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UMaine Today



Thomas Oliver: Finishing what he started with a B.U.S.

March 1, 2021

The University of Maine's flexible degree completion program for busy adults, Bachelor of University Studies, is still accepting applications for the 2021 spring semester. The extended deadline is March 15.

The Bachelor of University Studies (B.U.S.) allows busy working adults like Thomas Oliver to finish what they started. In 2021 Oliver expects to earn the bachelor's degree he started 28 years ago.

Oliver graduated from Old Town High School in 1993 and began his post-secondary education at the University of Maine, where he studied engineering and worked in information technology. In 1998, he left the state to work and travel.

Oliver settled in Oregon and found employment with an electric utility company. He married and had three children. Despite work and family leaving him with little free time, a professional development opportunity focused on management issues for electric utility leaders got him thinking about his unfinished degree.

He began to look at options for completing his degree and found the University of Maine Bachelor of University Studies (B.U.S.) online program.

"The Bachelor of University Studies provides the flexibility a working adult needs and the opportunity to learn alongside, albeit virtually, others who have similar life experiences. The dialogue with classmates is an important part of the learning process and I believe that is captured in the structure of the B.U.S. program," he says.

After a 20-year break from college, Oliver entered the UMaine B.U.S. program in 2016 and has since been steadily working to complete his degree on a part-time basis. The B.U.S. is designed to be adaptable to the needs of the individual student and offers multiple track options. He found that the lab studies, hands-on practical subject matter relevant to his personal and professional



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that the labor studies track combined subject matter relevant to his personal and professional development and incorporated other areas of interest, such as history, politics and philosophy, into his curriculum. He is on track to graduate this year with a Bachelor of University Studies, and minors in business and economics.

Now a director of engineering, Oliver credits his employer for supporting his education and his family.

His advice to the adult learner is not to wait. "You do not need to start with a full course load. Don't let it overwhelm you. Pick a piece and work on it."

For more information about the Bachelor of University Studies, and to apply for a spring semester start, visit umaine.edu/universitystudies or call 207.581.3143.

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