CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

Bass Balances Work, Family, & Education

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UF Information Technology

UFIT

2046 NE Waldo Rd, Suite 2100
Gainesville Florida 32609-8942
(352) 392.2061
<editor@cns.ufl.edu>
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In the 1994-95 CNS Annual Review, we wrote about several CNS staff members who are pursuing further education, while working full-time and juggling other responsibilities as well. We are happy to be able to publish an update to that story.

Sandra Bass of the CNS accounting office completes her studies this month, and is slated to receive a BA degree from UF in Business Administration, with a major in Management-General Business. She is also completing a minor in Management and Sales in Agribusiness, offered through IFAS and the College of Agriculture.

For Sandra, the goal is now steps away, but the trip took perseverence. When she married her husband Joey 14 years ago, she was working and studying part time. In fact, she'd just earned an associate's degree, and was admitted to UF's Fischer School of Accounting. But the young couple also wanted to buy a first home -- they'd found a reasonably-priced doublewide -- and concluded they couldn't afford the home and keep Sandra in school as well.

A pledge was made. Sandra would quit school, and work full time until the home was paid off. Then her part-time college education would resume.

Five years later, the home was paid off, her son J.C. turned four, and Sandra started her current program at UF. The going was slow. Travel time between Shands Hospital, where she worked, and distant classrooms elsewhere on campus made day classes an uncomfortable time squeeze. "Of course, nighttime classes tended to infringe on family life. It was hard to strike a balance with work, family and school."

Nevertheless, she progressed, one course per semester, nine credits a year, and watched classmates speed by her at a rate of 12 to 15 credits a term. "There were times when I saw no light at the end of the tunnel," she recalls. There were also semesters when, to prevent "burn-out," she took a break. Sandra also took time off from school after J.C.'s brother Matthew was born in 1991.

"My husband, family, friends and employers never let me forget our pledge," said Sandra, "and without their support I would not have been able to keep going."

The biggest problem is scheduling. "I don't like to miss any family activities. I like T-ball games, and I like T-ball practices. But there have been times I've gotten feedback from my kids that I am not participating enough in family activities," she said.

Sandra joined CNS in August 1993, where she found a supportive atmosphere for her educational goals. Happily, she found that most of the courses she needed were offered in classrooms "just steps away" from CNS's central location at the Bryant Space Sciences Research Building. She was able to take two courses per semester -- occasionally three!

Typically her "school" days begin at 5:30 a.m. and end at midnight, following three to four hours with the books. Four times a week, she uses her lunch hour to sit in a classroom. This semester is one of the toughest, she said. For one course she has had to prepare five detailed business plans, "plus one megaproject worth 35 percent of the course grade."

All of us at CNS are proud of Sandra for her achievements, both in the classroom and in the office, where she daily helps handle the creation of new accounts, resetting of pass-words, and answering the many questions associated with userid billing.
Congratulations, Sandra!

Your Comments are Welcome

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