

Madeleine Michalik



Madeleine Michalik shared with us her academic journey as an adult student and the long road she's had to return to school and finish her degree in Communications Studies. Madeleine eventually started her academic journey at UNC Charlotte in the Fall of 2013, and she reflects on her experiences at orientation and her initial feelings about continuing her education as an adult student here:

"I specifically remember the summer orientation I attended: I was very obviously pregnant with my second child, and I was the only (at least visibly) pregnant student waddling around orientation. I remember feeling out-of-place and intimidated until I made friends with other transfer students in my orientation group. I took exclusively online courses my first two semesters which I was thankful for as online courses allowed me to be home with my two young children and further my education simultaneously".

Madeleine attended St. Bonaventure University in New York State as a Journalism/Mass Communication and International Studies double major from the Fall of 2009 through the Fall of 2011. When her and her husband decided to relocate to North Carolina, she had hoped to transfer to UNCC in the fall of 2012. However, she put those plans on hold as her family anxiously awaited the delivery of their next daughter who was born 3.5 months prematurely in August of that year. As a result, she decided to wait to apply until the following year to enroll. Madeleine chose UNC Charlotte "because of its Communications program and its (relatively) close proximity to my home".



Madeleine's journey to complete her education may sound familiar to other adult students on campus. Between relocating to another state, starting or growing a family, and transferring from another institution, taking the leap to complete your degree can be an intimidating and timely one.

Madeleine's advice for adult students who are returning to school is:

"Be confident, participate, and do your best! I felt like I didn't fit in or couldn't relate to the other students, and I was initially nervous about participating in class, but that quickly disappeared as I pushed myself to engage with the other students. I also work really hard to participate in class and get good grades because I feel a certain stigma is associated with having kids while still in college, and I want to prove that just because I chose a different path than most, I can still have a successful career".

Madeleine's next steps are to secure an internship, graduate, and acquire a job, "ideally in a hospital setting"!

As she approaches graduation in 2016, we want to wish Madeleine the best, and thank her for sharing her journey with us! If you are interested in sharing your journey or success story with us, please visit:

<http://oases.uncc.edu/student-information/student-success-stories> to learn how.