

Fall 2016 Class Schedule

Vol. 71 #1

The View

OLYMPIC COLLEGE

Basic Studies at OC

“
Completing my high school diploma has been one of the most exciting and fulfilling experiences of my life.”

—Ruby, HS 21+

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Going beyond the basics with OC's High School 21+ program

In 2015, at the age of 35, Ruby Behlen enrolled at Olympic College with the intention of completing her GED. That goal changed slightly after learning of a new program designed to help adults earn their high school diplomas.

This past spring, Ruby was among the first students at OC to earn a degree through High School 21+. At the graduation ceremony, she jumped at the opportunity to say a few words about her experiences in the program.

"It takes a lot of courage for all of the adults, all of the parents, all of the people who left high school for any reason to actually come back," she said.

As she worked her way through the program, Ruby felt an array of emotions from excitement to uncertainty and even embarrassment.

"It's hard going through all of those emotions at once because here I am 35, just completing my high school diploma," she said. "I'm pretty well-spoken, so most people didn't even know that I didn't have my high school diploma."

OC Professor Dr. Karen Bolton, who spoke at the graduation ceremony, knows first-hand what students like Ruby are going through. Bolton's parents and siblings all attended college, but she was different; dropping out of high school and eventually earning her GED before completing a 21-year decorated career in the Navy.

"People doubted me. They still doubt me," she said in her speech to students. "You have to work twice as hard when you have a GED to prove to others that you belong. But you don't really have to. You've made it, the rest is easy. That hurdle is removed."

City of Bremerton Mayor Patty Lent, who also spoke at the ceremony, shares Bolton's sentiments.

"It is never too late to pursue their career path. Without a high school diploma or GED they will have hurdles that are difficult to overcome," she said. "For many of these students who have come back to school after all of these years, it is a very brave thing for them to do and I hope they never feel the need apologize for their accomplishments."



Ruby Behlen address the audience at the HS21+ graduation ceremony.

When Ruby decided to continue her education, she didn't realize the barriers that existed as a result of not completing high school, even though she was only three credits short. One such hurdle was applying for federal financial aid which requires a high school diploma or GED.

There were many other adjustments along the way, but Ruby's transition back to school was helped by the staff and faculty she encountered at the College.

Her first contact was with Anthony Carson, from the Advising/Counseling office, who Ruby says went above and beyond to make her feel welcomed and informed. After their appointment, he walked with her down the hall to the Basic Studies office to schedule her next appointment.

"If he wouldn't have done that, I don't know if I would have followed through with it," she said.

From there, the personalized instruction continued.

Ruby credits instructors Tina Prentice, Cindy Frederick and Basic Studies staff member Heather McKnight for helping her rediscover skills she had not used in years.

"Tina and Cindy have literally been the foundation of my adult education," Ruby says. "They helped me understand, define

and polish skills I have learned through life experience."

High School 21+ is a competency based program which means students get credit for their life and work experience which they can apply to the completion of their high school diploma in lieu of additional classes.

The capstone of the program is a portfolio class where students must write papers that demonstrate their knowledge in areas that were not completed while in high school. The portfolio class provides valuable experience that sets the stage and expectation for the continuation of their education.

With her high school diploma now complete, Ruby plans to continue her education at OC in one of the College's health occupations programs.

"From the moment I walked through the doors at OC, the entire staff was very, very helpful," she said. "I really credit everyone in the Basic Studies office for helping me get back into the academic swing of things."

If you are considering taking the GED test or completing your high school diploma, contact our Basic Studies team. Their friendly and welcoming staff of program experts will guide you through the many options that are available.

Visit Olympic.edu and search "**Basic Studies**."



BASIC STUDIES AT OLYMPIC COLLEGE

At Olympic College we are committed to student success. The Basic Studies office is one of several departments dedicated to helping you learn skills to further your education and career. Our welcoming staff and faculty will help direct you to the programs that meet your needs.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

The ABE/GED/HS21+ programs are designed to improve basic skills in reading, writing, math and basic computer skills for success needed to pass the GED test, college level coursework, vocational technical programs, and the workforce. You must attend an orientation and meet Adult Basic Education requirements to qualify. Contact the Adult Education office to answer your questions and schedule your orientation.

English to Speakers of Other Languages

Do not let language be a barrier to achieving your educational and career goals. OC offers beginning through advanced courses in English specifically geared to speakers of other languages. These courses will help you learn how to read, write, speak and understand English for personal, educational and employment reasons. You must attend an orientation and meet Adult Basic Education requirements to qualify. Contact the Adult Education office to answer your questions and schedule your orientation.

High School 21+

Sometimes life gets in the way. Don't let that stop you from completing your high school diploma. OC's High School 21+ program allows adults 21 years of age and older to complete a high school diploma. This program is tailored to adult learning styles and allows students to earn credits for life skills, experiences and competencies. You must attend an orientation and meet Adult Basic Education requirements to qualify. Contact the Adult Education office to answer your questions and schedule your orientation.

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)

I-BEST is a unique program where two instructors work together to provide high-tech workforce training and basic skills in English, reading and math. Students gain training in good paying fields such as Nursing Assistant, Electronics, Manufacturing and Composites, while earning the basic skills they need to thrive in the workplace. Cynthia Metcalf is your go-to contact for getting started in I-BEST.

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