

History

The Delaware College for Colored Students, now known as Delaware State University, was established May 15, 1891, by the Delaware General Assembly under the provisions of the Morrill Act of 1890 by which land-grant colleges for blacks came into existence in states maintaining separate educational facilities.

Because there was already a private Delaware College (now the University of Delaware) located in Newark, Del., to avoid confusion new state legislation was passed and enacted in early 1893 to change the black school's name to the State College for Colored Students. That would be the institution's name for the next 54 years.

Through the conservative and practical planning of the Board of Trustees appointed by Gov. Robert A. Reynolds, the College was launched upon its mission of education and public service on February 2, 1892. Five courses of study leading to a baccalaureate degree were offered: Agricultural, Chemical, Classical, Engineering, and Scientific. A Preparatory Department was established in 1893 for students who were not qualified to pursue a major course of study upon entrance. A three-year normal course leading to a teacher's certificate was initiated in 1897. The College graduated its first class of degree candidates in May 1898.

In the 1916 to 1917 school year, the Preparatory Department was phased out, a Model Grade School was established, and a high school diploma was granted on completion of a four-year course of study. In 1923, a Junior College Division was added. Four-year curricula in the Arts and Sciences, Elementary Education, Home Economics, Agriculture, and Industrial Arts were established in 1932. The College graduated the first class of bachelor's degree candidates completing one of the courses of study in June 1934.

In 1944, the College received provisional accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The University's accreditation was most recently reaffirmed by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) in 2012.

In 1947, the name of the institution was changed to "Delaware State College" by legislative action. On July 1, 1993, the College turned another chapter in its history when Gov. Thomas Carper signed a name change into law, renaming the institution Delaware State University.

The University has grown in stature as a center for teaching, research and public service. The purpose and objectives of the University have broadened in keeping up with changing times. While recognizing its historical heritage, the University provides higher education today for a diverse student population. Academic units are organized into the College of Agriculture & Related Sciences; the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences; the College of Business; the

College of Education, Health & Public Policy; the College of Mathematics, Natural Sciences & Technology; and University College.

The University offers 42 undergraduate degrees, which include unique and traditional majors such as Agriculture, Aviation, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Forensic Biology, Hospitality & Tourism Management, Management, Mass Communications, Natural Resources, New Media in Arts, Nursing, Physics, Public Health, Social Work and Textiles & Apparel Studies.

Delaware State University also offers 16 master's degrees in Agriculture (Animal Science, Plant Science), Applied Optics, Biological Sciences (M.S.), Business Administration (Aviation, Business Analytics, CPA, Finance, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Information Systems or Project Management), Applied Chemistry (M.S.), Computer Science, Educational Leadership, Food Science, Mathematics (Pure or Applied), Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience, Natural Resources, Physics, Public Administration, Social Work, Sport Administration, as well as Teaching English as a Second Language.

The University also has five doctoral programs in Applied Chemistry, Educational Leadership, Interdisciplinary Applied Mathematics and Mathematical Physics, Neuroscience, as well as Optics.

The institution has national academic program accreditations from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, the Council on Social Work Education, the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, and the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics. The University's College of Business is also internationally accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

The underpinning of the growth and development of Delaware State University has been the leadership of 11 permanent Presidents and three Acting Presidents. The 11 permanent Presidents have included Wesley P. Webb (1891-1895), William C. Jason (1895-1923), Richard S. Grossley (1923-1942), Howard D. Gregg (1942-1949), Oscar J. Chapman (1950-1951), Jerome H. Holland (1953-1960), Luna I. Mishoe (1960-1987), William B. DeLauder (1987- 2003), Allen L. Sessoms (2003-2008); Dr. Harry L. Williams (2010-2017); Dr. Wilma Mishoe (2018-2019); and Dr. Tony Allen (2020-present). The three Acting Presidents are listed as follows: Maurice E. Thomasson served twice as Acting President from 1949-50 and 1951-1953, Dr. Claibourne Smith served as Acting President from 2008-2010, and Dr. Wilma Mishoe served as Acting President from January 2018 to July 2018.

As a result of the efforts of past and current presidents, administrators, faculty, staff and students, the University is well-positioned to reach new levels of prestige and respect in the new millennium.