**cartagena-jazmin-20230605.mp4**

**Speaker 1** [00:00:02] All right. Thank you and welcome to Jasmine Cartagena. Thank you so much for being here and participating in the X, a student Experience StoryCorps Archive project. And I'm going to read the Archive Project Prompt, and then I will hand the mic over to Jasmine to tell her story. So the prompt is tell the story of your experience so far as an engineering student. You may want to start with your background. What brought you to pursue the program? Then you may want to include your initial impression of the program, how you began to understand how the program fits into your life or doesn't how you fit into the program or how you don't. You may also want to include most important characteristics of the program for you, or what impact you hope it will have on your life or community. And with that, I will hand it over to you. Jasmine, thank you so much again.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:06] Thank you. Okay. Rachel said, My name is Jasmine Carter. Hannah and I am a senior in high. I. I'll begin with my background. So I am a marine Corps veteran. I served five years working on stage 53 Echoes, which is what was the largest helicopter in the U.S. military. That's where I met my husband. And now we have two kids together. So that actually brings me to when I started school, when my daughter was three months old. And so I've had a child throughout school, and I just introduced my son this last year into my final year. So it's been exciting with that. So now we have two kids and so that's cut. That's what drove me to doing. I wanted something that I could take from the Marine Corps and bring back for school. And so I actually, I'll be honest, didn't know what it was. I was like, okay, easy. That's cool. I'll just be electrical engineering. And then the computer science came in and I was like, Oh. So that was a learning curve for me. But I've just accepted it and I've made a bunch of new friends from the struggle of computer science. And so having that military background and then coming into school. That's. Been a big. Think for me, I am a first generation college student, so I don't have previous. My parents didn't go to school, whereas my husband's did. And so picking a degree on top of that, I wanted something that I could be familiar with. So, yeah. So being a first generation student is how I identify as somebody that's. An underserved in one of the underserved communities. And. That's the reason why I came into OSU wanting to pursue electrical and computer engineering. I think that having a background in avionics, because that's what I did in the Marine Corps, was working on the electronics on the helicopter. I have always had an interest in tinkering around with electricity. In all honesty, I'm like, I have a fear of electricity, which is hilarious for the major that I'm in. But I recognize that everything we handle around us is all electrical. So it's just the nature of the beast. When I first got into OSU in the program, it was very new because it wasn't as structured as the Marine Corps and. That was somewhat a little bit difficult for us. But I think over the couple of months and having my daughter, it kind of. Just made us progress. And so that's what my husband and I have been doing. We've just been going turn by turn. Basically how we did in the Marine Corps is chow by chow. And so easy has. Grown on me more that I've gone through the whole program and I've been able to make more friends. I think the first year was harder for me because I'm older, and so there's this disconnect with being an older student coming in with students, especially here in Oregon, that have some college experience because they have this cool program where you can take college courses in high school. Where I'm from, we don't have that. And so that was definitely different. Having to deal with that. So one thing that I did was I joined Treo, which is also serves. First generation students. And that has helped to gain. Relationship with friends as well. And. I guess my initial impression of the program was that, oh, man, this is going to be hard. Like I knew. School is going to be hard, but. I'm learning a lot more about myself and the program first had the pro school application and that made me a little bit nervous. I was like, Oh man, am I going to be able to live up to getting into pro school? Like, how does that even work? But they ended up getting it rid of that the year before. And so that kind of took a huge relief off of me the way in and have to apply because I'll be honest, I'm not the best student. I always end up. I make fun of myself. I learn things after the class that I've taken it so my husband makes fun of me in that aspect. But that's just how I am as a student. I learned after the factory. Learned by doing. Excuse me. The program now. After going through it. I think it was definitely the right fit. I always like to joke that I should have been a mechanical engineering student, but in all reality, I don't think I could have done those classes. Even though I struggle with electrical engineering, I have a passion behind it. I think that there's so many great things that can be created. Like my senior design project, I am working on a car seat. Monitoring system and. I have many ideas of how to use my degree to. Better the world. It's kind of weird to say better the worlds, but just create devices that could help in certain aspects. And I think that's why this program was the right fit for me at the end of the day. Because I even though I have a fear of electricity, I have a better understanding of it. I have a respect for it. That's where it comes in. But I think that there's a lot of things that I've learned that can. Eventually helped me later on in the future, creating whether it be a company behind my degree or joining a company and creating devices that could help society later on. And. I honestly can say that I've made better friends here at school through this program than I did in the Marine Corps. I think that. Me being in the Marine Corps as a female. There's not many female Marines. And it's kind of weird saying female Marines because we're all Marines. But there there is a difference. There's not many that you'll see. And so. There. There are still been situations in the Marine Corps where. I've had to deal with wives that not necessarily like me because I'm working with their husbands and it has to do with insecurities. Whereas I haven't had to face that in school because I'm around honestly, a lot more females and we don't bash each other. We honestly just build each other up and make each other feel really good. At least that's the friend group that I've. Built around myself because I don't want to be around people that are going to bring me down. I want people that are going to bring me up and I want to do that for them as well. And so my friend group calls me the mom of the group, which kind of fits since I already am a mom. But I think having to deal with such a small community of female in the Marine Corps and then bringing it here to college and seeing that, wow, there's actually. Way more people, females here in school that are trying to do the same thing that I'm doing is really cool. And. I'm I'm excited to see where they go in life because they are really awesome and. It's just college. It's cool and it's different than the Marine Corps. And that was my very first job. I left for boot camp a week after I graduated high school, and so that was my whole experience was high school week of freedom and then Marine Corps. And then I went. Marine Corps. Three months of Freedom College. And so I've always had something going on because that's just how my husband and I were just constantly going and going. And that's honestly what's made us. The people we are and we like being around people that want to do something with their lives. And I it's actually really cool. So my dad is in school now and he's I think he's 58 and we're kind of like racing each other to see who's going to be because he's also a first generation student. So it's kind of funny to see he's going to see me graduate and then I get to see him graduate from school. And I think. That is just kind of like a proud moment for the two of us seeing each other going from one situation to the next, whereas he served 30 years in the Coast Guard. And that's how I was. I grew up, was a military brat, so I moved around a lot. And I think that's another reason why adapting has been. Easy at heart at the same time. Especially for college, because there's a lot more freedom that comes with college. But it's also a challenge. So being a student parent is challenging. So my husband and I have had to balance. School and our kids. Obviously, our kids are going to come first for us because they're everything to us. We credit our daughter, who's actually going to be five next week for getting us through school. She I don't we probably would have made some excuse like, oh, we don't need school. We can just go and use our technical skills from the Marine Corps and just get just some random job and live happily that way. And we would have lived fine. But we she's everything. She she's the person that got us through school. And now we have our son and she's we're just trying to push our lives to be better for them so they can be better. But I also forgot where I was going with that. Oh, being a student parent. I know it's not on the list, but it is kind of an underrepresented community. There's. I mean, my husband and I are older and we came from. A military background and coming into school, we just realized that it's not it's not really equipped for the nontraditional student. And I understand it's college. Most people are going to be coming from high school. But sometimes, you know, parents want to be able to be included in groups. And luckily, I've had the friends that I have love my kids. And that has been a huge help for me because they always want to they understand like, hey, I can't I can't go out tonight, like I have my kids. I was like, You guys are more than welcome to come over and study or and they'll come over or we'll get on Zoom and we'll try and do a study break and. So that's really nice having those groups or fighting those people that will help you and understand your situation. And but that has really changed throughout college, too. Like. There's events that we want to go to. But we can't because we have kids or. I breastfeed. So my son needs me. And, you know, as a mom, like, sometimes it can be hard to breastfeed. And I'll I'll have a function for a group and it'll be at like six at night or one we're doing dinner time. And it's it's just hard to be like, Hey, I need you to take the kids for a little bit. I'll try and feed them and be back by then. But sometimes it just doesn't work out that way. And I've had to tell groups to be like, Hey, I can't meet. Like I have my kids. And most of the time students are understanding. But still, I don't like to be put in a position to where I have to. To be like, Hey, like. I can't you know, it's tough because I want to be included. With the group, with with my peers. But my peers are not in the same situation as me. And that can make it difficult because sometimes they understand, sometimes they don't like My kids are always going to come first. And. They have different priorities, basically. And so that can be difficult. And I wish I wish sometimes that we could be included in in like timing of things. Obviously, schedules are schedules and there's going to be the clubs or. Activities are going to be planned around the majority, but sometimes the minority would like to be there too, and be included. And they just have different priorities, really. And so being with that, with priorities, my family is a huge, huge thing for me and my husband. They are everything we wouldn't we wouldn't be here without, like I said, my our daughters, what got us through this degree, through our degrees. And so family is huge for us and. They are the most important thing. They drive us and luckily we, the two of us, have had amazing support systems, whether it be his parents or my parents. Like his parents, like his mom specifically has been a huge help for me because. She knows that I'm a first generation student, so I can't necessarily go to my parents about talking about college and stuff because they don't really. Now my dad understands, like what I've gone through for the past couple of years. But when we were starting off, she was a huge help and being a role model and kind of being like, It sucks. We know, like just it's going to be okay. You can get through it. Just take it one step at a time. And and that has been a huge, huge help. And for my parents, I am Hispanic, I'm Puerto Rican, and. Bringing that in where we're very close. In a way, I'm not as close, honestly, as my husband's family, but we are still very close. We try and call them as much as we can, especially for the kids. But family is huge for us. And so having the the support system and just listening when. You're having a hard time as big. I feel like. Hmm. Not necessarily. I'm not valued, but it is harder. I don't know. So I think being Hispanic is is a big part of who I am. I love being Puerto Rican and I cherish it. But sometimes you battle like, Oh, and my Puerto Rican enough or being included in those groups because I don't speak Spanish. I can read Spanish and I can hear Spanish when people talk slowly. But I don't I don't speak it because I have an accent. And so I don't necessarily hang around many Hispanic groups because I feel like I'm an outsider in a way. And I know that's not how I should feel, but that's that is how I feel. So I had joined the. The ship, the Spanish or Society of Hispanic Engineers, because I happened to meet somebody that was the president at the time and she invited me. But I don't necessarily go or feel a part because I feel like it's an imposter syndrome of it because I don't speak Spanish. And I know that some people are like, Oh, it's okay. Like. It's okay, but it's kind of the imposter syndrome where I know I'm I am Puerto Rican and I'm proud to be Puerto Rican. And but sometimes you get around Spanish speakers and you feel like, okay, I don't I'm not actually Spanish because I can't communicate with them. The. And that's no no fault of my parents. I. Moved her out, like I said, and we moved from Puerto Rico to Alaska. And so as much of an adjustment was for me, which it wasn't too much because I was only like two. It was an adjustment for my family, and my dad honestly wasn't around much when I grew up. He was gone a lot for his job on boats and whatnot. Which made me join the Marine Corps. Honestly, because I always want to make my dad proud. But it also made me realize how much I might have missed out on. Just having more. Of a I guess not necessarily a nuclear family because I have a dad and mom, but. More of a father figure in your life, which my mom made up for it like 100%. But it's also different because. She's only one person trying to raise two kids on her own. And so I grew grew more of appreciation for my mom throughout the years, seeing how much she had to put up with. And I think that's where I value. My parents in marriage. A lot more to just seeing how much she went through over the. I mean, she'd been married for 30 plus years at this point. So that also influenced me as a human and kind of, if you think about it later on, guided me through school too, with valuing my husband and our relationship. And even though school is stressful and we bicker a lot because of school, because we have two different programs and we're completely two different people in school, we have to balance life in general. I feel like I'm trailing, but my family is huge for me and as a different. I think that. My family is a huge part of who I am, and everything that I've gone through in the past has influenced me and given me guidance. And I've learned about my strength and my weaknesses. And I think that because of who I am today sitting in this chair, I have so many strengths and I can contribute to engineering later on or in my near future, honestly. I think that. I'm not the typical mold of a student and. I think that sometimes. Younger students can also have an imposter syndrome or have these stresses about them. But I think that realizing that there's other students around going through the same exact struggles and might have even more responsibilities can be like. In or like with my some of my friends are like, I don't know how you do it. I don't know how you raise two kids, take 17 credits and still pass all your classes. All is hard and there's a lot of tears that come along with it. But at the end of the day, I don't know anything else. I don't know what it's like to be a student that doesn't have kids and go to school. I passed my classes. I don't necessarily fight for A's and B's because realistically I've always had this, and this might not be the best mentality to have, but CS get degrees and at the end of the day we're all going to end up engineers. But I think that having all my differences bring the strengths to the engineering program or into the in the industry, really, because I'm not the typical mold. I don't have all high school to college backgrounds. I have high school. Marine Corps College, two kids, husband. Dynamic. Which just means I have more experience and different aspects where somebody might have weaknesses and balancing each other is is good. Working with members where you're figuring out your weaknesses and your strengths, you can always pick up slack somewhere. I think that showing. Showing different backgrounds would be nice to see because we usually see, oh, this the typical mold. High school and college? Not necessarily. Everybody needs to go to college. I think that maybe showing. Students that didn't go straight from high school to college is. Not everybody has the same experience. Student parents have different experiences than other students because they have other priorities. Being a first generation student, we have a lot of programs, but not everyone feels like they are going to fit like the imposter syndrome. I think. Marketing to not your typical or nontraditional students would be good too, because sometimes other students want to come to school after. Whether it be the military or just other life situations happened. Seeing those other people come to school and and seeing them and school and actually getting a degree would be nice to see. I don't really know any other. Parents or first generation students that. Finished school? I don't know many, honestly. So I think seeing those people actually seeing them and having them. Posted up and being viewable would be nice to see. Like, oh, look. Oh, they have. They have kids too. Or oh, they're a first generation student. They they kind of went through what I'm going through or. Just seeing it can help. Yeah, Just seeing it, you know. Engineering students that might go might be in the same situation, because I think we all at some point in time have imposter syndrome. I want to thank Rachel for meeting with me today and allowing me to talk. I know I kind of rambled on, but. I think I processed things by doing this in my own head, talking to somebody else. I'm really excited to see what this project does and how it ends up, and I'm glad I was able to share a little bit more about myself. I think I learned a lot about myself during this too. I think I look forward to seeing every scene where the College of Engineering goes and how they try and. Build upon maybe recommendations from this project. So. I think that's really it.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:51] Thank you so much for being with us again today and Jasmine, and we'll look forward to seeing your interview posted.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:00] Thank you.