

Marilyn Brown



For Marilyn Brown, it is all about maps. Making them, using them, being all over them...

Brown, an adult student at UNC Charlotte majoring Geography, began her college career in the late 1980s at Northwestern State University in Louisiana in a program dedicated to the study of the Great Books. After a couple of years in that program, personal commitments took her around the eastern United States and away from her studies.

During that time, Brown worked in a variety of jobs and kept busy, but, in 2013, working in retail and living in Stanly County, she decided it was time to go back to school.

"I looked at a lot of programs, certificate, degree, two-year, four-year," she said. "I read the UNC Charlotte catalog and went to an open house. I decided, this is where I want to spend a lot of my life."

Not every prospective student reads the entire university catalog, but Brown was serious about "mapping" out her future.

"I read every degree program in the catalog to find out what I was interested in," she said.

She knew that the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences housed her future. She anticipates graduating with a Bachelor's of Science in Geography. She plans on pursuing a Master's in Geography (hopefully at UNCC!) with a concentration in geographic information science & technologies (GIS&T). GIS combines the use of computer technology and maps to convey geographic information. GIS is used in a variety of areas, including medicine, law enforcement and retail planning. Brown knows that a major application for GIS is the identification of probable locations of natural resources, such as oil and gas, a pursuit that could take her back to her family in her hometown of Houston, yet another place on the U.S. map where Brown can stick a pin.

While Brown is dedicated to spending a great deal of time on the UNC Charlotte campus, she knows that it helps to have two kinds of maps, a literal layout of the campus and guide to all that the campus has to offer.

"UNC Charlotte is an embarrassment of riches," she said. "There are people here who are happy to help you with anything, but how do you find out who and where they are?"

Brown found that map in the course, UCOL 1010 "College Transition for Transfers."

"The technology of being a student is totally different today," she said. "I had to submit assignments through Moodle. What's Moodle? UCOL 1010 covered all of that. It also reinforced how to structure research papers, how to use the library. I had not done research in 20 years."



The section of UCOL 1010 that Brown took was taught by Kimberly Rodgers, an advisor in UNC Charlotte's Office of Adult Students and Evening Services (OASES), which has been a part of Brown's campus experience from her first day.

If you are interested in sharing your journey or success story with us like Marilyn, please visit: <http://oases.uncc.edu/student-information/student-success-stories> to learn how.