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More students earning online degrees from Georgia Southern University

MAY 4, 2009



When Alex Giles receives his degree from Georgia Southern University on May 9, he won't be the typical graduate.

Giles is already well-established in his career field. He is 46 years old. And he took Georgia Southern classes while living and working about 300 miles from the campus.

Giles is one of 72 online graduates who will receive their degrees Saturday, the most ever for the University. Georgia Southern offers nine fully online graduate programs, two fully online undergraduate programs and three "blended" online programs.

"These online degree programs allow working adults and those who are outside of our campus area to complete their degrees. We offer flexibility and high-quality programs that meet the needs of adult learners wishing to further their careers," said Gary Means, dean of continuing education and public services.

"I never felt like I was far away, even from 300 miles away," Giles said.

When he decided four years ago to become a nursing instructor, Giles already had bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology and an associate degree in nursing, and had worked for several years in the medical field. However, he knew he needed even more education and training.

"Everyone knows about the nursing shortage nationally, but an even bigger need is nursing faculty," said Giles, who teaches at Chattahoochee Technical College in Acworth, Ga. "I knew I had to get my BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) if I was going to go further in the teaching field."

Giles enrolled in the Georgia Southern School of Nursing's RN-to-BSN Program, which is offered completely online. He is one of 13 RN-BSN graduates this spring, from 12 different counties and 13 cities in Georgia.

"The RN-BSN Program at Georgia Southern provides an opportunity for registered nurses to earn a BSN degree from a Carnegie Doctoral-Research university without having to travel long distances, in many cases, to class. Registered nurses often consider online education their only or best choice for earning a BSN degree," said June Alberto, nursing professor and RN-BSN program director.

"I looked at a lot of online programs, and I wanted a traditional academic program," Giles said. "I never expected an online program to be as structured and supported as Georgia Southern's."

While working full-time in Acworth, Giles took five online classes per semester to earn his BSN degree in one year. At the end of each semester, he would come to the Georgia Southern campus to present a project or assignment and to interact with instructors and other classmates. Giles described earning his online degree as "a challenge, but worth it."

Although Giles has earned his Georgia Southern degree completely online, he never had any doubt that he would attend Commencement at Paulson Stadium.

‘I wouldn’t miss it. That’s my school,” said Giles, who now plans to pursue his master’s degree in nursing.

For more information about Georgia Southern University’s online programs, call 1-800-679-6801 or visit <http://online.georgiasouthern.edu>.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers 115 degree programs serving nearly 18,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of Georgia’s largest, is a top choice of Georgia’s HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu.