

# Beyond the Bubble

a look at the outside of West Virginia University

## Recruiter/Alumna Profile:

**Marianne Wolf-Astrauskas**

**Fine Arts Major, Class of 1976**

**Director of Volunteers**

**Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs**

### **Marianne, what work do you do?**

I provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer involvement within the Department of Cultural Affairs by developing and maintaining operative volunteer services. I'm responsible for managing the volunteer program for the Department of Cultural Affairs which is located at the landmark Chicago Cultural Center. This includes coordinating with DCA staff to recognize short and long-term volunteer roles, deploy a work plan to meet these needs, and identify suitable volunteers for designated tasks. I track and evaluate the contributions of the volunteers to ensure effectiveness of volunteer operations in support of the DCA staff and foster a positive work relationship between staff and volunteers.

### **Did this job come to you immediately after graduating IWU?**

No. My career has changed direction a number of times since graduating. As I have grown with life experiences, I have networked with many different people from all walks of life. Opportunities sometimes grow from these and one thing leads to another and before you know it...you are doing something you never imagined when you were a college student.

### **How do you get qualified people to offer their services in a volunteer role?**

Network! Sometimes the best referral is word-of-mouth. I often use a web site "volunteermatch.org" for large projects.

We have a link ([www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org)) on the web site. Once someone has been accepted for our volunteer program I send out email messages, letters, etc. But



nothing replaces picking up the telephone and making a call. What's important is getting our event schedule and requests for help out there. We currently have approximately 150 volunteers in our volunteer program.

### **What major skills do you look for in volunteer candidates?**

Personality, friendliness, willingness to help people under any situation – which can be a challenge when dealing with the public. People who can problem solve, have a professional attitude, and dress appropriately for assignments, too. In short, people who take volunteering seriously and are dependable.

### **Why do you think a college student should volunteer with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs?**

Energy! Learning experience! Yes, many school service clubs have responded to my call for volunteers and helped me by recruiting students from both local college and high school campuses. We've had college students from Columbia College Chicago, DePaul University and most recently Building with Books which provided 26 high school students for our annual family event, Hallowed Halls, a free Halloween program for children of all ages.

### **What are volunteers responsible for at the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs?**

Volunteers play many diverse roles at the DCA. Some provide visitor information, some are building docents providing tours to the public, others assist people with disabilities, some usher at theater and musical performances, others lend their work experience to a particular department handling research, answering telephones, processing departmental mailings, staffing information booths at city festivals, facilitating family programs such as Hallowed Halls, Dance-Along-Nutcracker with craft making, entertainment, organizing games, etc, manage the Saturday morning wedding program at the Cultural Center, and always provide Chicago-style hospitality at all of the free programs sponsored by the Department of Cultural Affairs and City of Chicago.

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

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# Career Connections

a newsletter from the best career center



## Dreaming of Skyscrapers? Make a Career in Architecture a Reality

Unless you're currently reading this copy of "Career Connections" in the middle of a desert wasteland (in which case I must ask: what on earth are you doing with a copy of a career center newsletter in a desert wasteland?), there's a very good chance you are surrounded by architecture. The fact of the matter is, architecture is nearly everywhere and it requires hard-working architects to bring everything from glamorous skyscrapers to revolutionary interior designs to life.

For some at IWU, the notion of architecture as a career might sound exhilarating. Sadly, it might also seem like a mere fantasy career since IWU does not offer an architecture program.

Those of you who have written off architecture as an impossibility should take note that several IWU alums have gone on to specialize in the field and are currently doing great things in the world of architecture. These alumni prove that anyone interested in architecture should not rule out

the industry simply because they're pursuing their undergraduate degree at Wesleyan in a different area.



**The Children's Discovery Museum in Normal was designed by local Francois Associates Architects.**

Few alumni provide a better example of this than Joe Herzog, an international studies major and studio art minor who graduated IWU in 1998. Herzog currently runs his own architecture studio, Merz Project, in Arizona. Despite the fact that Herzog's liberal arts training at IWU provided no formal training in architecture, he says "I wouldn't do it any other way. The broader your knowledge and skill-sets, the greater you'll be as an architect."

Willie Chandler, a Computer Science major and Graphic Design minor who graduated IWU in 2003 and now works for Goettsch Partners in Chicago, offers a similar sentiment. "You have to take into account so many factors in designing buildings that, along with architec-

-tural knowledge, you really need to know about as much as you can outside of 'Architecture.' I'm glad I had the opportunity to study more than just architecture before I decided to spend the rest of my life studying it," says Chandler.

Of course, without a bachelor's degree in architecture both Chandler and Herzog took a longer period of time to receive their Master of Architecture degree. As Chandler explains, "The path for those with an undergrad degree in a field other than architecture (like me) is a master's program that lasts 3 years, instead of the usual 1 year master's program for those with a bachelor's in architecture."

If this sounds like a lot of strenuous hours in the classroom, that's only the beginning. Herzog said that during the summers of his Wesleyan years he took engineering courses (drafting and calculus) at Purdue University. In addition, Herzog advises interested IWU students to take sociology, physics, and calculus courses and to take a lot of Art Studios and understand art and architecture history.

According to Chandler, for those truly passionate about architecture the arduous journey will be well worth it. "To walk through a space that existed only on paper months before, and just as an idea before that, is a truly unique experience," says Chandler. As Herzog puts it, "It is so hard and it takes so long to design/build great buildings, but it is also empowering. I truly feel that I possess a technical skill that .0000001% of the world's population really knows how to do." (Arch. Cont. on Page 2)

**make an Issue**

Tips on architecture from Vault.com!

Feedback from employers on student interviews!

Check out our website for the full page

# Architecture Cont.

If all of this sounds like a career that genuinely excites you, you'll definitely want to pay attention to what Russel Francois, the principal architect of local Francois Associates Architects, has to say. Francois, who has been in the field for quite some time, says the first step for any Wesleyan students considering architecture is to put together a portfolio. Even if you feel the drawings in your portfolio are lacking technical know-how, Francois suggests that an education at IWU can still aid your efforts to enter a professional architecture program after graduation.

Says Francois, "In architecture, we architects like to think we know how to teach people to draw, but you can teach a monkey how to draw. What professional architecture programs would rather have you know is some-

-thing about life and some kind of understanding of people and of culture; and I think you get all this with a good solid liberal arts education."

Chandler agrees: "Don't think that you are unfit for architecture school because you don't have any official architectural experience or training. The most important thing is that you have an interest in buildings and how they affect the lives of those who use them."

For Francois, the most important trait required for an architect is a heartfelt passion. Says Francois, "Architecture is open to anybody. The crazier they are and the more passion they have, the more welcome they should be to this profession." Passion is key as well, because on average architecture is the worst paid of the licensed professions (including lawyers and doctors).

As Herzog says, "I don't think architects make as much money for how hard we work and the broad-base of knowledge that we are required to know. The problem with architects is that we love what we do so much, we basically give it away."

As Francois elaborates, "Architecture is a very late peaking career. In fact, most architects will make the most money they'll make in their lives at age 66 or 67. It is a very experience-laden field."

Still, if architecture is a field you honestly would like to explore further, don't consider it out of the realm of possibility. Schedule an appointment with the Hart Career Center some time to discuss your options or take a look at the information on Vault below. Either way, those buildings aren't going to go up on their own— they're in your hands.

## Tips From the Vault

The Hart Career Center offers many online resources, but one of the most expansive is Vault. This resource is a unique career content site that includes carefully researched and continually updated "insider" information on over 3,000 companies and 70 industries. To log in, visit the Hart Career Center website ([iwu.edu/ccenter/resources](http://iwu.edu/ccenter/resources)) and enter your IWU email address to have Vault immediately send you a temporary password. For a sampling of Vault, see the tips and advice the site has to offer on the field of architecture, here mixed in with the wisdom of an expert, Russel Francois:



- 1) Only become an architect if you love it - "You really have to find within your self what you can commit with passion to for a lifetime," says Francois.
- 2) Hone your drawing skills - "Take a pencil or pen and start sketching to practice your drawing. Just sit down and look around and watch people interact. That's what architecture really is," says Francois.
- 3) Learn your architectural history - Past and current trends are important. As Francois elaborates, "The prevailing trend in architecture right now is speaking to LEED certification. Almost everything we're doing is impacted by a concern for the environment."
- 4) Make sure you have good, or at least sufficient, writing skills.
- 5) Travel. Develop your interest in things other than just architecture. Says Francois, "What you should do - because architecture's about understanding culture - is any travel you can do that exposes you to new buildings."

## Upcoming Career Center Events

Date: 11/15

Event: **Free Practice Graduate Testing**

Time and Location: See 'Free Tests' on Page 3

Date: 11/18

Event: **Coffee House Series (Math Panel)**

Time: 4 p.m.

Location: Welcome Center Auditorium

Description: Attend and hear panelists with experience in math-related fields discuss various career options.

## The Distant Future

Date: 02/13/09

Event: **CareerFest**

Time: 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Location: Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace, IL

Details: Stop by the Hart Career Center now for \$10 early registration.

# Free Practice Graduate Tests

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While many of us likely thought the ACT or SAT signaled the end of stressful standardized testing in our lives, those interested in graduate school have a whole new set of even more difficult and specialized tests awaiting them. These tests are no mere formality either. According to the Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions website, “investing time and effort in preparing for the GRE today can help you get into the grad school of your choice and can greatly increase your chances of getting financial aid.”

Clearly, an impressive performance on a graduate school test is an essential step towards making your grad school dreams come true. Understandably, taking a test represents a hefty financial commitment. The GRE (Graduate Record Examination), which provides grad schools with common measures for comparing the qualifications of applicants, costs \$140 to register, effectively eliminating the chance that you might take the test just to get your feet wet and get an idea what real graduate testing is like.

On Saturday November 15, though, Illinois Wesleyan and Illinois State Universities are combining to offer students the chance to take one of four graduate practice tests free of charge. The tests being offered include the GRE, the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), the LSAT (Law School Admission Test), and the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test).

These exams are an all day commitment for those taking them, as the multi-part tests generally take about five and a half hours including administrative details and breaks. For those interested, the GRE and GMAT practice tests take place at ISU, with the GRE starting at 9:30 am in Schroeder Hall, Room 130, and the GMAT starting at 9:00 a.m. in Schroeder Hall, Room 138. The LSAT and MCAT will be conducted at IWU, with both starting at 10:00 a.m. in CNS C102 and C101, respectively.

These tests are hardly your typical scantron exams, either. Both the GRE and GMAT, for example, feature CAT

(computer adaptive tests) which increase the difficulty of questions as you get more right and decreases the difficulty as you get questions wrong. Your final score, then, is based both on the number of right answers and the difficulty of the questions you answered correctly. It's important to stretch out your forearm muscles as well because each exam closes with a writing assessment to test your written communication skills.

Anyone who would like to take advantage of this awesome opportunity should call 1-800-KAP-TEST to reserve their seat or visit [kaptest.com](http://kaptest.com) for further information. Keep in mind, too, that although these practice tests sound like an awfully painful way to spend a Saturday, there are few better ways to prepare yourself for the rigors of graduate school testing than by actually take an exam – and these ones are free!

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## Interview Feedback

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As confident as you may feel about your ability to ace an interview, recent feedback from employers interviewing Wesleyan students suggests that several blunders are being repeated. To avoid these same mistakes and truly nail your next job or internship interview, take note of these major interview issues:

- **Typos and grammatical errors in cover letters and resumes** – Your cover letter and resume are the very first impressions you make on an employer. If you're going to send them with typos, you might as well spill coffee all over the pages as well. That way the ridiculous mess might at least distract the employer from the sloppy resume.

- **Answers to behavior-based interview questions** – Unlike simple “what's your major” questions, behavioral questions require more depth, detailed answers, and solid examples. For practice questions and a look at the useful

four-step STAR method, see the Hart Career Center Guide.

- **Good questions for employers** – Coming prepared with your own questions can show that you've done your research and are really interested in a position with this company. Make sure to frame your questions to show that you're engaged, too. For example, “I looked at your website and...” or “Earlier we were discussing x, can you expand?”

- **Knowledge of industry** – Although company and position knowledge are essential, you should probably go one step further and have a good grasp of market related concepts. In most cases, this will mean a further understanding of the position you're applying for as well. For example, if you apply for a finance position, you should be able to answer questions about the current state of the stock market (hint: it's not good).

- **Understanding of corporate culture** – In the same way you should know a company's industry, you should also have done some research on the culture of the company. Knowing that a company has a rigid, mechanical structure can help you decide whether the company is a good fit or not before you even interview.

- **Speech** – It is imperative that you speak clearly during your interview. Don't mumble and provide complete answers – beginning, middle, and end. Likewise, be careful with umms, long pauses, and overly nervous talking.

- **Enthusiasm!** – Most importantly, your communication skills and non-verbals have to suggest that you're excited to be there in the interview. This means, too, that you don't talk about other internships or jobs you're applying for that you'd rather get. The interviewer does not need, or want, to know.