

Colby



Colby Magazine

---

Volume 107  
Issue 1 *Spring 2019*

Article 13

---

April 2019

## Moving North and Finding Answers: Questbridge Student Regina Martinez Considers Her Identity on Mayflower Hill

Kardelen Koldas

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine>

---

### Recommended Citation

Koldas, Kardelen (2019) "Moving North and Finding Answers: Questbridge Student Regina Martinez Considers Her Identity on Mayflower Hill," *Colby Magazine*: Vol. 107 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine/vol107/iss1/13>

This Feature is brought to you for free and open access by the Colby College Archives at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Magazine by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby.

# STUDENTS

## MOVING NORTH

### AND FINDING ANSWERS

QUESTBRIDGE STUDENT  
REGINA MARTINEZ  
CONSIDERS HER IDENTITY  
ON MAYFLOWER HILL

By Kardelen Koldas '15

## GOOD NEWS ABOUT COLLEGE FOUND REGINA MARTINEZ '20 ON A BAD DAY.

Martinez had a sinus infection. She and her mother were at the doctor's office in Juarez, Mexico, across the border from their home in El Paso, Texas. As they left the office, an email arrived informing of a status update on her college application. She hurriedly clicked on "Status Update." The announcement loaded and said, "You have been MATCHED!"

Martinez was one of 29 students in Colby's first group enrolled through QuestBridge, an organization that matches academically talented low-income students with undergraduate institutions in the United States.

This was to be her second move north. Martinez and her family moved 20 minutes north from Juarez to El Paso when Martinez was about six years old. "Although Mexican education was really good, my mom knew that opportunities from being in the U.S. were going to be much greater," Martinez said.

QuestBridge was Martinez's opportunity to access an education that her engineer mother and business administrator father couldn't afford—and an incentive to think more broadly about her options. Her intellectual curiosity craved a diverse curriculum—and Colby's interdisciplinary liberal arts education offers just that. And when Colby's Denise Walden, associate director of admissions and coordinator of multicultural enrollment, visited her high school, Martinez felt connected and made Mayflower Hill her first choice on the QuestBridge application.

Affording college was no longer an issue. She'd soon face others.

Colby was nothing like El Paso, where the majority of the population is Latinx. "All my identities hit me in the face when I came here," she said. But, she discovered having a similar background wasn't a precondition for friendships. "I felt my parents' income was right on my forehead and everyone could tell. But people actually don't care, as I found out."

“ I FELT MY PARENTS' INCOME WAS RIGHT ON MY FOREHEAD AND EVERYONE COULD TELL, BUT PEOPLE ACTUALLY DON'T CARE, AS I FOUND OUT.”

—Regina Martinez '20

Though she was a top student in high school, Martinez initially felt other students were smarter and better educated. "Seeing everyone coming from super fancy-sounding high schools, I was like, 'How did they select me?'"

There were good reasons. And through her interactions with faculty outside classes, she realized they were as interested in their students as in the material they taught. "A lot of them have been able to help me fit into this environment, or how to feel that my voice is relevant in their classes," she said.

As she adjusted, her academic interests changed. Initially, she aspired to be a veterinarian, but cooled to that idea. But what else could she study?

The answer came in a Latin American studies class. "It shocked me that I was in Waterville, Maine, learning about my own identity," she said. "I fell in love with the idea that I could not only learn who I am, but the historic aspects and the legacies of all the social movements ... that have led my culture to be what it is," she said. "It is actually relevant to me in a very academic way but also in a very real way."

As a Latin American studies major with a managerial economics minor, she is eyeing administrative experience and humanitarian work. "The most valuable work I could do would be helping the Latinx community in the U.S.," she said. "I would definitely like to do something where I can advocate for others, especially because I feel my family is the definition of what the American dream in progress looks like."

Regina Martinez '20 came to Colby through the National College Match program at QuestBridge, which links highly qualified low-income students to the nation's top colleges. Students accepted to the competitive program complete one application to 12 Questbridge college partners they have selected. Those who are ultimately matched with one of those colleges receive a full four-year scholarship. By next year, Colby expects to have enrolled about 125 QuestBridge students.