

IDAHO PRESS-TRIBUNE

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Serving the

'COLLEGE JUST GOT REAL'



Photos by Adam Eschbach/IPT

Above: Manuel Gomez is the fourth College of Western Idaho student featured in the "College Just Got Real" reality series, which tells the stories of real CWI students. Gomez is in his second semester in the Automotive Technology program. **Below:** Gomez is interviewed Wednesday by Travis Swartz and Jake Hixon.

Reality series profiles CWI students clearing hurdles

Show answers questions stopping students from attending college

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As a child, Tyler Murphy had dreams of a military career so grand bases would be named after him and parades would be thrown in his honor.

But that plan was put to a halt shortly after he enlisted at age 18. A rope snapped during training and Murphy fell 100 feet to the ground, seriously injuring his knee.

After his stint in the military, Murphy worked a number of menial jobs, but soon

WANT TO CHECK IT OUT?

To follow the "College Just Got Real" series and enter for a \$1,000 scholarship visit collegeofwhatif.com.

Find the College of Western Idaho online:

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realized it was time to move forward.

Murphy, 31, Boise, is now in his last semester at College of Western Idaho, working on his plan B — a degree in liberal arts and acceptance to Boise State University to work toward a master's degree in math. After BSU, Murphy hopes to get a doctor-

ate in math from the Michigan Institute of Technology and return to CWI as an instructor.

He is also the first of five students profiled in CWI's "College Just Got Real" reality series that addresses popular questions and hurdles that stop people from going to college.

"Maybe there is someone out there who's thinking about going to school, and they have kids, and they have a job, and they don't know how they can make it fit," Murphy said. "This shows them somebody in the same situation, who has made it work."

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CWI

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Murphy's wife Ruthie said he was too smart not to attend college. Ruthie Murphy sent in his paperwork and enrolled her husband at CWI. Now, Travis Murphy works at Jiffy Lube while going to school and is able to work on homework when it slows down at work. He said his family, including his 5-year-old son, is one of his biggest motivators to continue college.

Jennifer Couch, director of communication and marketing at CWI, said the premise of the series is based on the idea, "What if?"

The goal of the project is to allow current students to tell their stories. The five videos, released about every three weeks, profile traditional and nontraditional students and their journeys through CWI.

"It really allows those students to be followed through their entire day," Couch said. "There are so many other things going on besides just college."

The short videos are directed by Travis Swartz, a local documentarian. The entire project, Couch said, will cost about \$20,000.

CWI will promote the reality series at high schools through social media and websites and also will be shared with those who fund and support students and programs at the college.