

When Abbie Radech first told her customers she was going to Black Hawk College, they worried she would leave her current career.

Radech is the owner/operator at RiverView Salon in Port Byron, where she has worked for 15 years. She assured them she had no plans of leaving: she wanted to fine-tune her business skills.

Making the decision



The '99 Riverdale High School graduate felt the need to earn a business degree after having back surgery in 2012.

She noted the cosmetology industry can really take a toll on your body due to all of the hours spent on your feet and a lot of bending and twisting.

"You never know exactly how long you have until you have to hang up your apron," she said. "I decided I needed a Plan B in case Plan A wouldn't get me to retirement."

Continuing to work in the salon is exactly what Radech wants to do, but her BHC degree has opened up possibilities and opportunities she didn't have before if she ever wants or needs to make a change.

"I know if I wanted to expand my business to where I don't have to work behind the chair as much, I can," Radech said. "If I want to leave cosmetology and go into another field, I have

the confidence.”

In addition to making Plan B possible, Radech also wanted to make sure to select a degree that would benefit her in her current position. She found the right fit with the Associate in Applied Science degree in business management and marketing.

Getting the degree

She took on the challenge of being a nontraditional, full-time Black Hawk College student in 2013 while continuing to work full-time. At the same time, her husband, Sean, also became a full-time student and worked full-time.

Although doing both things full-time could be stressful, Radech and her husband supported each other as they balanced work and classes. The camaraderie with other students also helped.



She completed her degree in Fall 2015, and Sean earned his Associate in Applied Science degree in computer specialist in Spring 2016. The couple walked in the May graduation ceremony together.

“That will always be one of my favorite memories,” Radech said. “To go through it together and be done together, that was nice.”

The two decided to study at Black Hawk College for several reasons, including cost, location and schedule options. Plus, Radech wanted to come back to Black Hawk College after previously attending.

"I had been to Black Hawk before, unsuccessfully, when I was right out of high school, so I kind of felt like I had to redeem myself a little bit," she said.

At that time, Radech attended because she thought she should, but the second time, she knew exactly what she wanted to study and had the right mindset to meet her goal.

Going back felt terrifying, she said, like any other first day of school, but Radech quickly became comfortable with the campus and her instructors.

She said Black Hawk College was a great environment for learning, and the mix of online and on-campus classes was exactly what worked with her busy schedule.

"If you're ready for a change, do it. If you're ready to further yourself, do it," Radech said. "You never regret getting more education."

Are you ready to start your journey at Black Hawk College? Contact our [advisors](#) to get started!

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