

First bachelor's degree-completion program at BC3 @ Brockway to benefit business students

April 5, 2018

(Brockway, PA) A 24-year business owner says her workplaces have benefited greatly from her studies as a current BC3 @ Brockway business management student and will capitalize on the site's inaugural bachelor's degree-completion program set to debut this summer.

Graduates of BC3 @ Brockway's business administration, business management and office administration-executive associate-degree programs will be able to earn an additional 33 to 38 credits at BC3 @ Brockway, and their final 30 online from St. Francis University, to attain a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership from St. Francis.

St. Francis ranks No. 18 in U.S. News & World Report's 2018 survey of the Top 100 northern four-year schools in the United States. BC3 ranks No. 1 among Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges in back-to-back surveys conducted by Schools.com, most recently as of October.

Tuition and fees for the additional 33 to 38 BC3 credits to be applied toward the bachelor's degree would reflect costs of attending BC3, which is less expensive than 41 regional universities and colleges, according to the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard.

Students can learn more about the degree-completion partnership at BC3 @ Brockway's open house, scheduled for 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. April 24.

BC3 program "absolutely opened my eyes"

Like 75 percent of BC3 graduates, Michelle Moore, 50, of Brockway, expects to graduate debt-free in December – with associate degrees in business management and in accounting – and pursue the bachelor's degree in organizational leadership through BC3 @ Brockway and St. Francis.

"I've learned a lot about business and about analyzing your business, your strengths, your weaknesses, your opportunities and your threats," Moore said of her classes at BC3 @ Brockway.



BC3 @ Brockway student Michelle Moore, 50, expects to pursue a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership through BC3 @ Brockway and St. Francis.

The lifelong Brockway resident and first-time college student has co-owned with her husband Brockway businesses 219 Hair Care, Ken Moore Busing and J&M Auto Service for more than 20 years.

“I thought I knew so much,” she said. “But when I went to BC3 @ Brockway, all of the teachers had enough practical experience to give us great simulations and great classroom projects that taught you a lot more than just bookwork.

“It absolutely opened my eyes.”

Moore said she can complete her St. Francis bachelor’s degree online from her home or from computer labs at BC3 @ Brockway, which is two miles from her residence.

“There was not a bit of hesitation,” Moore said of her decision to pursue the bachelor’s degree program. “I knew it was something that I was absolutely going to do. I instantly decided to schedule my classes to head toward that degree because I thought it was going to be something that wasn’t possible. When you are 50, and you have a chance right in your backyard to get a four-year degree, and to be able to finish the rest of it online, that’s pretty convenient.”

“I have to go somewhere else” obstacle removed, BC3 administrator says

After her daughters left Brockway to attend and live at separate Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education universities, Moore decided in the summer of 2015 to take her first college course – “to get my feet wet,” she said – in employee training and development at BC3 @ Brockway.

“I know a lot of people my age are very afraid of going back to school,” Moore said. “Nothing ventured, nothing gained. If you don’t try it, you might always have regrets.”

Among the courses BC3 @ Brockway graduates can pursue from BC3 to meet the 33 to 38 additional credits and apply toward their St. Francis bachelor’s degree are those in accounting, algebra, economics, English literature, philosophy, political science, sociology or psychology, and 12 free electives.

Each class would be offered in a traditional classroom setting at BC3 @ Brockway, online or as a hybrid.

BC3 @ Brockway students will be able to transfer up to 98 BC3 credits to St. Francis. Sixty credits are required to attain a degree in business administration from BC3 @ Brockway; 63 in business management and 65 in office administration-executive. Only those BC3 courses in which a student earned a grade of C or higher will transfer to St. Francis.

“Those students were going to have to find a destination after BC3,” said Robert Morris, BC3’s dean of admissions. “They were going to have to go somewhere. What we have done is to provide them with an opportunity to earn additional credits through BC3 at our Brockway site and then finish online with St. Francis. It takes away that ‘I have to go somewhere else’ obstacle.”

“A degree in organizational leadership is a great fit for somebody who is already in a company at some level, and they need a bachelor’s degree to be qualified for that next level or promotion. There are a lot of middle managers who have only an associate degree or maybe don’t have any degree. This is a great overall business degree that makes you attractive in any area of a business. It will give them skills they need to succeed and move up the ladder.”

Degree prepares students to be “change agents,” St. Francis leader says

Sixteen BC3 @ Brockway students are currently enrolled in the site’s business administration, business management and office administration-executive programs, according to Sharla Anke, BC3’s assistant dean of institutional research. Nineteen have graduated from BC3 in those programs since BC3 @ Brockway opened in fall 2013, Anke said.

The 30 credits to be taken online from St. Francis will result from classes in faith and Franciscanism, international management, organizational behavior, language, finance, production-operations management, strategic management, a free elective and two courses in quantitative budget analysis.

A degree in organizational leadership prepares students to enter the business world, said Dr. Julie Barris, associate dean of adult degree and continuing studies, and career services, at St. Francis.

“It prepares those students to be change agents,” Barris said. “To become those leaders and managers who are going to excel and help their businesses excel. And to help employees within the organization to be successful as well.”

The program was designed for the work-experienced adult with prior college-level coursework and will benefit students in, among other fields, sales, human resources, management or assistant management, or as account executives, Barris said.

“Students can come into our program part time or full time,” Barris said. “So it is really at whatever pace they are able to finish those last 10 classes.”

“BC3 makes it happen,” college president says

The most important aspect of the degree-completion program, said Jill Martin Rend, BC3 @ Brockway director, “is that we keep students here in our communities and in our jobs. We don’t

have a large number of people in our area who have bachelor's degrees. This will help students be able to achieve that degree.”

According to the most recent report from the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of those 25 or older living in BC3 @ Brockway's service area and holding a bachelor's degree is 20.9 in Clarion County; 13.2 in Clearfield County; 17.8 in Elk County and 14.8 in Jefferson County, home of BC3 @ Brockway.

Nearly 30 percent of Pennsylvanians age 25 or older hold bachelor's degrees, according to the Census Bureau report.

Clearfield ranks No. 36 in population among Pennsylvania's 67 counties, according to US-Places.com, followed by Jefferson (No. 50); Clarion (No. 57); and Elk (No. 59).

“This is exciting news for the students and communities we serve at BC3 @ Brockway,” said Dr. Nicholas Neupauer, BC3 president. “This is yet another example of how BC3 provides affordable, accessible and quality educational offerings. BC3 @ Brockway has already been successful. Add in our nursing program, along with this incredible bachelor's degree partnership with St. Francis University, and it's easy to understand why we are the No. 1 community college in the commonwealth for two consecutive rankings.”

As of this fall, BC3 @ Brockway will be the only BC3 location other than the college's main campus to offer an associate of applied science degree in registered nursing and its own bachelor's degree-completion program.

“BC3 makes it happen,” Neupauer said. “We are responsive, agile and nimble, and provide unique collaborations and partnerships to benefit our students and communities.”

Added Martin Rend: “We are looking at what the community needs, and responding to those needs.”

BC3, St. Francis share high rankings

Founded in 1847, St. Francis is the oldest Catholic-Franciscan college in United States and whose U.S. News and World Report ranking is based on widely accepted indicators of excellence that include graduation and retention rates, reputation and student selectivity.

Other regions in U.S. News & World Report's surveys are South, Midwest and West.

St. Francis trailed among Pennsylvania schools in the survey only the University of Scranton and St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia. Its ranking was higher than Pennsylvania schools such as Lebanon Valley College, the state's No. 4 finisher and the overall No. 24, and LaSalle, Gannon, Mercyhurst, West Chester, Chatham, Geneva, Slippery Rock, York and Waynesburg.

Schools.com, which ranked BC3 as No. 1 in October and for the second consecutive time since late 2015, used a five-point scale in rating each of the 14 Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges' members in categories that included percentage of students enrolled in distance education, total cost of attendance, student-to-faculty ratio and number of transfer agreements with other institutions in Pennsylvania.

BC3 @ Brockway, Pennsylvania's only community college location north of Interstate 80 for a 268-mile stretch, opened in fall 2013. It offers associate of applied science degree programs in business management and office administration-executive; associate of arts degree programs in early childhood education, general studies, psychology and social work; and an associate of science degree program in business administration.

Those who attend BC3 @ Brockway may also be eligible for the Varischetti Family Scholarship for five semesters.

BC3's main campus offers bachelor's degree completion programs in nursing, and in communications/public relations from Chatham University; in accounting, from Clarion University; in psychology and, as of this fall, in information technology, from La Roche College; and in administration of justice, from the University of Pittsburgh. BC3 students can also transfer more than 90 credits toward a bachelor's degree in business administration from Franklin University, with classes available online and in a traditional classroom setting on BC3's main campus.