

Staff Profile

Chris Serwacki

In order for Chris Serwacki to enjoy something—even his own birthday party—he has to plan it. Most recently, Serwacki planned his 30th birthday bash, a Halloween-themed costume party. “I rented the hall, I found the DJs, I did all the decorations, and I specified what kind of food people could bring,” he said. “When I get into event mode, I don’t enjoy myself unless everyone else is having a good time.”

Serwacki, who has been at Emerson for eight years, works in the Development and Alumni Relations office as coordinator for special events. A sign on the bulletin board in his office reads, “Poor planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.”

Growing up, Serwacki envisioned himself becoming a paleontologist, “working with animals or dinosaur bones.” When he became a biology major in college, at UMass Amherst, he thought he had it all figured out. “I thought: This is it; this is the career path for me,” he said. However, things changed during college as he got involved with clubs and student organizations. “I still had a passion for biology, but I was developing a taste for event planning,” he explained.

One summer during college, Serwacki got a job at Disney World. He worked with a manager to analyze the “show quality” of different setups. Although he realized Disney World was not for him, he got a sense of what works and what doesn’t in terms of event planning and set-up. Back in Amherst, he started working with the Student Activities office to help plan the Summer Leadership Conference. He also worked with the UMass Theatre Guild, planning productions and banquets, and working with favors, decorations, and lighting.



After completing his biology degree, including spending his final semester in South Africa visiting game parks and wildlife reserves, Serwacki came to Emerson in 2004 as a staff assistant in Student Life.

Back then, the Student Life office was at 96 Beacon Street. Now, at his desk on the 7th floor of the Walker Building, Serwacki has old photographs of the Beacon Street buildings, which he purchased from the College for \$1 each in 2006, as the College was selling the building. Other pieces of memorabilia on Serwacki’s desk are his Student Life Award for five years of service, as well as his Distinction Award from Hand Me Down Night, now known as the Emerson Recognition and Achievement (ERA) Awards.

Serwacki transferred to Property Management in 2009, where he worked as assistant property manager until joining the Development and Alumni Relations office this year. He also serves as the staff advisor for the student group EAGLE (Emerson’s Alliance for Gays, Lesbians and Everyone), a position he has held since 2008. Beyond Emerson, Serwacki serves on the Boston Steering Committee of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans.

Serwacki often can be found walking around the office, chatting with fellow staff members or students about Emerson. “I love talking to people on campus and hearing what’s going on,” he said. In his current position, he’s in the perfect place to stay updated and help keep things running smoothly.

By Diana Potter, Development and Alumni Relations

Staff Notes

Awards and Accomplishments

- Maria Piteros, assistant director of institutional research, has been selected as a fellow for the 2012 National Data Institute, co-sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).
- Rafael Jaen, costume design advisor, has been elected to the United States Institute for Theater Technology (USITT) Board of Directors. USITT is the only association that brings together all the “behind the scenes” disciplines of theatre and live performance under one roof.
- Jason Allen, assistant to the chair of Performing Arts, will perform in an outdoor production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* this July, throughout the Malden park system.

Weddings

- Billy Palumbo '06 (Library) married Darcy Hofmann '06 on May 19, 2012.

New Faces

- David Dower, Director of Artistic Programs, Arts Director
- Jay Phillips, AVP, Facilities and Campus Services, Facilities Management
- Jeffrey Schoenherr, VP for Development and Alumni Relations, Development and Alumni Relations

News

The Transportation Children's Center, located in the Transportation Building, has slots opening up in its Toddler One classroom (ages 12–24 months) and Toddler Three classroom (ages 33–39 months). Questions? Contact Elena O'Malley at elena_omalley@emerson.edu.

Correction

In the last issue, Michelle Ziomek Williams's department was listed incorrectly. She works in Property Management. We apologize for the error.

Staff Forum Recap

The last staff forum of the 2011–2012 academic year was held May 17 in the Bordy Theater. More than 100 staff members enjoyed refreshments and listened to presentations by Maureen Murphy, MJ Knoll-Finn, and President Lee Pelton.

Murphy, vice president for administration and finance, gave an overview of the budget for Fiscal Year 2013 and explained the recent changes to the budget process, which now includes more staff members from various departments.

Knoll-Finn, vice president for enrollment, shared vital statistics about this year's freshman class. She also spoke about the perennial issues facing financial aid, emphasizing the value of an Emerson education.

Pelton gave public recognition to Marc Hamilton, associate vice president for property management, and Lance Olson, associate director in the Office of the Arts, both of whom are leaving Emerson after decades of service. Pelton then spoke about the recent Board of Trustees meeting and gave an update on the planning process for the new L.A. Center.

Glad You Asked

Q: What are the summer hours for the Emerson College Fitness Center?

A: The Fitness Center is open Monday–Thursday, 7:00 am–7:00 pm and Friday, 7:00 am–6:00 pm. It is closed Saturday and Sunday.

Q: Can I check out popular movies at the Iwasaki Library?

A: Yes! Did you enjoy movies like *Drive*, *Hugo*, *The Descendants*, *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Social Network*, *Howl*, *The Darjeeling Limited*, *127 Hours*, *Black Swan*, or *The King's Speech*? The library has all these films, and many more. Check them out for free with your Emerson ID. Stop by the library to browse, or search the library catalog online.

Q: Are campus security procedures different now that the spring semester has ended?

A: Yes. Staff members must present their Emerson ID cards to enter all campus buildings; be sure to carry yours with you at all times!

Wear It Everywhere

Send us your photos of Emerson gear—T-shirts, caps, water bottles—in an exotic location (read: not Boston!). We'll feature photos in each upcoming issue of the staff newsletter.



Rhea Becker (Communications and Marketing) rocks the Emerson look in New Orleans.

people@Emerson

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