

*Chapter 11*<sup>\*</sup>  
Advice from  
Alumni of the  
Communication  
Design & Strategy  
Department at the  
College for Creative  
Studies



<sup>\*</sup>I have no idea what chapter number this is supposed to be. Eleven is just a guess.



## QUESTION 1

Could you share your post-graduation journey—where did your career path lead you immediately after CCS?

My senior year internship turned into a full time junior art director position with Brooklyn based Huge, who had offices in Birmingham at the time. I left Huge as a senior art director and **landed in-house at Converse** as a lead digital designer before going freelance. As a freelancer, I cater to tech startups looking for brand strategy and visual identity to help secure venture capitalist funding.

Reed (Nowels) Hoffman CLASS OF 2019

I **worked at Marwil bookstore** until about 6 months after I graduated and found a job as a designer at a tiny design studio.

I had my children, worked at a great company and taught a graphic design class at OCC.

Libby Cole CLASS OF 2004

Sydney Finney  
CLASS OF 2021

Post Grad I was hired full time at the job I was working part time at during my senior year at CCS. I am a Junior Art Director at Woodward Collective, a merchandise and branding agency in Ferndale, Michigan. I went into the job interested in Branding and was transparent about that. Now, im soley put on branding projects because it's my strong suit!

Bri Powers CLASS OF 2024



Question 1 (Continued)

Could you share your post-graduation journey—where did your career path lead you immediately after CCS?

My career path lead to a small branding agency in Chicago, IL. I enjoyed many hot dogs as well as learning about the fast paced industry. My quick Exacto knife skills came in handy as well as knowing how to handle the fast paced turnover.

I took a break with the smaller agency and screen printed some wacky things in-between.

Then, I moved to a fun global advertising agency that specializes in social focused digital clients!

Vivienne Apsey CLASS OF 2019

Networking is no joke! I got my first job as an in-house designer at Mike Morse Law Firm because one of my friends in EA did leadership dogs for the blind with them. She heard they were needing a graphic designer, so I got their email through my friend and contacted them directly. Got an interview before they even put up a job posting, and that was that. A good takeaway is this: Don't be afraid to email companies directly. It doesn't matter if they have a job posting up or not; you'd be surprised how many places need a designer.

Amber Brunett CLASS OF 2024

*"A good takeaway  
is this: Don't be  
afraid to email  
companies directly."*



Right after CCS I started freelancing until I was able to find a full-time position.

Jessica Kuhlman  
CLASS OF 2022

I had held a job at Milk & Froth from my junior year until November after graduating. I also got an internship with Design Core in the TC post graduation through recommendation of my Creative Director, Katie Kunesch, at the school's Marketing office. The internship was supposed to last just the 8 weeks after graduating in early May. They ended up liking me and my work enough to extend that until the end of September.

I ended up getting to know a few people through Design Core, Leah Faust at LFNCO. being one of them. Frances Bernardo (shoutout Frances) in the Design Core office introduced us when she and I were at RedHook co-working. Leah and LFNCO. offered me some freelance work and I ended up contributing to the opening of Neighbor x Folk in Michigan Central Station. Neighbor x Folk is an extension of the café, Folk, in Corktown on the corner of Trumbull and Bagley.

Through LFNCO. and that project, I got a job with Neighbor x Folk – originally as a retail associate and then shortly after that, Event, Retail, and Design Associate. I left Milk & Froth in November of 2024 after 2 years of working there.

Sophie Boysen CLASS OF 2024

Right after CCS I ended up taking a three month internship in Dublin, Ireland. There I worked for an event design company. I ended up designing for one of Ireland's largest children's halloween events. I also got to work on signage for an immersive experience bar in London called Alcatraz.

Samantha Belle  
CLASS OF 2019

At the advice of a family friend, I skipped getting an internship and instead got a job at a small printing company. I would help with prepress and doing designs for local businesses, like flyers, business cards and some logo designs. This really helped with my real world understanding of print design.

Allison Graw  
CLASS OF 2004





**Question 1** *(Continued)*

Could you share your post-graduation journey—where did your career path lead you immediately after CCS?

Immediately after graduating in 1992 with a degree in Graphic Design I secured a position as a keyliner at a print shop here in metro Detroit. It was invaluable experience and an interesting first job, but I moved on pretty quickly into the advertising world as a Designer and eventually an Art Director. Through the following 30+ years of working my career took a bunch of twists and turns as the environment we live in changed. For example, when I started things were still done manually, computers to design on were more of a rarity (communal resources rather than sitting on every desk or lap), people could still smoke in their offices, smart phones didn't exist, the Internet wasn't a thing and smart phones were a distant invention. I was (and still am) curious and an early adopter. So I embraced computers while I was still in school when few did. When the internet came around I volunteered to be one of the first computers connected in the office. I kept that spirit throughout my career.

I moved up through creative management and through the changing landscape. I seized opportunities as they presented themselves and looked interesting.

That approach took me from traditional design, though traditional advertising, then “digital” advertising, social media, marketing/technology innovation and invention, and finally where I am now in Customer Experience Design (CX).

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**Scott Lange** CLASS OF 1992

I kept going with painting, design, and music but ultimately committed to UX design when I started a family and needed the steady loot.

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**Marc Nischan**

CLASS OF 2003

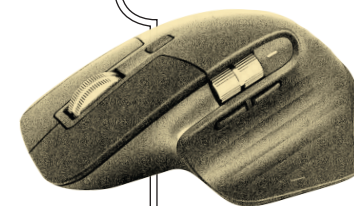
I immediately starting working at small agencies and design studios in the area. After a decade or so, I branched out and started my own company.

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**Carl S. Johnson**

CLASS OF 2001

*“This initial set  
of experiences  
was monumental in  
developing my skills  
professionally.”*



After CCS I was focused on being a multi-faceted designer, going in and out of a few different design studios while freelancing a little bit on the side. This initial set of experiences was monumental in developing my skills professionally. Eventually I decided I needed to fill in a gap and joined a large tech company. After that I fully went out on my own and formed an independent studio.

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**Nick Hart** CLASS OF 2018

Immediately after graduation I worked locally in my respective field at Defrost Design in Royal Oak. I was recruited by another CCS Alumni shortly after graduation to join a studio in Boston that focused on toy packaging design and branding. I move out to Boston and started to work at Pilot Studio, I stayed at this role for about a year, I quickly realized I wanted to pivot my career to textile design and patterning. I started a personal blog (this was cool then) to kick-off sharing my pattern work. I picked up some freelance projects and was able to make my way into the Automotive world back in Detroit.

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**Rachael Claeys** CLASS OF 2009

I had a job locally remote before graduation which I was very grateful for and led me to bigger and better opportunities.

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**Owen Porter**

CLASS OF 2021







## QUESTION 2

How do you evaluate career opportunities now, and what advice would you give to recent graduates about searching for jobs?

Always keep looking forward! You may have to take a gig to pay the bills, but keep your portfolio up to date and look around for opportunities. Meet other people that do what you like to do and keep in touch.

Marc Nischan *CLASS OF 2003*

I ask myself some questions in the following order: "will I enjoy doing this," "will I gain experience and grow from this" and then I consider "is this compensation fair for the value I will deliver." To find jobs, just keep making and creating every day. Look for things that inspire you, and work to replicate similar styles and improve your craft. The internet is a powerful thing that anyone can tap into by finding inspiration and sharing work consistently. We also have the good fortune of being able to reinvent ourselves by curating the work we share. And the best part is, if you make what you're passionate about, that is what you will be hired to make. I'm constantly modeling success off really strong work I see out in the world and I bring that into my day to day.

Nick Hart *CLASS OF 2018*



## Question 2 (Continued)

How do you evaluate career opportunities now, and what advice would you give to recent graduates about searching for jobs?

I think a big thing I continue to learn as a growing professional is no work environment will be a perfect fit. There will always be pros and cons, and sacrifices you need to weigh in deciding where your priorities align and what place is right for you. These desires also shift as your life evolves. Currently, I sacrifice a bit in terms of having smaller project budgets/timelines, because the economic stability, an incredible team of coworkers, clients in the social justice/impact space (who tend to have less dollars for design), and immense learning opportunities at Teal are most important to me. On the harder days (because everyone has them no matter how much we love our jobs), these positives really ground me.

Also, you are young! Take risks. Take the internship! It's okay to work at the not-so-shiny places too—you don't have to be at a big corporation like Nike or some famous boutique design shop to be successful. Leave pride behind. You are just starting out in your career so take the opportunities as they come! There is no shame in getting paid and trying new things as you grow. We all need to make rent.

It's cheesy, but your path isn't going to look like anyone else's and unhealthy comparison kills both joy and growth. Be inspired and learn from others' rather than falling into traps of jealousy and comparison.

Oh, and when reaching out to professionals on LinkedIn: be genuine and thoughtful. Facilitating real connections over coffee chats will get you farther than just treating your messages as a transaction and asking people immediately for a job/favor right out the gate. Even if a person doesn't know of any available opportunities, still ask them for a call to pick their brains and learn about their career journey. You never know who will help you down the line! Do your homework on where folks work (check job postings, company values, peruse projects) and send a link to your portfolio so folks don't have to dig for your skills and qualifications. People get busy, so remove some of the steps for them so they get insight into who you are immediately!

Always keep learning, too. Our programs/tools in industry are changing every day. I've been learning Figma the last few years on the job since it wasn't baked into the CCS program at the time I was a student! Lifelong learners :)

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Madie Graham CLASS OF 2022

Balance is important to me. I don't get excited about a job description if it's asking for a "rockstar who understands hustle culture!" I also don't turn down work if it's simply production, like they need help changing out backgrounds and resizing graphics. I love being a freelance designer because it offers me flexibility—either I'm working on something I love, or working from the comfort of my home on something that I have the skills to help people out with. I never take less money than I'm worth for exposure or because someone's a small business just starting out. Don't sell yourself short. Take the internship or the low paid gig to start out, but don't let anyone tell you that because you're a recent graduate that you aren't worth much—they're hiring you because they're going to make money off of your work. Get something out of it. If the money is really bad, what are the benefits? flexible with remote/hybrid work? health insurance? Be confident in your skills and education. Another thing not enough people mention is, you don't always need to strive for more. You don't need to be the creative director at a top firm if that's not actually what you want. I like less stress and more options. Know what it is you want out of your life, your end goal. Don't let anyone else tell you what that is.

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Allison Graw CLASS OF 2004

A great question to ask at an interview: What is the employee turnover like? If there's a lot of turnover, RUN!! If people are leaving after 1 year or less, there is a reason !!!

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Mariana

CLASS OF 2023

The best opportunities are discovered when getting out and meeting people in person. Although having your portfolio online is crucial—do not rely on the internet, social media and sites such as LinkedIn. I get the most work from referrals. Do good work, make good client relationships and more work and clients will come. Find clients/markets that interest you.

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Matthew Van Der Maas

CLASS OF 2002



Question 2 (Continued)

How do you evaluate career opportunities now, and what advice would you give to recent graduates about searching for jobs?

The job market is definitely tough, but one thing that's helped me the most is networking. Connecting with people on LinkedIn—especially those at companies you admire—can open unexpected doors. Focus on building genuine relationships and staying top of mind for opportunities. My biggest advice to recent graduates is to put yourself out there, be proactive, and stay patient. The right opportunity will come when the time is right.

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Jordan Mickey CLASS OF 2023

There will be lots of rejection but it's always good to get experience in interviewing and making connections through them even if you don't get the job. Always make sure the company you work for has appreciation for your skills and doesn't take advantage of you. It is hard to gauge but make sure you take care of yourself first and communicate with those in leadership positions.

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Jessica Kuhlman

CLASS OF 2022

Hang in there. Believe in yourself. You are a true creative. All it takes is for someone—one person—to give you a chance, and they will. And you'll be off to the races.

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Carl S. Johnson

CLASS OF 2001

Sometimes those who don't excel in class do excel in the real world and vice versa. Don't be discouraged by those around you and focus on yourself. Always have a side passion project that you work on, it will keep you sane and give expand your opportunities.

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Owen Porter CLASS OF 2021

*"Don't be discouraged  
by those around  
you and focus  
on yourself."*



The most promising job opportunities have come through the connections I've made at CCS and with my community. Honestly I fucking hate networking with a fucking passion. But knowing people is how I got my current job. Connections, I've found, will guarantee you an interview. Doesn't mean you'll get the job, that depends on whether or not you bomb the interview (which I have done quite a few times). ALSO. If you have terrible social anxiety and just anxiety around interviews in general, I have found success going into interviews pretending like I'm calling my mom just to chat. Think of someone you love calling and feel at ease with and that has changed my mindset from "Oh no what if I fuck this up?" My actions determine whether or not I get this job and whether or not I can make rent and groceries and my phone bill and my car payment and my credit card bill and my blah blah blah."

Pretend you're calling your mom. Or a friend. Takes so much pressure off your shoulders.

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Sophie Boysen CLASS OF 2024

Holding onto connections. Reaching out to Alumni. Social meetings with people and making it a point to connect on any type of media.

I truly feel like people value a smile, good handshake, and asking how their crazy day has been definitely goes a long way.

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Vivienne Apsey CLASS OF 2019

The economy and job market is pretty bad right now, so I recommend getting what job you can and improving your portfolio while you're working. However, I know a couple people that waited a year and got a good job, so it's really up to your living situation.

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Amber Brunett CLASS OF 2024

If you don't have someone at your job to learn from/someone to push you/someone to compete with, find a new opportunity!

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Joe Benghauser

CLASS OF 2012







### QUESTION 3

What's the biggest difference between design school and professional work in terms of both skills and day-to-day experience?

I'm having to do a lot more marketing and business than anticipated. Since our department is super tiny, I have to wear a lot of hats (including copywriting, organizing campaigns, running events, etc). I also have to be very self-motivated and proactive about assigning myself things to work on. Can't be idle.

Amber Brunett CLASS OF 2024



You have a lot less time and freedom, creatively. When you are starting out, you are often mainly on production tasks and honing in those tangible/foundational design skills. Not every project is going to be a master piece: sometimes it's just about getting it done to the best of your capability in tight budgets, and keeping it simple for easy-use by non-designer clients. Canva is an incredible tool for accessible design and it's not stealing our jobs! I think I had a lot more room to be experimental in college, while in the real world, you are balancing so many factors such as differentiated opinions, art directors' visions, budgets, deadlines etc. Then you are balancing your first years in a adulthood away from your college community on top of starting out your career! That was one of the hardest parts for me, was no longer being at CCS with all of my closest friends and support systems. Art college is such an incredible and one-of-a-kind experience. Creative community outside of college can be a bit more isolating. It's important to find other outlets for your creative energy outside of your job!

Madie Graham CLASS OF 2022

Question 3 (Continued)

What's the biggest difference between design school and professional work in terms of both skills and day-to-day experience?

Design is an occupation. At the end of the day the client has to approve your work. Like any relationship, the more you understand your client, the better your experience will be. School is fun and very personal the reality after school is you are paid for your work and they own it.

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Matthew Van Der Maas CLASS OF 2002

The “process” as we know it from CCS is sometimes non-existent in professional life. Tight deadlines often mean you just have to do the best you can with what you know.

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Joe Benghauser CLASS OF 2012

Design school definitely prepares you to juggle multiple projects and deadlines at once, which translates well into professional work. However, one of the biggest differences is the shift from purely creative exploration to solving real-world business challenges. In school, you have more creative freedom, but in the industry, you're designing with strategy, brand guidelines, and business goals in mind. Collaboration also changes—you're not just working with other designers but also marketing teams, clients, and stakeholders who may not have a design background. Learning to communicate your ideas effectively and take constructive feedback is just as important as the technical skills.

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Jordan Mickey CLASS OF 2023

*“Learning to communicate  
your ideas effectively and  
take constructive feedback  
is just as important as  
the technical skills.”*



The stakes are higher once you're out of school. You're dependent on making a living to support yourself and/or others you love. That seems like an obvious difference, but it hits hard.

Much of my role now as a leader is teaching those who work for/with me. So “people skills” are INCREDIBLY important. More than you think. Way more!

Creative skills are only part of the equation. In order to go far you also need to be curious about how business works, operations, human resources, strategy, and financial concerns. Become a renaissance person, a generalist who is adaptable to problem solving in many different ways. That's what creativity is, it's problem solving.

Your lessons don't stop when you graduate. What you learn at CCS only scratches the surface, most of your lessons come in the years after you leave school.

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Scott Lange CLASS OF 1992

Depending on where you work, everywhere is different, the stakes are lowered in some places while raised in others that you wouldn't expect. Be willing to adapt and to be part of a team with a bigger vision in mind rather than just your own. Working well with others will get you far.

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Owen Porter CLASS OF 2021

There's not always time for in depth processes. When working for clients make sure to take the feedback and run with it.

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Jessica Kuhlman  
CLASS OF 2022





Question 3 (Continued)

What's the biggest difference between design school and professional work in terms of both skills and day-to-day experience?

Design school teaches you the tools of how to physically make the thing you're trying to achieve, the liberty of creative freedom, patience with teamwork, and discipline of knowing what you need to do to complete those things.

Professional work adds other variables into all of that, but they're good variables because you have more minds working together. There's legal, print deadlines that aren't negotiable.

It's not always perfect because of those variables, but you have a team of people behind rooting for you, since they know you can do it.

Vivienne Apsey CLASS OF 2019

In my experience, especially in more corporate settings, something that might take like a week to do in design school takes like a month or more to do at work. The larger the team/company, the longer it takes to get from ideation to final product.

Mariana CLASS OF 2023

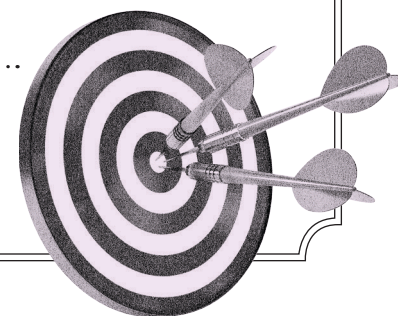
You really have to be able to talk to people who don't fully understand design, and vice versa also receive feedback and listen to people. In school, I felt it was easier to disregard other's voices! Day-to-day you have to pace your work and other responsibilities for yourself in a way that is less structured than at school.

Libby Cole CLASS OF 2004

*"You really have to be able to talk to people who don't fully understand design, and vice versa"*



*"Although clients can be picky, they usually are very impressed and can help build your confidence"*



Turnaround times...during school you have so much time to refine and research...in the professional world I'm lucky if I get a week! You got to learn to be fast, and creative. At least at my job...I get a mood board and some information about the client and that's about it! Overall though I would say I have more fun at work because although clients can be picky, they usually are very impressed and can help build your confidence whereas at school I felt so much imposter syndrome being around so many talented people and having to face critiques every week that made me feel like my direction wasn't understood.

Bri Powers CLASS OF 2024

There was a lot of romanticization of overworking, exhaustion, reaching mental breaking points, etc. when I was at CCS. It's not so cute to crash out in a professional setting. When you're salaried you do not get paid overtime for all-nighters, so it's really on you to manage the workload, seek support and advocate for yourself before you're burnt out.

Reed (Nowels) Hoffman CLASS OF 2019

Design school is way more fun

Sydney Finney

CLASS OF 2021

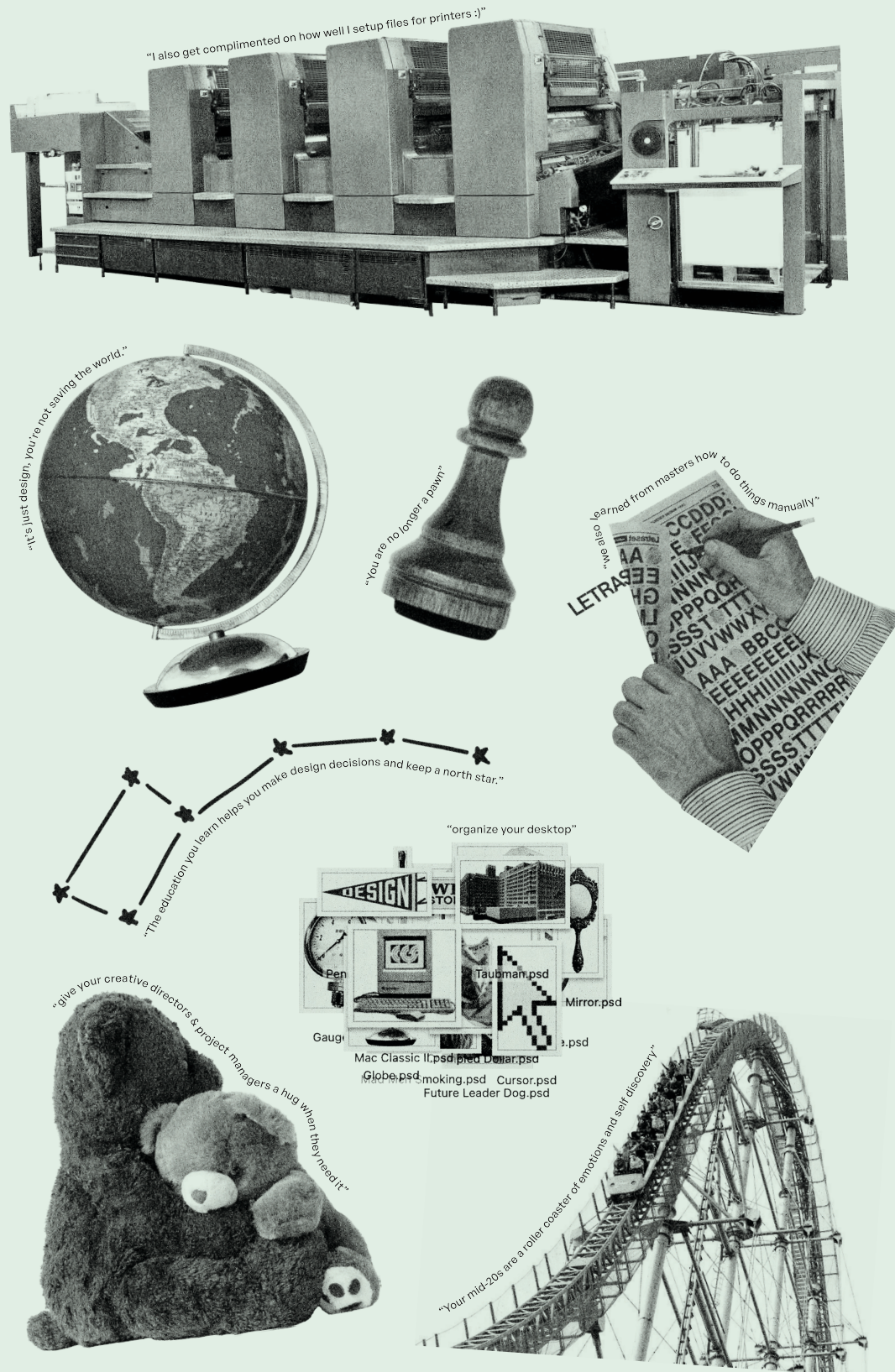
One thing I've learned is that design school is way harder than professional work. Clients are for the most part extremely happy with whatever you come up with.

Samantha Belle

CLASS OF 2019







## QUESTION 4

Looking back at your time  
at CCS, what were your most  
valuable takeaways—from  
education, professionalism,  
time-management,  
prioritization strategies,  
to coping strategies?

Everything!!! However, a big thing my boss has complimented me on is my ability to take critiques in stride. She asked if that's just my personality or if I learned it in school. I said that's the biggest thing we learn at CCS!

Amber Brunett *CLASS OF 2024*

I was VERY fortunate to go to CCS when I did. It was an important transition period in design. Things were very experimental, but we also learned from masters how to do things manually (drawing, setting type, keylining, etc.) Those are skills that are obsolete now, but gave me a foundation of understanding that I was very fortunate to have.

That was my most valuable take away from CCS was the opportunity to learn from truly masterfully skilled practitioners. I feel very fortunate for that.

Scott Lange *CLASS OF 1992*



Question 4 (Continued)

Looking back at your time at CCS, what were your most valuable takeaways—from education, professionalism, time-management, prioritization strategies, to coping strategies?

My favorite advice I received by Professor Raupp still stands for me to this day: “The best designers don’t have a style, because they’re main priority is to serve the goals of their clients,” and also, “It’s just design, you’re not saving the world.” Make sure to keep in touch with all your creative/design friends from CCS! It’s so important to have people to lean on as you discover your creative practice and career. Your mid-20s are a roller coaster of emotions and self discovery—we need our people. Every May near our graduation date, my CCS friends hop on a group call to catch-up and talk about our lives/industry.

Madie Graham CLASS OF 2022

CCS does a phenomenal job at disseminating design culture to its students. I think a lot of public schools lack this. I already mentioned it, but the atmosphere of design school is unlike any other. You get pushed hard, but I miss a lot of what CCS creates for its students. The education you learn helps you make design decisions and keep a north star. Project deadlines were effective in emulating the fast-paced professional world where, if you move faster, you can make more money, but also the quality of work may suffer and you need to learn how to not sacrifice the quality of work. These are realities that I learned first during my time at CCS. I’ve always written out physical lists and wrote on sticky notes to help me remember. These strategies have helped me in life after CCS. Also getting plenty of sleep. Take naps if you have to. Your brain will work better and you’ll feel better.

Nick Hart CLASS OF 2018

I found the education around process and research super valuable and have definitely kept those parts in my own work. Also the professionalism, at the time if felt very unique to CCS (maybe still is?), but the “practicum” class which is similar to current version of sponsored projects where students work with clients on “real” projects to be integral to my confidence moving into real client work. I also get complimented on how well I setup files for printers :) which I was introduced to at CCS while working on these projects. AND I worked on SPINE! at least once... maybe twice- I can’t remember LOL!

Libby Cole CLASS OF 2004

Do fun stuff outside of work, give your creative directors & project managers a hug when they need it, cut yourself a break once in a while, understand that it’s all good and you’re going to be good!

Vivienne Apsey CLASS OF 2019

Looking back at my time at CCS, one of the biggest takeaways was learning how to manage multiple projects at once. The fast-paced environment forced me to develop strong time-management and prioritization skills—balancing coursework, freelance projects, and leadership roles taught me how to meet deadlines without sacrificing quality.

From an educational standpoint, CCS instilled in me the importance of strategy in design. It’s not just about making something look good; it’s about creating work that communicates effectively and serves a purpose. Professionally, I learned how to take and apply constructive feedback, which is crucial in the industry.

Coping with stress was also a big lesson. CCS pushed me to my limits at times, but I found that breaking tasks into smaller steps, setting realistic deadlines, and allowing myself creative breaks helped keep burnout at bay. Looking back, those skills have been just as important in my career as the design knowledge itself.

Jordan Mickey CLASS OF 2023

*“I found that breaking  
tasks into smaller steps,  
setting realistic deadlines,  
and allowing myself  
creative breaks helped  
keep burnout at bay.”*



Question 4 (Continued)

Looking back at your time at CCS, what were your most valuable takeaways—from education, professionalism, time-management, prioritization strategies, to coping strategies?

The most valuable thing I learned at CCS was about the power of design, and the way we see it as art, not just a career. Playing with type, image, hierarchy. Listening to critiques with an open mind and not being offended. Staying all night if you really need to but then giving yourself time after to decompress. Coffee and camaraderie. I remember being unsure when I started my career if I learned enough about the actual programs, setting things up for print, interviewing, etc. but I came to realize the tools I came away with, the way I learned about design and concepts and presentation, were way more valuable than any kind of business training I could have received.

Allison Graw CLASS OF 2004

All of it. As time and experience goes by you will build on these skills and have personal strategies that work for you. Being a design student is the best time to experiment and have fun. Hopefully after graduation you can find work and clients who value design as much as we do and you can continue to experiment and have fun while achieving client objectives. Research, understanding and process is as important as the curriculum will tell you.

Matthew Van Der Maas CLASS OF 2002

*“Find work and clients  
who value design as  
much as we do”*

The most valuable thing I developed while at CCS was confidence. Learning skills beyond graphic design (book-binding, welding, wood-working, screen printing, letterpress, etc.) that demystified a lot of processes that once have overwhelmed me.

Joe Benghauser  
CLASS OF 2012

If something isn't working for you, make a change. If an instructor or program isn't giving you what you need, make a change... say something. You are at a world class institution paying world class tuition - you are the best person to determine how it will serve you. You are no longer a pawn, a head in a seat, like in high school. You are a paying customer, get yours. Also, you must commit to give everything you have in service of your goal. Pour yourself into it. If you are willing to do these things you will be unstoppable.

Marc Nischan CLASS OF 2003

I think what set CCS grads apart from others is that you get pushed to your breaking point sometimes, you feel like you have to invent something that's never been done before. You're pushed to explore and never stop making, which can sometimes be a bit toxic. However, I think that type of mindset allows us to see design opportunities from everything, to find symbolism in small details, and overall be more creative and innovative. Additionally, time management was a huge takeaway for me, learning how to balance work and life, and also short deadlines. With all the work you had to balance at CCS anything seems possible!

Bri Powers CLASS OF 2024

The biggest takeaways are to have some type of process, organize your desktop, and make sure you are getting feedback from other designers or just fresh eyes on things. It always helps to have someone else check your work.

Jessica Kuhlman  
CLASS OF 2022

From an education perspective, process is very important to arrive at a well thought out solution. Professional development is really valuable, and CCS treats students like professionals, with tight deadlines and deliverables I felt well prepared for the real world. Prioritizing is definitely a skill we had to use to develop during college, based on your class load and project deliverables. Being organized and tracking your projects keeps you aligned with what to do next!

Rachael Claeys CLASS OF 2009







## QUESTION 5

### Beyond work, what brings you fulfillment—both in creative pursuits and life in general?

Friends and family. Exercise. Any type of design that *isn't* graphic design—interior design, industrial design, fine arts. I enjoy learning how to build things and how to fix things.

Joe Benghauser CLASS OF 2012

Making my silly little drawings and personal projects, being in and a part of nature, being with the people that I love.

Allison Graw  
CLASS OF 2004

I find fulfillment in creating things and in committing to improving my life. I like to read, apply things I've learned, and track progress. I get so much out of looking back and seeing tangible results. This can be things like focusing on mental health, meditation, being happier. Or it can be getting into an exercise routine—great for living a balanced life. Finding and connecting with amazing people is another wonderful thing. We can accomplish remarkable things in our professional and personal lives and it's a fun journey to embark on.

Nick Hart CLASS OF 2018

Spending quality time with loved ones, traveling (if you have the means), trying new restaurants, cooking soups, journaling, therapy, and playing guitar/songwriting.

Madie Graham CLASS OF 2022



Question 5 (Continued)

Beyond work, what brings you fulfillment—both in creative pursuits and life in general?

Beyond work, I find fulfillment in making others happy—whether that's through my creative work or in everyday life. There's something incredibly rewarding about bringing a client's vision to life and knowing that my designs have a real impact. Creativity has always been a way for me to connect with people, tell stories, and inspire.

Outside of that, family is everything to me. The time I spend with loved ones keeps me grounded and reminds me why I work so hard. Whether it's sharing a meal, celebrating wins together, or just having meaningful conversations, those moments bring me the most joy.

Jordan Mickey CLASS OF 2023

Being a creative is my passion, using my skills and knowledge everyday to guide others at work is really an amazing opportunity. Over the years I have found it critical to keep my own creative spark going through continuing to make and create. I've sold items, done craft shows and designed aspects of my home. Currently I have a small pottery side hustle. I'm also a mother of two amazing kids, who I enjoy making art with and instilling creativity.

Rachael Claeys CLASS OF 2009

Always learning. I believe the best part of being a designer is researching, discovering and understanding new things. These things not always relate to design but can be applied in solving design problems. Bored people are boring.

Matthew Van Der Maas CLASS OF 2002

*"The best part of being a designer is researching, discovering and understanding new things."*



Touching grass! Literally and metaphorically. I feel fulfilled when connected with nature and other humans and creating using analog means. I love figma so much I could cry about it, so it's been important to find some analog outlets for creativity. Cooking, gardening and introducing my 1 year old to crayons has been great for me.

Reed (Nowels) Hoffman CLASS OF 2019

I highly recommend finding hobbies that allow you to step away from screens. Sometimes work can suck all of your creativity and energy out of you, so it's important to have things you enjoy doing that are fulfilling outside of work.

Mariana CLASS OF 2023

I am learning how to have hobbies again, outside of being creative. It's sad, and not everyone will be the same as me, but CCS has drained the joy out of creative expression for personal enjoyment. I still enjoy design and drawing but I never do it for myself anymore.

I moved into my own apartment after graduating and even though I was dying to have my own place during senior year, it didn't hit me until the first week at my new place that I was so fucking lonely. So I've been going to cafés to work, just to get me out of my apartment during the days I work from home.

I didn't grow up in America so I didn't have friends when I came to CCS. It took a lot of courage but attending events and going to do things by myself is what got me some of my favorite jobs and how I made some of my closest friends. Doing things by yourself is lonely sometimes but it's so rewarding.

Living by yourself is a double-edged sword so to speak, or whatever the saying is.

Sophie Boysen CLASS OF 2024

Game nights, personal projects, geeking out on creative shows like Severance 🧐

Vivienne Apsey CLASS OF 2019



Question 5 (Continued)

Beyond work, what brings you fulfillment—both in creative pursuits and life in general?

This will make me sound like a horrible designer, but I refuse to do graphic design in my spare time. I believe it's super important to create a divide between my personal and professional life. In my personal life, I'm most fulfilled when painting, writing, sewing, reading, socializing, etc. I have too many hobbies to count, and I like it that way. :)

Amber Brunett CLASS OF 2024

*"I believe it's super important to create a divide between my personal and professional life."*



again, having a passion outside of work that still aligns with your creative potential. Lately in my off time I've been having fun making collages, both digital and physical, making music, and writing. Finding ways to use your other talents to incorporate those into your studied field.

Owen Porter CLASS OF 2021

A good meal and a good show/movie. I moved to ferndale post grad to be closer to work and I love going to try a new restaurant or going to trader joes and making a fun dinner. Then sitting down with my girlfriend and our cats to watch whatever show we are watching, rehash our days...it's the most relaxing and fulfilling time for me.

Bri Powers CLASS OF 2024

Family, passion projects, music and friends.

Marc Nischan

CLASS OF 2003

My family (and also art)

Sydney Finney

CLASS OF 2021

*"Those who work with their minds, relax with their hands."*



First, the life I've built for myself and my family. Second, embracing my curiosity and making things.

Someone told me once or I read it somewhere that "those who work with their minds, relax with their hands." I am a serial tinkerer. I have a workshop and I dabble in woodworking, metal work, sewing, embroidery, printing, repairing things, working on my house.

I'm a sailor, a new beekeeper, I grow vegetables, I love the outdoors. The list goes on.

Scott Lange CLASS OF 1992

Art, faith, music and culture. Staying creative, inspired, and working on personal projects.

Carl S. Johnson CLASS OF 2001

Spending time with friends and family and engaging in the community I live in, going to events and such

Jessica Kuhlman

CLASS OF 2022





## Who's your favorite designer?

In your opinion, what point size  
should body text be? (on average)

At the time you graduated, what was the department called?

## What's your current favorite typeface?

