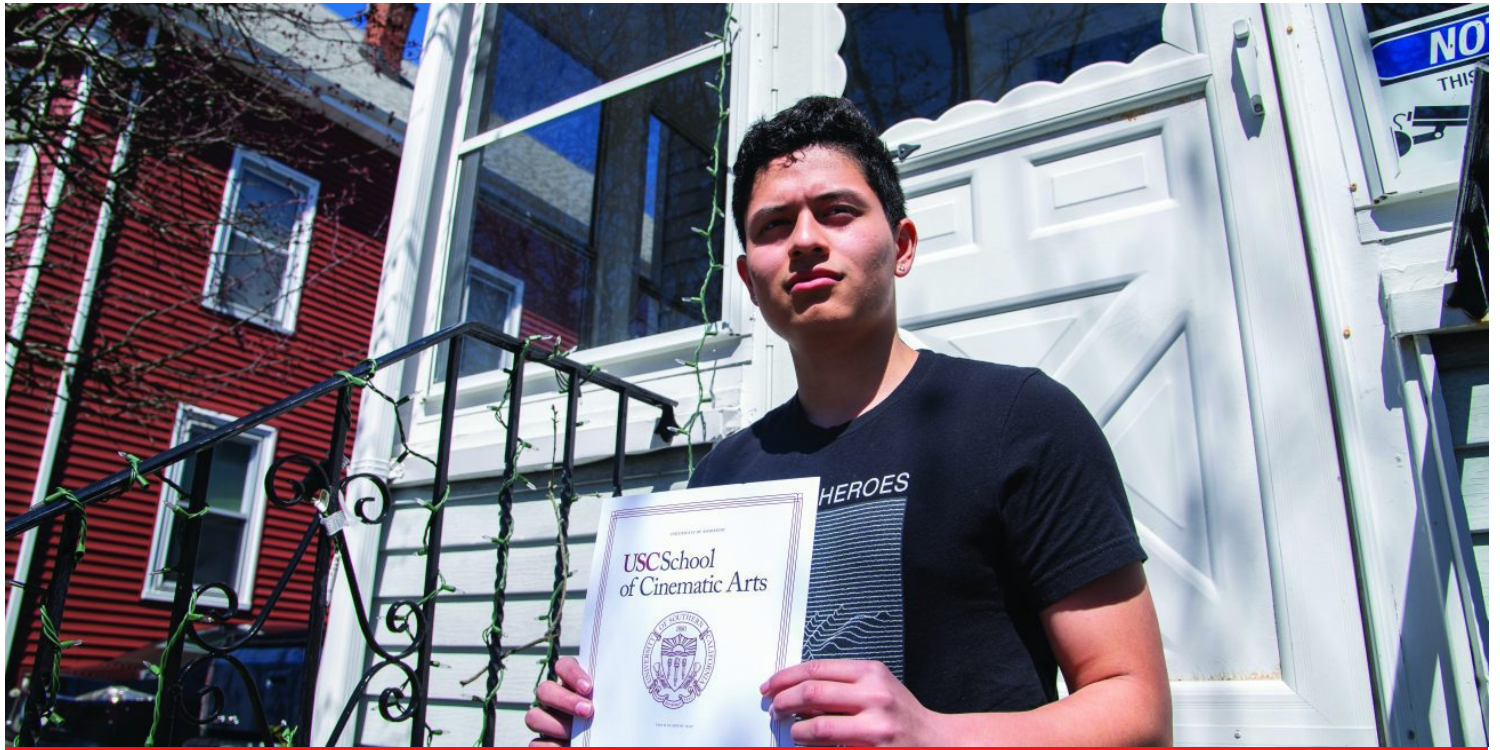


EDUCATION, NEWS

LYNN TECH STUDENT GETS FULL RIDE TO USC

BY ALLYSHA DUNNIGAN | April 11, 2022



Juan Cubides, a first-generation student from Colombia currently enrolled at Lynn Tech, was recently recognized as a Trustee Scholar by the University of Southern California, granting him a full scholarship to the university. (Jakob Menendez)

LYNN — Juan Cubides is graduating from Lynn Vocational Technical Institute this spring and will be taking his love for video games and drawing to the University of Southern California (USC) on a full scholarship for the game-design program.

Cubides applied to other schools as well, but USC was his No. 1 choice.

When he was initially accepted to USC in February, he said it was a normal day that he didn't know would change his life.

"I was just minding my own business and playing video games and I didn't even realize it was the day I was supposed to hear back from USC," Cubides said. "I checked my email around dinner time and saw that I had been accepted into the game-design program and I really just couldn't believe it." Cubides said he went downstairs, with the news still not fully hitting him, and told his family.

"We were all really excited," Cubides said.

He found out about a month later that not only was he accepted, but he was offered a full scholarship to attend.

"My mom asked me to open anything from USC with her... so one morning I woke up early and checked my phone, not expecting anything from USC, and saw that I had something from them," he said. "I thought they were probably just asking for more information, until I read 'congratulations, you have been awarded a full scholarship to USC.'"

Cubides said his mother recorded him reading the email and she was so excited and happy for him.

"I think she was more excited than me at first. It was awesome," he said.

The award he received is a very competitive and exclusive scholarship. Cubides was automatically entered in by applying for the program before Dec. 20.

He did an interview via Zoom — essentially a casual conversation to just get to know him.

On the day of the interview, Cubides decided to wear something that he felt represented him, so he wore a shirt from a game called "No More Heroes."

During the interview, the director of the game-design program asked Cubides about his shirt and told him that he worked with the creator of the game on the original "No More Heroes."

"I just remember thinking 'wow that's so crazy,'" Cubides said. "This is something that ever since I was 10-years-old, when I got my first Wii and my first game was Super Mario, I remember thinking 'wow this is so cool. I wish I could do something like (make) this.'"

Fast forward nearly 10 years later and Cubides is embarking on making his wish come true.

A big factor that he said helped get him into the game-design program is his love for drawing.

Making original drawings and designs is something that Cubides said he never considered doing until recently. Now, he has been working on his own drawings and is in the process of making his own story for a game that is heavily inspired by Lynn and his hometown of Cali, Colombia, where he lived until he was 15.

"I'm going to combine those two parts of my culture to pretty much create a love letter for everything in my life," Cubides said.

In addition to his love for art and games, Cubides is also involved in the community.

He is a member of SkillsUSA at Lynn Tech and has been in the Real to Reel film school at Raw Art Works since his sophomore year. He is currently working on producing a music video with some of his friends from the Real to Reel film school.

The leader of SkillsUSA, Jason McCuish, who also had Cubides in class for two years, described Cubides as an exceptional student and human being.

“Since I first met him, he has continued to inspire me by his humility and the care he shows to his family, friends, and classmates,” McCuish said. “This, coupled with an impressive work ethic, drive and motivation, have helped Juan excel in all aspects of his life. I am so proud of him, and I can barely wait to see what great things the universe has in store for him. This honor is well deserved.”

Cubides thanked McCuish, Raw Art Works, and his friends James Aguilar and Jacob Anderson for supporting him throughout high school and the college application process; his mom, stepdad and brother for always having his back; and the website newgrounds.com for being the inspiration to his art.

Cubides plans to officially commit to USC this week and is looking forward to his future.

“I’m excited to graduate (from Tech) and to close this chapter of my life and open a new one,” Cubides said. “It’s been a wild ride, but I know it’s just getting started.”



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Allysha joined the Daily Item in 2021 after graduating with a degree in Media and Communications from Salem State University. She is a Lynn native and a graduate of Lynn Classical High School.

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