

COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

ALUMNI

MAGAZINE

2023





Take Advantage of Your **10% Knight Tuition Discount**

Alumni who are ready to take their success one step further are eligible for the Knight tuition discount. With the Knight tuition discount, recipients will receive 10% off tuition toward their master's or doctoral degree. The Knight tuition discount is also available to spouses and dependents of alumni.



**COLUMBIA
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From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

One of the most exciting things about our annual alumni magazine is the opportunity to honor of all your hard work that has led to success. Our CSU family spans from all over the world, yet by sharing your stories it makes us all feel a little closer. When you read the CSU alumni magazine, you are reading stories of hope, history in the making, adversities overcome, dream jobs becoming a reality, and so much more; Now that's something to celebrate!

Speaking of celebration, Columbia Southern University turned 30 this year! What a milestone for our university. To commemorate, we take you back to where it all began and guide you through the life of CSU, highlighting the successes throughout the years. With each decade, you will be able to see the significant growth that is all thanks to the CSU faculty, staff, students and alumni! To read more, go to page 11.

A personal favorite of mine is the story of Kevin Hensley on Page 14. After his time in the Air Force, he was diagnosed with constrictive bronchiolitis, a terminal lung disease that is a result of his time in the service. Now, Kevin is a legislative advocate fighting for veteran's rights. After eight deployments and a lifelong disease, Kevin is the definition of a fighter.

How have you kept going during tough times? What did your time at CSU teach you? I would be honored to listen and share your story with our fellow Knights. You never know who your story could help! If you would like to connect, I encourage you to reach out by emailing CSU-Alumni@ColumbiaSouthern.edu so we can find the best platform to feature your story.

I want to thank each and every one of you, alumni, for being the best there is. Your commitment to your alma mater is incredibly moving, and the stories you tell leave me in awe. I say this every year, but without you there is no story to tell. With you, I continue to have the greatest privilege.

With gratitude,



Haley Smith
Editor-in-Chief



"You'll never do a whole lot unless you're brave enough to try."

Dolly Parton

Letter From the Alumni President

Hello my Fellow Knights,

It is that time of year again that I am honored to reach out and impart some of my thoughts to you.

First and foremost, happy 30th birthday to our alma mater! Wow, look how far we have come. I think back on how Robert Mayes Sr. had this vision of teaching young and old minds alike the art of environmental and safety processes. Much like most of our educational goals, it started off as a thought, and through inspiration became a reality and more.

That is exactly how I envisioned our climbs beginning in whichever field you selected. It was a thought, and then that thought became reality at CSU, and eventually the foundation for a great future.

I have had the great honor of seeing the 15th, 20th, 25th and now 30th anniversaries, and each time it moves me knowing that I had the opportunity to be a part of, and see something as important as CSU, become not only a respected name in the educational world, but also many industries. To hang that diploma on the wall in my home was, and always will be, a highlight in my life.

As far as what is happening in our alumni world, we continue to grow in numbers and groups. With COVID taking a backseat on many levels, there are more and more opportunities for us to get together and embrace our learning pasts. Many of us were in class together and responded week in and week out to each other's discussion boards, but never had the opportunity to actually meet.

We will be welcoming another class ('23) into our midst on October 27. As was the case with us, I am sure they are very excited about taking on the world with the knowledge they will be leaving CSU with.

For those of you who want to continue your learning at CSU, and if you have family members who are



interested, we do have the Knight Tuition Discount. This provides all of you with a 10% discount off your tuition. I think this is great recognition on behalf of our alma mater.

If you have questions, contact your assigned academic advisor.

In finishing, I am always humbled to be able to write to you and let you know what is happening if you are not keeping up with it yourself.

Once again, happy 30th birthday, and please continue to move forward and up in your lives. You deserve it.

Most humbly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph Blessing".

Ralph Blessing
Alumni Association President
M.S. Occupational Safety and Health, Class of 2007



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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Three-Time CSU Graduate

ARICA UREÑA

Helps Hire Heroes



Arica Ureña was a single mother serving in the U.S. Army when she decided she needed to pave a way to a better life for her son and their future. In her eyes, the only way to that life was doing what no one in her family before her had done—earn a bachelor's degree. The desire to go to college was always there for Arica, but joining the military was the only path she saw that could get her to a degree someday.

"Growing up, I was taught the only way to afford an education was through the military," she said. "While in service, I started my associate degree at CSU, and it really set me up for success on the outside

and assisted in my promotion to the rank of staff sergeant in the United States Army."

After completing her associate degree, Arica pushed herself to go further.

"I was the first in my family to earn a bachelor's and a master's degree," she said. "I earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in marketing. It was scary and all I kept thinking about was I wanted to be bigger than my circumstances. When I see my family and how proud they are it means a lot. I now have younger ones in my family who are coming up behind me asking about school and how I did it."

Arica's mentorship goes beyond just those in her family. As a transition specialist for Hire Heroes USA, a non-profit organization helping military members, veterans and military spouses find new careers, Arica spends each day serving those who have served our country.

"I give them a more personalized experience in their transition from military to civilian life. We help them with job searches, the interview process and all the way up to when they are hired."

Hire Heroes has helped around 75,000 service members and spouses succeed in the civilian workforce.

"I love it because I was that person," said Arica. "I had no idea what to do once I got out of the military. I was 17 years old when I first joined and had no idea about civilian life which prompted me to go right back in the military because I didn't know what I was doing. I get to help my fellow brothers and sisters every day."

Arica has walked in the shoes of a once single, military parent who earned three degrees. Her advice to anyone doing the same is simple. Keep your "why" in plain sight.

"Why are you doing this? Who are you earning your degree for? When you are clear about why you are going on this educational journey, your focus will sharpen," she said. At the time, my "why" was my son. I wanted to be able to provide a better life for my son and I knew that advancing my education would allow me to do just that."

To learn more about Hire Heroes, visit
HIREHEROESUSA.ORG



Notable Knights

KARI-JO KOSHES

Kari-Jo Koshes has been recognized in the Business Observer's 2022 40 Under 40 selections. She works as the director of stores and fulfillment for JMX Brands. "I appreciate the opportunities for growth and leadership skills that JMX Brands has made possible for me." She earned her MBA and DBA from CSU.

PATRICK SWEENEY

Milligan University has hired Patrick Sweeney as their new head coach of men's soccer. Sweeney, a former Milligan University soccer player, went on to play professionally over the course of 12 years. He played in the Irish First Division, Irish Premier League, USL Pro League and USL Pro Select League. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration concentrating in sports management in 2007 at CSU.

TAMMY BOOTH HOLLIS

Capt. Tammy Booth Hollis was recently promoted from lieutenant to captain of the Lee County Sheriff's Office, making her the first female captain in the department's history. "I want to show young women thinking about taking this career path that they can do this if they choose to," she said. "Before you know it, you might be captain after starting as just a 'little girl police'. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity and look forward to continuing to serve the citizens of Lee County in my new position as captain." She is a 2014 CSU graduate.

BRANDEN ROBERTSON

Braden Robertson was recently featured in a 40 under 40 article for The Roanoker. Robertson, 33, works as the director of quality and patient safety for Carilion Clinic. "Working for an organization that puts incredible emphasis on improving the health of the communities in which it serves makes acting on my passion—improving safety and inefficiencies of health care delivery, both inside and outside the walls of our organization— easy," he said. "Southwest Virginia and beyond is being impacted in big ways." He is a 2018 CSU graduate.

KEN PRILLAMAN

Ken Prillaman was recently named Texas Fire Chief's Association Chief of the Year. Ken holds an associate degree in fire science, as well as a bachelor's degree in fire administration and graduated Magna Cum Laude from CSU. He is a nationally certified Fire Officer III, fire investigator, Fire Instructor II as well as an IAAI-fire investigation technician and evidence collection technician.





Get to Know CSU Alumni Relations Coordinator **Matt Spradlin**

How long have you been with CSU?

I came on board with CSU in February 2017, so I have been here 6.5 years.

Where did you attend college?

I attended the University of Mobile where I earned a B.S. in Christian studies in 2004, and then obtained my Master of Arts in discipleship from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2016.

Where did you grow up?

I am originally from Valley, Alabama. I graduated from Valley High School in 1999. My family (wife and two boys) and I currently live in Foley, Alabama.

What other roles have you been in at CSU?

Prior to joining university relations as the alumni relations coordinator, I served in academic advising as an academic advisor, supervisor of

academic advising, team manager of academic advising and graduate team lead of academic advising.

Can you explain what you will be doing in your new role?

Our students and graduates are the reason we do what we do, and we want to stay in touch to see how our fellow Knights are changing the world. I hope to increase participation in the Alumni Association—both membership and involvement in our alumni being ambassadors for their alma mater.

What are you most excited for as you enter your new role as alumni relations coordinator?

I am most excited about the opportunity to empower, engage and equip others. Whether as a husband, dad, pastor, teacher, advisor, manager or alumni relations coordinator, I thrive in being able to pour my life into

others and help them become more than they thought they could be. My job title is temporary, but how I treat others is what will be remembered.

Why should our alumni get involved in the CSU Alumni Association?

Joining the Alumni Association allows you to receive invitations to alumni events and gives you access to the CSU Alumni Magazine and digital newsletter, the Communicator. Membership also affords you the opportunity to become a CSU Knight Ambassador. More information can be found at ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Alumni.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family, serving in my church, coaching my boys in sports, going on walks, playing tennis and supporting the Atlanta Braves and Auburn Tigers.

2023 In Review

April

INDIANAPOLIS, IN

In April, CSU's alumni relations team attended the annual Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) held in Indianapolis, Indiana. This was the 16th year CSU attended. There were 34,357 fire professionals who were in attendance.

160 CSU students and alumni stopped by the booth to say hello and many new faces came by expressing interest in becoming a CSU Knight!



June

SAN ANTONIO, TX

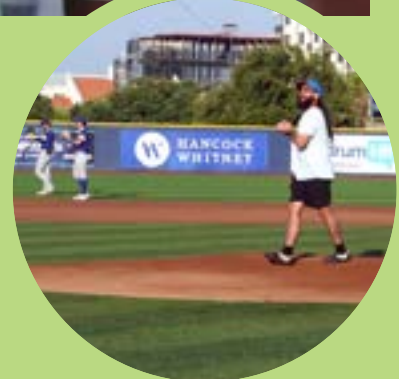
The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) held its annual conference in June in San Antonio, Texas. CSU had a booth where 139 alumni and 66 current students came to visit.





August

PENSACOLA, FL | In August, CSU celebrated Back to School Night at the Pensacola Wahoo's game. Columbia Southern University sponsored Friday Night Giveaway where Blue Wahoo's staff gave away CSUxBlue Wahoo's co-branded backpacks to the first 1,000 children attending the game. Many fans came by to get their Knight swag. CSU Director of Loyalty and Engagement Brett Patterson got the night started by throwing the first pitch!



30TH ANNIVERSARY



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

WITH

*Columbia Southern
University*



This year, Columbia Southern University celebrates 30 years. In three decades, CSU's impact has far surpassed its roots as an Alabama safety college. Boasting more than 100,000 diplomas granted to date, and just over 24,000 active students, the university currently houses 106 degree programs, 27 certificate programs and more than 150 courses. Our students and alumni proudly hail from every American state, and many from across the globe.

Travel back in time with us as we recognize some of the most meaningful moments at CSU. This timeline provides a look back to where it all began and gives insight to a few of CSU's milestones through the years that have shaped our university to what it is today.

Of course, nothing would be possible without you, our alumni. If you had not trusted Columbia Southern as your partner in education, we would not be celebrating 30 years. So, thank you. This celebration is just as much for you as it is for the university.

30TH ANNIVERSARY



1993

Columbia Southern University was founded by Dr. Robert Mayes, Sr. From the very beginning, CSU's focus was environmental compliance and occupational safety training.



1994

The very first graduating class included seven students.

"I always felt that CSU's history was there to prepare people beyond just an education."

Joel Yager, Class of '94

1996

Launched new programs beyond environmental and occupational safety including business administration, computer science, criminal justice administration and health care administration.

2001

Granted institutional accreditation by the Distance Education and Training Council.

2002

Graduates celebrating together during CSU's first commencement ceremony.



2003

CSU became one of the first U.S. universities to offer a degree program in Vietnam with a campus in Ho Chi Minh city.



2005

Robert Mayes, Jr, transitioned into the role of president.



2008

CSU broke ground on its Orange Beach campus, which opened in 2009.





2012

The Communicator, CSU's official student and alumni newsletter, launches.

2013

CSU reaches 10,000 Facebook followers

2015

Sir Maximus introduced as the university mascot.



2015

The first edition of the CSU Alumni Magazine was published.

2018

Chief of Staff Ken Styron transitioned into the role of president.



2022

CSU granted institutional accreditation by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Through achieving this accreditation, CSU became one of the most affordable, completely online, SACSCOC accredited universities in the U.S.

2023

CSU celebrates its 30th anniversary

A **VOICE** *for* **VETERANS**

Kevin Hensley Fights for Heroes' Rights

In April 2022, Kevin Hensley stood on the steps of the Veterans of Foreign Wars headquarters, clenching the oxygen tube that feeds supplemental air to his lungs.

“A promise made is a promise kept to this veteran right here, holding on to one of his last breaths.”

An Air Force veteran, Kevin is battling two fights: one for the fair treatment of veterans, and the other for his life.



"After high school, I didn't think college was the answer for me right away, so I joined the military," he said. "I talked to an Air Force recruiter and took the ASVAB and went into the service in January of 1995."

During four of his eight deployments to the Middle East, Kevin was assigned to operating open-air burn pits.

"It was the most horrible smell you could ever imagine," he said. "Since the burn pits were adjacent to our living quarters as well, if you left your bunk to shower, you could see the ash from the smoke falling all over the place, almost like it was snowing in the summertime."

Kevin had hopes of finding a career in law enforcement. After interviewing with TSA and halfway through their screening process, they reviewed his medical records and asked that he discontinue his application.

"Trying to find out answers to what was really happening was difficult because I was being told it was all in my head and I was making all of my illnesses up," he said. "Had it not been for organizations like BurnPits360, Healing Arizona Veterans, GruntStyle etc., I would not have the documentation to show the VA I wasn't making this up, and they needed to acknowledge my symptoms and those of other veterans as well."

Eventually, Kevin was diagnosed with constrictive bronchiolitis, a terminal lung disease that would require him to wear a portable oxygen concentrator to assist his breathing.

"90 percent of my brain was deprived of oxygen due to the toxic exposure," he said. "After being diagnosed with a terminal disease, and realizing I couldn't perform the job my degree was in, I had to find a way to re-invent myself. I became legislative director and an advocate for toxic exposure and other veteran's issues."

Kevin and his fellow advocates successfully helped pass the PACT Act, a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances. The PACT Act became the largest piece of veteran legislation ever passed. The act strengthens health care and benefits for veterans and their survivors.

"If I passed away, my wife and my kids would not get the benefits because my diagnosis was not

recognized by the VA," he said. "Now, since the act was passed, it will be recognized by the VA and my family will get the benefits they deserve."

"Never in my dreams did I think I would be pounding the pavement on Capitol Hill, talking to senators and congressional delegates, advocating for veterans and their families," he said. "Now, I cannot imagine doing anything different."

Kevin earned two degrees from CSU, an associate degree in applied science and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration.

"It has allowed me to plan, organize and set up meetings with senators and congressional delegates, keep on task, research, follow-up, forecast and overall become a better legislative advocate, which allows for legislation being supported and passed," he said. "More importantly, it shows my children the importance of what continued education can do for them. I wanted to back up what I was saying to them with a degree."

With three other veterans, Kevin co-authored a book entitled "The Promise." According to Kevin, toxic exposure is causing cancer, rare respiratory disease and even death for veterans, some who are less than 30 years old.

"We're family by tragedy...advocating for triumph," he states in his book. Along with his fellow advocates, including actor and comedian, Jon Stewart, they continue to take a stand for wounded warfighters and their families.

With all of the sacrifices he has made and knowing the outcome, there wasn't even a hesitation to if he would do it all over again.

"I would do it all over again because at that time, it was all I'd ever known from 19 years old," he said. "We were worried about other things. For example, making it home in one piece. I wish we would have been more cognizant of the situation, and the information we could have gathered to provide more support and had legislation passed earlier. Serving our country was an honor and privilege, and a huge part of our lives as veterans, we did something historic and honorable."

To learn more about Kevin's work, visit
GRUNTSTYLEFOUNDATION.ORG

Career and Professional Development Course

Want to become your own career manager? The CSU Career Services: Career and Professional Development course is for you! This course is a hands-on experience that gives you an introduction to Career Services and how to manage your own career. This is a brand-new resource for students and alumni looking to take charge of their own career development! The first three sections are live with more to come!

Students and alumni can self-enroll in Blackboard to access the content in the Career and Professional Development Course. You must be enrolled in Blackboard to start the self-enrollment process.

How to self-enroll in the Career and Professional Development Course:

1. Once logged into Blackboard, you will click Institution Page on the left side of the screen.
2. Click on Career Services and you will be prompted to continue self-enrollment.
3. Once you have enrolled yourself, the Career and Professional Development course will be listed under Organizations within Blackboard.

CareerQuest

CSU alumni have access to work one-on-one with a Career Development Coach after graduation! CareerQuest is where career services house a specific job board for CSU students and alumni. To access the job board and to make appointments you must be subscribed to CareerQuest. Over 700 internships have been posted within the job board! Appointments can be made for reasons such as career exploration, degree exploration, resume reviewing, cover letter reviewing and more.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

To learn more about these resources, or to schedule a resume review session, call 877-297-6192 or email CareerServices@ColumbiaSouthern.edu

2023 Scholarship Recipients

OMEGA NU LAMBDA

Columbia Southern University's Department of Career Services is proud to award the Omega Nu Lambda Scholarship to its latest recipients. Omega Nu Lambda, a national collegiate honor society, was founded to foster community, provide encouragement and acknowledge the academic success of online students. In order to obtain the scholarship, students must maintain a 3.2 GPA, be in good academic standing and actively participate with CSU Career Services. The Omega Nu Lambda assists in the cost of one future CSU course and recognizes the accomplishments of Omega Nu Lambda student members.

"Since my Omega Nu Lambda nomination, I have been motivated to develop my career in order to provide a better life for my family," said Bruce who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in emergency medical services administration. "The nomination has given me the confidence to pursue formal leadership roles, something I have always been passionate about. I am grateful for the recognition I have received through Omega Nu Lambda, and it has served as a catalyst for my personal and professional growth."

To learn more about the Omega Nu Lambda Scholarship, visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Scholarships.



Albert Enriques Jr.



Christopher Moye



Jennifer Hyleck



Prinkeya Smith



Angela Miller



EL Drake Smith



Lorrie Hardin



Randi Long



Ann Bruce



Emily Swaby



Loyd Mosier



Tamiko Johnson



Catherine Owle



Harsunder Hunjan



Matthew Eller



Troy Mance



Christopher DeRosa



Jared Defoore



Olivia Clinton



Vanessay Holloway

California Paramedic Receives Robert G. Mayes Memorial Scholarship

Columbia Southern University recently awarded Bradley Reddall of Phelan, California, the 2023 Robert G. Mayes Memorial Scholarship. Reddall works as a paramedic for the Department Health Agency.

“As a dedicated and passionate individual, I am deeply committed to giving back to my community through various avenues of service,” he said. “My primary role as a volunteer flight paramedic allows me to make a tangible difference in people’s lives during critical and life-threatening situations. By providing emergency medical care and transportation, I strive to ensure the well-being and safety of individuals in need.”

In addition to his role as a paramedic, Reddall also serves as an EMS educator and has established a nonprofit organization aimed at supporting paramedic students.

“Through this organization, we offer financial assistance to aspiring paramedics, helping them pursue their dreams of becoming skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals,” he said. “By alleviating the financial burden associated with their education, we empower these students to focus on their studies and ultimately contribute to the betterment of our community’s healthcare system.”

Reddall earned a bachelor’s degree in fire administration at CSU in March 2023. With this scholarship, he plans to pursue a master’s degree in emergency services management.

“First and foremost, my degree has enhanced my effectiveness as a paramedic,” he said. “By studying fire administration, I gained a deep understanding of fire behavior, hazardous materials, and emergency response strategies. As an EMS educator, my degree has played a pivotal role in my ability to educate and train future paramedics.”

“Pursuing a master’s degree in emergency services management at CSU will enable me to expand my knowledge, enhance my leadership skills, advance my career, engage in innovative problem-solving, build a professional network and make a significant contribution to the field. I am excited about the opportunities this degree will provide and the positive impact I can have on emergency services management.”



Bradley Reddall

*2023 Robert G. Mayes Memorial
Scholarship Winner*

Robert G. Mayes Memorial Scholarship

Are you thinking of going back to school? CSU is offering our alumni the Robert G. Mayes Memorial Scholarship. This honored scholarship was established in loving memory of Dr. Mayes, Columbia Southern University founder. This 60-credit hour scholarship is awarded annually to one CSU alumnus who wants to further their education by obtaining an online master’s degree with CSU.

Be sure to check out other scholarships available to CSU students and alumni to see if you are eligible to apply. You can visit columbiasouthern.edu/scholarships for more details!

Q&A

with CSU Alumna Hong Anh Pham



Q: What degree do you hold from CSU?

A: A master's degree in business administration.

Q: When did you graduate?

A: Officially this past February, but I plan to walk at the 2023 commencement in October.

Q: Who is your employer and what is your job there?

A: VMLY&R Vietnam, Operation director

Q: What do you do in your job?

A: My scope of work currently involves overseeing and managing various aspects of the company's operations. It includes: strategic planning, process improvement, resource allocation, team management and ensuring operational efficiency. I manage sales, account, project and creatives teams. I often work with managers to optimize processes, control costs, KPIs, enhance productivity and maintain a high standard of quality in the organization's operations.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your job?

A: As the operations director, what I enjoy the most is the opportunity to lead and support my diverse team. Witnessing their growth, fostering a collaborative environment and working together to overcome operational hurdles brings me immense satisfaction. Additionally, the dynamic nature of the role keeps me engaged, as each day presents unique challenges that require strategic thinking and gives solutions quickly help me feel busy and useful.

Q: How has or will your degree impact your career?

A: It has helped me rotate to a regional position out of Vietnam, and increased access to compelling projects, clients and responsibilities.

Q: What made you decide to pursue your degree?

A: I knew it would help me find a job when I settle in the United States.

Q: Why did you choose CSU over other institutions?

A: The online teaching method was suitable for my work.

Q: What benefits, personally or professionally, did you gain from your program at CSU?

A: I gained researching, networking, marketing and analyzing skills. I also learned about risk, strategic thinking and leadership.

Q: What were some of your previous jobs?

A: I worked two years as a training manager for Diageo Vietnam (a global leader in alcohol beverages), five years as a project manager at Marketeers (a local marketing agency) and five years as an account director at Market Action (a global marketing agency).

Q: Have you won any professional awards?

A: My project won MMA, Blue Dragon.



Columbia Southern University Surpasses 100,000th Degree Conferral Milestone

July 6, 2023—In addition to celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, Columbia Southern University recently achieved another milestone: conferring its 100,000th degree.

"This is a proud moment for CSU," said Rachel Farris, registrar, whose team manages the academic records and diplomas for students and graduates. "Achieving this milestone of 100,000 degrees is both a testament to our commitment to helping working adults achieve their dreams and to the love and appreciation our students have for the university. I am excited to welcome the next 100,000 graduates."

The Baldwin County, Alabama-based university, whose academic roots are based in public service-focused education, was ranked in top 5% of conferred degrees for occupational safety and health, fire, business and criminal justice, according to data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System's 2021 report.¹

CSU will recognize more conferred graduates on Oct. 27, 2023, as it conducts its annual commencement ceremony at the Foley Event Center at OWA in Foley, Alabama. The university is set to conduct a morning and afternoon ceremony in order to balance the facility's capacity limits. In addition, the university plans to celebrate its 30th anniversary this fall with various projects and events.

1

www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/recent-ipeds-rankings-reveal-ace-as-leading-conferrer-of-graduate-degrees-in-education-301819861.html

Become a Learning Partner

Exclusive Scholarships



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LEARNING PARTNER
10%
DISCOUNT

Columbia Southern University Achieves SACSCOC Accreditation Milestone

December 7, 2022—On Dec. 6, 2022, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) board of trustees granted institutional accreditation to Columbia Southern University. Through achieving this accreditation, CSU effectively becomes one of the most affordable, completely online, SACSCOC accredited universities in the nation.

Achieving SACSCOC accreditation status not only ensures the continued quality and integrity of a university's academic programs, it also serves to verify that an educational institution has established and placed into practice instructional, student support and other services to assist students in achieving their educational goals.

"After much preparation and envisioning greater opportunities for our institution and our students, I am thrilled to announce that we have achieved SACSCOC membership," said Ken Styron, DBA, president. "Even more humbling is the opportunity to provide one of the most affordable and accessible pathways for adult learners to achieve higher education in the nation."

According to College Scorecard's four-year distance-only U.S. colleges, CSU ranks in the top 1% for affordability based on tuition and fees. (Dec. 5, 2022)

CSU is ranked No. 1 for economic value in Alabama for business bachelor's degrees based on a Georgetown University study.

CSU is the only fully online university in the U.S. ranked in the top 5% for Degree Choice's economic score.

CSU's costs are lower than the published tuition and fees of any online degree program at an Alabama four-year university. (Dec. 5, 2022)

In 2021, more than 60% of CSU graduates completed their degree with zero debt, compared to 45% of bachelor's degree recipients graduating from four-year public and private nonprofit colleges in 2020 according to [APLU.org](https://www.aplu.org) data.

Obtaining SACSCOC accreditation is a multi-step process. An institution must first become an applicant, next a candidate, and finally, a member (accredited). In addition to its newly granted SACSCOC accreditation status, CSU was granted accreditation by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) on Jan. 15, 2001, and has maintained its accreditation status since it was initially granted. For more information, please email CSU-Communications@ColumbiaSouthern.edu or visit [SACSCOC.org](https://www.sacscoc.org).

And Receive

Exclusive Benefits

With more than 5,000 Learning Partners across the nation, Columbia Southern University has already provided training and education to thousands. Learning Partners have exclusive benefits at CSU. Not only are these benefits available to our partners' employees but they are also available to employees' spouses and children.

GET STARTED TODAY. Visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Partners



COLUMBIA
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