

## Bridgeport Academic Advisor Navigates Workday Unpredictability



*Sarah Squatriglia is an academic advisor for students in the University of Bridgeport's IDEAL Program at the Waterbury Center location.*

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BRIDGEPORT, Conn. -- Sarah Squatriglia describes each day as different in her role as an academic advisor for students in the University of Bridgeport's IDEAL Program at the Waterbury Center location. Her goal, however, remains the same for each student she comes across.

"My role is assisting and educating," said Squatriglia, who earned her Master's degree in education from UB in 2011. "I'll show them how to use the portal, how the online classes work and how to access technology and resources. Sometimes, I'm the only face of the University that students see. I know a little bit about financial aid, career services, everything to help better serve the students."

The IDEAL Program, which is for students ages 23 and up, is an accelerated degree completion program. It offers students the flexibility of online, evening or weekend classes.

Squatriglia navigates a lot of moving parts to help students find their educational path. She considers each individual's education experience, family

situation, work commitment and class offerings to set up a program that is flexible, expedient and convenient.

"Students in the IDEAL Program have work schedules, children, families and lives that they're trying to fit in with school," Squatriglia said. "There's a lot of reaching out via email and phone calls. I keep them updated with their questions. I help them find the best avenue for them to complete their degree. It's different for every student."

Squatriglia said the unpredictability of daily events is what she enjoys most about her job.

"No day is the same," she said. "I'll check my emails and phone messages to begin the day, but that's the only routine part. Then I set off to do what we need to do, figure out what issues came up and how we can solve them. There is no typical day. One email can set off a whole chain of events."

Squatriglia's relationship with her students results in a connection that's closer than most other college advisors. She attends awards banquets, graduation dinners and graduation.

"My favorite part is graduation," she said. "It's at that moment when I'm excited and proud of them for the work they've done. I know the experience and challenges they've faced to get to that point. I'm excited for them, and proud of what they've accomplished."

Squatriglia's passion for education comes through in conversation. She enjoys her job, but more importantly, enjoys helping others pursue their goals. She has seen students with all ranges of hardships obtain their degrees, and it energizes her to help the next student facing a rocky road.

"I have seen such resiliency," Squatriglia said. "I've helped students who've had some traumatic things happen to them. I'm impressed by them. They are so invested in their education. They are dedicated and want it because they see the value in it."