



Transform U – Q & A from College Student

1. Your Name and School Attended?

Kari Prott. I attended Lewis & Clark Community College in Godfrey, IL.

2. When did you start going to school again? What degrees have you obtained and what year did you get them?

I returned to school in 2009. My expected degree is May 2012 in an Applied Associates in Science with an emphasis in Paralegal. I will also have my Certificate in Proficiency in Paralegal. I have decided but I may transfer to a 4 year college to obtain my bachelors once I graduate next May.

3. How could the Library have helped you with the process of going back to school? Any resources we need on hand? Do we need contact information for Staff at the local colleges? etc.

The library did help with my process of going back to school by having open public access to computers, books, movies, and research material. If the Bethalto location did not have what I needed, they would search the computer system and find it at another location and have it transferred. Also, the hours of the library are very important, being able to go after work or school and having a quiet place to study. The wifi access was awesome.

4. What were the easiest parts of going back to school?

The easiest part of going back to school was meeting new people...a wide variety...it's an amazing opportunity and the networking possibilities are endless! Don't be afraid – there are many people out there who decided to change careers, or finally decide to go back and get the degree left unfinished – the more people you meet the bigger your adventure.

5. What were the biggest challenges of going back to school?

The biggest challenges were expenses – financial aid was a blessing, but be ready to do paperwork and meet deadlines. Scholarships are out there....search the web, go to collegezone.com, ask the financial aid office at LCCC, talk to other students and teachers, use the resource centers available, talk to your local unemployment office. I would have qualified for a federal grant through Madison County – Work Investment Act (WIA). There are many opportunities to get financial assistance!!

Also, a key to understanding Scholarships is having a nice profile of yourself, your career, goals, and letters of recommendation prepared at all times. Make copies and keep in a “Scholarship” folder and also keep an electronic copy on a flash drive. Most scholarship deadlines are due the April before the following Fall Semester begins – be ready and don't wait to the last minute.

Another challenge: adjusting to being a student, employee, mother, and wife – I am lucky to have in-laws who are retired and help in any way they can. I never have to worry about a sitter and if I need quiet time to study or do homework, they are always willing to help. However for those not so lucky – the best thing to do is find a co-student that you “connect” with or even a group of students – form a support group. I did this as well and found it to be very beneficial.

6. What is something you wish someone would have told you before you started back to school?

How to buy textbooks cheaper on Amazon and eBay, or get assistants with books and materials through the Perkins Program at LCCC. If you don't have to buy through the college bookstore – then don't – they are overpriced!! Also, I wish someone would have recommended buying a laptop for sure – mine is my best friend!!

7. Did you find any books or websites that were helpful in your process?

Websites I found very helpful were: the FAFSA site (federal student aid), easybib, Google, collegezone.com, amazon.com, and ebay.com – I always just Google what I looking for and go from there – explore the possibilities on the world-wide web. I would also talk on a regular basis to your field advisor – ask enrollment if you're not sure who that is – this advisor is there for the student and I have found mine to be a great help. Books – I recommend either selling them back on eBay or Amazon or to co-students (the book buy back at the campus is not very good...just a heads up), or if you really find you like one of your books – keep it!! I have an entire shelf dedicated to my favorites and then there were some I couldn't wait to be done with!

8. Please share any information you think would be helpful to an adult who is faced with furthering their education as a way of finding employment.

For anyone furthering their education first, I say, “Way to Go!” There are many support systems for adults going back to school for employment opportunities: the WIA program through Madison County, the Perkins program at LCCC, tutoring and Student Support Services, Math Lab at the campus, and there are many great people for you to meet along the way. Renee Bauer is a counselor at the Godfrey campus and she is one of the greatest people ever – she would do anything to help a hard-working student.

9. Would you be willing to share any of this information in a video interview or audio interview to be posted on our future website?

Yes, I would definitely be willing to share my information in a video or audio interview. I believe in the philosophy of “Passing it On” – I have had wonderful teachers and co-students to help me find my way and I would like to do the same for someone else.