

# Beyond the Bubble

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

## **Intern Profile: Brandon Dorn English (Econ Minor) Class of 2011 826 Chicago**

### **What organization did you intern for this summer?**

I interned at 826 Chicago, a writing and tutoring non-profit, and was a Summer Intern

### **What was your role in the office?**

I helped out at the storefront (a faux spy shop called "The Boring Store"), performed moderately menial yet interesting tasks for the staff members, such as putting booklets of student works together from the writing workshops, helping out with the varied creative workshops, and manning the publicity booth at a festival (that was one weekend - not really day to day). Oh, and I rode my bike to 826 from the train station, which, in a sense, was work too.

### **What was the office atmosphere like?**

The atmosphere was jovial and encouraging, and not in any manufactured way. The staff members are lovely, witty, and enthusiastic people, the volunteers enjoyed giving of their time to help out and get involved, and, for the most part, the students who participated in the workshops and writing camps truly wanted to be there and engage. It is a wonderful environment.

### **What led you to choose this intern-**



### **-ship in particular?**

I enjoy reading and writing, and came upon an author named Dave Eggers who began 826 National years back. After some minor research, I discovered that there was an 826 in Chicago and, with a desire to help younger students learn to write and exercise their imaginations, I applied for an interview.

### **How was the experience overall?**

Helping out at 826 was thoroughly enjoyable. While I wouldn't say I played an integral part in the maintenance of the nonprofit, it was informative to see how the staff members work together with one another and the volunteers to run 826. I laughed a lot, helped out some curious and fascinating students, and learned how to run with ideas.

### **What are your plans for the future?**

Well, after the internship, I feel a bit more inclined to help others as a teacher some day. Working with elementary-

-aged students, while taxing at times, was lively and heartening. While a more definite answer might sound better, I really don't know what I would like to do later on, though helping at 826 and meeting the hopeful, eager educators there showed me that teaching is something I might be fit for.

### **What's the most important thing you learned from this internship?**

All kids, people, have imaginations that simply need encouraging, and creativity can be fostered only in an environment of encouragement.

### **Any amusing anecdotes from your work this summer?**

A student wrote a story about a ninja starfish, another about a black and white fairy land whose color was stolen by a goblin, and another about muffins.

# Career Connections

a newsletter from the hart career center

September 2009

## Let the Job Seeking Begin: Fairs Offer Internships, Jobs, and More!

When I think of fairs, I also think of funnel cakes, difficult games of skill, and abnormally large, stuffed versions of SpongeBob wearing a karate belt. I also can't help but picture bright, sunny skies. There's not a cloud in sight.

Unfortunately, that is not the forecast for this year's Job and Internship Fairs, as the dreary cloud of an uncertain economy casts a fearful shadow over IWU students seeking some form of career experience. While attending a Job Fair where you're surrounded by employers can always be an intimidating experience, the troubled job market just adds that much more to the urgency of the situation.

In short, it's more important than ever for IWU students to take advantage of every career-related resource available. And a great place to start is with the upcoming Fall Internship and Job Fairs.

This year's events are rapidly approaching. On Friday, September 25, the IWU/ISU Fall Internship Fair will take place from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the ISU Bone Student Center. Then, on Tuesday, October 6, the IWU/ISU Fall Employment & Internship Fair will occur from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the ISU Redbird Arena, and the Hart Career Center will provide transportation throughout the day. Look

for the van at the south entrance of the Memorial Center.

For the uninitiated, these Job Fairs are convenient chances to meet reps from hiring organizations. As Laurie Diekhoff, assistant director/internship coordinator for the Hart Career Center, puts it, "The Fair is a perfect time to begin looking at options and practicing your professional networking skills."

This practice can help build interviewing skills as well. According to alumna Heather Lindquist ('09), "You have to go up and introduce yourself, hand them your resume, and you have to start the conversation which is the hardest part... for anybody." That said, Lindquist recommends an assertive approach. "They expect you to come up and talk to them," said Lindquist of the employers. "They're there as a resource for you and as a resource for their companies."

That being the case, the Fairs offer resources aplenty. This year's Job & Internship Fair boasts over 100 organizations, including Allstate Insurance, Six Flags, Great America, and Windy City Wire. The organizations span a wide area of interests - for all majors! Even if an organization might not look like a good fit for your particular major, don't be afraid



to visit. Says Bethany Thomas, education coordinator for the Children's Discovery Museum, "You never know what might be a good match if you don't ask."

Adds Thomas, "I'm always impressed with the students who take time to at least ask questions and inquire about potential opportunities, even if they are unsure of the fit." You'd be surprised how successful you might be just by showing some enthusiasm. Thomas says "motivation is sometimes lacking from students" and that "the worst case scenario is that a student comes completely unprepared, uninterested and expects to be paid."

To insure that you are prepared, make sure to attend two Hart Career Center events on Tuesday, September 22. At noon in the Welcome Center Auditorium, you can attend Job Fair Jitters. Then, from 2 to 4:30 p.m. join us for Resumania! Bring your resume for this new event in which Hart Career Center staff and Human Resource specialists will help you perfect the all-important resume. Then take your skills to the Fair!

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# Online Tools: Jobs at Your Fingertips

Have you ever tried walking into a company cold and unannounced, in search of a job? It's an intimidating experience. I tried it at the Electrolux factory south of campus one time and got so nervous I just started shouting "dust bunnies!" while rolling on the floor.

If you feel just as unprepared, the Career Center offers a great selection of online resources available from the comfort of your room. Your job searching shouldn't end with these resources, but they're a great, relaxed place to start.

## Titan CareerLink

First and foremost, the professional online career site formerly known as eRecruiting is now called Titan CareerLink. Don't worry, Titan CareerLink has all the same features as eRecruiting. In fact, Titan CareerLink is really better because a) it's name is way cooler and b) it lets you, through a highly scientific system of pulleys and levers, order

clones of yourself to be created in various parts of the world! (Ok, not really at all. But wouldn't it be cool to have a clone of yourself in, like, Iceland? I can't be alone on this.)

Name change aside, Titan CareerLink lets you view job or internship opportunities through a number of criteria (i.e. location, field of interest, paid/unpaid positions, etc). You can create your own professional profile, post and update resumes, and ultimately apply to internships or jobs that suit your interests. You can also use Titan CareerLink to sign up for mock interviews or to work with an alumni mentor who can share information and insight about their career field. Access to the site (<http://titancareerlink.experience.com>) is easy and free. For a tutorial on Titan CareerLink with Career Center staff, call extension 3071.

## ISCPA Online Career Center

This career resource is only available to

25 small private colleges and universities throughout Illinois. Unfortunately, IWU is not one of them. Kidding, kidding – why else would we include this?

The ISCPA (Illinois Small College Placement Association) Online Career Center is open to all majors. To use the website ([iscpa.org](http://iscpa.org)) all you need is your IWU e-mail and you'll be allowed to search for jobs and internships, post your own resume, and even get the chance to find interview opportunities on the campuses of other member schools.

## Career Center ListServ

The ListServ is the easiest way to keep up with all the events at the Career Center. Information covered includes potential scholarships available to students, internship or job fairs, and educational sessions. To join, just send an e-mail to [careers-subscribe@lists.iwu.edu](mailto:careers-subscribe@lists.iwu.edu) with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

# Chicago Grad School Day

We can probably all agree that Job Fairs present wonderful opportunities for students seeking the perfect job or internship. But what about those students who would rather face the rigorous demands of graduate school? Admittedly, the uncertain job market has made additional years of schooling more appealing than ever. Yet the question remains: Are these grad school dreamers supposed to be left in the cold Fair-less, with naught but a desire for more years of schooling and a name?

Fortunately, no. The 5th Annual Chicago Graduate and Professional School Fair will take place Thursday, October 8, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the University of Illinois at Chicago Forum. The Fair boasts representatives from approximately 200 excellent schools, including Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins University, and Northwestern University.

Collectively, the schools will cover a vast array of specialties, from aeronautics to urban planning, and each representative will be there to discuss program requirements, scholarships, and much, much more.

Best of all: There is no cost for IWU students to attend and IWU will even provide transportation. The bus leaving from IWU will require a \$10 deposit to hold your seat, but that deposit is fully refundable as long as you actually show up to claim your seat. You can register at the Hart Career Center.

For those interested, more information can be found on the Career Center's website ([iwu.edu/ccenter](http://iwu.edu/ccenter)) or on the official site of the fair ([chicagogradfair.ocs.uic.edu](http://chicagogradfair.ocs.uic.edu)).

And while we're on the subject, the Hart Career Center also offers several other incredibly useful resources relating to graduate school. Within the Career Center's library you will find Peterson's Graduate and Professional Programs directories, which provide complete information on all graduate programs and degrees at over 1,500 institutions. In addition, the electronic CollegeSource ([collegesource.org](http://collegesource.org)) stores over 3,600 college catalogues that can be read at your convenience. All you need to do to access CollegeSource is be connected to an IWU internet server.

## Career Center Events

Date: 9/16  
Event: **Removing Doubt in an Interview**  
Time: 7:00-8:00 p.m.  
Location: Welcome Center Auditorium  
Presenter: Interview expert and State Farm Financial Services Director, Eric Hoss

Date: 9/16  
Event: **Internships 101**  
Time: 4:00 p.m.  
Location: Welcome Center Auditorium

Date: 9/23/09  
Event: **Bring It On: Standing Out in an Interview**  
Time: 4:00 p.m.  
Location: Welcome Center Auditorium

Date: 9/24  
Event: **Federal Employment Workshop**  
Time: 4:00 p.m.  
Location: Welcome Center Auditorium

# Interviewing: What You Need to Know

Whether you consider yourself an interviewing pro, or you'd rather sleep out on the quad this winter than have to present yourself to a stranger, the Hart Career Center offers plenty of different interview opportunities – many of which can be conducted right on campus. Check out the seminar “Bring it On: Standing Out in an Interview” on September 23 at 4:00 p.m. in the Welcome Center Auditorium and prepare yourself for upcoming interviews.

## Mock Interviews

Even if you're not job-seeking at the moment, there's a good chance you will be in the very near future. A mock interview is the perfect way to help you establish essential interviewing skills (in a comfortable atmosphere) before the real interviews become a reality. Don't let the title fool you though – mock interviews are conducted by professionals in HR from many big name firms. According to Sarah Micale, a Senior Accounting major, the process “was very beneficial in that it helped me get used to speaking to an interviewer.”

To sign up, you must be registered through Titan CareerLink and have uploaded a current resume. The mock interview process is open to any major – no matter which company the HR representative is from. A schedule of upcoming mock interviews can be viewed on Titan CareerLink as well, but move quickly. Application deadlines for the first mock interviews are rapidly approaching.

## On-Campus Interviews

For those of you ready to interview for available jobs and internships, the Hart Career Center offers the wonderfully convenient option of interviewing here on campus. Companies such as Country Financial or MB Financial Bank will be sending representatives. “Definitely take advantage of the interviews available on campus because it is far more convenient than trying to travel to various corporations,” said Micale, who ended up getting internship offers from some of the companies she interviewed with on-campus.

Candidates for interviews are pre-se-

-lected by organizations, so be sure to view the schedule of companies visiting on Titan CareerLink and apply as soon as possible. On the date of your interview, make sure to dress professionally and do advance research on the company you're meeting. Just because the interview is held on a campus location doesn't mean your preparation should be taken any less seriously.

## ISCPA Fall Interview Day

In addition to the ISCPA online services, ISCPA members can reap the benefits of such events as Fall Interview Day. This unique event offers the rare opportunity to interview with many high-quality companies throughout the course of one day, at one location. This year's event will be on Tuesday, October 20, from 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at Ashton Place in Willowbrook, IL. Registration is required ([iscpa.org](http://iscpa.org)) as employers will pre-screen candidates. Visit the ISCPA website to view a list of employers that will be attending.

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# Essentials For A Very Memorable Job Fair

I've got a challenge for you: in thirty seconds or less, tell me everything about yourself that makes you a spectacular person worth interacting with. If you're thinking to yourself, “this is silly, this lame writer isn't even here listening,” you don't actually know that (I could be creeping around in the vent behind you. Just sayin'), and you're missing the point (you can stop looking in the vent now. I am undoubtedly elsewhere).

It can be tough not only to articulate your finest qualities, but also to do it in a quick period of time. At the Job Fair you won't have a lot of time to speak with each employer. The fast paced nature means sometimes you'll have to leave a lasting impression in five minutes or less. Here's how to do it:

**Practice Makes Perfect** - Prepare a quick intro including your name, major, graduation date, relevant experience, and anything else you want the employer to remember about you (in all likelihood, you don't want them to

remember how you downed an entire keg by yourself the night before). By the time you get to the Fair this information should flow so freely from your lips that there's absolutely no struggle involved. Like the icy white waters of Niagara sailing over the horizon, a natural wonder to behold. Just make sure to tell the employer no flash photography allowed.

**Resumes Ready Please** - You'll want to have plenty of copies of your resume (bring more than you think you'll actually need) ready to give to potential employers. Since you will be giving a copy to each organization you speak with, you'll want your resume to be top-notch quality, too. An easy way to polish your resume is to set up an appointment with our terrific Career Center staff by calling extension 3071. Or, make sure to take advantage of upcoming Career Center events like Resumania! on September 22, from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at the Hart Career Center. Have those mistakes fixed well in advance.

**We Have Nothing to Fear...** Do not be scared to walk up to any and all organizations you have an interest in. That's why they come to these fairs. To meet you! Your chances of standing out in an employer's mind increase greatly when you not only provide them with your resume, but also demonstrate communication skills in person. Maintain eye contact, sound confident (but not cocky) and you'll be fine.

**Dress to Kill** - Although any killing is unlikely to occur at the Fair (as it is frowned upon in most circles), you will want to look very, very nice. Sure the Job Fair isn't exactly the same thing as a formal, on-site interview with one company. But that doesn't mean what you're wearing won't make an impression. In actuality, the same dress you would wear to a formal interview is recommended for the Fair. Don't over-do-it (you're prom dress or tux won't be necessary) but a suit is a safe bet. And besides, how often do you get to look this good?