Scott Cook

As chair of the Emergency Medical Services Department at Southern Maine Community College (SMCC), Scott Cook works with other clinical and faculty members in the design and delivery of 20 courses in the EMS program curriculum. He has just completed his first year in this full-time faculty position.

Scott’s undergraduate degree is in Applied Science with a minor in Behavioral Science. He was previously a paramedic in the Waterville area, and taught courses for the public as well as for the hospital, such as the American Heart Associations CPR/First Aid classes, EMT continuing education, and community health classes. At the same time, Scott was also working at SMCC as an adjunct instructor. But it wasn’t until he was in USM’s Adult and Higher Education program that Scott realized he wanted to move toward teaching.

Scott had heard about the AHED program through friends and a web search, but he was an hour and a half away, so it wasn’t convenient. When he found out the program offered online courses, he decided to apply. Once he met with Karen and Mike, he felt the program would be a good fit.

Having taken a few online courses, Scott felt comfortable with this format. However, there was some adjustment to the difference in structure and framework moving from undergraduate into graduate level study. The History and Philosophy of Adult Education, for example, was a well-structured course, but “you have a lot of freedom to move within the framework.” Education isn’t so black and white he said, “learning is wide open.”

The wide-open freedom gave Scott the opportunity to explore and get comfortable with self-directed learning. Mike Brady and Karen Day were very supportive and influential during Scott’s program. Mike offered new perspectives and “opened doors to explore new pathways, and Karen pushed when I needed it,” especially in The Adult Learner course. The nature of the program’s framework meant Scott needed to develop organizational skills, which were key to becoming more comfortable with self-directed learning.
“The Adult Education program provided the resources and tools to learn how to facilitate and understand adult learners,” Scott says. He counts the Facilitating Adult Learning course, and a presentation by Stephen Brookfield among the influential learning experiences during his degree program that guided him to his current career.

Scott’s program at SMCC offers a two-year Associates Degree in Paramedicine, along with single semester EMT courses. Working with National EMS Standards Scott and his colleagues design and deliver courses to 15 paramedic and 75 EMT students each year. Although the current courses are 100% classroom based, Scott’s department is now working on identifying courses that can be converted to an online format.

USM’s Adult and Higher Education program enabled Scott to make a significant and positive transition in his career. He recommends the program to “any person that works with people on a regular basis – medical, education, HRD, employee development, public speaking – there are so many options.”

For more information about the USM Adult and Higher Education program please contact Graduate Admission at (207) 780-4386 or visit usm.maine.edu/adult-education