Knowledge That Works.

Because You Never Stop Learning.
Because You Never Stop Learning.
celebration of the 50th anniversary of IPFW, we in the Division of Continuing Studies pay tribute to the success of our General Studies alumni.

Students in General Studies are all ages and come from many walks of life. Younger students look to prepare for their first professional career or graduate school. Experienced workers often seek a bachelor’s degree to change careers or be promoted. Others plan to re-enter the workforce and need to update their knowledge and skills for the current job market. Many come with transfer credit wanting to change majors. Each creates a unique plan of study to match their personal and professional goals.

Many students enroll in General Studies because of the program’s flexibility. Often they have a lot of interests and want a well-rounded program that can be tailored to their career goals. Other students “land” in General Studies after being in the military or out of school for a while because they need to complete their degree as quickly as possible. General Studies offers a variety of options to help returning students pick up their education where it was left off and run with it to the graduation finish line.

Having the added bonus of being able to achieve a General Studies degree completely or partially online provides convenience for those needing to work around their careers, family obligations, or military deployments.

Whatever your life situation, General Studies is here to serve you and wants to help you achieve your dreams, just like the alumni featured in this booklet have done. Please give us a call to take the next step toward your success.

Deb Conklin • Executive Director
Division of Continuing Studies
Chris George worked for 12 years as a physical therapy assistant at local hospitals when he realized that he wanted to work in orthotics, a specialty within the medical field that designs and creates orthotic devices to improve function and mobility. The only thing that stood between him and his future career was a bachelor’s degree so that he was eligible to pursue certification in orthotics. “I was in need of an undergraduate degree that was flexible enough to work around the 15 years of classes that I had been taking,” Chris recalls. “The IPFW General Studies program allowed me to customize the degree to maintain family commitments while considering life experiences to complete my classroom requirements.”

To help him prepare for his future career, Chris worked with his General Studies advisor, who “was tremendous in finding resources that would help complete my degree.” While concentrating his coursework on health care administration and biology, his advisor introduced him to a biology professor who customized a series of courses to fit the apprenticeship he was doing with an area orthotics company. “The last 12 credits in biology were the biggest influence on what I do today,” he said.

After graduating from IPFW in 2011 with a Bachelor of General Studies, Chris completed an orthotics certification program through Northwestern University in 2012 and a residency with the Midwest Orthotic & Technology Center in South Bend. Now serving as Practice Manager of the new Midwest Orthotics office in Fort Wayne, Chris realizes that his General Studies degree not only provided a solid foundation for his career, but also “has had a tremendous influence on how I manage my patients and the challenges of growing a business.”

CHRIS GEORGE • B.G.S. 2011

From physical therapy assistant to certified orthotist and orthotics practice manager
hen approaching retirement at General Motors, Terri Glaza decided to pursue a second career in interior design, a lifelong passion she developed while remodeling and redecorating her home. Terri decided to take her first step toward the new career by completing an associate degree in interior design at IPFW. She attended classes part time while working 40 to 60 hours per week as an electrical test associate at the automotive plant.

Her next step was to pursue a bachelor’s degree at IPFW; but since interior design was not yet available in a B.S. format, Terri enrolled in General Studies (G.S.). “The best part about the G.S. program was that I could write my own degree program and take as much time as I wanted to graduate.” Later, when interior design became available as a bachelor’s degree, she transferred out of General Studies and completed a B.S. in interior design in 2010. She then decided to re-enroll in General Studies and take courses to enhance her skills. “I was able to integrate the interior design curriculum, construction technology, 3D animation and computer modeling to create my own General Studies program. It was a perfect fit for my career,” she said of the flexible program that led to her B.G.S. in 2012.

Shortly after retiring from General Motors with more than 31 years, Terri started her own business, Access-2-Design, LLC. “My business offers design services to architects, interior designers, furniture manufacturers, as well as residential clients,” she explains. While Access-2-Design handles all aspects of interior design, Terri’s specialty is 3D modeling and final presentation, thanks to her General Studies coursework at IPFW.
Studies show that college students typically change majors three times before finding the right fit. And while General Studies graduate Jeremy Moore was in some ways not a typical college student due to what he calls his “adventurous spirit,” he did change his major three times before choosing General Studies. He started college at Indiana University, in his hometown of Bloomington, where he switched his major from math to theater and from theater to religious studies.

Jeremy then moved to Fort Wayne in 2007 to work with his former youth pastor, and when he went to enroll at IPFW, discovered there was no major available in his preferred area of religious studies. After exploring various options, he finally landed on General Studies as his major. He chose General Studies because “it fit my personality well and allowed me to pursue a lot of different areas instead of just one. I ended up with four minors—communication, religious studies, psychology, and sociology—because I really liked the professors and the content in those areas,” he explains.

Jeremy completed his Bachelor of General Studies in 2011 and recently served as a contract trainer for Parkview Health System, training employees and medical personnel on EPIC, a new patient management software system.

He currently is weighing various options for his future, which may include going back to school for a master’s degree or enrolling in an alternative degree program. “I could be happy doing many things,” he explains. With the variety of subjects he studied as a General Studies major with four minors, he likely has a lot of options to choose from.

JEREMY MOORE • B.G.S. 2011
From Indiana University Bloomington
transfer to medical records
training contractor
hen Jeff Valliere completed his Bachelor of General Studies degree at IPFW in 2013 and headed to dental school at the Indiana University School of Dentistry in Indianapolis, he left behind a lot of smiles in Fort Wayne. Through his senior project, Smiles for Success, he worked within the existing healthcare framework of the Matthew 25 Dental Clinic and the Healthy Cities health fair to assist the under-served in Fort Wayne.

With help from both IPFW Dental Laboratory Technology (DLT) students and local dental professionals, the project completed work on 29 dentures and restored 22 patients to functioning dentitions. “Although these oral prosthetic appliances brought about new and restored smiles, the impact reaches far deeper than a better first impression, leading to a lifetime of new opportunities and better overall health” for those served, Jeff believes.

After completing an associate degree in Dental Laboratory Technology at IPFW, Jeff knew he wanted to become a dentist. He chose the General Studies program for his bachelor’s degree because of the program’s practicality that allowed him to tailor his coursework to include pre-dental and biology classes in preparation for dental school. “My General Studies degree prepared me for my specific path better than any other degree could have,” he recalls. “It was the bridge between my DLT program experience and my goal of dental school.”

Looking to the future, Jeff says he plans to continue teaching a distance-learning class for the DLT program while in dental school. “Hopefully I can also continue to foster my volunteerism and work to improve oral health in the community around me,” he says.
Having a son with Asperger syndrome motivated Valerie Panning to want to help other families by becoming an advocate for those in need. Recognizing that in order to achieve her goal, she would have to go back to school and finish her bachelor’s degree and then complete a master’s program for social work, she enrolled in IPFW.

Valerie chose the General Studies program because it allowed her to get her degree “in a most expeditious way” by accepting her past coursework credits. She had attended college right out of high school, but “I didn’t love education the first time around; I was doing it for my parents.” She subsequently dropped out of college to get married and raise a family.

After 15 years as a homemaker, “I went from being a full-time mom to being a full-time student. I came in really focused on being a therapist and doing advocacy,” she says.

“General Studies, for returning adults, is a very soft way to re-enter college, and the staff really hears you and tries to tweak your program and make things fit your interests and goals,” she notes. In addition, she found that “the classes at IPFW were really applicable to what I wanted to do and they served as a foundation for the rest of my studies.”

Valerie completed her B.G.S. in 2010 and enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at IUPUI. She achieved her M.S.W. in 2012 and immediately accepted her current position as Program Director for Liberty Landing, a homeless shelter for military veterans in Fort Wayne, working with people in need and doing what she loves.
Marcus Trice started his college career at Indiana University in Bloomington directly out of high school, where he majored in psychology with a goal of becoming a clinical psychologist. But after two years, he “stopped out” of school to tend to the responsibilities that came with marriage and a family. While working in marketing and management positions for a newspaper publisher and a local telecommunications company, he never forgot his desire to return to college and finish his degree.

When he enrolled in the Bachelor of General Studies degree program at IPFW in 2005, he was a returning adult student with two years of college already completed. Returning to school “was one of the best decisions of my life,” he reflects.

Determined to set an example for his children, Marcus excelled academically in the classroom at IPFW, attributing his success in part to the fact that he was more mature the second time around. “I really enjoyed the interaction with the professors and students. Abstract ideas come alive when you add life experiences,” he says.

Trice completed the B.G.S. in 2007 and went on to earn a Master of Arts in Communication in 2010. While completing his master’s degree, he served as a graduate assistant and taught organizational communication classes, which led to his desire to teach full time. After achieving his M.A., he transitioned into an adjunct faculty position at IPFW. Today, he continues to teach classes at IPFW, along with at Ivy Tech and Brown Mackie College, in the areas of public speaking, applied ethics, and organizational, business and interpersonal communication.
Henry and Tricia Graf became acquainted as young college students when they both were cast members in the musical *Godspell* while attending Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois (now Concordia University, Chicago), and it wasn’t long before they decided to take their friendship offstage and into lifelong roles as husband and wife. “I met my best friend, fell in love with him, married, had our first child and moved to Texas to begin ministry,” Tricia recalls. Neither of them brought a college degree with them to Texas.

The next phase of their life brought them back to Henry’s hometown of Fort Wayne, where he accepted a position as a church youth director. “It took me forever to figure out what I wanted to do with my life, but I knew I needed to finish my degree—because without it, I felt like I had no credibility.” Henry decided to enroll in IPFW General Studies. “The whole program blew my mind! There were a lot of great people enrolled, I could pick what area to specialize in, and I came to realize that the degree could open up a ton of doors for me,” he said.

Henry completed his B.G.S. in 2002 with a minor in Communication and went on to achieve an M.A. in Communication in 2005. His IPFW degrees “set me up and launched me into an international speaking career,” he believes. Henry has traveled across the U.S. and overseas for speaking engagements and has also

Tricia Graf • B.G.S. 2007

*From college stop-outs to careers as church pastor/professional speaker/author (Henry) and as college instructor/dance ministry leader (Tricia)*
taught introductory speech classes at IPFW, all the while completing a Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary and serving as youth director, and now senior pastor, of Promise Ministries in Fort Wayne. He recently published his first book, titled *More Than a Story*, and anticipates writing additional books and working on a doctorate degree in semiotics and future studies.

While Henry worked on his college education, Tricia devoted her attention to being a mother and operating Studio 149, a not-for-profit dance ministry she founded, but she always had an eye on completing her college degree. “I wanted to be able to finish the degree that I had begun . . . (but) I also was in the midst of healing from a health crisis,” she recalls. Tricia suffered from a severe case of Celiac disease that affected her mobility and left her in a lot of pain. But despite all the challenges, she enrolled in IPFW and found that “the General Studies program offered me the ability to obtain a degree . . . in the shortest amount of time, in addition to allowing me to obtain a minor in dance and still be at home raising my daughters because of the online classes that IPFW had to offer.” She achieved her B.G.S. in 2007 and currently teaches dance-related classes for IPFW and the University of Saint Francis while growing her dance ministry and watching their two daughters turn into young ladies.

Based on their positive experiences, the couple often encourages others to enroll in IPFW General Studies. “It’s a good way to start and you can only go up from there,” Tricia says, with Henry adding that “It’s a great base for going into other fields.” Both agree that General Studies has helped them to achieve their career goals and lifelong dreams that all began years ago when they met as starry-eyed students acting in a college play.
Rebecca Goetz earned an associate degree in interior design from IPFW in 1990 and decided to return to school and work on a bachelor’s degree to expand career opportunities. As a single mom, she enrolled in General Studies because of the program’s flexibility. She particularly enjoyed the online courses that made it possible for her to work two jobs and raise her family while completing her education as quickly as possible.

“I knew I needed, and wanted, to return to college to complete a bachelor’s degree. Yet knowing it would require a great deal of work, I was determined not to allow it to take too much time away from my work and family life,” Rebecca recalls.

She chose to enroll in classes year round. By adding one online course to each semester’s schedule and using her wireless laptop computer, she found that she could tap into lectures during her down time and complete her degree sooner. But the online aspect of the General Studies degree provided additional benefits. “By taking courses online, I increased and updated my technology skills, while feeling more comfortable utilizing software relevant to my job.”

Shortly after enrolling in General Studies, Rebecca was offered a part-time interior design position with Pizza Hut of Fort Wayne, Inc., which she worked while finishing her degree. Upon graduating with a B.G.S. in 2012, Rebecca was offered a full-time position with Pizza Hut and was promoted to chief interior designer in 2013 when the previous chief designer retired. “This all came about after sharing my success at IPFW. The combined added educational experience was the driving engine that cultivated the end result of a full-time position.”

REBECCA GOETZ • B.G.S. 2012
From single mom to chief interior designer
Winemaking has become a burgeoning industry across the U.S., and IPFW’s General Studies degree program is playing a behind-the-scenes role in the operation of at least one Indiana winery.

“I run a winery and my job description changes on a daily basis. One day I might be stacking barrels with a forklift, another I might be spraying the vineyard or reconciling our accounting software,” explains IPFW graduate Eric Harris. When enrolled at IPFW, he felt that being a General Studies major was the only way he could acquire the unique skill set he needed for his multi-faceted career. Eric is co-founder, winemaker and manager of the Two-EEs Winery near Huntington along with his wife, Miss Indiana USA 2013 Emily Hart, also a graduate of IPFW.

Looking back on his college career, Eric says that he attended Ball State University for two years, but left for a business opportunity that prompted him to come to IPFW to finish his degree. “I had been choosing classes ‘willy-nilly’ and didn’t have much direction,” he reflects on his early years of college. “I thought I knew what I was doing until I visited with a General Studies advisor, who was able to organize the balance of my years at IPFW into purposeful classes that helped me get my degree in a reasonable amount of time.” He completed his Bachelor of General Studies degree in 2009.

Eric believes General Studies was the right choice for him because he “felt the confines of certain degrees kept me from learning about other things that I felt were important,” things such as skills for managing his own company. “This long strange trip has given me a solid foundation to build on with real-world experience in organizing and developing a new business,” he reflects.

**ERI HARRIS • B.G.S. 2009**

*From Ball State University transfer to winemaking entrepreneur/winery co-owner*
Sometimes it takes a life-altering event for people to realize that change is needed. For 2007 General Studies graduate Doug Hartle, the turning point was 9/11. “When September 9, 2001 hit, the family business we had . . . was numbered in its days and we knew it. I needed to prepare for whatever was coming next,” Doug reminisces. “I finally got my strength and courage up and enrolled at IPFW. A short time later, our business shut down. It was clear that education was mandatory.”

Doug initially enrolled as a psychology major, but “General Studies proved to be more broad and I could pick and choose many of the classes based on what I was interested in,” he says. Because he wanted to work with people, he concentrated on courses dealing with human behaviors.

His biggest challenge was figuring out how to support and be with his family. So, he drove school and charter buses, taking classes in between routes and using his down time to study and be with his children. “I wanted to be an example to my kids in more ways than one,” Doug says, noting that he “was able to go from a 0.9 GPA my last year in college 20 years ago to a 3.64 GPA graduating with honors this time around.”

While finishing his degree, Doug worked in the General Studies office as an academic peer advisor, which led to his becoming a professional certified life coach with his own practice, called Stages. He also serves as a facilitator for Blue Jacket, Inc., teaching job search and life skills to adult ex-offenders. And just for fun, he co-owns and sings for a professional vocal group called Classic Voice.

DOUG HARTLE • B.G.S. 2007

From self employment to certified life coach
You could say that 2006 General Studies graduate Nick Hill is living the American dream. He grew up in Michigan with parents who did not have a college education but wanted a better life for their son. So Nick went off to college on a baseball scholarship. But a sports injury forced him to explore other options and eventually led him to IPFW as a transfer student.

“The General Studies degree sounded great to me. Because I didn’t know what I was going to do as far as a career, I felt that the broad background would be more beneficial to me—that I would be more marketable,” Hill reflects.

His future direction came as the result of attending a job fair at IPFW, leading to an offer from Wells Fargo. The banking hours were a good fit for his college studies and he enjoyed the work. He has since been promoted three times and in January 2013 was named a Wells Fargo branch manager. “Through the General Studies degree program, I was able to package my college credits in a way that made me a viable candidate for my current job,” he believes.

Nick is an advocate of General Studies and often suggests his employees enroll in the versatile program that worked so well for him. “Ninety percent of today’s jobs require a bachelor’s degree, but no major is specified. General Studies can provide you with an extensive set of skills and a degree that can open doors for you,” he says.
hen Brian Miller started at IPFW, fresh out of Carroll High School, he knew he wanted to work in sports. He served as the public address announcer for Mastodon basketball and volleyball events and devoted so much time to extracurricular activities that he neglected his studies. “I struggled my first year and was put on academic probation,” he recalls of his early college days, which also included serving on The Communicator staff and in student government.

Floundering as a business student, he became connected with IPFW General Studies, and one of the caring G.S. advisors provided him with the direction and confidence he needed to get his academic career on track and complete his degree. Brian worked in the IPFW Athletic Department throughout college, which jumpstarted his career in sports marketing. Immediately upon graduating in 2002 with a Bachelor of General Studies, he was hired as IPFW Associate Director of Marketing Promotion and Sports Information.

Brian enjoyed his time on staff at IPFW, but in 2006 he had an opportunity to work for Host Communications and the University of Kentucky selling sports sponsorships. In 2010, Brian was promoted to Associate General Manager with UK IMG Sports Marketing, and in May 2013, he was named General Manager.

Brian credits IPFW’s General Studies for his success. “I would not be where I am today without the opportunities I had at IPFW and the empowerment and freedom a General Studies degree gave me.”

BRIAN MILLER • B.G.S. 2002

From sports enthusiast/student leader to general manager for a sports marketing firm
Former IPFW men’s basketball coach Dane Fife called him the “ideal student athlete” not only for his prowess on the basketball court—he scored more than 1,000 points while playing for the Dons from 2005 to 2008—but also for his academic success. Chicago native DeWitt Scott achieved not one, but two degrees from IPFW, including a Bachelor of General Studies in 2007 and a Master of Liberal Studies in 2008.

DeWitt went on to play for the Fort Wayne Mad Ants from 2008 to 2010. From there, he returned to the Windy City, where he accepted a position in the College of Education at Chicago State University. He currently is serving as Student Teacher Coordinator for the college and pursuing a doctorate degree in education.

DeWitt looks fondly back to his days in Fort Wayne. When he came to IPFW on a basketball scholarship, “I was a bit lost and didn’t know what to major in,” so he turned to General Studies, where “the staff members were so welcoming and helpful.” He liked the versatility of the B.G.S. and M.L.S. curricula and believes the degrees “put me over the top in the job market” and helped him to be open-minded about career opportunities.

While working for Chicago State and pursuing his Ed.D., DeWitt keeps in touch with his old friends from IPFW and says he talks to Coach Fife on the phone “every two or three months.” Meanwhile, Coach Fife, a former standout on the Indiana University Hoosiers basketball team, is now serving as assistant coach at Michigan State University.
Life was my biggest challenge.” That was the response of Caren Vachon-Jones when asked about the obstacles she faced while pursuing her college degree. She went on to explain that “over the course of my college journey, I got married, had children, got divorced, raised children as a single parent, and cared for my mother after she was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer. I had to stop and start my courses a few times. But, when I was ready, IPFW and General Studies were there for me.”

While taking college courses, “I was trying to balance a full-time job, raising two children and completing my degree program. I was the first in my family to go to college and I wanted to be a role model for my children,” Caren reflects. “Due to its flexibility, the General Studies program allowed me to achieve my bachelor’s degree while still allowing me to grow and advance in my career with Wells Fargo. I didn’t have to give up one for the other,” she says.

“The completion of my Bachelor of General Studies degree, coupled with my work experience, helped lead to my becoming a Regional Manager for Wells Fargo, working with a team of 10 to 12 direct reports and responsibility over five states.” She notes that a bachelor’s degree is required for many senior-level positions and that she feels “well prepared for future promotions or opportunities as they arise,” thanks to the Bachelor of General Studies that she completed in 2010. Future plans include working toward a master’s degree to help her advance even further in her career.
Why General Studies?

Success Since 1978
While IPFW celebrates its 50-year anniversary in 2014, the General Studies program marks its 36th year of offering accredited college degrees under the auspices of Indiana University. Since 1978, more than 3,461 General Studies’ majors have graduated from IPFW. An estimated 80 percent of those graduates remain in the Hoosier State, with the majority residing in Northeast Indiana. The economic impact of those graduates over the last 10 years is calculated to be a combined annual increase in earnings exceeding $39,718,000.*

Customized for Your Future Success
The General Studies degree program is known for its flexibility and convenience that allow students to tailor their bachelor’s degree to interests and career goals while working around their career, family or military obligations. Below is a summary of the various features and benefits of the General Studies program.

- Nationally-recognized online degree, ranked in the top ten of U.S. News’ 2014 Best Online Bachelor’s Programs in the country.
- Convenient onsite and online classes to fit student schedules.
- Credits available for courses taken at other accredited institutions, as well as for military service, CLEP and approved ACE training programs, and documentable life experiences.
- Hybrid “Advantage” program to allow returning adult students with 60 hours of credits to complete their bachelor’s degree in 18 to 24 months.
