



PHOTO BY DICK BLUME

REPORT FROM: **COLUMBIA** COLLEGE

Columbia College's Hancock Field campus has proved itself a partner to Central New York businesses, and **John Hammill**, director of the campus, wants you to know about it.

Columbia College-Hancock Field has been around since the Gerald Ford administration, educating

airmen and their families and busy working adults who are trying to get ahead in their careers. The campus is on the Air National Guard base in North Syracuse, home to the 174th Fighter Wing, but most of its students are civilians.

Lari Jimerson, who graduated from Hancock Field with a bachelor's degree in 2003 and a master's in business administration in 2005, is now a certified public accountant and federal auditor. "Columbia College was by far the right choice," Jimerson says. "It offered the classes I wanted to take — it fit my schedule, it was conveniently located and it was affordable." ▶

John Hammill has been the campus director for Columbia College at Hancock Field in Syracuse since July 2008. He previously was manager of student services for the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. His former positions include director of graduate admissions at Niagara University and assistant professor of sociology at West Point. He received his bachelor's degree from SU and his master's from the University of Maryland.



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Columbia College Hancock Field offers seven associate degrees, 11 bachelor's degrees and three master's degrees. Students can pursue a degree in business administration, criminal justice, human services and computer information systems.

Columbia College-Hancock Field

174th FW Bldg. 613
6001 E. Molloy Road
Syracuse, NY 13211

To see if Columbia College-Hancock Field is right for you or to explore direct-pay tuition for your employees, go to www.ccis.edu/nationwide/Syracuse. You may also contact Hammill at syracuse@ccis.edu or (315) 455-0690.

You must make an appointment to enter the base. Office hours are Monday 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The office is closed on weekends.



Courses that fit a hectic schedule, affordable tuition that fits the budget

"I always knew that to get ahead, I would need a college degree," says Jimerson. "I also knew that taking care of my children while working two jobs and juggling school wouldn't be easy." Jimerson decided to take the risk and enroll in evening and online classes at Columbia College. The eight-week sessions fit her hectic schedule, and the affordable tuition fit her budget, she says. "A bachelor's degree and an MBA later, I have a rewarding career and children who know the value of an education because they grew up in a house where everyone did their homework together."

John Hammill, campus director, remembers Jimerson as an exceptional student — but also as a typical one. "I'd say 65 percent of our students are women," he says. "And a fairly high percentage of these are not young adults fresh out of high school but working adult professionals or parents ranging in age from 25 to 42."

In fact, Hammill says that up to half of his more than 600 students come from such area businesses as Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, AXA Advisors and SRC (formerly Syracuse Research Corp.).

Hammill says that many of these students don't pay a penny for tuition. Their company pays Columbia College-Hancock Field directly.

Columbia College-Hancock Field business-friendly practices include:



PHOTO COURTESY OF **COLUMBIA COLLEGE**

Lari Jimerson attended Columbia College while working two jobs and taking care of her children. She graduated from Hancock Field with a bachelor's degree in 2003 and a master's in business administration in 2005 and is now a certified public accountant and federal auditor. She is proud to say that her children "know the value of an education because they grew up in a house where everyone did their homework together."

- Private education at public institution prices.
- The college is regionally accredited (see sidebar.)
- Courses offered in-seat, online or both.
- Convenient eight-week sessions that fit today's hectic pace, beginning in January, March, June, August and October.
- Seven associate degrees, 11 bachelor's degrees and three master's degrees. Students can pursue a degree in business administration, criminal justice, human services and computer information systems.
- A favorable student to teacher ratio of 16:1. All faculty have at a minimum a master's degree within their teaching discipline and the vast majority, such as Jimerson — now teaching accounting at the college — are practicing professionals in their teaching discipline.

Shelley Schmidt, a 1998 graduate who is now a career services representative with Bryant & Stratton College in Syracuse, says, "I really liked that Columbia College is set up for people who work full time and want to complete their degree. Plus, because of the small class sizes, I got to know many of my classmates and instructors."

As every businessperson knows, the contacts you make and the resulting network will get you further than almost any other business practice.

Columbia College-Hancock Field also offers a in-seat class tuition discounts of 25 percent for all law enforcement personnel, and all 174th Fighter Wing personnel and 20 percent for all military spouses.


Stimulating Syracuse's economy

Columbia College-Hancock Field hope to

directly stimulate and contribute to Syracuse's economic recovery with the \$4 million renovation of an existing structure, transforming it into a state-of-the-art facility scheduled to open in July 2011. The college will hire local construction workers and architects to implement the existing blueprints. The college is now in a temporary location on the base, and construction is scheduled to begin this November.

The building will be approximately 19,000 square feet, almost doubling the size of the current facility, with eight modern classrooms with Internet access, a large student commons, two computer labs and a testing center. The test center will administer American College Test, College-Level Examination Program, Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support and other proficiency, advanced placement and certification exams. Online students may use the labs for proctored exams during midterms and finals. When the computer labs are being used for courses, students can use one of six kiosks in the student commons.

"This new building will be the foundation for more growth," says Hammill, who has secured the use of two adjacent parking lots for the college. "We are already well-known to the business community, and I'm confident this new building will make us even better known."

Columbia College-Hancock Field is a proven business and community partner that has been in the same location since 1975. A lot has changed in 35 years, but Columbia College plans to continue to innovate and explore new methods to meet the educational needs of tomorrow and help working adults get a degree. 

3 THINGS

COLUMBIA COLLEGE-HANCOCK FIELD OFFERS AREA BUSINESSES

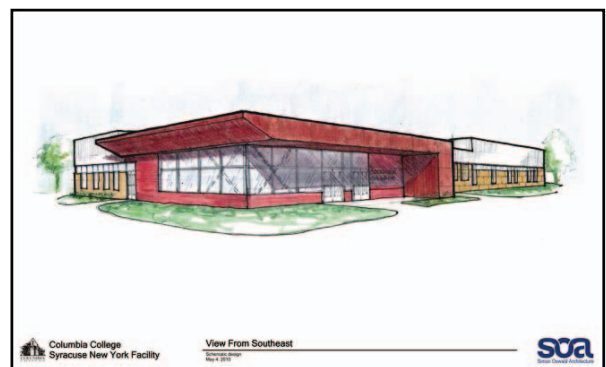
- 1 Tuition at Columbia College-Hancock Field is among the lowest of any four-year institution in the Syracuse area.
- 2 Columbia College-Hancock Field offers evening and online classes in convenient eight-week sessions, so employees won't have to miss a single day.
- 3 Life is unpredictable, so Columbia College-Hancock Field also offers start-and-stop degree flexibility to meet work or family obligations.

What's the difference between regional and national accreditation?

Regionally accredited schools, like Columbia College, are predominantly academically oriented, nonprofit institutions. Nationally accredited schools are predominantly for-profit and primarily offer vocational, career or technical programs.

So what's the problem?

The problem is that some nationally accredited schools' academic standards are lower, and it may be difficult to transfer credits or even a degree earned at a nationally accredited institution if you later apply to a regionally accredited college.



GRAPHICS COURTESY OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE

Columbia College-Hancock Field is undergoing a \$4 million renovation of its existing building, transforming it into a state-of-the-art facility scheduled to open in July 2011. The building will be approximately 19,000 square feet, almost doubling the size of the current facility, with eight modern classrooms with Internet access, a large student commons, two computer labs and a testing center.