

Art Institute arrives in Durham

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DURHAM -- The Art Institute of Raleigh-Durham has arrived.

Inside its new office in the American Tobacco Campus, which is merely a temporary station set up for greeting prospective students and faculty members, artwork created by alumni and pictures of institute locations throughout the country adorn the walls.

The institute, which has more than 40 locations nationally, received approval from the UNC Board of Governors to operate in Durham earlier this month. Today, it's kicking off its marketing and advertising push to announce its arrival in the Triangle.



Kevin Seifert/ The Herald-Sun

Student works from other Art Institute locations adorn the walls behind Michael DePrisco, Art Institute of Raleigh-Durham president, at the institute's American Tobacco Campus office on Monday.

It has set its opening date as Aug. 21. By then, the school will have moved into 34,000 square feet in the Fowler Building. Just a shell space right now, the school is planning to build lecture halls, multimedia labs, kitchens for the culinary arts students and various amenities.

And then, of course, there are students to interview and accredited industry professionals to hire as faculty members.

A tall order to accomplish within a span of less than two months.

"We're very excited," said Monty Clark, dean of Academic Affairs who previously was at the Charleston location and before that, he was the Game Art & Design Program Chair at The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale.

Clark, who has more than 10 years experience in the gaming design industry, was particularly enthused about the American Tobacco location of the Durham institute.

"When I went from Ft. Lauderdale to Charleston, I was like, 'Wow.' And then I came up here, and it was, 'Well, forget that,' " he said.

Clark said the enclosed environment and the architecture make it an ideal campus for art students, who will be able to come out and practice perspectives on the old tobacco warehouses.

The institute will initially offer bachelor's degree programs in culinary arts management, fashion marketing & management, graphic design, interior design, and Web design & interactive media; and associate's degree programs in culinary arts, fashion marketing, graphic design, and Web design & interactive media.

The Durham location's president, Mike DePrisco, said the initial curriculum will fit the market's needs.

"Culinary arts meets some of the needs of employees to work in restaurants," he said. "We felt those were the programs that could make an immediate impact."

In order to expand in the future, the institute would receive recommendations from a Program Advisory Committee composed of industry professionals, alumni and members of the community.

The school is also a branch of The Art Institute of Charlotte and will hold an open house Aug. 9.

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