



Lisa

East Palo Alto Working Scholars

BA in Business

Lisa is a resident of East Palo Alto and is the city's current vice mayor. She previously earned associate's degrees in marketing management and business administration, but had not been able to earn her bachelor's degree.

Lisa explained that the city of East Palo Alto had been talking about bachelor's degree attainment and what it means for their community since many of their residents do not have a bachelor's degree. They felt Working Scholars could fulfill a large need and be a good fit for the community.

"To be able to work towards getting a bachelor's degree means a lot," she said. "It is going to be amazing to be able to say that individuals have their bachelor's degree so that they could then apply for jobs that require a bachelor's degree."

East Palo Alto residents will not only be able to increase their career mobility, but Lisa said it will also help the community fight off gentrification.

"Someone with a bachelor's degree will be able to, perhaps, apply for a job that will allow them to stay in the community that they love," Lisa said.

The program is now giving Lisa the opportunity to earn the degree that she previously wasn't able to.

"I decided to become a Working Scholar because I always knew I wanted to get my bachelor's degree, but after investing in my children it was not something that was affordable to me," she said.

The Working Scholars program, which she

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described as “an innovative, no-cost to the student bachelor’s degree pathway,” fits into Lisa’s busy schedule.

“When I started the program, I found it so easy to just be online and study and to take a quiz and to have time to do the program,” Lisa said. “I’m able to study at any time and get lessons done.”

Being able to study at any time means Lisa can even make progress towards her degree when she’s just having a hard time sleeping or on the road.

“At two or three in the morning when I’m awake and can’t sleep and I know I want to get something done, I will do some work,” she said. “I often study or listen to lessons in the car when I’m traveling.”

Lisa added, “As the vice mayor of a city and a person who has a full-time job, it’s sometimes kind of difficult to find the time, but when I can sit in between meetings and pull out my phone and go through a lesson, it’s very helpful. This program fits into a busy working person’s schedule. It’s an education on demand when you’re ready for it.”

Lisa said the success coaches she works with as part of the Working Scholars program have been great.

“Katie is my coach and, unlike a traditional college, I can talk to Katie or send her an email and get an answer at any point,” she said. “She has been very instrumental with helping me to get the degree pathway and stay on track.”