

Florida Trends's

2012 - 2013

next

Your Future After High School In Florida™

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Log In and Learn p. 12

**Exceptional
Essays** p. 38

**Financial Aid
Facts** p. 40

**Scholarship
\$avvy** p. 44



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**COLLEGE & CAREER
PLANNER** p. 31

ON THE CAREER PATH



Even though you're still in high school, you've taken classes in lots of different subjects. Having a well-rounded education is a good thing because you're being exposed to ideas and experiences that can help you decide how you want to spend your working life.

With so many options out there, deciding on a career isn't always easy. But it is important, so take the time to consider what you want to do and how you can prepare for it.

Read on to find out how three students found their way to programs that will give them the right tools for their trades.



Designed for Success

Stael Saint-Eloi moved to the United States from Haiti in 2009 and spent a great deal of time and effort learning a new language. Along the way he also discovered a new passion.

After Stael shared his interest in the field of engineering with his English teacher at Auburndale High School, she encouraged him to enroll in a computer aided drafting and design (CADD) class that offered within Auburndale's Communications Academy. He's only a junior, but Stael is already getting hands-on experience using special software, and once he's in college, he'll have an advantage "because I'll already know the basics."

Stael also seems to have a knack for it. "Drawing on the computer is a lot easier than reading English," he says.

While CADD experience can be applied to many fields, including architectural design, construction and engineering, Stael has a very particular dream. "I'd like to go to a four-year university and study aerospace engineering." The academy program has definitely opened his eyes to many

possibilities. "I used to see things from only one perspective. But now I know that engineering is everywhere in life."

Math Teacher in Training

A little further along her career preparation path, **Marissa Hoffman, 20**, is a junior at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale. Even before she got to college, Melissa knew she wanted to become a high school math teacher, and she chose her school accordingly.

"The main reason I chose NSU was

next TIP

If your high school doesn't offer classes in your specific area of interest, look for internships or volunteer opportunities in that field. You make not earn a paycheck, but you'll gain priceless experience.

"The future is in your hands. Start thinking about it as soon as you can."

– Stael Saint-Eloi



because it was the only university that offered a degree program specifically for what I wanted to do,” Marissa says. “Other universities offered degrees in general education or elementary education, but NSU offered a degree in secondary math education.”

Marissa appreciates the fact that NSU offers membership in educational honor societies and opportunities for study-abroad programs just for education majors. But for her, the most helpful learning experiences have been in the local schools. “I get to practice what I’ve learned in an actual classroom and discuss these methods with veteran

teachers.” In addition to her course-related fieldwork, Marissa also works as a math tutor to other NSU students.

After graduation, Marissa would like to work at a Florida high school where she can teach math and be involved in extracurricular programs. She also hopes to go on to earn her master’s degree in education. “Teaching is one of the most rewarding and satisfying careers someone can have. There is nothing better than being able to expand the minds of the next generation of leaders in this country.”

Investing in an IT Education

Like lots of people, **Pablo Lucena** didn’t head straight to college after high school graduation. Instead, he went to work full time and landed in an information technology (IT) position for a major company that operates cellular service

“I want to teach math to others and show them that it does make sense.” – Marissa Hoffman



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and wireless communication centers in Florida, Central and South America.

But after two years, Pablo realized that if he wanted get ahead in his career he needed some additional education and training. While still working, Pablo enrolled in the information technology program at Keiser University's Pembroke Pines campus.

Besides earning an associate degree in Information Technology in 2012, Pablo became more passionate about his chosen field. "For lack of a better phrase, I fell in love," he says.

Pablo credits the quality of his instruction with providing that extra spark of interest. "I had several classes with an abundance of one-on-one time with my professors because of the small class sizes. The one-on-one approach was one of the most powerful learning experiences during my core classes."

While the fact that Keiser offers job

placement assistance to its students was one reason Pablo chose the school, ultimately he didn't need the help. "I was about half-finished with my degree when I was recognized for a promotion to network administrator at work due to my acquired knowledge," he says. Now he manages a network with over 400 computers and 20 servers and tends to the network's security. Ultimately Pablo's goal is to become a network engineer at a large company or a network consultant for an Internet service provider.



"Stay ahead of the game by being involved through online communities, attending free seminars whenever possible and most importantly, being passionate about your career." – Pablo Lucena

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