

No matter who you are, Black Hawk College's PaCE program has something to offer you.

PaCE, which stands for [Professional and Continuing Education](#), has served the community for more than 40 years.



Program coordinator Abbey Roodhouse loves the impact PaCE makes. Her job duties include developing, coordinating and promoting a variety of PaCE classes and programs.

"I love that the PaCE Department has a class offering for everyone," she said.

Most of the classes and programs Roodhouse focuses on fall in the areas of community education, language, lifelong learner (designed for those "55 years or better") and youth.

A small sampling of offerings Roodhouse coordinates include art, genealogy, self-defense, beginning beekeeping, floral design, and writing your story.

Coming to PaCE

Roodhouse attended Western Illinois University in Macomb, where she earned a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Arts in law enforcement and justice administration

After graduating, she accepted a probation officer position in the Chicago area. She later took several years off and returned to work when her youngest entered preschool.



Before applying for the Black Hawk College position, she worked for two years as a forensic interviewer. The job involved asking victims questions about crimes.

"I believe that work is very valuable, however, it can be very heavy," she said.

When the BHC job became available, Roodhouse decided to apply since she wanted a change and the description was interesting.

"I just wanted something totally different," she said. "It was a really good fit."

Roodhouse's job duties and volunteer work included coordination duties, and she was already familiar with PaCE before she accepted the job in 2015.

"I would always flip through the schedule when it came," she said.

Roodhouse took a PaCE ballroom dancing class with her husband, and their daughters had participated in youth programming before she started working for PaCE.

Working FOR PaCE

Roodhouse really enjoys the people she interacts with – from students, to instructors, to the organizations the department coordinates with, to her co-workers.

"There are a lot of different courses and programs within the PaCE Department," she said. "Everyone does such a great job coming together to make it all run smoothly and successfully."

PaCE offerings include short-term career programs, continuing education and professional development courses, online options, SAT and ACT prep, arts, crafts and dance. Roodhouse noted there is something for everyone, from elementary school students up to retirees.

Two examples of PaCE's wide appeal come to mind for Roodhouse - a robotics class for students entering first or second grades and a 94-year-old attendee of [CommUniversity](#) who told her how much she enjoyed the classes.



When Roodhouse is not at work, keeping up with her daughters and their activities fills the bulk of her time. She likes golfing with them, listening to live music, reading and being outside.

Her family still enjoys participating in PaCE activities, too. Roodhouse has taken meditation classes, which she really enjoyed.

"Who does not need to learn better ways to de-stress?" she said. "I find it really interesting and beneficial."

Her daughters' PaCE participation includes the Dining Etiquette class, Clay on the Potter's Wheel, College for Kids, and most recently, her oldest taking the SAT Preparation class.

Roodhouse's office features art created by her kids, including many pieces from Clay on the Potter's Wheel. The common theme of the pieces is bright, fun colors.

When her evening schedule allows it, Roodhouse hopes to take PaCE classes in stained glass and sign language in the future.

[Learn more about PaCE and the classes offered.](#)

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