

INTERNSHIPS TO CAREERS

'Career Whisperer' guides Industrial Automation Student to a career with Advanced Food Products.

When Jonas Jonasson, a single father, came to College of the Sequoias, he wasn't sure about his course of study. "The counselor told me about the two-semester industrial maintenance program," said Jonasson. "I was intrigued because I like working on motorcycles and was impressed by the employment opportunities."

While working on the Industrial Maintenance Certificate at the COS Tulare Annex location, Jonasson attended Entrée to Employment organized by Lisette Conway, COS CTE Student Success Coordinator and her colleagues. "It fosters relations between students and employers in a non-interview environment," said Conway. "That's where Jonas first connected with Advanced Food Products." With her help, Jonasson secured a 30-day internship with the company.

Inspired by the Advanced Food Products internship, Jonasson returned to COS complete his Industrial Automation (A.S.) degree. "I wanted more programmable logic controller (PLC) knowledge so I enrolled in the one-year Industrial Automation Certificate program," said Jonasson.

There are many openings for PLC technicians, explained Industrial Automation instructor Travis Asher. "We work closely with industry to prepare graduates to troubleshoot and keep automated systems running using real world equipment," said Asher.

After graduation, Jonasson stayed in touch with Advanced Food Products. "When there was an opening, I interviewed for the position and got it," said Jonasson. "Working on electrical and PLC maintenance projects at Advanced Food Products is a lot of fun. I really like the people, the starting pay is great, there are opportunities to advance and I feel that the company wants to invest in my future."

He credits COS for helping launch his career. "The COS instructors are well respected by employers," said Jonasson. "Everyone in support services is genuinely happy to see you and help. Without Lisette's efforts, I wouldn't have had this great opportunity with a fantastic company. She truly is the 'Career Whisperer.'"

