

Katherine Dayton is a fifth year student attending Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Q) How did you first get interested in the graphic arts, or decide to major in graphic communications in school? *I always loved art and design but wanted a degree that was more marketable and more technology based than visual art at my school. I thought that Graphic and Printing Sciences gave me a specific career path while still allowing for creativity and working with people, which is something that I'm passionate about.*

Q) Did you take any courses in high school that were related to graphic communications, or that prepared you for your planned career? *In high school, I took general art and pottery. I was constantly drawing and designing on my own, but I didn't really take advantage of the art resources at my school. The school district also didn't have very many graphic arts courses that I was able to take advantage of, which was disappointing. So, my journey with graphic arts started formally in college, which shows that it's never too late to start!*

Q) What course of studies are you taking now, or planning on taking, during the path of your school education? *I'm currently studying Graphic and Printing Sciences with an emphasis in multimedia. I also have minors in French and Communications. As it is my final semester before I graduate, I am taking the last classes required for my program which are Offset Lithography, Flexography, Web Design, and Printability Analysis. In the past, I've also taken courses like Color Management, Digital Printing and Workflow, Introduction to Inks, Advanced Multimedia, etc. and many communication classes for my minor. I love being able to use creativity in classes for projects while also learning a lot about the graphic arts industry.*

Q) Is there a particular area of the graphic communications field that is of special interest to you as you consider where you want to focus your future career on? *I'm especially interested in graphic design and social media. I hope to use my background in graphic arts, and design- both print and web- to find a career that fulfills my need for creativity.*

Looking to the Future

Q) What type of company would you like to work for after you graduate? *I would preferably like to work for a small, tight-knit company upon graduation that allows me to wear multiple hats and learn a lot, especially at the beginning of my career. My main focus is gaining a lot of experience to help me find my niche, so I am excited about the job possibilities that are open to me right now!*

Q) What do you think employers are looking for in today's workforce and current industry environment? *Based off of interview and the work experiences that I've had, I think that a solid background in graphic arts is important, but a positive attitude, diligent work ethic, and willingness to learn are also essential. A degree and background knowledge are necessary, but it really comes down to being able to work with a person well. A candidate could have awesome credentials but might have a poor attitude and might not be willing to learn or work hard. In that situation, a candidate who was more positive and a harder worker but less experienced might have a better shot at a job offer.*

Q) Is there anything that you have found to be particularly different from what you initially expected now that you've progressed through your education process? *I came into college as undecided and I spent a lot of time looking for a "perfect" major that would lead me to a "perfect" career with a clear-cut path ahead of me. Now, I've learning that this isn't really the case, and it's up to me to decide what I*

want, what to make of my education, and what my career path is going to be from here. It's a little scary, but it's also awesome because I can really think about what I want out of a career and what's best for me.

Q) Have you changed your plans or ideas about what area or type of job you might like to have since you first considered the graphic communications field and began studying for a career in it? *I haven't necessarily changed my plans but I've focused in on what I'm really interested in. I decided to study graphic arts knowing that it was a broad field with a lot of opportunities and possibilities. With that in mind, I kept my options open and tried to learn as much as I could about the industry so I could ultimately find what is most interesting to me, and what I wanted to pursue. I didn't have a specific career path when I started, I kept my mind open and learned about everything to find what I wanted.*

Q) Has being a recipient of a PGSF scholarship made a difference in your education, and if so, how? *Being a recipient of a PGSF scholarship has meant so much to me this past year. I take my classes very seriously knowing that it's not only me, but others who are investing in my education and wanting me to succeed. The financial burden has been lifted considerably, but I also take a greater accountability in my education, knowing that the generosity of so many have gotten me to where I am now.*