From COD to the World of IT

Michael Wagner rewrites career path as a nontraditional student
Enrolling in college signals the beginning of a new chapter in life. Doing so as an adult comes with additional questions and concerns that can make this important step feel daunting.

College of DuPage provides adult learners with a welcoming environment where faculty and staff understand their circumstances. In this issue of Engage, we shine the spotlight on this important population, the programs they seek and the people who work closely with them.

You may be surprised at just how many adult students can be found in our classrooms. These are students who are 20 years of age or older who have been away from school or never attended. In fact, I have heard countless stories from our faculty who find the perspectives and experiences of their adult students invaluable in the learning environment.

In addition to smaller class sizes and greater access to faculty, adult students will find numerous resources on campus to help them succeed. For example, the Learning Commons provides free support options that include tutoring and assistance, while our library maintains extensive collections, materials and services to meet educational goals.

Getting started could not be easier. Our Admissions and Outreach team has three representatives who work exclusively with adult learners, while adult information sessions are designed specifically to answer their unique questions.

We know adults enroll in college for a variety of reasons—to change careers, to gain additional skills and credentials, and for personal enrichment. Most recently, people have faced the loss of jobs or other challenges related to COVID-19.

Let College of DuPage help you meet whatever goal you set. Age should never be a barrier to academic success, and in this issue of Engage, discover why COD is the place for you.

Popular Annual Financial Report
I invite you to take a look at the fourth annual Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. The PAFR is a summarized version of the College’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and provides information on the College’s financial condition in an easy-to-read format.

The issuance of a PAFR is not required by any regulatory body. While the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada encourages state and local governments—including community college districts—to issue PAFRs, only a small number do so. We are proud to share a PAFR with the community and help them understand our financial condition.

The PAFR and other financial reports can be found at cod.edu/financials.

—Dr. Brian W. Caputo is president of College of DuPage.

Featured Program: Human Services
College of DuPage’s Human Services program provides quality instruction and in-depth clinical training in Addictions, Applied Gerontology, Corrections, Developmental Disabilities, Domestic/Family Violence, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Residential Child Care and Veterans Counseling. Alumna Annie Todor (left) is finishing her bachelor’s degree at National Louis University through COD’s 3+1 program.

See page 8 for more information.
Get Ready for Success at the Career Services Center

Whether the goal is finding a job, changing careers or discovering a career path, the Career Services Center at College of DuPage is a key link toward successful employment.

The Center provides vital resources to students, alumni and community members at any step in their education or career while helping local businesses find qualified and talented employees.

“We meet our students where they are,” said COD Interim Manager of Career Services Krystina LaSorsa. “Whether a job seeker is starting their career journey, worried about their relevant work experience or changing careers, the entire process can be nerve-wracking. We are here to ease those anxieties and make sure they feel confident, prepared and ready for success.”

Staff members offer support and guidance in career discovery, cover letters, resume and portfolio development, interviewing, job search strategies, salary negotiating, and networking. The Center also hosts a variety of events; coordinates service learning, internship and job shadowing programs; and provides invaluable resources. These include Career Coach, a database that helps job seekers explore career options, and Chaps Get Hired, an online career job board that connects job seekers with employers who need their skills.

While COVID-19 has presented a new set of challenges, the Center continues to provide a full range of services through webinars and virtual one-on-one appointments. The Career Tip Thursday video series on Facebook also covers employment and job search topics such as debunking career-related myths, following up on an interview and dealing with job loss.

“Finding a career no longer means walking around looking for ‘Now Hiring’ signs,” LaSorsa said. “It is important to be creative in your job search regardless of the industry. The Career Services Center can provide job seekers the skills and strategies needed for success.”

To explore the services offered by the Career Services Center, visit cod.edu/careerservices.
After graduating from high school, Michael Wagner moved into his own apartment to gain independence. In his 20s, he married, had three daughters and purchased a home for his family.

But he knew that wasn’t enough. Wagner had aspirations of a career in the information technology industry but saw no realistic path, given that his job at the time was unrelated to IT. That’s when he decided to enroll in classes at College of DuPage.

“I knew that if I wanted to pursue a new career, I had to push harder,” he said. “My decision to enroll in college courses more than a decade after high school was a difficult but necessary one to make.”

Wagner’s decision to attend COD did not come without challenges. After all, he was a nontraditional, first-generation college student who was caring for his family, and he had become unfamiliar with what it was like being in a classroom.

“The difficult part was that I did not know what to expect. No one else in my family had ever experienced this,” he said. “I also knew that going to school would leave a big burden on my family. I wondered how I was going to balance work, manage my personal and family life, and still have time to focus on school.”

Fortunately, Wagner had the full support of his wife, Elvia, which made the transition easier.

“I know Michael was very concerned about the impact on us, as he is a very good father and husband,” she said. “I gave him the support he needed by being encouraging and understanding. I had more work placed on me when he was in night classes, but he was still able to help with picking up the kids, cooking and in other ways at home.”

Wagner also found assistance and a new source of motivation at COD.

“I was supported as early as when I had to take my placement tests,” he said. “I remember meeting with a guidance counselor who was very helpful in getting everything sorted out so I could take the exams. There was also support when I entered the CIT (Computer and Information Technology) program. The instructors were great and they believed in me, which motivated me to keep going.”

One faculty member who had a positive impact on Wagner was Assistant Professor Brock Stout. He calls Wagner a model student and an example of what can happen when students believe in themselves and make efforts to improve their outcomes.

“When I talk to CIT students about Mike, I focus on his dedication to his plan,” Stout said. “Mike wasn’t just at COD to get good grades. He was here to learn everything he could about IT. He was focused on understanding the material, knowing that what he was learning would be useful in his future. Mike not only completed his courses to the satisfaction of the College, but he would continue to study and achieve the industry certification. As a result, this extra time paid off and he is one of the most successful students we have had in the program.”

With support from inside and outside the classroom, Wagner excelled during his time at COD and took advantage of every possible opportunity.

“COD enabled me to become CompTIA certified for A+ and Network+, and I earned the Cisco CCNA Routing and Switching certification,” he said. “I completed six College certificates within the Computer and Information Technology program and, to wrap it all up, I finished my associate degree.”

(continued on page 5)
At right and below: Michael Wagner provides IT work on a project at the Panama Canal; he tests an ethernet line for his current employer, Republic Bank of Chicago.

“Mike wasn’t just at COD to get good grades. He was here to learn everything he could about IT.”
—Brock Stout, Assistant Professor of Computer and Information Technology
“My advice to future students at College of DuPage would be that it’s never too late to succeed if you believe in yourself. Never let your situation define you—rather, define your situation.”

Not only did Wagner earn a degree in 2016, but he was also named one of the College’s Outstanding Graduate finalists.

“Being a finalist for Outstanding Graduate meant a lot. It was an honor to know that I had a chance to win the award,” he said. “When I decided to go to college, I knew that I wanted to give it my all because my family was sacrificing. My mindset was that I did not want it to be for nothing. This proved that it was not for nothing. I remember having my kids at the graduation ceremony because it was important for them to see that.”

Throughout his time at COD, Wagner was inspired by his supporters and his doubters.

“To all the people in my life who doubted me and to everyone who believed in me, thank you. Because when times became rough for me mentally, physically and emotionally, I used your comments as fuel to continue to push forward. I proved that a person can be more than what they’ve become and that it’s never too late to succeed.”

After graduating, he interviewed for many jobs before accepting one as a network engineer with an industry leader in purpose-built video surveillance. His work took him around the country to such places as Silicon Valley, Scottsdale, Gulfport and Las Vegas, and he even traveled to Central America to Panama City for IT work on the Panama Canal.

He currently is employed as a network systems engineer by Republic Bank of Chicago, where he focuses on security infrastructure. Wagner said that he uses skills he learned while at COD on a daily basis.

“My role as a network engineer has provided me the opportunity to implement, design and install a wide variety of IT-related systems,” he said. “I have applied many of the things I learned throughout my education and so much more.”

Wagner continues to pursue his education through the CIT program, earning his CCNA Wireless certification and Design certification, and is considering a second degree in Cybersecurity and Defense. He used the COD Pearson Vue testing center to recertify for his accredited IT vendor certifications and will use it again as he currently is preparing for another Cisco certification.

Wagner wants other adults who are considering going to college to know that age is no barrier to rewriting their stories.

“My advice to future students at College of DuPage would be that it’s never too late to succeed if you believe in yourself. Never let your situation define you—rather, define your situation. With dedication, commitment and sacrifice, you can achieve your goals.”
After working in the insurance industry, Jason Patrick began seeking opportunities in the technology field. With a family to support, the only way he could pursue an education toward a new career path was to find full-time employment. By chance he found Project Hire-Ed, an apprenticeship program at College of DuPage.

“Project Hire-Ed was exactly what I was looking for,” he said. “It allowed me to work full time in industrial maintenance at Mauser Packaging, receive benefits and gain the necessary experience and additional education I need to further my career. I could not have worked in this industry with virtually no experience without this program. I’m grateful for the opportunity.”

The College launched Project Hire-Ed in 2019 to address what business leaders believe is missing in the skills set of recent applicants and from the workforce. The initiative focuses on classroom curriculum, on-the-job skills building and employment in today’s marketplace.

Since the program’s inception, COD has partnered with local employers to offer students apprenticeship opportunities in manufacturing machining, manufacturing CNC operator, facility maintenance, industrial maintenance, HVACR service, welding and electro-mechanical mechatronics. Starting in 2020, Project Hire-Ed added apprenticeship offerings in health care for medical billing and coding and is currently developing apprenticeships in computer and information technology, computer and information science, and cybersecurity.

Project Hire-Ed Manager Danielle Kuglin Seago said students enrolled in Project Hire-Ed benefit from full-time employment while developing job skills through college courses and work-based learning. Participants walk away from COD with not only training and a job but also a 30-credit hour certificate. Additionally, all courses are stackable, which allows apprentices to easily pursue additional credentials, such as an associate degree.

“Our apprenticeship program graduates are equipped to fill knowledge and skills gaps within the companies where they already work,” she said. “They create a pipeline of talent for employers.”

With a focus on recruiting underrepresented minorities and women to the manufacturing field, Project Hire-Ed recently partnered with Addison’s Pioneer Service, Inc., a contract manufacturer looking to hire new talent. Pioneer Service, Inc. President and CEO Aneesa Muthana said that the future of manufacturing hinges on outreach to tomorrow’s professionals while dissolving the old adversarial mindsets of women versus men and millennials versus boomers.

Through Pioneer’s partnership with COD, Muthana is hopeful she can continue to diversify her workforce.

“Project Hire-Ed is a program that allows ambitious and highly motivated students to break into a trade industry of their choice with almost zero experience needed,” she said. “Before our partnership with COD, we never had experience with the apprenticeship process. We have now successfully hired two talented workers through COD’s program to support our growing workforce.”

Hamid Benfakir, Pioneer Service CNC machinist apprentice, said that Project Hire-Ed enabled him to work at a company where he sees himself as a long-term employee with a steady salary.

“Being a student in this program has allowed me to incorporate the knowledge acquired in the classroom as well as the technical skills learned on the job into building a foundation for a career in the CNC manufacturing field,” he said. “Both Pioneer and COD work with me to ensure that I have the tools that I need for success and the resources needed to advance in both my education and my skills in the field.”

Kuglin Seago said Project Hire-Ed provides students with affordable paths to secure high-paying jobs and careers without the typical debt associated with college.

“Students in Project Hire-Ed receive a salary with incremental wage increases and benefits from the onset, and their education is free, as it is paid for by the employer,” she said. “For adults looking to change careers, Project-Hire Ed is an ideal launching pad for exploring a new career as they will continue getting paid while also receiving on-the-job training.”
COD offers two Associate in Applied Science degrees—Human Services Generalist and Addictions Counseling. Students who earn their degrees and are looking to further their education can take advantage of the 3+1 Bachelor of Arts in Human Services program offered by National Louis University (NLU) on COD’s campus at reduced tuition rates. In addition, through a partnership with Mount Vernon Nazarene University in Ohio, students can seamlessly transfer to their online Bachelor of Social Work program.

While the human services profession gives many adults a fresh start, Florin said that the program’s student population also includes professionals in the field looking to add on credentials. Certificates can be earned in Addictions Counseling, Applied Gerontology, Corrections Counseling, Developmental Disabilities, Domestic/Family Violence, Fund Development, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Residential Child Care and Veterans Counseling.

“Our certificate offerings are great resume builders,” he said. “We even have a track tailored to people who have finished a clinical graduate degree that allows them to complete their Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC) certification more quickly.”

The program’s high reputation also has resulted in strong clinical affiliations and numerous partnerships. Most recently, faculty began teaching addiction classes to employees at Linden Oaks Behavioral Health to help them earn their CADC.

Todor currently works at Naomi’s House, a residential program offering support to women who have suffered from commercial sexual exploitation. Having completed her associate degree, she is three classes away from earning her bachelor’s degree through the 3+1 program with NLU.

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“If anyone thinks they can’t succeed at college later in life, just look at me,” she said. “You take it one class at a time and before you know it, you look back at what you have accomplished. No one can take that away from you.”
Stronger Lives
Sharing a Common Goal

Paralegal Studies professor helps all ages work together toward success

Paralegal Studies Chair Sally N. Fairbank knows that many of her students worry about feeling out of place in a classroom setting.

“"I remind potential students once they start the program that everyone has a common goal—to learn and have more employability," she said.

Fairbank and her fellow Paralegal Studies faculty at College of DuPage understand their students face the stress of everyday life, the challenge of paying for college and the anxiety over finding a job after graduation. To assist her students, she has created a "family" environment through a supportive faculty network and encourages them to reach out if they need help. The Paralegal Club, which is led by adjunct faculty Linda Jenkins, provides networking, socializing and educational enrichment opportunities for both current and former students.

“Our students and faculty are so willing to share information and help one another,” she said. “We’ve had faculty and students create scholarships to help others financially and show in multiple ways that they are always willing to lend a hand. Past students will even post jobs and speak at Paralegal Club meetings. They want to give back.”

Program graduate Terry Mohring is one of those students. She was in her 50s when she enrolled in the Paralegal Studies program.

“I had two children in college and I thought the students in my class were going to be my kids’ age,” she said. “I thought, ‘Am I going to fit in the program?’”

After attending her first class, Mohring discovered several other students were her age while the younger students made everyone feel that age was not a barrier. She realized that the faculty and staff are fully aware that this program attracts students of all ages.

“They have the goal to help us achieve and have success, whether it was with our grades or home life—they were there to help,” Mohring said. “This is why I keep coming back to COD.”

Fairbank knows the ultimate goal of the Paralegal Studies program is graduation with employment. To help her students achieve this, she worked diligently to get the program approved by the American Bar Association (ABA).

“The ABA is a way to separate us out when establishing quality. It’s like getting the Good Housekeeping magazine seal of approval,” she said.

Before launching the Paralegal Studies program at College of DuPage in 2006, Fairbank worked in a variety of job settings as an attorney. During law school and after graduation, she was a law clerk for a state appellate court judge in St. Louis. She then moved to Chicago and worked as an associate attorney doing defense litigation at a medium-sized law firm. Then came transactional work in the law departments of two Chicago corporations.

“I wanted courtroom experience, so I began working at the DuPage Public Defender’s office in the juvenile division. At the same time, I started teaching Business Law at College of DuPage. Subsequently, I was offered a full-time position coordinating the Paralegal Studies program at South Suburban College before coming to COD.”

Because of her diligent work on behalf of students, Fairbank was named the College-Wide Full-Time Outstanding Faculty Member in 2012. That same year, the Illinois Community College Trustees Association recognized her as the Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Member for the state of Illinois.

At the end of the day, Fairbank’s goal is to help her students inside and outside of the classroom.

“One of the best parts of my job is being able to cheerlead for our students when I am called to give a reference and see our students placed in jobs where they can thrive, use their skills and help others.”
“One of the best parts of my job is being able to cheerlead for our students when I am called to give a reference.”

— Sally N. Fairbank, Professor and Chair of Paralegal Studies
Quick Training,

Nikole Clay thrived in College of DuPage’s Massage Therapy program. She now operates her own private practice, Soma Sage Health & Healing, Inc.

Programs such as Commercial Driver’s License (above) and Phlebotomy (at right) are examples of short-term training that can put students on the fast track to a career.
After a successful career in various sales and marketing roles, including seven years as the marketing director for a company that specialized in biological remediation of municipal water, Nikole Clay felt drawn to something different.

“Though I was doing work in technologies that were either geared toward health care or healing the environment, I still felt unfulfilled in the corporate sector,” she said. “I craved a deeper, more personal connection that better aligned with my authentic self.”

Clay decided to make a change and enrolled in the Massage Therapy program offered through Continuing Education at College of DuPage, which provided a quick path to reach her goals.

“The classes are well planned, thorough and provide the opportunity to discover your unique style within the framework of the modality that is being taught,” she said. “The instructors actively practice massage therapy and are able to provide a practical perspective to what you encounter in the field, and the classes are sized so that everyone receives ample personal attention.”

Business Solutions Program Manager Amanda Skarosi said short-term training programs are more important than ever.

“The College community has always recognized the need for quick training opportunities for job seekers, as well as the needs of employers for well-trained employees who don’t need an advanced degree to fill positions,” she said. “The College is perfectly placed to help job seekers and career changers, offering short-term certificate and training programs in a variety of industries, many of which can be completed in less than six months.”

She said COD is committed to providing the utmost value and support to students with their education and careers, offering short-term programs in a broad range of fields that have a strong demand for skilled workers. These include computer programming, finance, fire science, health care, hospitality, management, manufacturing, marketing and office technology information.

“The College also has programs that feature stackable certificates. While they can be earned individually to upgrade skills or gain a competitive edge, they can also be applied toward a degree if students decide to further their education.”

To provide even more assistance, COD offers more than 150 degree and certificate programs that are approved for funding by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, which provides financial aid for unemployed and underemployed individuals toward training that will lead to a return to the workforce.

According to Kris Fay, Dean of Business and Applied Technology, COD works hard to provide options for students, job seekers and career changers while providing well-trained, highly skilled employees to businesses.

“Our programs are aligned with business and industry needs to provide training for in-demand positions,” she said. “Many are designed to enable students to develop skills, earn credentials and enter or return to the workforce in a short time. Once gainfully employed, they can come back to COD to update skills, earn additional credentials and move forward in their careers.”

Responding to a critical need due to COVID-19, COD mobilized resources and collaborated with the DuPage County Health Department and the Illinois Department of Public Health to create the Contact Tracer Training program in just a matter of weeks.

“As a community college, COD is agile enough to swiftly conceptualize, design and implement programs to meet the needs of students and employers,” said Continuing Education Program Manager Lori Garcia.

Additional noncredit training programs that put students on the fast track to a career include the 40-hour 911 Dispatch Operator course, Business of Craft Beer, Certified Personal Trainer, Commercial Driver’s License, Dental Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Real Estate and Veterinary Assistant.

After Clay completed the one-year Massage Therapy program and gained state licensure, she felt well-prepared and confident in her skills. She worked in a prominent chiropractic practice before launching her own private practice, Soma Sage Health & Healing, Inc., in Naperville.

“Helping others to overcome pain and achieve their wellness goals through massage therapy simply spoke to me,” she said. “The brevity of COD’s program is especially helpful to those who are learning while also working. I personally found the pacing highly motivating.”
Eliminating Barriers

COD helps adult learners at all stages of their educational journey

While working in the food industry, Adrian Brown found himself at a dead end.

“I reached the ceiling in my career and saw little to no more learning experiences for me,” he said.

Always fascinated with the intricacies of the brain, he decided to pursue a career in psychology and enrolled at College of DuPage, even though he had concerns about doing so.

“Attending college as an adult student is no easy task, but COD does everything they can to help ease that stress,” Brown said. “I was able to structure my career path because of the help of my advisors, librarians and even other COD students.

“If you think it’s too late to shift gears professionally, ask yourself the question: Why not?”

COD Adult Admissions Representative Angela Nackovic said it is common for adults like Brown—years or even decades into their working lives—to realize they want to reinvent themselves professionally. For some, it means completing a degree started long ago or enrolling in college for the first time; for others, it means earning a certificate to advance in their already established career and finding a pathway toward promotions, raises or employment with a desired company.

“Adults are never a second thought at COD,” she said.

“We provide support every step of the way, whether you are wanting to learn about program opportunities, financial assistance, learning resources or future career paths. Whatever the circumstance, the College is ready to help at all steps of an adult’s educational journey.”

Navigating the Cost

Paying for college can be difficult at any age. But for adult students who are likely to be entirely responsible for the cost—in addition to other financial responsibilities—navigating the economics can be particularly challenging.

Nishia Ikezoe Heard, COD Senior Director of Student Financial Assistance, Veteran Services and Scholarships, said adult students have more options than they realize. For example, adults already established in a career should find out whether their employer provides tuition reimbursement.

“We are happy to discuss options for funding a college education with all current and future students,” she said. “The thought of a college education being unattainable because of cost is not always true. There are always options.”

Adult learners are eligible to apply for federal and state grants, institutional scholarships, private scholarships, federal work-study jobs, and federal loans. Through the COD Foundation, several scholarship opportunities are geared specifically toward adult students, including one for single parents and another for returning adults.

Additional funding opportunities include workforce grants up to $10,000, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant. Through this federally funded program, unemployed and underemployed individuals can receive vocational and occupational training to enhance skills and increase marketability. COD offers more than 150 WIOA-approved degree and certificate programs in high-demand occupations.

The College also offers payment plans to make the cost of higher education more affordable. Depending on the age of the adult learner, discounted tuition rates are available to senior citizens.

Flexible Scheduling

For students with a busy work and family life, COD provides day and night courses in 16-, 12- and eight-week sessions; online self-paced classes; and hybrid class formats. This includes more than 370 different online courses covering more than 75 different disciplines.

COD Provost Mark Curtis-Chávez said these options give adults the flexibility to fit school into their schedules.

“We acknowledge that everyone is at different places in their lives and are returning to school for different reasons. We understand that students have work and family obligations, and we design our course formats accordingly with student success always at the forefront.”

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Where do you fit in?
College of DuPage welcomes adult students who are attending for a variety of reasons.

Career Advancer
“I never wanted to leave my company, but I knew returning to school was the only way I could advance to a management position. If I can go back at 54 years old, anyone can.”
—Ron Baker, Sr., Management, who took advantage of his employer’s offer to pay for tuition

Career Changer
“College of DuPage is a gem for adults. This goes to show that at any age, people can reinvent themselves and start new careers. For anyone feeling stuck or needing a change, I urge you to explore all that COD has to offer.”
—Joyce Webb, Physical Therapist Assistant

English Learner
“I utilize the knowledge I obtained at COD in the ELA (English Language Acquisition) and Horticulture programs every single day in my professional life. Not everyone who immigrates to America has the fortune of getting the right start, but I’m lucky to say that I did.”
—Ana Solares, Horticulture
Resources to Succeed
Students with anxiety about taking a course can utilize free academic support services at COD’s Learning Commons. Angel Nance, Learning Commons Coordinator of Operations, Outreach and Technical Support, said nontraditional students shouldn’t worry about feeling out of place or uncomfortable.

“Our adult students will often look across the table and find another student in a similar situation,” she said.

While the Learning Commons offers course-based tutoring and assistance across the academic spectrum, attention to key subjects helps students successfully complete classes and programs.

“Our focus on math, reading, writing and speech addresses subjects that not only cover general education requirements in degree and certificate programs, but also build skills in areas that are used in just about all other classes,” Nance said. “For adult students who are returning to school or are attending for the first time, these core classes can be daunting. But we are here to help.”

The COD Library is another valuable resource for students along with the Open Education program, which bridges the equity gap for students through Open Educational Resources as well as no-cost print and electronic collections available at COD’s Library.

Reference Librarian Denise Coté said utilizing these resources makes education more affordable, accessible and equitable.

“We want to ensure all students start class on an equal footing in terms of instruction and course materials. Between Open Educational Resources, the Learning Commons and the Library, we strive to help students succeed.”

Finding Career Opportunities
The COD Career Services Center offers resources that include one-on-one career coaching and exploration through a career coaching database tied specifically to COD programs. Krystina LaSorsa, Career Services Center Interim Manager, said switching careers at a later age is more common than many realize.

“A lot of students have had several careers before coming to COD. And in this time of uncertainty during COVID-19, career switching is top of mind for many people. The Center is happy to provide a bridge for students who want to enter, re-enter or reinvent themselves in the workforce.”

Another option for adult students is the workNet DuPage Career Center, located in Lisle, which provides career counseling, job placement assistance, tuition assistance and support services. COD conveniently employs a liaison to the center who knows the WIOA training grant process and approved WIOA programs at the College.

Adela Meitz, Workforce Development and Student Resource Specialist, said workNet DuPage helps adult learners obtain certifications, update their job search skills and gain the confidence to re-enter the workforce.

“In the aftermath of the pandemic and facing a changed economic landscape, advancing your education has never been more essential, and workNet DuPage remains fully committed to helping job seekers navigate a post-pandemic labor market.”

Adults Welcome
Nackovic said regardless of your age, students can find a place to fit in at COD.

“A lot of people have a fear of being the oldest students in their classes, but they quickly find that there are more students with similar backgrounds. What makes COD so special is that we serve a very diverse audience.”
Late to the Game
“I worked 30 years as a legal secretary and was able to take no more than two classes a semester. I am confident that I am on the right track and am well-equipped to pursue my new career in serving others.”
—Virginia Watson, Psychology

Veteran
“College of DuPage is a veteran-friendly school and that was a big selling point for me. Meeting other veterans with similar backgrounds helped me overcome some of the fears I was having returning to school after such a long time away.”
—Adrian Raygoza, Transfer

Regardless of your age, you can find a place to fit in at COD.

High School Equivalency
“I hope other students gain a wide perspective and see the great opportunity of education that COD has to offer in many significant ways. Don’t give up, ask for help and apply for scholarships. I believe the only person who can limit your future is you.”
—Chanbopha Loera, Accounting

Stay-at-Home Mom
“Classes offered day and night allowed me to work and take care of my family while attending school. And with the help of financial aid, I finished a degree and three certificates in three years.”
—Heidi Monteith, Interior Design
Frida Kahlo Exhibition Opens June 5

“Frida Kahlo: Timeless” will run Saturday, June 5, to Monday, Sept. 6, at the Cleve Carney Museum of Art, located in the McAninch Arts Center at College of DuPage. The multifaceted exhibit will be the most comprehensive presentation of original Frida Kahlo work in the Chicago area in more than 40 years. For more information, visit theccma.org.