

AC MARTIN

Architecture, Engineering, & Construction

Student Success Story



Rachel Areli Zuniga Coronado

Glendale Community College

Rachel joined AC Martin as an intern in the summer of 2024. She graduated from Glendale Community College with an Associate's Degree in Architectural Drafting and Design, along with a Certificate of Achievement in the same field. Rachel has been accepted to the Woodbury University School of Architecture for Fall 2024 with advanced standing, entering as a third-year student.

#HerStory Below

How did you learn about the opportunity at AC Martin?

A flyer for this opportunity was being circulated by the professors in the architecture department. At the time, I was working on the CCCAP National Architecture Design Competition so I would stay in the school computer lab almost every day. That is where the architectural professor, Paul Chiu, introduced the opportunity to all the students there. He offered everyone help if anyone was interested. I reached out and he helped me get my portfolio together for the interview. Thanks to professor Paul Chiu and help from my peers, I was able to get hired as an intern at AC Martin.

What was your experience transitioning from GCC to AC Martin?

At AC Martin, I was assigned to the Public/ Private Sector working with a designer. The workplace is fast paced. There are deadlines to be met and a team of people working on a project. This seemed scary at first, but I could tell that the employees at AC Martin love what they do. There were many meetings that I was able to sit in and see how ideas get developed. Everyone was extremely kind and wanted to talk to me. I was able to get a lot of advice from everyone I met. I went from not really talking to anyone at school to a place where everyone talks to each other all the time. I learned that communication is key to keeping projects moving forward.

Now that you have had some time in the office, please share about your preparedness for your position and how your courses/ professors at GCC helped?

Working really opened my eyes to the reality of work progress. There needs to be a schedule and smaller goals to accomplish before the big goal can be realized. My time as a student prepared me to know the importance of note taking. During my internship, I would always have a notebook on hand to record any advice or instruction given. Even after the internship, I still go back to my notes and references from the tips given to me during my internship.

What expectation vs. reality did you encounter and can you please describe your experience thus far?

Going in, I didn't know what to expect. I imagined a stiff environment where everyone worked separately. The reality was the opposite. It was a work community. Everyone was so nice and sociable. Even when speaking about work, all team members were approachable. I was able to ask questions about the software used and even about career paths I'm interested in. At AC Martin, I learned to use Rhino, a key software for 3D modeling. I truly loved working at AC Martin. It was so inspirational watching the dedicated people who work there. I have gained confidence and motivation to continue my studies.

What was the most difficult aspect of transitioning from student to employee?

The most difficult aspect of transitioning from student to employee was probably my own insecurity about being in the workplace. I was unsure about the chain of command. Who would give me assignments. The people there were so nice, I could just ask anyone on the team, and they would guide me.

What was the easiest aspect of transitioning from student to employee?

The easiest aspect of transitioning from student to employee was showing up every day with motivation. I felt so lucky to be there. I went from a backpack to a work bag. I would get to the Wilshire Grand Center, the tallest skyscraper in Downtown Los Angeles, and get to use a badge to walk through security. The office occupies the 28th floor and has beautiful views throughout the office. I was able to be part of a team and work on real projects. I would get tips on how to improve and things I should know for my future studies. It was really fun!

Any words of wisdom for students looking to follow in your footsteps.

Do not limit yourself and don't be afraid to ask for help. If you have a goal you want to achieve, do the work to make it happen.