USU-Beaver Student
First to Earn Business Administration Bachelor’s

Leaves 20-Year Career to Go Back to School
- USU-Southwest

After holding a successful career for more than 20 years, it’s hard to imagine leaving it behind to step into an unknown future. Jody Draper, ex-hairdresser, mother, grandmother, and outdoor connoisseur, did just that. In 2011, she left Salt Lake and headed south for Beaver, Utah. She immediately began taking classes at Utah State University-Beaver (USU) while raising her two daughters. Seven years later, she’s walking down the aisle as USU-Beaver’s first business administration graduate.

“It wasn’t always easy,” said Draper. “It was wake up at five a.m. to finish my homework so I would have a good balance between work, school, and raising my family. This experience wasn’t just about me getting a college degree, it was about me fulfilling my educational goals and serving as a role model for my daughters.”

Leveraging her professional experience and newly acquired bachelor’s degree, Draper was offered a job as the campground manager for the Bryce Valley KOA in Cannonville, Utah. Not only did she land her dream job, combining her passion for the outdoors with helping people, she was able to negotiate a higher pay rate, which she attributes to her business courses.

“The classes were well structured and I was able to gain a lot of new skills I think I could only get through college, like negotiating. USU-Beaver has a great staff, and the collaboration between Beaver and the main campus in Logan provided me with everything I needed to succeed,” said Draper.

Like all of USU’s 33 regional campuses and centers, USU-Beaver provides locals with access to quality higher education without having to relocate. By working hand-in-hand with the Logan campus, students are able to receive the benefits of a big university with a small-town feel. USU-Beaver works with students to provide a flexible schedule of classes in the day, evening and weekends.

Draper has already started her new management role, closing out one chapter of her life and starting a new one. “I am sad to leave Beaver behind,” said Draper, “I’ve made some great friends and had the opportunity to get to know great people here. The staff at USU-Beaver have helped me so much. But I am excited to start this new journey.”

According to Nancy Glomb, USU Southwest’s executive director, Draper embodies what it means to be a successful regional campus student. “Most of our students have families and are working, just like Draper. She was able to buckle down and work hard. Her drive for a better life is the same drive the rest of our students have. Given the right resources and support, they earn college degrees and change their future. We are very proud of Jody and all those following in her footsteps.”

She was selected to speak at USU Southwest’s commencement, sharing how she was able to overcome the obstacles between her and a bachelor’s degree through desire and support from USU staff and faculty.

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