



A Script for Success

Students seeking TCC's Film Collaborative Certificate open up about landing their dream job. BY SALLY VERRANDO

The students in Tarrant County College's Film Collaborative Certificate program are taking their education beyond where they once thought it could go. In an interview with *The Lens*, they showed what it means to be truly engaged in filmmaking. These students aren't just passive listeners—they're active participants, challenging the norms, pushing boundaries and learning from seasoned professionals. It's this kind of hunger that will propel them in the fast-paced world of film.

THE CAST

Monica Coppola returned to North Texas after a divorce. "I saw the Film Collaborative program and thought it would be a great way to get my foot in the door," she says. "I got my degree [Associate of Applied Science] in radio, television and film."

Dallas native **Cole Harvey** graduated with a bachelor's degree in motion picture production but struggled to find film work. The TCC program, he says, is "a good opportunity to learn and make connections."

Fort Worth visual artist **Ramiro Rosas** is experienced in classic automobile restoration, woodworking and electrical. At 43, he was looking for fresh creative outlets.

"The Film Collaborative program is a great opportunity to learn something new," he says, "apply my current skills and knowledge to the growing Texas film industry, and provide for my family at the same time."

They all chose the Grip and Lighting Certificate but worked other jobs, too. All agree on the program's affordability, efficiency and flexibility.

What jobs did you get?

MC: I was a production assistant for the art department last year through the Fort Worth Film Collaborative. My second production I found on my own through networking. I was the electrical person but also helped the gaffers. The hours were long but worth it. I have to pace myself since I'm a full-time student and have a part-time job.

CH: I am a location sound recordist for film and finally started getting some professional work—one feature, a short film and a promotional video with Visit Fort Worth.

RR: Last year I worked on my first big-budget production, but the role wasn't behind-the-scenes where I could test what I learned. I was cast to play a pool cleaner on *Lioness*, Season 2.



How has TCC set you up for success?

MC: I know about the equipment, what everything is called and how to use it. The training helped me feel better about knowing the basics.

CH: I have benefited greatly from people I've made connections with. The opportunity to get more hands-on grip experience has helped me on set when needing to do something that was out of my expertise.

RR: The production skills I learned have helped me understand the lighting in films more. I apply that to my own drawings and filming.

What's your favorite part?

MC: They were very generous, letting me ask a lot of questions—something I was told usually doesn't happen on bigger film sets.

CH: Definitely the people. I love the feeling of being on sets.

RR: Learning about all the different equipment and techniques used on set and in the field while getting to use the cameras and lights on my own.

What are your ultimate job aspirations?

MC: I would love to end up in film or television.

CH: My main goal is to record sound for major film productions or other projects I'm passionate about.

RR: I would like to apply my current creative and technical skills to the set construction or art department. I'm open to learning the many roles of the film industry to push myself forward. 🌟



Deep Focus of Danny Vazquez

Danny Vazquez completed the Film Collaborative Certificate program in less than four months. And in March 2025, he will launch a hiring app for Texas film workers.

He had accepted a challenge from Cody Lassiter at Paramount Pictures. Through an unexpected encounter between Vazquez's mother and Lassiter, she got his business card and an invitation to talk.

"After a two-hour conversation," says Vazquez, "he challenged me to leave California and enroll in the Fort Worth Film Collaborative at TCC. I packed up my life, drove 1,360 miles through a Texas snowstorm and started a new chapter."

He left behind 10 years as an assistant general manager, marketing director and sales director with Minor League Baseball. He yearned to use his passion for storytelling. He found it in Fort Worth.

TCC's Fort Worth Film Collaborative not only provided hands-on training but also direct networking opportunities that led to his first job in the industry.

He worked as the assistant travel coordinator for *Lioness*, Season 2, handling housing, transportation and logistics and ensuring seamless travel arrangements for the cast and crew. "Currently," he says, "I'm serving in the production office of *Landman*, Season 2, as a day player." He says he hopes for a permanent role in the locations department or production office.

Vazquez's new app, OnSet, will "connect department heads and hiring managers to verified Texas-based film crew members with certified work experience and credentials, streamline hiring and reduce the need to bring in out-of-state workers. With Fort Worth's growing film scene, I see tremendous opportunities here," Vazquez says.