

# Beyond the Bubble

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

## Alumnus Profile: Brian Udovich

Business Administration Major, Class of 1998  
Film Producer in Hollywood, California

### How did your education at IWU help prepare you for your current work as a film producer?

Actually, IWU turned out to be the ideal place to prepare me for the film world even though I never studied the subject there. The most beneficial effect of a liberal arts education is that you learn to be a student for the rest of your life. Methodologies and approaches to businesses and art forms are continually changing, and with that I need to adapt and continually be eager to learn new approaches.

In short, everything I learn becomes irrelevant every few years, so it's important that I learned at IWU to be interested in a wide range of things that keep me ahead of the curve... and hopefully still relevant in my industry.

### What internships did you do while at IWU? How were these experiences?

I had two internships while at IWU. My first was for State Rep Bill Brady and the second was for a summer in Dallas, Texas for Cap Gemini. Both were invaluable. My time in Texas was a boot camp on how the professional business world worked and prepared me for the jump I was going to have to make after graduation. I actually can't explain how imperatively important the internship experience is in order to prepare yourself for the transition into the world and in helping you figure out what you really want to do with yourself.

### Why did you decide producing films was the career for you?

Producing feature films, to me, is the perfect combination of the business and artistic aspects of my personality. The artistic side likes nothing more than to find a story that needs to be told and to collaborate with a writer or director on



photo courtesy of iwu.edu

how to bring that story to life on the big screen. The business side of me loves the organizational aspect and the execution side of pulling off a large production. I wake up excited about what I do every day. What more could you ask for?

### What's been the most exciting aspect of your job?

The most exciting part of my job is figuring out how to effectively tell a story and then seeing it come alive in front of an audience. We received a standing ovation when "The Wackness" screened at Sundance. It was a very heartfelt and rewarding moment.

### What has been the most challenging aspect of your work?

Dealing with the varied personality styles I have to encounter for each film. If you have watched the show "Entourage" it's a pretty accurate depiction of the varied personalities you find in the film business and you need to adapt to each in order to work with them effectively.

### From your perspective, how is film holding up in this economy?

The film industry is being hit just as hard as every other industry in America. But the beauty of the film industry is that the paradigm of how things work changes all the time. From this current situation in our economy will arise new opportunities that didn't exist before. Thank goodness for my liberal arts education. It looks like I'll need to be ready to learn something new all over again.

### Any career advice you'd be willing to offer to current IWU students?

I believe it's just as important to figure out what you don't want to do as much as it is to figure out what you do want to do. Take some internships in the fields you think you'll enjoy. Like me, I'm sure you'll find your passion rests somewhere different than where you originally envisioned. Hell, I never thought when I was at IWU that I'd be living in Hollywood, yet here I am (as Minor Myers, jr. would say) doing well, and doing good.

[www2.iwu.edu/~bub](http://www2.iwu.edu/~bub)

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## Interested in an International Internship?

In the first week of her internship at an art gallery last fall, IWU junior Katie Feriozzi was invited to join her boss at an art opening. At the opening, Feriozzi met the featured artist, Marcello Morandini, and went to dinner with him, his family and friends. It was a memorable experience for Feriozzi – perhaps even more memorable because the events occurred far from IWU’s familiar campus in Bloomington, Illinois. In fact, they all took place in Venice, Italy.

Feriozzi, whose internship was officially in Milan, is just one of many IWU students who have combined a desire to travel abroad with an internship opportunity they’re attracted to. While the notion of an internship in a big city like Chicago can be intimidating enough for some students, several ambitious IWU students are thinking globally in their quests to seek out the ideal future career.

“I know that I want to pursue a career in arts business and to live and work in Italy,” said Feriozzi, “These internships will provide me with great



**IWU senior Lauren Nelson during her internship in Prague**

networking in the field and can hopefully lead to other internships and job opportunities in the future.” As an assistant with Lorenzelli Arte, Feriozzi gained experience translating gallery catalogs and the company website from Italian to English, and assisting with the installation of two exhibitions held by the gallery.

Through it all, Feriozzi showed no regrets towards interning so far from home. “Living in Italy, though stressful at first, quickly became second nature to me,” she said, “I was less stressed than during a normal semester and I was able to experience new things everyday.”

During her internship in Prague, Czech Republic, senior Lauren Nelson had a similarly valuable experience. Nelson worked as a Russian information service intern with Radio Free Europe, an organization dedicated to providing uncensored news and information in countries

where free press is banned or restricted. Said Nelson, “My main responsibility was creating weekly news overviews for the Russian news program, “Time of Liberty.”

In addition to her work, Nelson studied Czech and politics at Charles University during the day. For her, the most difficult part of her time abroad was the language barrier. “I quickly became aware of the disparity between what I had learned in my Russian grammar courses, and how professionals speak in the real world,” Nelson said.

Still, Nelson, who’ll be going to graduate school next year to pursue her M.A. in Russian, East European, and Eurasian studies, enjoyed interning in Prague. “I liked the Prague that wasn’t in guidebooks,” she said, “the coffee shops that could only be found when I was completely lost, the foreign language bookstores, and the Vietnamese food markets with apricots and cherries literally rolling out the entrances.”

For IWU junior Katie Slevin, it’s not apricots or cherries rolling out the entrance of her workplace, but instead the delicious aroma of various pastries. Slevin is currently interning in Nantes, France at a boulangerie/patisserie (bakery, bread, and cake shop) called “La Viennoise.”

“I love it all,” Slevin said of her time spent abroad this semester. “I would like to be a pastry chef someday so this is a perfect opportunity for me.” Junior Monica Shah found an equally appropriate internship for herself this semester, working at the local UNICEF office in Salamanca, Spain.

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# International Internships (Continued From Page 1)

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Said Shah, "I want to work for UNICEF in the future and thought that this would be a great stepping stone."

The benefits of interning abroad as opposed to here in the states have already become apparent to Shah during her work this spring semester. "I find it exciting that my Spanish speaking skills have improved a lot, especially in a professional setting, and this is something that I could not have obtained by solely taking classes or befriending locals," said Shah.

Likewise, Shah advocates the benefits of simply being in another country for an extended period of time. "I enjoy just exploring and being independent and learning how to make a new setting your temporary home," said Shah.

Immersion into another culture is something junior Reem Abassi has welcomed during her current internship with Calvary Enterprise Development Foundation (CEDEF), a micro-loan organization in Ghana, Africa.

"It's so interesting to work with the staff and the women to figure out what obstacles African women face when trying to start their own business," Abassi said.

Abassi's responsibilities include helping African women fill out loan applications and visiting the location of the woman's business to interview them and learn the challenges and problems they're facing with their business. "Working with CEDEF has been an eye-opening experience," Abassi said, "Even though Ghana is one of the most developed countries in Africa, it still has a lot more developing to do."

So how can interested IWU students get started on an international internship of their own? Director of the International Office, Stacey Shimizu, recommends setting up an appointment with the International Office to gather information and explore your options. Said Shimizu, "Some questions to consider early in the process are when you would like to go abroad, how much time you want to

spend each week in the internship, and whether you want to earn academic credit."

Shimizu also points out that the programs offered by the International Office all can provide academic credit, but this results in a tuition charge. The application process for international internships is two parts: an application to IWU for permission to study abroad and an application to the study abroad program of your choice.

No matter what they're called, though, these internships can be life-changing experiences. Just ask Feriozzi, who'll be returning to Venice, Italy this summer to intern at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. "I knew that I wanted to return to Italy this summer – somehow, somehow," Feriozzi said. If you don't find yourself exhibiting that same passion towards work in Bloomington or Chicago, perhaps an international internship is just the experience for you.

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## Job or Internship Searching? Time to Think Federal

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As seniors currently scrambling to secure employment may tell you, finding a good job that matches your interests is no easy feat in this economy. Consequently, it's more important than ever that IWU students look under every nook and cranny for potential employers - and start looking as early as possible at that. There is one large employer, though, that all too many students simply overlook: The United States federal government.

According to USAJOBS.gov, the official job site for the federal government, there are currently 37,359 jobs available in the federal sector. But surely, these jobs are all dreary, political undertakings, right?

Not so fast. In her book, *How to Land a Top Paying Federal Job* (now available in the Hart Career Center library), Lily Whiteman stresses the diversity of opportunities in federal employment. According to Whiteman, the government is looking to hire IT experts, accountants, scientists, business managers and many more positions.

It's not just full-time employment the government offers, either. Whiteman

mentions approximately 70 Agency and Congressional internship programs available to students, including internships with the CIA/FBI, EPA, National Science Foundation, and even the U.S. Holocaust Museum.

While at IWU, class of 2000 alumna Monica Toporkiewicz interned with three of these government agencies: the Washington, D.C. Trade Representative's Office, the U.S. State Department, and the U.S. Department of Commerce. An international studies major now working as an international trade specialist with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Toporkiewicz says "No two work days are alike, which is why I enjoy the challenge of seeking answers to different trade related questions and global issues that my clients face."

As Toporkiewicz says, there are many advantages to working in a position under the watch of the federal government. "One large benefit is the security in knowing my job is important to Congress and not partisan-based. It will not be eliminated since our work supports

U.S. companies' interests abroad and promotes prosperity and a healthy economy."

Undoubtedly, this is why Whiteman includes job security as one of the top perks of federal jobs. Other top perks include "generous vacations, top-notch health insurance, and excellent retirement packages."

One of the best ways to apply for jobs with the federal government is to visit USAJOBS.gov and scour the site for positions that meet your interests. For internships be sure to visit the Hart Career Center with questions.

In either case, Whiteman stresses the importance of targeting your application to the specific sector of government you find yourself applying. In other words, recognize the diversity of federal positions available and do not become a "mass mailer," sending essentially the same cover letter and application to different positions.

# Financial Planning Workshop

We all know the economy is a bit of a mess right now. Mass media has made sure that point is abundantly clear. But for upcoming graduates about to face this financial quagmire on their own, wouldn't it be nice to have some advice on how to best manage your money?

On Tuesday, March 31, Jon Thetard, an investment executive for Raymond James Financial and an IWU alum ('73), will present a program on some key financial issues students will face upon graduation. Topics covered include job evaluation from a financial perspective, how steps you take before you're 30 can determine whether you'll ever be able to retire, and some of the pitfalls of credit card debt.

Thetard is not one to sugarcoat the challenge upcoming grads face. He fully acknowledges the harsh reality of our nation's current economic climate, stating "never in the history of the United States have personal finances been under such stress nor have the consequences of failing to manage your finances been so

dire."

Still, Thetard hopes to share his wealth of knowledge to make the dire situation a bit easier for IWU students.

"I hope to give the participants the desire to manage their finances properly and some tools to help," says Thetard, "I believe everyone will benefit if they can take some "fatherly" advice to heart and put some basic principles into action."



Thetard has a bit of an interesting career progression himself, having majored both in chemistry and

biology at IWU before deciding to get his MBA at the University of Illinois in 1975. In addition, he has worked as the president of a community bank and has had a position as a stock broker/financial planner since 1994.

Obviously, financial decisions affect all majors and all class years. Anyone interested in attending can come to the Welcome Center Auditorium at 7 p.m., March 31. Hopefully some of what you learn will help you keep those wallets nice and fat in the upcoming years.

## Career Center Events



Date: 3/26

Event: Federal Jobs and Internships

Time: 12:00 noon or 4:00 p.m.

Location: Welcome Center Auditorium

Description: The U.S. government is hiring for many majors.

Date: 3/31

Event: Financial Planning Workshop

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Welcome Center Auditorium

Description: See article to the left.

# Council For IWU Women

As many IWU female students and alumna know, this past February 27 and 28 marked the 3rd annual Conference for the Council for IWU Women. The conference, which was first hosted in March 2007, is the main event sponsored by the Council for IWU Women.

According to Elizabeth Eberspacher '98, an IWU alumna and Council member, "The primary goal of the Council is to assist IWU students in their professional endeavors." To do this the Council offers a wide array of mentors willing and able to guide students through questions they may have about a particular profession. As Eberspacher puts it, "The Council wants to assist their fellow 'soon to be alumni' in reaching their professional dreams."

With its informational panels and luncheons, the Council's annual conference is one of the best opportunities offered to female students. "Being involved in this annual forum is a great opportunity for

female students from freshman through senior year," says Eberspacher, "We try to help students fine-tune their degrees and decide whether to attend grad school or get a job, and in what area for each."

The Council itself is incredibly diverse



and according to their website "works to support the intellectual and personal growth of women while emphasizing the spirit of inquiry and intergenerational exchange." Indeed, members of the council range from graduating IWU in 1953 to upcoming graduates in 2009. Likewise, there are members working in areas as distant as Anchorage, Alaska and

Hamburg, Germany and in career fields like journalism, banking and nursing.

In addition to experience, the Council also offers several fortunate students scholarships. This year, scholarships were presented to one female student from each class: Samantha Margaritis '12, Tian Mao '11, Vijeta Pamudurthy '10, and Kari Irwin '09.

To learn more about the Council and how you can apply for scholarship opportunities yourself, visit their website (<http://www.titanpride.org> – click groups, then select Council for IWU Women as your interest group).

In the meantime, Eberspacher advises current IWU women to "expose yourself to as many facets of college life as possible and get ready to buckle down and work VERY hard after graduation to get your foot in the door to your dream job." Don't feel like you have to do this alone, though. That's what the Council for IWU Women is here for.