Megan Hitz '04 may have grown up on a farm in rural Oregon, but you’d never know it. After studying apparel design at SPU, Hitz hit the streets of New York City and landed a position at Ralph Lauren. In two short years, she’s already been promoted to associate children’s wear designer.

“Moving to New York City was definitely one of the biggest risks I have ever taken,” says Hitz. “I really can’t explain how I made it here, but I know that God has been leading me every step of this crazy adventure.”

Although she was drawn to Seattle Pacific University’s many degree programs in design, she wasn’t sure what she would pursue. But, says Hitz, “it just kept coming back to fashion.” She believes SPU gave her a strong technical background in textiles and construction, but most importantly, the experience taught her a lot about herself. “I came to see and understand my skills, my need to be creative, and my drive to make it happen. That’s when everything clicked for me.”

Two awe-some internships didn’t hurt either — one with Crystalyn B., a handbag designer, and one with Luly Yang, a couture bridal and eveningwear designer.

SPU Assistant Professor Jaeil Lee, who directs the apparel design program, says Hitz was a natural leader. “She

Check out this bracelet! It is from Megan Hitz’s own line of accessories. That’s right, a designer at Ralph Lauren by day, and an entrepreneur by night. Not bad for a 24-year-old.
To have a whiz on the sewing medium may be, and have my own design studio, whatever the future? “Make sure it is a passion, as for Hitz, who describes her personal style as bohemian-meets-city-chic, she says Ralph Lauren is just the beginning. There are so many things I want to do,” she says. “In five years, I want to be further along in my fashion career, exploring other parts of the world and beginning the launch of my own business. In 10 years, I hope to have my own design studio, whatever the medium may be, and have my business off the ground.” And she’s not just talking — Hitz has already launched a line of jewelry called “Tilly.” She designs and makes each piece herself and recently had her first trunk show. To date, she has filled more than 100 orders.

What advice would Hitz give to anyone thinking about their future? “Make sure it is a passion, otherwise it’s not worth it,” she says. “But if it is — go for it!”

“Graduates from our program will leave with a digital portfolio, a completed garment, a realistic sense of the industry and, in most cases, an internship,” says Lee. SPU’s apparel design program has doubled in size since 2001. “Graduates from our program will leave with a digital portfolio, a completed garment, a realistic sense of the industry and, in most cases, an internship,” says Lee. SPU has developed relationships with Nordstrom, Tommy Bahama, Helly Hansen, and Eddie Bauer among others, resulting in coveted internships for design students.

Don’t worry, Lee says, you don’t have to be a whiz on the sewing machine. “I would say about half of my students already know how to sew,” Lee explains. “It’s about a quarter that don’t. The most successful students are well-rounded, critical thinkers, and creative. Megan Hitz is a perfect example.”

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