The Career Empowerment Program (CEP) is a seven week program providing employment and job preparation training for 30 underrepresented youth, ages 16 to 18 years of age from Champaign, Rantoul, and Urbana. The CEP engages units on the university campus to host program participants. CEP participants are employed in jobs that reflected their interests, skills, abilities, and career goals. They receive positive work experiences which promote honesty, integrity, respect, accountability, and teamwork. These core values are strengthened through the intensive supervision and mentoring provided by the university unit supervisors and staff.

The 2014 CEP identified 4 goals for the program to accomplish. Those goals are listed below:

- Provide work experience for underrepresented area youth
- Encourage youth to pursue their career goals
- Job preparation training
- Help local underrepresented youth build a positive relationship with the University

CEP 2014 offers students a maximum of 20 hours per week. Students receive hours between 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday thru Thursday. CEP participants are required to spend every Friday during the program in Career Convocations. The subjects of the convocations are listed below:

- Understanding the principles of Restorative Justice and conflict resolution
- Introduction to Window’s Word 2010
- Introduction to Window’s Excel 2010
- Introduction to Resume Basics
- Introduction to Business Interviewing and Professional Etiquette
- How to navigate the Admission’s process for a Big Ten University

In partnership with the Office of the Chancellor, Staff Human Resources, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Access, CEP 2014 looks to accomplish more goals. Incorporative of the goals and convocations from 2013, below are some of those goals:

- Outreach and interview local students starting in April 2014
- Outreach to campus community for potential CEP 2014 positions in March 2014
- Engage more underrepresented students from local area
- Increase number for 10 to 15 students from each public high school for 2015
- Create opportunities to work with public high school to host job fairs

With the support for this program, the University continues its effort of being a responsible and responsive partner in the local community.