
IRSC adds three new bachelor's degree programs

By Colleen Wixon

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FORT PIERCE — Parents can no longer tell their children to stop playing video games because they are useless.

Starting in January, gaming will be a specialization in the new digital media bachelor's degree program at Indian River State College. The college received state approval Tuesday to begin three bachelor degree programs in digital media, biology and human services.

IRSC President Ed Massey, who made the announcement of the new bachelor's degree programs Wednesday during a biology laboratory, said the community and local businesses have been supportive of the college's efforts.

More than 75 businesses in the life sciences, digital media and human services fields wrote to the Florida Board of Education supporting the proposal.

With digital video company Digital Domain coming into the area committed to create 500 high-paying jobs by 2014, the digital media degree will be beneficial to students, Massey said.

John Textor, chairman of Digital Domain Holdings, said the expanded program was good news for the company because it can find trained employees nearby.

But IRSC students will benefit as well, getting training for high-paying jobs in other parts of the state and country, he said.

More than 4,000 companies within Florida utilize digital media, Textor said.

"It's quietly becoming the leading industry within Florida," he said.

Digital media student Daniel Oria said he plans to stay at IRSC instead of transferring to the University of Central Florida as originally planned. He said the education and training he's getting from IRSC is among the best in the state.

Oria wants to specialize in 3-D modeling and animation in the digital media program.

The college's video production program has one of the biggest green rooms where videos are created in the state.

The video gaming industry also is exploding these days, with games being created for the iPhones, said Ori, president of the Campus Coalition Government.

"These programs are so advanced, and they change one year to the next," he said.

Several IRSC students welcomed the news of the expanded programs. Many wanted to continue their studies in these areas, but didn't want to transfer away from home to do it.

"That was the best thing that could have happened to me," said Princetel Toussaint, 20, of Port St. Lucie.

Toussaint is working toward his biology associate's degree and thought he would transfer to the University of Central Florida for his bachelor's. He wasn't sure how it would work because of family obligations he has at home.

Vanetta Robinson of Vero Beach already has been accepted at Florida Atlantic University for the fall semester to get her bachelor's degree in human services. Robinson graduated IRSC earlier this month with an associate's degree in human services and wanted to stay home to continue her studies.

"That's where everything I know is. That's where I want to stay," she said.



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