

Austin Heredia is a freshman that is attending the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale in Florida.

Q) How did you first get interested in the graphic arts, or decide to major in graphic communications in school?

A) While being a visual artist and never into computer design, I decided it was time during high school to try something new. I did not know what I was getting into, but I'm glad I chose to learn the trade! Graphic Design has changed the way I look at all art and design, and has taught me to look at certain types of design, and the message that they send. Graphic Arts is now my passion!

Q) Did you take any courses in high school that were related to graphic communications, or that prepared you for your planned career?

A) All 4 years of my high school career were used to study graphic design classes at South Tech Academy. I graduated, certified in Adobe Photoshop, In Design, Illustrator, and Flash. The schools design program provided many opportunities to enter my work into contests in which I won many awards. It also opened up networking opportunities with business professionals and designers in the field.

Q) What course of studies are you taking now, or planning on taking, during the path of your school education?

A) I am currently working on my Associates Degree in Graphic Design. Once I have completed my associate's degree I will be rolling immediately right into the Bachelor's Degree Program. At the Art Institute, I have already completed Design Basics, Layout, Concept Development, Photography Techniques, Signs Symbols and Ciphers, Color Systems and Digital Media Production. And I am currently taking Typography, Package Design, and Desktop Publishing. And in three weeks I will be starting Corporate Identification and Graphic Design Applications. And then to finish out my associates the last two terms with Drawing and Perspective, Promotional Design, and Web Development/Fundamentals.

Looking to the Future

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?

A) I have found a lot of interest in Corporate Identity and Package Design. I feel that showing your identity through design is a factor in the minds of people who look upon you. And Package Design is something I think is awesome because it challenges you to design a package appealing enough to consumers so that they want to buy the product. And, that, I find so interesting in this world that you can visually grasp people's minds by an image you created.

Q) What type of company would you like to work for after you graduate?

A) Ultimately, I would love to freelance for myself and own my own company, that would grow into a known entity. But, also, to be able to work for an accomplished design firm or package design would be an honor.

Q) What do you think employers are looking for in today's workforce and current industry environment?

A) Today's employers are looking for workers who can talk well with customers, have people skills, have over four years of design knowledge and tremendous creativity. That can take what someone has

expressed and to be able to come up with the most exciting work that they or their customers have desired.

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?

A) At first, I used to think that designing was about how well you can put something together that is appealing. But, now I see that it is not just layout, and that it has to have a message to the design.

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?

A) I have always known the kind of design I wanted to pursue as my future career and it hasn't changed since I've started. Corporate Branding and Package Design is my passion.

Q) Has being a recipient of a PGSF scholarship made a difference in your education, and if so, how?

A) Being a recipient of the PGSF scholarship has not only helped me cover a financial part of my Associate's cost but it has encouraged me to never stop designing and to always strive for what it is that you want to be. By being chosen it has helped encourage me to be a better designer and given me motivation to be the best designer I can be, knowing that my work was up to standards to have been chosen amongst so many others. It has also encouraged me to submit my work to other scholarships to hopefully help towards my bachelor degree costs which is right around the corner.

Q) Anything else that you would like to add?

A) I would like to thank all of those who participate, and donate, and believe in students like me. Without the programs and funding that PGSF provides, dreams of becoming an artist/designer may not be possible for some. Thank you for supporting my career and my future, and for helping to make my dream of attending the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale a reality.

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