

YOU GET TO WORK!

That ambiguous title is just right for what follows. We asked some of the ISP students now in the U.S. about their jobs on campus and received quick and very interesting responses. We hope these experiences will offer insight to all the UPDATE audiences: other ISP students, support groups, donors, contacts in the colleges.

We thank and congratulate the students who did the writing that follows. They are at colleges on both coasts and in the middle. Whether they have jobs in their areas of interest or not, they're interested in their jobs. They are contributing to their own financial support, building their CVs, learning different sides of life. We thank them all for their stories and advice.



Raed

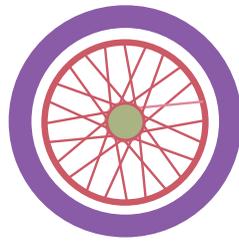
Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

During the orientation period, I attended a session for the students who were interested in Biology and Premed studies. There, one of the professors asked if someone wanted to work with her in the bio lab. I

was the first one who asked for that position and I got the job. I'm a bio major and I love biology, so I felt that the lab would be the most suitable, interesting and beneficial place for me to work.

The work that was assigned to me was more advanced than my other colleagues were doing because I had more classes previously. I was working on some tasks which were related to the professor's research and to the senior students' projects. I got to know the biology professors more and got some experience in how to use the lab appliances and in being responsible for the data.

I learned the importance of paying close attention. Also: If you are not sure how to do some steps, it is not a shame to ask. On the contrary, here people become very glad if you ask them for help.



IRAQI STUDENT PROJECT

New and Noteworthy — February, 2010

Meena
Dominican University, San Rafael, California



I started working during the summer of 2009. A friend working in the mail room on campus asked me if I was looking for a job and she was very helpful and recommended me to her boss. I started the training there, and I would help people to pick up their packages and help the faculty and staff in their copying job and even checking the copiers around the campus. I continued working there during the school year too. At the beginning I admit I was worried because it was my first job.

After the first month I started to love my job more than anything else. It was the best decision I made since I came here. Asking a lot of questions was one of the good things I did and it helped me know more about my work and be more comfortable with my surroundings.

Finding a job and loving it had a lot of impact on me. I realize it gave me a lot of self-esteem. Being good in what I do in work guaranteed me to keep my job during the next summer.

Work is a great thing as long as it's not interfering with school. The student needs to focus on schoolwork first, otherwise it will effect both work and school. For me I work on the day that I don't have any classes so it helps focusing on my work and doing better in it.

My job has nothing to do with my major and I find that a very good thing because it will give my mind a break from school and it helps opening my mind for other different experiences.

My advice for other students: Be more active and find a job and gain more experience from it. One of the things that a student can do is apply to the US government to work outside the campus with the help of the International Studies Office.



Hisham

Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas

I'm working with the Information and Technology Department as a technician. I got it by going to the department director and asking him if he could have a student worker in his department. He asked me to send him my resume. Two days later he did an interview with me.

Basically, what I'm doing is fixing any computer problem all around campus, mostly network problems. I like the experience that I'm getting from this job and I like helping everyone on campus with their computers,

so now not only do I know all the students on campus, but I'm getting to know all the faculty members and the professors. The hard thing about this job is I have to walk all around the campus every day; it's good for being in shape, but it's really hard when it's freezing and snowing outside.

On my second day at work, my boss and another employee in the office were discussing a problem that they have in the system and they can't figure out why, so I stepped in with an idea that's cheaper and easier than what they're thinking of. They tried it and it worked. After this happened, my boss started to give me more work.

My advice to other ISP students is to get a job. It's not all about money. You could make friends through this job and let's not forget the experience part. I'm waiting for the college to give the permission to work full-time in summer, otherwise I will probably end up doing a internship in either one of my majors (Computer Science, Mass Communication/Media).

Negative side of working is that you need to manage your time really strict, because you need to keep up with your work and your homework. For sure it's better when you get a job within your major, a job that gives a lot of advantages and experience by the time of graduation.

Taif

Union College, Schenectady, New York



My only work experience at my college, so far, was during last summer. My job was basically at the library with the ILL, the library loan program. ILL takes care of all of the books, articles, archives and videos that come in and out the library. It also controls what is called "Connect New York," which is a system that connects all the colleges in NY State and makes sharing books and other things a lot faster.

I heard about this job from one of my friends who was working there. I had an interview with

the person who is in charge of the ILL department, AKA “BOSS,” and the interview was basically about my language skills, computer knowledge and making sure that I’m a responsible person.

The only thing that was hard about this job was that I had to be extremely careful with what I did. A single mistake and things would go so wrong. Also my boss was a little bit hard with me (but she was nice in the long run), which made it a harder for me just because I was scared of making a mistake. At the end I managed to please her and I will do my best to get the job whenever I have the chance because I liked the efficiency of this job and I made many friends through it.

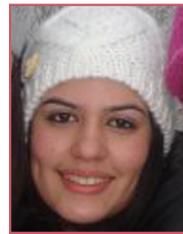
I would recommend ILL jobs to any ISP student for two major reasons: 1) It makes you very careful, responsible and helps you to manage your time. 2) It makes you more knowledgeable about what goes around the library in terms of books and other information resources.

One of the most important things about working during the summer is that you are going to make money which will help you a lot later on. Also, it helps you not to get bored, and keeps you busy which is definitely a good thing rather than staying in your room doing NOTHING!

If you manage to have a job that is related to your major, this will make your CV look much better when you try to apply for an internship. Also it will help you to practice what you have studied in textbooks in real life which will give you a great work experience for after you graduate and want to find a job.

● *Shahad*

Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio



I work in the Interior and Fashion Design lab. Before I got this job they told me that I would work in the dining services. But I asked my professor if she wanted someone to work with her and she said she did want an assistant to work in the lab, so I started working with her. I work four hours a week. Every time I work she gives me something different to work on: making copies for her classes, organizing fabrics, preparing stuff for the lab classes, making a display for our department. I liked the last one the most because it is in my major.

This semester I got another job beside my first job. I work

in the Career Development Department as an assistant. I got this job when I went to meet my advisor who works in this department to talk with her about my major and to work on my resume and internship. I asked her if she wanted a student to work with her in the summer because I wanted to plan for the summer job early. She said she wanted someone to work four hours during the spring semester. Now I’m working with her and I might keep working with her over the summer.

This job is different from the first job. I work on the computer such as: posting online jobs for the students, entering students’ names and saving them on the computer. I feel comfortable with both jobs and I like them. Working on campus is a good thing because it makes me feel very responsible and independent. Also, I will get experiences, meet new students who work with me and make new friendships.

My advice: Don’t be afraid or shy to ask. I always remember this when I have troubles in anything here.



● *Fouad*

Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts

My current job is at the Office of Events Planning at Clark University. Our office is also the information source of assistance for students. I got the job offer during the summer in July, before I came here to Clark. I asked my support group to see whether I will be working or not. One of them was so helpful and talked to the boss, and she was very nice to accept me, without qualifications. To tell you the truth, I felt that I got the job because I am Iraqi, and the people wanted to help, but it doesn’t matter since I have proven that I am qualified for this job. I was actually named the employee of the month for October.

This job has given me the chance to figure out the whole area in a matter of a month or so. I had to acquire information to have the answers for the questions I receive. However, my first semester, I mostly worked the night shifts. I knew that my ability to

answer those questions wasn’t that good (not good enough English, I thought). Rarely, during night shifts, do people come and ask questions. It was mostly doing setups for the upcoming events.

Nothing has only positives, but the trick is to know how to overcome the negatives. It was so hard, working the first semester. I didn’t have time to go out and have fun, which was fine with me, but it’s not now. People have already formed friendships by the end of the first semester, but not me because I didn’t spend a lot of time with them. However, when I consider what I am doing now, and its effects on my future, I feel very lucky to have this job. I don’t care about how much I hang with friends as long as I am doing something good for the future.



● *Awab*

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon

I have been working for the last three months at a place called the Mills International Center. It is the coolest place on campus where domestic and international students study, hang out, or have events. My job at the front desk is to manage the center and help the students with whatever they need. One of my tasks too is to make sure that everything is in the right place (whether books need to be rearranged or computers to be fixed).

As for training, the center’s staff provided me two weeks training so I can know exactly what to do.

I heard about this job through an announcement in one of my scholarship meetings. I went to the front desk immediately and told the person in charge how interested I am in this position. I got two application forms to fill. They liked my application and decided to interview me and then I got the job. I like my job at the MIC because of the nice atmosphere and of course because I get paid for it. The only bad thing is time. This term has been extremely busy and living off campus consumes a lot of time in traveling. But I would say that I am overall happy with my job.

THE REUNIONS IN NEW YORK AND WISCONSIN OVER WINTER BREAK

Many of the ISP students in the U.S. were able to attend one of two gatherings over the winter break. Some met in Nyack, New York, and some in Racine, Wisconsin. One of the photos on the final page shows the New York group during their visit to the UN with ISP Board Member Doug Hostetter; Doug heads the UN office of the Mennonite Central Committee. ISP is grateful to Andrew Courtney for taking the lead in setting up the New York gathering, and to Sister Virgine of the Racine Dominicans for organizing the Wisconsin gathering.

TOFA REPORTS ON RACINE

The second day we were together was New Years Eve! Since we were in Wisconsin during the winter there were many exciting activities to do outside. That evening we enjoyed some Iraqi music and danced "Chobi." Shahad made dolma, and everyone loved it. Rahman conducted a prayer before we ate dinner. The food, dancing, and music reminded us of our country; we all felt at home. We celebrated the New Year with sparkling apple cider, and at midnight we made our New Year's wishes!



On the fourth day we went to a nursing home to talk with the many sisters living there about the Iraq war, and what the U.S. is doing there. Afterwards we split up into three groups. Each group toured a different museum. One group went to the Museum of Natural Science, one went to the Museum of Art, and one went to the Museum of Science. After the museum

tours we all went sledding. It was so much fun, but it was also very cold. We had a few accidents with people falling off the sleds.



● *Ahmed Nameer*
Grinnell College, Iowa

I work here in Grinnell College dining hall as a custodian this semester. I worked in sanitation in the fall semester in the dining hall as well. I value it because it is a whole group work. I got the job simply by applying for it and usually the dining places require as many students as possible, so I was accepted immediately. For me, working here has both advantages and disadvantages. You'll be able to support yourself financially, but on the other side, it is time-consuming and it has a different atmosphere from studying. If you can pay attention to both your studies and your work, you will be the winner.

I encourage any student and especially the ISP students to try this opportunity as it can build their characters and appreciation to being a student in the U.S. It is for sure wiser to take a position that relates to your studies since it can reinforce your study goals, plus it is also beneficial because you get to be paid by doing something you enjoy.



● *Randa Muneeb*
Saint Mary's College, South Bend, Indiana

The economic situation now in the U.S. is not that good, so many students are trying to get a job during college. However, there are not many places or jobs for all those who apply including us, the international students. So it depends on the school and what they need, depends on the department, and of course depends on the job. Some jobs need a specific skill while others do not (for example: work on the front desk of the dorm will be a good start as a job, and easy to do).

My recommendation for the first-year students: If you can get a good job, with a suitable amount of hours, why not? Yet, if you do not find a job, it is ok because first, they have to get to know the education system and pay more attention to the classes, adjust to the new place and the new environment.

RAED REPORTS ON NYACK

The reunion was in Nyack, about forty minutes by car far from NYC. It is a magnificent place nearby the Hudson River. The people who offered the place are part of an organization named the FOR (Fellowship of Reconciliation). It is one of the oldest organizations interested in peace activities around the world. When they heard about the ISP and our need for a place to have our reunion, they offered us their headquarter building for five days. They also filled the fridge with food and facilitate many things, like the transportation.

Besides meeting the ISPers, which was the best thing, we had some special moments during the reunion. During the first morning in Nyack, Bob Stien, one of the people who helped organizing the reunion, took us with his family for a hike in a mountain in Nyack named the Hook Mountain. For sure, it was the first time for me, as well as for most of the ISPers to go hiking after the long stairs of Wadi Mar Musa that we climbed last year. It was really fun, and fortunately, there was no snow that day. The view from the top of the mountain was amazing.

For me, the last day we spent in NYC was very special. We had a private tour of the United Nations. It was just for the people in the ISP, arranged for us by a UN official who is a friend of ISP, Mr. Ralph Kader. We saw most of the rooms and halls of the UN, which we used to see on TV. After that, we had an Iraqi Night with Iraqi food at a restaurant in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. It was the first time I had Iraqi food for five months. Ali, the owner of the restaurant, had prepared Iraqi songs for us.

