

RELL



Dual Degree in Theatre and Cinematic Arts

What were you involved in at UMBC and/or what was your experience like as an adult learner?

More often time than not I was isolated. This is a very interesting campus that has a certain vibe i cannot really figure out. Of course it was not astronomically bad but it was not the best experience either.

What are your plans after graduation?

First, sleep for 3 weeks. Next hopefully find work within photography/videography as well as work on making content for my youtube channel.

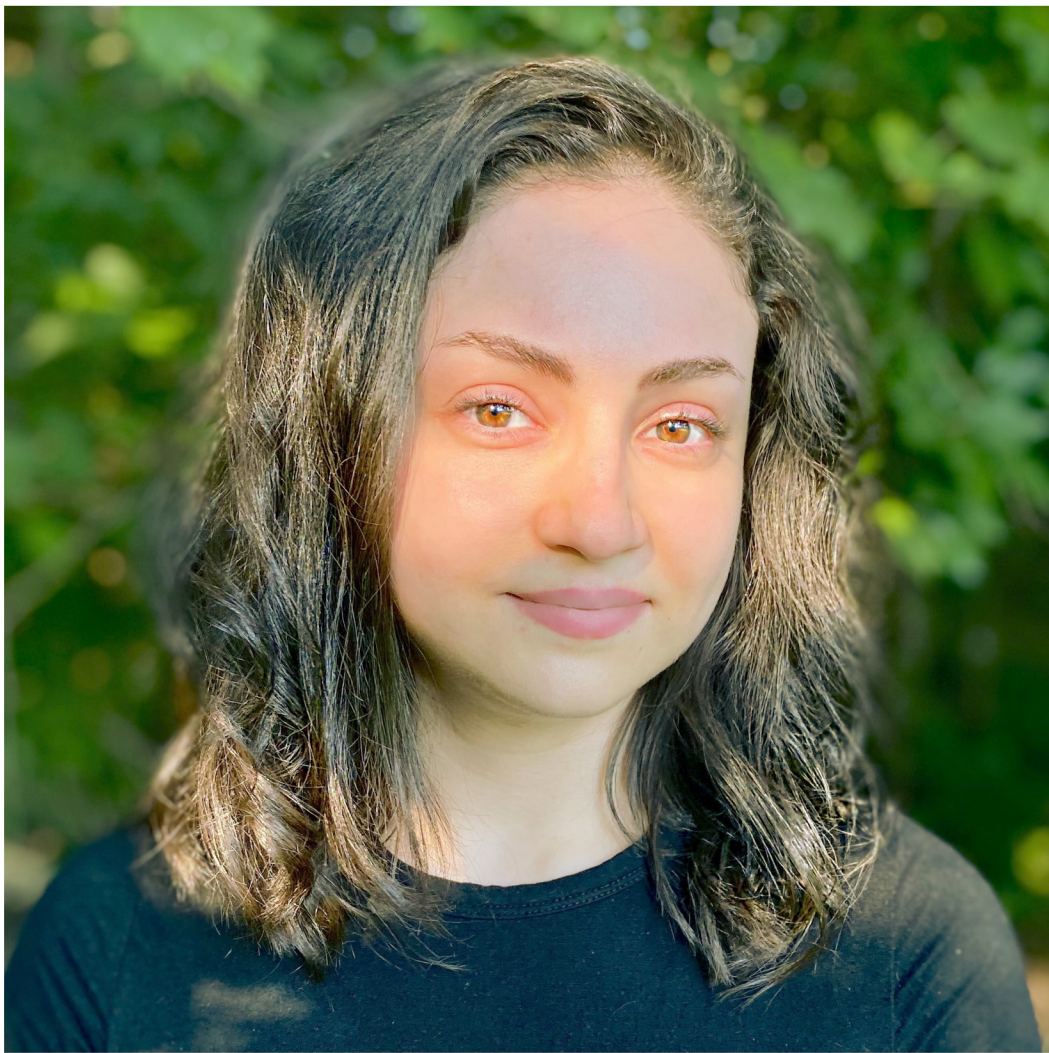
Looking back on your experience, what is your advice for current Returning Adult Learners?

Connections, find others that have/share experiences such as yourself, and don't be afraid to attend events. But also don't feel out of place because of the age gap. you'd be surprised at how many people you'll end up potentially forming lifetime bonds with despite being older than them. We're all here to succeed and thats all that matters.

What else do you want to share?

Yeah follow me if you want.
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpH3IgPnlHsd0gCx9t9LoYQ>
https://www.tiktok.com/@_rellyrell_?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc

ATIEH BAKHTIAR



B.A. Biology

What were you involved in at UMBC and/or what was your experience like as an adult learner?

At UMBC, my experiences with the Women's Center and adult learners have been incredibly enriching. The Women's Center provided a supportive community where I engaged in insightful discussions, attended empowering events, and developed lasting connections with fellow students. The center's commitment to fostering inclusivity and addressing gender-related issues has played a crucial role in my personal and academic growth. Additionally, as an adult learner at UMBC, I found a welcoming environment that understands the unique challenges and perspectives of returning students. The resources tailored for adult learners, such as flexible scheduling and academic support, have allowed me to seamlessly integrate into the university community while balancing the demands of work and family. These experiences have not only enhanced my education but have also contributed significantly to my sense of belonging within the UMBC community.

What are your plans after graduation?

Medical School

Looking back on your experience, what is your advice for current Returning Adult Learners?

For current returning adult learners, my advice is to embrace the journey with patience and self-compassion. Recognize the value of your life experiences, as they bring a unique perspective to your education. Build a strong support network by connecting with fellow adult learners and utilizing resources tailored to your needs, such as academic advising for flexible scheduling. Stay organized and prioritize self-care to maintain a healthy balance between academic pursuits, work, and personal life. Don't hesitate to seek help when needed, whether it's from professors, mentors, or support services. Remember, your commitment to learning is commendable, and each step forward is a triumph worth celebrating.

What else do you want to share?

You are never alone. Share your experiences with others and take it one step at a time.

KIMBERLY



Bachelor's degree in Social Work

What were you involved in at UMBC and/or what was your experience like as an adult learner?

at UMBC, I was involved with SWSA, NAMI, InterVarsity, Spanish Conversation Club and the Adult-Learner's program. My experience as an adult learner has been great! I have been receiving support and resources from the Women's Center ever since I found out I was pregnant in Spring 2022.

Looking back on your experience, what is your advice for current Returning Adult Learners?

I would encourage current Returning Adult Learners to seek any resources you may need from the Women's center, if you are struggling in any way. The Women's Center has information to many resources on campus. This is amazing program for adult students in general or adult students like me who have a child. Remember to take use of rest and break, reach out for help if you need it and make use of the resources available.

What are your plans after graduation?

Upon graduating and obtaining my bachelor's degree, I plan to work for a non-profit agency/organization and apply to graduate school within 1-2 years to obtain my Master's degree in social work or sociology.

What else do you want to share?

I would like to share my extreme gratitude for being apart of this program and being able to attend to UMBC. it has been an amazing experience and within the last two years, I have received financial assistance and support through UMBC to be able to continue my education, so I will forever be grateful to the Women's Center, my professors, my academic advocate, my social work advisor and my mom for all pushing to keep going no matter the obstacles thrown my way. I have defied the obstacles and persevered through whatever has come my way. I couldn't have done it without a supportive and caring community at UMBC.

SINCERE



BA in Gender and Women Studies

What were you involved in at UMBC and/or what was your experience like as an adult learner?

As a transfer adult learner coming to UMBC, I immediately began looking for opportunities to get involved on campus. I served as a First Year Ambassador with the SGA which afforded me a chance to participate in STRIVE 2020 through the Center for Democracy and Civic Life. I became a RAL Newcombe scholarship recipient. I also served as a Vice President of Tau Sigma honor society, gained membership in Sigma Alpha Lambda honor society, and also earned a membership in Delta Alpha Pi honor society. I am a UMBC Honors College student and a member of Women in Learning and Leadership. My experience at UMBC as an adult learner was challenging but I never felt unsupported. It was difficult to relate or socialize with students in my classes making study groups awkward and uncomfortable but it helped to have a place to go in order to work out these personal feelings. Student disability services was helpful and well equipped to meet my specific needs one by one.

What are your plans after graduation?

I intend to work as an Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance Officer on the federal level.

Looking back on your experience, what is your advice for current Returning Adult Learners?

Set realistic goals, be kind to yourself, use the resources available to you, speak up when you have concerns, be proactive instead of reactive.

What else do you want to share?

If you want to know if all of the hard work is worth it in the end, the answer is absolutely yes!

JES GODINEZ



B.A. Geography and Environmental Studies

What were you involved in at UMBC and/or what was your experience like as an adult learner?

I'm extremely proud of myself and glad I returned to school as an adult learner. Being committed my school work and knowing what I wanted to do in college was easier for me this time around than it was as a teenager. I learned a lot from working with students younger than me, it pushed me and motivated me.. it has been my favorite college experience.

What are your plans after graduation?

Going to travel over the summer, then find GIS work to put my mapping skills to the test.

Looking back on your experience, what is your advice for current Returning Adult Learners?

Remember why you're doing this and be proud of yourself for choosing to!

DELENA ALEXANDER



BA Social Work

**What are your plans
after graduation?**

Grad School

**Looking back on your
experience, what is
your advice for
current Returning
Adult Learners?**

Communication is
the Key!

SHANNON BRYANT



BA Management in Aging Services

What were you involved in at UMBC and/or what was your experience like as an adult learner?

I have too much going on in my own personal life for any extra curricular activities but I was able to work my way through the last three semesters with all A's and I'm proud of myself.

What else do you want to share?

Thanks for all your support.

Looking back on your experience, what is your advice for current Returning Adult Learners?

Be patient and believe in yourself.

What are your plans after graduation?

I am hoping that the perfect career path and myself meet up in order for me to begin to provide a better lifestyle for my family.

JORDAN PACKETT



B.A. in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies **Minor in Critical Sexuality Studies**

What were you involved in at UMBC and/or what was your experience like as an adult learner?

During my time at UMBC, I did a lot of really cool things! I went to STRiVE in Spring 2020, held three different positions on the LGBTQ+ Student Union's board, played for Shazam (women's club ultimate frisbee team), and was a recurring attendee at Women's Center events and meetings, like Spectrum and We Believe You. This semester and last year I also was glad to be able to volunteer to help the Center put on Take Back the Night! More importantly to me though, I got to go through my GWST program alongside another returning adult learner who I love, Kathy Robitaille. Sadly, she passed not long after her own graduation in summer 2020, but I will always, always cherish being able to take "Psychology of Sex and Gender" with her and getting dinners together afterward. I also got to meet some of my literal best friends at UMBC, and I'm beyond words about what it's been like to build beautiful, queer, trans, disabled, liberatory futures with them.

What are your plans after graduation?

My plans are to SLEEP A LOT. To be able to learn how to eat and move my body in safe comfortable ways again, without the intense fears and anxieties that schoolwork never failed to stoke. And to continue my work in the service industry for the time being, currently as a bartender at Peabody Heights Brewery. Come see me if you're ever in the City!

Looking back on your experience, what is your advice for current Returning Adult Learners?

My best (and really only) advice for RALs is to do whatever it takes for you to survive. If taking fewer classes each semester, taking a pause one semester, or leaving school altogether are part of what it takes, then that is what it takes. Getting caught up in the pressures of academia again, especially as a transfer student who took several years off in between college runs, I struggled a lot with feeling like I didn't have any choice but to move forward. I worried anything less than full completion this time around would be ruinous. But honestly, looking back, there are a few moments where I wished I had given myself much more grace and compassion than that. I really hope you will offer yourself all that grace, compassion, and then some.

What else do you want to share?

On August 11, 2021, my father passed away due to long-term impacts from a horrific experience with Long COVID. Since he became ill in March of 2020 up until his final day, I was his primary caregiver, while still maintaining part-time academic and work schedules. We lived together during my entire UMBC journey, which came with ups and downs to be sure, but the final year and a half of his life was undoubtedly the hardest. One of the things that my father so wanted for me was to finish my undergraduate education, even if it meant having to step back from some of the responsibilities of his care when he was sick. I'm grateful to finally be making his dream for me a reality, too.

AYANNA MARTIN



BA Management of aging services

What were you involved in at UMBC and/or what was your experience like as an adult learner?

My experience at UMBC was amazing. The staff and students were all kind and offered many resources.

Looking back on your experience, what is your advice for current Returning Adult Learners?

Never give up even when it seems impossible to complete. All will work out.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to move to California and pursue grad school at UCLA if accepted.