

Raven Anson

Personal Statement

Community college had never really been on my radar when I was in high school. Yet life had other plans for me. The fall after graduation I enrolled at a four-year institution. But due to a medical issue, I was unable to continue there and came back home. It took me a year to recover, and by then I had missed the start of the fall semester. Rather than sit around until the spring semester began, I enrolled at my local community college. Initially I thought I would be there for a quarter or two, but things went better than expected.

I have always had lots of interests, but I would not have been able to tell you in high school what I wanted to major in. When I enrolled in community college, I decided to figure out which interests I wanted to pursue. I had been excited when I learned my first high school offered theater technology courses, and disappointed when, after my family moved, my second high school did not even have a theater. Community college provided my first real chance to explore this. So, I signed up for a couple of theater tech courses. Studying Japanese was also a simple choice. Since middle school I had been trying to teach myself Japanese, so I could understand one of my favorite bands, which was from Japan.

I came to theater technology from a studio art background and with a love for painting. In the theater tech world, most tech workers are willing to do it all. They will help hang lights, build the set, work on crew, and do pretty much anything that needs to be done. The one exception is painting. Scenic painting is probably the messiest job in a theater. As a result, it is often shunned by the other workers. This is where I came along. I was unafraid of the mess and I truly enjoy working with paint.

Slowly, I discovered that people also avoid scenic painting because of the time crunch. Paint is always the last thing to happen because set construction, for the most part, needs to be finished before painting can begin. I usually work right up through preview, putting final touches on just before opening night. Nevertheless, I love all of it. I love being able to create different times and places for the audience to experience. It does not matter to me if I am building sets, running the spotlights, or simply painting; I love seeing the faces on the audience at the end of the night and hearing the excited chatter about what had happened during the show. Theater tech was one area I wanted to pursue further.

Along with theater tech, I was studying Japanese. The more I explored Japanese, the more it dawned on me that it really was my passion and I wanted to major in it. I also realized that the best way to learn a language, outside of immersion, is in a classroom. In class, a professor can explain the subtle nuances of words; on your own, you miss those cultural connotations. And conversations with classmates are much richer than simply parroting sentences back to a computer.

Unfortunately, not many universities have theater technology departments, let alone theater tech and Japanese. I happened to be studying at a college with a strong theater tech department, but that was unusual. It quickly became clear to me that to study both, the best way was to earn my associate's degree in theater tech, while taking some Japanese along the way, and then transfer to a university with a strong program in the Japanese language. So, I ended up staying at community college longer than I expected, but I have had a great experience.