Meet Marianne Rogers – a non-traditional student who left college for several years to get some real-world experience under her belt. Now that she’s back, she’s laying the groundwork for a successful career by majoring in computer information systems. Experience tells her that this degree will give her an advantage in business.

“I returned to the College to study accounting, but I got into computer science when I took a refresher course my first semester back. I really didn’t know a lot about computers, but I wanted to be proficient with programs like Excel. Halfway through that class, I realized that computer information systems (CIS) was a feasible direction for me.”

It was the guidance she received from one of her professors that moved Marianne to switch focus. “He talked to me about the opportunities available in the CIS field, and explained that I could take computer classes and business classes for a semester and then decide. He also helped me see that the CIS curriculum can be as much about business as about computer science.”

In her software engineering class, Marianne explains, “we discussed software successes and disasters. It was like a philosophy class because it was almost entirely discussion. Outside of class, we wrote code and studied various operating systems.”

In her programming languages course, she learned about different computer languages through ideas. “It was like learning the constructs behind the Romance languages, and then having the professor say, ‘OK, Week One, learn French. Week Two, learn Portuguese,’ etc. It was pretty intense, but that’s great because it’s what you have to do in our field.

“What’s key is that this major isn’t only about computers. We study code and programming and systems, but the way we learn is thoughtful and creative. It’s not what you might imagine.”

Now, Marianne is taking finance and accounting courses along with her systems and database classes. “I want to be able to say to an employer, ‘yes, I know how to program and how to manage databases, how to write code and test systems, but I also know how to interact with human beings and run accounting books, and I’ve taken management courses.’ I’ll be able to do that because this major melds business and computer science.”