

History

Over a Century of Success

1899 - Founding

South University was founded in 1899 in Savannah, Georgia with the establishment of Draughon's Practical Business College. Founded by Dr. John Draughon, the institution focused on teaching the fundamentals needed by successful businesses including accounting, banking, shorthand, bookkeeping and typewriting. Over the past century, South University has transformed from humble roots, of a two-year college, into a university offering both undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

1974 - South Family Acquisition

The college was acquired by the South family in 1974, and the institution's name was changed to Draughon's Junior College. Under John T. South III's more than 40 years of leadership, the institution would grow from a one-location junior college in Savannah to a doctoral-level university with more than a dozen campuses around the U.S. and alumni from all 50 states and beyond.

1986 - Steady Growth and Evolution

In an effort to more strategically align its institutional name with its mission, the school changed its name to South College on October 21, 1986.

In 1996, the institution began offering four-year degrees with the addition of the Bachelor of Business Administration. In 1997, the School of Business and the School of Health Professions were formed with a redoubled effort on training students for the growing and in-demand career field of healthcare.

2001 - Twenty-First Century Transformation

South College became South University on December 21, 2001, after the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accredited the institution to award master's degrees.

SACSCOC approved the University's plan to award doctoral degrees in December of 2002, making South University the first institution in the Savannah, Georgia area to offer a healthcare doctorate. Soon after, plans were announced to offer a Doctor of Pharmacy program.

A South University education became available to students around the country with the introduction of web-based instruction in 2004.

2008 - Structural Change and Academic Expansion

The University's academic structure took an important step forward in 2008, when the Board of Trustees approved the creation of the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Health Professions, and the College of Nursing. The College of Theology was established in 2013, and enrolled its first Doctor of Ministry degree program students the next year.

2014 - National Recognition

With the added Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Occupational Therapy programs, South University was designated as a Level VI institution by SACSCOC, a designation shared by only 113 SACSCOC accredited higher education institutions.

2019 - New Chancellor Appointed

On August 30, 2019, the South University Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Steven K. Yoho as Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer for South University.

On his appointment, Chancellor Yoho commented, "I am honored to serve the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of South University." He noted, "And, I am particularly excited to continue on our path toward excellence in academic quality, student retention, and student growth. Working collaboratively, we can accomplish these three goals while making an increasingly meaningful impact in each of our communities and beyond."

Yoho brings a wealth of experience in higher education and business. From 2007 to 2013, he served South University as Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs after initially joining the University as Dean of the College of Business. Earlier he spent 15 years in private, non-profit university leadership roles and prior to that he held several executive positions in business.

2023 – Change in Control

On July 14, 2023, after 20 years, South University returned to a private, independent university.