

Wilco spotlight: Darien Aranda '21

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Criminal Justice alumnus Darien Aranda is making a name for himself as a United States Marine Security Guard. Below he answers a few questions about his professional journey and how life at Wilco prepared him for it.



What is your current position and where are you stationed?

I am currently a SOI (School of Infantry) in Camp Pendleton to become a rifleman. After, that I will go to Quantico Virginia to become a United States Marine Guard.

How your Wilco program prepared you for your career?

Wilco gave me several opportunities to think critically, problem solve, sharpen my discipline and grow my leadership skills. That, along with an effective curriculum helped prepare me for the difficulties of basic training and, ultimately, my military career.

How have you stayed engaged with Wilco as an alumnus?

I am thankful to have the opportunity to mentor students seeking to follow similar career paths as mine. Therefore, when I'm back in the Chicago area, I also plan on visiting Mrs. Gunther's Criminal Justice Class to inspire her students to build their skills of examination of criminological theories and models, methods of preventing or reducing the commission of crime, as well as prosecution and punishment of offenders.

What is your advice to Wilco students hoping to enter the military?

Get involved! The Criminal Justice program gives students several opportunities to get involved in different projects. "The military is a big decision and big commitment." "It's something you have to put your mind to and it's something you can't do for a little bit and give up." "You have to put your heart and soul into this, and be prepared for making sacrifices."

I think this is what sets Wilco apart from other career centers. While these projects provide for great social outlets, you also learn invaluable skills that will one day transfer over to your career and beyond. Being able to communicate and solve problems with groups of people will be skills you develop (whether you know it or not) and will be useful to you for the rest of your life. I would even say that developing these skills is just as important as getting good grades in the classroom. Good luck!