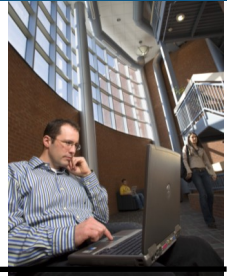


# *Penn State DuBois: Profiles in Success*

Michael White  
Penn State DuBois College Student



*Did you ever wonder how some people achieved the job/career they have?  
How did they get there? Did they always know what they wanted to do?  
Is there any way I could do some of the things they have done?*

We hope to answer those questions and more as we introduce you to **Penn State DuBois** alumni in a variety of fields from business to wildlife, from occupational therapy assistant to engineering technology, etc. Their stories will be featured here over the upcoming months.

Join us now as we continue our profile of Michael White, a Penn State DuBois graduate in business administration. Following time in the Coast Guard and as a correspondence student, *Michael is ready to tackle full-time study at the Penn State DuBois campus!*

## The need to achieve

Michael spent almost 15 years traveling with the Coast Guard and then completing Penn State correspondence courses. However, he realized that this combination was not allowing him to reach his goals soon enough. He made the decision to leave full-time employment and begin full-time college studies at the DuBois campus. He decided to move back into his parents' home, which was a good financial choice, but a bit intimidating. However, his parents were glad to have him back and the hour commute to campus would allow him to ponder the Penn State DuBois experiences as they unfolded.

As Michael settled into the full college opportunity, he finally had the experience of interacting with others on

projects, sharing ideas, and receiving feedback on the concepts about which he had been reading. Any doubts he had about his ability to compete with younger students were quickly erased as he settled in and tackled one of his first course projects in the associate degree program—the development of a web page. The student sitting next to him in class provided some assistance and Michael was experiencing the student interaction that he missed in the correspondence courses.

One of the first things he did at the beginning of the semester was to obtain a work study position on the campus. Michael reviewed work study options, interviewed with several sponsors and chose a work study experience with

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Dr. Jack Spillan, program leader of the baccalaureate degree program in business administration. Not only did he learn a great deal from the work study experience, but he also had his horizons enlarged by Jack Spillan.

“After I had been on the DuBois campus a short time, Dr. Spillan began talking to me about the baccalaureate degree in business,” says Michael. “He explained that the baccalaureate degree would be the ‘meat and potatoes’ for my future and, six months after arriving on the campus, I made the decision to switch to the bachelor’s degree program.”

Michael now had a longer time to acquire business concepts, refine his writing skills, and develop computer proficiency. In addition, his work study job allowed him to develop the abilities to research, think, and problem solve. “Dr. Spillan was great in presenting projects and ideas. He would indicate what he wanted in a ‘broad sense’ and let me devise how I attained the goal. I learned so much about research from the work study and the projects were real life applications. I developed abilities in the areas of advertising, marketing and human resources. Entering the data from my own study in an Excel spreadsheet gave real meaning to collecting and analyzing data. The key thing Jack kept emphasizing was ‘stretching’ - stretch your mind and look at ideas differently. That is the key to progress and success in the bachelor’s degree program.”

### Adult learners succeed at Penn State DuBois

“Penn State DuBois is the ideal place for adult learners! Class schedules work for adult learners; many adults work 9-5 and Penn State DuBois offers class starting times at 5 pm, 7:10 pm, etc.,” indicated Michael. “Here, adult learners are related to on an individualized basis, not as a number. If you

e-mail a professor here, he/she responds. When faculty members introduce new concepts in class, they ask you to, utilizing your past experiences and work background, make connections between the new information and what you already know. Ideas and concepts make sense, they stick with you, and you keep ‘stretching’ yourself to see other applications. Adult learners have expertise they bring to the class, are willing to share the information, and earn the respect of traditional students in the class. Going to class is fun - you want to add your own experiences to the classes without being prompted.”

“I did feel intimidated when it came time to take a Calculus class. The younger students who had just graduated from high school had completed AP calculus and the college course was basically a review for them. I looked at it this way - some of the younger kids may be better prepared for calculus, but they don’t know Earth Science. We can ‘feed off’ each other; I didn’t hesitate to ask a first-year student to tutor me when I needed the help.”

“The selection of classes for the business degree gave me a skill set to do any job in business. I completed courses in human resource management, supply chain management, problems of small business, interpersonal communications (negotiations), etc. I am ready to move into a job.”

PS: Michael’s academic success is evident. He compiled almost a 4.0 average during his campus time at DuBois; factoring in his correspondence classes, his overall average was 3.69.

**How did Michael find his first job? What will he be doing? How did Penn State DuBois courses prepare him for the position?**