At age 42, John McMinn is working on his first college degree at Hinds Community College’s Jackson Campus-Academic/Technical Center.

A culinary arts major, McMinn will graduate in the spring and continue on to earn a second degree in hotel and restaurant management.

“Because I have experienced the joys and pains of many of life’s challenges, I am now more focused and determined and even more interested in the field of culinary arts than I would have been years ago,” said McMinn, who is married and has a baby on the way.

He has been working in the food service industry and has always had a passion for cooking. But he and his wife were concerned about the cost of school and how they would pay the bills while he was in school.

“After speaking with the financial aid advisers at Hinds, who are eager to assist in every way, I learned that compared to other two- and four-year colleges, attending Hinds is very affordable,” he said. “Along with that, there are also numerous financial aid programs, such as government and state grants, scholarships and student loans to assist the student with the costs associated with going to college.”

Hinds has been a great experience for McMinn, who credits his instructors and the campus’ administrators with guiding him into the right choices for his lifestyle.

“The faculty and staff are genuinely interested in the education and well-being of the students. Their desire to teach and their passion for helping students grow in every area of their lives are second to none,” he said. “The qualified and passionate faculty and staff — along with a curriculum geared toward the intellectual, mental and physical growth of the student — is what Hinds Community College is all about.”