

# About Charter Oak State College

Celebrating 50 years, Charter Oak State College is Connecticut's public online college, offering associate, bachelor's and master's degrees, as well as certificates in a variety of career-focused fields.

The College offers working adults a flexible and affordable path to degree completion and advancement through its online courses, flexible credit transfer and credit for prior learning. The College has been recognized as a Military Friendly institution and is guided by the following Vision Statement. Charter Oak State College: *A dynamic community of online learners advancing the nation's workforce one graduate at a time.*

## Governance

Charter Oak State College is one of the six constituent units of the Board of Regents. The Board is comprised of 15 voting members with nine appointed by the Governor and four appointed by legislative leadership, of whom one is a specialist in K-12 education and the three remaining are alumni of the Community Colleges, Connecticut State University System, and Charter Oak State College. Also serving on the Board as full voting members are the chair and vice-chair of the Student Advisory Committee. Funding comes from three sources: state appropriations, tuition and fees, and the voluntary contributions of individuals, foundations, and the corporate community.

## History

The Connecticut General Assembly created the Board of State Academic Awards in 1973. In 1980, the Board received legislative authorization to designate its degree program as a college. The name chosen, "Charter Oak College," commemorated an early success in Connecticut's struggle for self-governance and was particularly suited to a public institution in what is popularly known as the Constitution State. In 1992, the name was changed to Charter Oak State College to facilitate recognition that the College was part of the state system of public higher education. In 2009, the State statute was changed to grant Charter Oak State College authority to offer master's degrees.

In 2011, the Connecticut Legislature reorganized the state system of higher education, combining the community colleges, the state universities, and Charter Oak State College under one governing board called the Board of Regents.

## Mission

As part of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) system, Charter Oak State College, the state's only public, online, degree-granting institution, provides affordable, diverse and alternative opportunities for adults to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates. The College's mission is to validate learning acquired through traditional and non-traditional experiences, including its own courses. The College rigorously upholds standards of high quality and seeks to inspire adults with the self-enrichment potential of non-traditional higher education.

## Vision

A dynamic community of online learners advancing the nation's workforce one graduate at a time.

## Degree Offerings

Charter Oak State College is authorized to offer Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Masters degrees all online. Degrees are awarded by the governing board, the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of an appointed core of consulting faculty. This recommendation is based on the faculty's formal evaluation of transfer credit, non-collegiate instruction and portfolios; results of approved examinations; evaluation of Charter Oak State College courses; and other procedures by which they assess and validate academic learning.

## Educational Philosophy

Charter Oak State College holds a unique place in American higher education. It pioneered the development of an alternative to the traditional college model. Charter Oak State College developed an innovative distance learning program for learners that affords them the opportunity to apply towards a college degree the learning they acquired through life. Charter Oak's degree program model is designed to prepare students with the human and technical skills to thrive in society and the workforce.

The Charter Oak State College educational philosophy asserts that:

- college level learning can be acquired anywhere, anytime, and in many ways;
- such learning can be assessed;
- when assessed, it should be accredited via appropriate means;
- learning is effectively enhanced via collaborative interaction with faculty and peers; and
- advisement and academic support is critical to student success.

Charter Oak State College undergraduate students can earn their credits in many different ways, and students come to Charter Oak State College having earned numerous credits. Since the average age of the Charter Oak State College student is around 37 years old, Charter

Oak State College students have already acquired many of the skills necessary to succeed in life, such as being a responsible citizen, the ability to work with others, and the ability to work independently. Therefore, the undergraduate General Education requirements at Charter Oak State College build upon these skills. The General Education requirements emphasize the liberal arts and the skills necessary to enable students to succeed in their profession, be good citizens, and to continue as lifelong learners and meet the standards of both its state and regional accrediting associations.

The liberal arts component of the General Education requirement helps undergraduate students:

- evaluate the influence of historical agency in the context of defined periods;
- express ideas, identify behaviors, and propose creative practices to advance social justice, equity, and understanding of human differences;
- acquire the ability to use scientific and quantitative inquiry to solve problems;
- learn how the arts and humanities enhance our lives, and;
- understand how the social sciences and behavioral sciences explain past endeavors and guide future efforts at living together in political, economic and cultural communities.

The undergraduate General Education program is also designed to help students enhance specific skills and knowledge:

- to apply innovation techniques to solve problems or make improvements;
- to communicate effectively in the physical and digital world;
- to use information literacy in conducting research; and
- to make ethical decisions.

These skills are infused in a number of the liberal arts courses and in courses required for the concentration or major.

The College's philosophy carries over to our graduate programs as well. In our graduate programs the College allows students to demonstrate learning equivalent to college-level learning and are designed with learners in mind. The programs require that the students have work experience and permits them to develop a project that can enhance their career. In addition, these degrees extend the specific skills of our general education undergraduate program—innovative thinking, effective communication, information literacy and research, and ethical decision making.