



Selena Blankenship is a graduate student in UGA's top-ranked adult education program. Additionally, she works as a graduate assistant, a scheduler at Clarke Central High School, a community volunteer, a wife and a mother of three children.

### Selena Blankenship

Doctoral student Selena Blankenship knows how to juggle a busy load. She is a former educator and aspiring school administrator who recently managed a graduate assistantship that required travel across the state, community service work, a full load of classes, and a job at Clarke Central High School. She is also a wife and mother to three children. She has received two scholarships from UGA's College of Education, and she served on a search committee for a new faculty member in her department. After graduation, she plans to teach at the college level or do organizational development work within school systems.

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[Occupational Research Group](#)

[Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy](#)

[College of Education](#)

**Expected graduation:** August 2009

**Degree Objective:** Ph.D. in adult education

**Other degrees:**

B.S.H.E. in fashion merchandising, University of Georgia

M.Ed. in human resources and organizational development, University of Georgia

**University highlights, achievements and awards**

Last year, I was the recipient of both the Ruby Maude Anderson Scholarship and the Del Jones Memorial Scholarship from the College of Education. For the past two years, I have worked as a graduate assistant with the Occupational Research Group. In this capacity, I conducted site evaluations across the state for schools with Comprehensive School Reform grants, which are funded through the Georgia Department of Education. I recently served on a national search committee for a tenure-track faculty position in the Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy

department in UGA's College of Education. I also served as a conference paper reviewer for the Academy of Human Resource Development. I am active in my community, serving as vice-president of the Greater Oconee Swim Association and as a volunteer for the Jeanette Rankin Foundation. I have presented a paper at the Academy of Human Resource Development's International Conference. The paper was co-authored by Wendy Ruona and was titled "Professional Learning Communities and Communities of Practice: A Comparison of Models." I have been initiated into both Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and Delta Kappa Gamma, an education sorority.

**Current employment:**

During the school year for the past three years, I have worked as the smaller learning communities scheduler at Clarke Central High School. This coming year, I will serve as a graduate research assistant in the department of lifelong education, administration and policy. On top of all of these paying jobs, I am a wife and a mother of three children, ages 10, 12 and 14.

**High School:** Southeast Whitfield High School

**Hometown:** Dalton, Georgia

**I chose to attend UGA because...**

...of convenience and because of the reputation of my degree program. As an undergraduate, I transferred to UGA during my sophomore year and fell in love with Athens -- and my husband, Matt. When we moved back to Athens five years ago, I knew it was my opportunity to return to school to pursue an advanced degree. I feel very fortunate to be able to continue my studies in UGA's nationally-ranked College of Education. My program, adult education, is recognized as one of the top-ranked programs in its discipline.

**My favorite things to do on campus are...**

...attend sporting events. I am a diehard Dawgs fan, and I love bringing my children to the sporting events. I also love walking through North Campus. It is just as beautiful today as it was twenty-two years ago when I came to UGA as an undergraduate.

**When I have free time, I like...**

Honestly, I have very little free time, juggling the responsibilities of my jobs, a full course load and my family. I am a certified U.S.S. swimming official, and I enjoy officiating at Athens Bulldog Swim Club and high school swim meets when I have the time. I look forward to reading for pleasure again one day, and when I have the time, I enjoy cooking, baking and entertaining friends.

**The craziest thing I've done is...**

...try to juggle three jobs, four graduate classes and maintain a relatively normal home life for my children! That was my schedule last semester! However, I think it is important for my children to see me setting goals for myself and working to achieve them.

**My favorite place to study is...**

...Jittery Joe's, at either the Five Points location or the Watkinsville location. When I am at Jittery Joe's, I don't have the distractions that I do at home and I can focus on my schoolwork. Plus, I get to enjoy the best coffee in town while doing it!

**My favorite professor is...**

...Wendy Ruona. Dr. Ruona has high expectations for her students, and the courses I have taken with her have been some of the most demanding, yet rewarding, courses I have taken at UGA. As my major professor, she advises, challenges and encourages me as I refine my dissertation topic.

**If I could share an afternoon with anyone, I would love to share it with...**

...my grandfather. He and I were very close, and he passed away six weeks before my wedding. My youngest child is very much like him, both in looks and personality, and I would love to see the two of them together.

**If I knew I could not fail, I would...**

...audition for a Broadway play. I have always loved the theater, and before I had children I was active in Athens' Town and Gown. It would be the ultimate thrill to perform in front of a sold out house night after night on the Great White Way!

**After graduation, I plan to...**

...work in an organizational development capacity within school systems and/or teach at the college level. I would like to help school leaders and faculties build capacity to implement and sustain school improvement efforts in order to help our students achieve at higher levels.

**The one UGA experience I will always remember will be...**

...my assistantship with the Occupational Research Group. My work as an evaluator has been an invaluable experience and has offered me great insight into the variety of ways schools go about the process of implementing large scale reform.