

Busy Mom Finds University Of Bridgeport Program IDEAL Way To Attain Degree



Sarah Sullivan is about a year away from acquiring her college degree from the University of Bridgeport's IDEAL Program.

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FAIRFIELD COUNTY, Conn. -- When Sarah Sullivan's youngest daughter enrolled in college three years ago, she also started taking classes in the [University of Bridgeport's IDEAL Program](#), an adult degree completion program.

"I told her we'll graduate at the same time," Sullivan said. Now, she is about a year away from fulfilling that promise.

Sullivan, who started at UB with just three transfer credits, expects to finish her education in May 2016. She will receive a degree in Professional Studies with a concentration in Human Resource Administration.

Sullivan enrolled in college 20 years ago. "Then life happened," she said. She dropped out after getting pregnant, and then set about raising her family. She always knew, however, that she wanted to return to school.

"Going back as an adult, I was very nervous about it," she said. "I thought, 'I'm going to have to write a lot of papers,' and I thought it was going to be very hard.

What I found was that I knew a lot of things, I just didn't know what they were called. I can't imagine trying to do this as a teenager. Life experience helped me a lot. It has given me the confidence to succeed in school."

The hardest part for Sullivan is juggling school and work. She holds down a full-time job, two part-time jobs and provides care for a special needs person at home. She's also active in the Meriden Humane Society and recently led a major fundraising event for the organization.

"It definitely has been very demanding," Sullivan said. "The best part is I am able to do most of it online. I had my first class in person in three years, and that made it even harder. I do a lot of books on tape. You just figure out what you need to do and get it done. The flexibility of online learning allows me to have a life and still get my degree."

Sullivan said she found the IDEAL counselors and teachers willing to work with her to meet her goals. "When I was looking for schools and online courses, it was confusing," she said. "The fact that I could go in person to UB and talk with someone was the reason I selected that school. My adviser is wonderful. She's the reason I picked UB. They just have that chemistry. If I tell my adviser I'm coming in, she's ready and waiting for me. I think they appreciate the fact that everyone is busy."

Sullivan's 22-year-old daughter has an Associates degree. Her 20-year-old daughter is a college junior majoring in business. She says they are her role models.

"I was hoping they would be the opposite of me and would finish their education early," she said. "I'm proud of them. It's going by so fast, I thought four years was forever. Going from three credits to over 70, and doing it part time, it seems like it's a huge deal. I don't even know where I found the time. It boils down to what's important to you."