



Ruth Stricklen Pullins, MA, PHR
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Committing to Lifelong Learning

Ruth Stricklen Pullins first became interested in pursuing an advanced degree in the mid 1990s.

“There was something missing from my day-to-day work experience,” she says. “I began looking at an advanced degree to fulfill career aspirations and strive for personal achievement. At KU Med, I am surrounded by professionals who are focused on lifelong learning. That is a tremendous motivator!”

Having completed an undergraduate degree in Human Resources Management, Pullins initially looked into Industrial Psychology programs. However, the Communication Studies program at the University of Kansas intrigued her.

“I was particularly fascinated by the organizational communication topics, which so closely paralleled issues I was facing at work. For example, the theories about the socialization process were vital in helping me ensure the recruitment and retention of employees in my Department,” continues Pullins. “I was also impressed with the rigor of study at KU, in comparison to some of the other ‘fast-paced’ programs I explored. I wanted my degree to carry real weight.”

Pullins began her studies in 1997 and didn’t look back.

“It was challenging, no doubt, to balance school and work,” she says. “I had to accept the fact that for a few years, school came first. I took my textbooks to work so I could study at any free moment.”

Pullins says she was enriched by her studies: “All the classes were interesting, but I particularly enjoyed business communication and diffusion of innovations. I really feel the education was of a higher standard.”

Pullins graduated in 2000 and is already reaping the rewards of her experience, personally and professionally.

“Midway through the program, I was promoted from an assistant administrator to administrator, which was a nice step for me. Not only that, I feel much more confident among my peers and am looking forward to the opportunity to teach communication studies on the undergraduate level. I have also provided a strong example to my son – a student at KU. I think he was proud to see his mom was striving for something better.”