



SOUTH METROPOLITAN
Higher Education Consortium

Mission Statement: The Colleges and Universities of the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium collaborate to enhance educational services and programs in the Chicago Southland.
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CONNECT TO higher education



Facing the Future with a Degree

Two women, a mother and a grandmother with different stories, share one common goal – the desire to change the course of their lives. Each chose to return to college at Governors State University, earn a degree, and gain confidence, knowledge, understanding, and a brighter future.

"After 30 years of working downtown, completing some college, getting married, and having two children, I experienced highs and lows in my career. I was laid off from two major corporations in 10 years and knew it was time to return to school to earn my bachelor's degree," said Laurie Giller of Bradley.

Theresa M. Tofiga of Oak Lawn faced a similar situation. "I was a single mom, worked two jobs, and raised three children. It has been a struggle. Over the years, I learned that without an education, it is impossible to secure financial stability. Now I am setting an example for my kids and grandkids."

Giller and Tofiga are currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (IDSS) program at Governors State University in University Park. IDSS enables students to earn credit for previous work and life experience. Education received through work and life experiences is often comparable to college courses and can be credited toward a bachelor's degree.

Giller's individually-designed program concentrates on business courses, which enhance her qualifications in her current job with Coldwell Banker in Bradley. "I find the things I am learning in class very useful at work. My goal is to go on for my MBA."

Tofiga is focusing her studies on communications; she plans to earn a master's degree in communications after she receives her bachelor's degree.

Giller's and Tofiga's dedication to achieving their educational goals is illustrated by their personal sacrifices and the honors and scholarships they have each earned.

Tofiga, who had to sell her car to help pay for her tuition one trimester, was recently named the 2009 recipient of the Robert A. Pringle Memorial Scholarship. The \$500 scholarship is awarded to students in IDSS programs for their commitment to their education and academic success.

To help her earn her degree, Giller was awarded the St. Paul Federal Scholarship presented by the GSU Foundation and the Jane Klausman Scholarship presented by the Zonta Club of Kankakee.

For more information about the Governors State University Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies program, **call 708.534.4092 or visit www.govst.edu/sidl.**



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Hilkert, O.P., Ph.D.

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