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UPDATE is edited by
 Lila Guillet
 Commencement Coordinator
 and Assistant to the Provost



From the Desk of the Provost

We had our ten year regional reaccreditation visit from November 6-9. For those of you who are not familiar with regional accreditation, it occurs every ten years with a five year review in the middle and annual updates. Regional accreditation is important to us and to you. It is the “gold seal” for colleges. It is also what allows us to offer financial aid to you. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), which is our regional accreditor, sends in a team of eight people from other colleges from outside of Connecticut to review our academic programs, student services, finances, etc. Then they make a recommendation to the NEASC Board. As part of that process, they also talk to some of our students and alumni. The visiting team was really impressed with our students. We do not receive the final recommendation from NEASC until sometime in the spring. However, based on the exit report, Charter Oak had no major issues. They were impressed with how well we serve our students and our academic offerings.

I want to use this space to talk to you a little bit about attendance in your courses. I am sure you all know that class participation is the best way to ensure success in a class. You probably also know that we take attendance. We can tell when you log in and when you do work. It is the “when you do work” that is key. Because we offer financial aid to students, if a student stops attending a course, we have to go into the course and see what day you last submitted an assignment. That date is what is then used to recalculate your financial aid. The tool that we use to help us with this process is called Starfish. If you are not in attendance during the first week of the course—you receive a notice and so does your advisor. If you don’t submit work by the end of the first week, you will be academically withdrawn, but you will still owe the tuition for the course. This also happens if you have not submitted any work for ten consecutive days. If you are academically withdrawn, the instructor cannot allow you back in the course. You will have to complete a petition form to get back in (your academic advisor or the registrar’s office can help you with the form) if you have a documented extenuating circumstance. If you know you are going to miss a lot of time because of work or a medical procedure, not enrolling that term is probably the better option. If there is an emergency that is going to prevent you from getting your course work done on time, you need to request an incomplete which requires documentation. Again, the instructor can’t just grant you extra time. Whether or not you are allowed back in the course or are granted extra time is based on a number of factors—the documentation provided, how much work you have completed in the course, where in the term we are, and what grade you currently have.

We have had some turnover in staff this semester. Linda Larkin, Director of Academic Services, has retired after 31 years. She supervised our academic advisors, Student Association, and a number of other programs. Her current advisees have been assigned to other advisors. We are in the process of interviewing for her replacement. We have a new Accessibility Coordinator—Joanne Prague Doyle jpraguedoyle@charteroak.edu. Shaunna Lowe is the interim coordinator of the WIT and CT Wage program. There are articles about Joanne and Shaunna later in the newsletter.

The holidays are upon us. Take time to enjoy family and friends.

Shirley M. Adams, Ph.D.
 Provost



Shaunna Lowe, M.B.A.
Interim Coordinator of the
COSC Women in
Transition
Program (WIT)



Shaunna Lowe, M.B.A. will be substituting for Delores Bell as **Coordinator of the Women in Transition Program (WIT) and CT-WAGE Programs** for the next few months.

The Women in Transition Program began in 1999 to help working single mothers earn an Associate and/or Bachelor's degree with the assistance of student financial aid.

The online courses offered at Charter Oak State College allow mothers to earn their degree from the convenience and comfort of their homes. The program is funded by donations and grants.

The WIT program offers a loan of a laptop computer, Internet service reimbursement, free books for Charter Oak courses, and reimbursement of book costs for courses taken at other institutions.

Academic, career, and personal counseling, along with personal and professional development workshops, are offered by the WIT /CT-WAGE Program Coordinator.

Applicants must fulfill the following qualifications:

- Be a single mother with dependent children
- Have a minimum of 21 college credits from an accredited institution
- Have a minimum 2.3 Grade Point Average
- Meet the eligibility requirements for Federal Financial Aid
- Be employed in a low paying job (will be determined once application received)
- Be willing to take at least two or three courses per semester

The CT-WAGE (Connecticut Workforce Advancement Grants for Education) program was established in 2008 by the Connecticut Legislature to help married and single male or female parents in low-income jobs complete their college degrees online.

The CT-Wage program offers the loan of a laptop computer and Internet service reimbursement, free books for Charter Oak courses, reimbursement for books for courses taken at other accredited institutions of higher education, and academic, career and personal counseling.



Applicants must fulfill the following qualifications:

- Must be the parent of a child or children with whom you are actively involved and to whom you provide some degree of financial support
- Must be employed in a low-paying job – as determined by Federal Poverty and State Median Income Guidelines
- Must have 36-45 transferable credits (fewer will be considered in special cases) earned at an accredited institution(s) of higher education and/or through testing or military credit
- Must have maintained a minimum 2.3 Grade Point Average in earning those credits
- Must meet eligibility requirements for Federal Financial Aid
- Must be willing to take a minimum of two courses during each semester (fall and spring) and one summer course until meeting Associate and/or Bachelor’s degree credit requirements

You may contact Shaunna Lowe, Interim Coordinator of the WIT program, at 860-515-3819 or by email at slowe2@charteroak.edu



Charter Oak’s New Accessibility/Learning Specialist

We are excited to welcome **Joanne Prague Doyle, M.A., M.S.**, as our new Accessibility/Learning Specialist.

Having worked in education at the elementary and secondary school levels for over 30 years, Joanne is pleased to have the opportunity to bring her experience to the post-secondary level. She has held positions as a teacher of English and History, school principal, 504 coordinator for accessibility services, and counselor for Region 8 in Connecticut.. Much of her time was spent assisting students with learning differences applying to colleges and gaining skills in self-advocacy.

Joanne reports that she is eager to connect with students and welcomes emails and calls in the Office of Accessibility Services from those who wish her assistance. She can be reached at (860) 515-3846 or by email at oas@acharteroak.edu.

Meet our New Faculty Member

Jessica Waterhouse, M.A., is a new consulting faculty member. She is a Professor of Criminal Justice and Program Coordinator at Tunxis Community College. She will serve a three year term on the **Social and Behavioral Sciences Committee**.



Attention Financial Aid Students

The 2017-2018 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is now available for students to complete. What this means is that students don't have to wait until January 1, 2017 to file a FAFSA for the upcoming 2017-2018 academic year.

In addition to being able to file earlier, students no longer need to estimate income and tax information when they file their 2017-2018 FAFSA.

In most cases students will be able to retrieve their income data directly from the IRS the first time they file their FAFSA. This is because students will be providing 2015 income tax information when they complete their 2017-2018 FAFSA. Since most students and their families have already filed a 2015 tax return, IRS tax data can be electronically imported into the FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT).

To use the IRS DRT, students simply navigate to the "Finances" section of the FAFSA application where there is an option to use the IRS DRT. For most applicants selected for verification, the use of the IRS DRT may eliminate the requirement of providing an IRS Tax Return Transcript to the Office of Financial Aid.



Graduation Dates and Deadlines

Charter Oak awards degrees three times a year (May 31st, August 31st and December 31st). Diplomas are also issued three times a year, 4-6 weeks after the May, August and December conferral dates.

Please note that your degree **will not be awarded** if you have an outstanding balance on your account. To receive your diploma, you must also have completed your financial aid exit interview (if applicable). If you have any questions, please contact Paul Morganti, Associate Registrar at pmorganti@charteroak.edu

Undergraduate Program News

Enroll in Your Spring 2017 courses NOW!

Spring registration is currently open. The last day to register for Full Semester, Term 1 and Session 1 courses is **Wednesday, January 11, 2017 at 11:59 p.m.**

The deadline for Session 2 courses that begin in mid February is **Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at 11:59 p.m.**

The deadline for Term 2 and Session 3 courses beginning in March and April is **Wednesday, March 15, 2017 at 11:59 p.m.**

Only payment at time of registration will secure a "seat" in your course. We recommend that you register early to avoid being closed out of the course you want.

To view a listing of spring courses, click on [https://acorn.charteroak.edu/ICS/Course Search.jnz](https://acorn.charteroak.edu/ICS/CourseSearch.jnz)

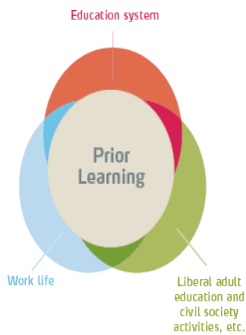
Please check the academic calendar for other important dates!

[https://acorn.charteroak.edu/ICS/Registrar/Registrar.jnz?portlet=Academic Calendar](https://acorn.charteroak.edu/ICS/Registrar/Registrar.jnz?portlet=AcademicCalendar)

Blackboard News

Charter Oak State College will be upgrading Blackboard in Spring 2017 to improve upon logistics and provide 24/7 help desk support to students and faculty. To keep students and faculty informed, notifications will be sent to your Charter Oak email account. We are looking forward to making the transition as smooth as possible and appreciate your patience with the upgrade.

Prior Learning Assessment News



Save time and money – use PLA to get credit for what you already know. Click on the “Credit for Prior Learning” button in the left frame of the College website at www.charteroak.edu

Good News! Prior Learning Assessment Scholarships Available!

The College Foundation has generously funded the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Scholarship for 2016-17. PLA can help you save time and money by reducing the cost of your education and your time to degree. Review the information online at www.charteroak.edu/pla to learn more about getting credit for what you already know, then work with your Academic Counselor to make a plan. You can use PLA to apply for credit instead of taking courses and the scholarship funds can be used to help cover the costs for taking standardized examinations, requesting credit for credentials or using the portfolio assessment process.

We invite you to apply if this is something you would like to take advantage of. The PLA Scholarship Application form with instructions is in Student Self-Service /Student Forms on Acorn.



Distance Learning News

Spring 2017 New Courses

CRJ 215: Criminology (new 8 week format)

Bush, Jada L., Instructor

Term 1—January 17—March 12, 2017
3 semester credits—Lower Level

CRJ 315 : Race, Class, and Gender in the Criminal Justice System

Bush, Jada L., Instructor

Term 2—March 20—May 14, 2017
3 semester credits—Upper Level

CRJ 325: Ethics in Criminal Justice

Instructor TBA

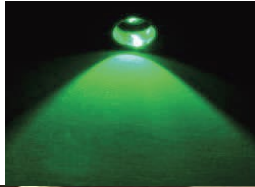
Term 2—March 20—May 14, 2017
3 semester credits—Upper Level

Cyber Security Program at Charter Oak Receives National Accolade!

Charter Oak was named among the Top 10 Most Affordable Online Cyber Security degrees by OnlineU! The ranking can be found here: <http://www.onlineu.org/most-affordable-colleges/cyber-security-degrees>



Student Spotlight



Daniel Flores was awarded the 2015-2016 Paraeducator of the Year Award for the Consolidated School District of New Britain. He is pursuing our Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Child and Youth Development.

Ms. Nancy Sarra (right), Superintendent of Schools in New Britain, called Daniel a true professional and is grateful to have him as part of the Consolidated School District of New Britain (CSDNB). “Daniel is someone who understands the importance of building the capacity of staff. He is committed to the New Britain students as well as the New Britain staff. He is a strong member of our CSDNB team.”

Congratulations, Daniel!

Holly Palmer, a Bachelor’s degree candidate at Charter Oak, was elected Chair of the Connecticut State College and University System (CSCU) Student Advisory Committee (SAC). In that role, she serves on the Board of Regents as a voting member and represents the 88,000 students attending the CSCU institutions. She has been a member of SAC for the past three years and has served that committee as secretary for most of that time.



Holly is also a council member of the Charter Oak State College Student Association. We are sure that Holly will continue to make us proud.

Attention *** Certificate Students ***

You must complete the online ***Certificate Graduation Application*** to have your certificate conferred.

Certificates are conferred 3 times a year; May 31, August 31 and December 31.

If enrolled in your final certificate course or within 6 credits of completing certificate requirements, you must complete a *Certificate Graduation Application*.

The application can be completed and submitted online on the ACORN Student Portal: <https://acorn.charteroak.edu>.

Log in at <https://acorn.charteroak.edu> → Go to: Graduation Tab → Applications for Graduation → Certificate Graduation

If you have questions about completing the ***Certificate Graduation Application***, please call the Registrar’s Office at 860-515-3702.



Master of Science in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership

What is the difference between a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree and a Master of Science (MS) degree and what degree is best for me?

The field of business has a wealth of disciplines that students can choose to pursue including such areas as organizational effectiveness and leadership, accounting, finance, marketing, international business, business analytics, etc. The identification and selection of an appropriate degree program is a very personal decision that will come down to your identifying your professional career interests and aspirations. If you are in a career field that you want to continue to engage in, or you know the career field you would like to pursue and deepen your knowledge, then a Master of Science degree will tend to be more valuable to both the student and to the employer as compared to a general MBA degree (QS Quacquarelli Symonds Limited, 2009).

When comparing an MBA degree versus a Master of Science degree, one needs to explore the issue of breadth versus depth of the subject matter to be covered in the degree program. A person with a Master of Science degree tends to desire to become a subject matter expert within a singular discipline and desires to be recognized as the resident expert in a functional area within an organization. A person with an MBA tends to want to look at the big picture covering a wide area of functions within an organization. The approach to the studies may vary significantly. A Master of Science degree guides a student through a substantial, deep exploration of the intricacies of the subject matter whereas an MBA will address a broad range of knowledge content areas across all business functions that are focused on application, yet limited in depth of singular, subject content coverage.

The MBA is the most globally recognized, academic business credential and still highest volume business degree awarded. That being said, there has been a substantial increase in the number of Master of Science degrees over the last 10 years. The percentage of Master of Science degrees has increased to approximately 20% of all graduate business degrees awarded and continues to increase (GMAC, 2013).

So why a Master of Science in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership instead of an MBA?

It has become increasingly challenging for organizations to operate effectively and improve their value chain, given the increasing rate of change occurring in the business environment driven by constantly improving technology, rapid new product and service development, supply chain globalization, and global economic uncertainties. This is exemplified in the following trends that are driving critical business decisions (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2013):

- “Next generation leadership- The majority of organizations (84 percent) say that developing future leaders is relevant now and in the next three years, but organizations must seek a new leadership model for the age of agility. Although there is clear focus on developing the next generation of leaders globally, HR executives still need to develop a different approach around development. These strategies must be specific to the business. It's pervasive and organizations must commit to getting the best results.



- Accelerating organizational change- 87% of respondents see the way in which organizations view change as a top trend. In today's fast-paced environment, organizations need to adopt a new way of looking at change and become more results-orientated.
- The war to develop talent- 86% of respondents reported the shift to development and upgrading skills as a critical trend. As businesses struggle to fill critical positions at many levels, companies are putting renewed focus on building capabilities, not just finding them.”

Today’s leaders need to be able to adapt and succeed in an ambiguous environment. Leaders need to analyze and develop an organization’s culture based on a highly diverse and global workforce. The ability to understand the dynamics of working with cross-cultural, self-directed, and cross-function teams will be paramount to both a leader’s and organization’s success. Leaders and team members will be required to look at the organization and make decisions from a systems perspective. Learning at the individual, team, and organizational levels will be a constant activity. Leaders will be required to effectively communicate and inspire their team to commit to a shared organizational vision. Leaders, regardless of the level in the organization, will need to be able to coach, mentor and drive effective organizational change, as change will be the sole constant in every organization.

Organizations are flattening their organizational structures creating a critical need to develop leaders at every level within an organization. Organizations are unable to develop the number of leaders they need with the critical skill sets that are required in order for them to be effective leaders. The Master of Science in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership at Charter Oak State College was chartered and is uniquely positioned to develop, provide, and enhance the requisite practical skill and tool sets that leaders in organizations so desperately need. Your time to influence and lead has come. Our Master of Science in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership at Charter Oak State College will help you achieve that goal.

References:

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited. (2013). *Global business seeking new leadership models*. Retrieved from: <http://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/global-business-seeking-new-leadership-models-deloitte-survey.html>

GMAC. (2013). 2013 mba.com prospective student survey. Retrieved from: <http://www.gmac.com/market-intelligence-and-research/research-library/admissions-and-application-trends/2013-prospective-students-survey-program-demand.aspx>

QS Quacquarelli Symonds Limited. (2009). *Graduate business degrees: MBA or Masters?* Retrieved from <http://www.topuniversities.com/courses/business-management-studies/graduate-business-degrees-mba-or-masters>





From the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Charter Oak State College has a long history of listening to its students and revising processes and services to meet current needs. In order to help us continue this tradition, we ask current students and alumni to take a few moments to reply to confidential surveys. While the summary results are shared with the Administration and Staff, individual responses are not shared. Any personally identifiable information provided is removed prior to reporting and is only be visible to the research team.

If you have any questions about survey administration at Charter Oak State College, please contact Cris Dittrich, Research Associate for the office of Institutional Effectiveness at cdittrich@charteroak.edu

Updated information from the Course Evaluation Survey

Students' overall ratings of their courses and instructors were positive this past year – 83% of students rated the overall effectiveness of their instructor as “High” or “Very High,” and 87% of students rated the overall effectiveness of their course as “High” or “Very High.”

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness would like to thank students for continuing to make the online course evaluation system a success. The purpose of course evaluation at our institution is to provide: 1) information for the individual faculty member to use in assessing his/her instruction, 2) data that may assist in making curricular and course content decisions, 3) data that will assist in improving the online delivery system, and 4) the student body with a voice in developing and maintaining an effective faculty and curriculum.

The insights that students provide play a significant role in helping Charter Oak continue to enhance its courses while preserving the things that the school does best. We would like to remind students that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will email links to the online course evaluation survey during the final weeks of instruction in each sub-term.

Updated information from the New Student Survey

Charter Oak State College is interested in a student's experience going through the admissions process and becoming a student. In the survey students were asked to respond to questions regarding multiple office and online resources. Twenty-one questions are asked regarding experiences with the offices of admissions, financial aid, business, registrar, and academic counseling. Eight questions are asked regarding online resources and blackboard.

The New Student Survey was sent out in the beginning of August and was open for one month. A total of 132 students were contacted for the survey and 14 students responded for a response rate of 11%. When asked if it was easy to contact COSC offices by phone or email, 82% of students attempted to contact the COSC offices agreed. When asked if useful information was provided by COSC offices, 83% of students who contacted COSC offices agreed. These two inquiries related to the Financial Aid Office, Business Office, Registrar's Office, and the Admissions and Academic Counselors separately. Email is the most frequently used form of contact between COSC students and staff.



Updated information on the Graduation Survey

Students are asked to complete a graduation survey at the time they complete the online registration form for graduation. There were 768 completed graduate applicants between September 1, 2015 and August 31, 2016. This year we received 64 surveys from associate degree completers, 342 surveys from bachelor's degree completers, and 12 surveys from students who did not identify their degree. This yielded a total of 418 surveys which is a 54% response rate.

When asked about their employment status, 84% of associate completers identified themselves as currently employed and 84% of bachelor completers identified themselves as currently employed. Of those students that are employed, 84% responded in the affirmative when asked “Did your Charter Oak experience enhance your job skills?”

When asked “What is your overall level of satisfaction with Charter Oak:” 98% of associate degree completers and 96% of bachelor degree completers indicated being satisfied to very satisfied with Charter Oak overall. The remaining students identified themselves as being neutral. Ninety eight percent of respondents would recommend Charter Oak State College to others.

Through the graduation survey responses we gather vital information from students who have had the full Charter Oak experience. This helps us to improve our programs as well as a student's experience at our institution. This includes but is not limited to the availability of courses, programs, advising, and employment assistance. Alumni are encouraged to complete the graduation survey to help future students.

Updated Information on the Alumni Survey

A new survey is being sent out to Charter Oak State College Alumni who have graduated two years prior. This survey will take 5 minutes to complete. Alumni are asked to complete 17 questions regarding career, employment, educational pursuits, and interests. Responses are used to help the institution meet the needs of our graduates.

The Charter Oak State College Alumni Survey was run in September 2016 for degree and certificate recipients who completed between 9/1/14-8/31/15. The survey was open for one month and 76 students participated. This survey asks questions about alumni careers since graduating from Charter Oak State College.

Ninety-two percent of applicable respondents rated their experience at Charter Oak State College as preparing them 'slightly' to 'greatly' for their current occupation; 75% felt at least moderately prepared. Ninety-two percent of applicable respondents found that their experience at Charter Oak State College prepared them at least slightly for future educational endeavors.



What if I get sick?

Part of the upside to being an online student is the lack of physical barriers to class attendance, but sometimes things happen. A student can encounter an illness, a family emergency, or other matter that would mean a stretch of more than a day or two of time away from the computer. Should you find yourself in this situation, please contact your instructor, your Academic Counselor, and the Registrar right away. They will let you know if you may need to provide documentation for your absence and the policies that may apply to your situation.



Test Administration Schedule November 2016 – March 2017

CLEP & DSST Exams are held at 85 Alumni Road in Newington, CT
Pathways/Early Childhood Exams are held at the main office at 55 Paul Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT

MONTH	CLEP	DSST/DANTES	COSC Pathways
November	(F) 4 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 5 (9 a.m.) (S) 12 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.) (F) 18 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 19 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.)	(F) 4 (11:00 a.m.) (S) 5 (11:00 a.m.) (F) 18 (11:00 a.m.)*	(S) 5 (2:00 p.m.) (S) 19 (2:00 p.m.)
December	(R) 1 (10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.) (F) 2 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 3 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.) (F) 16 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 17 (9 a.m.)	(R) 1 (10 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.) (F) 2 (11:00 a.m.) (F) 16 (11:00 a.m.) (S) 17 (11:00 a.m.)	(S) 3 (2:00 p.m.) (S) 17 (2:00 p.m.)
January 2017	(R) 5 (10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.) (F) 6 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 7 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.) (S) 21 (9 a.m.) (F) 27 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 28 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.)	(R) 5 (10 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.) (F) 6 (11:00 a.m.) (S) 21 (11:00 a.m.) (F) 27 (11:00 a.m.)	(S) 7 (2:00 p.m.) (S) 21 (2:00 p.m.)
February 2017	(S) 11 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.) (R) 16 (10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.) (F) 17 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 18 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.) (S) 25 (9 a.m.)	(R) 16 (10 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.) (F) 17 (11:00 a.m.)* (S) 25 (11:00 a.m.)	(S) 11 (2:00 p.m.) (S) 25 (2:00 p.m.)
March 2017	(R) 2 (10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.) (F) 3 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 4 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.) (F) 17 (11:30 a.m.) (S) 18 (9 a.m.) (S) 25 (9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.)	(R) 2 (10:00 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.) (F) 3 (11:00 a.m.) (F) 17 (11:00 a.m.) * (S) 18 (11:00 a.m.)	(S) 4 (2:00 p.m.) (S) 18 (2:00 p.m.)

*DSST Public Speaking at 2:15 p.m.

All CLEP & DSST exams are offered at 85 Alumni Road in Newington, CT.

Pathways exams are offered at the main office in New Britain.

(R) Thursday (F) Friday (S) Saturday

