

# AIU<sup>®</sup> ink

Alumni Spotlight on Ronnika Ann McFall • Alumni Program • Alumni Stories  
Career Advice • University News • 2018 Commencement Speakers



Ronnika Ann  
McFall

The Evolution of an Entrepreneur

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**Kristy Kotek**

Director of Career &  
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## Dear Alumni,

Alumni Services believes in the power of partnership. When we come together as an institutional community and foster connections, anything is possible. I feel a great sense of pride in what we do. Our alumni community is a reflection of the AIU spirit.

One way we help our alumni stay connected to AIU is by offering university community-focused programs. The opportunities are designed to serve your professional and personal development while helping to support others on their path. By getting involved you have the chance to share your experiences and story to inspire others on their educational journey. One way we think of it is “paying it forward.”

We also believe in sharing your success. It is one of the most important things we can do to celebrate each other. You are encouraged to share your achievements with us. We regularly celebrate alumni stories in this magazine, AIU’s blog, and social media. Share your story with us at [alumni@aiuniv.edu](mailto:alumni@aiuniv.edu).

If you have questions about how to get involved or ideas on how to support our community, please reach out to us!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristy Kotek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kristy" and last name "Kotek" clearly legible.

Kristy Kotek



## Ronnika Ann McFall, The Evolution of an Entrepreneur



Beginning an MBA program probably generates feelings of anxiety in many students, but Ronnika Ann Joyner, now known as Ronnika Ann McFall, plunged into her education at AIU by facing her fear and taking the class she was most nervous about. “My most memorable experience at AIU was my statistics class. I took it first because I was super nervous about it,” she said. Beginning a graduate program by choosing to take a very difficult course might not be ideal, but Ronnika emerged with the highest grade in the class, and carried that confidence into the rest of her studies at AIU.

This early victory set the tone for a successful academic career at AIU. Like many AIU students, Ronnika Ann was drawn to the school’s flexible online courses. She was able to balance work and academics, and emerge with the strong writing and team management skills she needed to help her begin her company, iGN Public Relations & Co. “Investing in yourself and your education is the best thing to do as you prepare for your career and future,” she said. Her own investment culminated in 2014 when she earned a Master’s degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Management.

Since establishing iGN Public Relations & Co. nearly five years ago, Ronnika Ann has combined her formal education with creativity and a unique outlook on business and marketing. When she started out, one of her first challenges was trying to strategically navigate social media, wanting to bolster her business but maintain her personal connections to friends and family, a conundrum faced by many solo entrepreneurs. Ronnika Ann wanted to find a way to go beyond typical status updates and posts about daily life. “I didn’t want to put personal information on my social media pages,” she said. “As a business owner who wanted to be taken seriously, I had to remove Ronnika Joyner and insert Ronnika Ann into the world of social media.”

Developing an “alter ego” to promote her business gave Ronnika Ann room to share inspirational quotes, educational articles, and business tips while maintaining privacy and sharing personal details only with her friends and family. “This was my beginning way of balancing business and personal,” she said, pointing out that when competitors tried to undermine her work, she didn’t let it derail her. “They really don’t know me. They knew what I wanted them to know about me. I am my personal

publicist and only shared what I wanted to share on social media," she explained. "I tell people all the time that social media is the window of their business. It's their digital résumé. You have 100% control over your own social media platforms. Social media can help or break a brand. It should be used wisely." Successfully separating her professional platform from her personal relationships online was an early indicator of her skill at leveraging social media for a range of purposes.

Ronnika Ann's approach to tailoring her virtual presence to fulfill both personal and professional goals hasn't been her only success. As Founder and CEO of iGN Public Relations & Co., which specializes in public relations, social media management, event planning, and brand development, she oversees a staff of four and runs between seven and ten campaigns concurrently. Though her company is based in Atlanta, modern technology has facilitated her ability to serve clients all over, including Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Texas. "Making YOU the Headline©" is the company's philosophy, and drives the overarching goal of helping brands garner public support.

Personal growth is as important to Ronnika Ann as her company's success. Though she's been CEO of her company since its inception, she didn't initially refer to herself as such. "I didn't start calling myself CEO until about a year ago. I had to understand the responsibilities and discipline of being someone's boss. I had to grow and learn money management skills...If I could give advice to my younger self, I'd tell myself to slow down and enjoy the process. Growing companies for other people is fun, so it should be fun to grow my own, right? I did not

notice that when I was a young entrepreneur. I tell my clients and team daily, 'You are your first client and first priority.' If you cannot handle your own business, how can you serve a customer or handle a client?"

Every business success is an opportunity for professional growth, but Ronnika believes she has an obligation to grow as a person too. "The commitment to personal growth is at the heart of my team's efforts," she said. Most importantly, "Entrepreneurship is not only about being your own boss. It's about creating a healthy, loving life for yourself and others."

***"The commitment to personal growth is at the heart of my team's efforts"***

Ronnika Ann attributes her success to her strong communication skills, but also cites the impact of determination, faith, and providing support to others. "I have a love for hard work, but I believe all my success comes from help from above. Having a strong foundation in God is the reason I can stand so firmly. As entrepreneurs, we hold everyone up, but who's holding us up? For me, it's my God and my church so I want to share that with others." Ronnika also offers leadership and guidance to Beauties of the Shore, a Gulf Coast, Mississippi-based nonprofit, which seeks to empower young women.

The need for balance between work and home as a normal struggle, one shared by many. Ronnika Ann's experience has given her special perspective, especially for her fellow female entrepreneurs. "Women face many challenges, such as dealing with their love life, their personal

family goals, and so much more. However, I believe these challenges are meant to be faced. Women entrepreneurs can be mothers and wives and so much more. It's just as important to understand that you will have to sacrifice a lot of things to grow a successful business. Understand you cannot have everything at one time but you can have everything if you tackle them one at a time."

As she forges ahead with her company, Ronnika Ann is always looking for additional ventures where she can share her skills and knowledge to help and support others. Blogging and speaking engagements, through her PR For a

Day brand, provide her with forums to share her communications experience with aspiring entrepreneurs, something she's passionate about. "Understand that everyone started from the bottom," she said. "Do not compare your current to someone else's because everyone's journey is different. Use your abilities to create a plan to make your dream happen!"

To learn more about Ronnika's books, social media and web presence, visit her here:

PR For a Day

<http://www.prforaday.net/online-store>

@RonnikaAnn

[www.RonnikaAnn.com](http://www.RonnikaAnn.com)

@iGNPR [www.iGNPR.com](http://www.iGNPR.com)

@PRforaDay

[www.PRforaDay.net](http://www.PRforaDay.net)



## Alumni Mentor Stories

We are also excited to share that the Alumni Mentor Program grew in 2017 with over 85 alumni joining the team. These alumni continuously dedicate and volunteer their time to motivate and inspire their mentees. While each mentorship experience is unique; we're able to recognize what a difference this program is making in the lives of our AIU student population.



*Penny Fowler*

Alumni mentor Penny Fowler and her alumni mentee, Chealsy Summerlin, are one of those stories that really stand out. Even though graduation wasn't far away for Chealsy, she still wanted to receive support from an alumni mentor and was paired with Penny in July of 2017. In the beginning of their mentorship, they focused primarily on future planning and career guidance. Chealsy admitted, "I

thought I had it figured out, but things changed and I felt indecisive." Penny was more than happy to guide Chealsy in the right direction towards a successful future. Penny encouraged her to work with AIU's career services, suggested participating in AIU's 'Serious Advantage Career series,' and recommended various career paths she could explore.

Penny and Chealsy started their mentorship by communicating on a bi-weekly basis. What's convenient about the Alumni Mentor Program is that it's a personalized, unique experience that strives to meet the needs of each student. Some individuals look for career guidance, others need help finding motivation, or setting goals for their future. Penny and Chealsy's mentorship grew from focusing on career exploration and planning, to supporting each other during difficult personal issues. "I had an intuition, even before our first conversation, that we would have a powerful mentorship," Penny remembers. Aside from discussing their AIU journeys, career path, and financial aid concerns, they were able to relate to each other on a very personal level. "Me and Penny would always talk about school, our goals and various life obstacles...but it wasn't until we discussed certain traumatic experiences of loss that we really connected and wanted to be there for each other. I've always appreciated how caring, understanding, and encouraging Penny has been to me." Chealsy recalls, "She has been motivational and kind towards me during a challenging time in my life," Chealsy remembers, "it was great to speak with someone who I could talk to about school and obstacles life throws at us."

Chealsy was also able to provide Penny with additional support during difficult personal situations. "During Hurricane Harvey, Chealsy always made sure I was doing okay. Chealsy had family members who experienced similar situations during Hurricane Matthew and could definitely relate to some of the hardships we were enduring." Penny had the unfortunate experience of losing several family members to Hurricane Harvey. She was devastated by the aftermath of the disastrous and violent storm, but knew she had to remain strong to stay in school and earn her degree. "[Chealsy] became my sounding board. I think that experience helped our mentorship really grow. We were able to have a temporary role reversal where it felt like Chealsy was the mentor and I was the mentee – this was something that was very helpful during my time of grief. We were eventually able to get back to our traditional roles, but I will never forget her kindness during such a difficult time." Penny shares.

Both individuals decided to enroll at AIU because of their sons and wanting a better life. Penny, despite enduring an emotionally tragic event, became inspired to go back after her son consistently encouraged her to enroll for online classes. For Chealsy, she realized she needed to make a greater effort towards earning her degree in order to create a better life for herself and her young son. Both individuals worked extremely hard to not only earn their Bachelor of Criminal Justice degrees, but are also currently being recognized for their academic honors. "It was a lot of work, but certainly worth it in the end!" Says Penny.

Penny and Chealsy understand how valuable the Alumni Mentor Program can be. "It helps knowing I have Penny there, who's willing to back me up in anything I do!" Chealsy acknowledges. Penny also appreciates the impact her mentorship with Chealsy has made on her academic, personal, and professional life. "Being able to talk with Chealsy has been beneficial for both of us...it's been very special because she's always done what she can to support me – even if I wasn't feeling well, she would try to call or send me a quick text."

A mentorship is expected to last a minimum of three sessions. After that timeframe, the mentor and mentee can collaboratively decide how they would like their mentorship to evolve. Penny and Chealsy plan on continuing to grow their mentorship. "Our mentorship has gone from working through problems, to building a long-lasting friendship – sharing milestones like Chealsy getting married or both of us graduating!" Shares Penny, "I think the friendship that has come out of this mentorship has been an extreme experience. I look forward to continuing to build this incredible friendship!"

## AIU Mentor Program

Connecting alumni with students in need of extra support can make a profound difference— on the both alumnus and student. When we come together as a community to learn and grow from each other, the possibilities are exciting and endless.

Student mentoring is geared towards students active in their courses who are in need of extra support and motivation. Through the program, alumni have the opportunity to share the knowledge and experience gained from their AIU journey to positively impact a student who has just started theirs.

### *What do mentors share with students?*

It's important for mentors to be open to sharing the hard-earned knowledge and insight that you've acquired because students want to learn from their success. Each mentorship is a unique experience; discussing different topics, questions and goals. Mentors partner with students to understand their individual needs and develop a plan that supports their challenges and goals as a student. Often the mentor role will call on you to give a surge of motivation when a student is need of encouragement.

Learn more about the Alumni Mentor Program or apply to mentor students today!

## AIU Alumni Ambassador Program

Alumni Ambassadors have the opportunity to refer family, friends, co-workers and others in their community to AIU. A personalized referral webpage is provided to each Ambassador to make referring easy. By sharing the link, referees can complete an online form to jump starts the process of becoming an AIU student.

Along with referring, Ambassadors can volunteer to speak with individuals going through the university admissions process and who are interested in learning about the AIU experience from an alumnus. The Ambassador and potential student are connected for a one-time conversation. The Ambassador's insights give these individuals value insights into what life as an AIU student is like!

As a graduate, you have a unique experience and can inspire others to become a part of the AIU family!

Learn more about becoming an Alumni Ambassador!

## Alumni Speakers Bureau

Alumni Speakers Bureau is an exclusive volunteer program. Through the program, alumni have the opportunity to speak at virtual events or a physical University campus. Alumni can share their expertise on a variety of topics, examples including—career awareness, AIU success tips, industry expertise, and workplace expectations or professionalism. The program is a way for alumni to share valuable information to inspire others while growing their resume through speaking engagements.

# To Run Where the Brave Dare Not Go:

## AIU Alumna Lucille Kellogg's Incredible Story of Perseverance

by Brittany Gundlach

Many of us have had the unfortunate experience of hearing the words, "No, you can't do that," or "You'll never amount to anything great." AIU Alumna Lucille Kellogg did not let these harsh words hold her back and because of her tenacity and perseverance, she served in the Navy, became a professional bodybuilder, and earned her associate and bachelor's degrees from AIU.

Lucille started her professional journey as a hairdresser in the 1980's, working on her Aunt Marcy's hair while listening to her stories about being a nurse in the military. "I had picked her brain for years about military life," Lucille said. "She told me, 'Lucille, you know more about the military than most people do. There is nothing more I can tell you about it, except to join and find out!'" Despite her father telling her she wasn't allowed to go, Lucille joined the Navy. "I told him, 'Fighting the military will be a losing battle for you!'" Over time, Lucille would come to realize that men throughout her life would constantly try to hold her back.

In the Navy, she met a man who would become her first husband but who proved to be an unsupportive spouse. He criticized her appearance after she had their son Dalton, calling her post-pregnant body "fat." She took his harsh criticism and started lifting weights. Lucille became so talented at it that she evolved into a competitive bodybuilder. "I was a national level bodybuilder and was very well-known within the community."



Throughout her training, she raised her son and two stepchildren, worked full-time as a hairdresser and part-time as a personal trainer, and made the decision to pursue her associate degree with a concentration in Healthcare Administration online at AIU. During this busy time in her life, her marriage ended abruptly when her husband came home with his girlfriend.

To start a new chapter, Lucille decided to pursue her associate degree with a concentration in Healthcare Administration online at AIU. She also immersed herself

in preparing for the Olympia Stage in bodybuilding. "I was doing my own marketing and getting a lot of fan mail." One fan stood out among the rest, and after receiving several communications from this particular admirer, a courtship began. Their relationship grew into Lucille's second marriage, which quickly took a turn for the worst. "I was a target for him in a horrific strategy of entrapment, abuse, and multiple affairs. He asked females throughout Washington to come brutalize and kill me." To distract from the nightmare of her marriage, she focused on her jobs and education. "School and work became my escape."

Unfortunately, Lucille's perseverance continued to be tested. Her health worsened at a rapid rate. Both of her legs and feet suffered as she was diagnosed with compartment syndrome, tarsal tunnel syndrome, plantar fasciitis, and severe nerve damage. She had a total of six surgeries on her legs, but they weren't enough to spare her from a wheelchair – which she couldn't afford and no one would buy for her. Lucille had to close her hair salon and was forced to move out of the house due to her crumbling marriage. She and Dalton ended up living in a tent in Capital Forest, Washington, but never gave up on her education. "For a while, I was crawling everywhere. I even crawled to my car with my son and two dogs just to get to the library [to do my homework]."

To Lucille, AIU was the one hope she had to create a better life for her and her son, and so she pursued her bachelor's degree with a concentration in Healthcare Administration after receiving her associate degree. Amidst getting her degree, she battled in court and eventually was permitted to move with her son to Virginia where she grew up and had access to family and friends. "All of this was going on while I was going to school – I refused to give up!" People would continually ask her why she didn't quit; it certainly would make things easier. "I told him that we are not quitters!" And so Lucille forged ahead.

Her resilience was tested again when she and her son ran out of money halfway through their trip to Virginia. Fortunately, domestic violence agencies and churches willingly assisted her during their journey across country. But when they finally arrived, her original housing situation fell through and everywhere she went, people turned them away. "Everyone slammed doors in our faces."



Then one day, a woman from veteran services called, asking Lucille if she was aware of the assistance offered to veterans. A door had finally opened. Lucille felt like she could breathe again. This woman helped Lucille and her son find a shelter. She also helped secure a service dog named Norman for Lucille. Norman's therapeutic companionship inspired her to continue building a better life for the three of them. Back in Virginia with Norman by her side, for the first time in a long time, Lucille was ready to start a new chapter in her life without living in fear.



Today, Lucille is an advocate for individuals who are victims of domestic violence, homelessness, and veterans. Lucille is very passionate about helping veterans in need of service dogs. She hopes to someday provide assistance by giving veterans and their service dogs appropriate resources, food, and temporary fostering services.

As a proud AIU graduate, Lucille volunteers her time as an Alumni Mentor in AIU's Alumni Mentor Program. "Academically, this school provided me the knowledge and resources I needed to move forward in my life and my career. I am beyond grateful to this school."



## Meet AIU Alumna, Marilyn Buchanan



No matter how old you might be, many of us have heard amazing stories of perseverance and overcoming adversity from fellow students and alumni. These inspirational stories make us wonder "what does this individual's future look like?" or "how did this person get to where they are today?"

A lot can be said about the path alumna Marilyn Buchanan took to earn her degree. Marilyn started her associate's degree at AIU when she was 74 years old. The idea of attending school online to earn her degree was intimidating in the beginning: "people often have this stereotype that older individuals do not understand how computers work. I took this as a challenge and through practice, patience, and determination was able to, not only become extremely proficient using computers, but I was able to graduate Magna Cum Laude with my Bachelor's degree!" Marilyn also holds a 4.0 GPA in her current Master of Healthcare Management program.

Marilyn went back to school to earn her degree so she could continue being an advocate for citizens 65 and older who do not receive quality care and insurance. "The negligence and indifference some of these facilities have [for the elderly] is appalling. The two generations who are ignored are the babies and the elderly. I feel like it's my job to ensure they receive the quality care they deserve" she shares.

Since the 1960s Civil Rights movement, Marilyn has always made it a top priority to fight for what she believes in. "Being involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was a WOW moment in my life. I was very active in my hometown of East St. Louis, IL: participating in sit-ins, marches, and later going to Alabama to hear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. while singing 'We Shall Overcome.' I remember standing in Washington, D.C., listening to his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech and feeling very proud to have been a part of such an incredible experience. I wish younger generations would know what it felt like to fight for their beliefs."

Marilyn is very active in AIU's Alumni Association. She currently volunteers her time as an Alumni Mentor in the Alumni Mentor Program. Marilyn wanted to become an Alumni Mentor after seeing how dedicated AIU's faculty and staff were (especially her student advisor, Jackie Miller) in ensuring her academic success. "I wanted to earn my degree so that I could make myself into the best person possible," she shares, "AIU offers assistance and encourages growth to any student who's interested. Come join me - you are never too old to learn!"



# Doing the “Work” in Networking

By Dustin Lingemann

You’ve heard this phrase 1,000 times: “it’s not what you know but, who you know”. Determining “who you know” has never been more of a reality when it comes to your career search. One of the most over-looked areas of opportunity is networking. When examining your career search, who do you think would have the best advice to give you on starting out in your field of choice? The answer would be someone who’s found great success as a working professional in your preferred career path. They can give you the most insight on what worked well for them and discuss areas that you should avoid. Many who want to utilize networking for their job search are often times unsure of where to start. Whether it is a social gathering or utilizing LinkedIn, the more people you’re exposed to and able to share your professional skills with, the more marketable you become.

We highly encourage creating a LinkedIn profile. While most job seekers will already have a LinkedIn profile created, many will fail to utilize all of the helpful features the platform has to offer. It can be difficult to connect with individuals that you’ve never met before. That’s why it’s important to use LinkedIn’s search function. By using the search button located at the top of the page, users can search their desired career field. Once you have the results, the next step is evaluating which professionals will help elevate your search. Think about:

## 1. Do they have a picture on their profile?

(If they don’t chances are they don’t really care to connect or they aren’t checking their profile on a regular basis).

## 2. How many connections do they have?

(If they have a lot of connections, chances are most of the connections are within your field which would allow you to possibly connect with a hiring manager.)

## 3. What is their work experience?

(I tend to look for professionals that have been in the field for at least 3 years and up.)

Once you narrow down the professionals, you’d like to connect with, send them an invite. It’s important to customize your message instead of sending LinkedIn’s generic message invite. You can make your message more personal by referencing things like their years of experience, their professional background, and your desire to work in a similar field. This is a great way to

engage the professional in a conversation and give them a call of action. The most common mistake jobseekers do on LinkedIn is become a “connection” collector. Keep in mind that you want to build a professional relationship that will lead to a tentative employment opportunity. Be sure to keep the conversation going and reach out to your LinkedIn connections at least every two weeks. It also helps to bring that connection in the “real world.” You can do things like asking the professional for a cup of coffee or meet them for lunch to make a real life connection. It can be easy to hide behind the keyboard and forget how real connections can assist in the career search.

***“it’s not what you know but, who you know.”***

There are networking opportunities all around you that may not even be aware of. Think about the last gathering you went to. Chances are you probably knew half of the people there. More than likely there were some guests that you have never met before. Did you introduce yourself to those people? Did you get an idea of what they do for a living? If yes, then you were networking. It’s also a good idea to bring up your background as well. Unlike an interview this type of environment is more casual and less stress. You can use this casual setting to your advantage and discuss your background without worrying if you answered their questions right. We also encourage the importance of using business cards in various networking settings. Similar to LinkedIn, you can follow up with that professional later on.

Keep in mind, the main purpose of networking is to help to build your professional brand. The more people become aware of what you can bring to the table, the more available opportunities you will have.

For more information on how to network efficiently please contact the Career Services Department. The Career Services Department is available to help AIU students and alumni with their career searches. You’re not alone in your search and help is only a call or email away!

# The Serious Advantage Career Series

Premium Career Coaching for Serious Professionals



Receive coaching to get you where you want to be with AIU's Serious Advantage Career Series – a personalized online career planning program. This online career preparations series is available to AIU Online alumni at no additional cost.

Each five-week online course in the Serious Advantage Career Series goes above and beyond to help you:

- Understand the job market and learn how to research companies
- Network with professionals in your industry
- Understand your soft skills in order to stand out
- Create an effective resume and social media profiles

## SERIOUS ADVANTAGE CAREER SERIES COURSES

Here's what you can learn in each of the four five-week Serious Advantage Career Series courses:



### COURSE 1:

Create a career search plan, identify your skill sets, find out what employers want and learn how to overcome obstacles in your path.



### COURSE 2:

Get to know what employers can offer you by researching companies, interviewing a professional in your field and understanding how to market your soft skills.



### COURSE 3:

Build your resume, cover letter and social media profiles with the help of a professional certified resume writer. You'll also practice how to answer tough interview questions.



### COURSE 4:

Find out how a professional mentor can help you grow your career and discover the career resources you need to continue moving forward.

**Reserve your spot for the Serious Advantage Career Series.**

Register at: [CareerServices@aiuniv.edu](mailto:CareerServices@aiuniv.edu)

Please include your full name, student ID, degree program, phone, mailing address, and email address in the registration email.

AIU cannot guarantee employment or salary.



# 2018 Commencement Speakers

Summer time is AIU's graduation season. We are excited to announce the speakers for our 2018 commencement ceremonies:



## Houston (June 1) & Atlanta (July 27)

### ***Paul Gunther, Jr.***

Paul Gunther, Jr. is a storyteller with a penchant for world travel, who currently serves as Chief Dreamer for the non-profit Live Love. Professionally, he has owned several businesses; written two books; worked as a home-builder, paperboy, and private chef. In the early 90s, he started a ground-breaking grass roots marketing company, SPY Promotions, which helped propel entertainment giants like "Veggie Tales" and "P.O.D. to Success," and promoted Sixpence None the Richer for its platinum album in 1999.

The grandson and son of Christian Missionary Alliance missionaries to Thailand, Gunther has lived much of his life overseas and has visited over 30 countries. In addition to running Live Love, he also leads humanitarian trips throughout the year to such countries as Haiti, Liberia, Malawi, and Thailand. He has a strong desire to bring Americans out of their comfort zones into the beauty that can be found in third-world countries.

Blue collar, white collar, cook, paperboy, pastor, world traveler – Gunther continues to live at the cutting edge, but with a purpose – to leave his world better off than when he entered it.

## Chicago (August 18)

### ***Anne Mahlum***

As Founder of Back on My Feet, a non-profit organization that uses the power of running to help those experiencing homelessness improve their lives, Anne Mahlum focuses on the concept of change. She believes that we all need the same things in life to grow and succeed... to be noticed, to be appreciated, to be valued and to be cared for. She teaches that changing the way people see themselves and their circumstances is at the core of change and that only then can people begin to move out of their comfort zones and create real and lasting change in their lives. Mahlum has received numerous awards from her work around homelessness and social change. In 2012, she hosted a documentary for MTV called "The Break" on youth homelessness, and she was recently featured in the book, 50 Everyday Heroes.

She is currently the Founder, Owner and CEO of a fast-growing company she founded in D.C. in 2013 called Solidcore. In just 3.5 years, Anne has grown her company to 22 locations with more than 75,000 clients, including Michelle Obama.

With raw vulnerability, grace and lots of humor, Anne leaves people feeling motivated, purposeful, and empowered to both manage and create real change in their lives.

We are honored to have such special guests join us on graduation day to inspire our graduates!

# AIU Recognized by Military Times

We are proud to share that **AIU has been named among Military Times Best: Colleges 2018 rankings** (formerly known as Best for Vets). In its eighth year, the rankings factor in the results of Military Times' annual survey, the most comprehensive school-by-school assessment of veteran and military student services and rates of academic achievement.



This recognition is deeply appreciated by the University and one that we're proud to share with our students and you, our staff and faculty.

"Military Times—consisting of Army Times, Navy Times, Air Force Times, and Marine Corps Times—is one of the most read sources of military news and information for service members. Being named a 'Best for Vets' school is evidence that the hard work AIU puts into serving our military community is being recognized outside of our university," says Trent Orndorf, AIU Senior National Military Relations Manager. "It is truly an honor for AIU to be selected, but it would not be possible if not for the tireless effort and commitment that each and every AIU employee provides to its military community students."

## Military Times Rankings

As with all Military Times rankings, *Best Colleges 2018* is an editorially independent news project that evaluates the many factors that help make colleges and universities a good fit for service members, military veterans and their families. More than 600 colleges took part in this year's detailed survey.

Military Times' annual *Best Colleges Survey* asks colleges and universities to meticulously document a tremendous array of services, special rules, accommodations and financial incentives offered to students with military ties and to describe many aspects of veteran culture on a campus. Military Times also factors in data from the Veterans Affairs and Defense departments, as well as three Education Department sources: the IPEDS Data Center, College Scorecard data and the Cohort Default Rate Database.

View the results for Online and Nontraditional Schools at

<http://bestforvets.militarytimes.com/2018-11-20/colleges/online-nontraditional/>.

## Gear up with AIU Pride!

Students, alumni, and friends can now shop at the new online store and show their AIU pride.

AIUGear.com features a variety of products with easy ordering options. You are sure to find the AIU item you are looking for!

- Over 300 products available
- Promotional offers every few weeks to get the best deals
- Brand name clothing lines; Adidas, Under Armour, and Columbia



- Gift certificates are available for purchase
- Orders are produced on-demand and shipped within 24 hours

**Check out these items and take advantage of this promotion by visiting [AIUGear.com](http://AIUGear.com) today.**

## AIU offers E-Diploma to Alumni



NEW in 2018, electronic diplomas (e-diploma) available for order by AIU alumni! In 2017 AIU initiated a project to issue e-diplomas to upcoming graduates and assessed its impact and effectiveness. With the success of the project and desire of expanding, now all former AIU graduates, at both Campus and Online, regardless of degree level, will have the option to request a copy of this unique and dynamic diploma option.

The electronic version of the diploma has been designed to match the traditional version, and is intended to provide our graduates with an alternative means by which to demonstrate their academic achievement.

- Students who choose to access their e-diploma will have a verifiable and secure electronic version of their diploma to share within their existing social network channels or other interested parties.
- Once purchased, issued and claimed; students have unlimited access to their e-diploma.
- Students have the opportunity to build their electronic academic profile and maintain access to their credentials and accomplishments at any time through Parchment, Inc.

The fee for the e-diploma is \$5 and it can be requested by logging into or creating an account at [www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com).

Feel free to contact the University Registrar's Office with any questions at [diplomas@aiuniv.edu](mailto:diplomas@aiuniv.edu).



## Meet the New Business Dean: Dr. Teresa Hutchinson



*Dr. Teresa Hutchinson*

Dr. Hutchinson started with the University in December 2017 and is responsible for the continued development and distribution of business-specific curriculum. She holds a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership/Educational Technology from the University of Phoenix. Her dissertation focuses on the assessment of complex computer simulations in MBA courses and the role that instructional technology plays in providing effective learning experiences.

Dr. Hutchinson has spent 25 years in the higher education industry. Her previous roles include Program Dean for the School of Business at University of Phoenix, Campus President for Keiser University, Campus President for Kaplan University, and Director of MBA Programs at St. Ambrose University in Iowa.

AIU is excited for Dr. Hutchinson to join AIU and serve our students!

## Alumni Savings Program

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Contact [Alumni@aiuniv.edu](mailto:Alumni@aiuniv.edu) for more information.

#### AIU Alumni Association Mission

*The mission of the AIU Alumni Association is to establish and strengthen a mutually beneficial relationship between AIU and its alumni, provide opportunities for the professional, social and intellectual growth of its members and enhance the stature of AIU by promoting its interests.*

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