



JOSE ALVARADO

Intern

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Interning for an Icon: Commercial Architecture Student Builds Experience at KDG

Jose Alvarado first met [Dan Keiser](#), the principal architect at Keiser Design Group as a participant in the [Architecture & Construction Management \(ACM\) Satellite Program](#).

[Jason McGee](#), Alvarado's instructor, frequently had Keiser visit the class as a guest speaker. In addition, McGee instituted a classroom currency called “Keiser Bucks” — a prize for students' exemplary participation or contribution to the classroom. This cash could be collected and traded in for prizes of various kinds, and on the front of them was none other than Dan Keiser's face.

“Every student knew of Dan,” recounted Alvarado. “He was an icon.”

Now a Senior at [The Ohio State University](#) with hopes to pursue commercial architecture, Alvarado is completing a paid internship with this icon of the trade.

Not only did he get to experiment with KDG's expert staff — he now gets to build his design experience with them.

A Time for Experimentation

Alvarado was born in Columbus, Ohio, and has had a creative side since he can remember.

“I've always been a pretty creative person,” said Alvarado. I've always enjoyed looking at cool buildings, so I always thought I might want to do commercial architecture.”

As the story goes with many students in the Gahanna school district, it just took one look at the listing for the ACM program to pique Alvarado's interest.

“When I saw that I had the opportunity to try architecture out in high school, I knew it was a good time to experiment and see if I really liked it,” said Alvarado.

Looking back now, Alvarado would deem the experiment a resounding success. According to him, his time in ACM laid the groundwork for all of the skills and knowledge he has now.

“Everything I know about architecture software began with ACM,” said Alvarado. “Jason taught us everything from Revit to AutoCAD, and I use that in my internship every day.”

Alvarado is also quick to mention the variety of projects he got to experiment with in the program — everything from a bridge to a house to an ice cream shop. Through this hands-on experimentation with a variety of projects, Alvarado found his passion for making commercial architectural plans.

A Time for Experience

When it came time for Alvarado to find an internship to coincide with his studies, he knew exactly who to contact.

"I messaged Jason, and he helped connect me with Dan," said Alvarado. "In high school, I always had a lot of respect for Jason, and I knew I could approach him."

That conversation opened the door to Alvarado's paid remote internship with KDG. As a full-time student, KDG works with Alvarado's busy schedule, giving him around eight hours of work per week.

"My favorite thing is getting real-life experience," said Alvarado. "I not only get to see what an architect does, I actually get to do it! Connecting with clients is something you don't really do in school, so I have enjoyed experiencing those aspects of architecture I didn't know existed until I got the internship."

As he works to be a problem solver, accommodating both the builder and the client, Alvarado has peace of mind knowing that he's building experience in a genuine environment that prioritizes relationships.

"Going into the internship, I didn't feel like a stranger," said Alvarado. "I felt very welcomed, and I knew I could ask questions to anyone on the team."

True, Alvarado is now working for the "icon," but KDG has seen him as so much more than a mere coffee-fetching intern.

After years of experimentation and experience building, the team at KDG is confident Alvarado will enter the field of commercial architecture with excellence.

Learn more about KDG's approach to commercial architecture and check out some recent commercial architecture examples at keiserdesigngroup.com/service/commercial/.