

ADULT STUDENTS FIND SUCCESS, OFFER ENCOURAGEMENT

It's Never Too Late to Pursue a Degree



1 ALDO SALAZAR-LOPEZ CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

Aldo Salazar-Lopez, 31, followed his service in the Marine Corps with a new mission – to graduate from DCC with a construction technology management degree. He said the career's combination of the office environment and outdoor work was ideal for him.

"I'm more of a hands-on person," said Salazar-Lopez. "Working with computers is certainly required in construction management, but you also get to go on site and be part of a more blue-collar environment."

His experience as an adult student has been very positive. In addition to his academic pursuits, Salazar-Lopez is active in the DCC Military Club, serving as the Student Government Association representative.

"As an adult student you have a life, a family, probably a mortgage, but it's definitely worth it," he said. "Other adults who are thinking of returning to school definitely should make the time; this is a great campus at which to learn."



2 KYLE FORREST CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

Kyle Forrest, 35, has found that DCC is better the second time around. "I started as a criminal justice major after high school, but I landed a job and ended up going to cosmetology school and becoming a hair stylist," she said.

After years of working two jobs, she came back to DCC and settled on construction technology management as a major upon a recommendation from her brother, a project manager at an architectural firm. Forrest said it's sometimes been hectic balancing her studies with parenthood and a full-time job, but that finding a field she enjoys has been transformational.

"I'd tell other adults thinking about coming back that sure, you're with students from a younger generation for the most part, and that can be a little scary at first, but it will work out fine," said Forrest. "You just need to focus on your goals and your future."



3 PARIS AIKEN AVIATION SCIENCE: PILOT

Paris Aiken, 34, used his second try at college to really get off the ground. Aiken, a single father, is finishing his degree in aviation science and plans to transfer to Utah Valley University's School of Aviation Sciences to become a helicopter pilot.

"When I came back to Dutchess my career path was physical therapy, but I took an aviation course because I needed an elective," said Aiken. "The teacher was amazing."

From there, he took a rotary-wing course and became hooked on helicopters. He said coming back to school was the right move and recommends other adults thinking of a career change try DCC for its quality and value.

"I'm graduating from DCC not owing a dime in student loans. Dutchess is affordable and it's a great place to get your foot in the door and understand the college experience."



4 ERIK HRYCUN BUSINESS

With sights on opening a record store, Erik Hrycun, 50, said his DCC courses are striking just the right chord. He's on track to graduate with degrees in both accounting and business management.

After Hrycun lost his job as a call center representative in 2010, his son suggested he go back to school. "I thought I'd be so out of place among the younger students," he said. "But an admissions counselor helped me realize that going back to college was a good idea."

He took advantage of DCC's free academic support services during his first semester and earned a spot on the dean's list. He said he feels very much at home on campus and enjoys working with younger students on class projects.

"Faculty and staff have been so positive about helping me reach my goal," said Hrycun. "Other adults thinking of coming to DCC definitely should do it!"