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City Tech Students Participate in Groundbreaking Advertising Research at UniWorld Group

Matthew Zagada, Ben Miftari and Pedro Ferreira, Advertising Design & Graphic Arts (ADGA) students at City Tech, are participating in UniWorld's (UWG) research workshop known as Culture Labs. UWG's Culture Labs partnership with City Tech offers students the opportunity to actively research culture and share the information learned with UWG clients, potential clients and other industry insiders. City Tech's urban student population brings the diversity that advertising firms are seeking as their strategies to reach a broad consumer base become more sophisticated.

The Culture Labs partnerships are designed to identify and cultivate the deep nuances that affect consumers' daily decision-making process. Jared Carethers, creative director, UWG Culture Labs, says that the partnership with City Tech has already produced groundbreaking data and content that has been used by the agency's partners and clients.

"When you think about the heritage of our department as a hands on education in creative problem solving, this partnership is an extension of the classroom," says City Tech Professor Douglas Davis. "Relevance is key to delivering on that heritage and influences everything about the way we introduce design problems to students. It is a pleasure to see the fruit of our efforts within ADGA expressed through our students in the industry."

Miftari says that UWG offers a "different paradigm" when it comes to internships. "It's an intense hands-on experience in which we have a lot of input; we're not treated like interns at all."

Miftari, Ferreira and Zagada have been hitting the streets of Brooklyn, where UWG is headquartered, to talk to people about the brands that speak to them. "It's all from a storytelling standpoint," says Miftari. "We want to know what about the brand affects people and why. A connection to a brand could be about nostalgia or rebellion—and these stories are insights into an emotional reaction that we want to understand."

Zagata says, "I've always been interested in picking people's brains and learning about them. Recently, I discovered that I can utilize my abilities to tell their individual stories and share them with others." For Ferreira, a graphic designer who focuses on branding, the visual storytelling in advertising resonates with his interest in design: "Being able to radiate creativity and ideas to my peers is a great feeling."

The Culture Lab team has produced three brand reports, which focus on peer groups and brand identity, the influence of peer groups on brand choice and major influencers in New York City style. Some of their interviews can be found on the UWG website at

<http://www.uwg.is/index.php#/labs/studies>.

“This is a very exciting time. Not just for UWG, but for the industry,” says Monique Nelson, UWG chairman and CEO. “The landscape is changing every day, and we have to be nimble and ready to act. As marketers, our clients look to us to tell their story to consumers. We can’t do it without studying and understanding cultural trends that help us tell our clients’ stories with passion, depth and integrity.”

UWG plans to replicate its Brooklyn Culture Labs collaborative model in their other locations across the country.

City Tech (New York City College of Technology), of The City University of New York, is the largest four-year public college of technology in New York State and a national model for technological education. City Tech has an enrollment of nearly 17,000 students in 65 baccalaureate, associate, and specialized certificate programs.

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