

ASHFORD

CONNECTIONS

AU Alumni Magazine

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MAIN COVER PHOTO: Florence Haley, Bachelor of Arts in Business Information Systems, 2012, shows off her new Ashford gear at the fall 2012 commencement ceremony. For more photos of the event, see page 9.

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“
Ashford University is already an innovator in its field, and I am honored to help guide Ashford into the future.
”

Welcome Letter: Dr. Richard Pattenauide

DR. RICHARD PATTENAUDE

President and Chief Executive Officer

Dear Ashford students and alumni,

On behalf of the staff and faculty at Ashford University, I welcome you to this issue of Ashford Connections. I'd also like to take this opportunity to introduce myself.

I have been involved in higher education for decades, having served as Chancellor of the University of Maine System for five years, President of the University of Southern Maine for 16 years and, prior to that, as Vice President for Academic Affairs at Central Connecticut State University and a member of the Political Science Faculty and the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

I had the pleasure of joining Ashford in October as President and Chief Executive Officer. One of my main motivations for assuming the leadership of Ashford was the opportunity it afforded me to join a university that is a leader in online education. I believe the future of higher education must include a robust and growing online sector, and I didn't want to just sit on the sidelines and watch it happen.

In the relatively short time that I've been here at Ashford, I have already come to admire the deep commitment to student and alumni success throughout the entire organization. It was this belief in the transforming power of education that has been my focus throughout my career, and it's what brought me to Ashford University.

Ashford University is already an innovator in its field, and I am honored to help guide Ashford into the future. We are on a great trajectory and we are moving fast. For these reasons and more, I love telling the Ashford story.

It's clear others love telling it, as well. This issue, themed "My Ashford," is filled with stories of your fellow alumni written in their own words. As you read through the pages, I hope you're inspired to keep reaching higher in all you do. It's an honor to have each of you as part of the Ashford family. After all, this is your Ashford, too. Enjoy the issue!

Sincerely,

Richard L. Pattenauide

Dr. Richard Pattenauide
 President and Chief Executive Officer
 Ashford University

STUDENTS GET THEIR 15 MINUTES OF FAME

Ashford Idols: Ashford students in the spotlight

CHARLES PORTER Featured on A&E's "Scared Straight"

Bachelor of Arts in Social and Criminal Justice

Ashford student Charles Porter, 45 and of Windsor, VA, began a 17-year career in law enforcement after serving several years in the US Navy. He earned many titles while working as a jail officer, including Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Certified General Instructor, Defensive Tactics Instructor, and Firearms Instructor.

Despite his many accomplishments, Charles knew that in order to climb the ranks, he'd need a degree. While on the phone with an Ashford Admissions Counselor, a regional jail captain who had been encouraging Charles to get his Bachelor's degree joined the call. By the time they got off the phone, they had both decided to enroll at Ashford. Of the captain, Charles says, "He recently completed his Master's!"

Due to graduate in September 2014, Charles is already reaping the benefits of his own Ashford education. "Since I have been enrolled in Ashford, I was promoted to the rank of Regional Jail Sergeant, I have been selected as Supervisor of the Year, I have begun teaching the Law Enforcement Interpersonal Communication Instructors course at several academies, and I have been appointed as my agency's Scared Straight Coordinator, which has been featured on the A&E Television show 'Beyond Scared Straight.'" You can view the episode Charles appeared in by searching online for "**Beyond Scared Straight: Color Coded Criminals.**"

Clearly, Charles is thriving in many areas of his life. "I feel as though I am really receiving a top notch education from some of the most dedicated and passionate instructors. Being an Ashford student

empowers me by giving me the extra confidence in my abilities to succeed at anything in life, regardless of how challenging." And he is regularly able to apply the theories he learns in his courses at work. "The critical thinking concepts that I have learned have enabled me to convey directives and thoughts to subordinates and peers in a more comprehensible detailed manner."

When Charles finishes his program, he intends to become a part of his agency's upper management staff. "My experience at Ashford has really been a great educational journey. I have really felt a lot of increased self-confidence in every aspect of my life, all of which comes from the decision I made to enroll in Ashford. All of the newfound knowledge has transcended into my life in ways that I cannot even begin to explain."



"Being an Ashford student empowers me by giving me the extra confidence in my abilities to succeed at anything in life, regardless of how challenging."

ARLENE DUNCAN

Participated in President Obama's Inaugural Parade

Bachelor of Arts in Education Studies

On January 21, 2013, ten women from the Native American Women Warriors (NAWW) marched their way into history when they participated in the inaugural parade for President Obama's second term in office. One of them was Arlene Duncan of Chicago, IL, a student achieving her Bachelor of Arts in Education Studies online at Ashford University and a member of the Anishinaabe Native American tribe.

Created in 2010, NAWW are the first recognized all-Native American color guard to participate in a presidential inaugural parade. The selection committee chose 60 out of the close to 3,000 groups that applied to be part of this historic day. In the parade, the women wore the jingle dress traditionally worn by the Anishinaabe tribe while participating in healing and prayer dances. The women in NAWW come from many different tribes, and each displayed their military branch and rank on their dresses with their own unique headpieces, leggings, and moccasins.

Said Arlene, "If I inspired just one person back on my reservation or in my community, I will be happy. Our goal marching that day was to bring a little healing to everyone, and I think we accomplished that goal."

Prior to enrolling at Ashford, Arlene served in the United States Marine Corps and did one tour in Afghanistan. She added, "It was such an honor to represent not only my family and tribe, but the United States Marine Corps. One day I will be able to tell my grandchildren that I left my mark on history." Her future aspirations are to earn a graduate degree in Native American studies and teach high school history.



SERETHA GUINN

American Idol Contestant

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology



When Seretha Guinn isn't spending time studying, she's singing her heart out - and recently, the entire country was lucky enough to hear her. After auditioning for season 12 of American Idol in her hometown of Charlotte, NC, this talented 26-year-old Ashford student was chosen to advance to Hollywood, where she made it to the final 60.

Seretha, who works as a hairstylist while pursuing her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, is the proud mom of her 3 year-old daughter, London. As she shared with viewers of the show, their life was recently turned upside down when London's father, Monty, was in a very serious accident that almost cost him his life. He was listed in critical condition and was unresponsive for two days. Though he has had eight surgeries so far and two more to go, he is now recovering. She didn't tell him she was auditioning because she thought he could use a happy surprise to lift his spirits.

Luckily, he got one! Seretha wowed judges Nicki Minaj, Randy Jackson, and Mariah Carey - all while holding London's hand - with a surprisingly fresh update of the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air theme song, followed by a touching rendition of "How Do I Live"

by LeAnn Rimes. After being told she was proceeding to Hollywood by the unanimous panel of judges, she took a photo of London posing with her idol, Minaj.

To view Seretha's audition, view "**Seretha Guinn Auditions - AMERICAN IDOL SEASON 12**" on American Idol's official YouTube channel. //

Had your own brush with fame?
Let us know at
connections@ashford.edu.

Ashford University's growing alumni community now has even more reasons to forge a lifelong relationship with the University: the Ashford Alumni Relations department has brought on two talented Alumni Relations Specialists and is currently planning an expansion of programs and services that will benefit all Ashford alumni - and students, our future alumni - in 2013 and beyond.

MEET THE ALUMNI RELATIONS TEAM!

Alumni Relations Spotlight: Meet the Alumni Relations Team!

A STRONG ALUMNI network benefits not only alumni by helping them build professional connections with other Ashford graduates, but also students who will depend heavily on a diverse professional network to help them find jobs and acquire relevant and practical career advice. The Alumni Relations team understands the necessity for building the foundation for a strong Ashford alumni community.

With that said, meet the team!



Laurie Bianchi
Alumni Relations Manager

With the help of her team, recent addition Laurie Bianchi envisions a national network of vibrant and engaged Ashford alumni in the not-too-distant future. Her energy and extensive experience in building alumni programs and engagement for San Diego State University made her a natural choice for the role. Laurie has worked and consulted in numerous industries and with some of the world's most known and admired brands and companies.



Carol Vaughan
Alumni Relations Specialist

Carol Vaughan brings with her a rich history of working in education and professional coaching. She has taught high school, led study abroad trips, and advised students at Mesa Community College. Most recently, she worked in Ashford's Career Services department, providing career counseling to students and alumni while also offering the Gallup StrengthsFinder assessment as a professional development tool. Her background in education and event planning enhances her ability to build programs that help students and alumni to connect, reconnect, and build strong ties to each other and to the University.



Crystal Folk
Alumni Relations Specialist

Crystal Folk is our newest member of the Alumni Relations team. She possesses a tremendous amount of experience in the areas of alumni relations, education administration, special events, and coordination. Most recently, Crystal worked at University of Phoenix building rapport with students and alumni through events including commencement ceremonies, information fairs, and celebrations honoring both the student and alumni populations. She looks forward to applying all of her knowledge, skills, and talents to building and growing Ashford's Alumni Relations program. //

Keep an eye out for Laurie, Carol, and Crystal at Ashford's Professional Development and Networking Events (see the full list of upcoming events on the back cover), and be sure to say hello!

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PREVIEW

Alumni Relations Spotlight: Alumni Association Preview

The Alumni Relations team is thrilled to be gearing up for the launch of the Ashford University Alumni Association (AUAA) in the coming months. The association will consist of programs and events that will connect, educate, and engage Ashford alumni across the US and around the world. Although the program is still in the works, a new logo (below right) and formal bylaws for proposed alumni chapters and volunteer leadership have already been developed.

"We have a vision that alumni will one day reach out and rely on one another to find jobs, establish important business relationships, and give back to Ashford students and their communities as a united population," says Laurie Bianchi, Alumni Relations Manager. "This is how top universities envisioned their alumni groups in the past, and certainly the way that Ashford will succeed in doing so in the future."

Bianchi cites Mary Vaessen, Mount St. Clare College class of 1963, as an example of what can be achieved through alumni connection. Mary began reaching out to her closest classmates in 2009 and subsequently wrote and designed her own version of the campus newspaper, The Clarian (later renamed The Clarianette).

Through mini reunions and larger gatherings, Mary developed a strong core of class of 1963 alums who have made a commitment to stay connected and celebrate their 50-year anniversary this June. "The first time we got together was as if we never parted," Mary mused. "We sat and talked for hours and hours, and it wasn't nearly enough time to say all of the things we wanted to say!"

Alumni like Mary Vaessen are leading the way, and the Alumni Relations team of Carol Vaughan, Crystal Folk, and Laurie Bianchi are searching for more alumni who understand how critical an alumni network is to the success and fulfillment of students and graduates alike. Keep an eye out for Alumni Relations announcements and a major launch of AUAA in the coming months.

"Ashford alumni deserve a community of their own and a strong sense of belonging to something bigger than they are," added Bianchi. "They've earned it." //



ASHFORD UNIVERSITY™
Alumni Association

Be sure to visit ashford.edu/alumni to register and activate your AUAA membership and to receive updates and announcements over the coming months!

Volunteer, send ideas, and share your vision of what you would like to see the AUAA offer by emailing alumni@ashford.edu.



JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE Q&A

October 2012 Commencement: Jackie Joyner-Kersey Q&A

Widely regarded as the world's greatest female athlete of the 20th century, Jackie Joyner-Kersey – six-time Olympic gold medalist, motivational speaker, and founder of the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation – delivered the keynote address during the October 14, 2012 commencement ceremony held at the i wireless Center in Moline, IL. Hammering home the importance of persevering in order to get one's education despite any circumstances, her speech kept the audience captivated and left them inspired. We got the chance to sit down with her afterward to chat in-depth on these topics and more.

AU: How important was it for you to obtain your own degree?

JJK: Obtaining my degree from UCLA was very important, and it was a conversation that I had with my mother. And at the time, when you're a youngster, you're like, 'Ok, I'm going to school,' but you never know. I never knew if I was going to have the opportunity to go to the school of my choice, which was UCLA, but because of Title IX and my many gifts, I was able to make sure that I took full advantage of those opportunities and not take it for granted to work toward my dreams of trying to better Jackie as a person, not as an athlete.

Is there an impression that it's far-fetched to get a degree online?

It's not far-fetched at all. I think it's about the possibilities and opportunities, and the more you can bring awareness to these opportunities the better. Because you're not only talking about people that are coming from high school and then eventually going to college and have the time, but people that are already established and even want to go back, and didn't have the time...to finish their Master's degree. Here is another opportunity for them while they still try to raise a family and still try to make ends meet.

What would you say to those people who are trying to fit education into other life, work, and family commitments?

I would say to them: it's balance. Balance is so important, and also having a great support system. Because when you're trying to further your education, if you're doing it on campus or even online, it's really having that support system and understanding that 'my challenges are different from yours, but the sacrifices that I'm making we all will benefit in the long run.' So I think it's really having the right support system.

And also you will be an example for your young daughter or your young son or someone in the family – or it might be [that] someone in the family just didn't have the time or the energy. But now here is another opportunity for me to do this online; that's encouraging, and it can be empowering. And that can uplift someone's self-esteem who just might be afraid to talk about it, [as in] 'Well, I didn't have the time to do this, I couldn't do this; now, I can.' So you can be empowered in so many ways.

How has technology changed your life?

Well technology, in a sense, that's the new wave...it's really the way the generation is going. You have all the social media, and there's just so many things that are happening on the internet. [In my commencement address] I alluded to the fact that my mother didn't have an opportunity to use the internet – let alone we didn't even own a computer – so [it's great] to be in a position where young people, all people

from all different backgrounds, can further their education by going on and signing up to take classes so they can either improve themselves or better their opportunities in life.

How are you seeing technology change the world of athletics?

It's a part of our training when we are doing stride length, measuring body mechanics, arms in position, dealing with timing, motion, lost time. Because in track and field, time is of the essence; every tenth of a second or millisecond makes a difference between first, second, and third.

What lasting impression would you like to leave with the nearly 900 new graduates present today?

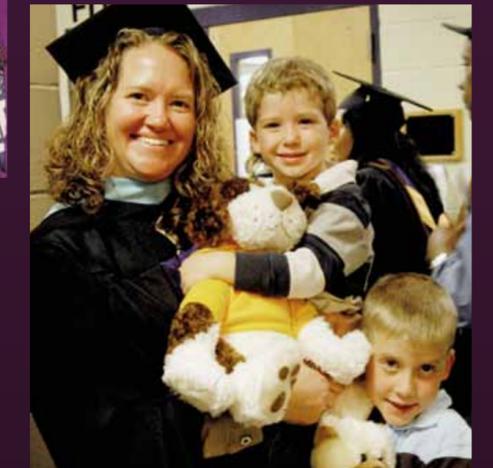
The lasting impression is that the impossible is probable. And if you persevere, you stick with it, whatever your goals are, you work towards them. And then once you attain them, you still have to reinvent yourself and then set new goals. You can never become complacent. You have to still be willing to work hard. //

To see a portion of this interview and to view her entire commencement address, visit Ashford's YouTube channel, youtube.com/user/ashforduniversity, and select the Commencement playlist.

PHOTO GALLERY



CLOCKWISE FROM THE TOP LEFT: Mike Conover, BA in Elementary Education, 2010 (campus) and MA in Teaching and Learning with Technology, 2012 (online), and his family; Patricia Rollins, BA in Health and Human Services, 2012 (online), enjoying the "Future Achievers Fun Zone" with one of her children; Marissa Thede, BA in Business Administration, 2011 (campus) and MPA, 2012 (online); Patricia Dell, MA in Education, 2012 (online), and her children; Quentin Brackenridge, BA in Social Science, 2011 (campus) and MA in Organizational Management, 2012 (online); and Wendy O'Reilly (at left), AA in Early Childhood Education, 2012 (online), and her family.



“This job allows me to provide myself, my wife, and my children with a quality of life that we all deserve.”

- Devin Jon Giroux

In their own words: stories from Ashford students and alumni.

“...I began the second career of my dreams.”

- Alfonso Rivera

MY ASHFORD

When Ashford students and alumni were invited to share their stories of life and learning at Ashford on the website my.ashford.edu, the response was overwhelming. From overcoming obstacles and achieving astounding triumphs, one theme unites them all – a drive to achieve more than what they thought was possible. In this issue of Ashford Connections, we are bringing you their stories in their own words. We hope they inspire you to reach for your own goals as you reflect on your own journey thus far – and look forward to what’s ahead.



After being out of school for 20 years due to working full-time, I decided it was time to return if I wanted to advance my career and set an example for my children on the importance of obtaining a higher education. Working 50-plus hours per week, I did not have time to go to a traditional brick and mortar campus.

It takes a certain discipline and self-motivation to complete school in an online environment, and you must be accountable for your actions. You also need to remember that you get out what you put in; therefore, if you are not learning, it is not the school’s fault.

After completing my Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, I went ahead and decided to complete another 12 classes and obtain my Master of Business Administration. I am thankful that I did, as it resulted in a promotion to a director level position with another company and at a salary increase. When adding an annual bonus, my salary jumped significantly, and it is due to my education in conjunction with experience.

Good luck with your educational goals and future endeavors, Ashford alumni!



BRIAN JACOBY
Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, 2011
Master of Business Administration, 2012



CORRINNE HENKE
Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education, 2011



I have known since I was five and read my first Baby-Sitters Club book that I wanted to work with children. Teaching preschool is just in my soul. It is not, however, a field known for its rewarding salaries. In 2003, I became pregnant with my daughter, dropped out of college, and almost immediately found myself as a single mother making minimum wage.

Even after five more years, an Associate’s degree, and an award from the National Association for the Education of Young Children for Provider of the Year, I was still working two jobs and living right on the poverty line. I was terrified to go back to school and worried that I couldn’t succeed without being in a traditional college classroom; but I knew I had no choice. I couldn’t leave my field, but I couldn’t stay where I was.

Another teacher recommended Ashford to me, saying they were one of the more affordable accredited online universities. I set to researching and was shocked to find it was true! And the most exciting part of all...I could get into classes right away!

Those classes changed my life! Most people outside of the field are not aware of the dramatically shifting paradigm in early childhood education, but these teachers really had their fingers on the pulse of the progress. Near the end of my degree, I left my... corporate day care job for a position in a high quality preschool and immediately put my classes to use! I pride myself on being a knowledgeable educator, with experiences in many different environments; but the education I gained from the men and women who taught these classes is still put to the test every

day. And I am not the only one who benefits; the children I work with every day hear these instructors’ words as well.

Through those 22 months, I had many ups and downs, sometimes having to drop and restart classes, like when my beloved Nana, for whom my daughter Chloe is named, passed away. Ashford was always adaptable, and always treated me like I was an individual and not a numbered head in a desk. As a single mother working two jobs, I required quite a bit of that flexibility. It was really quite remarkable how much everyone was willing to work with my circumstances, and how fair my teachers and advisers were. I felt like every single person there really understood how much I wanted to succeed, and just how desperately.

Ashford changed my world so I could go out and change it for these kids.

I graduated in July 2011 with a degree in Early Childhood Education and 3.77 GPA. I received a 20 percent raise, became qualified to teach the most competitive age level in my school, and found my work family. Recently I have married, and I plan to start a resource and advocacy group for single parents in my area by providing parenting classes as well as trainings for other educators (a lot of which will be based on things I learned at Ashford!). I love my job, I can support my family, and I feel amazing about what I have accomplished. I didn’t just get my Bachelor’s degree, I *earned* it.



DEVIN JON GIROUX
Bachelor of Arts in
Business Information Systems, 2012

“ As we all know, the job market in this country is tough. I graduated from Ashford in April 2012 and immediately began sending out resumes and browsing job sites. In June, I found a golden job opportunity and applied for it. This application led to a personal interview in July, which led to a job offer in August. I am now employed by the state of Maine’s third largest university as an Information Technology Systems Help Desk/Desktop Services Technician, and it has literally become the job of my dreams. I am fully convinced that my Bachelor’s degree from Ashford was the deciding factor in the hiring panel’s decision to offer me the position, and I could not be happier. Thank you, Ashford University, for a high-quality education and your contribution to my personal success. This job allows me to provide myself, my wife, and my children with a quality of life that we all deserve.

“ My name is Jacquelyn (Jackie) Thrasher, and I recently completed my second Master’s degree at Ashford. I am a grandmother of six and this was an exciting accomplishment for me.

The new technology I have been exposed to via my Ashford experiences, and the higher level of education techniques, will help me to be successful when working with young children and also in my pursuit as a published writer. I have some children’s books that I am now more motivated to complete and get on the market. My instructors at Ashford, especially Dr. Keith Pressey, helped me gain the confidence to move forward through their guidance and encouragement in all facets of my education.

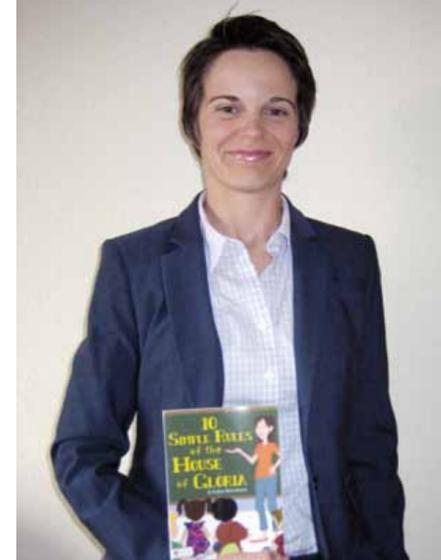
Being a part of the Ashford student community has increased my writing skills, even though I have always loved writing. I am happy to let you know I have had a story published in the special Christmas edition of Guideposts Magazine, titled “The Joys of Christmas.” My story is titled “Sitting Room Only.” Since Guideposts receives thousands of submitted stories, I was elated and honored to get the call that my story was selected, especially since it is also in one of the special editions. Anyone who would like to purchase the book can do so at shopguideposts.org/joys-of-christmas-2012.html. Guideposts is a non-profit that helps many people, including our troops.

Look for my name and more of my work as time goes forward! Remember me as one of your fellow alumni and that it is never too late to follow your dreams, as I am 64 years old!

Ashford students, alumni, employees, and advocates are invited to submit their own stories at my.ashford.edu.



JACQUELYN THRASHER
Bachelor of Arts in Social Science, 2008
Master of Arts in Education, Early Childhood Education specialization, 2011
Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning with Technology, 2012



EMILY GRACE BOLTWOOD
Bachelor of Arts in Economics, 2011

“ I began my Ashford journey in January 2008 and completed my Bachelor’s in Organizational Management in June 2010. The faculty and staff members continually worked with me through military deployments in a variety of challenging geographical locations and arduous assignments. Because of Ashford’s commitment to affording their students the best education possible, I was able to begin and complete my Master’s in Organizational Management (with a specialization in Project Management) in 16 months.

“ The education I received at Ashford provided me with the knowledge and resources to be resilient in this ever-changing economy. The skills I obtained from my education at Ashford University filled me with the confidence to take a step out and create my own job.

My name is Emily Boltwood and I am the creator of the children’s story *10 Simple Rules of the House of Gloria* [available on tatepublishing.com and amazon.com]. I created Gloria and her home. It is one thing to have an idea, but it’s another to be equipped with the tools necessary to take an idea, turn it into a product, and then create demand for your product. Whatever your business idea and from whatever your beginnings, you can make anything you want possible. I scratched out this idea on a simple sketch pad. It is now an exciting new original children’s book with another to follow in the upcoming year. I hope to continue with this project and maybe one day turn the idea into a children’s cartoon.

I recently retired from the United States military and, with my years of military service experience in combination with my Ashford education, I began the second career of my dreams. I have been able to join a Fortune 500 company and federal government agency as a Managing Consultant within organizational change at IBM Global Business Services. I firmly believe my education obtained through Ashford University was critical in being considered. //



ALFONSO RIVERA
Bachelor of Arts in
Organizational Management, 2010
Master of Arts in Organizational Management, Project Management specialization, 2012

Video Spotlight:

EDDIE HENDERSON

Bachelor of Arts in Applied Behavioral Science



Eddie Henderson is a single dad of two daughters, one of whom has special needs due to having a rare genetic disorder called velo-cardio-facial syndrome. For this reason, they moved to Maize, KS – a town regarded for its schools’ excellent special education departments.

Although he’d worked in manual labor jobs his whole life, mostly as a drywall laborer, Eddie soon realized he too wanted to work with children. “The only way I was going to get a better job was to pursue a higher education, but I really did not know if a 47-year-old single dad had any business starting college.” Despite his fears, Eddie took a major leap of faith by enrolling at Ashford to pursue his calling – and only a couple of courses into his program, he landed a job working at a local elementary school as a paraeducator.

“Being at Ashford has given me self-confidence that I have lacked in the past.”

When we heard Eddie’s story, staff members of Ashford Connections traveled to Kansas to spend a few days with him and his daughters and document his journey. To find out how Eddie’s courageous move has played out so far, visit Ashford’s YouTube channel and watch “Eddie Henderson: A Leap Toward a Better Future” in the Student Stories playlist. //



MEET THE LOWES

For over 30 years, Curt and Flora Lowe have called Ashford University home.

Campus News: by Brian Burmeister, Assistant Professor of English

The couple, who first arrived as a “package deal” to Ashford’s Clinton, IA campus in the fall of 1980, has seen many exciting changes happen to both the University and themselves. From seeing the first class to graduate with Bachelor’s degrees in spring 1981 to the library doubling its entire collection in the late 80s to the rapid expansion of Ashford’s programs starting in 2005, the Lowes have been there through many significant changes that have helped make Ashford what it is today.

Curt and Flora first met in physics class at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA. As their time there came to a close, they were ready to embark on a whole new set of adventures together. According to Curt, “We graduated one weekend and were married the next.”

When they first arrived in Clinton, Curt took a position teaching history and English classes, and Flora began work as the University’s librarian. Today, Curt serves as the campus’ Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and Flora as the campus’ Library Director.

What keeps a couple working somewhere for over 30 years? For the Lowes, “Ashford has always been a great place to work,” and they see Ashford staff and faculty members as a family. Flora explained, “From when the University was small until now, this feeling hasn’t gone anywhere. It’s still a family.” The campus and the people on it played such a major role in their lives that the couple even saw their daughter, in many ways, grow up on campus.

The students are another factor that have made Ashford so special to the Lowes. Both of their faces absolutely light up when discussing the successes of their former students. Curt spoke of the first time he hired a former student to teach at Ashford. “You remember someone in the front row taking notes,” he said, “and then you see them standing in front of the class teaching. It’s a really neat feeling.” Flora shared similar sentiments. She feels a great sense of pride whenever seeing former students at academic conferences and loves hearing of all the great things they have gone on to accomplish.

Despite the fact that they have devoted much of their lives to Ashford’s campus, it’s not just the campus students the Lowes have created relationships with. Having had the opportunity to help lead three European travel courses, the Lowes have had the fortune of spending a considerable amount of time with online students. Many of these students still keep in touch with them, and they’ve even run into some of them at Ashford’s commencement ceremonies. “It’s really interesting to watch students succeeding with their studies and their families and at graduation recognizing they have ties to campus,” Flora said. //

Want to share how the Lowes or other Ashford faculty or staff members have made an impact on you? Email connections@ashford.edu.

CHRIS NORTON INSPIRES ASHFORD SAINTS

Campus News: by Chris Shaw, Sports Information Director

His story was featured in Sports Illustrated, he has met some of the most respected coaches in college football, and he was the winner of the 2011 CBS Courage in Sports America’s Choice Honor. But on January 19, 2013, he was roaming the sideline alongside Head Coach Oliver Drake as the Ashford University men’s basketball team defeated bitter rival St. Ambrose University 71-67 inside Kehl Arena.

Chris Norton, a student at Luther College in Decorah, IA and honorary coach for the afternoon contest, was severely injured in a 2010 football game for the Norse during his freshman season. While covering a kickoff, Norton fractured his C3-C4 vertebrae as he made a tackle. Norton was removed from the field on a stretcher and later airlifted to the hospital, where doctors told him that he had a 3% chance of ever regaining any movement below his neck.

Through grim odds, Norton persevered. “Chris has been an inspiration to our team and is, in my opinion, a true hero,” Coach Drake said. “He stands for what’s right – working hard and being grateful for your opportunities – doing things the right way. I’ve really enjoyed following his journey so far and appreciated the time he took to spend with us.”

Showing an incredible faith and unbreakable attitude, Norton never missed a day of therapy and recently

stood for over ten minutes completely unassisted while taking his first steps with the aid of a walker. His ultimate goal is to be completely independent and to walk without any assistance.

Prior to the game that day, Norton spoke with a group of Ashford student-athletes, coaches, and administrators and not only shared his story, but discussed his attitude and mentality in the wake of his tragic accident. “Something I learned early on in life was that the most important thing in life is your responses, not your circumstances,” Norton said. “We all face challenges and all go through adversity, but one thing is for certain, you have to respond to whatever circumstance you’re dealt with. You can’t allow your circumstance to determine who you are or what you will be.”

After spending five weeks in the hospital, Norton was able to shrug his shoulders and had movement in his arms. “For the longest time, my legs felt like they were in this cast, and I just couldn’t break out of it,” Norton quipped. “One day, I felt like my toe came out of this cast and I could almost move it. I couldn’t really tell, but I knew I was close and there was something happening for the good.”

Doctors told Norton that it was a “phantom feeling,” in that he wanted to move his toe so bad that he was tricking himself into thinking he could do it. But not even a week later, on Thanksgiving, Norton wiggled his toe.

Responding to his circumstance, Norton founded the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)-CAN project, a non-profit organization with the simple goal of raising money to provide patients with various levels of neuromuscular deficiencies equipment that would be beneficial for them to achieve their goals.

“I was fortunate enough to have some of the best equipment in the country for therapy and work with some of the best doctors.” But as Norton explains, not everyone with this type of injury is so fortunate or insured at all. “Going through this type of injury, you meet other people who don’t have the same help and care. My mission is to prolong the help and recovery of others with spinal cord injuries.”

Norton’s long term goals include graduating from Luther College and continuing with the SCI-CAN project. The organization hopes to open up the first neuro-recovery home and to open a rehabilitation center.

Prior to the contest, Coach Drake and senior guard Mitch Jankowski presented a check for \$857 to the SCI-CAN Project in hopes of furthering this worthy cause.

“It was a very inspirational day and it was nice to see other Ashford student-athletes in attendance to listen to his story,” Jankowski said. “He never took anything for granted, and I think that’s the same way other athletes need to be. It was an honor to be out there with him, and have him on the bench and in the locker room. It’s something that we’ll use for motivation for the rest of the season and for the rest of our lives.”

To learn more about the SCI-CAN project, visit luther.edu/scican. //

For all things Ashford Saints, use the hashtag #AUSaints on social media.



The Ashford University men’s basketball team poses with Chris Norton following a 71-67 victory over St. Ambrose University.

ASHFORD WELCOMES NEW FACULTY

In this faculty spotlight, we're profiling four of many online faculty members – one from each College – who have recently joined the Ashford team full-time. These faculty members are just a cross-section of Ashford's growing, incredibly diverse, and highly qualified full-time faculty members who bring their rich experiences and educational backgrounds to our classrooms.

Help us welcome Drs. Albert Cruz, Jennifer Irwin, Claire DeCristofaro, and John Ackerman to the Ashford family!

Faculty Spotlight: Four of Ashford's new full-time faculty members



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Dr. Albert Cruz is an Assistant Professor in the College of Business and Professional Studies at Ashford University. He holds a PhD in Applied Management and Decision Sciences from Walden University, an MBA in Technology Management from University of Phoenix, an MA in Human Behavior from National University, and a BS in Information Systems from University of Phoenix. His research interest is Knowledge Sharing.

Dr. Cruz was born in Shanghai, China and grew up in Hong Kong. He began working as an insurance agent and gradually worked his way up to vice president of the U.S.-based company Sentry Insurance. In 1978 he became the founder and president of his own insurance business, ACANDA International Ltd., a company that remains active in Hong Kong today. One of the first Dale Carnegie instructors anywhere to teach courses in Chinese and a recipient of the prestigious Dale Carnegie Leadership Award, Dr. Cruz has used his speaking talents throughout his career – perhaps most notably with a stint as a news anchor for the television station HKTVB in Hong Kong.

Dr. Cruz moved with his wife and two daughters to the United States in 1983 and became a United States citizen in 1989. A knack for computers and personal finance landed him a long-term position at Intuit Inc. in San Diego where he was a developer for the popular program, TurboTax. “I believe one cannot extend one’s lifespan, but one can always increase the breadth of it. Teaching at Ashford, I can interact with learners from diverse backgrounds, which gives me not only the opportunity to help them enhance their knowledge, but also enrich mine.”



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Dr. Jennifer Irwin, a native Marylander, is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at Ashford University who teaches graduate early childhood education courses. She was previously an associate faculty member in the College. She has a BA in Psychology/Early Childhood Education from St. Mary's College in Maryland; a Master's degree in Education, Reading Specialist program, from Loyola University Maryland; and a PhD in Educational Equity from American University in Washington, DC.

Dr. Irwin has taught preschool, first and second grades, community college, and graduate education courses, and has been teaching online since 2006. She has presented at several national conferences such as The League for Innovation in the Community College and National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) on topics including pre-service field experience and web 2.0 technologies. In 2010, she was awarded a Teaching Excellence Award from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD).

“Teaching and learning are connected processes, and I see myself as a lifelong learner. My favorite part of working at Ashford is seeing how dedicated the students are to their learning.” Dr. Irwin lives in San Diego, CA with her family and enjoys going to the beach, hiking, and biking.



COLLEGE OF HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, AND SCIENCE

Dr. Claire DeCristofaro is an Assistant Professor in the College of Health, Human Services, and Science and Ashford University. Her graduate (MD) degree was conferred by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University in New York, and her undergraduate (BA) degree was obtained at Hunter College of the City of University of New York, where she majored in Biology/Chemistry and minored in Math/Psychology as a Thomas Hunter Honors

Scholar. She has practiced as a family physician in New York City; Charleston, SC; and rural TN and SC (where she maintains an unrestricted medical license). Although she's been teaching since 1981 (online since 1999), she continues to periodically deliver clinical services in the free clinic setting.

Her previous faculty experience has focused on clinical programs such as pre-licensure nursing, graduate physician assistant, and graduate nursing. At her medical practice sites she's also been a clinical preceptor for medical, pharmacy, family nurse practitioner, pediatric nurse practitioner, and PA students. She has given many conference presentations on the scholarship of online teaching and has authored multiple journal publications with a focus on teaching as well as on clinical topics. Another scholarship interest is continuing education, and she has developed and presented clinical topics both online and in the teleconference and live conference formats.

“As full-time faculty in the College of Health, Human Services, and Science at Ashford University, I am thrilled to support adult learner opportunities to pursue their goal of obtaining a college education. One benefit of online education is the ability for the adult learner to fit their learning into an adult’s schedule with all their outside obligations. This is congruent with my philosophy of inclusiveness, both in clinical care delivery and education.”

For more biographies of Ashford faculty members and to follow their most recent accomplishments, visit ashford.edu/faculty.



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

In the College of Liberal Arts, Political Scientist **Dr. John T. Ackerman** is a clear example of the benefits of life-long learning. Starting as a young officer in the United States Air Force, he was chosen to instruct new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) operations crew members and this task set him on an educational path that would greatly expand his horizons and opportunities. Early in his military career, he was able to complete courses in instructional systems design, leadership, and earn a

Master's degree in Information Systems Management. He was able to apply these new skills in a variety of instructional and educational positions both in ICBM operations and in the Air Force's professional military education (PME) system.

Dr. Ackerman's educational journey continued when he was selected to attend the USAF's mid-level PME school in order to earn a Master's degree in Military Operational Art and Science. This wonderful educational opportunity also opened the doors to new jobs teaching and developing PME course curriculum and then an opportunity to earn a doctorate in political science. After completion of his doctorate, Dr. Ackerman again taught PME courses and led educational departments for the Air Force before retiring from the Air Force in 2007. Again, one career door closed as another opened when he was hired to be a course director during the initial development stages of a new online Master's degree program that the USAF was developing. The online teaching, curriculum development, and leadership experience he gained enabled him to begin working for other online universities, including Ashford University.

In late 2012, a full-time position for an Assistant Professor of Political Science opened up at Ashford and he eagerly applied and was hired. Dr. Ackerman's educational journey from the classroom teaching to online instruction has taught him the value of challenging students to be critical thinkers and to always be life-long learners. “Teaching online readily reveals the critical thinking skills of our students and their passion to learn.” His one tip to students is to find career fields that incite your sense of wonder and excitement and your desire to continue your educational journey. Dr. Ackerman's passion to learn extends into his personal hobbies with his wife that include nature watching, hiking, and supporting activities to preserve and protect our natural resources. He and his wife have two grown children that both share their desire to learn more and explore life to the fullest. //

CLASS NOTES



After serving 22 years in the United States Coast Guard, Ashford University student **David Conley**, Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, has begun a new career as Director of the Red Cross for the City of Fostoria and Seneca County of Ohio. He is currently pursuing his Bachelor's degree in Organizational Management at Ashford, and is due to graduate this year. Says David, "My academic success at Ashford University, combined with my military experience, made me an exceptional candidate during my career search. Ashford University has provided me with an exceptional academic education as well as real-life skills that will help me advance in the workplace."



Kathy Hammond, Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, 2009 and Master of Arts in Organizational Management, Human Resources Management specialization, 2010, is the author of the newly released self-help book *The Road to Ne: A Remarkable Little Tale About Getting What You Want By Giving Up Just One Little Thing*. The book explores how to reconnect with abandoned dreams and ambitions. Said Kathy, "The rigor of the Organizational Management programs at Ashford helped me perfect my voice in writing while legitimizing the knowledge I now use to help others achieve their goals." For more information, visit the book's official website: theroadtone.com.



Harman Professional has appointed **Jaime Albers**, Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, 2009, to the position of Senior Director of Global Sales Operations. In this position, Jaime now oversees all global sales office operation activities at the company. "Ashford's Organizational Management program definitely helped me develop the needed characteristics to become a successful leader within my organization," he told us.



Brian K. Larson, Master of Business Administration, Information Systems specialization, 2010, was promoted to Regional Technical Support Manager at Dell. He previously was a Technical Support Associate - Lead. "Obtaining my degree allowed me to be eligible to interview for my current role and played a major factor in my being offered the position." In addition to his professional success, despite facing the obstacle of dyslexia, Brian's creative outlet is penning a series of sci-fi/fantasy novels geared toward young adults called *Secret of the Crystal*. For more information, visit secretofthecrystal.com.



Ashford University graduate **Larry Zimmerman**, Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, 2013, will be leading the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. Larry, who received a bronze star in Afghanistan, was previously the state command sergeant major in the South Dakota Army National Guard. Now, he has been confirmed as South Dakota's first Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The Rapid City resident was recommended 9-0 by the Senate State Affairs Committee during a confirmation hearing on January 10, 2013 and then confirmed by the South Dakota State Senate on January 15.



In 2008, San Diego military spouse **Gwendolyn Bates**, Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, 2010 and Master of Business Administration, Entrepreneurship specialization, 2012, was nominated to sign an educational proclamation at the Pentagon for the Career Advancement Initiative, which offered military spouses small grants to go back to school. Now, this mom of two is continuing to make waves by launching a private label accessory and cosmetic company called G-Fash. "I feel that with the degrees, I am more credible and competent." Support her endeavor at gfashnow.com.

SHARE YOUR MILESTONES!

Email alumni@ashford.edu or visit ashford.edu/alumni and let us know how your Ashford degree is helping you reach your personal or professional goals.

SOCIAL MEDIA CORNER



Achievement Belongs to All of Us

For many, social media has become the main pipeline that keeps us connected to our friends and extended family members. These days, it's not unusual to see baby announcements and other major life milestones announced solely on Facebook pages. Now, Ashford has created cover photos that can be used by alumni to proudly let everyone in their social media networks know of their status as an Ashford graduate. Add one to your own timeline by visiting on.fb.me/YhcRuZ.

Discover Ashford's social media communities at ashford.edu/social, and join the conversation - you could be featured in an upcoming issue of Ashford Connections!



College of Business and Professional Studies

Bachelor of Arts

- Accounting*
- Professional Accounting Program**
- Business Administration*
- Business Economics
- Business Information Systems*
- Business Leadership*
- Computer Graphic Design**
- Consumer & Family Financial Services
- eMarketing
- Entrepreneurship
- Finance*
- Human Resources Management
- International Business
- Operations Management & Analysis
- Organizational Management
- Project Management
- Public Administration
- Public Relations & Marketing*
- Real Estate Studies
- Service Management
- Sports & Recreation Management*
- Supply Chain Management
- Sustainable Enterprise Management

Graduate Degrees

- Master of Arts in Organizational Management
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Public Administration

College of Education

Associate of Arts

- Early Childhood Education

Bachelor of Arts

- Business Education**
- Child Development
- Cognitive Studies
- Early Childhood Education
- Early Childhood Education Administration
- Education & Public Policy
- Education Studies
- Elementary Education (grades K-8)**
- English Language Learner Studies
- Instructional Design
- Library Science & Media
- Physical Education**

Graduate Degrees

- Master of Arts in Education
- Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning with Technology

College of Health, Human Services, and Science

Bachelor of Arts

- Adult Development
- Applied Behavioral Science
- Complementary & Alternative Health
- Gerontology
- Health & Human Services
- Health & Wellness
- Health Care Administration*
- Health Care Studies
- Health Education
- Health Informatics
- Health Marketing & Communication
- Natural Science**
- Psychology*

Bachelor of Science

- Biology**
- Computer Science and Mathematics**
- Health Science Administration**
- Natural Science**

Graduate Degrees

- Master of Arts in Health Care Administration

College of Liberal Arts

Associate of Arts

- Military Studies

Bachelor of Arts

- Applied Linguistics
- Communication Studies
- Cultural Anthropology
- English
- English and Communication**
- Environmental Studies*
- History*
- Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Journalism & Mass Communication
- Law Enforcement Administration
- Liberal Arts*
- Military Studies
- Political Science & Government
- Social & Criminal Justice*
- Social Science*
- Sociology*
- Visual Art**

*Offered on campus and online.

**Offered on campus only. All other listed programs are offered online.

For more information about on-time completion rates, the median loan debt of students who completed each program, and other important information, please visit ashford.edu/pd.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS EDITION OF ASHFORD CONNECTIONS! WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK - PLEASE SEND ANY COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS TO: CONNECTIONS@ASHFORD.EDU.





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Ashford University Student and Alumni Networking Events may be coming to a city near you. Be sure to visit ashford.edu/networkevents for specific dates and to RSVP. To make sure you receive information on all alumni events and benefits, please update your current home and email address by signing into your [Student Portal](#). If you graduated before 2005, please email alumni@ashford.edu to update your contact information.



MAY 2013

15 / Nashville, TN

16 / New Orleans, LA

29 / Seattle, WA

30 / Denver, CO

JUNE 2013

18 / Columbus, OH

19 / Chicago, IL

20 / Naperville, IL

JULY 2013

17 / San Francisco/East Bay, CA

18 / Sacramento, CA

30 / Austin, TX

31 / Dallas, TX

AUGUST 2013

14 / Milwaukee, WI

15 / Detroit, MI

27 / Miami, FL

28 / Atlanta, GA

SEPTEMBER 2013

18 / Washington, DC

19 / New York, NY

OCTOBER 2013

23 / Philadelphia, PA

24 / Pittsburgh, PA