

Jasmine Martinez: You Don't Have to Have It All Figured Out to Start



Jasmine Martinez (right) first came to College of the Sequoias in 2018, planning to follow a traditional four-year engineering path. But the pressure of working full-time and supporting her family made it hard to keep up with her studies. “I had to work full-time and didn’t have enough time to study,” Jasmine said. “It didn’t work out, and I ended up leaving school.”

For several years, Jasmine worked at Grocery Outlet and took on growing responsibilities at home, especially helping care for her five younger siblings. At 23, she made the decision to return to COS and explore new directions. “I tried out electrical, accounting, and fire technology to figure out which route to go, and I really liked the electrical class. That’s why I stuck with it.”

That curiosity and willingness to try different paths led Jasmine to Industrial Maintenance and then to her current role as a **Junior Maintenance Technician with a leading employer in the region’s food manufacturing industry**. She is one of the few selected for the position this year, a milestone she calls both surprising and rewarding.

“It was a little surprising. I wasn’t sure I was going to make it that far,” she said. “I’m about to go on my fourth year at COS. I was feeling like a robot before, and this is definitely a reward. I feel very, very blessed.”

Jasmine has already completed her **Associate of Science degree in Industrial Maintenance**. That degree will also satisfy requirements for Electrical Technology and Industrial Automation once she finishes the remaining courses. She has also earned a Certificate of Achievement in Industrial Maintenance and plans to continue learning.

Starting Over, One Class at a Time

Jasmine’s return to school didn’t involve a dramatic reset. It started by taking a couple classes at a time, while **balancing part-time work and helping care for her siblings**. She often had to leave class early to handle school pickups or unexpected issues at home. “Trying to do homework around them was not possible,” she said. “It was loud and messy and chaotic.”

Support systems at COS made all the difference. Professors like Shane Baesemann and Shane Souza offered flexibility and encouragement. Jasmine is especially grateful to her instructor Shane Baesemann, who she said was always willing to work with her when life got hectic and she needed support. **“He was the biggest help to**

me,” she said. **“He worked with me when I had to leave class early and always made sure I stayed on track.”** Shane Souza’s policy of allowing students to earn assignment makeups by doing well on labs and extracurriculars also helped her stay on top of her work despite her family obligations. She received additional support through EOPS and the Student Success Program. “My laptop had a broken wire, and I had to wrap it just to get it to work. EOPS gave me a new one, and that really helped me out.”

Motivated by Curiosity and Family

Despite being the only woman in many of her trade classes, Jasmine never let that hold her back. “On the first day of my electrical class, I saw a bunch of guys walk in and thought, ‘What am I getting myself into?’” she said. “But then I noticed that not everyone in the room seemed as focused, and that motivated me even more. I knew I was ready to work hard and stay committed.”

Her drive comes from both her curiosity and her siblings. “They don’t take school seriously, and I want to be a good example,” she said. “I’m always asking why things work the way they do. I love wiring diagrams and figuring out how machines work.”

Her instructors noticed that motivation right away.

“Jasmine is truly an inspiration,” said Electrician Training professor Shane Baesemann. **“Despite working full-time, she radiates boundless energy and positivity. Her unwavering willingness to learn and grow sets her apart.”**

Industrial Maintenance instructor Shane Souza added, **“Jasmine was the hardest worker in the room. Even if she didn’t succeed at first, she always figured it out. She was a leader in the class and the best in her group at electrical wiring and motor controls.”**



Advice for Anyone Who Feels Stuck

For anyone who feels like they can’t go to college because they’re too busy, overwhelmed, or unsure where to begin, Jasmine says **“stay open-minded and be comfortable with change. If something interests you, just start. You don’t have to take a full load or have everything figured out. I wish I knew back then that I could take just one or two classes while working. That would have made a big difference.”**

What she’s most proud of isn’t the job title or the degree. It’s that she never gave up.

“I’m proud of my perseverance. That was the hardest part when I first started. I thought it wasn’t going to work out. But I’m still here.”