

Morrison brings experience to the classroom

Dianne Morrison brings the "real world" to her College of Business Administration classes.

Morrison grew up in a family that owned a south-east Minnesota concrete business, eventually becoming the office manager of the company for more than 20 years. She earned a bachelor's degree in business education and taught at the high school and technical college levels before coming to UW-L. She and her husband owned and managed four area car washes for over a decade.

It's that kind of experience that Morrison, an instructional academic staff lecturer in the Finance Department, says helps make her an effective educator.

"I've had the business experience; therefore, I can come at the topics from a variety of angles," she explains. "That's one of the biggest benefits I can bring to the classroom. I'm able to take the textbook and relate it to the real world."

Students like that approach. Their evaluations of Morrison often mention her effectiveness in relating to real-life business situations. "That's what helps them learn, when they can connect with the material," Morrison notes.

Morrison says she — and her students — are continuously challenged by the fast-changing business world. That's why she covers an array of materials in her classes. Rather than trying to teach them everything, she emphasizes resources where students can continue to find current business and financial information. "We try to teach them how to learn," she explains.

"That's the lifelong learning skills we offer them."

Morrison is liked by students — and she enjoys her students. She has an open-door policy and is energized when she sees students learn new concepts. "I think the

neatest thing about teaching is the feedback you get on the positive side, when I see the light bulb go on in a student's head," she says.

She keeps in touch with many of her students and hears from them, often when they have a personal finance question or are seeking financial advice.

The most difficult part of her teaching occurs when she sees students who don't apply themselves. "I always want everybody to be successful," Morrison explains. "The toughest part of the job for me to see is the students who set themselves up for failure and don't succeed."

Morrison says she often finds herself learning right along with her students.

"The biggest fringe benefit of my job is that I learn so much," she says. "I have to keep current because people expect me to answer their questions in many various financial areas."

She admits, though, that she's sometimes reluctant to jump into every new trend. Even though Morrison's 26-year-old son has her on-line with internet stock trading, she has yet to hit the return key when money is involved. She prefers the more traditional method, via telephone.

Morrison has enjoyed teaching on campus since she began teaching part-time in 1988, which eventually turned into full-time. "It's a great career when you are never bored, continuously challenged

and the hours of the day zip by," she says. "There's always something new and every day brings a chance to help someone learn."



The Dianne Morrison File

- Master's of Financial Planning**, College of Financial Planning, Denver, 1998.
- Certified Management Accountant**, 1991.
- Master's of Business Administration**, UW-La Crosse, 1987.
- Bachelor's of Science** in Business Education, Winona State University, 1969.
- Instructional Academic Staff Lecturer** in accountancy and finance at UW-L since 1990. Previous teaching positions at St. Mary's College, Winona, Minn.; Winona State University; Western Wisconsin Technical College; Aquinas High School, La Crosse.
- Owner and manager** of four area car wash businesses, 1986-1997.
- Office manager**, Crest Precast Inc., La Crescent, 1969-90.