosmetics and beauty industry. So when the College's First Leap program gave her the opportunity to shadow at Ulta Beauty's headquarters in the spring of 2017, she jumped at the chance.



"I spent a full day at Ulta, shadowing the whole marketing department," she says. "It was an amazing experience. I was exactly where I wanted to be."

Next, Bulaon set her sights on a summer internship with Ulta. She had to wait until her junior year to apply, but once she did, she was called in for interviews within a week.

"I had three interviews—first a phone interview with HR, then two in-person interviews at the corporate office," Bulaon says. "Then I had an interview with their chief artistic director, Ammon Carver, who's a celebrity of the beauty world. I was like, oh my gosh, I'm going to be talking to a famous person! The next day, they offered me the internship."

Although her internship won't start until June, Bulaon's new bosses invited her to join them in April at a major beauty show at Chicago's McCormick Place. There, she met creative directors, shadowed the company's model-prep team and got a taste of what the beauty world is all about.

"Being in school, you don't get a feel for where you want to go with your career," Bulaon says. "This internship will help me figure out what I like and what I don't like."

Opportunities in HR

ALEXANDRA MILLAN '19 didn't know anything about internships when she started college. But then internship director Holly Coffin visited one of her classes to talk about the importance of real-world experience, and she was sold.

"After the class I went and talked to her about my interests and my goals," says Millan, a business management major. "As a first-generation college student with a single mom, I'm looking for anything that can help me get my foot in the door."

Coffin told Millan about an internship opportunity in human resources at Blistex Inc., an Oak Brook-based



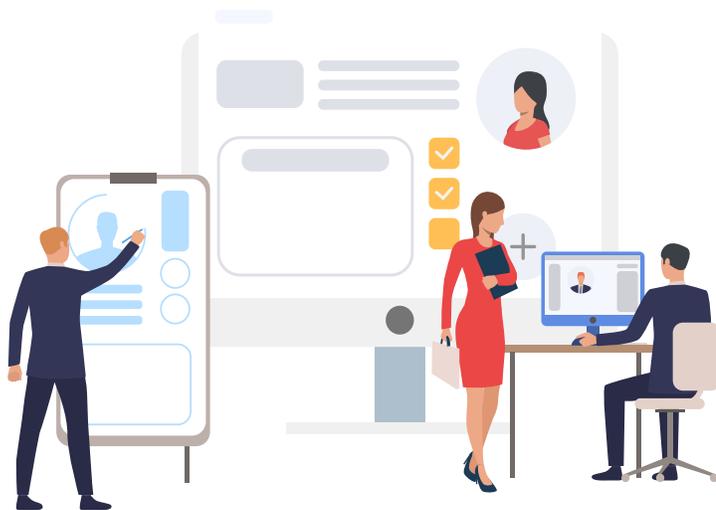
company that makes lip balms. Millan polished her resume, applied for the internship and spent the summer of 2018 shadowing HR professionals, updating policies, working on an employee opinion survey and more.

At the end of the internship, Blistex invited Millan to return during winter break—but by then, Millan had already landed another internship with

Semplex Corporation, an Elmhurst-based manufacturing company. She spent two semesters with Semplex, working on everything from reports to new employee orientation to payroll.

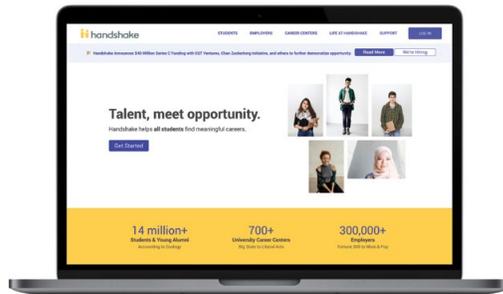
Millan's supervisors at Semplex were so pleased with her work that they created a new full-time position for her. She'll join the firm in June as a human resource specialist.

"College classes teach you how to think. But an internship lets you experience what it's like to work in the real world," Millan says. "My internships have given me more confidence about what I want to do in my career."





Introducing ECCONNECT powered by Handshake



In an effort to expand students' access to job listings and employer connections, the WCPE is adopting a new career management platform. Starting this spring, ECCONNECT will be powered by Handshake—the nation's leading college-to-career network, serving more than 700 colleges and universities.

“Students like Handshake because it’s set up like the social media environment they’re used to, so it’s easy to navigate,” says Martin Gahbauer, executive director of the WCPE. “And employers like it because many of them are already on it.”

Handshake will replace Symplicity, which has served as the College’s career platform for the past nine years. The new platform offers a more intuitive suite of services and access to a much larger network of employers.

“Our current system gives students access to just under 3,500 employers. In contrast, more than 300,000 employers are on the Handshake platform,” Gahbauer says. “Not all of those employers will connect with Elmhurst College, but we expect to see a significant increase.”

Handshake takes a mobile-first approach, making it easy for students to access on their phones. Like LinkedIn, it encourages students to create profiles so that employers can initiate contact with them. It also gives students easy access to career events on campus and allows them to network with one another.

In choosing a new platform, WCPE leaders consulted with employers and other career centers and invited current students to try out the three platforms under consideration.

“Handshake is definitely a one-stop shop for employers,” says Meghan E. Dillie, university relations and early talent specialist for Ingredion Incorporated. “It’s so nice to be able to create one posting and send it to as many schools as I want to. It’s also nice to be able to manage interview schedules and other on-campus events through Handshake.”

“To a person, those who’ve been using Handshake lauded its capabilities,” Gahbauer says. “There’s a lot of positive energy around the platform, and we’re all excited to start using it.”

The new ECCONNECT powered by Handshake platform will be available to employers in mid-May and to students in June, with an official rollout scheduled for Fall Term.

WCPE STAFF

Martin Gahbauer, M.Ed.
Executive Director
(630) 617-3625
martin.gahbauer@elmhurst.edu

Erica Ashauer, M.A.
Director, Pre-Professional Advising,
Health Professions Advising
(630) 617-6482
ashauere@elmhurst.edu

Ingrid Becton
Adult, Graduate and Alumni Career Advising,
First Leap, Resume Assistance
(630) 617-3186
bectoni@elmhurst.edu

Alfie Chelette
Coordinator, Data Systems and Analysis
(630) 617-3190
alfie.chelette@elmhurst.edu

Holly Coffin
Director, Career Experiences,
Internships/Employer Relations
(630) 617-6457
hollyc@elmhurst.edu

Julie Nosal, M.A. '03
Director, Career Education
(630) 617-3440
julien@elmhurst.edu

Amber Skinkys
Coordinator, Office Operations
(630) 617-5295
ambers@elmhurst.edu

Lisa Woods, J.D.
Pre-Law Advising
(630) 617-6466
lisa.woods@elmhurst.edu

India Worthem, M.S. '12
Coordinator, Career Experiences
and Communication
(630) 617-3188
india.worthem@elmhurst.edu