


# AIU<sup>®</sup>ink

- 
- Blair Underwood Delivers AIU Online Commencement Address
  - Meet AIU's 2015 Distinguished Alumni Winners
  - 5 Ways to Tell if Your Interview Went Well

**AIU Alumni  
CELEBRATING  
SUCCESS**

# American InterContinental University

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## ***Betsy Balachandran***

*Betsy Balachandran is the Vice President of Student Affairs for American InterContinental University. She has been in various roles within the student support departments of AIU for nearly 12 years. Betsy enjoys helping students succeed in their academic and career goals and hearing about student success stories.*

## ***Letter From Leadership***

*“ We recently concluded a wonderful summer of AIU’s annual commencement ceremonies. From Florida to Chicago, Atlanta to Houston, recent graduates took time to celebrate their success of earning their degree and participated in the commencement ceremonies with their peers and loved ones. The thrill one receives upon completing a post-secondary degree compels pause and reflection: reflecting on the numerous late-night study sessions, the occasional thought of “can I do this?”, and the myriad of sacrifices it took in order to accomplish the success of earning your degree. It deserves to be celebrated and that was evident at the four ceremonies this summer!*

*This milestone may have long since passed for some, but hopefully you will never lose that feeling of accomplishment, triumph, and perhaps relief from when you graduated. Celebrating success – yours and others’ – should be an integral part of everyone’s life. Successes and wins can also come in the small, almost mundane facets of life. How often do you celebrate small accomplishments? When do you celebrate others? What makes one successful?*

*Think about these questions and all of the things you have done so far this year. Make a list of big and small accomplishments, and perhaps small accomplishments that are steps leading you to a bigger goal. Some successes may be personal and intrinsic, such as delivering a project at work or registering for your next degree program, but are still necessary steps to celebrate as you continue to move ahead.*

*The 2015 AIU Chicago Commencement Keynote Speaker, Blair Underwood, spoke about his approach to defining his successes. He defined true success in terms of indirect outcomes: does it render joy to you, and are you helping others?*

*How and when we choose to define “success” can differ person to person, but reflection, celebration, and planning are all traits we see in some of the individuals who continue to feel accomplished and move forward. However you define it, one thing is clear: as an AIU graduate, you have reason to celebrate the success of furthering your knowledge through education and earning your degree. Here’s wishing continued successes to celebrate!* ”

*Betsy Balachandran*



# South Florida Events



## AIU Florida Holds Final Graduation Ceremony

On June 12, American InterContinental University South Florida held its final graduation. A total of 130 graduates (both on-ground and online) attended this day of celebration. The Grand Ball Room of The Broward County Convention Center was transformed into a room filled with happiness and festivity.

The key note speaker was Thomas Eugene, senior account executive

with the Miami Dolphins organization, followed by the alumni speaker, Dr. Socrates Zayas. The speeches concluded with an exhilarating speech given by the student speaker, Jeffrey Walters from the AIU Online School of Business.

Following the graduation ceremony, the campus invited its graduates and guests to a reception held in the east lobby where special

musical guest Jon Saxx played his alto saxophone for the audience.

AIU South Florida would like to thank those distinguished guests from across AIU's campuses who were able to make it to our final graduation. It was a great success, and we would like to thank those staff members who put in the countless hours making sure our last graduation was a memorable one. 🎓

# South Florida Events

## AIU South Florida Alumni Chapter

The AIU South Florida alumni chapter took part in the American Heart Association's 5k Heart Walk on Sunday, April 12, on the beautiful campus of Nova Southeastern University in sunny Fort Lauderdale, FL. The American Heart Association is the largest voluntary health organization working to prevent, treat and defeat heart disease,

stroke and other cardiovascular diseases. These diseases, the Nation's number one and number four killers, claim more than 813,804 American lives a year.

Felicia Medina, AIU-Weston, FL career services advisor and AIU alumna, said that "despite the unusually early spring hot weather,

there was a very large turnout. The community provided a lot of support to this organization, and the hosting campus did a great job organizing it." Nearly \$800,000 was pledged for this event. Thank you to those AIU alumni who make contributions to the American Heart Association. 🙌





# Atlanta Events

## AIU Atlanta Celebrates 2015 Graduation

American InterContinental University Atlanta celebrated its 2015 graduation at the Cobb Galleria Centre, Friday, June 26, 2015. Over 412 graduates, families and guests were in attendance. The ceremony opened with an Invocation from 2015 Bachelor of Fine Arts graduate, Da'Marcus Jones-Walker.

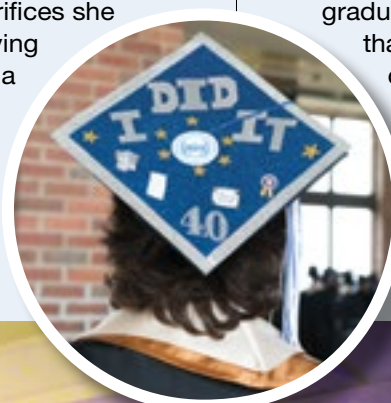
Peggy Anderson, AIU Atlanta Media Production student, delighted the audience with an a capella version of her original song, "AIU is for You." Alice Oliver, Campus Director of Student Experience, welcomed the graduates to the 2015 Commencement Ceremony. Campus President Dr. Hisham Shaban reminded the 2015 class to enjoy every moment of the celebration, followed by an inspirational speech by AIU

President, Dr. George Miller. Keynote Speaker Sam Crenshaw, reminded the 2015 graduates of the importance of taking initiative as the key to achieving career goals.

Jemel Townsend, 2015 AIU Atlanta Distinguished Alumni Award Winner, discussed the importance of truly being yourself and surpassing untapped potential. Michele Carr, MBA 2015 Graduate Student Speaker, inspired everyone in attendance with personal struggles and sacrifices she faced while achieving her degree. Tanisha Millens, 2015 undergraduate Student Speaker, provided inspiration to the 2015 class and

reminded them of the importance of overcoming challenges. Betty Wooten, MBA graduate, provided additional music for the ceremony with her rendition of the National Anthem and Stevie Wonder's original song "A Place in the Sun". The ceremony closed with a graduation video and inspirational poem from Keith Taylor, 2015 Bachelor of Fine Arts Graduate and Poet Laureate.

Congratulations to all of our 2015 graduates and a special thank you to the graduation committee, faculty and staff who helped make this graduation a memorable occasion. 🙌



# Atlanta Events



## AIU Atlanta Serves Up Hope and Healing at Ronald McDonald House

Having a warm meal and a place to rest your head can make all the difference in the world when your child has to receive medical treatment away from home. “It’s something so small, cooking a meal for these families, but it is something, and we’re glad we can make a difference,” said John Breedlove. A Senior Career Coach at AIU Atlanta, Breedlove organized the Atlanta Ronald McDonald House (ARMHC) event for the AIU Atlanta Alumni Chapter.

The Gatewood House residence was at full capacity on April 1 when AIU Atlanta’s crew of alumni, staff and volunteers arrived to prepare dinner. More than 50 families were staying at Gatewood House while their children received treatment at Egleston Children’s Hospital or Emory Hospital, which are both within walking distance of the RMHC residence. On the menu that night was spaghetti, a fresh salad

and warm cookies for dessert, all prepared by the dozen or so AIU Atlanta alumni, students and staff who helped shop, cook, serve and clean up the meal. “Some families were there, and they ate right away. The rest of the food we packaged up in the refrigerator or freezer so families could eat as they come and go. We sealed the to-go containers with AIU stickers so families would know we had been there and were thinking of them,” Breedlove said.

This is the second time that Breedlove has organized the ARMHC dinner, and he is always happy to meet new alumni volunteers and recognize familiar faces. “Many of our

alumni are very successful, and I love hearing about what they do.”

For those volunteers who aren’t currently working, Breedlove makes a point to reach out during the event. He said, “I tell them to come and talk to me either on the phone or on campus so we can strategize and create a plan.” 📞





# Houston Events

## AIU Houston Celebrates 2015 Graduation

The AIU Houston campus hosted its annual commencement ceremony to honor the graduating class and all of their accomplishments on June 5, 2015 at the First United Methodist Church Houston-Westchase. Family and friends all gathered for the commemorative celebration to share the prestigious

moment and grant well wishes to the 255 participating graduates. This year's commencement address came from Mr. Orlando Sanchez, the Harris County Treasurer, in which he extended his profound words of encouragement as a tool to motivate our graduates in executing the next steps of their

journeys. The student speaker was Nicolas Mussolini, and the singer of the National Anthem was Chika Nwosu. A special thanks to all faculty, staff and students that played a pivotal role in making this year's ceremony a memorable occasion. 🇺🇸





# Houston Events

## AIU Houston Walks to Cure Arthritis

The AIU Houston Alumni Chapter participated in the Walk to Cure Arthritis on Saturday, May 16, 2015. Along with alumni and students the AIU Houston Career Services Department also joined the walk, which included a scenic three-mile and one-mile course along the Buffalo Bayou. Marvin Gary, AIU Houston Admissions Advisor, organized the event for the AIU Alumni Chapter. "We wanted to show AIU's support for the community and the cause. I'm a disabled veteran and live with arthritis, so I have a personal incentive [to walk] as well."

Those who participated also helped represent AIU Houston by wearing their school T-shirts. They

also learned a few things about the disease, "I realized how stretching and exercise is key to living a productive life with arthritis. There were some dogs there that were suffering from arthritis. We think about arthritis as a human disease, but animals also suffer from it," Gary said.

In addition to the Arthritis Foundation Walk to Cure Arthritis, AIU Houston hosts regular events including charity walks, runs and public service outings to build relationships within the community and among AIU Houston staff and alumni.

Walk to Cure Arthritis is the Arthritis Foundation's signature

fundraising event series that unites communities across the country to put an end to arthritis, a debilitating disease that impacts more than 50 million adults and 300,000 children. The Houston Walk was one of 90 Arthritis Foundation walks that took place between April and June this year, raising over \$266,000. The money raised will help people gain access to the critical medications necessary to live full, healthy lives and will also help fund research for better treatments and a cure for arthritis.

Everyone who participated enjoyed this opportunity to give to a great cause, and AIU Houston plans to attend again next year. 🇺🇸



# Chicago Events

## Chicago Alumni Evening

The Chicago Alumni Chapter hosted its fourth Annual Alumni Evening at the Harry Caray's restaurant in downtown Chicago on a beautiful summer evening on Friday, August 7, 2015. In tandem with the annual Online graduation weekend, new graduates, alumni, guests and AIU faculty and administration enjoyed celebrating successes, networking with one another and sharing stories and good cheer at the largest Chicago Alumni Evening event to date with over 200 in attendance.

Dr. George Miller, President and Chancellor of AIU, opened the festivities with welcoming remarks to the attending guests. He provided special recognition to the new graduates in attendance who achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA as they earned their degree.

Guests who attended the event were treated to a wonderful variety of tasty hors d'oeuvres and beverages. In addition to professional photography, guests also got to take fun, candid pictures of themselves and could instantly upload them to their preferred social media outlet with the on-hand Photo Station. Of course, many attendees relished the opportunity to chat and have their picture taken with our 2015 Chicago Ceremony Keynote Speaker Blair Underwood. Mr. Underwood also participated in our raffle prize drawing, reading the numbers of the lucky winners and presenting them with their prizes.

Thank you again to all who attended this excellent event, and best wishes for success especially to our new AIU graduates. 📷



## Blair Underwood, AIU Online's 2015 Chicago Commencement Speaker

Known for his educational advocacy, actor, director and producer Blair Underwood delivered an inspiring and motivational message as the 2015 AIU Online Commencement Keynote Speaker. He shared what he considers to be the keys to true success: find joy in what you do and help others. Mixing important, and often humorous, anecdotes of his own life's journey with his profound ideas on living in the service of others, Mr. Underwood's message was well-received by both attending graduates and their guests.

[Click here](#) to view video of Blair's message to our graduates at AIU's Chicago Graduation Ceremony on Saturday, August 8th, 2015. 📺





# Chicago Events

## The 2015 AIU Chicago Graduation Ceremony



American InterContinental University celebrated its 2015 graduation ceremony at Chicago Navy Pier's Grand Ballroom on August 8, 2015. The event was the largest single attended Chicago ceremony in AIU's history with 300 participating graduates and their attending guests. Over 80 of these graduates earned honors distinction, with 12 of them donning a medallion signifying a perfect 4.0 GPA. Additionally, 53 graduates were presented with American Military honor cords, recognizing their service as active duty or veterans in the U.S. Armed Forces. This exciting and memorable day on Lake Michigan began with the induction of new members of the honors societies Epsilon Pi Tau, Kappa Beta Delta, Delta Mu Delta, and Alpha Phi Sigma.

Following the graduate processional and the Color Guard presentation of the flag, Ryan Morrison began the ceremony by singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Dr. Rob Manzer, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, then addressed the graduates and explained the significance of achieving an advanced degree.

He also paid special tribute to the U.S. Armed Services graduates in attendance. President and Chancellor Dr. George Miller followed by extending congratulations to the ceremony's participants and reminded them that achieving a degree should not be looked at as an end, but rather a beginning to something more. Blair Underwood, the ceremony's Keynote Speaker, delivered a salient message to the graduates about success. He implored and encouraged them that utilizing the powerful combination of serving others and finding joy in what one does are the keys to obtaining real success. Ann Farley, the Graduating Class Speaker, delivered an inspiring message about perseverance, and provided anecdotes of her own AIU journey and the personal trials and challenges she overcame to obtain her

degree. She also credited key figures in her life, both personal and at AIU, who encouraged and pushed her onward to seeing the degree come to fruition. She admonished the graduates to never give up.

The ceremony segued to Dr. Cynthia Solari, the Business Program Chair, as she presented the Distinguished Alumni Award to Rolanda White. Rolanda shared with the attendees her life's turbulent personal journey through a battle with cancer, her son's suicide and divorce. And yet through it all, she was determined to go back to school and complete a post-secondary degree almost twenty years after finishing high school. In fact, she earned her AIU MBA degree while achieving a 4.0 GPA. Seeking advice and encouragement from many sources, including AIU faculty, Ms. White plans to start a non-profit to honor her son; it will be dedicated to helping to empower youth to overcome challenges faced by those young people who believe they are on the brink of hopelessness.

The ceremony closed with the conferring of the degrees to the graduates by Dr. Miller, and the tassels were turned! It was truly a wonderful and memorable day for all those who participated and attended. Best wishes for success to all AIU 2015 graduates! 🎓



# Chicago Events

## Chicago Autism Walk

Members of the AIU Chicago Alumni Chapter and their families and friends turned out at Soldier Field in downtown Chicago for the 2015 Walk Now For Autism Speaks 5k on Saturday morning, May 16. Meandering up and down Lake Shore Drive with spectacular views of the Chicago skyline, Grant Park, the Field Museum and Shedd Aquarium, the Chapter joined over 25,000 walkers and 600 volunteers in raising awareness and donations for autism.

Natosha Woods, 2015 Masters of Business Administration graduate who was accompanied by her daughter, enjoyed participating in the walk and supporting this wonderful cause. She said, "It's great that more awareness is being given through an event like this, and it's fantastic that there is such a large turnout." She was also very excited to share that she had recently completed her third AIU degree and was looking forward to sharing in her recent educational

success with other graduates in the summer Chicago Commencement ceremony. Jessica Velazquez, 2012 Bachelor of Business Administration graduate, was joined by her children and her mother. She was thrilled to participate in her second 2015 Chicago alumni event. She said, "It's great that the alumni chapter is taking part in varied events around the city. I look forward to more!" 🙌





# Distinguished Alumni Awards

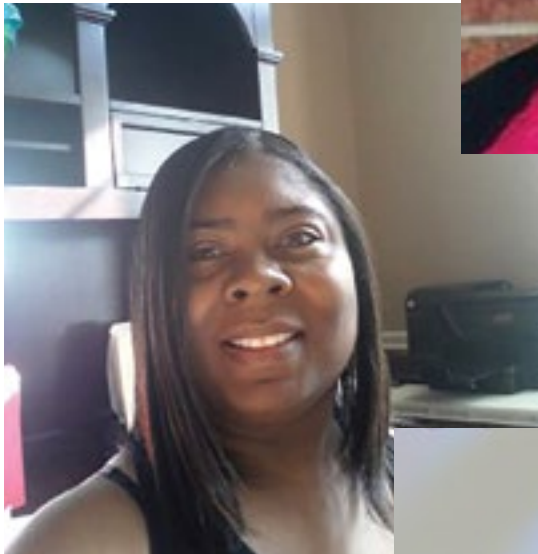
## Celebrating AIU's 2015 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients

AIU's Distinguished Alumni Award honors graduates who have used their degrees to change lives, advance their careers, help the community and overcome adversity. Congratulations to the 2015 Distinguished Alumni Award Winners! 🎓



Heather McCalip,  
AIU Houston  
BSCJ, 2014

Jemel Townsend,  
AIU Atlanta  
BSCJ, 2007



Rolanda White,  
AIU Online  
MBA, 2015



Marcos Rivero,  
AIU South Florida  
BFA, 2014





## Marian Nelson

MBA 2012

*"I went all the way through without a hitch, and that's a testimony to AIU and the professors"*

Marion Nelson already achieved success in the mortgage industry when she decided to change the trajectory of her career, earn three business degrees from AIU and place all her efforts "In God's Hands," a non-profit organization she is launching this year. "It's always been in me to start my own non-profit organization," Nelson explained.

The fledgling organization helps people who are struggling to gain the skills and financial independence they need to eventually become employed homeowners. Nelson had her first inklings for starting a non-profit when she helped a friend from church who was struggling with money and homelessness. Rather than just lending her money, Nelson decided to train her to become a loan originator like herself. "Every day I would pick her up after work, take her home with me and take her through some training," Nelson recalled.

When Nelson accepted a position at another firm, she told her office manager that she had a replacement already trained and ready to work. "So he hired her, and that was her first job. It was very successful for both of them and she still thanks me today," Nelson explained.

It wasn't until 2009 that Nelson decided to return to school and earn her degree. With the idea of In God's Hands to motivate her, she went straight through her associate, bachelor's and master's degree without stopping. By 2012 Nelson had earned her associate and bachelor's in business and an MBA in human resources, "I went all the way through without a hitch, and that's a testimony to AIU and the professors," Nelson said.

When asked how she stayed motivated through three degrees Nelson said, "There were so many days when family and friends were going to barbecues, but I stayed

right here and I did my coursework. I said to myself 'there will be plenty of other barbecues.'"

Like many AIU students, Nelson had challenges along the way including a family and a full-time job. She said, "Attending school online was very convenient for me. It allowed me to set my schedule. I was working, going to school and taking care of my mom at the same time."

Nelson's hardworking example inspired friends and family to also return to college to finish their education, including her sister and two daughters, "My youngest daughter, she is going to AIU now. Her name is Ebony Nelson."

To those who are considering a return to college, Nelson says, "Do it, but be serious about it. I hit the jackpot with AIU, but you have to do your own research."

Nelson credits her AIU education for helping to give her the confidence and knowledge she needed to move ahead with her dream, "My education with AIU enabled me to really understand how to run a business. AIU taught me everything from creating the overall structure to completing daily paperwork."

Today, Marion Nelson is looking toward her future and growing In God's Hands to serve as many people as possible. "In the next few years I see myself with my organization up and running full speed ahead." 📌

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## Wesley Usyak

M.Ed. 2012

*“You need to be passionate about what you are studying, and you need to be motivated...”*

With eight years of college-level teaching and a master's in education from AIU, you could say that Wesley Usyak knows the classroom from just about every angle: student, teacher, online and on campus. As an adult learner himself Usyak understands, firsthand, the unique needs of older students who often juggle full-time college course loads, careers and family responsibilities all at once. “It's not easy to do. I know, because I did it myself,” Usyak explained.

Usyak was a senior pharmacy technician for a Chicago-based retail pharmacy chain when he decided, in 2008, to pursue his BBA in Healthcare Management from AIU. When asked about the obstacles he had to overcome to achieve his bachelor's Usyak said, “I had all same obstacles that my students now have: making sure to put the time in. Not letting my job take over, time management.”

After his undergrad Usyak decided to become a pharmacy technician instructor and begin formally training others coming up through the ranks. Before long, Usyak found himself moving beyond his role as a vocational instructor and threw himself into curriculum development for the pharm tech programs he taught. In 2012, Usyak decided to pursue his Master's in Education (M.Ed.) from AIU with a specialization in Adult Education and Training. Usyak said, “I knew that this would put me in a different group of individuals, because not everyone has the master's in teaching.”

Usyak says earning his M.Ed. at AIU helped him draw from his own experiences as an adult student. “The M.Ed made me really think about how to work with and how to talk to students. You need to be more of a facilitator with adult learners rather than just a teacher,” Usyak explained.

Usyak focuses on group work with older students and gives them more one-on-one time when he can,

especially those who need extra help juggling a busy life. Of his AIU experience, it was Usyak's graduate capstone course that most often resonates with him today. “My professor was so passionate about education. She was going to push you to the limit in order to make sure that you succeeded. I learned so much from her about how to put together a classroom.”

To students thinking of going back for their degree, Usyak says, “You need to be passionate about what you are studying, and you need to be motivated.”

Usyak also advises students to have a support system in place, “Time and barriers outside are going to take over. Think about how you are you going to get through them, whether it's through your family support system or your support system at school.”

Today, Usyak is regarded as a subject matter expert by his peers and superiors. He currently teaches at a vocational school in Minneapolis. Usyak also serves on an accreditation board as an evaluator for pharm tech programs. As the healthcare industry continues to grow and change, Usyak sees many possibilities for advancing his career. Whatever his next step turns out to be, Usyak knows that following his passion will be his key to continued career success. 📖

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## Brenda Schroeder

AABA 2012

*“My degree is what prepared me to do the work I do. It’s also what helped me get hired ...”*

Before she ever went back to school Brenda “Lee” Schroeder spent plenty of time in the classroom. As an elementary school teaching assistant, she knew first-hand the importance of lifelong learning. “I love learning, but I’m just not an in-classroom kind of person,” Lee explained.

Over the years Lee made several attempts at higher education, but between work, her family and caring for her elderly parents in her home, she didn’t have time to commute and wasn’t able to fit attending classes into her busy schedule. The problem was that Lee knew she needed a degree to move forward. “My daughter was just starting college for her bachelor’s and she said, ‘Mom, you’ve helped me all your life. Why don’t you think about going back to college for you?’”

With a daughter going off to college and an ailing mother to care for, Lee decided to give earning her degree online a try. “And when I did, I really fell in love with it,” she said.

“Once I got going, I shared my live chats and my classwork with my mom. I told her, ‘This is what I’m doing, Mom. How does it sound to you?’ She never even went past high school, and for me to do this with her was a blessing.”

With the support of her entire family and the staff at AIU, it wasn’t long before Lee had earned her Associate of Arts in Business Administration and began a new career in customer service with a corporate retailer. “My degree is what prepared me to do the work I do. It’s also what helped me get hired, because

that’s who they are looking for: someone with a business degree.”

As an added bonus, Lee’s new employer is an AIU Educational Alliance Center (EAC) partner. Lee now receives tuition grants from work that help her as she pursues her BBA in Management. As an immediate family member, Lee’s husband was also eligible for an EAC tuition grant. “My husband supported me with my education, and in turn, I encouraged my husband to earn his degree at AIU. He graduated from AIU with a BBA in management and a 4.0 G.P.A.” Lee said.

Since getting hired, Lee has earned several promotions at work. She is currently a Delivery Solutions Specialist working directly with field technicians to locate the parts they need to complete service orders. Lee is on track to graduate with her Bachelor of Business Administration in October 2016. “Once I finish my bachelor’s degree, I’ll be eligible to become a Lead Manager in my Department.” 📖

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# Alumni Success in CJ



## Douglas Williams Jones

2014 AIU-Atlanta Graduate  
ASCJ 2014

### How did you hear about AIU?

A few years ago, I saw AIU commercials on television. A good friend, Albert Southall Jr., and I discussed our life and careers, but both acknowledged that we had never gone on to post-secondary education. We made it a goal and both went back to school at the same time! I enrolled at AIU in 2012.

### What made you choose AIU?

I appreciated the non-traditional, focused approach to the school and my program. I am in my 40s and this appealed to me. There were few distractions of traditional extra-curricular college life.

### Why did you choose your degree?

I have been in security/corrections/law enforcement since the 1990s. I have worked in prisons, and ended up working in Homeland Security. Obtaining a Criminal Justice degree seemed a natural fit for my career.

### What was your time at AIU like?

I enjoyed the learning environment, and I liked my instructors. They were

very helpful and willing to work with the students. When I reached out to them for assistance, they responded in kind. I also used tutors. I enjoyed the Atlanta campus layout, library, cafeteria and parking. The campus staff was helpful and I still maintain contact with them.

### Were you working while attending AIU?

I continued working full-time with the TSA while I was a student. I took classes early in the morning, at night. I even went to campus on Saturday to do schoolwork.

### How did you feel when you graduated?

Immense pride! It was awesome! This was the first time I walked across a stage. I didn't even have a chance to walk in my high school graduation years ago, so this was very special.

### What work are you currently involved in?

I work as a lead transportation security officer with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). I oversee security staff, ranging from 10-40 people; I handle employee and passenger security issues; I manage the screening operations to ensure passenger safety. I have been working for the TSA for 12 years.

### How did you get into your current role?

I'm the lead officer. My previous law enforcement experience, including as a Staff Sergeant in the Marines, has helped.

### What has your career progression been?

I had the time and experience in law enforcement for several years, but I knew that advancement would come through earning a post-secondary

degree. I am now looking ahead to earning a Bachelor's degree in Homeland Security.

### What is some advice you would give to other CJ students and alumni trying to get into a similar role?

If you make the decision to study Criminal Justice, you need to be dedicated to it; be diligent in your studies, have a great attitude about law enforcement (you cannot be anti-police!), and you need to start networking and talk with local law enforcement staff, such as police officers and detectives. Put yourself out there. Mingle and network with them! You also have to dedicate yourself to your students. I kept my books in the car and did schoolwork at every available opportunity. To be successful at your studies you will have to make decisions and sacrifices: do I go to the party, or BBQ...or do I know I need to accomplish my homework, or study for that test?

### What are the most important skills that helped you get to where you are?

Being a 'people person' has helped me out a lot. You should be outgoing. Also, you need to be approachable. Be open to asking questions! Be interactive with people. 🗣️

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# AIU Alumni Mentor

## Interview with Alumni Mentor Laura Siegmann



### What is your current position and title?

I am currently the Director of Education and Compliance for a massage school in Dayton Ohio.

### What are your day-to-day job responsibilities?

I supervise over 24 faculty members including instructors and clinical staff members. I also oversee our compliance and accreditation processes.

### What kind of professional experience do you have?

Most of my professional experience is in education. Previously I was a Director of Student Services. I started my career as a part-time instructor in Criminal Justice.

### What do you enjoy most about what you do?

When you work for a college, it's all about seeing students succeed. That's what I love most about my job – it's seeing our students go on to have rewarding careers. I also enjoy working with our faculty and staff. I have always had an open door policy. I am always ready to work with my team to ensure that we are providing our students with the best possible education.

### How did you hear about AIU?

I knew that I wanted to move ahead in my career. I also knew that I needed a master's degree to get there, but I didn't have the time to sit in a classroom. I looked at five or six online schools, but only AIU had the degree, specialization and accelerated pace that I needed.

### What degrees have you earned?

I have an undergraduate degree in criminal justice. I earned my Master of Education in Educational Leadership from AIU in 2013.



# AIU Alumni Mentor

## **Who were some of the people who helped you thorough your program at AIU?**

My husband and my parents offered a tremendous amount of support while I was at AIU. My husband earned his master's degree completely online, so he was a great source of advice and inspiration. I received a great deal of help from AIU, too. If I ever had questions, I knew I could get a response from my instructors and even other students. The students in my master's program were also great help. We really got to know each other through having the same classes and sharing our experiences through chats, message boards and group projects.

## **Why did you choose to mentor new students?**

I wanted to be able to help students who were going to school online for the first time. I wanted to be there for them and show them the ins and outs.

## **How do you help students?**

Mostly I help students get the hang of managing their time and juggling work, family and school. I help students create a schedule so that they can have the time they need to study, even if it's while the kids are sleeping.

## **What advice do you give most often?**

It's nice for students just to have someone to talk to—someone who has been there and has already done the things that they are trying to accomplish now. The advice I give to students most often is to get to know their instructors and classmates. I also tell them not to be afraid of asking questions when they need answers.

## **What do you enjoy most about it?**

Now that I've been mentoring for a while, I found that I love sharing the excitement of going back to school with the students. It's like doing it all over again for the first time. 🍷

# Career Services

## Insight through Experience: Connecting Students and Alumni to Industry Experts

Jason Brashler

Talking with an industry professional can be a very valuable experience to anyone hoping to progress within a career. By default, someone further along on the same career path you are on can often provide you with insight from their own experiences, perhaps helping you anticipate or avoid common obstacles, keeping you abreast of new trends or simply providing you with a “big picture” perspective of how the industry works and where you might fit in. To ensure our students and alumni have the opportunity to engage in these types of conversations, the Career Services department uses channels such as Employer Information Sessions, Virtual Commons Clubs and the Serious Advantage Career Series to host guest presenters with various industry backgrounds.

In May, the Virtual Commons Criminal Justice Club hosted Amanda Morgan, a former Crime Scene Investigator Tech for Prince George’s County Police Department in Maryland. Ms. Morgan provided insight into beginning and developing within this career path and also provided detailed information on what the job was like. The presentation included examples of crime scene diagrams, common categories of evidence and a breakdown of how the position fits into the larger context of criminal justice. A few weeks later, the Career Services and IT Professionals Clubs

hosted iOS Developer and Mentor Weien Wang, who provided guidance on both how to become a developer and how to create marketable products based on perceived needs.

This Summer also saw presentations from Allison Nicholas of Acxiom and representatives of the LA County Probation department. Ms. Nicholas provided an explanation of how and why widespread data collection is conducted, analyzed and used to add value to the revenue streams of Acxiom’s clients. Representatives of the LA County Probation department outlined the responsibilities, salary ranges and hiring process for the department. While directly applicable to individuals who live or work in the LA County area, the presentation was valuable to anyone interested in probation as a career, as the representatives discussed career searching within the field in general, as well.

In addition to providing outlines and experienced-based insight into these career paths and development techniques, each guest speaker made time to answer questions from the students and alumni who were able to attend. In many cases, it was clear to see that the participants were actively engaged in these conversations and attempting to integrate knowledge gained into their career development strategies.

We look forward to hosting many more events like these in the future. Please be on the lookout for emails regarding guest speaker events through our Employer Information Sessions, Virtual Commons Clubs, and the Serious Advantage Career Series. 📧

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## Did My Interview Go Well?

Dustin Lingemann



We have all been there. You've been on an interview and feel pretty good about it. You prepared extensively, answered all the questions with ease, and dressed to the nines. No matter what, though, there will always be that nagging question "Did they like me?" It's never fun to play the waiting game. Nowadays, it's very rare to get hired on the spot. The list below shows five ways to gauge if the hiring manager is interested in you. Of course this list isn't the "end all be all," but it can help you avoid sleepless nights.

### 1. Did they talk about the big picture?

If the hiring manager speaks about where the company is going and how your skills sets fit in then it's a really good sign that yes, you are being looked at in high regard.

### 2. Did the hiring manager engage in chit chat with you?

It's always a great sign if he or she is showing a personal interest with you. As they say, you want to build relationships professionally before personally. I wouldn't recommend getting off topic with the hiring manager, but if they start the personal questions then it's a sign that they see you being there for a while and want to get to know a little bit better.

### 3. Where you introduced to additional decisions makers?

If the hiring manager introduces you to the vice president or president of the company, that's a sure sign that you hit a homerun with the hiring manager or the interviewer. The interviewer definitely wouldn't waste their time if they felt that you were a dud.

### 4. Did the interview last longer than scheduled?

This is a great sign. Keep in mind that hiring managers usually conduct interviews that will fit into their daily routine at work. If they go over that timeframe of what they schedule that usually means they are very interested in what you have to say.

### 5. Was there a clear time frame?

Most companies have a pretty strict timeframe, but they usually will adjust it to find the perfect candidate to fit their need. If the hiring manager ends the interview and tells you when you can expect to hear back it's good sign that you're in the top running.

As I mentioned above this isn't the end all be all of knowing how well you did, but hopefully this can help calm your nerves a little bit. It's always a good idea to ask for a business card or email address from the hiring manager at the end of the interview. This way you're able to send a thank you letter/email. This way you leave a better professional image.

Dustin Lingemann has over four years' experience in career coaching with AIU. He strives to exceed goals by achieving a high level of service when providing students with job search strategies.

Interested in more posts on job search-related topics? Check out our Career Development blog.

If you're a current AIU student or alumnus looking for more career advice, please contact the Career Services Department at 877-221-5800 Option 5 or at [careerservices@aiuonline.edu](mailto:careerservices@aiuonline.edu). 📧

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# Career Services

## Career Services – Information Technology Conference

On April 29, AIU Career Services with the help of our alumni hosted another successful career conference: “Today’s IT: Navigating Change, Challenges and Opportunities.” The conference provided a forum for Information Technology professionals to establish new contacts and gain valuable industry insight and data on career opportunities, emerging markets and technology trends and best practices. Mr. Dave Czeszewski, CEC Senior VP and Chief Information Officer and conference keynote speaker, provided some of his own extensive IT background then transitioned into a discussion about how various subsections within information technology – such as cybersecurity, cloud computing, and web management systems – work together within a larger corporate IT structure.

The conference also featured an Employer Roundtable consisting of panel members Danielle Byron, VP of IT/CIO of C4;

Dr. Chuck Currier, CIO/VP of IT at College of DuPage and Peter Schaak, IT Director for the Village of Schaumburg. Each panel member added insight from their areas of specialization while answering questions from the audience.

In addition to organizations such as IBM and Career Education Corporation, experts from our

alumni community shared their knowledge and experience about several critical services and functions. Subject matter expert presentations were delivered by Jonathan Randy Lee from FireEye, who informed us on cyber security. Jack French of Microsoft discussed the role of solution sales and delivery and Martin McDermid from

Catamaran educated attendees on the various responsibilities associated with network engineering.

Attendees concluded the conference with a networking session. They were also able to download additional presentations from the subject matter experts on topics ranging from security to business intelligence, and they also received career search takeaways, along with a pre-recorded presentation on conducting an IT-focused career search. ■

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## The AIU® Alumni Savings Connection Can Offer:

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Receive discounted rates—up to 30% below box office prices—at all major theater chains. Make the AIU Alumni Savings Connection your portal to instant savings. Just log on today and discover why it pays to be a member of the AIU Alumni Association.

To save, simply log on to [www.aiuniv.edu/alumni](http://www.aiuniv.edu/alumni), scroll down and click on the Savings Connection icon.

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Need the perfect gift? We can ship directly to you or to the doorstep of the AIU student on your list. Visit: [www.estoresbyzome.com/aiu\\_online.php](http://www.estoresbyzome.com/aiu_online.php)



## FOR INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR MEMBERSHIP VISIT:

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### **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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