On the value of a technical education: “My professors guided me and gave me excellent knowledge to better myself, not only in photonics, but in life as well.”

Jason Troyano’s desire to pursue an associate degree in electrical and engineering technology began when he was fueling airplanes at a local airport in Florida. He was a line service technician for Key Air Inc., where he was responsible for all pre-flight services of aircrafts, including meeting safety regulations, performing maintenance and quality control inspections, and documenting his work. It suddenly dawned on Jason that he should pursue an education in electronics. “I have always been interested in the study of light,” he says, and he recalls the moment he learned “that everything we see has no color until the light bounces off of the object.”

Jason visited Indian River State College (IRSC) and found that “they had the exact program I wanted to get into: electronic engineering technology.” Jason embraced this opportunity and immediately signed up for their Robotics and Photonics Institute. Jason began his studies eager to learn about the nature of light and determined to succeed. Looking back now, he says, “Nothing could have prepared me for the series of events that would take place after that.” While Jason was in school, Key Air Inc. went out of business, which left Jason unemployed. “With my new frame of mind, I did not despair,” Jason recalls, and he instead focused on his new goal.

“Once I began the robotics and photonics program, my positive attitude and hard work really began to pay off,” Jason says. In 2012, IRSC’s Robotics and Photonics Institute offered Jason a job as an instructional aide, which allowed him to learn even more and gave him additional hands-on lab experience. Jason was responsible for maintaining inventories of parts and components, ensuring that equipment was functioning properly, assisting in the design and development of lab experiments, and helping students perform their labs. “I enjoyed myself thoroughly,” he recalls. In fact, one of Jason’s proudest moments was when he fixed the projector system in his school planetarium. He experienced how it felt to use his knowledge in a real-life application, and “it was very rewarding.”

Jason believes that his education helped prepare him for the real world. He explains, “My professors guided me and gave me excellent knowledge to better myself, not only in photonics, but in life as well.” Jason graduated from IRSC in May 2013 with an associate degree in applied science in electrical engineering technology.

As his education was nearing its end, Jason began applying for jobs both in photonics and in healthcare, keeping in mind that his ideal career would involve a mixture of both. Though he was unsure which job he would land, he explains, “I knew I would hear back from the right job.” General Electric contacted him for a job interview and offered him a job a few weeks later. “Needless to say, I took it,” Jason recalls, “and I was beside myself.” In his new job, Jason is responsible for maintaining MRIs for General Electric. “This career is the perfect combination of healthcare, photonics, and cutting edge technology that I was hoping for,” Jason says. Jason’s talent for troubleshooting and repairing electrical equipment is not the only advantage that he brings to General Electric; he also has strong communication skills and enjoys working with teams.
Looking back on how far he has come, Jason has become convinced that as long as people stay focused on their goals, “a positive attitude will take you anywhere and everywhere in this life.” With a bright future ahead of him, Jason is grateful for his decision to pursue a technical education. “Technology is everywhere,” he explains. “It impacts your everyday life now.” He believes that to overlook technology as a career prospect is to miss out on a great opportunity. “It’s worth taking a second look at,” he advises.

Jason recently moved to Miami, Florida to pursue his career with General Electric. In his spare time, Jason enjoys fishing, kayaking, playing board games and cards, and watching movies.