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Photo by Gayle Anderson

Brady Branstetter's path from Service Attendant to director of Facilities Maintenance included earning college degrees through MTA's Tuition Assistance Program

Tuition Assistance Program Paid Off Big Time for Brady Branstetter

By KIM SIM

(March 5, 2004) Brady Branstetter is one of the [Tuition Assistance Program's](#) success stories — an example of how persistence and hard work pays off.

Branstetter spent nine years obtaining his associate's and bachelor's degrees, all while working full-time. He received his bachelor's degree in Business Administration Management in 2002, after taking his first classes in 1993.

During that time, Branstetter worked his way up from a service attendant in West Valley Division 8 to Revenue Equipment supervisor to manager positions in Facilities and Wayside Systems. Now, he is director of Facilities Maintenance for MTA.

"When you're competing for advancements, the degree can really make a difference," he says.

Juggling a full-time job with school can be difficult, Branstetter acknowledged, but not impossible.

'Reaping the rewards'

"The reality is, it was two classes a semester," says Branstetter, who

took an average of six units every semester. "It was doable. I am now reaping the rewards of having done so."

With first his associate's degree from Moorpark College, a community college in Ventura, and then his bachelor's degree from Cal State Northridge, Branstetter moved up the employment ladder.

He applied for and landed a job as Revenue Equipment supervisor after receiving his associate's degree.

Branstetter got his current job as a director after completing his bachelor's degree. He says he would not even have been considered for the position without that degree, since it was a minimum requirement for consideration.

[Read more on the MTA Tuition Assistance Program](#)

"In a large place like the MTA, I think proof of education is more important in order to make decisions about promotions," Branstetter says. "If you are competing for a position, if all else is equal, the degree is going to make you successful."

It's been worth it

Although it took Branstetter a long time to get his degree, it has been worth it.

"In my particular case, the education has been very fruitful and produced results," he says. "Nine years sounded like an impossibility. As I look back, it seems like a long time."

He realizes, however, that "the time is going to march on whether you start or don't start into an educational program. My advice is to just start. Getting started is perhaps the hardest part. If you don't start, you'll never get there."

Marion Colston-Fayyaz lauded the achievements of Branstetter and others who have advanced their careers by pushing themselves.

"Those are your success stories," says Colston, Director of Strategic Organization for the unit that oversees the Tuition Assistance Program. "These are people we would like to celebrate."