

Students Molly Walter, Stephanie Wizorek, Andrew Maletto, Ayla Church, Dan Mauro and Laina Stanek show off their design work at the final day of Immersions on Friday, Oct. 24 in the Cantellops Art Gallery.

Students Collaborate in 60-Hour Design Challenge

This semester La Roche College graphic design students learned what it takes to conceptualize, develop and design projects for a real-world client – all within a 60-hour time frame.

From Oct. 21 to Oct. 24, the La Roche Design Division hosted Immersions, an annual design challenge in which student graphic designers have two and a half days to create concepts, develop solutions and pitch their projects to an outside client.

This year teams of juniors and seniors developed design solutions for Global Links, a Pittsburgh-based medical relief and development organization dedicated to promoting environmental stewardship and improving health in resource-poor communities, primarily in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Global Links challenged students to create promotional items for encouraging donations and inspiring community members to host fundraising parties.

Linn Ruiz-Goubert, a senior at La Roche, said, "The biggest challenge was that the client presented a small goal, and we had to find a way to broaden it in a unique way."

On the final day of the challenge, the teams presented their final projects to Maura O'Neill, development manager for Global Links, and Community Engagement Manager Stacy Bodow.

Students incorporated a variety of elements to support their design concepts, including color palettes reflecting Latin American and Caribbean culture, and social media to connect with a broader audience.

Dan Mauro, a junior, explained that research played an important role in developing a design concept.

"La Roche did a great job preparing us by thoroughly going through the ideation phases, which is a big part of design that people often overlook," he said. "A lot of our time and energy is devoted to researching and coming up with the idea."

By participating in Immersions, students learn how to perform under the pressure of strict deadlines.

In the process, students also discover how teamwork goes a long way in the professional world of graphic design.

"Our team members really helped us through this. We all collaborated together and had fun with it, which took the pressure off our shoulders," Mr. Mauro said. "We worked with each other's strengths and weaknesses, and I think it all just balanced out into a solid design."

Allison Benard, a senior, said her past experiences inside of the classroom at La Roche prepared her for working within a team under major time constraints.

"Our design classes taught us how to work together because our instructors make us work in groups all the time. Sometimes you're going to clash, and you're not always going to agree, but our classes taught us how to deal with that, move forward and come together for a strong group presentation and design," she explained.

The 60-hour design challenge not only offers practical experience for working effectively in teams and managing time, – it also teaches students how to listen to clients and conduct relevant research.

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>
> – Junior Dan Mauro

Assistant Professor and Graphic Design Department Chair Neha Agarwal said, "Students learn the power of design. They see the significant role design can play across a variety of causes, industries, audiences and mediums."

She added, "Students spend a significant amount of time carefully planning the content and rehearsing the delivery of their presentations. Sacrificing substance for presentation quality, or the other way around, is ultimately ineffective design."

Please visit **designatlaroche.com** for more information about the La Roche Design Division.

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