

Rachel Chesley



Rachel transferred to UNCC to seek a degree in Computer Science with a minor in Cognitive Science after receiving her Associate's degree from Central Piedmont Community College. Prior to transferring to UNCC, she attended Gaston College after high school followed by CVCC. Although she has attended a number of institutions prior coming to UNC Charlotte, she had a relatively smooth transition to the University in terms of financial aid, as her previous job was reimbursing her for tuition. Rachel commented about making the transition to attain her Bachelor's degree and how it was made possible:

“I had always thought that a BA would be beyond my ability, but with the support from my previous job it was finally an option that could be considered. As soon as I understood it [was] something I could do, I was more than willing to attend”.

When Rachel first arrived at the University, she had a mentor from OASES through the Adult Student Mentoring Program (AMPS). She revealed how helpful they were in answering her academic questions as well as helped her understand and navigate the major changes in administration from the community college level when she first transferred in.

“[The OASES mentor] helped me to feel less alone in the process. I felt a little lost in the crowd and a bit confused when I first got here, [but] having a mentor helped me to stick with school and to push through the transition period”.

The mentor Rachel speaks of is from the AMPS program, which is sponsored by OASES. This program is a peer mentoring program that matches experienced adult student volunteers with new adult students to aid a seamless transition into university life and provide a support system. As a mentee, you work one on one with a more experienced nontraditional student as you learn successful ways to excel as a student at the University.

Rachel continued by discussing some struggles she had during that transition period, and how she's overcome them to be a successful student nearing graduation today:

“I can definitely admit to being intimidated and feeling out of place when I first started at UNCC. To look back, it is hard to believe that is where I started. I took a class in programming (which I had never even seen before), was the only female in my team group, and by far the oldest of all of them. I had a lot of doubts, but I pushed through them and found a topic that I loved. Now I love programming, am a tutor, recently just took part in Hackathon, and I also was a preceptor for Rapid Prototyping. I have made valuable connections and more than all of that I feel like I have truly found what I want to do and feel like I have the tools to eventually have a stable and interesting job”.

Rachel's advice for adult students enrolled or seeking to come back to school is:

“Don't be intimidated. Yes, it can be a little scary. Yes, it can feel like a leap. And yes there will be days you feel out of place or overwhelmed, but it is worth it. It is a fulfilling process and allows for a feeling of accomplishment as well as rewards that go beyond just academics”.

Rachel is currently looking for a startup or smaller company within the Charlotte community to work for the computing world. She is also looking into and planning to apply for an internship with Charlotte Agenda among other internship opportunities. With a design interest, she hoped to one day be equipped to work in front end design or web design.



OASES sends our congratulations to Rachel on her graduation at the end of the upcoming Fall 2016 semester! We hope you feel inspired and have enjoyed reading more about one of our many talented adult students.

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.