

COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

ALUMNI

MAGAZINE

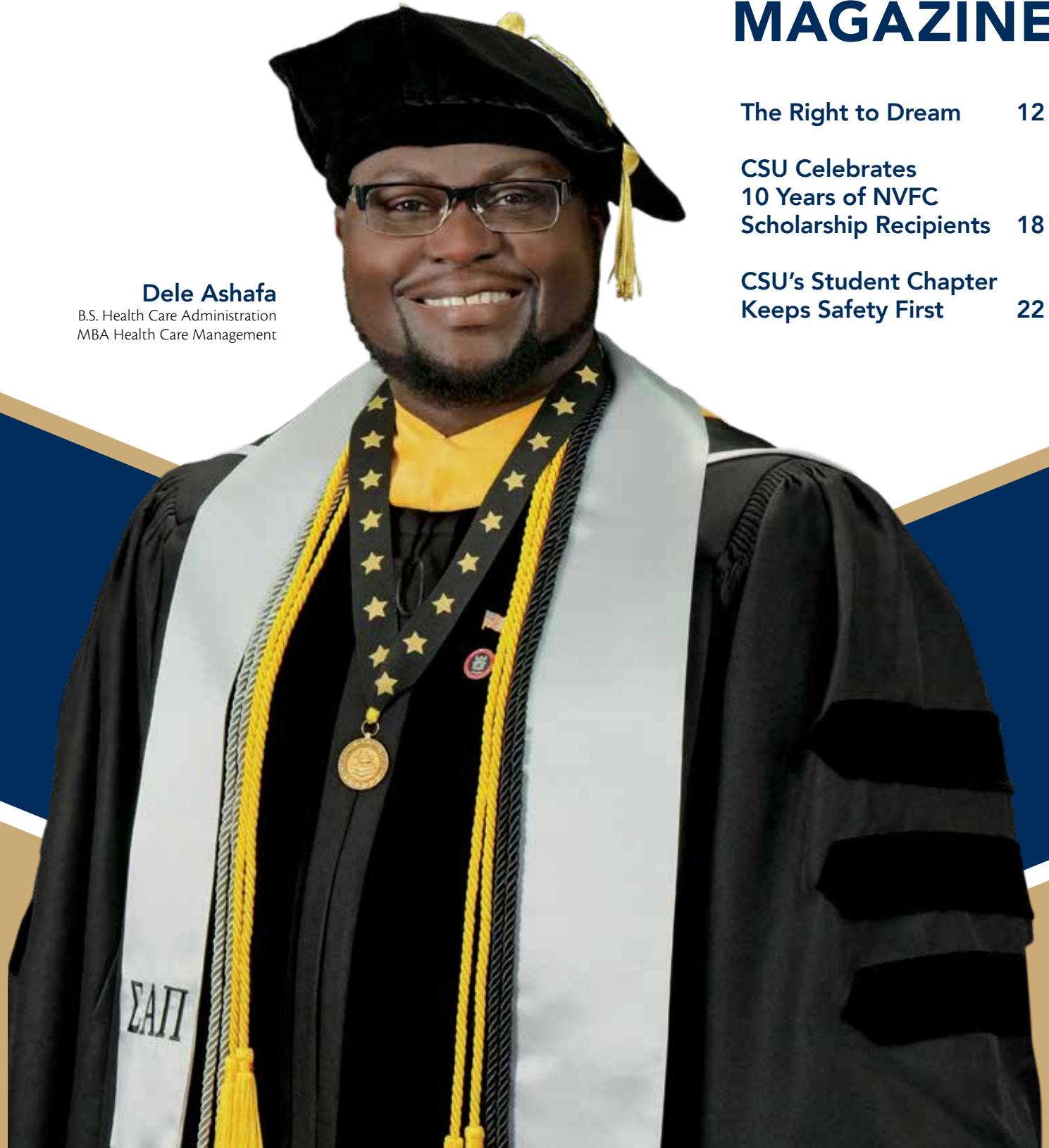
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Dele Ashafa

B.S. Health Care Administration
MBA Health Care Management



Thinking of Going Back to School?



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All alumni who earned their bachelor's or master's degrees with CSU are eligible to receive the Knight Discount. The 10% tuition discount is also available to spouses and dependents of alumni who are seeking to earn their degree with CSU.

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The CSU Alumni Magazine is a bi-annual publication.
2019 © Columbia Southern University.

Dear Readers,

Last year, Columbia Southern University celebrated its monumental silver anniversary. It was an incredible time of reflection for the university. How humbling it has been to look at how much has changed since 1993. In the last edition of the CSU Alumni Magazine, we took a walk down memory lane in the article “Building a University That Started as a Dream.” While we are certainly leaps and bounds from where we started, I am grateful that CSU never lost sight of the vision and family values on which it was founded.



So far, 2019 has been full of opportunity. I hope it feels the same in your life. The chill of winter is behind us and spring is full of fresh blooms, sunshine and hope. Sometimes it is easiest to see the hope around us when the sun is shining.

For a special few, sunshine is something that they create when everything else seems grim. One such person is Dele Ashafa. Dele, who was born in Nigeria, faced many difficult situations, including a life-changing injury sustained while serving in the Nigerian Army. You can find his story of hope and encouragement on Page 12.

Just like Dele, many of you have a story to tell. What rays of sunshine have you created? What hardships have you overcome? What dreams have you accomplished? As you read these stories, I hope that you see yourself in each of them, and I hope you will share them with me by emailing CSU-AlumniMagazine@ColumbiaSouthern.edu.

Yours just may be the story that someone needed to read.

Happy Reading,

Libby Reilly

Libby Reilly
Editor-in-Chief



CORRECTION: Alumnus Larry Riddle earned an A.A.S. and a B.S. in occupational safety and health with CSU, not a B.S. in criminal justice administration, as was stated in the fall 2018 issue.

LETTER FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT



To my fellow Knights,

We are well into 2019. While some of us have been successfully utilizing our degree for years, some of us are newer to our careers or our status as alumni. Welcome to all of you.

With every year comes new challenges. What will this one bring? What resources are available to assist us in moving forward?

One resource is webinars. As some of you may know, CSU hosts webinars throughout the year. These webinars, which feature CSU faculty speakers, provide updates and other information concerning various aspects of the industries in which you are working. Keep an eye out for those.

As alumni and working professionals in the industries that the university serves, I believe it is our duty to provide ideas and support for the various programs that exist, and could exist, at CSU. Reach out to CSU-Alumni@ColumbiaSouthern.edu with your ideas and comments.

I am proud of our university, as I hope you are, and what it represents to you and to your careers. Our education has been a steppingstone to bigger and better things. If we continue to work hard and maintain our connection to our alma mater, we can help shape its successes and the successes of future Knights.

Once again, I thank each of you for your dedication to your education. I hope through your experience with CSU, you have been inspired to change lives. If you have, please reach out to us and let us know. We want to let everyone know.

Continued success and good health to you all this year.

Most humbly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph Blessing".

Ralph Blessing
Alumni Association President, Class of 2004

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Engage with us on social media or send us an email at CSU-Alumni@ColumbiaSouthern.edu



[Facebook.com/ColumbiaSouthern](https://www.facebook.com/ColumbiaSouthern)



[Linkedin.com/school/columbia-southern-university](https://www.linkedin.com/school/columbia-southern-university)

Get to Know Your Fellow Knights

How well do you know your fellow Knights? Be on the lookout for the “Get to Know Your Fellow Knights” post in your alumni chapter Facebook feed on the first Monday of each month. Each post includes fun facts about Knights in your area. Want to fill out the form yourself? Just look for it in your chapter’s Facebook group feed. It’s an easy way to break the ice and get us all a little more acquainted with one another. Plus, you can win CSU swag!



Get to Know Your Fellow Knights *First Monday Each Month*

Alumni chapters are open to all graduates with an associate, bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree from CSU. To join your local alumni chapter, visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Alumni/Alumni-Chapters.

KNIGHT SUCCESS STORY

Take 5 With Bobby Turner, VP of Diversity-Veterans Recruiting for Bank of America

Bobby Turner
B.S. Organizational Leadership
MBA Project Management



How has your degree helped you in your career?

My MBA with a concentration in project management helps me because everything I do today requires planning and managing events that will support our recruiting goals at the end of the year.

What tips do you have for those who are transitioning from military to civilian life?

Start the process 24 months out. Obtain a master's degree, if at all possible, prior to getting out and start networking. Attend career fairs and practice your elevator speech. Start working on your resume. Get your LinkedIn profile up-to-date and brush up on your interview skills.

How can students get their foot in the door at Bank of America?

Through internships and networking with our staff on LinkedIn. Follow Bank of America to see where they will be conducting events such as job fairs to get your face and name in front of somebody.



Meet Chasity Douyon, Employer Relations Specialist

Chasity Douyon is Columbia Southern University's new employer relations specialist. Chasity, who is no stranger to CSU, worked with the Academic Advising and Student Support Center for two years before moving to Career Services. She has previously worked for the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Alabama Career Center, and she has experience in community-based mental health. Chasity holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Spring Hill College and a master's degree in counseling and psychology from the University of West Alabama.

Chasity assists employers with hiring needs and helps students and alumni meet their employment goals. Contact Chasity via email at Chasity.Douyon@ColumbiaSouthern.edu.

CAREER SERVICES

CareerServices@ColumbiaSouthern.edu
877.297.6192

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday - Thursday 8:00am-5:00pm CST
Friday 8:00am-3:00pm CST

Please include student number in all emails and allow up to 2-3 business days for a response.

Searching for a New Job?

Take Advantage of CareerQuest

CareerQuest is a career management platform available to all CSU graduates. CareerQuest gives graduates the opportunity to:

- » Schedule appointments with counselors. Counselors are available to assist with career and degree exploration, resume and cover letter review, interview practice, LinkedIn profile review and more.
- » Search and apply for job openings across the nation.
- » Connect with recruiters and research hiring companies.

To activate your CareerQuest account, log in to the student portal and select the "My Account" page. Scroll to CareerQuest at the bottom of the page and choose "Yes."



LEARNING PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



New Partnership Provides Educational Benefits to Safety Professionals Nationwide

Columbia Southern University recently entered a Learning Partnership with the National Safety Council. Through the partnership, employees and volunteers at the NSC's national headquarters in Itasca, Illinois, and its 25 chapters across the nation, will be able to pursue their educational goals at CSU with a 10 percent tuition discount and access to exclusive scholarship opportunities. Benefits of this Learning Partnership are also available to the immediate families of NSC employees and volunteers.

"As a university built on safety education, it is quite an honor to partner with the National Safety Council," said Ken Styron, president of CSU. "This partnership opens the doors for working safety professionals to receive a high-quality,

affordable education to help them accomplish their career goals. As a family-owned institution, it is also important to us to offer these benefits to the families as well."

CSU's Bachelor of Science in occupational safety and health is recognized by the Board of Certified Safety Professionals as a Graduate Safety Practitioner® Qualified Academic Program.

The nation's leading safety advocate for more than 100 years, the NSC is a nonprofit organization with the mission of eliminating preventable deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. 🇺🇸



Alumna Gamel Hawthorne Cultivates the Spirit of Giving



CSU celebrated Christmas 2018 by working with The Salvation Army of Coastal Alabama, one of our local Learning Partners. Whether it was donating Christmas presents, sorting donations, counting kettles, or ringing bells for change at the local Walmart, we were able to give back because of one Knight's passion.

Alumna Gamel Hawthorne enjoys getting involved with her alma mater, and she wanted to make a difference in her community. It was Hawthorne who connected the university with The Salvation Army. The relationship was cemented when the Coastal Alabama chapter officially became a Learning Partner in 2017. Through Hawthorne's dedication to her community, we were able to change the lives of more than 1,000 children during the Christmas season. ■



EAT YOUR LUNCH and Learn Something, Too

Make the most of your lunch breaks this year by attending a webinar hosted by CSU.

LUNCH AND LEARN WEBINARS

This year, we are taking the following topics out to lunch:

- » Emergency Medical Services
- » Fire Science
- » Homeland Security
- » Interviewing
- » Job Search Strategies
- » Occupational Safety and Health
- » Resume Writing



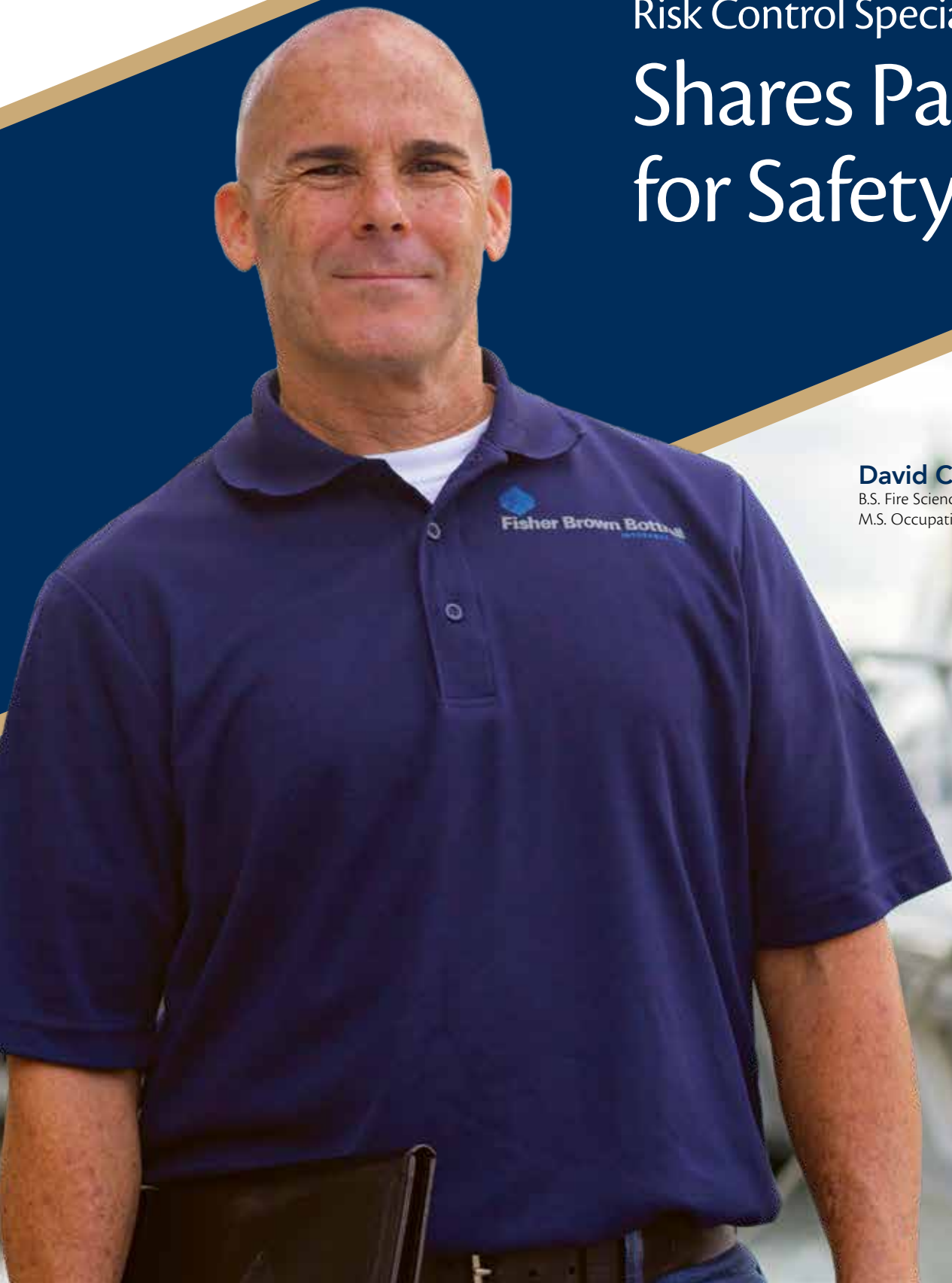
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To learn more about upcoming webinars, or to view webinar recordings on demand, visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu/TheLink.

MILITARY
SPOTLIGHT

Firefighter Turned
Risk Control Specialist

Shares Passion for Safety



David Combs

B.S. Fire Science

M.S. Occupational Safety and Health

“ Being able to advise and educate people on the importance of working safely is a very rewarding aspect of my job. ”

When you find your passion, it can be a beautiful thing.

Take David Combs, a risk control specialist with a Pensacola, Florida, insurance company. He's a man who is doing what he likes and is helping to protect lives in the process, something he has done since his days as a firefighter.

“My role in the agency is to work closely with our clients to assist them in improving their safety, fire protection and risk control programs,” said Combs. “The goal is hazard identification and risk reduction that ultimately leads to reduced workplace injuries and property loss which, in turn, results in a cost savings to our clients, both directly and indirectly.”

A typical day for Combs may start with a morning visit to a construction site or manufacturing plant. Next, he might conduct safety training or a fire protection evaluation at one of the area hospitality locations.

“Being able to advise and educate people on the importance of working safely is a very rewarding aspect of my job,” he added. That love of educating others is perhaps why he also enjoys teaching a variety of safety and health-related classes for construction and general industry.

Combs began his safety career in 1985 while serving in the Navy as a fire marshal and safety officer. After 21 years, Combs left the military and journeyed to the private sector in Jacksonville, Florida, as a loss control specialist for five years.

In 2014, he and his family moved to Pensacola where he worked again as a loss control specialist for an insurer and later as a risk control specialist.

“We moved here from El Paso after my wife completed her time in the Army,” he said. “We, of course, really love the beaches, the best of any [where] we've ever lived. Pensacola also has a small-town feel and the people here are some of the nicest you'll find anywhere.”

Combs holds a bachelor's degree in fire science (2007) and a master's in occupational safety and health (2016) from CSU. He also earned the Certified Fire Protection Specialist and Associate Safety Professional® designations.

“It sounds corny, but I had some of the best college professors in the business while earning my master's in occupational safety and health,” he said. “They took the time to pass on their wisdom to me, and I have a duty and obligation to pass what I learned on to others. In my mind, that's how this works and it's one of the keys to the process of keeping people safe.”

The Right to Dream

Written by Libby Reilly

When you meet Tajudeen Oladele Ashafa for the first time, he will probably lead with something like, "I can't complain. God has been good." This positive outlook spans every reach of his world; his genuine gratitude is refreshing, if not a bit surprising.



Dele Ashafa

B.S. Health Care Administration
MBA Health Care Management

“It is free to dream, but to achieve that dream, you’ve got to pay for it.”

Tajudeen (who goes by “Dele”) was born in Nigeria and grew up in a home with very little. When he was 3 years old, his parents divorced and he went to live with his grandmother. He managed to finish elementary school, but he admits it was a struggle. His grandmother did not have the ability nor the education to assist him with homework, and his grades suffered.

Dele’s father made the decision to move him to where he lived, a place about five hours away that was supposed to be full of promise with less poverty.

“My dad wanted me to work through the problems I had from their divorce...but then, my dad lost his job,” he said. “It was tough. Where I come from, once you lose your job, you can’t just get another one. My dad was a talent agent and when he lost his job, I thought ‘Now I must put food on the table.’”

Once again, Dele’s focus was on anything but his education. While still enrolled in school, he found a job selling yogurt.

“The manager said ‘I will trust you with one dozen yogurts. If you bring the money from selling them back to me, I will know you are reliable and will continue trusting you, then increase to two dozen.’ So I would sell the yogurt, bring him the money and make a profit. That money is how my dad and I survived.”

Though his work ethic thrived, Dele still could not find the motivation to commit to his education. So, at 15 years old, he joined the Nigerian Army.

“I loved it,” he said. “I was very young and used the motivation, thinking once I got in the military I could afford my education.”

After serving in the military for two years, he became a tactics instructor and dreamed of what his future held. What happened next though, he never saw coming. Dele was shot during his service in the Nigerian Army, requiring one of his arms to be amputated.

“In life, you’re going to have setbacks—physical, financial, emotional. Setbacks are problems and problems are a test; you have to pass it in order to move forward,” he said. “If you allow your setbacks to let you give up, you will lose the momentum that will carry you through to your destination in life.”

Even still, Dele finds nothing to complain about; he doesn’t see himself as a victim.

“Life happens,” he said. “I got shot while protecting the peace of the nation. They had to cut my hand off and I didn’t know what to do with my life.”

While many people faced with this situation would use it as a time to slow down, question everything and even sulk, Dele did none of that.

“God has a way of working things out for His people and everyone who believes in him,” he said.

Dele Ashafa with his wife Lisa, daughter Amiah and son Elijah.



“Setbacks are problems and problems are a test. You have to pass it in order to move forward.”

Because his bullet wound was severely infected, he was brought to the United States to be treated by his uncle, who was a doctor in Ohio. His hand was amputated but his spirit remained strong.

“Someone told me when I was in the hospital, ‘When you have one hand, there will be many things in life that will try to keep you down. You must rebuke the negative things that happen to you.’ So, that’s what I did; I rebuked it and said ‘That’s not going to be me; I am not going to suffer for anything I want in life.’ Life knocks me down, I stand up again.”

Soon, Dele found himself recovering in America and looking for a job. “It was a long process for me to get used to living without my right arm, but I was determined to do all the things as I did before.”

He discovered a company that offered resources to people with disabilities, and they had a job opening, but it was very physically demanding work.

“I said ‘Is it possible to do this job with one hand?’ The boss said, ‘It may not be possible with one hand because you will be lifting and feeding people, but if you think you can do it, I will give you a shot.’ So I said I wanted to do it and they gave me two weeks to try it. After the two weeks, I said ‘Ma’am, I like the work and want to keep doing it.’”

That director who took a chance on Dele is now his wife. They have two children and live in Lima, Ohio.

Soon after coming to the United States, Dele wanted to pursue a college degree, but he discovered that his Nigerian education did not equate to a U.S. high school diploma. So, while working full time, he completed his diploma before enrolling at a traditional college in Ohio.

“I was working full time and driving many hours; I wanted something that could be a little more flexible. I wanted to be able to finish some things at home and in my pajamas,” he said. “That’s when I found CSU. I gave it a shot and loved it.”

Dele completed his bachelor’s degree in 2014 and his MBA in health care administration in 2016. He is now working on his doctoral dissertation.

“CSU makes you feel welcome, makes you feel at home, makes you feel important.”

Dele says he will never take his education for granted. He recently published his first book, a motivational autobiography about his life and the lessons he learned along the way.

“CSU makes you feel welcome, makes you feel at home, makes you feel important.”

“To my knowledge, a disability is not something that controls your life,” he said. “You are in charge of your life. To me, I am not truly disabled because I go to school, I work, I am married...all without an arm. The only disability is yourself—don’t be your own disability.”

“You’ve got to have a dream and you’ve got to pursue that dream,” he said. “It is free to dream, but to achieve that dream, you’ve got to pay for it.”

Dele’s book “Achievement Through Adversity” is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. 📖

A Note From Dele Ashafa

It is my hope that the contents of my book will inspire you to be motivated to achieve any goal that you set for yourself and beyond. I believe in you and I know that you can do anything that you put your focus on. Dream, but you must wake up to achieve it. Thank you and God bless!

2019 is the Year of the Pig Are You Wallowing in Success?

Written by Anthony Cornealius



Smile big and enjoy 2019 as a year full of successes, according to the predictions linked to the year of the pig.

Asian peoples of many countries, faiths and cultures welcomed the pig with open arms on Feb. 5, the official start of the Lunar New Year. Each Lunar New Year is marked by a different animal of the Zodiac calendar, and 2019 is especially poignant. The pig, which symbolizes wealth and treasure, is the last animal of the lunar year calendar and is perhaps the most generous.

In Vietnam, this celebration, known as “Tet,” is usually observed several days before and after the official start date. In Chinese culture, the pig, because of its importance within agrarian societies, represents good fortune and luck.

Just before Tet, Vietnamese families typically clean their homes thoroughly and prepare for decorations, relatives, friends and fun. One of the most popular foods during the national holiday is banh chung, a large square of sticky

rice cake filled with beans and fatty pork. Boiled chicken, gio cha (Vietnamese sausage), pickled leeks, onions, cabbage and candied fruits are other delicious foods included in celebrating the holiday.

Many also journey to their homeland or hometown to honor and celebrate family. Temples all across the world are busy as prayers are said for the New Year.

From an astrological perspective, those born during the year of the pig—which includes 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007 and 2019—are believed to be big-hearted and friendly. They are also disciplined, hard-working and honest.

Columbia Southern University offers both hybrid and online degree programs in Vietnam with its in-country partner the Center for International Training Cooperation in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. For more information, visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Admissions.

The Sky is the Limit

Written by Sonya D. Lavett

Danica Fairfax will tell you that the good things that have happened in her career began with her decision to study occupational safety and health at Columbia Southern University.

When she first entered the workforce at the fresh age of 20, she had zero knowledge of the occupational safety and health industry. With a new role at Waste Management, Fairfax was eager to learn everything that she needed to excel in her job and prove her potential. She was instantly hooked.

Fairfax knew she needed more information and training if she was going to approach the safety realm in a practical way. She asked colleagues where she should go to receive an education in safety. She tried community colleges at first, but she couldn't make a go of it with the long hours she was working. So, she kept looking.

An online search led her to CSU. The university was highly touted for its safety program even 10 years ago, as the first two bachelor's degrees offered by CSU were in occupational safety and health and environmental management.

“ The CSU experience has afforded me the education needed to be successful for my husband and two sons. ”



Danica Fairfax

B.S. Occupational Safety and Health

She was astounded by the information she was gaining in her coursework. Even better, she was able to apply this knowledge to her job. The two tied in together nicely.

"I could not believe the valuable information I was learning in my courses," Fairfax explained. "The quality of instruction and research really blew me away."

She worked on discussion board assignments and reached out to classmates to glean information. It was always helpful to talk through scenarios with her fellow Knights and instructors.

Fairfax, the youngest of three children, grew up in a home where education was highly valued. Both of her parents were instructors and they brought their love of teaching home with them every day. They were passionate about sharing knowledge, and they encouraged their daughter to strive toward reaching her goals, to never, ever give up.

Sadly, illness struck her family. First, her mom fell ill when Fairfax was only 6 years old. Her father would continue teaching, but eventually he could not work enough overtime to support his family. Then, he became ill while trying to care for his wife and his children. Fairfax eventually lost both parents. She was devastated.

From day one, Fairfax has been supported and emboldened by her older siblings, aunts, uncles and a great aunt. She is grateful for the love and support they provide, and she

acknowledges that each of her family members stepped in as needed to ensure that Fairfax grew up feeling loved.

"They all contributed to who I am today in some way," she said. "Now I have my own family to care for, and I am beyond appreciative of the sacrifices that my family made for me."

Her career success has allowed her family to follow their dreams as well.

"The CSU experience has afforded me the education needed to be successful for my husband and two sons," she said.

Fairfax could never have imagined how her first job through a temp agency would turn into a solid and profitable career. She now is a partner of H-E-B in south Texas and adores her current role as transportation safety leader.

"I am so grateful to be a part of this forward-thinking organization. My leaders support me, trust me, and they listen to me when I speak," she said. "They take my recommendations into account, and they value me as a leader and partner in this business. My experience with Columbia Southern University has opened many doors, indeed."

When asked what is next for her on the horizon, she responded, "The sky is the limit." ■

CSU Celebrates 10 Years of NVFC Scholarship Recipients



Columbia Southern University and the National Volunteer Fire Council began a partnership 10 years ago to provide educational benefits to fire and emergency service personnel. In addition to a discount to CSU for NVFC members and their families, each year two NVFC members are awarded a scholarship to attend CSU. Since 2009, this scholarship has helped many NVFC members launch their careers and further their position in the fire and emergency services.

“We are grateful to Columbia Southern University for their commitment to the volunteer fire service and creating stronger communities through continued education,” said NVFC Chairman Kevin D. Quinn. “Education in the fire and emergency services is monumental to help our boots on the ground operate safely and effectively. The scholarships that CSU has generously provided to NVFC members over the last decade have allowed them to achieve their goals and help their departments to thrive.”

To date, 20 NVFC members have benefited from the CSU scholarship. The recipients are as follows:

Brian McNevin, 2009
A.A.S. Fire Science

Peter Rucinski, 2011
B.S. Fire Administration

Joseph Ondrasek, 2014
B.S. Fire Administration

Michael Carter, 2016
B.S. Fire Administration

James Longbrake, 2009
B.S. Fire Administration

Timothy O’Rourke, 2012
B.S. Fire Administration

Marc Veilleux, 2014
A.A.S. Fire Science

Stephanie Humberd, 2017
B.S. Fire Administration

Keith Wolven, 2010
A.A.S. Fire Science

John Loftis, 2012
B.S. Occupational Safety and Health, Fire Science

Robert Bernard, 2015
B.S. Fire Administration

John Sullivan, 2017
A.A.S. Occupational Safety and Health

Kevin Painter, 2010
M.S. Occupational Safety and Health

Deanna Leeper, 2013
B.S. Human Resource Management

Alyssa Cahoon, 2015
M.S. Public Health/Community Health Education

Theresa Pospichal, 2018
B.S. Fire Administration

Dan Federico, 2011
B.S. Health Care Administration

Andrew McWhinney, 2013
B.S. Fire Administration

LeCleaise Smith, 2016
B.S. Fire Administration

Thomas Peterson, 2018
B.S. Fire Administration

Changing Lives

With the 10th anniversary of the scholarship program, CSU reached out to past recipients to find out what they have accomplished since receiving their scholarships. Many responded with great news about how the scholarships have made a significant difference in their lives.

Keith Wolven, who works with Southern Stone County Fire District, a combination department in Branson West, Missouri, got a promotion. “I was the assistant chief and also interim chief at the time I applied for the scholarship. I am now the fire chief—officially,” he reports. “The opportunity provided by CSU, in cooperation with the NVFC, was greatly appreciated and a major factor in my being able to further my career in the fire service.”

Andrew McWhinney, who works in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, also gained a promotion with his degree. “Without a doubt, my supervisor has directly related my consideration for the new duties/title and confidence in my performance to my degree and constant pursuit of continuing education,” he said.

Marc Veilleux, who works in Sabattus, Maine, used the scholarship to gain his dream job after learning why he was overlooked the first time he applied for it. “I found out I needed an NFPA certification and lacked a college degree. The individual they chose had both. So, I set out to obtain the NFPA certification, which I received in 2013, and with the CSU and NVFC scholarship I received, I was able to obtain my fire science degree at the age of 47,” he said.

“At the end of the interview, I was asked to tell them why they should hire me over any of the other candidates in 60 seconds or less. I used 10 seconds and said ‘Because during my last interview I was overlooked due to the lack of the certification and the college degree, I went out and achieved both. Can the other candidates show that kind of drive?’ They hired me, and I have been in the position for the past three years.”

LeCleise Smith said his degree in fire administration has been very beneficial for him. “All of the knowledge I learned in my classes at CSU has been applied to my everyday professional life. I’m very grateful for the NVFC scholarship because it not only helped me financially, it helped me achieve my academic goal and helped my self-confidence.”

Although **Theresa Pospichal**, one of the latest scholarship recipients, recently started her degree at CSU, she is finding that the scholarship is already having a positive impact. “My fellow volunteers at the department recognize what a wonderful opportunity this scholarship and education is, so they recently nominated me for assistant chief. I’m nervous and excited for this potential change in status, and I hope to make them proud with this degree,” she said.

Stephanie Humberd
2017 Award Recipient



CSU and NVFC are proud of each scholarship winner. From promotions to new jobs, the impressive accomplishments by the winners show that the past 10 years of scholarship awards have benefited members immensely.

As CSU and NVFC continue their partnership, NVFC members are encouraged to submit an application for the next scholarship opportunity to boost their career and education. The application period typically opens in late June. Learn more about the NVFC scholarship and tuition discount for members at ColumbiaSouthern.edu/NVFC.

UPCOMING STUDENT & ALUMNI EVENTS



◀ CSU students and alumni pictured at the Graduate Safety Professional recognition event: Jason Ayling, Michael Barclay, William Fithian, Godson Gardiner, Edward Gray, Erin Hanson, Jennifer Hyleck, Jackson Igondou, John Jackson, William McKinney, Manuel Salinas, Katrina Siffrinn, Timothy Smith and Traci Snyder.



To RSVP for upcoming events, visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Events.

Events and Chapter Happenings

JUNE 10

GULF COAST CHAPTER



In conjunction with the **2019 American Society of Safety Professionals Conference** in New Orleans, Louisiana, CSU will host a **Student & Alumni Networking Social at Gordon Biersch** (200

Poydras St.) at 5 p.m. on Monday, June 10, 2019. Last year's event was attended by approximately 175 CSU students, alumni and guests.

SEPT. 10

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER



In conjunction with the **2019 National Safety Council Expo in San Diego, California**, CSU will host an event at the **San Diego Padres game at Petco Park** (100 Park Blvd.) on Tuesday,

Sept. 10, 2019. The event will start at 6:10 p.m., and the first pitch for the Padres versus the Chicago Cubs will begin at 7:10 p.m.



Alumni Events in Review

AUGUST 2018

AUG. 18 COLUMBUS CHAPTER

Alumnus James Dean hosted a meet and greet in Huber Heights, Ohio.

AUG. 20 LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

CSU Military Outreach representative Jimmy Woods hosted a meet and greet in San Marcos, California.

SEPTEMBER 2018

SEPT. 15 COLUMBUS CHAPTER

Alumnus James Dean hosted a meet and greet in Huber Heights, Ohio.

OCTOBER 2018

OCT. 18

CSU hosted an open house, ambassador dinner and Graduate Safety Professional® recognition meet and greet as a part of the university's 2018 Commencement celebrations in Orange Beach, Alabama.

OCT. 20 COLUMBUS CHAPTER

CSU alumnus James Dean hosted a meet and greet in Huber Heights, Ohio.

NOVEMBER 2018

NOV. 17 COLUMBUS CHAPTER

CSU alumnus James Dean hosted a meet and greet in Huber Heights, Ohio.

DECEMBER 2018

DEC. 15 COLUMBUS CHAPTER

CSU alumnus James Dean hosted a meet and greet in Huber Heights, Ohio.

JANUARY 2019

JAN. 5 GULF COAST CHAPTER

Alumni and guests gathered at the Third Annual Gulf Coast Chapter Christmas Party in Pensacola, Florida, and collected non-perishable snacks for a local USO location.

FEBRUARY 2019

FEB. 16 HOUSTON CHAPTER

CSU and alumnus Cory Mennor hosted a meet and greet in Katy, Texas.

APRIL 2019

APRIL 8

In conjunction with the Distance Education Accrediting Commission conference in Miami, Florida, CSU hosted an event showcasing the 2019 DEAC Outstanding Graduate and Famous Alumni awards. The event was attended by CSEG CEO Robert Mayes Jr. and CSU President Ken Styron.



Adam Kiedrowski
M.S. Occupational Safety and Health/
Environmental Management

From ASSP to Amazon CSU's Student Chapter Keeps Safety First

Written by Sonya D. Lavett

Occupational safety and health has been a key program offering at Columbia Southern University since its inception 25 years ago. CSU identified early on that occupational safety and health is the backbone of all business that relies on human involvement to accomplish its goals. Fast forward 25 years and CSU is renowned as the education leader within the safety industry.

In 2017, we partnered with the Mobile, Alabama's American Society of Safety Professionals student chapter to create the first virtual student section. CSU students pursuing a degree in occupational safety and health have this additional resource to connect with their fellow Knights and other safety industry leaders.

Helping members gain access to resources like education, training, exam preparation, career advice, standards development and advocacy are the components that drive this organization. ASSP student organization members—students, safety leaders, instructors and faculty advisors—also have the opportunity to openly discuss the topics about which they are passionate.

Adam Kiedrowski, an active member of ASSP, earned his M.S. in occupational safety and health with a concentration in environmental management from CSU in 2017.

"Being so new to this field, I rely on many of the resources and insight of the people that have spent years paving the way," Kiedrowski said. "I quickly identified the need and value in networking with a variety of professional groups, like ASSP, as well as some traditional social media and every day working safety professionals."

Kiedrowski has found that being part of the ASSP student section, coupled with his education, has become a valuable asset to his career successes, thus far.

"While nearing the end of my degree with CSU, I sought out and completed a safety internship with Spirit Airlines in Fort Lauderdale. Although at first things looked bleak, as I neared the end of my degree, the doors swung open," he said. "I was applying [to jobs] like a madman! To my surprise, and after over 500 applications, Amazon (of all places) came to me. This wasn't an accident, and as I've worked for them now over a year, I have confirmation that they recruit with extreme purpose."

"Without the CSU curriculum and the level at which they allowed me to prepare myself, I don't think I could have found myself on this path today," said Kiedrowski. "I feel I am the recipient of an upper echelon safety school degree, and I was completely prepared with the skills and fundamentals to hit the ground running with a company like Amazon."

Even with a successful career path in place, Kiedrowski remains humbled by these opportunities.

"I don't consider myself a stand-out, but rather a learner that believed that he could, and did." ■

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someone who
has the potential
to be a Knight?



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DET Honor Society

**Welcomes
4 CSU Inductees**

Four more CSU graduates were inducted into the prestigious Delta Epsilon Tau Honor Society from October 2017 to October 2018. The DET Honor Society recognizes graduates who work diligently to acquire new knowledge and skills from an accredited learning institution. As of October 2018, there are 274 CSU DET Honor Society inductees.

In order to be eligible to apply, individuals must have graduated with a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree from CSU with a minimum 3.8 GPA and submit an essay demonstrating leadership and active participation in community, civic or professional groups. For more information, email DETHS@ColumbiaSouthern.edu.

Congratulations

to the four new inductees to the DET Honor Society!



Katina Bonner

Adam Kiedrowski

Donald Kundrick

Traci Snyder

COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

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