



## Transfer Success Story

### **Eduardo Perez**

A.S., Wilbur Wright College, 2015

B.S., Illinois Tech, 2020

There is always a way to overcome adversity. My college education wasn't a simple line from A to B; it took me eight years to obtain my bachelor's degree. After high school, my parents wanted me to go to college to have a better life. I would be the first in my family to go to college. But I was faced with some challenges before college even started. My mom was the only source of income in my family as my dad suffered a stroke and was no longer able to work. Pursuing a college education seemed like a pipe dream, but I knew that I needed to go to college and to set an example for my younger siblings.

While attending Roosevelt High School, I was involved in GEAR UP and Genesys Works, programs that assist low-income students in pursuing post-secondary education. During my junior year, I was accepted into the Genesys Works program which provided IT training, preparation for college and an internship during my senior year of high school. Through their assistance, I was admitted to Northern Illinois University and Wilbur Wright College. Financially, I couldn't attend NIU, so I enrolled at Wright College with the goal to obtain my associate degree and transfer to an engineering school.

At Wright, I struggled with time management. I was attending my classes, working part time, and helping my family. This took a toll on my studies, causing me to drop classes and delay my graduation. I persisted through the difficulties of managing a rigorous course load. My internship as an IT desktop support tech helped me to identify my passion for and interest in computers; and I solidified my major as a result of my English 102 and Physics 236 classes. English 102's research topic on how engineers created the foundation of modern computers, and Physics 236's focus on electricity and magnetism excited me and helped me to understand computers more. Through hard work and determination, I completed my associate degree in 2015 with a 3.3 GPA and transferred to Armour College of Engineering at Illinois Tech (IIT).

Transferring into Illinois Tech was overwhelming for me academically and socially. The dramatic increase in coursework made me feel unprepared. I started to question my ability to complete the degree. As one of my engineering professors said, "There are no excuses in life, only management of your priorities." I reevaluated myself and changed my daily habits to prioritize my academics. I met other students walking the same path and joined the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers at IIT (SHPE-IIT). Their network and support made me feel welcome and part of the familia. I was also a member of the NASA Robotics Mining Team and was an electrical engineering intern at Continental AG during my senior year. These extracurricular activities helped me develop my skill set and seek career opportunities in my areas of interest.

When I graduated in 2020, the pandemic heavily affected the job hunt, but it didn't deter me from applying to numerous job opportunities. Three months after graduation, I secured a career with Motorola Solutions: Applied Technology as a PCB design engineer. As a design engineer, I work closely with electrical and mechanicals when designing new boards. As students, you will meet challenges and setbacks, but you will learn from your struggles, approach problems from different angles and find there is always a way to overcome adversity.