

# news

## Education Affiliates Proudly Announces 2017 Circle of Excellence Award Winners

*Please join me in congratulating the EA Class of 2017 Circle Of Excellence winners!*

*My 'A-ha!' moment today was reading these diverse and inspiring bios from people who truly enjoy what they do and are very good at it.*

*We all are changing people's lives every day!*

*- Duncan Anderson*

### Campus President

Albert McLaughlin ..... Lawrenceville  
Brian Owen ..... Salt Lake City  
John Estorge ..... Foley  
Mark Williams ..... Atlanta  
David Smith ..... Staten Island

### Dean of Education

Dr. Joseph Lucero ..... Landover  
Lisa Mays-Rudasill ..... Centerville  
Cindy Casciano ..... Essington  
Christopher Jones ..... Scranton  
Vanessa Lausch ..... Salt Lake City

### Registrar

Alissa Champ ..... ASC-Baltimore  
Patti Howarth ..... Orange Park  
Wendy Bandy ..... Cookeville  
Flor Ralda ..... Houston North  
Michael Foster ..... Birmingham

### LRC Manager

Judy Lee ..... Staten Island  
Lynn Ford ..... Indianapolis  
J. Erik Martin ..... Columbia  
Georgen Charnes ..... Port St. Lucie

### Dean of Nursing

Darlene Brown ..... Phoenix  
Joyce Errico ..... Orange Park  
Yvette Spees ..... Columbia

### Career Services Director

Melissa Espinoza ..... Denver College of Nursing  
Marc Stone ..... Salt Lake City  
Cynthia Stephenson ..... Cookeville  
Diane McQuillan ..... ASCL  
Ruth-Ann Duren ..... Port St. Lucie  
David Cross ..... Indianapolis

### Director of Financial Aid

Nayamka Ward ..... Staten Island  
Silvana Tarca ..... Smyrna  
Rachel Karmon ..... Centerville  
Christine Revill ..... Orange Park  
Geri Reichmuth ..... Denver College of Nursing  
Don Wood ..... Grand Prairie

### Director of Admissions

Sally Hinck ..... Salt Lake City  
Anna Pearson ..... Montgomery  
Dionna Jones ..... Indianapolis  
Margie Carter Fiasco ..... Pensacola  
Bobby Johns ..... Orange Park  
Detriah Tyler ..... Lawrenceville

### Business Office Manager

Cindy Remack ..... Pittsburgh  
Renee McMillin ..... Denver College of Nursing  
Jeremy Gibson ..... Montgomery  
Sharon Dietz ..... Smyrna  
Teri Molina ..... Cutler Bay



## Albert McLaughlin

Albert “Al” McLaughlin is campus president of the Fortis Institute in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. Before he started working for EA two and a half years ago, Al had been in the for-profit education field since 2004, working primarily in admissions and campus operations. Al has a bachelor’s degree and a master’s in business administration. The opportunity to help students improve their lives is what motivates him to come to work every day. He says he has A-HA! moments almost every day on the job as he observes the amazing “grit and determination” of Fortis students. Al says he is a proponent of the down-to-business model of for-profit educational institutions: “Give us a year, and we’ll change your life.” A key ingredient in the “secret sauce” of his personal success is inclusive decision-making, and his daily work habits center on thoughtful, data-driven action in collaboration with others. “Be humble,” he advises, “and be a sponge.” Al is married with three kids ages 13, 11 and 8, and he spends much of his free time focused on their participation in sports and other activities.



## John Estorge

John Estorge is campus president of Fortis College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He previously worked for Miller-Motte College as associate campus director, which prepared him for his position at Fortis by clarifying how multiple college departments can work together to deliver the best outcomes for students.

John has a bachelor’s degree from Louisiana State University and a master’s in divinity from Reformed Theological Seminary. He is now in the dissertation phase of the PhD program for organizational leadership at Regent University. John says his A-HA! moments at Fortis come from helping students overcome obstacles: “Working with our student population is a mission and a calling. Not everyone is cut out for what we do. Our students need extra attention, empathy, accountability and structure to succeed.” He says his successful work habits include setting daily and weekly operational priorities. He also credits his success to hiring “not just talented people, but good people who will take responsibility for their departments.” John is married with three kids: Anna Claire (22), Ben (20) and Molly (16). His hobbies include gym workouts six days a week.



## Brian Owen

Brian Owen is campus president of Fortis College in Salt Lake City, Utah. Brian previously owned a small business and served as a dean of education, and he cites business ownership as good preparation for anticipating campus needs and protecting the interests of employees.

Brian has a chiropractic doctorate degree, and his motivation to go to work every day is what he calls “searching out success.” Brian says his A-HA! revelations at Fortis is the futility of underestimating the school’s students and staff: “When given the opportunity to better themselves, people will find a way.” Brian advises others in his field “to do two things: hire smart people, let them be smart.” His successful every day approach to work is a failure-resistant practice of finding inspired people who are well suited for their work. Brian is married with three children, ages 18, 15 and 10. He spends the bulk of his time free time practicing baseball with his 10-year-old son.



## Mark Williams

Mark Williams started as campus president of Fortis College in Smyrna, Georgia in February 2017 and brought 17 years of prior operations-management experience in proprietary education. His previous operating titles have ranged from campus president and regional vice president to manager of university

admissions and regional corporate liaison. “I am passionate about leading from the front,” Mark says. “I believe I have to model the behaviors I expect others to exemplify.” Mark graduated University of Akron (Ohio) with a bachelor’s degree in business and organizational communication, and he earned a master’s degree in management with a concentration in organizational leadership and change management at Colorado Technical University. Mark says his experience reveals that “it is important to see and expect the best in others, especially our students.” He promotes Fortis as a mission-based educational alternative: “Our goal is graduates.” Mark is married with a 10-year-old daughter, and he enjoys reading and exercise.



## David Smith

David Smith is president of the St. Paul's campus in Staten Island, New York. Before joining EA a year ago, David held several administrative positions at educational institutions, including director of education at SAE Institute in Manhattan, New York, and center dean at DeVry College of New York in Manhattan.



Asked how prior experience prepared him to be a campus president, David described what the job truly entails: "From plumbing to accounting, sales to public speaking, everything is part of the job. And you are never fully prepared. He earned a bachelor's degree at Cornell University School of Arts and Sciences in Ithaca, New York; a master's in divinity at Southern Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and a master's degree in science/teaching at PACE University in Manhattan. David says he is successful because he keeps his eyes and his door open. David is married with a 14-year-old daughter. He plays trumpet in a community band, sings as a member of his church choir, and plays golf "poorly but with great joy."

## Lisa Mays-Rudasill

Lisa Mays-Rudasill serves as dean of education at Fortis College in Centerville, Ohio. Before she joined EA a year and a half ago, Lisa worked 14 years as a dean of academic affairs and five years as a regional vice president for academics. Lisa has a master's



degree in education. She says her background prepared her well for Fortis: "It allowed me to have a continued focus on academics and quality standards along with effective teaching strategies for faculty." Her daily motivators are students and faculty. Lisa cites quality education and dedicated faculty as the distinguishing characteristics of Fortis. She says continued development is the "secret sauce" of her personal success. Staying focused is essential to her everyday approach to work. Lisa is married and has four dogs and one cat.

## Dr. Joseph Lucero

Joseph Lucero is dean of education at Fortis College in Landover, Maryland. Before joining EA two years ago, Joseph served as academic dean at Virginia College, director of academic advising at Kaplan University, and both director of faculty operations and director



or academic operations at Colorado Technical University. His previous experience allowed him to develop his leadership style and better understand the relationship between academics and operations. Joseph graduated Argosy University with a doctorate in education, Keller Graduate School of Management with an MBA and Roosevelt University with a master's degree in clinical psychology. He says his biggest A-HA! moments at Fortis include realizing the students and "how much they need our support and appropriate role models." Joseph credits his personal success to building interpersonal relationships and what he calls "the practice of servant leadership ... I focus on the success of others." Joseph is an amateur boxer with four wins and one loss, and he is a successful boxing coach and trainer.

## Cindy Casciano

Cindy Casciano, director of education at the All-State Career campus in Essington, Pennsylvania, appreciates the value of giving students a second chance to succeed. "We had a student go from conduct probation to academic excellence," Cindy says. "If



we hadn't given her a second chance and provided direction on how to improve, she never would have had the opportunity to grow and learn." Cindy, who has a bachelor's degree in English and secondary education, says the opportunity to help faculty develop their instructional skills is part of her motivation for coming to work each day. Cindy promotes All-Star as a full-spectrum educational alternative: "Not only do we instill in students the technical ability but also the professional and attitudinal skills to succeed. You will not get this level of service at a traditional school setting." Team development is the "secret sauce" of her success and her daily approach to work is an effort to balance leadership, mentorship and management. Cindy is married, shares her home with three English Springer spaniels, and enjoys training them and spending time with them.

## Christopher Jones

Christopher Jones is director of education at Fortis Institute in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Christopher joined EA 18 years ago after getting experience as an adjunct instructor. Students' success is what motivates him daily, Christopher says, and his favorite experience at Fortis Institute is "seeing their faces when they graduate." For-profit schools are a good fit for many students, but every student should "look at every option before they make a decision," he says. Honesty is his best policy: Christopher says the "secret sauce" of his personal success is frank talk: "Don't hold back, tell it like it is." His favorite quote is, "No Excuses." That quote often is applicable to his way of reminding students that many small steps lead to the big step of graduation. Christopher is married with one child.



## Alissa Champ

Alissa Champ serves as registrar at the All-State Career campus in Baltimore, Maryland. She started working for EA four years ago. Her educational background includes graduating the medical assisting program at All-State Career and earning an associate degree at Community College of Baltimore. Alissa

draws daily motivation from responsibility for her two daughters and opportunities to help students. She says the for-profit educational model at Fortis puts students at the center of the school's attention: "Our entire model is built on them obtaining viable employment," she says. Her everyday approach to work is meticulous – "I am a little bit of a perfectionist," she confesses – and she credits dedication and hard work for her personal success. Alissa is married with a four-year-old daughter and a three-month-old daughter. Her family shares their home with a Siberian Husky, and her hobbies include drawing, painting, anything artsy.



## Vanessa Lausch

Vanessa Lausch is dean of education at Fortis College in Salt Lake City, Utah. She began working at EA six years ago and brought valuable experience as a high school teacher who learned lifelong lessons about how to engage and motivate students.

Vanessa also ran an online business that taught her about customer satisfaction. She graduated the University of Utah with a master's degree in teaching and learning and a bachelor's in history. Vanessa draws daily on-the-job motivation from her students and colleagues at what she calls a "home away from home" at the Salt Lake City campus of Fortis. As a graduate of a traditional university system, Vanessa says her collegiate path was a luxury not every student can afford: "They need focused education that will provide them with the skills to immediately enter the work force in a defined career path. Vanessa says her everyday approach to work is to "keep my perspective focused outward" and attend to the needs of others. Vanessa is married with two children ages 11 and 7 and shares her home with a cat. She loves her local community theater and Utah's natural beauty.



## Patti Howarth

Patti Howarth serves as senior registrar at Fortis College in Orange Park, Florida. She has worked for EA for more than 14 years. Her career journey began with her first job in the education field at the graduate admissions office of the University of Georgia. Patti subsequently worked as a registrar at the Fortis campus

in Jacksonville, Florida, and she has worked at the nearby Orange Park campus since 2006. She draws motivation daily from the people she works with. "We are like family, which I think is quite rare in most working environments," says Patti. Her A-HA! experiences include a graduating student expressing deep gratitude for her administrative support when he first enrolled at Fortis. Her everyday approach to work emphasizes multi-tasking, which also applies to her personal life. Patti enjoys watching football, basketball, and tennis and enjoys going to movies. She regularly visits a sister who lives in the North Georgia mountains. Patti is married with an adult daughter who is raising two adopted children with her husband.



## Wendy Bandy

Wendy Bandy serves as registrar at Fortis Institute in Cookeville, Tennessee, where she has worked for 16 years. Her previous experience involved child care, customer service and returning to college. Wendy has a special connection with older students. “While I was attending evening classes with other adult learners in my community,” she recalls, “I began to better understand how difficult it can be to return to school at what many classify as a ‘later age.’” Wendy says that experience led her on a career journey to “make a difference in the lives of students returning to school.” Among her greatest rewards are student success stories at all ages. Wendy says she has an A-HA! moment every time she sees students “become graduates and walk across the stage at their graduation ceremony,” confident that they have a rewarding career ahead. “The student is prepared for what’s ahead.” Her everyday work habits center on the benefits of a positive attitude and the basics of customer service. If there is a secret to Wendy’s success, it is her commitment to make a positive difference in students’ lives and their communities. She is married, and her family includes three nephews and a niece. She and her husband share her home with a rescue puppy named Beau Bandy.



## Michael Foster

Michael Foster is senior registrar at the Fortis Institute in Birmingham, Alabama. Michael says he became familiar with his line of work before he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a minor in Spanish: “I did part-time work as a student worker in my university’s registrar office, and I had a weird fascination with it.” The challenge of his position and his love of the college environment motivate Michael daily. He says his A-HA! moments happen when Fortis students graduate and start their careers: Some students graduate and then I find out they suddenly make more money than some of us! That’s always rewarding.” Michael says the keys to his personal success include staying organized, being positive and paying attention to detail. He is married and loves to take walks, visit zoos, travel to new cities, and binge-watch Netflix series.



## Flor Ralda

Flor Ralda serves as registrar at the north campus of Fortis Institute in Houston, Texas. Flor joined EA 10 years and 10 months ago. She previously worked as a receptionist and registrar at Interactive Learning Systems, where she maintained student records. Flor cites “the team work environment” as one of her main motivations to come to work every day at Fortis Institute, Houston North. Her peak professional experience is watching students face obstacles and hardships “but they still accomplish their goals and walk across that stage and graduate. It’s a great feeling!” Flor says the “secret sauce” of her personal success is a blend of love, hard work and good communication, and she approaches her workplace with “a positive attitude and a big smile every day.” She is a single mother with three kids, including one enrolled in the medical assisting program at Fortis Institute. Flor also has a dog and enjoys working out.



## Judy Lee

Judy A. Lee serves as LRC (learning resource center) manager at St. Paul’s School of Nursing campus in Staten Island, New York. She has worked for EA for five years. Her prior experience as a solo librarian gave Judy the ability to deal with a wide range of people and to conquer multiple tasks at the same time. She has a master’s degree in library science and an MBA in marketing. Her on-the-job A-HA! moments happen when students happily discover the full range of services available to them at St. Paul’s. Judy says the school has another competitive advantage in terms of time and tuition: “Our students do not have to take the prerequisites that are required by other colleges.” She is a compassionate listener who says she embraces each new day as “a chance to do even better than the day before.” Judy has been a widow for seven years. She has a 26-year-old daughter, Jamie.



## Lynn Ford

Lynn Ford serves as learning resource center manager at Fortis College in Indianapolis, Indiana. She previously worked at the University of Iowa as a graduate assistant at the Materials and Learning Center, College of Education, and student library assistant at the university's Hardin Library for Medical Sciences.



She graduated the University of Iowa in 2015 with a master's degree in library and information science and Brigham Young University in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in general studies. Lynn says the opportunity to work with students motivates her daily: "Working with students is very fulfilling. Every day is different, so I'm never bored." She cites her enthusiasm and approachability as the "secret sauce" of her personal success. Lynn says students' comprehension of difficult course material motivates her to come to work each day: "It's always exciting to see 'the light come on' when they understand a concept that they've struggled with." Lynn is married with four adult children and eight grandchildren. In her spare time, she enjoys knitting, reading, growing house plants, using social media, and solving crosswords and other puzzles.

## Georgen Charnes

Georgen Charnes is LRC manager and hybrid coordinator at Fortis Institute in Port St. Lucie, Florida, and she is a graduate of a state university who appreciates smaller schools like Fortis.

"The local community college is cheaper," she says, "but it has a two-year waiting list for its nursing program." She



graduated the University of Kentucky with a bachelor's degree in anthropology and two master's degrees. "Once you're enrolled in a state college or university, you're on your own," Georgen says. "Our students are helped every step of the way. If they're absent, we text them. If they miss an assignment, we call them." The "secret sauce" of her success, she says, is appreciating that, in many cases, "students' lives are complicated. Sometimes you can't help them, but sometimes you can." Her approach to work? "Think of every day as a fresh start," Georgen says. She has a 13-year-old daughter and shares her home with two cats and a golden doodle, and she enjoys reading, listening to podcasts, and playing World of Warcraft.

## J. Erik Martin

Erik Martin, the LRC manager at Fortis College in Columbia, South Carolina, previously worked as an adjunct professor at a career college. He says his teaching background gave him "a better understanding of what our instructors are going through every day." Erik has a master's degree in library and information science and bachelor's in information technology. He promotes the focus of Fortis programs because "there are no extraneous classes." Erik also extols the rigor of Fortis programs: "There's much more to research than using Google." He credits his personal success by focusing on the broad mission of Fortis: "We're creating not just graduates but lifelong learners." His everyday approach to work emphasizes collaboration. Erik says he tries to "lend a hand with everything. There's no such thing as 'not my job.'"



## Darlene Brown

Darlene Brown is director of nursing (DON) at Fortis College in Phoenix, Arizona. She previously worked as an emergency room staff nurse in Appleton, Wisconsin, for seven years and in Las Vegas, Nevada, for five. Darlene's prior experience also includes serving six years as medical surgery lead faculty at College of Southern Nevada.



She graduated the University of Las Vegas with a master's degree and Bellin College of Nursing with a bachelor's degree. Darlene, who joined EA five years ago and taught in a community college system, says she particularly enjoys the relatively low student-teacher ratio at Fortis: "In the community system it was not uncommon for me to have 100 students in a course, compared to 25" at the most in a Fortis course. Darlene credits her personal success largely to her practice of looking for ways to "build the student up to meet your standards." She has seven step-children, seven step-grandchildren and four step-great grandchildren.

## Joyce Errico

Joyce Errico, dean of nursing at Fortis College in Orange Park, Florida, says the personal touch distinguishes Fortis from other schools. “Our students are not a number but rather a future nurse who needs guidance, support and sometimes a shoulder to cry on.” Before she joined EA nearly five years ago, Joyce was director of nursing for an associate degree and the practical nursing program at another proprietary school in Florida. Her previous positions also include assistant director of nursing for a 500-bed acute care hospital in New Jersey. Joyce graduated Seton Hall University with a bachelor’s degree in nursing and a master’s degree in nursing education. One of the motivations for her to come to work each day is an array of “community service projects in which our student nurse association and campus participate.” Her A-HA! moments at Fortis include sharing the joy of nursing students who give their first injection without their hands shaking. She advises others in her line of work to be both kind and firm, and “always have a box of chocolates on your desk for students and faculty feeling overwhelmed.” Joyce is married with two sons, Andrew and Christopher, and two step-sons, Michael and Marc, plus three grandchildren. She shares her home with two cats, Coco and Angel, and enjoys swimming, league bowling and traveling.



## Yvette Spees

Yvette Spees, dean of nursing at Fortis College in Columbia, South Carolina, started the first practical nursing program in the state for another proprietary college. After starting that program in Greenville, she went on to start two other practical nursing programs in Charleston and Columbia. Yvette worked for 10 and a half years for her previous proprietary college as director of the practical nursing program before she joined EA three years ago. She graduated Clemson University with a master’s degree in nursing and Cleveland State University with a bachelor’s in nursing. She says her A-HA! experiences happen “when I see students who have been struggling finally get to the point where they get it.” Yvette believes there is a need for both proprietary education and traditional university program, but she says, “our programs are better suited for those students who need more personal attention in order to succeed.” Yvette says her “secret sauce” to success is “being a team player, and her everyday approach to work prioritizes a good working relationship with faculty. Yvette is married with two children, a daughter who just graduated nursing school and a son in high school, and their extended family includes a Standard Poodle named Chester.



## Melissa Espinoza

Melissa Espinoza is director of career services at Denver School of Nursing. She joined EA eight years ago and brought experience in student financial aid, business office operations and human resources. Melissa has a science bachelor’s degree in business management with a specialization in organizational leadership. She says her day-to-day motivation stems from her belief that “every day is learning opportunity here.” Melissa says one of the biggest revelations during her tenure at Denver School of Nursing has been the abundance of professional opportunity in the field: “I was not aware of just how far a degree in nursing can take you.” Melissa says there is no secret to her personal success: “It’s a matter of understanding what is expected from you and your department, and continually doing whatever it takes to accomplish goals,” which “at times can be a process of trial and error.” Melissa is married with three daughters ages 15, 12 and 4. The extended family includes their puppy, Lola.



## Marci Stone

Marci Stone is director of career services at Fortis College in Salt Lake City, Utah. Marci has worked for EA for nine years. She previously worked as a college professor, an experience that exposed her to students who recently enrolled. “I saw them at the beginning of their program when they were bright-eyed and ready for anything,” Marci says. “Now I see them at the end when they are exhausted but can see the light at the end of the tunnel.” Marci has a master’s degree in education and expects to finish her doctorate program in business by early 2019. She says Fortis and other for-profit colleges are more accessible than publicly funded universities: “You can attend a university but will most likely be on a waiting list before you get in, and since those programs are competitive, you will need a 4.0 GPA.” Marci credits an organized approach to work for her personal success, which includes setting and resetting daily priorities as needed. Marci owns a home with her boyfriend of 12 years and they share it with their dog, Moshe, and their cat, Kitty.



## Cynthia Stephenson-Garrison

Cynthia Stephenson-Garrison is director of career services at the Fortis Institute in Cookeville, Tennessee. She worked for 23 years in the medical field, the last 16 with a pediatric practice. With her connections in the medical field, Cynthia started working for EA 12 years ago. Cynthia attended Middle Tennessee State University. She says a “traditional four-year college is not for everyone ... Smaller classrooms help build confidence and allow for different types of learners.” She credits much of her success to heralding success stories about Fortis graduates and her commitment to placing them with a personal touch. Cynthia emphasizes that it is important to “know your graduates in order to market them.” Cynthia has a daughter, Ashlyn, and a son, Brandon, and three grandsons: Bennet, Oliver and Tripp. She also shares her home with a Labrador, Double D.



## Diane McQuillan

Diane McQuillan is director of career services at All-State Career School in Lester, Pennsylvania, and an All-State graduate who returned to the school to guide other grads. Her A-HA! moments include success stories posted by happy graduates on social media “It may be a post of their new car, a family vacation, new business, or just getting to work in the field,” says Diane, who promotes the job-placement power of All-State to prospective students. “I would let our employers do the talking by showing the openings and pay rates they offer.” Diane has a 10-year tenure at EA. “After returning to All-State Career School in 2011 as a career services advisor, I trained to take over as director of career service, and was promoted in 2016,” she says. Her educational background includes training in legal/accounting paraprofessional work. She derives daily motivation by setting daily goals and cites maintaining organization as her principal daily work habit. Diane has a son and daughter.



## Ruth-Ann Duren

Ruth Ann Duren is director of career services at Fortis Institute in Port St. Lucie, Florida, and she says her recurring A-HA! experience is “seeing a student go from a dead-end job to a vibrant career.” Ruth Ann, who has an associate degree, says she is motivated to come to work each day by the opportunity to mentor others. She started working for EA eleven years ago. Ruth Ann previously was engaged in teaching medical programs. She says that enabled her to become familiar with “a large network of established clinics, extern sites and hiring managers.” The ingredients in the “secret sauce” of her personal success are diligence and consistency. Ruth Ann promotes the “personal touch” at Fortis, and she says her daily approach to work is “with a smile.” Ruth Ann is married with three daughters.



## David Cross

David Cross is director of career services at Fortis College in Indianapolis, Indiana. David has a bachelor’s degree in English with a minor in communications, and he formerly coached a high school speech team. His experience includes four and half years in the skilled trades and a year and a half in the health care field. That varied background helped David to quickly expand the network of Indianapolis companies that employ Fortis graduates. He has worked for EA for a year and a half. David says his on-the-job revelations include understanding that different students need different types of motivation, ranging from nurturing to blunt: “Using the same strategy for all students doesn’t work, so I need to be flexible and adaptable.” David credits his success to flexibility, consistency and “Kaizen,” or continuous daily improvement. David is an avid martial artist who competes in Savate Kickboxing and teaches martial arts as well. He has a pet rabbit named Hallie.



## Nayamka Ward

Nayamka Ward serves as financial aid director at the Staten Island campus of St. Paul's School of Nursing. Nayamka joined EA eight years ago and brought with her six years of experience in the field of financial aid for college students. She graduated the University of Missouri with a bachelor's degree in journalism and earned a diploma in ministerial training from Charis Bible College Chicago. She says her A-HA! moments center on the resiliency of St. Paul's students: "I am always moved to tears when I see students finish and graduate and who persevered through challenges in their lives while attending school." Nayamka says the secret sauce of her personal success is commitment, "that intangible asset that makes success possible," and she describes her everyday approach to work as a willingness to "go above and beyond to get the job done." She loves traveling and getting surprise video calls from her nephew in Chicago.



## Silvana Tarca

Silvana Tarca, director of financial aid at Fortis College in Smyrna, Georgia, knows her job is about more than money. One of her most memorable experiences happened when Silvana fixed a problem with financial aid that allowed a student to graduate on time with her degree cost covered. "She started crying," Silvana recalls, "and she told me that was the first time anyone actually did something nice for her without her having to ask, and that she will never forget me or Fortis for that." Many students at Fortis are single parents whose lives are changed for the better, she says. The secret to her own success? "Help one student at a time," Silvana says. "Think of that student as if he or she was your own child." She sums up her approach to work as preparing for the worst while planning for the best. Silvana is married to her husband of 31 years and they have three sons – Leonidas, Lucas, Lorenzo – and a grandson, Lionel. They love to travel and enjoy car racing as a hobby.



## Rachel Karmon

Rachel Karmon is director of financial aid at Fortis College in Centerville, Ohio. She worked in financial aid at Keiser University in Orlando, Florida, before joining EA 10 years ago. "My time with Keiser gave me the foundation of knowledge about the rules and regulations of financial aid prior to taking on a management role," Rachel says. She graduated the University of Central Florida with a bachelor's degree in business administration and the University of Ohio with an MBA. She is a proponent of proprietary education for students who need smaller class sizes and ample individual attention. Her A-HA! experiences unfold when she works with struggling students. "Helping them through and watching them progress, matriculate and ultimately graduate school makes my position meaningful," she says. Rachel cites determination and integrity as the main reasons for her own professional progress, and prioritizing is the basis of her everyday approach to work. Rachel has one daughter.



## Chrissy Revill

Chrissy Revill is director of financial aid at Fortis College in Orange Park, Florida. She worked for another career-college company as a bookstore manager and assistant bursar prior to joining EA eight years ago. Chrissy has a bachelor's degree in fine arts. She draws daily motivation from her co-workers – "I love my financial aid staff," she says – and from helping students finance their education at Fortis. Her A-HA! experiences at Fortis include watching students cry tears of joy when they obtain the financial aid they need. Chrissy promotes the career-college approach to training for a career. "I'm a fan of smaller private schools because that's what I chose when I attended college," she says. "I wanted to be more than a number." Chrissy says organization and hard work are the key ingredients in personal success. She shares her home with an English Bulldog.



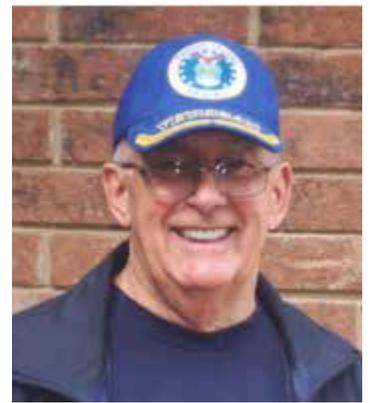
## Geri Reichmuth

Geri Reichmuth, director of financial aid at Denver School of Nursing, has made a career out of helping students pay for college. Geri has worked at several colleges, accumulating more than 25 years of experience in financial aid, including 10 years at Denver School of Nursing in downtown Denver. She loves her job, drawing motivation from students and staff. She says the most rewarding moments on the job are expressions of gratitude from students who get one-on-one help “through each process in the financial aid office.” Geri promotes Denver School of Nursing as an alternative to other educational institutions based on such metric as its pass rate, default rate and job-placement record. She credits her personal success to “developing leadership skills, being organized and letting staff have ideas and suggestions.” Geri says her successful approach to work involves “always being open and honest’ with staff and having “some fun, too.” Geri is married with two children, Eric and Paige, and she shares her home with two dogs. She loves camping, fishing and visiting family.



## Don Wood

Don Wood is director of financial aid at Fortis College in Grand Prairie, Texas. Don, who started working for EA nine years ago, has 35 years of experience in the college financial aid field. He was one semester short of his bachelor’s degree in elementary education before he pursued other interests. During his service in the Air Force, Don attended a language school, a technical school and a school that trained instructors. His daily motivation derives from knowing he can help college students navigate the complex maze of federally funded financial aid. Don says his A-HA! experiences include reading unexpected thank-you notes from Fortis graduates. He says he encourages prospective students to opt for Fortis rather than a not-for-profit institution if their goal is training for a career through courses that provide “no fluff, just job skills.” He credits his personal success to inquisitive encounters with students and compares his work in financial aid to solving puzzles, one student at a time. Don is married with a daughter, three sons, four grandsons and a granddaughter. He spends spare time hanging out with his dog and playing computer games with friends and family.



## Sally Hinck

Sally Hinck serves as director of admissions at Fortis College in Salt Lake City, Utah. Sally joined EA nearly nine years ago, and previously, she was a business owner and a national sales manager. “Many years of experience in sales has taught me to listen to others, really hear their needs and help find solutions,” she says. Sally, who attended Grand Canyon University, says the proprietary education that Fortis offers students is built on caring faculty and staff who “are there to teach, guide, direct and cheer them on.” Sally cites an outward focus as the “secret sauce” of her professional success: “Put others first.” Her everyday approach to work centers on projecting a positive attitude. Sally is a widowed mother of three children and four grandchildren, and she says family activities revolve around sports: “I am the family cheerleader!”



## Anna Pearson

Anna Pearson is director of admissions at Fortis College in Montgomery, Alabama – and stays active off the job, too. In her spare time, Anna runs a working farm with dairy goats and exhibition poultry. She also makes goat milk soap, candles, bath and beauty products and fragrances for one business and jewelry for another. Prior to joining EA three years ago, Anna had worked primarily as a director of admissions since 1985. She graduated the University of Southern Alabama with a master’s degree in exercise physiology and earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Oral Roberts University, where she had a basketball scholarship and lettered in four sports. Anna says many of her A-HA! experiences are chance encounters: “The best experience is to run into a graduate out in the community and have them tell you where they’re working, and the impact Fortis had on their life.” Anna has two grown daughters and two “mostly grown” grandchildren. She loves the outdoors, gardening, hiking, and all sports – especially Auburn football.



## Teri Molina

Teri Molina is the business office manager at Fortis College in Cutler Bay, Florida. Prior to joining EA two years ago, Teri worked for four years as a business manager and career services adviser at Florida Career College. Teri, who has an associate degree in computer science, draws motivation to come to work each day by the opportunity to work with students, and she says her on-the-job rewards include “experiencing the ups and downs with them.” Teri is a proponent of the close working relationship that staff and faculty have with student. “You don’t get that personal touch anywhere else,” she says. Her everyday approach to work is to treat each day as a fresh start. Teri advises others in her line of work to “build a rapport with staff and students,” and when issues arise, “don’t take it personal.” Teri is married and resides in Miami.



## Bobby Johns

Bobby Johns, admissions director at Fortis College in Orange Park, Florida, became a recording artist immediately after high school, then settled on a career in college admissions. “My most important education came from entrepreneurial pursuits,” says Bobby. “For example, I owned my first admissions office as an independent contractor.” Bobby says he draws motivation daily from a “constant craving to improve.” His A-HA! moments on the job include witnessing the escalating levels of achievement by Fortis graduates, including some who return to the Orange Park campus to teach. Bobby advises others in his line of work to “love what you do, and if you don’t, please do something else.” He says his approach to work centers on helping each department at the Orange Park campus succeed, “which in turn allows for a reputation-driven admissions process. Nothing sells quite like success.” Bobby is married, and in his spare time, he and his wife rescue and shelter dogs and cats. He also continues to write and record music.



## Margie Carter Fiasco

Margie Carter Fiasco, director of nursing admissions at Fortis Institute in Pensacola, Florida, started working for EA 11 years ago. She previously did similar admissions work for two other educational organizations. She has additional background as a business owner and her formal learning includes training courses, some college and continuing education. She draws motivation to come to work every day from the opportunity to encourage students to be “the best version of themselves.” Her A-HA! moment was the graduation of a student with a family who originally underestimated the requirements of the nursing program he wanted to enter. Prior to his admission, Margie insisted that the student work out a realistic schedule with his wife, who agreed to delay her career to take care of their kids, allowing him enough time for classes and studying. “He is now practicing in a local hospital,” she says. Margie approaches each day at work as a new chance to help people. Margie is married with a family that comes in three’s: three adult children, three adult stepsons and a three-year-old granddaughter, Audrey.



## Detriah Tyler

Detriah Tyler is director of admissions at the Fortis Institute in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. Detriah started working for EA six years ago. She has a bachelor’s degree in communications. She is motivated to come to work every day by the opportunity to help students succeed, even students who doubted they could. “Many of them don’t believe in themselves in the beginning and some do not have the support at home,” Detriah says. “We become the support system that ultimately gets them to graduation.” She credits her personal success to service on behalf of students: “Customer service will be the difference between you and the competition. Always go above and beyond for the customer.” Daily work habits that helped her succeed include a winning attitude. “I come to win every day,” she says, “and I push my team to do their best.” Detriah has three sons, ages 15, 11 and 7.



## Cynthia Remack

Cynthia Remack is business office manager at the All-State Career campus in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. An 11-year veteran of EA, she credits her personal success to having “a lot of patience.” After high school, Cynthia graduated Monroeville School of Business and began working as an office manager and a staff supporter in chief. “Assisting people is my best strength,” Cynthia says. She says her greatest A-HA! experiences are the successes of Fortis graduates who had “nothing to their name” when they first enrolled. “I consider our school a home away from home. We are down to earth,” says Cynthia, who approaches every day as an adventure. Cynthia shares her home with a beagle named Blue, and she loves doing arts and crafts.



## Jeremy Gibson

Jeremy Gibson is the business office manager of both Fortis College campuses in Montgomery, Alabama, and he brings a diverse background in military service to the job. During his 17 years of service in the Air Force, Jeremy worked in accounts payable, payroll processing and auditing and held such positions as training manager, financial analyst and budget analyst. “No two days are the same as business office manager, and the Air Force trained me for excelling in that environment,” Jeremy says. His dynamic experience at Fortis includes watching some students pay large tuition balances solely from tip money from working as a waitress. He has a master’s degrees in adult education leadership, a master’s in communication and leadership, and a bachelor’s in business management. “My favorite part of the job is graduation,” says Jeremy, who promotes Fortis as a fluff-free alternative to traditional university systems: “If you want to learn a trade and become certified in your field, we are the choice for you.” Jeremy is married to his wife of 23 years, Laura, and they have two kids: Joshua, 22, and Hannah, 19.



## Renee McMillin

Renee McMillin, director of business operations at Denver School of Nursing, has an eye for detail. Prior to her 14-year tenure at EA, Renee worked in accounting. In her last job before joining EA, she worked for a CPA firm and regularly reviewed the files of clients for changes in their financial statements. Renee, who has a bachelor’s degree in business administration, says follow-up and follow-through are critical to changing one’s station in life: “It’s always rewarding when students need to make a change and do what they say they’re going to do.” Renee says Denver School of Nursing offers personalized post-graduation benefits because of its compact size: “Students develop lifelong relationships after studying and stressing to get through school.” She identifies the “secret sauce” of her own success simply as hard work. Renee is married with a daughter, Mikayla, and shares her home with a cat and two dogs.



## Sharon Dietz

Sharon Dietz, the business office manager at Fortis College in Smyrna, Georgia, previously worked 11 years as the financial manager of a staffing company. In her prior work experience, Sharon did many of the same duties she handles now, including management of accounts payable, accounts receivable and human resources, and preparation of financial statements and tax returns. Sharon attended the University of Alabama and majored in communications. She says she draws motivation daily from her multifaceted job at Fortis: “The fact that my job involves a variety of duties and these can vary from day to day keeps me motivated as I like a challenge and variety.” Sharon says her A-HA! experiences at Fortis have revealed the simple ways that she can help students, which include “just listening to them when they are struggling with their payments, or some challenge they are experiencing in their life.” Being organized is the basis of her everyday approach to work, and she advises others in her line of work to “realize that most days you are never going to ‘get it all done,’ and try to have some fun.” Sharon is married with two daughters and four grandchildren, and she has one dog. Her hobbies including photography, travel and reading.



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