

# WCPE Briefing

FALL 2020



## A Path to Physical Therapy



**Hiral Tailor '17** has had his sights set on a career in health care ever since middle school. But it wasn't until his junior year of high school that he chose a specific career path.

That's when his grandmother started going to physical therapy after a series of falls.

"I attended a lot of physical therapy treatments with my grandmother, so I was able to see what a physical therapist does," Tailor says. "For example, I saw how much quality time they spend with their patients, getting to know them and building rapport. That really influenced my decision to pursue physical therapy."

At Elmhurst, Tailor pursued a major in exercise science after consulting with faculty advisors. "One of the great things about Elmhurst is that you can develop close-knit relationships with your professors," he says. "My advisors educated me on the different majors and the requirements, and they helped me pick the right path."

When it came time to apply for graduate study in physical therapy, Tailor turned to his advisors once again. His professors knew him well enough to write strong recommendation letters, and **Erica Ashauer**, director of pre-professional advising, guided him through the application process.

"I talked to Erica about anything and everything, even my regular courses that I had questions about," Tailor says. "Being able to build these great relationships with my professors and advisors was very helpful."

Tailor was accepted to the doctor of physical therapy program at Northwestern University and graduated in April. He passed the licensure exam in May and started a residency in orthopedics at Saint Louis University at the beginning of August 2020. Down the road, he hopes to work in private practice.

"Going to Elmhurst was the beginning of everything for me personally," he says. "Making the decision to go to Elmhurst led me down the perfect pathway. I truly appreciate it for everything I learned there."

## A Musician Goes to Law School



**Josh Gablin '19** came to Elmhurst to study music business. A versatile guitarist who performs across genres, he launched his own record label in 2015 and planned to gain the business skills to take his company to the next level.

Then he took a course in contemporary philosophy.

"The course turned out to be very appealing to me," Gablin recalls. "I learned a lot of very cool critical thinking skills that I wasn't getting in my other classes."

It wasn't long before Gablin changed his major to philosophy, joined the Philosophy Club and Mock Trial, and started thinking about law school. His philosophy professor, **Katrina Sifferd**, introduced him to **Lisa Woods**, Elmhurst's pre-law advisor, who walked him through the steps.

"There were so many questions I hadn't even thought to ask," he says. "What kind of law school do I want to go to? And what are the differences between schools? This whole new world opened up to me."

### ABOUT THE WCPE

The mission of the Russell G. Weigand Center for Professional Excellence is to prepare Elmhurst University 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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Woods and other Weigand Center staff members also helped Gablin polish his resume, write compelling essays, and get his law school application materials together. And through a Pre-law Club visit to several local schools, Gablin had a chance to compare his top choices.

Today, Gablin is a first-year student at Chicago-Kent College of Law, where he says the courses are challenging but manageable. “I cannot imagine feeling more prepared than I do,” he says. “Ms. Woods prepared me for what to expect, and my philosophy

classes gave me the tools to succeed.”

Gablin isn’t sure what he’ll do after law school, but one avenue of interest is intellectual property law—which would allow him to leverage his legal expertise to support his growing record label.

“Now that I’m releasing other people’s music, I need to make sure I’m taking care of everybody,” he says. “I want to learn everything I can about intellectual property laws so that I can protect my artists and their music.”



## Fair Housing IOI

**Verenice Ruiz '23** has always had a passion for justice. So when the criminal justice major heard that she could apply for a course on fair housing at UIC John Marshall Law School, she didn’t think twice.

“I was only a freshman, so I thought the chances were slim to none that I would get in,” says Ruiz, a student in Elmhurst’s pre-law program. “But I figured I would apply anyway, and I got in!”

A federally funded course, Fair Housing/Fair Lending aims to educate college students about housing discrimination and inspire them to pursue careers in the field. The program accepts applications from undergraduates at Elmhurst and several other colleges and universities in the Chicago area.

For Ruiz, the course was a perfect fit with her life experience and career goals.

“As a minority, I grew up hearing all kinds of stories about housing discrimination,” she says. “When you don’t know your legal rights, there’s not much you can do. I wanted to take the course so I could learn the basics of housing laws and help people who are experiencing this kind of discrimination.”

Although the course was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, Ruiz said it was a valuable learning experience.

“It’s a powerful course, and it really opens your eyes to a lot of things,” she says. “We learned a lot about housing discrimination—how it happens, what it looks like and how to prevent it. And for me, it confirmed that law school is definitely the right choice.”

## Training on the Front Lines During a Pandemic:

**Q & A WITH ELMHURST STUDENT SKYLAR RATLIFF**



As COVID-19 swept around the world, many Elmhurst students pursuing fields in clinical health care had to swiftly make changes to their academic programs and tracks. One of those students was **Skylar Ratliff '20** who is completing the 18-month, diagnostic medical sonography (DMS) track at Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH). DMS is one of three affiliate tracks Elmhurst has with NMH where students can apply to complete training at the hospital along with the health science technology major.

Skylar took some time during her busy clinical rotations to share some thoughts with us on how her academic experience and training has been impacted by COVID-19.

**WCPE: What drew you to Elmhurst?**

Skylar: What drew me to Elmhurst was the DMS program itself at Northwestern. I knew I wanted to pursue a career



in sonography, so when I found out Elmhurst had a program affiliated with Northwestern, I couldn't pass it up.

**WCPE: What do you like about the DMS program at NMH?**

I like the DMS program at NMH because people from all over come to NMH or are referred here, and it's an incredible learning opportunity to be able to see so many different and unusual cases you wouldn't see otherwise. Another aspect that makes Northwestern's program so valuable is the integrated class and scanning schedule. Being able to learn new material then having the chance to apply it and see it in a clinical setting potentially the same day, makes all the difference in learning sonography.

**WCPE: How has COVID-19 impacted your academic experience in the DMS program?**

Skylar: The main thing has been not being able to apply what we are learning in a clinical setting. [Students had courses online for part of the spring term of 2020 and could not be in the clinic.] In this program, scanning time is crucial, and not being able to do so, has been a bit of a set back. When returning back to the clinic in June 2020, we not only had to familiarize our self with the US equipment and exam protocols but with the new cleaning protocols and changes within the hospital as a whole.

**WCPE: What extra precautions have you taken while in clinical settings?**

Skylar: Every hospital employee/staff member is screened upon entering the hospital that day. In the few designated employee entrances, you must sanitize your hands, an individual at the door gives you a new mask if you need one, and then you asks if you are presenting any new symptoms that day. Finally, you scan your ID badge as a "pledge" you are well and can work that day. In addition to the screening process, NMH provides each student with their own goggles and face shield to use if we feel it is necessary in order to protect ourselves.

**WCPE: Does a situation like this one change how you feel about going into health care?**

Skylar: If anything, this situation makes me feel so proud and empowered to be going into the health field. The way everyone is working together to conquer the unknown has been inspiring. Although many situations have been unsettling, knowing so many people are looking up to you as a health care provider and being able to make a difference makes it all worth it.

**WCPE: What skills have you developed or refined from completing your training during a pandemic that you may not have prior to this?**

Skylar: I have developed the ability to adapt very quickly to many new, uncertain situations and learned that not everything is going to go smoothly in situations where everyone is alarmed. However, as a team/department you will get through it. I am no longer afraid of the indefinite.

# Working Toward a Cause



In the Weigand Center for Professional Excellence (WCPE) our mission is to prepare our students and alumni for an ever-changing world by igniting their professional curiosity, competencies and purpose. Throughout 2020, we have discovered many ways to push the initiatives of our mission forward as we have been tested by challenges experienced world-wide due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with this public health crisis, our communities began to take a deeper look at the long-standing issues related to race and equality in our society. Many members of the Elmhurst community and beyond felt called to action regarding their concerns about racism and social injustice. Part of the WCPE mission is to encourage students and alumni to find their purpose. Below are a few examples of how to learn more about these causes and support organizations that speak to you.

► **CAREER EXPLORATION**



**Julie Nosal**  
*Director, Career Education*

Working with a career advisor is a great way to explore various options for turning your passion into practice in a career. We connect students for opportunities to have informational interviews, job shadowing and mentoring with professionals who are employed by non-profits, to support these efforts as well as activists working toward social change. These professionals share their story and partner with us to guide students toward numerous majors and practical experiences that align best with their individual passion.

► **ACADEMIC COURSES**



**Andrea Krieg, Ph.D.**  
*Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice*

There are many courses at Elmhurst where students can learn more about social justice. Courses including Social Problems, Race & Ethnic Relations, Political Justice, and Native Americans: Public Policy, Religion, & Justice. In collaboration with Service Learning,



Dr. Krieg created an experiential learning option where students can observe court proceedings. Students go to both Maywood's and Wheaton's courthouses and observe for 30 hours. In addition, they read Crook County: Racism and Injustice in America's Largest Criminal Court by Nicole Van Cleve Gonzalez, which focuses on racism in the court system.



► **INTERNSHIPS**

**India Worthem**

*Coordinator, Career Experiences & Communications*

Now, more than ever, it's important for students to develop their Global/Intercultural Fluency career readiness competency students who are competent in this area:

value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions which is critical in pursuit of social justice and equality, particularly in the workplace. Those interested in engaging with social justice issues and promoting equity should consider participating in internships that align with causes that resonate with them. Through the WCPE we have connections to a number of organizations who focus on variety of social justice issues such as PASO West Suburban Action Project, Project C.U.R.E, Heartland Alliance, Erie House, Chicago Environmental Network, Broadway Youth Center to name a few.



► **SERVICE LEARNING**

**Mary Walsh, Ph.D.**

*Director, Service Learning; Chair and Professor, Political Science*

The Service Learning program can connect you with many options for service, both direct, in-person service and remote or online service. On the Service Learning website under Community Partners, students can find a multitude of sites, including service with community organizations which work towards civic and political advocacy for historically disadvantaged groups and community organizations which work towards addressing social and economic inequalities. For example, service with Chicago Votes a non-partisan, nonprofit organization working towards building a more inclusive democracy. There are also options for online/remote service. Consider the Citizen Advocacy Center, located nearby in Elmhurst Illinois. CAC has options for in-person and remote service! With CAC you can work on projects to affect the nature of our democracy and civic engagement. Or, with the non-profit organization CREO DuPage you can help young Latinx students attain the future they yearn for through virtual mentoring. Contact the Service Learning program for a complete list of online / remote options for service.



► **ELECTIONS**

**Erica Ashauer**

*Director, Pre-Professional Advising, Health Professions Advising*

Vote! Those who are eligible are encouraged to register to vote and exercise that right in local, state, and national elections to let their voice be heard. For those interested

in additional opportunities, counties will recruit election judges and workers who are typically paid for their service. Local organizations may be seeking volunteers to drive voters to polling sites or candidates may have opportunities for volunteers to support their campaigns. Not only are these opportunities to build professional skills, they demonstrate a commitment to civic engagement.

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