

**Mark Myers, SWCID Provost**

## **Provost VLOG #3**

(June 2009)

Hello, I am Mark Myers, Provost here at SWCID community college for deaf and hard of hearing people. Welcome once again to the Provost's VLOG.

Today we have 3 students from our graduating class of 2009 who will be graduating tomorrow. Congratulations to the three of you. Congratulations to all the students on their achievement. Graduation from a community college gives a feeling of success as students complete their Career and Technical Education goals. This is a really exciting time and we look forward to hearing what the future holds for these students.

I am so happy to have these 3 graduates with me today. First we have John Zebreski. He is married, the father of 2 young children, and will be receiving an Associate degree in Computer Information Systems (CIS). John is from Dallas and has been mentoring other students during the past year. Second we have Rachel Stanfield. She is from Plainview, Texas. She will receive an Associate degree in Interpreter Training. The third person I have is Carlos Medrano who is receiving his Certificate in Dental Lab Technology (DLT).

I am proud to have the three of you here to talk as you complete your studies. I have a few questions for these three students and I'd like to start with John. How do you feel about graduating tomorrow and what are your plans for the next step in your life? I am so excited to be graduating. After graduation I am considering one of two options, either going to work or continuing my studies and getting a Bachelors degree. That's great! Yes, it's really exciting to finally be graduating after working so hard these past few years. Well, we will be looking forward to see what that next step is and where you go from here and we'll support you any way we can. Right. I agree.

What about you, Rachel? What are your plans? Are you excited about tomorrow? Oh, Yes! I'm very excited. I am so ready to graduate! So, what are your plans after graduation? Well, I'm still thinking about that. I really haven't decided for sure yet. Well, I hope you will use the degree you have earned. Yes, hopefully so. I don't know, we'll see.

OK, we'll talk more a little later. Now Carlos, what about you? Are you excited about graduating tomorrow? Oh, yes. I'm pretty excited. And my new boss actually plans to be here for my graduation. It really shocked me that he will be there. It's great! So you have a boss already? Yes, I do and he let me know he will be here at the graduation on Friday, tomorrow. So you mean you plan to go to work after graduation? Yes, I have

already been offered a job so I'll start work right after graduation. Wow! That's great! Yes, thankfully I did so well during my internship. I proved my hand skills and they offered me a job. That is wonderful! So the internship helped to lead you getting a full-time job. That is wonderful! I am so happy for you.

It's terrific when students can explore possibilities for the future and then make an informed decision. Many people find new challenges or new interests which lead to making changes that's ok but it's important to have something ready to guide your planning, to help you reach what you want to accomplish. I am proud of you three for thinking carefully about your future careers.

Now I have a follow-up question for John. I'm curious how you decided on Computer Information Systems for a major? Well, I remember I first became interested in computers way back when I was in elementary school. If I remember right that would have been 1985 or so. Anyway, I started getting really interested in computers. I had some programs, some games back then. And that interest continued through school. So when I finally made the decision to go to college, it was natural for me to pick computers as a major. I actually graduated last fall with a certificate in Data Entry and now I'm getting my Associate's degree tomorrow. That's great. So really you've had this fascination with computers all your life. Oh, yes. I still remember the very first computer my mom ever bought. That got me started and made me want one of my own, one that I could work on, fix if I needed, whatever. And that experience with my own first computer really got me hooked on them. So are you skilled with both hardware and software? You can not only take computers apart and fix them but also install programs or whatever is needed? On a personal computer, pretty much whatever is needed, I can do. That is great. You seem to be very skilled. I know that nowadays more and more people are using computers and you will be able to help them with all their software and hardware computer needs. That's great, I'm very happy for you. Yes, I agree.

Rachel, what is one important interpreting skill you have learned here? Well, I've been very involved in the deaf community here. I get to see lots of different sign types and different things. I remember before, you and I were discussing your involvement in the deaf community and about living in the dorm with deaf students and interacting with them on a daily basis the past couple of years. What has that been like for you, living in the "deaf world" in the dorm? Yes, well when my hearing friends come to visit I introduce them to my deaf friends and I enjoy being able to chat and socialize with both deaf and hearing friends. Do you think your receptive skills, your ability to voice interpret, have increased as a result of your stay in the dorm? Oh, yes. It is such a valuable experience to be able to live among deaf people, to immerse yourself in deaf culture every day. That has to enhance both your receptive and expressive sign skills. I am sure you will be successful if you continue to study and hone your skills as a professional interpreter. Yes, I agree.

Great, now Carlos, tell me about your favorite part of the DLT program. I really enjoyed the hands-on aspect of the work, using my hands to fix things. I also liked the theory part of the classes. Learning what to do in various situations with problem teeth. Each individual patient is different, one may need dentures, another may need a gold crown, another a bridge. I like being able to do a variety of things like that. You mentioned crowns and bridges. Could you explain a little about those? Oh, sure. There is the full gold crown which would cover an entire tooth. Then there are bridges which cover a gap where a tooth has been removed and allow a person to chew food on top of the bridge. And then there are dentures, typically made for older people who have had all their teeth removed. I can make the complete set of lower dentures for that type of patient. It's very individualized. Each patient is different? Oh, yes, endless variety. That's great! I wish you the very best in your new job. Thank you.

And now the next question for you three. How has SWCID helped you to complete your studies?

I would say that my teachers have influenced me to be patient and they have encouraged me. They always have a positive attitude, making sure to meet my needs while not being overbearing. They have also helped me to develop consistency and a work ethic. Any time I have needed help they have been right there to assist me.

It is so important to listen to the instructor, finish your homework everyday, be diligent about the daily tasks. Those are the things that help you advance in your field and be recognized for your skills. That is so important. Yes, as I said, the teachers here have been very supportive, making sure I had the tools I needed to succeed. Well, obviously your hard work has paid off and tomorrow you get to reap the rewards of your labor. I agree.

Rachel, in what way has SWCID helped you achieve your goal of becoming an interpreter? The classes here are very small. You get a lot of one-on-one time with the instructor. You can approach the teachers and discuss just about anything. Interesting. Now I am curious just how you developed your receptive and expressive interpreting skills. Did that happen in lab, in one-on-one settings, or what? Yes, I worked both with instructors and with other deaf students. How many hours were you required to work in lab? A LOT! Well, that's probably good.

OK, now Carlos, how has SWCID helped you succeed in your DLT studies? First of all, I had a good instructor. And, the program here is unique, the only one in the country designed specifically for deaf students. That's why I chose that major and I've learned a lot and really enjoy it. It is certainly important to have a good instructor, as you said, to help you achieve your goals. Now as we are honoring you "soon-to-be" graduates,

I wonder what advice you might give to new students coming to SWCID next fall. If you were to meet them, what would you tell them that would help them to be successful here

like you have been?

My advice to students who decide to attend SWCID, my suggestions would be, to show up to class on time, do your homework, listen to your teacher, be responsible, be patient, be motivated, have regular attendance; If you do these things, I'm sure you will be successful. True, those are important.

What about you, Rachel? I would say never give up. Be persistent in your studies. And socialize with deaf people outside the classroom. It is important to maintain a balance between your studies and your social life here at college. Did you spend a lot of time at night or on weekends studying? Yes, But maybe other students who are smarter than me don't have to study that much. I don't think it matters whether you are smart or not, you need to study. For a 3 credit hour class you can expect to spend 9 hours a week studying so whether you are smart or not, a lot of hard work is required to be successful.

What about you, Carlos? I would say to new students you need to practice, practice, practice. In a major like mine that requires hand skills and hand-to-eye coordination, practice is crucial. If you don't put in the time practicing you won't be ready for the "real world" when your boss says "show me what you can do." You'll hand him some shoddy piece of work and be embarrassed. It's far better to practice hard here and become really skilled. Then you will impress your boss and you'll get hired right away. So I'd suggest lots of practice and also work hard on memorizing vocabulary. For example you might get a prescription and you have to do exactly what it says. And when you have a lot of work you have to move quickly. You have to understand the directions, follow those directions, make the bridge or whatever and then send it to the customer to match what was ordered. Wow, so practice and repetition really are crucial to success in your field.

That is so interesting. I'd like to thank the three of you for taking the time to visit me. Congratulations again on the upcoming celebration of your successful graduation tomorrow!

Now we will close this Provost's VLOG. I want to tell our audience that I am really inspired, humbled and honored to be the Provost here on this campus. I see students every day and look forward to congratulating every graduate tomorrow. Our faculty and staff are committed to helping young deaf and hard of hearing persons be the best they can be and to maximize their knowledge, skills and abilities. These three individuals that you have met today are a good example, having done well with their hard work and achievements. I think they are excited to move on to their next step. I wish them the best in their endeavors after graduation.

Thank you very much for attending the Provost's VLOG. We will be visiting with you in the fall. Have a great and safe summer! So long!