



Carl A. Gerstacker Institute for Business and Management



An exchange student in Germany while in high school, Genna Kleinknecht, '16, (pictured with her family) is pursuing majors in German and business and organizations at Albion.

By Genna Kleinknecht, '16

I am a non-traditional student. I am also a transfer student to Albion College, after beginning my academic career at a community college. Non-traditional for me also means being a mother of two beautiful girls and a wife to an incredibly supportive husband. Being a non-traditional student has helped to define my academic and professional careers in the most positive of ways. This title has taught me things I never imagined possible, and it has opened me up to a world of decision-making, time management, and a new definition of “busy” that I hadn’t even begun to fathom four years ago as a traditional student. Upon coming to Albion College, I chose the Gerstacker Institute and the German program as my fields of study. I couldn’t be happier with

Many Hats

‘Having it all,’ Gerstacker-style

my choices, and am grateful for the support, encouragement, and mentorship I have received from the staff of both programs.

Among the many roles I have, two stand out: mom and student. But most of all and all of the time, I am “Mommy.” I work part-time, attend school full-time, and handle the other priorities in my life in my “spare time.” I cram my full-time school schedule into three days a week and work part-time on my “off” days. My days consist of maintaining my house, scheduling and taking children to doctor’s appointments, working, going to school, and giving my daughters my complete and undivided attention when we are home together in the evenings. I would not describe my life as organized: It is extremely chaotic, and to say it is “busy” is sometimes an understatement. However, I wouldn’t change a thing, because this beautiful chaos led me to choosing Albion College, my direction of study, and my current employment.

Albion College was my school of choice upon transferring because of the programs it had to offer and the positive enthusiasm I experienced from the staff. It is

through the Gerstacker Institute that I was recommended and considered for a position in my field of study with Gross Stabil, a leading office furniture parts supplier. Being a non-traditional student at Albion College helped me to secure a part-time position as the key accounts manager, with a full-time offer upon completion of Albion’s business and organizations program in 2016. The Gerstacker Institute staff encouraged and supported me throughout the interview process.

When Gross Stabil first came to the Gerstacker Institute in search of a student for referral, they expressed that they were looking for someone who was local to the area and who had plans to form roots within southern Michigan. I could offer both. With the support of the College and my family, I pursued the position, and now have the exceptional relief of knowing that I do not have to worry about finding a full-time position upon graduation. I can continue with my many titles, though I will then happily let go of at least one: “Non-traditional student.”



'Shear' Delight

Profiting from a nonprofit-world internship



A cross country and track team member, Sarah Likens, '16, returns next fall for her second year as an RA in Mitchell Towers.

By Sarah Likens, '16

One of my favorite things about Albion College is the real-world, hands-on experience every student is encouraged to get, and the Gerstacker Institute is definitely part of that. The experience I received through Gerstacker's internship program has been second to none.

If you had asked me in the fall of 2014 what my career aspirations were, I would have said I wanted to work in a public relations firm in metro Detroit and eventually be working for the Detroit Lions or Tigers in their PR or marketing department. Never during all of my career planning did I consider entering the workforce on any path outside the business world. My internship during the spring 2015 semester at the Ella Sharp Museum, an art and local history museum in Jackson, Michigan, has changed that outlook.

On day one of my internship, my supervisors gave me a list of the different training sessions they felt would be most useful for my learning experience. Right off the bat I was excited as I read all the things I could learn and apply in a professional setting.

Working with the museum's Public Relations and Visitor Services coordinator and the Graphics and Marketing coordinator provided a unique experience for me within the organization. I could not have asked for greater supervisors or a better organization to have joined for three and a half months. It amazes me how much I learned during my time at the museum on both a professional and personal level. As I sat in on meetings, I was able to give insight and make suggestions. There were even a few projects I worked on that were implemented while I was there. That's about as real-life and hands-on as you can get.

I feel more confident in my writing and problem-solving skills, and I gained new skills like learning to use different programs in Adobe Creative Suite, create signage, and much more.

One of my favorite projects was Ella Sharp's Sugaring & Shearing Festival in March. (The event includes maple sap-to-syrup demonstrations and sheep shearing.) I wrote a press release under the museum's specifications, sat in on a J-TV interview, and volunteered at the event. Sugaring & Shearing is free to the public so I learned how to promote an event with very little budget. Getting to see all the community members enjoy the festival and then reading about what different media outlets said about the event afterwards was a rewarding experience.

Every day that I drove to Jackson for my internship, I was excited to see what would be in store for me that day. As I said in the beginning, I had given no thought to working in the nonprofit sector after graduation, but the staff and my experiences at the Ella have changed that. I encourage others to search for new opportunities in areas they may have never considered—you may be surprised to find a "fit" in one of the least expected places.

Closing the Deal

Learning the 'art and science' of finance



As a tight end for the Briton football team, Joe Mayone, '16, scored five touchdowns in the 2014 season. He is also a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee.

By Joseph Mayone, '16

It truly was a spring to remember. As a junior in the Gerstacker Institute, I took an internship with Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance and Financial Services. From mid-December to the end of March I learned more about finance, working, and life in general than I ever could have imagined, and all credit is due to my internship.

Going into my first day I had always thought that I would be a financial advisor and help families invest and plan for retirement. Beyond that, however, I knew nothing about becoming an advisor or what it really entailed. In the beginning I definitely had a wake-up call on how the insurance business works. I had heard the term "cold calling" before, and I knew that it could be difficult. After a couple days of training I thought that I was ready to hit the phones, but my mentor wanted proof. He had me call him, and he played the role of a potential client.

I quickly realized that I wasn't quite as comfortable on the phone as I thought. We spent the rest of the week doing one-on-one drilling until we both felt I was ready. And when I started making actual calls, I had success both in scheduling visits with potential clients and in getting referrals.

I took the internship opportunity for the experience and to gain knowledge. I chose to study finance because I wanted to help others. Now in the midst of my internship I started to see it all come together. It was a bit scary to see myself in the real world working, but at the same time it was incredibly exciting to have a little reinforcement that I chose the right path. I always knew from the time I was a kid that I wanted to help people. Now I could. The background of studies I received in the Gerstacker Institute has been extremely rewarding.

I always expected to learn a lot from my internship, but I thought I would be learning all the ins and outs of the stock market and investment strategies. Although I did learn about those things, I learned so much more. I learned how to talk to people in a professional manner over the phone. I learned how to balance a busy schedule. I learned what it is like to work from 8-5 every day of the week. I learned how to motivate myself to continue working out as hard as I can after a long day at the office because I've made a commitment to my teammates. It's hard to express just how beneficial my Northwestern Mutual experience has been for me. The work wasn't always easy or glorious. However, I saw myself grow, and some of the lessons I have learned will be with me the rest of my life.

Summer 2014 Internship Placements

From manufacturing to financial services to healthcare to marketing (and more), Gerstacker interns are in demand. Here's this summer's list:

Albion College: Marketing/Communications, Gerstacker Institute
Assurant, Inc.
Bankers Life
Battle Creek Bombers
Blackford Capital, LLC
Canterbury-on-the-Lake
Caster Concepts
Clayton & McKervey
CNI
Consumers Energy
Dimplex Thermal Solutions
Dow Corning
DTE Energy
Hantz Financial
HelloWorld
J. Winfield
Jack's Place
Kaufman Financial Group
Lear Corporation
Level One Bank
Marshall Community Credit Union
Matick Chevrolet
Mercedes-Benz Financial Services
New York Air Brake
Northwestern Mutual
Premier Business Management
Quicken Loans
Rough Performance Products
Shayla Accounting, CPA
The Spire Institute
St. Joseph Mercy Hospital
Thompson Reuters
TNR Machine, Inc.
Valassis
Xperience
YMCA
5/3 Bank



Fraud Alert

Well, he wasn't wearing a trench coat, but Nick Emery, '15, did go undercover to nab a suspected identity thief this winter. It was all part of simulations intended to show accounting students how the Internal Revenue Service is combatting identity theft in tax fraud schemes. Stephen Moore, '83, an IRS supervisory special agent in the Detroit field office, led the students through simulations of the real-life criminal investigations the IRS pursues on a daily basis. The student "agents" conducted surveillance, interviewed witnesses, and even searched garbage cans in order to gather sufficient evidence for court orders.

Electronic tax filing has created new opportunities for identity thieves, and Moore and his colleagues have stepped up efforts to detect and prevent this illegal activity using the tax system. "The crooks find ways to get your personal information, and then by claiming false business income, they file tax returns in your name, hoping to get money from the IRS," explained Albion accounting professor John Carlson. "By the time you get around to filing, the thieves have collected the false refunds and are long gone." Throughout the exercise, students reviewed pertinent points of tax and criminal law with their IRS mentors. "What I found especially valuable was the real-world application of concepts defined in the classroom," said Alex Decker, '15.



Prof. Steve Christian hosted Gerstacker's first-ever Afternoon Tea and the Art of Social Conversation. This successful event was held to instruct first-year students on how to help carry a conversation and avoid awkward moments. Simple skills were practiced in anticipation of using them for job and internship interviews.

CARL A. GERSTACKER INSTITUTE
FOR BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

HOME COMING
RECEPTION

SATURDAY
OCT. 17, 2015
12-1 P.M.

Kellogg Center
Living Room

Carl A. Gerstacker Institute for Business and Management

Admission to the Gerstacker Institute is selective. We are looking for good students—our average high school GPA is 3.6, and our average ACT score is 26. Successful applicants also demonstrate leadership, express awareness of, and curiosity about, their world, and possess a "can do" attitude that is evident across a wide variety of endeavors. You'll find the Institute application form online at: www.albion.edu/gerstacker.

To learn more about the Institute, or to schedule a personal visit, contact:

John Bedient, Interim Director
Laurel Draudt, Associate Director
Anne Cox, Coordinator

Gerstacker Institute for Business and Management
Albion College Telephone: 517/629-0418
611 E. Porter St. E-mail: gerstacker@albion.edu
Albion, MI 49224 Web: www.albion.edu/gerstacker