

Delivering for UPS

John Kurzenberger knew he had to sacrifice something from his busy schedule to find time to complete his bachelor's degree, and he was determined to make it work.



As an avid reader, active volunteer, father and husband, his solution would involve trading Steinbeck for Social Gerontology.

“For me, the only available time I had to trade was the little time I was devoting to reading for enjoyment, late at night or on weekends,” recalled Kurzenberger, a transportation administrator at the UPS Supply Chain Solutions Center in Newark, Del. “Eventually, I decided it was worth an attempt at exchanging those precious leisure periods for course work related to completing my BA degree in sociology.”

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Once Kurzenberger made that decision, the rest began to click. As a UPS employee, he said the process of qualifying and investigating the best college was easier than it might have been if he had not been employed by the company.

“Thomas Edison State College was listed as a UPS partner and I believed, correctly, that this relationship would save me the legwork of searching and comparing,” said Kurzenberger. “Completing an application, obtaining my previous transcript for evaluation of transfer credits and signing up for the educational reimbursement benefit offered by UPS was easy and pain-free.”

Kurzenberger said the next step was working with an academic advisor at the College early in the process, who helped him identify the required courses for his degree requirements.

“The flexibility offered by Thomas Edison State College in the various types of class formats as well as the convenient start schedules are a tremendous advantage to me in choosing how to allocate my time and still meet the demands of school, work, family and community involvements,” he said.

Kurzenberger is not alone among UPS employees attending Thomas Edison State College. Since joining the UPS educational network in 2005, Thomas Edison State College has earned the fifth

highest enrollment out of UPS employees who use the company’s tuition programs currently to attend one of approximately 2,000 colleges and universities throughout the country.

Patrick Myers, corporate compensation manager responsible for UPS Tuition Assistance Programs, said the College enables UPS to provide its employees with quality educational programs that work around the needs of a global, 24-hour organization.

“Quality and flexibility are critical to our organization, and that is what Thomas Edison State College provides our people,” he said. “We have been able to customize an operations management curriculum that leverages UPS training and can lead to degree completion for our employees, which can ultimately lead to professional growth within the organization.”

In 2008, the College evaluated the company’s Hub Supervisor Training School for college-level credit. Employees who complete the training program can earn up to 9 credits toward either an undergraduate certificate in Operations Management or an associate or bachelor’s degree from the College.

Kurzenberger said the College has enabled him to manage his professional and personal responsibilities, and continue serving the community.

Kurzenberger, who lives in Newcastle, Del., with his wife, Renée, and their two sons, has been a volunteer for both Delaware Hospice and the nonprofit literacy organization, Read Aloud Delaware, for about 10 years.

“Although I still have a way to go, I am thrilled that I made the decision to find a few hours each week to continue my education,” he said. “It has been one of the best decisions I have made. I feel this experience has made me a more valuable employee of UPS.” ■