

SI PROFILE: WEBSTER UNIVERSITY IN-DEMAND PROGRAMS IN SPACE SYSTEMS, PROCUREMENT AND MORE

BY KATE JONUSKA ■ SPECIAL TO SPRINGSJOBS.COM

Lee Trovas likes to quote the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who wrote, "You could not step twice into the same river." Trovas, the interim director of Webster University's Colorado Springs campus, explains, "He means that everything is constantly changing. If you just stand still, you're moving backwards. That's why education is so important."

Ranked by US News and World Report as one of the "Best Universities — Masters," Webster was founded in 1915, now has 107 campuses worldwide and has been serving the Springs since 1978 with their accredited solely graduate-level curriculum. Taking Trovas's recognition of change seriously, Webster is proud to offer some of the most innovative specialized programs in the educational community today.

"We serve both military and civilian populations as well as the Department of Defense," he says. "And we work on what I call the applied theory. You learn from people who have done it, not who have just studied it. We hire only practicing professionals to teach, no matter the subject."

SPACE SYSTEMS OPERATION MANAGEMENT

After 11 years in a completely different career in the military, Major James Bushong decided he wanted to be — and was designated — a space officer, a move he was very excited about. "But I needed to learn quickly," he explains. "I was in the 33 percent of army space officers that did not have an advanced degree and I knew I needed one."



James Bushong

PHOTO BY TED MEHL

Not selected to attend school while on the job through the Army, he needed a flexible schedule that would work around his full-time duties and frequent work-related trips, but that offered professionalism and quality. Webster met all his requirements, including accepting his military training for faster degree completion.

"It was a very good program, well rounded, perfectly suited for the things that I'm going to do," says Bushong, who learned about the complexities of space operations, planning and managing programs in the global environment of the space industry, handling space-related contracts, and balancing civilian and military goals in space. "A lot of the instructors come from military backgrounds or from working as contractors. They can apply the knowledge they've gained not just from books, but their direct experience."

Bushong says that the skills and ideas he was learning helped him on the job while he was completing his degree, but now has moved on to work with the National Security Space Office in Washington, D.C.



Students Ramon Gonzales (standing) and Henry Taylor prepare a PowerPoint presentation for a class. Both are enrolled in Webster University's Master of Arts Procurement & Acquisitions Management Program.

PHOTO BY BILL SOMMER

"I would highly recommend Webster, not just for military but for anybody looking at branching out," he says. "Webster has a variety of advanced degree programs. I was impressed by how many different working groups their degree plans would influence. I would whole-heartedly recommend it."

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Looking three years into the future, when she first qualifies for retirement from the Air Force, Esther Green was seeking a continuing education program that would improve her skills to make her more competitive both immediately and in the future.



Esther Green

PHOTO BY TED MEHL

"I was attracted to Webster's Human Resources Development program because that's what I do in the Air Force now. I do personnel and I wanted to do something that would not only help in my military career but help me segue into retirement," she explains. "I realize that when I use this degree it may be a few years old. But what we studied, and the way we studied it, will last. These things are relevant now and will be five years from now when I use it. I appreciate that."

She also appreciated not being brushed off intellectually just because she was a working adult. "They really bent over backwards to help me," she says, noting that she often had to make up projects due to being called away by her duties. "If I had to miss a class, they always allowed me to make it up and never put too much pressure on

me or made me feel like my duties would effect the degree program as long as I was doing the work ... I was able to get out it what I put into it, and I think that's amazing."

She's already putting skills she learned in her master's program into use in her current job, she says. "I think I understand organizational development quite a bit better than I did," Green explains. "I think I have better tools now to assist in the transitions any organization I'm with will inevitably go through, in the Air Force or out."

PROCUREMENT AND ACQUISITIONS MANAGEMENT

In a town where the military and government are involved in so many careers — even for civilians — Webster attracts many students looking to get involved in procurement and acquisitions, learning how to manage the development, procurement, contracting and channeling of material, services and systems. In other words, these are the specialized professionals who get things done, who manage the transfer of goods, services and ideas between agencies — an in-demand skill, for certain.

"I'm in the medical field, and I never really thought I could get a foot in that career," says Ramon Gonzales, a current student. "And here was Webster with a master's degree and a certificate in it. There's the foot in the door. That's great. It's been great ever since."

Gonzales was interested in government contracting, and Webster not only accommodated his busy life as a working single dad, it also has opened the door to his dream job, a job he's filling out the paperwork to begin. "This is the No. 1 job I wanted and

I'm going to get it because of Webster," he says.

Graduate Henry Taylor had a similar experience. After being laid off from one company, he landed his current position directly due to his studies at Webster. "My manager clued me in afterwards that during our interview, my being a Webster student leaned him in my favor over other applicants," says Taylor.

Taylor explains that the manager knew most of Taylor's instructors, who he held in high esteem in the tight-knit contracting society of Colorado Springs.

"The other schools I went through, I've never run into instructors that had the depth and the background that these people had," he continues. "It's not just their bread and butter but their heart and soul. Everyone of them I had owned their own consulting company or owned their own business or have been in the business for 20-plus years. People know them."

Both procurement students would heartily recommend both Webster and their field of concentration to anyone interested in procurement and acquisitions. Taylor notes, "Webster has done me well. It's done so much for me."

For more information about Webster University and its many on-campus and online degree programs and certificates, attend their monthly Information Session on the first Tuesday of the month from 4-7 p.m. on the Metro Campus, 5475 Tech Center Drive, Suite 110. Or contact the university by calling 719-590-7340 or visiting www.webster.edu/coloradosprings. ■

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