

Hector Aguilera

Hector Aguilera has always been goal oriented and practical. When the Palatine High School graduate attended Harper College for two years before transferring to the University of Illinois at Chicago, his intent was to get a degree in accounting without going into debt.

College was never a time for fun or friends. Careful budgeting and watching that bottom line was always a priority. "I took on a part time job to make sure I could pay my expenses. It was hard to take a breather and go out with friends; there just wasn't the time for that," he explained.

So when Hector had to take out a loan to help pay his tuition and to meet other expenses at UIC, he was uneasy. "It was the first time I had to take out a loan and it wasn't something I was super confident in doing," he recalled. "But then I realized the biggest return would be the investment in myself. I knew I would benefit the most from that loan."

And it seems he has. This spring, Hector received a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting. He plans to go on for his Masters Degree and eventually become a certified public accountant.

Hector admitted he hasn't had to rely on too much guidance from EB211. He is comfortable filling out financial forms, working at Harper as a Financial Aid Student Aide, which included semiannual audits of students' account's awards. But he always appreciated how welcoming EB 211 mentors were when he had questions.

"I feel like I've always had the support of so many people," said Hector. But I've always been self-motivated and tackled things head on. My education has helped me develop myself personally and professionally. I feel that without it, I wouldn't be able to present myself in a way that I feel proud.