Carlos Lopez

COM440: Intro to Journalism

Prof. Scott

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**Profile Story**

As Michael Gosz took a tour around the Illinois Institute of Technology campus, just recently being promoted to Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, he is approached by a woman who seems to love Prince’s color. At about 5 feet tall, with her curly dark brown hair done up, and a warm and kind smile, she musters the courage to ask Mike about the job opening that she had recently seen. “Actually that job is filled.”, Mike responds, but April determined to help many students on campus decides that this would be a great place to start, and so she persist. “Well, could I send you my resume?”, “Sure”. Michael would later go on to call her in for an interview and to accept the job position.

April Welch has since proven to be devoted to helping students in many different areas. She is now in charge of many student programs and has help in various initiatives to improve the experience of Illinois tech students. Many of her programs include the task of working with many different departments and groups of the school, for example housing, admissions, and the different colleges in Illinois Tech were used for her Brazilian Student Exchange program. “Programs that touch all different areas are the ones that I get to work on.”

When she first started working for Illinois Tech, she was working in a program to help high school students learn about photography and digital art. She would then leave that program and work on the Pre-trans, in which she helped high school students again, by introducing them to the major of civil engineering. The students would be taken to different work sites as they were being developed and got a chance to see for example, the inside of the Trump tower as it was being constructed or when the concrete foundation for parts of the Dan Ryan were being tested.

She really got a running start when she began working for her current boss, Mike Gosz, in 2006. As April’s boss worked now on the Provost side of the school, she became more involved with improving student’s experience. Working very closely with Mike, the two implemented changes to current student policies.“There were some policies that were not oppressive, but not in the student's favor.”

During that time, it was April’s next project that most students on campus use. Now that she worked on the Provost side of administration, her goals became to improve student experience on campus, and that included working with Undergraduate Admissions.

April began working on DegreeWorks, a tool to make it easier to search for future classes, choose classes for upcoming semester, and look at what classes have already been taken by a student. DegreeWorks started with April and Mike, which comes as a surprise to me since I always understood it as DegreeWorks was Matthew Bauer’s project. After DegreeWorks was set up and running April handed the project off to Matthew to maintain and improve it when need be.

April believed that by making it less of a burden to research and choose classes for the upcoming semester it would allow students focus on their current semester. And following her own desire of giving people chances to succeed in their life, she continued working in this effort.

In the summer of 2008, April had one of her most success programs realized as the Summer Institute here on campus. She wanted to demonstrate to other administrators, and fund providers that a summer program to introduce high school students to college life could really change a person.

During the spring semester of 2008 Mike was having a conversation with Jerry Doyle.“I was having a conversation with Jerry doyle, and we wanted to do something to help students transition to college. We both agreed to throw in 10k to start this. Well April was the one that said, ‘I want to do this’ ”. She then took that seed money in April and by July it was a full blown program.

April hand picked the 20 students that would be chosen for the program. These students were in a unique situation, in that they had been denied admission into the school. “ I got to go and look for kids who I thought could make it, even though the admissions group didn’t think they could make it.” She searched through the stack of denied students and looked at each case to see if their reason for being denied had nothing to do with their abilities.

So April gave 20 students a second chance by having them complete a 4 week summer program in order to be admitted into the school as a full-time student. The program was a huge success, so big that in the following years April was able to secure funding from Exelon(parent company to Comed). The Summer Institute was endowed as a gift from Exelon, and with that the Summer Institute was changed to Exelon Summer Institute(ESI). ESI is now funded with $2 million dollars from Exelon.

Through her many projects April can be seen as someone that cares about the future leaders that come from IIT. She has tried to improve many of the experiences that Illinois Tech students have on campus. April hopes that everything she does will guide the students to become leaders of their own faith, and to follow what they believe is right. “My philosophy is let the students lead.”