



**Wherever he goes and whatever he does, Phil Strickland has one guiding principle. Keep rocking.**

Strickland, an **adult student** at UNC Charlotte, made a last minute choice to defer his college career, when, as a recent high school graduate, he decided to give music a try.

I was all set with my dorm assignment and everything at UNC Greensboro, when, being teenagers, my friends and I thought we could make something of our band. Things did not go as well as we would have hoped.”

Things did not go that badly. Strickland and his band, Ground, were together for most of the 1990s, specializing in a heavier rock sound, which Strickland likens to Metallica. They had a degree of success recording and playing, especially in the Charlotte area, where they had settled. Still, as Strickland took on the responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood, he knew that he needed to move on with his life. He worked in camera repair for 15 years and made a few forays into community college, but, nearing 40, he knew that it was time to get serious about his education.

He has taken it quite seriously, posting a perfect GPA through his first semester, and he has settled on a major in geology, which is, among things, the study of, you guessed it, rock.

However, Strickland chose that major for more reasons than giving his friends enough material for a lifetime of groan-inducing puns.

“I have always loved science,” he said. “And I have always been interested in rocks and how they were formed. At home, when I am in control of the remote, instead of my wife or kids, I am usually watching something about volcanos on the Discovery Channel.”

As a family man, Strickland feels a responsibility to do more than just compromise on what he gets to watch on television. He feels a need to make a positive impact on the world in which his family will live in the future, and he plans to use his geology degree to that end.

“I want to work in hydrology, in finding clean water,” he said. “We are depleting our fresh water, and we have to conserve the clean water that we have. I would like to be a small, helpful part of that effort.”

In keeping with the family theme, Strickland credits his wife with his successful start in school. “I could not have done it at all, if she had not been so supportive,” he said.

Strickland also found support in UNC Charlotte's Office of Adult Students and Evening Services, and in the course, UCOL 1010 "College Transition Transfers," taught by OASES advisor, Kimberly Rodgers.

"That course was like a sanctuary, a refuge, for me as an adult student," he said. "Most of my classes were filled with 19-20 year olds, and then there was me. When I walked into my English class, the other students straightened up and stopped talking. They thought I was the teacher. That did not make me feel good."

In UCOL 1010, Strickland was surrounded by students ranging in age from their early 20s to 50s, as opposed to his younger fellow students, who were, as he put it, "zooming around on longboards with their ear buds in."

"Going to UCOL was like walking into a room with friends," he said. "I knew everyone in the room. That was not true in my other classes."

Having negotiated his reentry into college and settled on a major and career path, Strickland, a guitarist, still has not abandoned the type of rocking that initially kept him out of school. His new band is Watch Husky Burn. To see and hear them, go to [www.huskyrock.com](http://www.huskyrock.com).