COLLECTIVE VISION for DEPAUL SCPs

INNOVATIVE
FLEXIBLE
AFFORDABLE
SUPPORTIVE
INTELLECTUALLY-DRIVEN
ABOUT THE FUTURE
TARGETED
WHAT WE'RE STRIVING TO ACHIEVE
CAN INCLUDE VALUES
INSPIRING
CHALLENGING
TRANSFORMATIONAL
COLLABORATIVE
PROFESSIONAL
RE-DEFINE OUR DEMOGRAPHIC
MAKE DISTINCTION THROUGH BRANDING
RELEVANCE
LOCAL & GLOBAL IMPACT

Variety of ways to educate
Unique & memorable
About social justice
Students really care

Reimagine Careers
Rethinking Education
Redefining Retirement
Seated aboard a crowded Blue Line train, I peck away at my laptop's keyboard. I muse over how I am writing these very words from here—my CTA mobile office. And, I imagine how very similar my experience is to that of so many of our adult learners who are furthering their education amid incredibly busy lives. Every moment “in between” is a precious opportunity for schoolwork. In between precious hours of sleep and going about the day’s business. In between the obligations of family and work. In between our voluntary service, whether helping our neighbors, our friends, our condominium boards, our congregations, our municipalities, our nonprofit causes—the myriad of ways in which we just “do.”

Sound familiar?

As I write these words, I glance up and notice one of DePaul’s banner ads proclaiming, “Here, We Do.” I smile knowing I’m embodying this message, only the “here” is not at DePaul, but on a CTA train. And I think about how our adult learners regularly invert the slogan. A DePaul Newsline story explains that our marketing team intended the “Here” in this ad campaign to convey “DePaul’s connection to Chicago and the critical role this world-class city plays in the student experience.” In the case of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS), “Here” must be expanded to include a range of places, within and beyond Chicago, where our adult learners are indeed learning and applying what they learn with impact. My commute right now is a case in point: I am heading out to Harper College in Palatine, Ill., to greet two cohorts of our students pursuing their BA degrees in business administration—there, at Harper. In this case, “Here” is a learning ecology that includes a community college in the burbs and the Harper students’ homes, communities and workplaces.

I dwell on these musings to highlight a key reality of our new SCPS, the successor to our beloved School for New Learning (and inheritor of Continuing and Professional Education). Today, more than ever, we are bringing new learning to where our students are—in community colleges, workplaces, communities and, indeed, homes, through modalities that are on-site, online and “HyFlex.” Our on-site program at the Chicago Police Academy, highlighted in one of this issue’s articles, is yet another success story illustrating what we can do here—and yet there.

I met recently with one of our illustrious alumna, the Hon. Anne M. Burke (SCPS ’76), to congratulate her on being appointed as the next chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. As we talked about the changes underway for SCPS, she corrected me: “These are improvements, not changes!” I immediately thought: Who am I to argue with Chief Justice Burke?

Indeed, there is a great lesson here. It’s not that we are changing core elements of our mission; rather, we are reimagining it for new generations of learners in a dynamic world. This perspective has compelled us to rename this newsletter accordingly: Reimaginings. Our longtime adjunct professor Craig Sautter led the founding of our newsletter as Common Knowledge in 1987, selecting a name intended to inspire collective learning to be shared broadly, and to recognize how learning is integrated with everything we do: our work, our play, our community service, our relationships with others.

Here, we build upon this perspective to reimagine learning for adults, who in turn are reimagining themselves as learners—whether currently studying “here” at DePaul, at the police academy, at a partnering community college, at a corporate training site, in an overseas travel course, or online at homes everywhere. We are so very proud of our students, and our alumni wherever you are.

Here, We Do!
Having grown up in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood, Maria Capoccia (SCPS ’93) stayed close to home after high school and worked for a Hispanic social service agency. There she met the two colleagues who would join her in co-founding Mujeres Latinas en Acción, now the oldest social service agency serving the Latinx community in the United States.

“We’re going on 50 years,” says Capoccia about the organization she helped found in 1973.

“Our initial goal was very simple: We wanted a place where women could help other women. While we were working in Pilsen, we saw that there was no place for women to go who needed help of any kind, whether it was from domestic violence or for paying rent,” she says.

While continuing her involvement in the organization, Capoccia soon segued professionally into the corporate world. She took a job at AT&T as a customer service representative.

“I quickly realized that there were other opportunities within AT&T if I paid attention, performed well and understood what was needed to move the business,” she recalls.

But after several years she hit the proverbial wall.

“I was fairly successful at AT&T, and I had several promotions. But I realized that I wasn’t going to get any further unless I had my college degree. And so one day I woke up and said, ‘I just have to do this,’” she says.

In her 30s at the time, she began exploring different programs. DePaul’s School for New Learning (now the School of Continuing and Professional Studies) stood out.

“The idea of going to a traditional college was not appealing to me because of my age. And the fact that I had this corporate experience and had traveled extensively meant that I was a full-fledged adult, which differentiated me from [traditional] college students,” she says.

Through word of mouth, Capoccia found out about DePaul.

“It was such a positive experience for me,” she recalls. “The faculty and other students were wonderful, and I was able to take classes in areas that I was genuinely interested in, not just because it was a requirement.”

After she received her BA, Capoccia’s career took off. By 2000, she was vice president of sales at AT&T. A stint for AT&T International sent her abroad for a few years. After retiring in 2007, she continued working, initially as a nonprofit consultant, before becoming policy director for Sheila Simon, then Illinois lieutenant governor.

But she hasn’t forgotten DePaul.

Capoccia decided to include a bequest in her estate plan to create the Maria C. Capoccia–Mujeres Latinas en Acción Latina Leadership Endowed Scholarship to provide recognition and financial assistance to SCPS students. Consideration will be given to students of Latinx and Hispanic origin. In 2018, 20% of the total SCPS student population identified as Hispanic/Latinx, according to DePaul’s institutional research.

“I was the first one in my family to graduate from college with a BA,” she says. “I know how difficult it can be, especially for women, to pursue their education. So I’m happy to do whatever I can to ease that burden a little, knowing how important education is.”
As assistant director of Ingalls Same Day Surgery in Tinley Park, Ill., Andrey Ibragimov oversees a lot of moving parts.

“I always gravitate toward lean thinking,” says Ibragimov, who completed DePaul’s Six Sigma Green Belt certificate program, a learning process improvement methodology that uses a set of statistical, analytical and problem-solving tools and techniques.

DePaul offers a host of continuing education programs for adult students through the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS). From financial planning and human resources to law and marketing communications, adult learners can access the latest knowledge and practical insights to enhance their professional development and advance their careers.

“It’s an exciting time for continuing and professional education,” says SCPS Assistant Dean Hap Bryant. “More than ever, professionals and employers are seeing the value of professional development training, whether that’s in certificates or corporate training or professional certifications. More recently, there has been a shift toward integrating that training through certifications into degree programs. DePaul has emerged as a natural leader in this marketplace.”

Ibragimov seized the opportunity to apply what he learned after his team approached him with a problem. “I told them to step back and re-examine the problem. We then created a process map and were able to tackle the problem from a strategic approach. What Six Sigma did was give me a discipline for resisting a quick fix. I’m actually listening at the root of the problem and creating a sustainable solution,” he says.

Beyond the knowledge gained from the certificate program, Ibragimov also gained valuable insight from faculty and co-workers. “Our group was really fantastic. We worked closely on projects, and the results were eye-opening. Since there were people from all different fields, from retail and health care to manufacturing,

SCPS’s continuing education programs include a range of offerings across disciplines, including certificates in communication, education, finance, law and the social sciences. To learn about current offerings, visit SCPS’s website: bit.ly/SCPS_cpe

THE POWER OF SIX SIGMA

For Ibragimov, a registered nurse, DePaul’s 16-week Six Sigma certificate stood out.

“I really wanted to formalize my training and continue to grow and learn. I knew that DePaul offers a reputable program in a short time frame and is conveniently located downtown,” he says.

The knowledge he gained from the program was immediately transferable. “If you follow the methodology, it really gives you a good way of tackling your projects, big or small. It gives you the techniques and tools to achieve maximum results,” he says.
Continuing Professional Education

“Professionals and employers are seeing the value of professional development training ... DePaul has emerged as a natural leader in this marketplace.”

–Hap Bryant

we were given a diverse range of perspectives and different approaches, which was very valuable,” he says.

GETTING AHEAD IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

After 35 years at the Northern Trust Corporation in the technology department, Francine Minter found herself unemployed after her team’s entire function was outsourced to India. Fortunately, she was contacted by Operation Able, an organization that connects Chicagoans to education and job training. She was told that because of her situation, she was eligible for tuition reimbursement for professional training.

“I always had an interest in financial planning. Since I did not want to go back into technology, I decided to pursue something different,” Minter says. She had received a telecommunications certificate from DePaul while working for Northern Trust, so she decided to return to SCPS to pursue the financial planning certificate program. When she finishes the course, she will have the educational grounding required by the CFP Board to sit for the CFP® Certification Examination.

Minter is enthusiastic about her educational experience.

“ ‘I think it’s a great program. It is very intensive. I especially enjoyed the layered program on taxes,” she says.

As for her future, Minter is still deciding. But one thing is certain: a certificate from DePaul paves the way for a variety of professional options.

“Yes once you get the certificate, you’re eligible to work in either the insurance industry or the financial industry, which makes me feel better about my options,” she says.
Daniel Gonzalez is on a quest for knowledge.

The 35-year-old Chicago police officer, who is pursuing his BA through SCPS, in partnership with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the Chicago Police Department, credits DePaul with helping him pursue his love of learning.

“Everyone says you can’t stop learning, which I am realizing is really true, especially now that I’m at DePaul,” says Gonzalez, who completes the program this year.

Gonzalez grew up in the Gage Park neighborhood of Chicago, one of four children of parents who were born in Mexico.

After high school, he started working as an automotive technician. It didn’t take long for him to pursue welder and electrician certifications, which enabled him to become a vehicle upfitter. While working on police vehicles for the city, he started interacting with Chicago cops. He found himself bitten by the law enforcement bug.

“I kind of got my foot in the water by talking with other people in law enforcement and hearing their stories,” he says.

In 2010, Gonzalez began working as a correctional officer at Cook County Jail. A couple of years later, he decided he wanted to apply for a supervisory position within the jail or a patrol position outside of the jail. The only catch was that he needed an associate degree.

“That is actually when I realized that a school diploma is important,” he says.

In 2015, he received his associate degree from Moraine Valley Community College and realized his ambition to become a patrol officer. A year later, he qualified as a Chicago police officer. These days, he works the 12th District, a broad stretch on the southwest side of the city.

“I like that every day is not the same,” says Gonzalez about a beat that includes police investigations to community interactions.

Through a fellow officer who was in the first SCPS/FOP cohort, Gonzalez heard about the DePaul program.

It’s been a demanding two years, but Gonzalez has been able to translate so much of what he’s learned in the classroom to his work on the street—from HR protocols to project management skills.

He’s also learned the importance of self-care.

“One thing we learned that has really stuck with me is that if you fall down and hurt your knee, you go to the doctor. But when a police officer suffers traumatic incidents, not many go to a doctor or talk about it. As police officers, we have to remind ourselves that we are human beings first,” he says.

In the meantime, Gonzalez is grateful to DePaul for his unique educational experience.

“I take pride in being a DePaul student,” he says. “Not only has it helped me personally, but it’s helped me be a better police officer and given me a bigger network where we can help each other.”
For Catherine Marienau, who hung up her DePaul shingle after 36 years as a professor at SCPS, retirement has opened up a host of new possibilities.

“My entire career has been working with adult learners and in innovative degree programs,” she says. Her roles have included everything from being associate dean and designing the Master of Arts in Applied Professional Studies (MAAPS) program to directing the Master of Arts in Educating Adults program. She was also the recipient of the 2019 Via Sapientiae award, DePaul’s highest honor.

Since leaving DePaul, Marienau has joined the podcast revolution with “Women Over 70: Aging Reimagined,” produced and created with Gail Zelitzky (SCPS ’15), a former MAAPS student of hers. The idea emerged from their ongoing conversations about the issues women continue to face as they age. “She’s 77, and I was approaching 70. We thought, ‘There’s a lot of us out here—women who are in their 70s and 80s and 90s, who are still active and leading lives with purpose, who want to continue to make a difference in important ways and have fun along the way,’” she says. (Check it out: womenover70.com.)

Marienau is also writing books. Her latest is on integrative healing approaches for postmenopausal women, which she’s writing with a physician. And she’s becoming more involved in the end-of-life choices movement. Marienau will return to SCPS in winter 2020 as adjunct faculty to teach a graduate liberal learning seminar. But she’s still finding some time for travel. “It’s all been very exciting,” she says.

Fred Wellisch was a criminal defense attorney in Chicago when he began as an adjunct professor at SCPS in 1998. He was appointed to the full-time faculty in 2000. During his two decades at DePaul, he taught subjects ranging from constitutional law to drama and theatre classes, because he is also an actor.

Retirement has pushed him to “rebalance and decide where I want to put my priorities,” he says.

But theatre has remained a constant. Last summer, he performed in the play “Other Desert Cities” at the Dunes Summer Theatre in Michigan City, Ind. Wellisch and his wife, also an attorney, are active volunteers for the National Immigrant Justice Center. In the fall, they went to El Paso, Texas, to work with detainees to prepare them for asylum interviews.

In addition to taking adult enrichment courses on everything from 17th-century Dutch art and history to Native American history since 1890, he’s thinking of teaching again. “It would be interesting to see how, having taught adults in a credit-bearing setting, it would be to teach a very similar subject for adults who are just going for their own enrichment.”

Gabriele Strohschen retired after 16 years at SCPS, but like her colleagues, she hasn’t left the school’s mission behind.

Born in Berlin, she initially ran a tutoring center for Mexican immigrants in suburban Chicago before joining SCPS faculty in 2003. As director of the graduate division, she was involved in the school’s first international, campus-based graduate program in Thailand. She also played a leading role in the creation of the master’s in educating adults program.

“I wholeheartedly believe in the mission of DePaul. I also loved [SCPS] for the way social justice and service were combined with a competence-based program,” she says.

Since retiring, Strohschen has been organizing her papers from her extensive travel to places like Afghanistan and Kenya to research and set up adult-learning programs. She’s also building new initiatives for social justice and adult education.

Life for her is a wide-open road. “Right now, my focus is doing whatever I can do through writing, encouragement, and participation in activities, to ‘do good well’ in our world,” she says.
March of the Socks is back again! When you make a gift of $25 or more during the month of March, we’ll say “thank you” with a pair of custom DePaul socks!*

Your gift to DePaul University demonstrates your belief in our mission, our students and our community. Make your gift of $25 or more at give.depaul.edu/socks and direct it to any part of DePaul you care about most.

*While supplies last!