

# Carl A. Gerstacker

## Liberal Arts Institute for Professional Management

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### OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

An important part of the Gerstacker Institute program is the time students spend away from Albion. By extending their education through internships and studying abroad, students have the chance to apply the things they've learned on campus. They have the chance to translate theory into practice.



And, as the stories here describe, they get to do that in some amazing places with fantastic opportunities.

All Gerstacker students are required to expand their education in this way. Most do both a full-time, semester-long professional internship and a semester abroad. Their travels might take them as far as Zurich, Beijing, Cape Town, or Denver. Just as valuable could be an internship across town in Albion. Read on to hear about some recent Gerstacker learning adventures.

*While studying business and Mandarin in China, Gerstacker student Nate De Winkle, '09, also visited historic locations including the summer palace in Beijing.*

### Lia Cronenwett, '09 Stryker Corporation Kalamazoo (and beyond)

During Lia Cronenwett's internship with Stryker, a global leader in medical technology, she was assigned to the internal audit group at the corporate offices in Kalamazoo. But she didn't spend much time there. Instead she racked up thousands of air miles while traveling to perform audits at Stryker's offices in San Jose, California; London, England; Paris, France; and Düsseldorf, Germany. At the same time, she gained a working knowledge of Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) financial reporting requirements.



Her work experiences were varied: "During the audits, I learned an array of things that will help me grow as an auditor post-graduation. During fieldwork, my main priority was to make sure Stryker was in compliance with Sarbanes-Oxley as well as with Stryker's internal accounting policies. Other than working on SOX 404 audits, I helped out on process improvement projects to enable the internal audit team at Stryker to run more smoothly."

In addition to seeing the world, Lia gained a lot from her summer at Stryker. "This internship has not only taught me knowledge that I can use in my professional career after graduation, but it has opened up many opportunities for me. Being a part of a corporate environment really helped me understand how a large corporation like Stryker is so successful."

### Craig Stangland, '09 MGM Grand Las Vegas

"Within the first few weeks of my first year at Albion College," Craig Stangland says, "I set two primary goals: to study abroad in Australia and to participate in the Hospitality Internship Program with MGM in Las Vegas. I am overjoyed that I have had the opportunity to do both. My time in Australia taught me more than I ever could have imagined, while my time in Las Vegas working at the MGM Grand hotel has given me the professional experience I need to excel. I can't express how happy I am with my choice of goals, and that I had the opportunity to live them out."

Stangland says Albion College and the Gerstacker Institute prepared him for his internship with MGM in a variety of ways. "First and foremost is the depth and breadth of knowledge I can bring to any task or project," he observes. "The liberal arts experience has taught me that there is always more than one way to reach an answer, and all avenues must be considered. The level of detail required in my job is easy for me, thanks to Albion's demand for detail. There are multiple other ways in which Albion has prepared me, ranging from knowledge, to work ethic, to professionalism."



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## Jessica Fillinger, '09 Off-Campus Study Thessaloniki, Greece

Through the efforts of Albion College trustee Charlie Raphael, '68, and others, there is a growing relationship between Albion and the American College of Thessaloniki (ACT). Raphael says, "As a trustee of both Albion and ACT, I have had the privilege of nurturing the connection between the two schools. Both share a highly regarded,

liberal arts tradition of educational excellence in an intimate academic environment. I can think of no greater life experience for an Albion College student than to study at ACT and in the process absorb the cultural heritage and exceptional beauty of northern Greece."

In fall 2007 Jessica Fillinger, '09, became the first Albion student to study at ACT. She describes her experience:

*Geia sas. Ti kaneis? Katalaves? This is where you insert, "It's all Greek to me." Well, these words mean: Hello. How are you? Do you understand what I'm saying?*

*I was able to work on my Greek a considerable amount when I studied abroad at the American College of Thessaloniki. It was a life-changing experience. Should I begin where I climbed Mt. Olympus? Or perhaps discuss the numerous encounters I had with the locals who only spoke Greek? Maybe you would be interested in my travels in Greece as well as in Turkey, Austria, and Germany? Or how about my certification in Greek dance?*

*Albion College and the Gerstacker Institute have exceeded my expectations of a liberal arts education. During my three-month stay in Greece, I learned a tremendous amount about myself and my communication skills. My education at ACT put the world into perspective; every class would start out with "what's going on in the world." ACT taught me how important it is to be not only a citizen of my state, and nation, but also a global citizen.*

## WORKING GLOBALLY ESCIA, Pontoise, France

In today's globalized marketplace, nearly every business is international to some degree, says Mike Frandsen, director of Albion's Gerstacker Liberal Arts Institute for Professional Management. "Virtually everyone is now involved in international business. It may only mean they need to be aware of foreign competition or of global supply sources—but no matter what business people are in, they have to think globally and work with people from different cultures."

What better way to prepare for that reality than to do it, to work with students from other countries to develop a business plan. Five Albion students had the chance to do that in March 2008 as the first step in what is hoped will become an ongoing relationship between Albion; ESCIA, an international business school sponsored by the Versailles (France) Chamber of Commerce; and other international partners. The students traveled to ESCIA with Frandsen and Perry Myers, associate professor of modern languages and cultures at Albion, for a week of learning, work, and fun with students from the French host school and from schools in Croatia and Hungary.

During the week at ESCIA, bi-national teams were asked to develop a business plan that would incorporate resources and the culture of each country. Despite the language barrier, the Albion-



ESCIA team got right to work. "I don't think it was any more awkward than if they'd all been Americans," says Jen Daly, a junior economics/management and French major, of her French teammates. Joe Seikel, a junior economics/management major and one of three non-French-speaking members of the team, agrees. "I didn't know how different from us they might be," he reflects, "but as soon as we started the icebreakers, they were laughing just like we were."

The team set out to develop a venture to assist small French companies in selling directly to American consumers. Seikel explains, "Right now we're working on using a Web site to match the French companies with buyers." Daly notes that every change, every new idea, requires extra effort just to be added to the plan. "We've had to research FDA regulations and import taxes, Web site development, things like that," she says. "We have to learn about so many things just to do our part of the plan." Befitting the idea of a 21st-century multinational business, the teams keep in touch via a Yahoo! group and videoconferencing.

The ESCIA team hopes to visit Albion this coming January so the team can do a final presentation of their business plan, a visit that Seikel and Daly say the whole group is looking forward to. "I know this is for business, but the personal relationship we've formed beyond our work, that has been really neat," Daly explains. "It's one thing to sit in a class and talk about international business and being aware of other cultures," Seikel concludes. "When you actually interact with people, it's different. I think that has been the most valuable part of this for me, to interact with people from another country and do something business-related."



*The Albion-ESCIA team at work on their global marketing project.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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 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/](http://www.albion.edu/gerstacker/).

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

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