



**Alumni / Faculty / Board member - Spotlight Interview**  
**Randell Orner | July 13, 2020**

Professor Randell Orner is a proud graduate of Charter Oak State College (2003), an Army Veteran, a teaching faculty (since 2016) and is the Faculty Advisor to the COSC Foundation Board of Directors. In his position on the Foundation Board, Randell had the opportunity to learn of the need of our students and the fundraising efforts of the Foundation, both were extraordinary during these pandemic days – the student need and the foundation effort. Having been fortunate enough to teach at least one course per 8-week semester since hired, with few exceptions, he felt compelled to show his appreciation for Charter Oak while assisting with student’s financial need. To that end, he made a generous proposal:

Professor Orner offered to donate the proceeds for each “second” course that he will teach this academic year. For example, if he teaches two courses in one term and one course in the next term, he would “give-back” the income received (after taxes) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> course. The funds are to be used by the Foundation “as is needed most” or for the Financial Aid Extenuating Circumstances Fund.

**Professor Randell Orner took a moment to catch up with COSC Foundation Executive Director, Carol Hall.** He shared his great appreciation for Charter Oak, his “history” with the college, as well as his personal philosophy on learning and higher education.

Randell began his adult life at 18 years of age as typical, in college. However, after just one semester he decided to join the Army. He served in the US Army and used the educational benefits chasing a degree. At the point of finding Charter Oak State College, he had 38 weeks of military training, university, and community college credits totaling about 60 credits. His initial discussion with, now Assistant Director of Admissions and Veteran Liaison, Bob Fredrickson convinced Randell that Charter Oak was all about student success and was the College for him. Working with a plan in hand ( Individualized Studies being his specialty), he coordinated his next educational steps with the objective of completing his bachelors to continue with his master’s degree.

As we have seen time and time again, Randell had the Charter Oak student’s philosophy of life-time learning. In 2003, Randell Orner received his first official higher education credential – his B.S., from Charter Oak State College. He went on to earn a M.S., Touro University International; M.B.A., Trident University; and Ph.D., Northcentral University, along with a variety of technology certificates.

Shortly after acquiring his degree from Charter Oak, his career was set on a new trajectory. He was not only earning degrees, he was applying his newly learned knowledge in his work arena and propelled from a field service representative to the National Service Director. His education paid for itself time and again. As he stated, he was self-sufficient but worked with Bob at Charter Oak to solidify his degree plan.

Randell also became an ambassador for Charter Oak State College as he connected his employers’ education center to the admissions department. This large network within the healthcare arena



partnered with Charter Oak to offer educational benefits within its network – a beneficial connection for both the employer and the college.

If he had to wrap up his Charter Oak experience in one phrase, it would be that “Charter Oak State College has student’s best interest at the heart of their efforts, top-of-mind.” His experience with Bob made him a life-long friend and fan of Charter Oak!

Now, at this stage in his career, living by the shore in Florida, he is inspired to pay-it-forward – or better yet, donate-it-back, to help others on their path to degree completion with a little bit of financial assistance.