

Summer 2020

THE VOICE



SAINT LEO WORLDWIDE STUDENT NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL ISSUE HONORING

CLASS *of*
2020



Featuring our
2020 Farewell
Addresses from:

Anna Murhpy, BA in Religion

Tiffany N. Ertle, BA in Educational
Studies: Education & Adolescence-
Social Sciences

Disclaimer: The views expressed in these articles are those of the writers & do not represent those of the University.

Faculty in the Spotlight

Dr. Phillip Neely Jr.

Department Chair, Undergraduate
Criminal Justice

College of Education and Social
Services

IN THIS ISSUE

Same Boat v. Same
Storm: Living during
the COVID-19
pandemic

Plus..

The importance of
enlisted military
personnel pursuing
higher education.

EDITORIAL

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FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you for reading this issue of The Voice. We trust you will find inspiration in our articles, especially our 2020 farewell addresses from graduating students, and our spotlight on Dr. Phillip Neely.

For me, this is "good bye for now," as I just graduated with a Master's Degree. I love this University and will be still involved as a new double-alumna, but as I am no longer a student, I leave you in the hands of Casey Herko who will serve as the new student editor and will do an excellent job.

I came to The Voice as a journalist 3 years ago when I first came to Saint Leo University to finish my undergraduate degree. I had no particular interest in writing or anything, but I wanted to take advantage of our online organizations and be involved in some way. I figured, if I wrote for fun, it would help me practice for academic writing which I had not done in years. Plus my student advisor, Steve, serves as the advisor for the club, so it seemed like a safe place to start! I am glad I took that first step and showed up to a Student Communications Club meeting because I found something new that I truly love. Also, I was right. It did help me with my writing, but more importantly, with the discovery of the Student Communications Club and several other organizations I participated in, I found friends and mentors that will last a life time.

So, please look for ways to be involved. As you notice, we do not have anyone on our staff currently, we need more participation. We also have a list of all our organizations at the end of this issue. Find some you think you will be interested in and get involved. You may be surprised at what you find, and more importantly, I am convinced that one of the first things you saw about Saint Leo University will come true, and "you will love who you become here."

It has been an honor to serve as your student editor for the past two years. I wish you all continued success, and if you ever need anything from an alumna, my email is listed to the right, and yes I will continue using it!

Sincerely,

Timothy G. Robinson

Tim Robinson
Student Editor



SAME BOAT OR SAME STORM? LIVING DURING COVID-19

BY CASEY HERKO

“We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar.”— Damian Barr (@Damian_Barr) April 21, 2020

In an effort to support and comfort each other during this challenging time, friends, family members, even coworkers have been using the phrase “we’re all in the same boat” or “we’re all in this together.” While I agree with the sentiment, it does not accurately describe the situation equally. The quote from Damian Barr on his Twitter account more accurately describes this pandemic we’re all facing in our own way.

We can agree we are all in this same storm, but what does your boat look like? Let’s say you are married, have one or more kids at home. You’re still working full-time and managing kids full time. And in the middle of that trying to keep the relationship with your spouse from turning into a boxing match. Let’s say you’re single, and no kids at home. You’re 75 and cannot see your newest grandchild born three weeks ago. Your best option is to try a new technology that you find frustrating and (if you’re being honest) a little intimidating. You want to be at the house to help your son/daughter with the newborn, but for everyone’s safety, all parties agreed it’s better to stay apart for now. Let’s say you’re in a new relationship, having dated this person a mere three months. You have a large dog who is not used to having you around and at home 24/7. You’re faced with finding new creative ways to get your dog adjusted to you being home, while you’re adjusting to you being home. Your relationship dynamic is changing because you can’t see each other nearly as often as you would like. While comfortable with the technology available to keep in touch with each other, it’s just not the same, is it?

All of these scenarios present their own unique blend of challenges. What might be a blessing to you (less commute time, shorter amount of time spent getting ready in the morning, see more of your immediate family/spouse), could present new obstacles to another (impromptu child care/school concerns, fewer options for quiet/alone time, social disconnect from your support group of friends and extended family).

Perhaps you've considered with this time available (however forced it might be) to tackle some frequently put off projects commit to self-care habits, quality family time, exercise and finally make it stick. Perhaps you've considered starting a new project redecorating your bedroom, finally perfecting that turtle cheesecake, turning a new page with quitting smoking – and see the results of your labor come to life.

There's no perfect fit for everyone as we continue to make our way through the pandemic. What has helped or inspired your cousin may very well frighten the living daylights out of you. The source of comfort or relief you find in your day may be a stress trigger for someone else.

What I hope we can see, as we continue to support and be kind to one another, is this one universal truth: it will be a different experience for everyone and no one will get it right 100% of the time. Seek to find your new pace, your new happy, your new routine. Seek to share patience and share in each other's successes. Seek out friends when you need them and be the friend when someone reaches out to you.

The pandemic will pass, but we don't know what exactly lies ahead. You will not have control over everything you would ideally want to, but you can choose how you look at each day going forward. The storm will have more thunder and squalls before all is said and done, but as FDR rightly pointed out: "A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor".



WHY ENLISTED SERVICE MEMBERS SHOULD PURSUE A GRADUATE EDUCATION

BY TIM ROBINSON

In the next month, I will separate from the Navy after nearly ten years of service. I had every intention on staying in for a career, but in the last few years I have discovered that I have done all I can do in the Navy, and I have a different vocation now. In addition to my upcoming transition, I just graduated with a Master's Degree and I wanted to share some thoughts I had about being enlisted with a Master's Degree and why more of us should pursue this path. I do not have enough space in this paper to write about all the reasons enlisted personnel should get a Master's degree, so I will focus on just two topics; collegiality and leadership.

When I joined the Navy I had 60 credits already, but once I got settled in my first duty station and was an E-5 in just two years, I was convinced I would be spending a career in the Navy and there would be no need for me to return to school. That started to change when I got married, but after too many of my shipmates were sexually assaulted, I had enough. I felt useless as a Religious Programs Specialist (RP). All I could do is be there for support, refer the victims to additional resources, but I wanted to seek justice! At that point, I was not quite sure if I wanted to be a cop so I can be the one catching the predator to begin with, or if I wanted to be a lawyer so I can make sure they stay away for a long time. However, I had a few years left, and I knew it would be best if I get back to school and finish my Bachelor's Degree, which I did, than I went on to a Master's.

As an RP, I work for some of the most educated people in the military, chaplains. As ministers, chaplains are really good at taking care of people. However, I must admit, there is quite often a disconnect between these highly educated officers and their enlisted support. As RPs, we're supposed to be focused on the programs, operations, logistics, and administration, so chaplains can focus on their ministry. We do not always do that the best we can, and it is not because we are not trained or bad at our jobs or anything. It is mostly because we do not always understand why we do the things we do, or why chaplains are the way they are. That all changed when I started my Master's Degree, because I learned skills that I can apply in the workplace. As a result, my bosses did not just look at me as the Leading Petty Officer, responsible for supervising the rest of the enlisted, but also as a trusted member of the team. I was able to bring my own ideas to the table and help them make decisions. I found processes that were in place and just barely seemed to work, but found a way to make them better. Overall, we started functioning better as a team because more of us had similar education backgrounds, the same thought processes, which helped us all see the bigger picture.

The main lesson I took from grad school and the primary reason I think we need more enlisted people with Master's degree is collegiality. We are introduced to this at the undergraduate level, but when you are a graduate student, your life depends on learning from and working with, your classmates. We have some organizations in the military that are supposed to be somewhat collaborative, but are usually overcome with egos and people who are only interested for a check in the box on an EVAL or FITREP. Collegiality looks much different, and as a grad student you will learn how to share your own ideas, research, and findings then you will learn everyone else's. You will find most are very different, but working together you find a way to use all of your new knowledge to find a solution to a problem. We all know there are tons of issues that need solving in the military, we would need a textbook to discuss them all. So if you have the intention of making the military career, you will be a part of the solution to these problems. Think of the difference we can make in our current commands, our future commands, and across the DOD if more of us enlisted folk went for a graduate degree!

The second reason enlisted service members should consider grad school is leadership. In the military, we talk a great deal about leadership, and when we get out, most companies are looking for us because of our military experience, specifically leadership. However, you might have noticed, the military does not really train all of us, especially enlisted to be leaders. We are trained to be managers. We absolutely have leaders in the military, but if you ask them, the majority of them learned to be who they are from someone else, or their own independent studies. Our courses, especially at the enlisted level are designed to teach us to manage. We learn procedures that we teach juniors and are giving orders and expected to carry them out. As we rank up, we learn new procedures and new responsibilities for supervision and have increased authority, but we are still mostly managing. If you read any leadership text, one of the main factors that determines the difference between a manager and a leader is innovation. As enlisted, we are rarely given the chance to innovate. Yes, we can adapt and overcome, but when was the last time any of us had a say in something that is changing in the military? How many of us wrote policies that will benefit the generations service after us? The military is not designed for everyone to innovate. The only person innovating is the one at the top. However, if more of us had a graduate education, we will learn how to analyze everything around us. We can communicate our ideas tactfully to our chain of command, and they will be respected, because we have the education and associated skills to back it up.

Some branches (including my own) have already begun cutting back on education benefits. However, if you have the desire and the calling to pursue a graduate education, there are plenty of other options. But this can be the first problem you address. When you get out or retire, you will see there are tons of organizations that are pushing certifications and technology. There are very few, if any, that are looking to help transitioning service members get into academia. However, the world needs scholars and leaders, and enlisted veterans have the experience and work ethic to be successful in academia and make significant contributions to our society. If you are enlisted, please consider grad school and discuss it with a professor and our military affairs office!

Cecelyn M. Dennis

Master of Science: Human Services Administration

CeCe the Powerhouse! You did it
Phenomenal Woman!

Believe in yourself, learn, and never stop
wanting to build a better world.
- Mary Mcleod Bethune

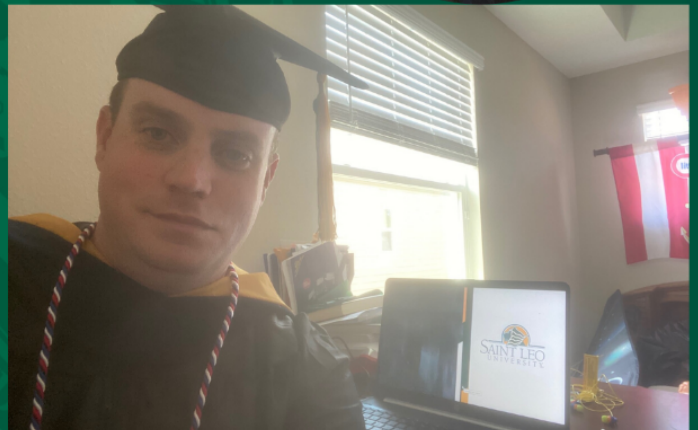


Congratulations

**SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY
CLASS OF 2020!**

Timothy Gerard Robinson

Master of Science:
Criminal Justice: Criminal Investigations



ANNA MURPHY

BACHELOR OF ARTS, RELIGION



Anna Murphy is originally from Warner Robins, GA. She is a wife and mother of a special need's child, whom she spends most of her time with as his caretaker. She is graduating with a BA in Religion, having earned department honors, and will be enrolled in Saint Leo University's Master's Program in Theology this fall. She has a special interest in apocalyptic literature and intends to pursue the field of academics with an interest in eschatology after obtaining her PhD. She also writes poetry and is currently working on having it published. Her poetry often revolves around the subjects of mortality and human suffering, often a reflection of her lifelong battle with a debilitating disease. While she is a practicing Catholic, her goal is to use the realm of theology to bring people of different cultures and beliefs together. Anna has come to appreciate the world's diversity and the strengths and wisdom found among different people, taking a special interest in Japanese culture and philosophy. She believes that people should focus more on what they share rather than pointing out what makes communities different. Her goals for the future include educating people about each other's cultural and religious beliefs in the hopes that humans will come to better respect and appreciate one another. To work among theologians at the Vatican to promote these ideas is her dream.

ANNA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

I have always felt that it took a great deal of discipline to complete a degree online. Everyone here has overcome and conquered the obstacles life gives to be standing here today. For some of you, that challenge was earning a degree while serving our country, and I thank you for your service. For others, it may have been squeezing in class time while chasing your little ones around the house. No matter your situation, you made it, you're here. My struggles, like yours, were difficult and at times almost unbearable. I have PTSD from years of abuse, and I also have Aspergers. I was born with a crippling condition called Ehlers Danlos Syndrome. I live in pain every moment of my life, be it from my joints shifting about, waking up on the floor after a black out, or the agony of the rupturing that takes place in my organs. While facing my own battles, I am also helping my son face his. My son is autistic, and he also has Ehlers Danlos Syndrome. Since he is currently homebound, I care for him 24/7, and it is truly a full-time job. Somehow through it all I managed out with a high GPA and the honor of being the Online Religion Major of the Year.

Yet, despite what my family goes through, I was determined to find purpose in my life, to make use of my personal struggles. Though my life may not be long, I knew it could still be meaningful. For myself that purpose came in a desire to bring people together. As a Religion major at Saint Leo University, I have had the privilege of working with many of you, and with some of the most dedicated, and hard-working professors I could have ever asked for. My freshman year I thought I knew everything, and I was sure that I knew what my future would hold. As time went on however, my experiences with you and the Saint Leo staff began to change me. I became a student who listened, one who could put aside her own thoughts and beliefs to hear what someone else had to say. I could accept that throughout my life I will be wrong and make mistakes, but that I can use constructive criticism to learn and grow from these experiences. Most importantly, I could admit that I knew so little.

By the time I was nearing the end of my degree, I could fully appreciate the Saint Leo Core Values. Standing here today, I am a better person, as are all of you. Everyone here has grown and learned, helping each other and fostering friendships even from afar. We didn't let our struggles define us, we chose our outcome through hard work and perseverance. We decided that we didn't want to blend in with the crowds, we wanted to stand out and make a difference in the world. Everyone here has a purpose, and no matter your race, sex, or religious beliefs, we are all here to help make the world a better place. We are strong, we are fierce, we are lions. We are Saint Leo's 2020 online graduating class!

TIFFANY N. ERTLE

BACHELOR OF ARTS, EDUCATIONAL STUDIES: EDUCATION & ADOLESCENCE-SOCIAL SCIENCES



Tiffany N. Ertle was born in Steubenville, Ohio, and grew up in the small town of Jewett, Ohio. She graduated from Jewett-Scio High School in 1997. In 2014, she moved with her family to Homosassa, Florida from Powell, Ohio where she volunteered as a Docent at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. She is graduating cum laude with a BA in Educational Studies: Education & Adolescence - Social Sciences. Tiffany was inducted into Kappa Delta Pi as well as the Alpha Delta Alpha Chapter in 2018. She was awarded the Community Core Value Award in January of 2018 for exemplifying the Saint Leo University Core Value of Community. She has served as a National History Fair Judge for Pasco County Schools during her time at Saint Leo. For the last five years, Tiffany has worked as a substitute teacher as well as volunteered for the Citrus County School District. Tiffany is the eldest daughter of Debra Swope and Tyson Horshok; Mother to twin boys Dominic & Damien; Wife to Corey. Joining her to celebrate today in addition to her mother, sons & husband are her grandfather James Reese and second parents, Dave & Michelle Ertle, cherished former student Iliana Hamlin and her mother Ivy, as well as other treasured family and friends. Her goal after graduation is to obtain a teaching position in a middle school where she can make history relevant and engaging to her students as well as build relationships with her students that will help create a memorable experience for them to look back on. Tiffany would like to recognize the professors who had an immense impact on her during her time at Saint Leo University:

Professor Laurie Muffley - Online Adjunct Professor Dr. Beryl Diamond - Online Adjunct Professor Professor Carrie Frump - Adjunct Professor Professor Beverly Ledbetter - Adjunct Professor Professor Rachel Hernandez - Adjunct Professor Dr. John McTague - University Professor Professor Debra Cross - Adjunct Professor Dr. Luis Garcia - Adjunct Professor

TIFFANY'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

Good afternoon! Thank you, President Senese, Honored Guests, Faculty, Graduates, Family, and Friends. I am so honored to have been chosen to speak today. I must admit something to you; I honestly never thought I would go to college. When I graduated from high school, the last thing I wanted to do was go through more schooling. I honestly had no clue what I wanted to do in life. But I did know that before I made the investment and the commitment of going to college, I wanted to be 100% sure I was on the right path. My mom, who is a teacher and is the daughter of a teacher, said to me, "Tiffany, you should be a teacher! You're so good with kids!" I laughed and said, "Yeah, right, mom, I can't stand kids!"

But I did know that I wanted to get married and be a mother. In my early 20's I met and married my husband, Corey. After nine years of marriage and countless hurdles, we welcomed our beautiful twin boys, Dominic & Damien. Their arrival made me feel complete. As it does, time flew by, and in 2014 we had the opportunity through my husband's job to relocate from Ohio to Florida. I was all too happy to sell my snowblower and buy some beach chairs instead!

Once we got to Florida, I felt we were on our way to a truly happy life. In 2015 our boys started Kindergarten, and being the helicopter mother that I am, I walked them in to school every morning. One day as I was watching them walk down the hallway to class, the secretary said I should consider becoming a substitute. I told her that I didn't have a college degree. She told me that our district was in such need for substitutes, that all I needed was a high school diploma. So, I became a substitute at Citrus County Schools. Eventually, I figured out that my mother was right all along. I wanted to be a teacher! And I actually LOVE kids! Sorry, mom, I guess I should have listened to you all of those years ago!

In January 2016, everything changed. After several years with his employer, my husband was let go. With my work as a substitute and some assistance from unemployment, we made it through the months it took him to find a new and better job. I decided that I needed to attend college and get a degree so that my family and I would be more secure in our future. That summer, I decided to enroll at Saint Leo to pursue my Bachelor's in Elementary Education. As a busy wife and mother to twin boys who worked full-time substituting at their school, I needed the flexibility that Saint Leo's online classes offered me.

So that Fall, I worked on my classes while balancing working full-time as a substitute teacher, caring for my children, husband, and pets as well as working part-time as a freelance photographer. My hard work paid off in 2018, and I earned my Associate of Arts degree. I even walked in the Gainesville commencement ceremony to celebrate my achievement!

While pursuing my AA, I took two amazing history classes, and it was those two classes that made me realize I wanted to be a history teacher! I changed my major, and with that, my residence. I became an Adult Education student at the main campus! I was so excited to be able to attend classes at the campus as I never thought I would be a real college student! I'll be honest, there were a few times that I was mistaken for a member of Faculty, but that was ok. I just told them I was an "alternative aged student." I made several friends at the campus and even felt welcomed by the "kids" in my classes. I tried to help them as much as I could and be a support to them when they needed me.

I took the dreaded General Knowledge test the following January and passed every subtest the first time around, except for the Math. Math is my kryptonite. I have taken the test two additional times and still have not passed it. But I wouldn't let that stop me from reaching my goal! I changed my degree to Educational Studies: Education and Adolescence- Social Sciences determined to finish what I started! I switched back to the online platform and took my last four classes online, returning to where I started. Through all of the ups and downs, the stress and the heartache, I never gave up.

And that is the message I want to impart to you today. No matter what life hands you, never give up. No matter how hard it might seem, you can do anything you set your mind to accomplish. Every morning you have two choices: Continue to sleep with your dreams or wake up and chase them. Because as Eleanor Roosevelt eloquently said, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." Thank you to my husband Corey, my sons Dominic & Damien, and our families for supporting me in the many ways you have through this process. I love you all more than I can ever say. Thank you to my Professors, University Supervisors, Cooperating Teachers, and classmates for all of your guidance and support. And finally, congratulations to my fellow Graduates...I wish you all the best of luck as you follow your dreams and remember, all our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.

Thank you.



SPOTLIGHTS

Faculty in the Spotlight

Dr. Phillip Neely Jr.

*Undergraduate Chair, Department of
Criminal Justice*

DR. PHILLIP NEELY JR. PROFESSOR/UNDERGRADUATE CHAIR CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

INTERVIEWED BY TIM ROBINSON

Many of us were first contacted by an enrollment advisor from Saint Leo University just because we had an idea that maybe we can get back in school and finish our degree. As working adults, it seemed impossible that there was no way we can balance a career and family with school. However, a conversation with an advisor and a little more research would tell us that there is no better option for people like us to go to school than Saint Leo University. Once we started taking classes, we quickly realize it is happening; what we once thought was impossible is now a reality, and we are about to finish our degree. As we get closer to graduation, we start to realize our full potential, which, for many of us, means the next degree. We come to this realization with the help of our professors, who have inspired us and led us to discover our true selves. Many of us have attended other institutions before Saint Leo University and know there is something special about the men and women who teach us at our school. Many of us admire our professors because of their accomplishments in our field, but when we get to know them, we discover they are not very different than us. At this practitioner-based institution, many of our professors also started as working adults and students. They also had their challenges and barriers to overcome to accomplish their educational goals. This article will help you get to know one such professor, a favorite among criminal justice students, Dr. Phillip Neely Jr.

Dr. Neely is the Chair of the Undergraduate Department of Criminal Justice. Before his current career in higher education, Dr. Neely served 23 years as a law enforcement officer in both municipal police agencies, as well as county sheriff

Dr. Phillip Neely Jr.

23 years in law enforcement

PhD- Public Policy and Administration with a specialization in Criminal Justice- Walden University

MS- Public Administration/Criminal Justice- Central Michigan University

Certificate of Management and Leadership from Georgia Law Enforcement Command College- Columbus State University

Saint Leo University Command Officer Management Program

departments, and retired at a command level position at the rank of Major. Dr. Neely's career in law enforcement led him back to school and ultimately to a second career as a professor and administrator. If anyone reading this article has ever had Dr. Neely as an instructor knows that this is a man that was born to teach and lead. His students know all too well that Dr. Neely is passionate about teaching and preparing our generation to make the changes necessary to make our communities stronger. It is not uncommon for a student to wrap up a semester with Dr. Neely believing that they will be a Sheriff, Police Chief, Attorney General, or Supreme Court Justice one day. If you shared this dream with anyone, they might doubt you, but in a recent interview, we learn another valuable lesson from Dr. Neely, how to handle nay-sayers.

When Dr. Neely was born, his mother was still in high school, and his father was in prison and never finished school. Many of his extended family also spent time in prison as well, so growing up, Dr. Neely learned about stereotypes, but the future scholar was committed to disproving the theory. As a result, Dr. Neely discovered his vocation to law enforcement, "I wanted to make a difference and be different, I always heard, You'll be just like your daddy, I wanted to prove that stigma wrong," Dr. Neely said.

To start on his path toward a career in law enforcement, Dr. Neely first wanted to serve his country in the Army. Since he had a very successful track career in High School, he was offered scholarships and decided it would be best to get an education first. Once he completed his education, he can be commissioned in the Army, so he started his academic journey at Clark College. However, while at Clark, Dr. Neely found what would prove to be the best path toward his extraordinary accomplishments.... Mrs. Neely! One challenge of being a student who is also a newlywed is finances, so Dr. Neely thought it would be best to leave school and start a career to provide for his new family.

"I wanted to make a difference and be different"

Dr. Neely began his profession in corrections, where he worked in the jail for a year and a half before moving to patrol. After he was on patrol for a few years, he was approached by his Chief and engaged in a conversation about school. The Chief was reviewing his record and noticed that Dr. Neely had some education under his belt and wanted to know why he never finished. At the time, Dr. Neely was content with his career and his family but knew he wanted to make Sergeant, and completing a Bachelor's degree would make him more competitive. He was not quite sure how he could balance a law enforcement career, family, and school. Then, he learned about a University that was offering classes on a local military installation for people just like him. Since he wanted to make Sergeant, and his Chief was encouraging him to return to school, Dr. Neely came to Saint Leo University to finish what he started at Clark College.

If you had asked young Officer or Deputy Neely if he knew he would eventually earn a Doctorate and return to his undergraduate Almer Mater as the chair of a department, he would have at that time, he just wanted to finish a BA to make Sergeant. He tried telling the same thing to a professor he admired,

Arthur King, who taught for Saint Leo University in Atlanta for 25 years. Professor King was impressed with Dr. Neely's devotion to his studies and his superb presentation skills. King was convinced that his student was capable of much more than a BA and a Sergeant; he knew the young man would excel in law enforcement as well as academia. Since Dr. Neely had respect and admiration for Professor King, he sought his mentorship, and the two came up with a plan to keep Dr. Neely engaged in academics so he can discern continuing his studies and the possibility of a second career as an educator. So, as a new alumna of Saint Leo University, Dr. Neely stayed involved by volunteering his time at the Atlanta center to help students, which included serving as a volunteer student advisor.

By helping students, maintaining his mentorship with Professor King, and relentless encouragement from his wife, Dr. Neely quickly began preparing for the next step, a Master's Degree. Also, someone else had taken notice of Dr. Neely and recognized his potential, his Sheriff. According to Dr. Neely, his colleagues and peers at the time were trying to discourage him by saying things like, "continuing school is a waste of time because cops don't need that much school." But Dr. Neely disagreed, so did his Sheriff, who Dr. Neely said, "Offered me a hand up, not a handout." Therefore, Dr. Neely knew if he put in the work and continued his education, he would continue up the ranks in law enforcement. Most importantly, Dr. Neely had a lifelong commitment to make a difference and be different. As a result, Dr. Neely then earned a Master of Science in Public Administration with a concentration in Criminal Justice from Central Michigan University.



With Professor King's help and under his continued mentorship, Dr. Neely returned to Saint Leo University and began his teaching career as an adjunct professor. "I realized this is what I want to do, I want to share my experiences in law enforcement and apply them to the text to help students learn," Dr. Neely said of his first impression as a professor. At the time, Dr. Neely was delighted with his career in law enforcement and moonlighting as a professor, he had no intention of continuing school any further, but Professor King had other ideas. Since Dr. Neely enjoyed teaching so much and was great at it, Professor King suggested the Doctorate. Although Dr. Neely was not that excited to go back to school again, the idea of working as a full-time professor when he retired from law enforcement did pique his interest. Mrs. Neely also loved the idea of her husband becoming a Doctor as she never wanted him to stop his education in the first place, going back to their days at Clark College. Dr. Neely points out that his wife was always his biggest supporter, encouraging him every step of the way in both his law enforcement and academic career. However, by this time, she was ready for her husband to move to a classroom because, in his career in law enforcement, Dr. Neely had several close calls, which include several shoot outs, being ran over by a car, and a stabbing. Also, Dr. Neely knew he made quite an impact in his career in law enforcement, but that did not have to stop when he retired. He knew if he went for a Ph.D., he would continue to live his vocation to make a difference by becoming a full-time professor and preparing future generations of criminal justice practitioners.

Dr. Neely earned his Ph.D. at Walden University and ultimately retired from law enforcement after 23 years of service at the rank of Major. Once he retired from law enforcement, Dr. Neely continued his teaching career at Saint Leo University as a full-time professor. Just as Dr. Neely rose through the ranks in law enforcement, he would rise through



the ranks in teaching, and it was not long before he ended up in his current position as the Undergraduate Chair of the Criminal Justice Department.

During Dr. Neely's law enforcement career, he worked in a variety of positions and has experience in both a municipal police department and a sheriff's department. Although he achieved the prestige of becoming a top-ranked law enforcement official serving in various capacities on command staffs, his favorite part of his career was the six years he spent in a narcotics unit. Dr. Neely reflected on the experience and said, "I enjoyed working undercover. I had the opportunity to look at both worlds from the perspective as a criminal and a law enforcement officer and be able to find a balance in between." His time in narcotics would prove to be an experience that would serve him well as a law enforcement executive and an educator.

"I realized this is what I want to do, I want to share my experiences in law enforcement and apply them to the text to help students learn"

Now, as an educator chairing a department that combines scholarship and practical experience to prepare students to enter a career in the criminal justice field, Dr. Neely addresses the changes that have occurred in the criminal justice system since he began his own criminal justice career:

"The entire system changed, police courts and corrections. We've gone away from community policing, and are more focused on public opinion. When I was policing, all we saw is the people; every individual is treated the same. An officer swore to tell the truth, but now they want video. Police have lost their ethics and integrity, and we have to get it back. In the courts, poor people get longer sentences; those with money are excused." To address these issues, Dr. Neely encourages criminal justice students to continue their education. "we need to get away from the mentality that cops do not need higher education. Training is a key component, but you have to have the education to complement the training. We train a lot, but we are missing education. At the university, we teach critical thinking and analytical thinking. These things change the mindset so we can grow and go."

Dr. Neely attributes the majority of the problems in the criminal justice system to three very powerful social influences; "race, religion, and politics." Making the reforms that are necessary will require educated individuals, but to some students, these issues may seem too complicated for them to handle initially. Furthermore, many students at Saint Leo University are working adults who may not recognize that they do have the ability to continue to graduate education to prepare them thoroughly to make the changes that are necessary to make a difference. However, Dr. Neely assures us that Saint Leo University has the faculty and resources on hand to prepare students for the field.

Some of the most critical learning occurs outside of the classroom, as well. One of the greatest resources Saint Leo University has, according to Dr. Neely are the online student organizations. Dr. Neely is well aware of the struggles faced by students who are attempting to balance school, career, and family because he lived it as well. To ensure students succeed at Saint Leo University, Dr. Neely offers the following advice:

"Stay engaged, practice time management, use the resources that are available to them and do not be afraid to ask questions. Many of them want to do the bare minimum. They need to be involved with the organizations so they can meet new people, develop new ideas, and start to think differently."

One way Dr. Neely and his colleagues use to get students to critically analyze the issues facing the criminal justice system is the practical application of the University's Core Values. "Every course is embedded with a core value," Dr. Neely said of the criminal justice program and he believes criminal justice practitioners should be especially committed to Integrity and Excellence. "We have to get back to a time when our integrity and ethics is not questioned. We will demonstrate this the way we do our job. Once we get our integrity back, we maintain it by having a firm commitment to our job and doing it well. This will help improve relationships between law enforcement and the communities we serve."

The practical application of core values and the amount of practical experience professors have in the field is what sets the Saint Leo University criminal justice program apart from other universities, according to Dr. Neely. "Most of the professors have ten years of experience in a criminal justice profession and are either still working in the field or retired from a management position. We don't just teach criminal justice skills, we teach life skills. We teach ethics, morals, and values that can be applied to any profession. We teach resources management, and everyone should be familiar with this process to get a job, stay on the job, and manage the job. We teach financial management, we teach leadership.

We prepare our students to be ready on day one to go out and do the job." For this reason, Dr. Neely believes Saint Leo University is second to none in criminal justice. Most importantly, for Dr. Neely and his colleagues the number one priority is the student. The programs at Saint Leo University are "designed for one on one attention to our students, including small class sizes, to ensure students are taken care of." If a student needs anything, all they have to do is ask their professor. This is especially true in Dr. Neely's classes as he is always available to his students.

Dr. Neely has walked in our shoes and knows what it is like to balance a career, school, and a family. Despite the challenges he faced, he always knew he had to be different and make a difference. One important lesson we can take from Dr. Neely's life is even if he had doubts or questions, he kept an open mind and listened to what others were trying to tell him so that he can reach his full potential. As students at a University, the same thing will happen to us. We are on the path to greatness, and we may have our doubts, or ideas that will surprise us, but we have people in our corner now, our professors, advisors, and classmates. If you are wondering what your next step will be, whether it is to continue in your career, or go to graduate school, or if someone has paid you a compliment by suggesting you think about it, the best thing you can do is talk to someone about it. As we've learned from Dr. Neely, our professors have all been there before. First, ask yourself this question: Are you satisfied with the status quo or are you committed to excellence and ready to make a difference and be different? Now, think about a professor you admire, and when you are done reading this article, send an email or make a call and start the conversation!

We thank Dr. Neely for agreeing to be our "Faculty in the Spotlight" for this issue of The Voice. We are grateful for everything you shared about your life with us, and we are honored to have you as a leader in our institution.



Career Services

From the Desk of Nancy
Cheek



The Career Services team assists students with all phases of career development from career guidance and job search training to resume advice, interview skills, and professional networking. We support the

mission of Saint Leo University by offering a practical and effective model for life and leadership in a challenging world.

Even though you are an online or education center student, you still have access to career services. The Career Services team can be reached at (352) 588-8346 or by email at careerservices@saintleo.edu. Remote appointments via phone or video conferencing, as well as sharing documents via email, allows you to work independently with a career advisor even though you never meet face to face for an appointment. Your specific program, industry, geographic location and individual career goals can be discussed in these sessions. Career Services also hosts 3 - 4 virtual events each month, related to general career topics or industries of interest, that you are invited to attend from the comfort of your living room.

It is never too soon to begin researching, networking and paving the path just right for your career goals. We encourage you to reach out to Career Services today!

Need help? Contact Career Services at (352) 588-8346 or email CareerServices@saintleo.edu.



Career Services encourages you to take full advantage of our newest career resource. Handshake is our online career management system for all students and alumni of Saint Leo University.

In addition to being the place where you can search and apply for internships, part-time and full-time jobs, students and alumni can also use Handshake to:

- Personalize and maintain an online career profile that recommends jobs, events and employers to you based on your career interests and other factors
- Schedule appointments with Career Services
- View upcoming local, on-campus and virtual skills development workshops and career fairs
- Upload and update your resume for employers to view

Handshake is a combination of some of the best tools on the web today, taken from services like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. It's designed to help you precisely target career information, internship and employment opportunities as well as career events related to your specific major, degree type and interests.

To learn more about Handshake, go to <https://www.saintleo.edu/career-services-handshake>. Students may login to Handshake at login.saintleo.edu. Alumni should contact careerservices@saintleo.edu to request an account.



SAINT LEO
UNIVERSITY.
Career Services

ONLINE CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Pacioli Online Accounting Club
Meetings: 1st and 3rd Wednesday
Time: 3pm-3:30pmET

Business Association
Meetings: 2nd and 4th Wednesday
Time: 7:30pm-8pmET

Computer Science Association
Meetings: 1st Wednesday
Time: 7:30pm-8pmET

Criminal Justice Association
Meetings: 1st and 3rd Thursday
Time: 7pm-7:30pmET

Healthcare Management Association
Meetings: 3rd Wednesday
Time: 7:30-8pmET

Human Resources Association
Meetings: 4th Wednesday
Time: 7pm-7:30pmET

Join Today!

<https://www.saintleo.edu/worldwide-club-membership-application>

ONLINE CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Liberal Arts Association
Meetings: 1st Tuesday
Time: 7:30pm-8pmET

Military & Families Club
Meetings: 2nd Wednesday
Time: 6:30pm-7pmET

Psychology Association
Meetings: 2nd and 4th Tuesday
Time: 7pm-7:30pmET

Sociology Association
Meetings: 3rd Tuesday
Time: 7pm-7:30pmET

Student Communications Club
Meetings: 1st Tuesday
Time: 7pm-7:30pmET

Student Peer Mentoring Club
Meetings: 4th Tuesday
Time: 7:30pm-8pmET

Join Today!

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