

History

The State 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. Through the conservative and practical planning of the Board of Trustees appointed by Governor 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. The normal course of study was extended to four years in 1911 and the Bachelor of Pedagogy degree was awarded to students on satisfactory completion of the curriculum. In 1912, the courses of study were changed to Academic, Agricultural, Mechanic Arts, and Domestic Science. The Bachelor of Pedagogy degree was awarded on completion of the academic curriculum. A certificate of graduation was granted on completion of the other courses of study.

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 & Schools, Inc. (3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680, (215) 662-5600). In 1947, the name of the institution was changed to "Delaware State College" by legislative action. In November 1949, the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools, Inc. (3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680, (215) 662-5600) revoked the accreditation of the institution. This was a severe blow to the prestige of the College. Strenuous efforts were exerted to maintain the existence of the College and to make it an accredited four-year, land-grant institution. At the end of the 1951-52 school year, the High School Division was discontinued. In April 1957, the College was fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools, Inc. (3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680, (215) 662-5600). This accreditation was reaffirmed in 1962, 1972, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997 and 2002. The University also maintains certification of its teacher education programs by the Delaware State Board of Education.

On July 1, 1993, Delaware State College turned another chapter in its history, when then Governor Thomas Carper signed a name change into law, renaming the College to 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 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 Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the College of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology, the College of Agriculture and Related Sciences, the

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College of Education, the College of Business, and the College of Health and Public Policy. The University offers 65 undergraduate degrees, 20 graduate degrees, and two doctoral degrees. Degree options include the disciplines of mathematics, natural and social sciences, education, airway science, visual and performing arts, management, accounting and finance, agriculture, natural resources, nursing and others. The University also offers master's degrees in biology, business administration, chemistry, education, physics, social work, plant science and natural resources, and doctorates in Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, and Educational Leadership.

The undergraduate programs in airway science, chemistry, education, nursing and social work are approved by the Federal Aviation Administration, American Chemical Society, The National for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the National League for Nursing Accreditation Council Commission and the Commission for Collegiate Nursing Education and the Council on Social Work Education, respectively.

The underpinning of the growth and development of Delaware State University has been the leadership of nine presidents, including Wesley P. Webb (1891-1895); William C. Jason (1895-1923); Richard S. Grossley (1923-1942); Howard D. Gregg (1942-1949); Oscar J. Chapman (1949-1951); Jerome H. Holland (1953-1960); Luna I. Mishoe (1960-1987); William B. DeLauder (1987-2003); and Allen L. Sessoms (2003-2008). Dr. Claiborne D. Smith serves as the current acting president. Maurice E. Thomasson served as acting president from 1951-1953. As a result of their efforts, the University is well positioned to reach new levels of prestige and respect in the new millennium.