

# “Upgrading opens doors to success”

Mike first enrolled in the Academic Upgrading (AU) program to pick up a few courses. At the time, he wasn't sure what direction he wanted to take. He drifted in and out of the program while gaining hands-on work experience. It wasn't until many years later that Mike realized he wanted a career, not just a job — and that he would need to return to school to make that happen.

Mike came back to the Academic Upgrading program with a new sense of determination. He recognized that work experience alone would not open the doors he wanted, and he was ready to take his next step. This time, he also embraced something he had previously avoided — acknowledging his learning differences.

With support from AU staff, he accessed learning accommodations that helped him work at his own pace and communicate more effectively in writing. Instead of seeing these tools as barriers, Mike saw them as a path forward.

The AU team connected Mike with college faculty to explore programs that matched his strengths. With guidance, he discovered that the trades — and specifically mechanical work — aligned perfectly with his hands-on abilities and interests. Over the next 15 months, he completed two English courses and five math courses, earning the prerequisites needed for the Millwright program at Sault College.



After successfully completing his first semester in the Millwright program, Mike transferred into the Mechanical Engineering Technician - Manufacturing program where he's achieving strong grades.

“The faculty and staff in Academic Upgrading showed me that I had the smarts and could brush up the skills required to pursue college and a career,” Mike says. “I now have the confidence I need to use my strong suits and skills to not just succeed but to excel.”

For anyone considering returning to school, Mike advises: “Find your strengths and get an education. Academic Upgrading opens doors to success.”

— Heather Ferguson, Sault College