

From a recent graduate:

"I may be a rather odd former student, since I would not have considered myself an adult educator coming into the program. Having graduated in August 2007, I am not sure that this has changed. But to me, this is the beauty of the program: it allows you the breathing room to plot your own course. The Adult Education program does not limit you to any specific career, the way most other graduate programs do.

Obviously, there is a core curriculum you have to take. But I found each of those courses to be highly stimulating and satisfying in their own right -- much more so than some of the electives I took in other departments. Without exception, the courses that had the most significant impact on me were taught by Adult Education faculty. In hindsight, I believe that the reason is not so much the content (although that was certainly critical) as it was the way that the courses were taught. Adult Education faculty tend to practice what they preach: when they assign challenging readings, they do not provide (or even withhold) the "correct" interpretation in order to affirm their intellectual superiority. Instead, using facilitated discussions rather than lectures, they invite you to process these readings by having you connect them to your own life. As a result, each class eventually becomes kind of a learning community of aspiring scholars, guided by an established mentor. I was never the passive recipient of knowledge that some disembodied entity decided I needed. Instead, I was allowed -- even encouraged -- to take charge of my own learning (all with proper guidance from the faculty, of course).

Of course, the fact that you are not limited to any specific career can also be seen as a liability. If your goal is to acquire a specific skill set, then it will be important to be very intentional about the courses you take and the study you conduct. Similarly, if you are interested in the title and the diploma rather than the process of getting there, there may be other programs that are more suitable for you. But if I were to do it all over again, I would not change a thing.

My experiences in the program -- the classes, the discussions, the readings, the reflections, and the feedback -- have allowed me to grow substantially. In the process, I have been made uncomfortable at times, confronted with my own old, habitual ways of viewing the world; I have been afforded a 50,000-ft. view of social science, making me a much more critical consumer of information; and I have been affirmed as an aspiring scholar. But perhaps most importantly, I was encouraged to ask the kind of question that really matters. If this appeals to you, then the Adult Education program is worth a very close look."

--Dr. Roemer Visser, Lecturer, Mays Business School, Texas A&M University roemer@tamu.edu. Roemer graduated in August 2007.

You'll see a couple of pictures of Roemer at his graduation if you click [Pathway through the program](#).

From a current student, who framed his comments as responses to some typical questions potential applicants ask:

If you were recommending this program to a friend, what are the most important things you'd want them to know about it?
The program is designed with the adult learner in mind. Not only are courses offered in a convenient format but also the curriculum is designed so you can pursue your interest and shape it to fit your passion.

As you think back, what are some key experiences you could share that capture what it's like to be a student in this program?

I was unsure at first if I would be able to form strong relationships with my peers since I commuted over 100 miles to class. However, I found that I have developed not only professional but personal relationships with my classmates. Everyone is truly supportive in the journey.

When you were considering applying to this program, what were your expectations?

To be challenged
To have flexibility in my curriculum both in content and delivery
Supportive faculty and staff

How were those met or (hopefully) exceeded?

The faculty and staff in this program truly understand they do not have many "traditional" graduate students. They are supportive and work with me when I have personal and professional conflicts in class.

What happy surprises did you have?

The biggest surprise I had is that the faculty seem truly interested in my opinions. You are treated as a peer, which is very different than my previous experiences in graduate education.

What have been your most satisfying moments?

- Completing my first class and realizing I could survive in a doctoral program
- Developing a training manual and presentation for class that was partially adopted by my employer.

How has this program benefited you/changed you/advanced your career?

In pursuing my degree I have grown as a student and educator. I look at my work through much sharper critical lens. It allows me to make better decisions not only for myself but the students I interact with on a daily basis. Recently I was promoted to a Dean's position within my campus. I believe that the skills I am developing were a key factor.

--John J. Willis, Dean of Student Affairs, The Art Institute of Houston. John is currently completing his coursework for the doctorate.

From a recent graduate of our program, who framed her responses in a similar way:

If I were recommending this program to a friend the most important things that I would want them to know is:

- The classes are primarily geared around the schedule of a working adult
- Classes are offered in different formats (TTVN, distance learning, web based and weekend formats)
- Classes can be started in any semester
- The amount of hours taken at any given semester is flexible
- Multiple opportunities for financial assistance
- Multiple opportunities for conference presentation

As I think back, some of the key experiences that capture what it's like being a student in this program are:

- Classes always challenged me to view various situations from a different frame of reference.
- Group discussions were always engaging and I typically learned something from the experiences of others
- Since I commuted from San Antonio, I always had the opportunity to immediately reflect upon the classroom experience within the three hour drive back.
- Each class I completed added another dimension to my view on student learning as well as my overall perspective as an adult educator

When I was considering applying to this program, my expectations were:

- To learn the key components of becoming an adult educator
- To learn various techniques of teaching in different educational settings in order to effect change within my own educational setting
- To learn the proper methods of conducting and documenting research
- To gain the opportunity to interact with and share educational experiences with other educators (professors and other students)
- Network with other educators for future employment opportunities
- To have fun learning!

This program exceeded my expectations. I learned so much more than I could have ever anticipated and I will always value my experiences in the program.

This program has benefitted me/changed /advanced my career by providing me;

- The credentials to match some of the experiences that I already possess.
- The credentials that will demand a higher level of respect from peers and superiors
- Personally, by allowing me the opportunity to engage in learning that I would not have been exposed to in any other venue. It has also encouraged me to view the world with different lenses and attempt to better understand some of the realities of others.

--Lt. Col. Yvette Woods, Ph.D., Chief, Occupational Therapy Branch, Ft. Sam Houston. ywnotlaw@aol.com. Yvette graduated from the program in August 2007.

These remarks come from a current student:

“My best reasons for recommending the program are the strength of students, the diversity of students represented in the program, and the networking and support made possible through interactions with other professionals. I was prepared for the faculty and class sessions to be excellent, but I was unprepared for the quality of discussion that some of my classes have had on WebCT. Discussions have gone above and beyond mere class requirements to true explorations of issues, concern for how to use the knowledge we learn in class, and implications for research. Along this same line, discussions also revealed diversity of opinion and background, and it has been fascinating to see diversity get talked about and negotiated at times. Finally, as a working professional, I have been able to network and seek support from others who confront issues in training, performance management and development, technology, and other issues in the field of adult education. This program has been a quality experience for me to grow in knowledge, research, and application.”

--Kris Wuensche, Instructional Designer, Office of the Deputy Chancellor, Texas A&M University.
Wuensche@tamu.edu Kris is currently taking courses towards her doctoral degree.

From a recent graduate of the program:

“The quality, reputation, and flexibility of the University and the program made it the only choice for me. As a commuter student, I needed a program that offered weekend, evening, and distance education opportunities for coursework.

You know, a friend and program classmate likened graduate work to a path. For me, it's the people with whom we travel along that path that shape what we see and how we experience the journey. I unreservedly recommend the program based on the strength of the faculty, curricula, and students as an interrelated whole.”

--Dr. Joellen E. Coryell, Assistant Professor of College Teaching/Adult Learning & Teaching, The University of Texas at San Antonio. Joellen graduated in August 2007. If you click on [Pathway through the program](#) you'll see a picture of her at graduation.

The following two comments come from current students in our doctoral program:

“The adult education program is challenging and highly flexible. What I enjoyed the most was the faculty's ability to tailor the program to your discipline. In addition, I have had the privilege of meeting wonderful colleagues from different professions and academic institutions.”

--Harold Henson, Assistant Professor of Dental Hygiene, University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston.
Harold.A.Henson@uth.tmc.edu Harold has completed his coursework and is currently beginning his dissertation research.

“Adult education is an experience-based process, which facilitates the learning and the sharing of old and new information for the primary purpose of improving an individual's quality of life; thus contributing to and resulting in a more stable and productive society. My definition of adult education has been primarily influenced by my personal and professional learning experiences, and by my academic mentors at Texas A&M University. Although instructional strategies and modalities are contextual in nature, the goals of adult education should forever remain consistent: to develop and empower individuals, to make organizations more efficient, and ultimately to improve the quality of life in a society - one community at a time. This is what I have learned in the Adult Education program at Texas A&M University. Discovering how adults learn has been the most rewarding of all experiences for me at the College of Education and Human Development's Adult Education program. The professors and the students provide an exceptional representation of the quality of education one might expect at a most unique learning institution. Come and be a part of a wonderful learning experience.”

--John De La Garza, Captain/Training Coordinator, San Antonio Fire Department. jdelagarza@sbcglobal.net
John is currently completing his coursework in the doctoral program.