

Santosh Attar

For Santosh Attar, Adjunct Instructor of Accounting, the road to Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) began in her hometown of Bangalore, India. Attar excelled in school and thrived in the highly competitive educational atmosphere of graduate school earning her MBA by age 20. At the age of 21 Attar was teaching graduate classes in business and accounting.

In 1997 Attar and her husband, a computer technician, came to Cleveland under sponsorship of his sister and her family. Attar's nieces attended classes at Tri-C West and Attar was enchanted by the campus and its students.

Attar missed teaching and wanted to teach at Tri-C. Knowing she needed more in the way of credentials to teach college level classes, Attar enrolled in the Graduate Business School at Cleveland State and earned her degree in accounting. She worked part-time at Chancellor University and Lakeland Community College gaining experience in teaching American students and working on her English speaking skills.

Through the persistent sending in of her resume and applying for teaching positions Attar was hired to teach a section of Introduction to Business Math. Her success in that class led to teaching Advanced Accounting. Her career at Tri-C was off to a good start.

The first in her family to attend college, Attar readily identified with her students who were often the first in their family to go on to higher education. Unlike students in India, however, whose only job was to go to school, American students had jobs, families and a social life along with their studies. Attar had to juggle her teaching style and expectations to meet the needs of her students.

"My fellow faculty, department chairs and deans were of tremendous help to me," said Attar. "They were so supportive in giving me strategies and methods to help my students. I could not have done it without their support and encouragement."

This resulted in immediate rewards in classroom performance. "Students don't care how much you know," said Attar, "Until they know how much you care." The caring on the part of this teacher was obvious.

Her classroom success and her background in global business affairs and values resulted in her being part of a consortium of 18 Community Colleges and Ohio State University in developing an International Business Curriculum and hub for information in that area. It also led to the attention of the Ford Motor Company and an offer to lure her away to work for them.

"Teaching is my passion," said Attar, "Not managing. I feel inspired by my colleagues and would not trade them for anything. My heart and my happiness are here at Tri-C."