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2026-27

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4 Katie Grillo

Katie Grillo transformed a passion for storytelling and creativity into a career in Geographic Information Systems (GIS).



6 Laura Fortunato

Laura Fortunato left a 28-year federal career to build stronger communities as a nonprofit professional.



8 Mike Nolan

After 17 years in economic consulting, Mike Nolan traded spreadsheets for stainless steel tanks and discovered a new career in craft brewing.



10 Justin Longo

Justin Longo's professional path has crossed military service, Wall Street finance, and nonprofit healthcare leadership – each chapter building on the last.

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The University Police Department, in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure Act, publishes an annual report outlining its policies, functions, campus safety plans, prevention techniques, and tabulated statistics for the most recent three-year period. For a copy of the Department's Annual Report, call (804) 289-8715, write the University of Richmond Police Department, att. Jeanne Clery Crime Statistician, Special Programs Building, 31 UR Drive, University of Richmond, VA 23173 or access the report online at police.richmond.edu.

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CHECK OUT OUR AREAS OF STUDY TO SEE ALL OUR CLASSES AND PROGRAMS AND LINKS TO REGISTER



READ MORE ABOUT KATIE

BUILDING PATHWAYS: Tech, Teaching and Community

LEARN MORE ABOUT GIS PROGRAMS

KATIE GRILLO'S JOURNEY TO GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL MENTOR

KATIE GRILLO REMEMBERS GROWING UP in Storrs, Connecticut, as a life lived in motion: playgrounds, forts, bikes and — in a large blended family — a house that never quite had enough bedrooms. "This blending of families and lots of kids made for a lot of adventures," Grillo said. "I believe that this also helped turn me into the adaptable, resilient, and playful person that I am today." Those qualities would shape a career defined by creativity and connection.

Today Grillo is widely recognized in the geospatial community for her leadership and advocacy in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). But her path into the field began unpredictably: she started



GRILLO TRANSFORMED A PASSION FOR STORYTELLING AND CREATIVITY INTO A CAREER IN GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS). FROM LEADING REGIONAL GIS GROUPS TO TEACHING STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD, SHE HAS BUILT A CAREER BASED ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY.

university as an English major with a passion for creative writing. During her first semester she took British Literature and Intro to Geography. "My Geography professor was so passionate about what he did and seemed so happy and vibrant doing it," she recalled. After talking with her advisor, she changed her major to Geography and soon discovered GIS — then a relatively new undergraduate program.

"I loved the mix of geography, mapping, creativity, problem solving, art, and design," Grillo said. That intersection of technology and storytelling became the foundation of her career. Internships exposed her to GIS applications, including a formative placement with the City of Cambridge, where emerging Story Map technology reshaped how geographic information could be shared. "We created a Story Map program in the city, which was geared towards empowering city staff to use their data to create interactive map-centric stories," she explained. More than a decade later, she and colleagues have produced over a hundred Story Maps and ArcGIS Online apps to improve communication, civic engagement, and understanding.

> ***"I loved the mix of geography, mapping, creativity, problem solving, art, and design."***

Grillo's work has also reached international audiences: collaborating with academics in Ghana on mining's environmental impacts and speaking to students about Web GIS and 3D mapping; and teaching high schoolers in Panama to use web mapping tools for community projects. "This incredible group of students is working on making a positive impact in their communities," she said.

Even with technical accomplishments, Grillo emphasizes people skills. As NEARC Chair during the COVID-19 pandemic, she launched Community Events to support GIS professionals and founded the Northeast Women in GIS Chapter to foster mentorship and networking. "You have to put yourself out there in order to be seen," she urged.

She teaches in our GIS Certification program, sharing ArcGIS Online, Story Maps, 3D mapping, and career development. Recently named to the Geospatial World Rising Stars list, Grillo remains energized by teaching and empowering others. "I love that moment when you show someone a tool that can help with their project, or their dream, or their mission, and they feel the potential in themselves."



A NEW DIGITAL BADGE FOR GIS PROFESSIONALS

This badge recognizes completion of GeoAI for GIS Professionals, an intermediate workshop focused on practical artificial intelligence (AI) applications in spatial analysis and GIS workflows. Earners gain hands-on experience using AI assistants, automation tools, and introductory machine learning techniques. The program emphasizes ethical AI use, critical evaluation of outputs, and real-world integration into professional GIS practice.

The four-session online workshop introduces GIS professionals to practical applications of AI in spatial analysis and data workflows. Learn how AI assistants and GeoAI techniques support tasks like data processing, analysis, and interpretation, with attention to ethical considerations and appropriate use cases. The program provides hands-on exploration of contemporary tools that can enhance everyday GIS practice.

From the Fed *to the Frontlines*

FOR NEARLY THREE DECADES, LAURA FORTUNATO was a trusted communications strategist and spokesperson for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, translating complex economic policy into clear language for the public. Today she's traded press briefings and economic outlooks for hands-on community advocacy, energized by the change.

"I love connecting with people and connecting them to knowledge that expands their thinking and enhances their community's wellbeing," Fortunato said. That drive—shaped by a childhood in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, a large extended family, and a Catholic education—has guided her from newsroom deadlines to nonprofit development work. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Villanova University, studying communications and political science and embracing a commitment to service.

At the Richmond Fed she rose through the ranks and served as spokesperson for 15 years, using varied communications channels to tell the Fed's story, forge relationships across its five-state region, and engage the public and media. In 2024 she stepped away from federal service to make a more immediate local impact, transitioning to community advocacy for nonprofits in Virginia and North Carolina.

In 2025 Fortunato served as development associate at Northstar Academy, a Glen Allen, Virginia, nonprofit school for students with disabilities. There she focused on fundraising, communications, and outreach, playing a key role in organizing the school's major fundraiser, The Illumination Gala. "The school is amazing in its commitment to helping students develop and use their talents in unique ways," she said.

Her volunteer work reflects the same ethic: building beds for children with Sleep in Heavenly Peace, judging student speech competitions with The Richmond Forum, and reviewing grants for underserved neighborhoods through NextUp. "We each have individual talents that collectively can create strong, stable networks that help youth develop resilience," she noted.

> ***"I love connecting with people and connecting them to knowledge that expands their thinking and enhances their community's wellbeing."***

Fortunato now runs Fortunato Consulting LLC, supporting nonprofits with communications, and recently joined the board of the Virginia Press Women's Foundation. Her nonprofit transition was shaped by the University of Richmond's Institute on Philanthropy (IOP). She first attended the Grant Writing Institute in fall 2024, then returned in February 2025 for an AI-Assisted Grant Writing workshop, gaining practical skills in grant research, writing, donor relations, and using AI to enhance storytelling.

She believes the IOP equips leaders and community advocates to address today's challenges. Looking ahead, Fortunato plans to apply her strategic communications background to nonprofit work and pursue a community project linking her passion for swimming with drowning-prevention advocacy.



How Laura Fortunato Left a 28-Year Federal Career to Build Stronger Communities from the Ground Up

READ MORE ABOUT LAURA



From Boardroom to Brewhouse

MIKE NOLAN'S RESKILLING JOURNEY IN BREWING

FOR MIKE NOLAN, the path to a brighter tomorrow wasn't a straight line but a winding journey shaped by curiosity and a deep desire to reskill. After nearly two decades excelling in economic consulting, he took a daring leap toward an entirely new career: professional brewing.

Nolan's professional life began conventionally enough. Armed with an undergraduate degree in economics, a Master of Economics and an MBA, he carved out a successful 17-year career at an economic consulting firm. Rising to Vice President, he advised law firms and their clients navigating complex litigation. But despite steady advancement, Nolan felt a stirring for change — a calling driven not just by financial success but by personal fulfillment and creativity.

That calling took root through a seemingly simple gift: a 1-gallon Brooklyn Brew Shop kit from his wife. After brewing his first few gallons, Nolan's curiosity deepened. He purchased more equipment to brew 5-gallon batches and began dedicating himself to learning the art and science of brewing.

"I started reading homebrewing books and joined a local homebrewing club," Nolan explained. What began as a casual hobby soon ignited a passion that simmered quietly for years until he realized brewing could be more than a pastime; it could be a new path forward.

> ***"The program gave me a much deeper understanding of how the commercial brewing industry operates."***

With no prior professional brewing experience and a challenging labor market, Nolan enrolled in the University of Richmond's Beer Brewer Professional Certificate (BBPC) program. This immersive course provided a strong academic foundation in brewing industry principles and served as a vital bridge from novice enthusiast to knowledgeable craft professional. "The BBPC program gave me a much deeper understanding of how the commercial brewing industry operates," Nolan said.

Hands-on field days — where theory met practice in bustling brewhouses — deepened his technical

skills, from yeast counting to sanitation protocols, and connected him with industry professionals who became invaluable mentors. “Our field day at Bingo Beer Co. was especially significant,” Nolan recalled. “My cohort spent a day with the head brewer and his team, and afterward, I was welcomed back to learn more about brewhouse operations.”

This practical experience helped Nolan land his first brewing job at Triple Crossing. He started as a cellarman, was promoted to shift brewer within six months, and by the summer of 2025 had assumed the role of Lead Brewer. “As Lead Brewer, I evaluate ingredients, develop recipes, maintain equipment, create and refine brewhouse standard operating procedures, and train new team members,” he shared.

Nolan has led the launch of a 7-barrel pilot system, brewed several of his own recipes, and poured his creations at regional festivals including Stone and Snallygaster in Washington, D.C. He credits the BBPC with opening doors in Richmond’s brewing industry. Nolan’s story is a reminder that it’s never too late to pivot, reskill, and pursue what truly ignites your spirit — and that sometimes the most fulfilling tomorrows come from embracing change today.





Driven by compassion, grounded in purpose



FOR SHANI BUCHHOLZ, learning has been the through line of her life.

“My education has taught me less what to think and more how to think,” Buchholz reflected, and that curiosity has guided career moves, family decisions, and community work.

Buchholz was the first in her family to attend college, earning a bachelor’s in sociology and anthropology from Virginia Commonwealth University. After raising twin daughters and working in information technology, she returned to school — earning a Master of Liberal Arts with a focus in horrific literature and a post-bachelor’s certificate in information systems from the University of Richmond.

“Reinvention through education is possible at any stage of life,” she said.

Her appetite for learning extends beyond degrees. Buchholz points to continuing professional education courses — from grant writing to collaborative communication — as tools for continuous skills development and deepening impact.

“I’ve come to truly appreciate how important these classes can be to upskill or reskill,” she noted.

That learning informs Buchholz’s work as a program coordinator on the Professional Education team at the University of Richmond School of Professional & Continuing Studies, where she values colleagues who combine competence with empathy.

“There is something special about being surrounded by people who are both capable and kind,” she said. “Every day, my colleagues demonstrate their passion for helping others continue their learning path.”

Outside the office, she channels curiosity into writing, crocheting, and a forthcoming fiction project.

“Becoming a published author remains a dream I have never let go of,” Buchholz shared.

Through study and service, Buchholz hopes her legacy will be quiet and practical: a life spent expanding opportunity, lifting others and proving that education can change both a life and a community.

“If there is one impact I hope to leave behind,” Buchholz said, “it is that I cared.”

READ MORE ABOUT SHANI



READ MORE ABOUT JUSTIN

Leading with Purpose

SERVICE, GROWTH AND THE POWER OF LEARNING

JUSTIN LONGO'S PROFESSIONAL PATH has crossed military service, Wall Street finance, and nonprofit healthcare leadership – each chapter building on the last.

As Senior Director at Daily Planet Health Services, Longo combines financial expertise with a passion for problem-solving in service to the community. His experience in the Community Health Center University (CHCU) Leadership Program at the University of Richmond reinforced the importance of communication, emotional intelligence, and peer collaboration while helping shape his vision for future executive leadership. Focused on innovation, education, and impact, Longo continues to embrace every opportunity to learn, lead, and give back.

Justin Longo's story is one of steady ascent—shaped by a military upbringing, sharpened by service, and propelled by a restless appetite for learning. The youngest of three and the only son in a Marine Corps family, Longo moved frequently across the U.S.; Virginia, where he lived the longest, became the place where his adult life took shape.

Following family tradition, Longo served as an infantryman in the U.S. Army. "That, I feel, created the additional structure and discipline needed to complete, and also afford, my higher education," he reflected. Those years of discipline paid off: after completing two undergraduate degrees, he was hired as an analyst for a Debt Capital Markets Exchange in Manhattan.

From Wall Street, Longo shifted toward mission-driven work. Back in Richmond, Virginia, he became Director of Finance for Daily Planet Health Services, a nonprofit community health center, and used his network to help small businesses and nonprofits with process updates and financial projects. "It felt great being able to solve problems for organizations that were doing so much for the community," he said.

When the opportunity to join the CHCU program arose, Longo didn't hesitate. "Education was an expected pursuit in my family—any time we had an opportunity to learn, we took it," he explained. The program arrived at a perfect moment: relevant to his role and well-timed in his career. What surprised him most was the candidness of peers. "It was refreshing to hear the stories from other organizations… and most surprisingly they were all so willing to tackle some of the hardest conversations that leaders can engage in—political, socioeconomic, burnout, etc.," Longo recalled.

That ongoing peer dialogue became one of the program's most valuable outcomes, producing practical solutions he adapted at Daily Planet. "It was reassuring to hear from the leaders of other organizations that they are experiencing or noticing the same trends and patterns my organization was feeling," he said.

> ***"It was reassuring to hear from the leaders of other organizations that they are experiencing or noticing the same trends and patterns my organization is feeling."***

Modules that left a big imprint weren't always technical. "The communications module was exactly what I needed," Longo admitted. The program also revealed personal indicators—his communication and emotional intelligence rankings confirmed suspected weaknesses and guided targeted improvement.

Professionally, impact came quickly: weeks after acceptance into CHCU, he was promoted to Senior Director. The program also reinforced his teaching ability. "Having a chance to help explain things I had some experience in…helped me realize I was comfortable enough to teach," he said.

Looking ahead, Longo is focused on modernization and continued education—exploring AI to augment data skills and considering a PhD. He stays connected with CHCU classmates, gave a live testimonial for the 2026 cohort, and urges others: "Use this course to not only stay ahead of relevant topics but also express yourself freely." Asked what his younger self would think now, he quipped, "Probably that I can still continue climbing."

The Community Health Center University (CHCU) Leadership Program is leadership program offered in partnership with Virginia Community Healthcare Association (VCHA) and the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (VAFCC). Registration for the program is managed through VCHA.

This one-year program targets emerging leaders from community health centers, free health clinics and other safety-net providers across Virginia.Participants study a curriculum that includes both in-person and remote seminars and practical activities. The program offers learning experiences, resources, and support to develop and strengthen leadership skills for emerging leaders.

The CHCU Leadership Program consists of learning sessions (virtual and face-to-face meetings) and one-to-one leadership coaching throughout the year. Face-to-face sessions are held on the University of Richmond campus. The program addresses the demands for developing leaders in healthcare organizations to help support the growth of their organization's operations, succession planning, and leadership development in participants.



Custom leadership program strengthens nursing at Sheltering Arms Institute

Sheltering Arms Institute
A collaboration with VCUHealth

A trusted text message led to a tailored leadership program that Sheltering Arms Institute says is already reshaping nursing culture at its post-acute care system.

Kelly Merricks, president of the Sheltering Arms Foundation, contacted the University of Richmond after seeing a related healthcare leadership model and recognizing the university as a trusted partner. Sheltering Arms Institute faced a common but acute challenge: nurses, who provide round-the-clock patient care, often have limited opportunities for professional development and meaningful collaboration across teams.

University of Richmond facilitators Laura Fitrer and Tom Parfitt from the School of Professional and Continuing Studies led a November 2024 working session that encouraged the partners to name specific obstacles—team dynamics, burnout, communication breakdowns and a need for practical, applied learning. That meeting shaped a six-month Leadership in Post-Acute Care program featuring a core curriculum, an advanced leadership track, and a Leadership Impact Project tied to workplace improvements.

"The program intentionally grounds leadership growth in the real-world complexities of post-acute care," said Misty Woodward, chief nursing officer at Sheltering Arms Institute. "We wanted leaders to actively apply learning to real challenges within their own units."

The curriculum covered emotional intelligence, difficult conversations, delegation, coaching and interdisciplinary communication. University of Richmond arranged dedicated learning sessions, alternating full-group and advanced discussions, and recruited instructors with relevant lived experience.

Students gave high marks and session evaluations averaged above 4.9 out of 5. Testimonials praised engaging instructors, interactive formats, and practical tools—especially in emotional intelligence and conflict resolution—and valued the chance to connect with colleagues across units. "We actually voiced our opinions on how to address these situations and management responded in real time. We felt like we were heard," one participant wrote.

Sheltering Arms Institute leaders view the inaugural cohort as proof the approach works and have asked for an expanded pathway, including digital badging and a three-level leadership pipeline. "Our Nurse Leadership for Post-Acute Nursing program is an investment in the future of SAI Nursing," said Susie Zimmerman, director of nursing. "It fosters engagement, strengthens relationships and creates a sense of camaraderie that extends beyond day-to-day responsibilities."

University of Richmond officials say the move from a single cohort to a continuous pipeline shows the partnership succeeded in designing a solution rooted in the organization's culture and workforce realities.

The generosity of the August Heid Trust established by Teresa J.N. Heid and the William R. Kenan Charitable Trust is making ongoing leadership education and training possible for the Sheltering Arms Institute nursing team and helping cultivate the next generation of nursing leaders.



READ MORE ABOUT THE NEW IOP IMPACT INSTITUTE

The new IOP Impact Institute

The University of Richmond's Institute on Philanthropy (IOP) has reimagined its Nonprofit Leadership Institute as the Impact Institute for Mission-Driven Professionals, shifting from topic-based instruction to a practical, workplace-integrated leadership progression.

Designed for emerging and mid-level nonprofit staff and based on feedback and guidance from the IOP Advisory Board, the refreshed program emphasizes applied learning, cohort-based peer work, structured reflection and a Leadership Impact Project that lets participants practice new behaviors on the job. Advisors and facilitators redesigned the curriculum to address a common gap: staff promoted for technical skill often lack preparation for leading people, projects, and change.

The curriculum moves deliberately from self-awareness and emotional intelligence to communication, conflict navigation, strategic values-aligned leadership, team leadership, and execution. Instructors were chosen for practical experience to keep lessons grounded.

Organizers frame the Impact Institute as a leadership accelerator intended to strengthen middle-level capacity, reduce communication breakdowns, improve retention, and lower burnout, delivering immediate organizational value through applied tools and an integrated project that reinforces learning in real workplace settings.

The first cohort begins in January 2027. Registration is now open.



NEW CLASSES IN DIGITAL MARKETING

In an era where online presence dictates brand success, digital marketing emerges as a pivotal skill set. Effective navigation of the digital realm can amplify reach, engage audiences, and drive tangible results, making it indispensable for modern businesses.

Our recently expanded online curriculum is tailored to reflect the ever-evolving digital landscape. It delves into the intricacies of digital marketing, imparting strategies that harness the power of online platforms, analytics, and targeted campaigns. Furthermore, our modules on customer experience ensure that professionals are equipped to design and implement user-centered solutions, creating seamless and memorable interactions for every online visitor.

While the primary goal of our digital marketing courses is to provide actionable skills, they also draw inspiration from broader educational principles. This ensures learners not only gain technical expertise but also appreciate the importance of values like care, precision, and innovation in crafting meaningful online experiences.

spcs.richmond.edu/dmpro



SPCS now offers digital badges

We're committed to providing you with the tools necessary to achieve your professional goals and we understand that communicating your credentials in an ever-expanding online marketplace can be challenging. A digital badge from the University of Richmond is a visual representation that the earner has accomplished specific program outcomes that are identified by the badge.

Learn more about badging and the badges we offer online at ***spcs.richmond.edu/badges***.

A Note from the Director

CHECK OUT OUR AREAS OF STUDY TO SEE ALL OUR CLASSES AND PROGRAMS AND LINKS TO REGISTER

Dear Lifelong Learners,

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Professional Education (PE) at the University of Richmond School of Professional & Continuing Studies I'm reminded that lifelong learning is not an abstract idea for the PE team. It is something many of us have lived and continue to pursue.



My own career path has moved through several chapters, from professional kitchens to culinary education, to leadership in professional and continuing education. Each step was shaped by learning, curiosity, and a willingness to take risks and grow into something new. These experiences have made me personally committed to creating real opportunities for others who are seeking their own next chapter.

I'm fortunate to work with colleagues who bring that same belief to their work every day. Our team understands that education can open doors, build confidence, and help people uncover new possibilities for themselves. For example, our program Coordinator Shani Buchholz's journey from first-generation college graduate to graduate student, writer, and advocate for compassion and opportunity, is a meaningful reminder that structured learning is often both personally and professionally transformative.

That shared commitment to providing educational opportunity shapes the programs we create, the partners we engage, and the learners we serve. We know that adults come to us with full lives, rich experiences, and goals that matter deeply to them and their communities. Our work is to meet them where they are, offer programming that is relevant and meaningful, and help them move forward with purpose.

For 30 years, PE has supported learners as they pursued new skills, new credentials, new careers, and new possibilities. As we look ahead, our team remains committed to honoring that legacy by building programs that resonate with lifelong learners and address personal growth and professional goals for students across our region and beyond.

Sincerely,

Thomas Parfitt

Tom Parfitt
Director of Professional Education

Celebrating 30 YEARS

Spider Must LIST

Here are five professional education programs we recommend to help you keep current or get ahead.



1 COMMUNITY-BUILDING CIRCLES — NEW!

Grounded in restorative justice principles, this highly experiential course invites participants to engage directly in Circle as both participants and facilitators. Through guided practice, reflection, and structured design work, participants develop the skills and mindsets needed to create inclusive, accountable spaces where individuals can speak authentically, listen deeply, and build stronger relationships.

Who is this program for?

- Team leaders and managers
- Educators
- HR and organizational leaders
- Community and nonprofit professionals

This is the foundational course in the 3-level Certificate in Restorative & Democratic Circle Leadership. Level 2, Peacemaking Circles, launches in spring 2027.

spcs.richmond.edu/circleleadership

2



SHRM CERTIFICATION PREP+

SHRM Certification Prep+ is the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) comprehensive review of the entire body of HR knowledge that prepares you to take either the SHRM-CP© or SHRM-SCP© exam.

This intensive program combines expert instruction with the SHRM Certification Prep System so you will learn faster, retain more knowledge and stay on track for exam success.

We offer SHRM Certification Prep+ each fall and spring semester. In response to student feedback, we rotate among online and in-person learning options throughout the year.

spcs.richmond.edu/shrm

3 GRASSROOTS LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

In addition to covering the history of lobbying, students will examine how the legislative process works, key tactics used by groups in order to promote different issues, building coalitions, relationship building and ethical concerns.

Eight Modules
Live Online via Zoom
13-week Term

Certificate holders will leave the program with the skills needed to step into grassroots lobbying or professional advocacy roles in most any field as well as the knowledge to support personal causes through grassroots lobbying or advocacy.

spcs.richmond.edu/grassroots

4 GIS: GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Dive deep into the world of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) with our specialized courses tailored for professionals who aim to harness the power of geospatial technologies. We offer a comprehensive six-month GIS Professional Certificate, delivered entirely online, that equips graduates to \ work toward GIS Fundamentals Foundation certification from Esri.

Our Introduction to GIS course gives a swift, yet comprehensive overview of the system, making sure you grasp its basics an understand its significance in various industries today.GeoAI introduces GIS professionals to practical applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in spatial analysis and data workflows.

Intro course offered in June. Professional Certificate offered each October. AI course offered each Spring..

spcs.richmond.edu/gis

5 IMPACT INSTITUTE FOR MISSION-DRIVEN PROFESSIONALS – NEW!



IOP's Impact Institute for Mission-Driven Professionals is a cohort-based leadership development program designed for professionals in mission-driven organizations who are preparing to take on greater responsibility, influence, and leadership. The program focuses on building practical leadership skills through applied learning, structured reflection, and a workplace-based project that connects directly to real organizational challenges.

In addition to earning a Certificate from the University of Richmond, students who complete this Institute successfully will earn the Mission-Driven Leadership Practice digital badge.

Launches January 2027!

spcs.richmond.edu/iop >>> ***Then Click on Impact Institute***

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Our Paralegal Professional Certificate pairs rigorous training with flexible, stackable credentials, so students can launch or advance their careers while balancing work and life."

— Jamelle S. Wilson
SPCS Dean

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Delivery: Live online, cohort model with asynchronous activities
Schedule: Spring 2027 cohort runs January 11–December 16, 2027
Class Times: Mondays and Thursdays, 6:30–9 p.m. ET online via Zoom
Cost: $5,995 total program cost— ***Save $2,000 with this special introductory price***
Module price: $1,498.75 each— ***Save $500 with this special introductory price***
Registration Deadline: December 21, 2026 for the Spring 2027 cohort





New Paralegal Professional Certificate Begins in January 2027

The fully online program consists of four sequential, eight–week modules — Paralegal I, Legal Research, Legal Writing and Litigation — that build knowledge and skills progressively in paralegal fundamentals, research, writing, and litigation practice. Students who complete the Professional Certificate are also eligible to enroll in one Advanced Paralegal Studies Certificate at no additional cost. Graduates receive a 25% lifetime discount on additional Advanced Certificates. Planned advanced certificate specialties include business and contract law, AI and electronic discovery, real estate law, torts, wills/trusts/estates, family law, environmental law, employment law, and criminal law.

"Paralegal professionals are taking on a growing range of responsibilities in law offices, and employers are looking for individuals with practical, job–ready skills," said Jamelle S. Wilson, dean of the School of Professional and Continuing Studies. "Our Paralegal Professional Certificate pairs rigorous training with flexible, stackable credentials, so students can launch or advance their careers while balancing work and life."

The Paralegal Professional Certificate does not carry college credit but awards continuing education units (CEUs), a University of Richmond professional certificate, and a digital badge.

The program is aimed at aspiring paralegals, career changers, legal professionals seeking formal credentialing, and those interested in legal technology, AI, and emerging practice areas. The program is open enrollment, and students may pay for the full pathway at registration or pay per module; eligibility for the included Advanced Certificate is contingent on payment of the full Professional Certificate tuition (either paid in full at registration or through accumulated module payments equaling the total fee). Students who have paid in full may enroll in the included Advanced Certificate before completing all four modules.

The program leverages the University of Richmond resources and reputation with a career–focused curriculum aligned with employer needs. Its stackable credentials, evening live online schedule for working adults, and emphasis on future–focused topics — such as AI and e–discovery — are intended to help students pivot into high–need legal specialties.