Online Learning Takes Discipline and Motivation

In order for Senior Tiffany Gerhart to be a successful online student, she had to put into practice writing “to-do” lists and managing every moment of her time. As the mother to four daughters ages five to fifteen, she also found the support of her spouse to be critical.

Gerhart, with the help of her husband, Bob, is working on a degree in management and has enjoyed the flexibility she finds with online learning. Attending a brick and mortar institution just wasn’t going to work for her and her busy family. From Maple Grove, Minn., she is currently employed as an administrative assistant and hopes that earning her baccalaureate degree will open doors to new opportunities for her in the future maybe as a supervisor or manager.

Never idle, Gerhart is active in the parent teacher organization at her children’s school as well as in her community. Even though her free time is extremely limited, she remains motivated and enthusiastic about pursuing her degree. “A degree from UMC means accomplishment,” Gerhart says. “For me this is more than a degree, it is my goal to inspire my daughters to go to college. I want them to see how much work it is, but then, I want them to witness what a difference a college degree can make in your life and career.”

Her family can attest to having those pesky to-do lists scattered around the house, but they remain her greatest motivation. “Bob keeps me going when I need the support,” she smiles. “And my daughters give me the reason to keep moving ahead.”

The Gerhart family was on campus for the first time during homecoming in October 2013. The entire family enjoyed meeting people and participating in some of the homecoming activities. It proved a great opportunity for Tiffany to meet faculty and staff and for her to see her future alma mater.

She knows that online students have a lot to manage because many of them are working and supporting families. She understands that two of the most important things one needs when considering an online education are discipline and motivation. “You will not have regular reminders like you would if you were on-site,” she reflects. “You will need a great support team who understands at home. That support helps keep you on track and gives you the push you need.”

Gerhart chose the U of M Crookston because she wanted a degree from a recognized institution and one without the word “online” in the name. “My first college experience was not what I expected, and I did extensive research when I decided to pursue a degree online because I wanted to be sure of what I was getting into,” she explains. “I found exactly what I was looking for in an online degree from the University of Minnesota Crookston. I have the flexibility I need, and I am earning the degree I want from an institution recognized all over the world.”
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Tiffany Gerhart (back row, far left) is an online student who visited campus with her family during homecoming in October 2013.