

Introduction

A. Preface

Purpose

This *Handbook* provides faculty pertinent information regarding the university's philosophies, policies, procedures, and facilities. It adopts a two-tiered approach in doing so: the *Handbook* delivers an overview of the topics within its purview; its second tier provides information on those topics in greater detail. The purpose of this approach is to facilitate access to information at the level most useful for a given situation.

Amending the Handbook

The university is committed to keeping the *Handbook* up to date, but its policies are superseded by those of the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents (BOR), which are fluid. The faculty should consult BOR policy anytime a possible conflict is suspected. Recommendations, proposals, and queries about [amending the Handbook](#) should be presented to the Faculty Handbook Advisory Committee.

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity

Columbus State University is committed to affirmative action and equal opportunity in education and employment and does not discriminate. See CSU's Statement on Discrimination. Members of the faculty share with the administration responsibility for sustaining this policy.

This the July 1, 2021 version. It applies to the 2021-2022 academic year.

B. History

Columbus College started humbly in the fall of 1958 as a two-year institution of higher education occupying the old Shannon Hosiery Mill. Still, the achievement represented the culmination of over a decade of community effort to bring post-secondary education to Columbus. That commitment on the part of city leaders and the general population is indicative of the position the institution holds in the city's consciousness—as a symbol of its aspirations, a catalyst for productive change, and a tool with which to achieve its educational, cultural, and economic goals. The school now enjoys a reputation extending well beyond the boundaries of the immediate community, having acquired university status in the University System of Georgia and developed highly regarded programs in a number of academic and extracurricular areas.

Initially, the college comprised fourteen faculty members, five administrative staffers, the president appointed by the Board of Regents, Dr. Thomas Y. Whitley—who served in that position until 1979—and fewer than 300 students. The college would remain in its original location until January of 1963 when it moved to its present site, but even during those first four years in the Hosiery Mill it experienced substantial growth—to 768 students, for instance, by fall 1962. After five years at its new location, enrollment had risen to 1,800 students and the school was offering its first upper-division courses, having been approved by the Board of Regents to become a four-year institution in 1965. By 1970, over 3,200 students attended Columbus College and the school awarded its first bachelor's degrees. The year 1974 saw the establishment of The Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center for Continuing Education and the college's first master's degree programs.

Columbus College celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1983, and in the following year embarked upon a fundraising initiative to establish a student scholarship endowment, endowments for faculty in business and nursing, library acquisitions, instructional equipment, and improvements and renovations for campus buildings. Also in 1983, Dr. John Townsend, the first African American student at Columbus College—having matriculated in 1963 and in so doing integrated the campus—returned to deliver the inaugural address of the Black Applause Banquet, an annual event that originally invited a noted African American speaker to campus and that has now evolved into the Legacy Celebration, which celebrates cultural diversity and inclusion for all minority demographics represented at CSU.

There can be no denying, however, that the 1980s were a difficult time for Columbus College, as they were for many other institutions of higher education throughout the country who faced declining state budgets and other financial woes. Enrollment at the school actually decreased for a time, and retrenchment in a number of areas was necessary. Low morale among faculty brought about a vote of no confidence that resulted in the resignation of the school's second president, Francis Brooke, in 1987. In 1988, Dr. Frank Brown was appointed the new president of the college. At a campus retreat in the summer of that year, Brown—who first came to the college in 1981 as the vice president of business and finance—outlined a plan for moving the college forward. Among his proposals was the building of a clock tower in the center of campus using bricks from the razed Shannon Hosier Mill to “serve as a reminder of our beginnings as well as a beacon for the future.” The tower has since come to represent the institution's architectural identity. Likewise, other proposals Brown laid out at the time have come to fruition and now represent part of the school's institutional identity—its commitments, for instance, to “international education and international awareness” and to becoming “a center for excellence in the arts and in the humanities.”

Another of Dr. Brown's initial goals was to attain university status for the institution, and in 1996 Columbus College became Columbus State University. Further initiatives involved the development of new learning centers, several of which entail collaborative efforts with the local community. Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, which opened in 1995, combines the efforts of the university, the municipal government, and Columbus Water Works. The Coca-Cola Space Science Center opened in 1996. In 2002, following the gift of world-renowned writer Carson McCullers' childhood home by local resident and former Columbus College English professor Thornton Jordan, CSU founded The Carson McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians.

In 2001, the RiverCenter for the Performing Arts opened in downtown Columbus. Building on the reputation of its regionally recognized music department and partnering with the local community, CSU raised more than a hundred million dollars to establish what has become the core of its RiverPark Campus, which now includes not only the RiverCenter, home of the Schwob School of Music and Music Library, but also the Rankin Arts Center, the RiverPark Theatre Complex and the Corn Center for the Visual Arts. Other milestones of the 2000s include the retirement of President Frank Brown and the assumption of duties by the CSU President Tim Mescon in 2008, the development of 16 fully online degree programs, and the awarding of the school's first doctoral degree—an Ed.D, to Justin Finney—in 2011. CSU's fifth president, Dr. Chris Markwood, assumed the office in 2016, after Tim Mescon's retirement in December 2015.

Clearly, Columbus State University, née Columbus College, began as an institution whose mission was to help train and educate the area's local population. By the early 2000s, over 60% of Columbusites holding university degrees were graduates of their hometown school. As Columbus business leader Jimmy Yancey, a Columbus College alum, has remarked on the evolution of the city and school over the past fifty years, what CSU has accomplished is to help create a middle class in Columbus, a town in which, in the late 19th century, over 90% of its workers were employed in cotton mills, over 60% of them in the same one—the Eagle and Phenix. Fitting and symbolic, then, that what has become Columbus State University should have risen out of the ashes of that mill economy. That the university's appeal now extends to an ever-widening group of potential students means that its population grows continuously more diverse. Currently, in addition to the large percentage of CSU students who come from the local area, students from every county in the state also attend the university, as well as students from elsewhere in the country and a growing body of international students. The institution's aspirations continue to expand, even as its core mission to train and educate remains the same.

C. Mission & Values

Mission

We empower people to contribute to the advancement of our local and global communities through an emphasis on excellence in teaching and research, lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, public-private partnerships, and service to others.

Values

- *Excellence* – Commitment to best practices in teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, student engagement, cultural enrichment and campus environment
- *Engagement* – Active civil participation by students, faculty and staff in the university experience
- *Creativity* – The pursuit of distinction through inquiry and innovation, challenging convention and focusing on solutions
- *Servant Leadership* – Effective, ethical leadership through empowerment and service.
- *Inclusion* – Fostering and promoting a campus that embraces diverse people, ideas, views, and practices
- *Sustainability* – Commitment to behaviors that recognize and respect our environmental context

D. Accreditations

Columbus State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, nexus, baccalaureate, masters, educational specialist, and doctorate degrees. Columbus State University also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of Columbus State University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).

CSU completed the SACSCOC reaffirmation process in 2016 and the next reaffirmation visit will take place in 2026. Institutional accreditation activities are facilitated by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education in Academic Affairs.

Specific Columbus State University programs—including business, nursing, teacher education, music education, and others—are accredited by governing bodies within their respective disciplines:

- The baccalaureate degree program in nursing is approved by the [Georgia Board of Nursing](#) and accredited by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#).
- The [Georgia Professional Standards Commission](#) approves all Columbus State University educator preparation programs that text-1g to certification in teaching, school library media, counseling and educational leadership.
- The Master of Education in school counseling and the Master of Science in community counseling degree programs are accredited by the [Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs \(CACREP\)](#).
- Columbus State University is an accredited institutional member of the [National Association of Schools of Art and Design \(NASAD\)](#).
- Columbus State University is an accredited institutional member of the [National Association of Schools of Theatre \(NAST\)](#).
- Columbus State University is an accredited institutional member of the [National Association of Schools of Music \(NASM\)](#).
- Columbus State University is accredited by [AACSB International - The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business](#) to award bachelor's and master's degrees in business through the D. Abbott Turner College of Business.
- The B.S. in Chemistry, ACS Certified Track is approved by the [American Chemical Society \(ACS\)](#). Students completing this program of study will receive an ACS-certified degree.
- The [Georgia State Department of Veterans Service](#) (State Approving Agency) has approved Columbus State University for the training of veterans and eligible dependents.
- Columbus State University's Continuing Education has been accredited as an Authorized Provider by the [International Association for Continuing Education and Training \(IACET\)](#)