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Winners Announced in National Career Education Poster Design Competition

*ACICS Selects Westwood Student Design for Commemorative Centennial
Poster to Celebrate 100 Years of Advancing Excellence in Education*

(Washington, DC) January 31, 2012 – After receiving more than 80 entries from students across the globe, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) today announced the winners of its student poster competition, which was launched as part of the agency’s Centennial celebration. Since 1912, ACICS has been a leader in advancing excellence and access to post-secondary education that prepares students with the skills needed to become competitive in the workforce. Many of the submissions included designs representing the role of career education in preparing students to succeed in industries such as business administration, allied health, information technology, criminal justice, and culinary arts.

“ACICS received submissions from talented students across the globe, utilizing different artistic styles and techniques that are taught in many of our school’s art and design programs,” said Dr. Al Gray, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of ACICS. “Our Centennial marks an important milestone in accreditation history, and we are pleased to showcase the work of our talented design students in this competition.”

First Place: Clayton Stewart

Clayton Stewart, a full-time Visual Communications student at Westwood College Houston South Campus took home first prize in the competition. His design, *100 Years of Quality: Making the Transition Between Education and the Workforce*, was an early favorite among the judging committee for its simple design and clear message, as well as its focus on the transition from student to working professional.

“I like keeping my work simple, and not to put too much stuff in it... to get to the point to make it easy for people to understand,” Stewart commented of his design and vision.

Stewart’s winning entry earned him a \$1,000 cash prize and national recognition. His design will also be reproduced and distributed to more than 900 ACICS member institutions worldwide, and featured at ACICS’ Centennial gala in Las Vegas in November 2012.

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Second Place: Michael Fitzgerald

Michael Fitzgerald of Anthem Institute in Springfield, PA earned second place in the competition. Currently studying Graphic Design, Fitzgerald developed his *Road to Transition* design to capture a particularly important element of career education: the opportunities that are made available to students who have achieved a quality career education.

“There are plenty of opportunities,” Fitzgerald said. “Once [students] graduate with a quality education, [they] can pretty much do anything [they] want. The future is a blank piece of paper.”

Third Place: Raul Pastor Lopez

Winning third place is Raul Pastor Lopez, a Graphic Arts student at John Dewey College in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico. Lopez was encouraged by his teacher to turn the competition into a research and design project about education. Inspired by Steve Jobs and the iPad, his design – *Workforce iPad: ACICS Edition* – incorporates icons on the tablet that represent career programs at ACICS-accredited institutions. He created the design using Adobe Illustrator, a program he learned in his classes at John Dewey College.

“From the time I was a child, I had an interest in design and wanted to get an advanced degree,” Lopez said. “Fortunately, my aunt that raised me is a designer and I can look to her for guidance.”

Visit the [Centennial](#) section of ACICS.org to view a full profile of each of the winners and learn more about the inspiration for the top three winning designs.

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About the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

Founded in 1912, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) is one of the most respected and longest established national accreditors of academic institutions in the United States. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). ACICS accredits more than 800 private post-secondary institutions offering certificates or diplomas, as well as institutions offering associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees in programs designed to educate students for professional, technical, or occupational degrees. For more information, please visit www.acics.org.

About the ACICS Centennial

ACICS will recognize its 100 years of service throughout 2012 with a number of events and initiatives designed to engage schools, faculty, students, and employers in the community. In May, ACICS will launch a week-long [community service initiative](#) to provide an opportunity for schools and students to give back to the communities in which they serve. In November, the ACICS Centennial Gala in Las Vegas will highlight the agency’s rich history of serving a leading role in helping students gain access to quality career education. Click [here](#) for more information on the ACICS Centennial and related activities.