

Finding His Path: Isac Burris Turns Determination into a Career in Automation

For Isac Burris, the road to a fulfilling career didn't start with a clear direction, but it led exactly to where he needed to go.

"I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, and nothing was grabbing my attention," he says. After taking courses in art, business, and IT at Reedley College without finding a spark, he enrolled at College of the Sequoias with hopes of joining the HVAC program. When that was full, a counselor suggested he try industrial maintenance. That simple nudge, and a class with instructor Shane Souza, changed everything.

"It was fate that led me here," Isac says. He soon discovered the Industrial Automation program and realized he had found something he truly loved. Encouraged by Professor Travis Asher to continue his education in industrial automation, he leaned into the challenge. "It felt like a complete 180 from the manual labor jobs I had done for years — stacking boxes, palletizing. This was something where I could grow."



Today, Isac is working as an **Automation Technician at Moonlight Companies** in Reedley, CA, the same company he once toured as a student. The work is hands-on, dynamic, and deeply technical, exactly what he was looking for. "Every day is different," he says. "There's always a new challenge, a new project. I'm actually using my brain, troubleshooting, applying critical thinking. I love that."

Isac gives much of the credit to the program's instructors and support services at COS. **"If it wasn't for the way Shane and Travis taught, and them just being so cool, I wouldn't have stayed,"** he says. "I'm

so grateful for them.” He also recognizes the vital role of financial aid and student success resources like gas cards, which helped him commute from Dinuba (one hour and 20-minute commute round trip). “There’s no way I could’ve made it without that support.”

Isac also shared deep appreciation for his fiancée, whose encouragement kept him focused and motivated. After a costly emergency vet visit for one of their dogs, he was inspired to pursue a more stable and rewarding career path.

Travis Asher, his Industrial Automation instructor, saw Isac’s dedication before he officially joined the program:

“Before joining the Industrial Automation program, Isac was completing the Industrial Maintenance program at COS. He heard about an upcoming tour our class had scheduled of Moonlight Packing in Reedley and took the initiative to ask if he could join. Right away, it was clear he was serious about pursuing a career in the field. Once in the program, Isac showed real dedication, often staying after labs to get extra practice programming PLCs with his lab partner, Nicholas. It’s been great to see his hard work pay off in his new role as an automation technician at Moonlight.”

Isac was hired through Bryan Medina, his current supervisor and COS adjunct instructor, who trusted the skills COS students develop. “I had no real-world experience in this field, but I put my faith in Bryan,” Isac says. “He knows what we’re capable of because he’s seen it firsthand. That made all the difference.”

Looking back, Isac is proud of sticking with it, especially through long commutes and moments of doubt. “I complained the whole time about the drive,” he laughs, “but I pulled through and made it!”



His advice to others considering the trades? “Just apply and do it. What you put into this program is what you’re going to get out. I’ve seen people get amazing jobs because they gave it everything, and others who didn’t apply themselves and didn’t get anywhere. The opportunity is real if you put some effort into it.”

Isac wholeheartedly recommends COS and its trades programs:

“I 100% would recommend COS to anyone looking to elevate or pivot

their career. Because of COS and the professors there, my life has changed for the better. I’ll be telling my future kids, and their kids, to go to COS. My fiancée, family, and friends have been my biggest supporters, but I can’t forget my professors: Shane Souza, Travis Asher, and Bryan Medina. **They gave me the knowledge and tools I needed to get to this point in my career. It may sound a bit dramatic, but I don’t think I would be here without them. And for that, I give them my gratitude.”**