

# The OSUAP Connection

Issue #73

December 30, 2021

*Know an Admin  
who is new to  
The Ohio State University?  
Please forward this  
Newsletter to them!*

## Inside this issue:

- Thinking about going back to School? 1
- Make time for mental workouts 2
- Tips for Adult Students 3
- How to Get Ahead at Work Without a College Degree 4

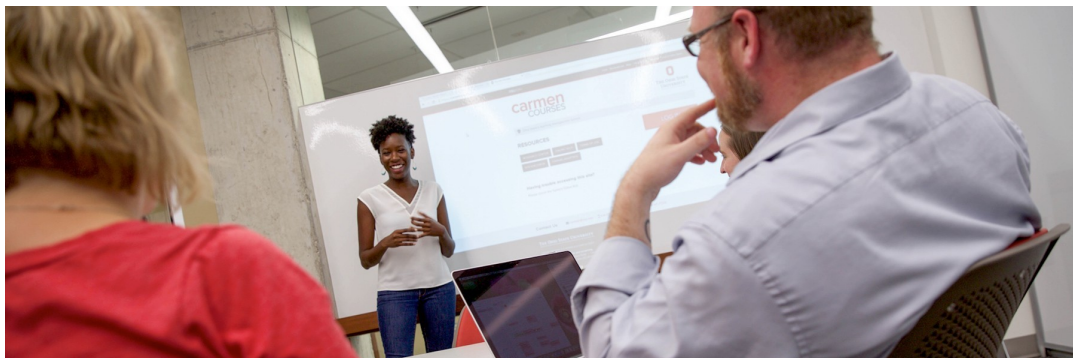
## OSUAP Goals

- ◆ Encourage professional development
- ◆ Develop leadership skills
- ◆ Network with peers

## Special Notes:



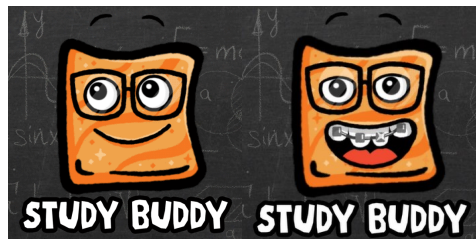
## Thinking About Going Back To School? Check out Extended Education right here at Ohio State! Here's my story... You can too!



*By Michelle Pennington*

Imagine being so completely terrified and so completely excited at the same time. That was me a short time ago.

Last month I got a Microsoft Teams message from a friend that said she was very interested in going "back to school" and so, like the great friend that I am, I said "We should do it together!!" I even sent her a GIF with braces that said STUDY BUDDY!



She asked if I was serious and I said that I have been wanting to for 14 YEARS!! 14 Years is a long time to want something. To think about it. To wonder if you can do it. To procrastinate.

Now if you know me personally, I am nothing if I am not proficient at procrastinating. I am an expert in the art of justification. But I wasn't just procrastinating. I was unequivocally and completely doubting that I could. Not only did I think I couldn't, I thought they would laugh at me for even trying.

Anyway, since this was all really just to help my friend, it technically wasn't about me and therefore, not nearly as scary... so I made an inquiring phone call to the Office of Distance Education and eLearning (ODEE). That one phone call changed my life. They listened to my questions and asked if I wanted to speak with an advisor. Nervously, I said "yes" and they said "Please hold, he will be with you shortly."

Well I am here to tell you that Mr. Jody Patrick, Senior Academic Advisor and Staff Assistant, took that call and changed my life. He listened to me prattle on about my friend and how we (me and my friend) wanted to do this together. He listened to why I had never called before. He listened to all of my questions and concerns and procrastinations with a few hopes and dreams sprinkled in. I am pretty sure he picked up on the fact that I am a perfectionist too. Paralyzingly so.

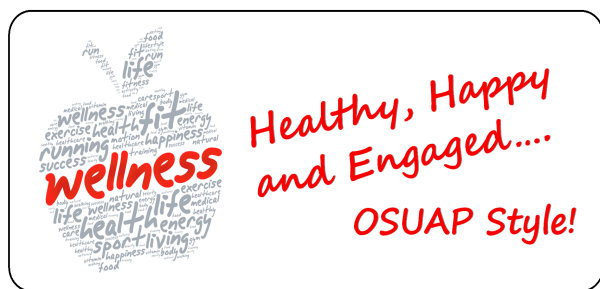


And then he said something to the effect of, "You can do this. Fill out the application. There is a deadline for Spring Semester and we have to get moving. But don't worry. We will get you in."

I said, "But wait... what about choosing classes and what about choosing a major and what about...." and he stopped me and said something to the effect, "Don't worry. Let's start small. It will all be fine. I promise."

After many more phone calls and emails, of which he answered every one, I was suddenly an OSU Student with all the rights and privileges and classes and assignments that I should have... and should have had... a long time ago.

Be bold. Be brave. Call Jody. You will be really, really glad you did, my friend. I promise.



## Make time for mental workouts

by Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk



## Activities that stimulate our brains are important as we move through life.

In Ohio State's fencing gym, young athletes work to stay upright on wobble boards — platforms with rounded bases, like half of an exercise ball. The more they wiggle and throw themselves off balance, the more their leg and ankle muscles strengthen and learn to correct to an upright position.

Muscles grow and strengthen when they are challenged, and the same is true for our brains. That's why it is just as important to engage in activities that strengthen our brains and intellectual wellness as it is to work out our muscles.

What is intellectual well-being and why is it important? Lindsay Bernhagen '08 MA, '13 PhD, defines it this way: "The intellectually well person values lifelong learning and seeks to foster critical thinking, develop moral reasoning, expand worldviews and engage in education for the pursuit of knowledge."

Just as a flexible body indicates physical health, she says, a flexible mind indicates intellectual wellness. Any time you learn a new skill or concept, attempt to understand a different viewpoint, or exercise your mind with puzzles and games, you're building intellectual well-being.

This isn't just a concept. Working your mind in this way actually improves the physical structure of your brain. While scientists once believed that humans were born with all of the brain cells they would ever have, we now know that new neurons are born continuously throughout your life, with neurogenesis regularly replacing old, dead cells in some areas of the brain.

Studies show that both physical exercise and mental exercise — learning new things, for example — support the health of these new neurons, while stress and depression can hinder them. Challenging your brain also helps existing neurons form new connections. A combination of intellectual growth and relaxing mindfulness, therefore, can help prevent mental decline as you age.

There are many ways you can improve your intellectual wellness that are both free and fun. Here are a few:

- **Read:** Try reading news stories 20 minutes a day to stay informed about the world, nonfiction to learn about new subjects or, for a new experience, ask a friend to recommend a book you wouldn't ordinarily choose. Read

about a political issue and try debating it with a friend, taking the opposite side from your own point of view. Even reading for fun can exercise your ability to visualize and make new neural connections.

- **Learn:** Attend public lectures about subjects new to you at your local library, university, museum or civic organization. Try learning a foreign language, a musical instrument, or a new craft or skill.
- **Play:** Sudoku, crossword puzzles and strategic games such as chess and Scrabble exercise your mind and memory. Trying a new sport that you wouldn't usually go for can provide mental as well as physical challenges.
- **Explore:** Go to a concert, movie or play you might not ordinarily choose. Travel also can put you in new situations and promote intellectual growth and problem solving. Try a new adventure! Stay curious. Even taking a different route to work or the grocery store can stimulate your mind.
- **Practice mindfulness:** Focus your awareness on the present moment. A good way to do this is to focus on your breathing, taking slow, deep breaths and concentrating on the air moving in and out of your lungs. Acknowledge thoughts and let them go without exploring any anxieties about the future or regrets about the past. Just be present with yourself without thinking about anything. A few minutes of mindfulness practice a day allows your brain to relax, de-stress and recharge. "The Present" by Dr. Spencer Johnson is a good book about mindfulness.

Engaging in lifelong learning, challenging your mind and following your curiosity sets the stage for a vibrant, centered and mentally active life. When you work to improve your intellectual well-being, you strengthen your mind — and you will never be bored!

*This article is still so relevant today and specifically for this issue, that I am sharing it again! (OSUAP, Nov. 2017)*



Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk is vice president for health promotion, university chief wellness officer, dean and Helene Fuld Health Trust Professor of Evidence-based Practice in the College of Nursing, professor of pediatrics and psychiatry in the College of Medicine and executive director of the Helene Fuld Health Trust National Institute for Evidence-based Practice in Nursing and Healthcare.

## Tips for Adult Students

### How to prepare for going back to school

- **Take inventory.** What skills and previous educational experience do you have that could work toward your final goal?
  - **Determine your goals.** Write them out, and then remember them. Whether you seek a degree or job advancement, you need to know what you want and in what field.
  - **Chart your course by asking about your educational options.** Discover what kind of collegiate programs are out there and which would be the best fit for you. Look to see if the school you are considering has night, weekend, and online courses for you to take. What about location? Schools often have multiple locations in which they offer classes.
  - **Outline your academic plan.** Make plans as to your next steps based upon the goal and program you have chosen.
  - **Set realistic goals.** Whether your goal is to earn a degree or obtain a better job, you will need to prioritize all of your responsibilities, which means that you may have to postpone household chores, for instance, in order to concentrate on your studies. Be flexible with your normal routines. Postpone tasks or routines that can be put off until school work is finished.
  - **Consult with your immediate family.** Discuss your plans with your significant others. Collaborate with them on how they can best support you and the household while you are working toward your educational goals. Your family members are an important part of your support system. Get support from family and friends.
  - **Be organized.** Prepare as far in advance as possible. Plan to use your time wisely. Schedules or calendars of your regular routines can help you stay on top of things. Prepare to plan.
  - **Update your technical knowledge.** Higher education relies heavily on the use of technology, so ensure you are up to speed by taking some computer classes.
  - **Take care of yourself.** Make your well-being a priority. Eat and sleep well so that you can better focus on your studies.
  - **Manage your time effectively.** Develop or plan for blocks of study time. Whenever set blocks of time are unavailable, be efficient and creative with your studying by fitting it in whenever you can.
  - **Find out what amenities your school has to offer,** including career counseling, childcare, technology assistance, discounts on purchases, etc.
  - **Attend new student orientation** so that you can become aware of processes and procedures, take a campus tour to learn your surroundings, meet fellow classmates, etc.
  - **Broaden your social network** by introducing yourself to other students in each of your classes. It's always helpful to have someone in your classes with whom you can commiserate or get notes from if you have to miss a class.
  - **Take baby steps.** Going back to school can be a challenging transition, so take a lighter load of one or two classes to begin with.
- Once you are accustomed, you can always build up to a full load from there.
- **Stay professional on the job.** If you plan to keep working while you go back to school, try not to let your school work interfere with your performance on the job. Experts suggest that if you want to study during your lunch hour, you should leave your desk in order to do so because remaining at your desk sends the wrong impression to your employer.
  - **Be patient, relaxed and focused** when dealing with school-related people and situations. Most adults feel apprehensive about returning to the classroom, but you don't need to be. Do not be intimidated by the idea of returning to school as an adult student. Remember: you are not alone.
  - **Become familiar with school administrators, such as your admissions counselor and academic advisor,** and establish a good rapport with your instructors/professors. They can better support your goals and situation by being on your education team.
  - **Get involved,** including taking advantage of study groups and labs with your fellow students.
  - **Most times success is all in the attitude so be positive and enthusiastic about your educational adventure.** Remember why you are returning to learning, and keep those goals in your sight.
  - **You have transferable skills from your life experiences, so bring them into the classroom.** Don't forget that from the classroom you will also be acquiring knowledge in the form of content and more skills that you can then apply back to many other facets of your life, including your career.
  - **Take an active role in planning, monitoring, and evaluating your education.**
  - **Discard any myths you have about the collegiate experience.** These notions can act as barriers to your success.
  - **Choose what you can relate to, such as subjects and courses that are not only most relevant to your occupation or personal life but that also fit into your academic plans.**

### Study Tips

- **Develop an awareness of how you learn or have learned best in the past** so that you can apply those study techniques to your education now.
- **Schedule weekly reviews and updates.** For better retention and comprehension, experts suggest reviewing notes and readings just before class and lecture material immediately after class.
- **Prioritize assignments** by starting with the most difficult subject first because it will be the most time and attention consuming.
- **In order to finish an assignment or your educational goals, you first need to start.** Begin with a plan or overview. Then, move forward on filling in the details.
- **Sometimes it's all about location.** Develop alternative study places free from distractions.



[Today's College Students Aren't Who You Think They Are : NPR](#)

[In 'Never Too Late,' Finally, A Guide For Adults Going To College | WOSU News](#)



## THE OSUAP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Effective Sept. 1, 2020

President: Roxann Damron  
Vice-President: Nicole Helton  
Secretary: Sherrie Kauffman  
Treasurer: Heidi Hamblin  
Membership Chair: Christine OConnell  
Member-at-Large: Alice Gardner and Kristina Toliver  
Immediate Past President: Quenetta Batts

Have suggestions for the Newsletter?

Want to share some good news?

Let us know!

Email: [Michelle Pennington](mailto:Michelle.Pennington@osu.edu)

Chair, Communications Work Group

Please be sure to submit suggestions by the 20th of each month to be included in the Newsletter!

© 2021 | OSU Administrative Professionals Group  
<http://u.osu.edu/osuap>  
Columbus, Ohio 43210



**“The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you.”**

~ B. B. King

### Upcoming Important Dates

12/31	New Year's Day 2022 Observed
1/10	Semester and first-session classes begin
1/17	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
3/14-18	Spring Break

## How to Get Ahead at Work Without a College Degree

by Chrissy Scivicque

When I was growing up, there was never a question about whether or not I would go to college. The only question was, *where*? I was very fortunate to come from a family with the financial means to make this my reality.

However, not everyone has that same opportunity—and quite frankly, many don't have the interest in college (or interest in taking on the debt required for it these days).

While I definitely believe a college degree can give you a leg up in the working world, not having a college degree is not necessarily a career killer. In fact, some of the most successful people I've met and worked with are degree-free.

Still, I'll admit, there can be some hurdles to overcome when you're working without a degree. But rest assured, they are overcome-able. If you don't have a college degree and you're wondering how to get ahead in your career without it, here are some things to consider.

### Don't Let It Psych You Out

In my experience, the lack of a college degree is frequently more important to the person who lacks it than to anyone else. Many people, in many fields, do not place an extremely heavy weight on the value of a college degree because they understand that real-world experience is often the best education there is. In many organizations and in many positions, the degree you have or don't have is of minor consequence. (This isn't true for all, of course, but it's more common than you might realize.)

All of that is to say, don't let your lack of a degree be a point of self-sabotage. Don't let that little voice inside your head tell you you're less than everyone else just because of your educational background. There are many forms of education in this world; a college degree is only one—and it's not even necessarily *the best one* in every circumstance.

### Get Professional Certifications

In some cases, a current, reputable professional certification is actually seen as more relevant and valuable than a college degree these days. Why? Because a college degree is a form of stagnant education. It doesn't evolve. You get it and you're done. You have a degree.

On the other hand, to maintain a professional certification you have to engage in continuing education. You have to keep your skills up-to-date in order to keep that certification valid. So, your education is continuously evolving with your field.

I'll give you a quick example: I earned my Bachelor's Degree in marketing in 2001. That was before social media was even a thing. Consequently, my marketing degree is actually pretty irrelevant in the modern world because I never did any course work that had to do with today's most powerful marketing tool—the Internet. If I were trying to work in the marketing field, it would be much more beneficial for me to have current professional certifications that demonstrate I have up-to-date knowledge of the field as it is today.

Depending on how quickly your field is evolving, you too may benefit more from a current professional certification than from an outdated degree.

Recommended Reading: [Are Professional Certifications Worth It?](#)

### Engage in Other Professional Development Coursework

Of course, certifications are one option. But, if you're not up for the time and financial investment, there are plenty of other professional development courses you can engage in—many of which are quick and inexpensive. Quality can vary dramatically, so do your research to find the right courses that suit your needs.



I believe every professional should continuously engage in [ongoing professional development](#), regardless of whether or not they have a degree. But, if you don't have a degree, this is certainly one way to gain new skills and demonstrate your commitment to continued growth. If you're so inclined, you can even list the courses you've completed on your resume—as long as they are directly relevant to your role and delivered through reputable organizations. (I don't recommend that you list generic professional development classes.)

### Let Your Experience Speak for Itself

Most managers and recruiters understand that real-world experience can be comparable to a degree. That's why you'll often see job postings with a required qualification such as, "A degree or equivalent experience." What that equivalent actually works out to be is subjective. It doesn't necessarily mean that 4 years on the job is directly equal to a 4-year degree. All it means is that the company is open to considering applicants who do not have a degree. So, if you have experience doing the job, and you believe you have the skills necessary to be successful, apply—with or without a degree.

### Go Get Your Degree!

Look, I want to be honest here: Some fields (and some organizations) *do* require a degree. Without one, you will reach a ceiling. If that describes a field or organization you want to be a part of, you're better off finding a way to go get that degree. Sure, you can try to fight the system and, in rare cases, you may be successful. But there's no guarantee. Obviously, there's a reason the degree has become such a crucial qualification for the work you want to do. It either provides some element of education you simply can't learn efficiently or effectively on-the-job, or it's seen as a valuable tradition that people are not willing to do away with. In either case, it's unlikely that anything else will compensate for a missing degree, so it may well be worth your time and financial investment to obtain it. (Only you can make that decision.)

If not having your degree is weighing heavily on your self-esteem or if you simply want to have the experience of higher-education, I personally believe there's never any drawback to learning. The only downside is the financial requirement to obtain it, so do your research and take advantage of every kind of aid possible.



[Chrissy Scivicque](#) (pronounced "Civic") is the founder of Eat Your Career (a division of CCS Ventures, LLC).

She is a certified **Project Management Professional (PMP)** and certified **Professional Career Manager (PCM)**. She also holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Sonoma State University, CA.

Chrissy is the author of [The Proactive Professional](#), [The Invisibility Cure](#), and the [Build Your Professional Development Plan Workbook](#). She has also authored 10+ e-books and e-guides.

[www.eatyourcareer.com](http://www.eatyourcareer.com)