Patty Robinson said she began her college career “as a community college student. ... I know firsthand how community colleges can change people’s lives. With the mentorship I experienced with my first sociology instructor, I decided to major in sociology, earn an advanced degree and return to the community college to teach.”

It’s not often that you hear about a student who makes so many decisions based upon his or her first mentorship, but, according to Robinson, “I wanted to give back to the system that helped me succeed.”

And give back she did. She went on to receive her Ph.D. in sociology at the University of California, Davis, and taught several years at Sacramento City College before moving on to College of the Canyons in 1999. At COC, she has taught sociology classes and served as department chair before moving into administration. Along the way, she developed an interest in the area of aging. As a result, she worked hard to build a program at COC addressing this topic – better known as SHARP: Skills for Healthy Aging, Resources and Programs. In addition, she continues to network with others interested in the field of aging to assist the campus and community.

Robinson says the most challenging part of her job is not having enough hours in the day to complete all the things she wishes to accomplish. On the other hand, she says, “The best part of my job involves working with people—building relationships. I love my faculty, as well as the students I work with on a daily basis! Honestly, I can’t think of a better job.”

**REAL JOBS NEED REAL SKILLS!**

*Career Technical Education Programs*
If you are a caring person looking for a recession-proof career path, then a career in healthcare may be something worth considering, and you may want to look into the Skills for Healthy Aging Resources and Programs (SHARP) Certificate Program offered by College of the Canyons.

Ideal candidates for the SHARP certificate include: students seeking job-skill preparation for a career in care for the aging, or those seeking supplemental skills while waiting to pursue advanced degrees for a career in health professions or related fields; unemployed and self-employed people seeking skill building for job acquisition; individuals who work with older adults; and current aging network service providers seeking staff development opportunities for employees.

“SHARP is a one-of-a-kind certificate educational opportunity and is the first program of its kind in the nation,” said Patty Robinson, dean of the social sciences and business division. “It is designed to prepare personnel to work in organizations assisting older adults, including those sites offering or planning to offer Evidence-Based Health Promotion (EBHP) programs for people of any age afflicted with chronic disease conditions.”

According to the Aging Labor Force Study conducted by the California Social Work Education Center, most employees in public social services do not have any formal training related to aging. Sixty percent of California county welfare departments have no staff with formal training in aging, and 61 percent of aging network services agencies lack any employees with formal training in aging.

In response to this shortage, Robinson said, “SHARP addresses the need to develop a well-prepared workforce to effectively develop, offer, manage and evaluate the proliferation of EBHP programs that are rapidly becoming the future of our community-based, long-term care support system.”

The industry has no shortage of potential employment opportunities, including senior centers, hospitals/health clinics/HMOs, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations and senior housing facilities, as well as the opportunity to become independently employed.

Potential positions include: EBHP coordinator; project manager; administrator; resident service coordinator; activities coordinator; community health worker; and health program manager. With additional academic studies in fields such as sociology, health, nursing, psychology and gerontology, emphasizing aging issues, one can pursue an advanced degree. Additional career options may involve working directly with or on behalf of older adults in areas such as direct care, counseling, planning and investments, health promotion/program development, research, community-based services, education, policy/advocacy, law, consulting or business.

What about the future of this industry?

“Demographics say it all. The baby boomers are turning 65, with more than 10,000 boomers joining the ranks of ‘older adult’ status each day of every year until 2029,” Robinson said. “This cohort will make up 25 percent of the U.S. population by 2025. The older population is also growing increasingly diverse in race, ethnicity, education and income. This aging and diversification carries significant national education policy implications, requiring increased attention to preparing workers with expertise and skills to provide care and services to older adults.”

For more information about this program, contact Patty Robinson at Patty.Robinson@Canyons.edu or (661) 362-3992.
Students enrolled in the SHARP Certificate Program have the option of completing the certificate in one semester; or, if they choose, they can spread classes out over one year. The program consists of four courses, as well as 60 hours of internship. Class sections include GERO 101: Introduction to Healthy Aging; GERO 102: Health Promotion: Behavior Change Theories and Practices; GERO 103: Health Promotion: Program Implementation; GERO 104: Health Promotion: Fieldwork Practicum; and CWE-GERO 188. All classes build on each other and must be taken in sequential order. GERO 104 serves as the capstone course to the program, as students participate in community fieldsites working directly with older adults. The program is offered during the evening and has attracted many working adults. If classes are taken throughout the year, it is recommended that GERO 101 and GERO 102 be taken together. In addition, GERO 103, GERO 104, and CWE-GERO 188 are “linked,” and students cannot enroll in one section without being enrolled in the others. GERO 101 is also offered during the day, since we hope to introduce younger students to the field of aging.

A large component of the SHARP program includes hands-on training through internships and Cooperative Work Experience Education (CWEE). Once students complete the first two courses of the certificate program, including GERO 101 and GERO 102, they are then required to enroll in GERO 103 and GERO 104. In addition, they must complete 60 hours of internship credit, once enrolled in GERO 104. Eligible students participate in an internship fair and select a host site, based on personal and organizational interests. GERO 104 provides a field practicum class whereby students discuss course-related topics based on weekly internship experiences. College of the Canyons prides itself in partnering with the community to provide relevant opportunities for our students. These internships are a vital part of the SHARP program and what sets this program apart. Below are samples of just some of the internship host sites where SHARP students have enjoyed applying their new skills and gaining hands-on experience.

### Employer Location

- Alicia Broadous-Duncan MultiPurpose Senior Center San Fernando Valley
- Arthritis Foundation Downtown Los Angeles
- Assistance League Hollywood Senior Multipurpose Center Los Angeles
- Facey Medical Mission Hills
- Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles North Hollywood
- Joslyn Adult Center Burbank
- Motion Picture & Television Fund San Fernando Valley
- Pacific Region OASIS Los Angeles
- Partners in Care Foundation San Fernando Valley
- Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center Newhall
- St. Barnabas Senior Services Los Angeles
- VIC/ Robert M. Wilkinson Multipurpose Senior Center Northridge
- VIC: Sherman Oaks/ East Valley Adult Center Sherman Oaks

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**SHARP Curriculum**

- GERO 101 Introduction to Healthy Aging – 3 units
- GERO 102 Health Promotion: Behavior Change Theories and Practices – 3 units
- GERO 103 Health Promotion: Program Implementation – 3 units
- GERO 104 Health Promotion: Fieldwork Practicum – 2 units
- CWE 188 Cooperative Work Experience Education – 1 unit

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**SHARPen Your Skills in One to Two Semesters!**

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Accounting | Administration of Justice | Administrative Assistant | American Sign Language Interpreting
Animation Production | Architectural Drafting | Automotive Technology | Commercial Photography
Computer Applications | Computer Networking | Culinary Arts | Customer Service | Early Childhood Education
Electronic Systems Technology | Emergency Medical Technician | Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management
Filmmaking | Fire Technology | Graphic & Multimedia Design | Hotel & Restaurant Management
Human Resources Management | Interior Design | Land Surveying | Manufacturing Technology | Marketing
Medical Laboratory Technician | Medical Office Administrative Assistant | Nursing | Paralegal Studies | Real Estate
Retail Management | Solar Energy Technician | Sound Arts | Sports Medicine | Video Game Animation
Water Systems Technology | Welding Technology | Wine Studies

REAL JOBS
NEED REAL SKILLS!
Career Technical Education Programs

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