

WCPE Briefing

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Career Fair

More than 300 Elmhurst students connected with employers during two Career Fairs in March.

Alec Lim '24 had never attended a career fair before this year. But with graduation just over a year away, the digital marketing communications major decided this was the year to give it a try.

"I knew there would be a lot of companies at the fair, and I wanted to get my name out there," Lim says. "It was really cool being able to talk to all these employers, and they were all very friendly."



The WCPE hosted two career fairs this year—one featuring business, communications and IT companies and another that focused on criminal justice, nonprofits, health professions and government. At each event, students met with employers, learned about job and internship opportunities, and made professional connections.

A total of 320 students attended the two events—a significant increase over last year's events, which had a combined attendance of 175.

"Attendance this year was a huge jump from last year," says Christina Danno, assistant director of career experiences, who attributes the growth to the return of fully in-person events. "This year both events were in person, and last year one of the fairs was virtual."

The business-focused career fair, which Lim attended, featured representatives from 40 organizations, ranging from large corporations such as Bosch and Jewel Osco to local brands like Castle Metals and Paylocity. The second career fair featured local and national organizations including the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab and the University of Chicago.

The WCPE also hosted a Prepare for the Fair event to offer tips on business etiquette, networking and the right questions to ask at a career fair.

"Without the fair, I never would have gone up to random companies and asked them to look at my resume," Lim says. "But when they're on campus in an environment with so many other students, it felt very easy to go up to them and say, 'Hi, can you tell me more about your company?'"



ABOUT THE WCPE

The mission of the Russell G. Weigand Center for Professional Excellence is to prepare Elmhurst University students and alumni for a rapidly evolving 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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Launchpad Into a Tech-Related Career as a Business Student

For Adam Bojovic, a pair of internships and some intense certificate training set the stage for a job offer in technology.

Adam Bojovic '23 comes from a family of entrepreneurs and businesspeople. So it was only natural that when he decided not to pursue engineering, his initial career choice, he chose a major in business management.

"I've had experience as a bartender, in retail and customer service," he says. "So I had a lot of input from my family saying that management would be a good path for me."

Last year, when it came time to look for a summer internship, Bojovic went to the WCPE for advice. Christina Danno, assistant director of career experiences, walked him through how to use Handshake, the University's job-search platform, where he saw an internship listing with Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

"I reached out to Christina to see if the WCPE had any experience with Enterprise, and they had nothing but good things to say," he says. "So I applied, and I got approved for it."

At Enterprise, Bojovic worked in customer service, sales and marketing, getting a broad view of the entire operation. He also learned how to upsell customers into more expensive vehicles and promote services like prepaid gas programs. "I learned a lot about people, too, because you never knew if your customers were going to be in a good mood or not," he adds.

Bojovic did well enough in the internship to get a full-time offer, but he wanted to keep exploring other types of management roles. So he got back in touch with Danno, who suggested that he take on another internship.

He connected with Patrick Yanahan '94, MBA '10, Elmhurst's entrepreneur in residence, who hired him for a marketing internship with his own company, USA Strategies, focusing on high-end packaging, machinery and technology. With Yanahan's encouragement, Bojovic pursued technical training through HubSpot marketing automation certifications including sales management and critical thinking.

At the company, Bojovic also pursued Google Analytics and Harvard's CS50 computer science training modules, which covered challenging concepts such as technology stacking, cloud-based technologies and a taste of Python (a programming language). Bojovic leveraged that training at USA Strategies on a web design project and other initiatives to become confident on tech platforms and be a well-rounded business decision-maker.



When he started looking for a full-time role, Yanahan worked with him on practice interviews and gave him tips on salary negotiations—advice that came in handy when he got an offer from Americaneagle.com, a website and database technology company.

"Patrick said I could do better, and he helped me craft a wonderful negotiations letter," Bojovic says. "He showed me not only how to ask for what I deserve but also how to back it up with research." Bojovic also spent some time with business professor Eric Sanders, who provided additional input on the negotiations process.

Bojovic accepted the company's second offer with a much higher salary and will start his new position as an account manager at Americaneagle.com in June. He credits his internships with giving him the diverse array of skills he needs to succeed in his new role. "The job is a fine balance between the business and tech expertise that I learned from Patrick and the upselling I learned from Enterprise and putting it all together," he says.

Asked what career advice he has for other students, Bojovic says it's important to leverage the resources available at Elmhurst.

"My biggest takeaway is don't be complacent," Bojovic says. "Go to the career fair, and reach out to people from the WCPE. It opens up a lot of different avenues that you wouldn't have otherwise and also get a taste of technology, even as a business major. If you have some relevant tech foundations, you will get noticed by employers."



Meeting the Firms

For Natalie McAvoy, a networking event led to a high-powered internship opportunity.

Natalie McAvoy '24 knew she needed professional experience to prepare for the postgraduation job search, but she wasn't sure where to begin. So when she got an email inviting her to the WCPE's annual Meet the Firms event in October, she saw her opportunity.

"I had some anxiety about it because I didn't know anybody there, but I knew I had to go," says McAvoy, an accounting major. "And I'm so glad I did, because I ended up getting a summer internship."

Each year, Meet the Firms brings together representatives from top accounting and finance companies such as FORVIS, Miller Cooper, BMO and EY. The reps talk about their companies and share career tips, and students have the chance to network and learn more about internship and job opportunities.

In recent years, the WCPE has expanded on the original event with a series of Meet the Professionals sessions that focus on individual sectors such as psychology, music, computer science and IT, and marketing and communications. Each session gives students opportunities to make connections, explore companies and move forward along their career path.

For McAvoy, Meet the Firms wasn't her first exposure to the WCPE. A transfer student at Elmhurst, she was hesitating outside the WCPE's office on her first day of school last fall when Julie Nosal '03, director of career education, came out and asked if she could help.

"I was standing there looking at the flyers and I didn't know what to do," McAvoy says. "But Julie got me started, and then I met with other people in the WCPE who helped me improve my resume and my LinkedIn profile. She even connected me with a mentor—a CPA who has given me a lot of help."

At the Meet the Firms event, McAvoy connected with the Miller Cooper representative and discovered they had a lot in common, including mutual friends. She set up an interview and got an internship offer.

"I definitely had a connection with Miller Cooper, and I can tell it will be a good place to work," she says. "They sent me cookies over the holidays, and they had a social event for the interns at WhirlyBall. They've even helped me plan out my route to the CPA."



"During my internship at KPMG, I was able to gain hands-on experience into the busy tax season at a Big Four accounting firm. Working on different engagement teams, I was able to work on various digital platforms to create the forms that were submitted to the IRS. Not only did I make great connections with my peers, but I was also able to improve my communication, organization and multitasking skills."

"As a result of this experience, various new employment opportunities have opened for me! I recently accepted a full-time position as an audit associate at EY. Working at KPMG has allowed me to gain so much experience and confidence when it comes to building my career and network. I am more confident during interviews, able to use my experience to add value in my conversations and show how determined I am to succeed."

—Klaudia Podsada '23



Austin Bound

A Fall Term internship opened the door to a full-time role with accounting giant Deloitte for Stephanie Nolan.

When **Stephanie Nolan '22** switched her major from biology to accounting, she realized she had some catching up to do in terms of professional preparation.

"In my junior year, all my friends were talking about how they were getting summer internships, and that was the last thing on my mind," she recalls. "So I made an appointment with the WCPE."

Staff members at the WCPE helped Nolan build a strong resume and make connections in the industry. Soon, she had landed an internship with a small local accounting firm that recruited on campus.

"The people at the WCPE were super helpful and always quick to respond," Nolan says. "And they have a lot of events on campus, which is how I got to know about all these companies."



At her internship, Nolan learned a lot about the industry and made a number of connections. But she also discovered that working at a small firm wasn't for her. So for her next internship, she set her sights on FORVIS, a midsize firm in the process of merging with a larger company.

At FORVIS, Nolan worked in accounting outsourcing services, doing taxes and paperwork for small firms. She says the internship gave her a good view of the basics and helped her prepare for her next steps.

"While interning at FORVIS, I was introduced to many types of programs and softwares that are fundamental for any accounting position," she says. "With these new technical skills and the further development of my communication and professional skills, I had the experience I needed for a full-time position."

With that experience under her belt, Nolan applied for full-time roles at all of the big accounting firms. She got several offers, but her top choice was Deloitte, one of the so-called Big Four. "I had an interview, and I loved the way they talked about the company and the culture," she says. "I knew working there would position me for growth in the industry and future opportunities."

She received an offer for a full-time role as a tax consultant with the company's office in Austin, Texas. The new job begins in June.

"I've lived in the same area of Illinois for my whole life, so this is a big change," she says. "But Austin is a fun place to be a young professional. Lots of young people are moving here to start out in the corporate world, and the people I'll be working with are always having office outings."

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