

## Beauty U

### Three women, three different reasons for studying cosmetology

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The university at 5321 N. Harlem Ave., in Chicago, has few of the trappings of its ivy-covered, academic brethren.

There are no athletic programs, no sororities or fraternities, no mascots and no grass-covered commons areas where students lounge and chat.

The students at this university don't look forward to wearing gowns, mortarboards and tassels at formal graduation ceremonies. Their names are simply announced over the public address system when they complete their studies. They don't even receive diplomas. They just get their transcripts in the mail.

This is Tricoci University of Beauty Culture.

#### Love story

Park Ridge's Jessica Nashan had nearly finished requirements for a bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of Kansas. But she enrolled instead at TUBC.

"I'll finish that degree someday, somehow, but right now, this is where I want to be," said Nashan, 23.

A summer job at the Changes Etc. salon in Park Ridge was all it took to convince her to alter her career path.

"I just love everything about it — the whole atmosphere," Nashan said. "When you finish a client's hair and she's pleased, you really feel good."

She is fewer than 400 hours away from completing TUBC's 1,500-hour cosmetology curriculum. Once she finishes, she'll take the state board exam, required for licensing in hair, skin and nails. Then she'll serve a one-year apprenticeship at a salon. Someday, Nashan hopes to open her own.

Until then, she'll work at a shop where she'll cut and color hair, give manicures and pedicures and more.

"If I worked at a spa like Mario Tricoci's, I'd have to specialize," she said. "I love it all, and I want to do it all."

#### Economy class

The depressed economy brought Morton Grove's Robyn Dominguez to TUBC. She lost her job of two years as an animal nurse, and she was out of work for a year.

"I loved that job, but not many people can afford specialty veterinary care today," she said.

For Dominguez, who has worked since she was 13 years old, ending up jobless was devastating. Finding herself in line at the Illinois Department of Employment Security applying for unemployment compensation was worse.

"I was so upset I went home and wrote to President Barack Obama about it," she said.

She and her husband have three daughters — Aurelia, 9, Angelina, 8, and Ava Sophia, 1. Dominguez, 28, wanted to help support them, but she needed a more recession proof — or, at least, recession resistant — career. So she dusted off an old dream.

Dominguez had fantasized about a cosmetology career since high school, but she didn't want to end up working in a "haircut mill." Still, her mother and she had been going to Mario Tricoci Hair Salon and Day Spa in Skokie. She admired the staff's professional attitude, and she was consistently happy with the services they received, she said. Dominguez chose TUBC.

"I'm convinced I made the right choice," she added. "I'll graduate in 10 months, and I'll be a legitimate contributor to my family's income. I'll never be unemployed again, and I'll be doing something I love."

#### Student to teacher

Nicole Tangora, 23, of Harwood Heights, set out to become a teacher, enrolling at Northern Illinois University.

"It just wasn't for me," she said. "I tried beauty school instead."

Two years ago, Tangora graduated from TUBC in Glendale Heights and obtained her license. Recently, she revived her passion for teaching by enrolling at TUBC in Chicago to study to teach cosmetology.

"First, I completed seven weeks of book work," she said. "Last week, I began student teaching.



Jessica Nashan, of Park Ridge, a cosmetology student at Tricoci University in Chicago, practices her hairdressing skills on a fellow student. (Tamara Bell/Staff Photographer)

I'll need to complete a total of 600 hours, with a passing grade of at least 85 percent. If I'd been licensed for less than two years, I would have needed 1,000 hours."

Tangora is about to move to her first home in Norridge. She is aware she would probably make more money practicing cosmetology than teaching it.

"I suppose I'll earn less," she said. "I just never asked. I love what I'm doing so much that it just doesn't matter to me."

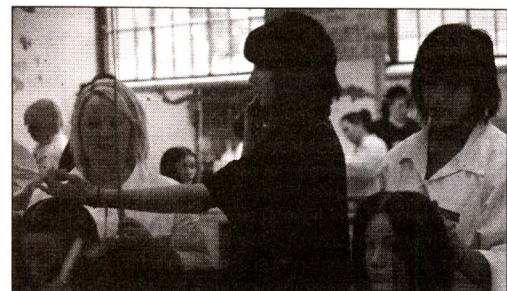
Students at TUBC are held to more rigorous standards than the state requires — 85 percent to graduate, compared to the 75 percent passing grade required for the state board exams. They study anatomy, physiology; hygiene, chemicals, ethics, bookkeeping, labor law, marketing and merchandising, along with cutting, coloring and shampooing.

"It's a very structured program," Dominguez said. "They set us up for success here."

Students get plenty of practical experience at TUBC — 1,010 hours, in fact. Under instructor supervi-



Cosmetology student Robyn Dominguez, of Morton Grove, practices her hairdressing skills on a mannequin at Tricoci University in Chicago. (Tamara Bell/Staff Photographer)



Nicole Tangora (center), of Harwood Heights, is a student teacher at Tricoci University in Chicago. (Tamara Bell/Staff Photographer)

sion, they staff the school's on-site salon, providing a wide range of services at exceptional prices to pa-

trons. For information, call (773) 467-1900 or visit [www.tricociuniversity.com](http://www.tricociuniversity.com).