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# COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE *of Funeral Service*



*Proudly Serving as a Non-Profit Institution for Higher Education*

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## 2021 – 2022 Catalog

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Houston, Texas 77090  
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Email: [information@commonwealth.edu](mailto:information@commonwealth.edu)**

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# COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

*A Non-Profit Educational Institution  
Organized Under the Laws of the State of Texas*

## CATALOG

2021 – 2022

Catalog Volume 18, Published and Effective July 1, 2021

This Catalog becomes effective on the date of publication. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service (CIFS) reserves the right to change the admission requirements, tuition, fees, academic regulations, and other policies stated in the present Catalog without formal notice. These changes shall take effect at any time as determined by the college administration. Students are expected to have knowledge of the information presented in this publication, the Student Handbook, and other CIFS publications; as well as officially posted notices. This revision supersedes all previous CIFS catalogs and publications.

### POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is committed to providing an educational climate that is conducive to the personal and professional development of each individual. CIFS does not discriminate and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender identity and gender expression, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or Veteran status in employment or the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school, administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs. To ensure compliance with Title IX and other federal and state civil rights laws, CIFS has developed policies and procedures that prohibit discrimination in all of its forms.

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is committed to cultivating an environment free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature including sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. All inquiries concerning CIFS policies; compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations; and complaints may be directed to the designated Title IX officers:

Christopher Layton  
Dean of Students  
415 Barren Springs Dr.  
Houston, TX 77090  
(281) 873-0262 or [c.layton@commonwealth.edu](mailto:c.layton@commonwealth.edu)

René Altheimer  
Admissions Counselor  
415 Barren Springs Dr.  
Houston, TX 77090  
(281) 873-0262 or [r.altheimer@commonwealth.edu](mailto:r.altheimer@commonwealth.edu)

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service complies with the “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.”

### IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

American Board of Funeral  
Service Education  
992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108  
Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097  
816-233-3747  
Fax: (856) 579-7354  
[www.abfse.org](http://www.abfse.org)

Texas Funeral Service Commission  
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 2-110  
Austin, TX 78701  
512-936-2474  
Fax: 512-479-5064  
[www.tfsc.texas.gov](http://www.tfsc.texas.gov)

Texas Workforce Commission  
101 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, TX 78778  
512-936-3100  
[www.twc.texas.gov](http://www.twc.texas.gov)

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W

elcome to Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service – Commonwealth is a wonderful place, and I hope, as a premiere training institute for future funeral service practitioners, that you learn a great deal of what we have to offer you.

Commonwealth Institute is located in Houston, Texas; America’s fourth largest city, with many events and activities that appeal to students with different interests and backgrounds.

As you learn more about Commonwealth, you will see that this funeral service institution is indeed a step ahead of the rest. Commonwealth is proud to present a state-of-the-art learning facility, which includes preparation facilities for practical and technical training. Our unique affiliations with Baylor College of Medicine, the University of Texas Medical School, and Harris County Department of Social Services allow students to participate in “real-life” funeral service experiences. Commonwealth offers a complete funeral service educational experience; whether you choose to attend classes on campus or utilize our online learning platform. Something else you will not find at another school is our relationship with the National Museum of Funeral History. Commonwealth is the only funeral service college to offer this special resource.

Additionally, our faculty consists of some of the most innovative and brightest individuals in funeral service education. Commonwealth believes in utilizing experienced funeral service instructors, so that our students can be confident that they’re prepared to enter the workforce as capable and responsible practitioners. We do not simply teach theory but believe strongly in applied learning – that is taking the knowledge you learn in the classroom and demonstrating how to use it in the workplace.

Commonwealth is a multicultural institution committed towards enhancing and facilitating learning in an environment that contributes to student success and academic excellence.

On behalf of the Board of Regents, administration, faculty, and staff; I extend best wishes as you allow us to assist you in your quest for success and academic achievement.



Cody L. Lopasky, MA, CFSP  
President  
Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

# Section 1

## Academic Calendar

### 2021

JAN. 4	Winter Quarter Begins, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses
JAN. 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no classes/office closed
FEB. 1	Acceptance Deadline for Spring 2021 Quarter
FEB. 15	President's Day, no classes/office closed
MARCH 15-18	Winter Quarter Final Exams
MARCH 19	End of Winter Quarter
MARCH 20 through APRIL 4	Quarter Break
<hr/>	
APRIL 5	Easter Monday, no classes/office closed
APRIL 6	Spring Quarter Begins, General Education Core, 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses
MAY 1	Acceptance Deadline for Summer 2021 Quarter
MAY 31	Memorial Day, no classes/office closed
JUNE 14-17	Spring Quarter Final Exams
JUNE 18	End of Spring Quarter; Commencement Ceremony
JUNE 19 through JULY 4	Quarter Break
<hr/>	
JULY 5	4 <sup>th</sup> of July Holiday Observed, no classes/office closed
JULY 6	Summer Quarter Begins, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter of Specialized and Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
AUG. 1	Acceptance Deadline for Fall 2021 Quarter
AUG. 27	Open House
SEPT. 6	Labor Day, no classes/office closed

SEPT. 13-16 Summer Quarter Final Exams

SEPT. 17 End of Summer Quarter

SEPT. 18 through OCT. 3 Quarter Break

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OCT. 4 Fall Quarter Begins, General Education Core, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)

NOV. 1 Acceptance Deadline for Winter 2022 Quarter

NOV. 12 Veteran's Day Holiday Observed, office closed

NOV. 25-26 Thanksgiving Holiday, no classes/office closed

DEC. 13-16 Fall Quarter Final Exams

DEC. 17 End of Fall Quarter; Commencement Ceremony

DEC. 18 through JAN. 2 Quarter Break

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## **2022**

JAN. 3 Winter Quarter Begins, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of Specialized and Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)

JAN. 17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no classes/office closed

FEB. 1 Acceptance Deadline for Spring 2022 Quarter

FEB. 21 President's Day, no classes/office closed

MARCH 4 Open House

MARCH 14-17 Winter Quarter Final Exams

MARCH 18 End of Winter Quarter

MARCH 19 through April 3 Quarter Break

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APRIL 4 Spring Quarter Begins, General Education Core, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)

MAY 1 Acceptance Deadline for Summer 2022 Quarter



MAY 30	Memorial Day, no classes/office closed
JUNE 13-16	Spring Quarter Final Exams
JUNE 17	End of Spring Quarter; Commencement Ceremony
JUNE 18 through JULY 3	Quarter Break
<hr/>	
JULY 4	4 <sup>th</sup> of July Holiday Observed, no classes/office closed
JULY 5	Summer Quarter Begins, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter of Specialized and Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
AUG. 1	Acceptance Deadline for Fall 2022 Quarter
AUG. 26	Open House
SEPT. 5	Labor Day, no classes/office closed
SEPT. 12-15	Summer Quarter Final Exams
SEPT. 16	End of Summer Quarter
SEPT. 17 through OCT. 2	Quarter Break
<hr/>	
OCT. 3	Fall Quarter Begins, General Education Core, 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
NOV. 1	Acceptance Deadline for Winter 2023 Quarter
NOV. 24-25	Thanksgiving Holiday, no classes/office closed
DEC. 12-15	Fall Quarter Final Exams
DEC. 16	End of Fall Quarter; Commencement Ceremony
DEC. 17 through JAN. 1	Quarter Break

## **2023**

JAN. 2	New Year's Day Holiday Observed, no classes/office closed
JAN. 3	Winter Quarter Begins, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter of Specialized and Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)

## **Section 2**

# **About Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service**

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE**

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is a vocational, postsecondary teaching institution with its primary purpose being to educate individuals interested in the subjects comprising the curriculum for licensure and a career in funeral service.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE**

The central objective of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is to educate students in every phase of funeral service so that graduates are prepared for entry-level employment in funeral service. In support of this objective, Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service has adopted the following learning outcomes:

Upon completion of the accredited program, students will be able to:

- Explain the importance of funeral service professionals in developing relationships with the families and communities they serve;
- Identify standards of ethical conduct in funeral service practices;
- Interpret how federal, state, and local laws apply to funeral service in order to ensure compliance;
- Apply principles of public health and safety in the handling and preparation of human remains;
- Demonstrate technical skills in embalming and restorative art that are necessary for the preparation and handling of human remains;
- Demonstrate skills required for conducting arrangement conferences, visitations, services, and ceremonies;
- Describe the requirements and procedures for burial, cremation, and other accepted forms of funeral disposition of human remains;
- Describe methods to address the grief-related needs of the bereaved;
- Explain management skills associated with operating a funeral establishment; and
- Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills and research skills needed for funeral service practice.

## HISTORY OF COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

In 1936, R. Victor Landig opened the Landig College of Mortuary Science in Houston, Texas. He saw a need in Southeast Texas for a college of mortuary science to train men and women as embalmers and funeral directors.

Landig was truly a pioneer in funeral service education, and he was able to attract to his faculty some of the leading experts in embalming and restorative art in the country. This included A.O. Spriggs, the author of *The Art and Science of Embalming* and *Champion's Textbook on Restorative Art* (Spriggs went on to become the director of research for the Champion Embalming Fluid Co.) and C.F. Callaway, author of the widely used textbook, *The Art of Funeral Directing* (Callaway later served as director of research for the Undertakers' Supply Co. in Chicago).

Landig himself wrote the book *Time Changes Everything* which became a standard textbook on communication skills for funeral directors. He also authored *Basic Principles of Funeral Service*.

During this growth period, the Landig College of Mortuary Science became the focal point in the formation of Howard S. Eckel's new method of restorative art, called "derma surgery," still used today as the core of the Restorative Art course.

In 1955, the school was renamed the Commonwealth College of Science, reflecting Landig's plan to move his college to Commonwealth Street in downtown Houston. However, personal health problems stopped Landig's plans and, in fact, led to him selling his interests in the college to Tex Garton, a popular and respected funeral director in the Houston area. Garton operated the college until 1966, when it was purchased by the Pierce Organization. Later, a new facility was built, and the college relocated to Barren Springs Drive in north Houston. Around that time, the name was again changed to Commonwealth College of Funeral Service.

In the late 1980s, an extensive feasibility study by a team of the nation's top funeral service executives, practitioners, and funeral service educators was conducted by R.L. Waltrip, chairman emeritus of the board of regents of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Services. The goal was to provide the finest contemporary funeral service education, including: a curriculum that emphasized hands-on experience in embalming and restorative art; computer science; and funeral directing and management skills. In 1988, the "Institute of Funeral Service" was chartered as a Texas non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, and instruction began on Aug. 29, 1988.

For a two-year period, there were two mortuary colleges in Houston. In 1990, the Institute of Funeral Service acquired Commonwealth College of Funeral Service and changed its name, becoming **Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service**. The merger of the two colleges brought together the finest faculty and facilities.

Over the years, Commonwealth has expanded and now offers the finest in educational facilities and faculty in the United States. Today, Commonwealth has a state-of-the-art clinical embalming facility, a restorative art laboratory, a funeral merchandise display room, a library, a computer lab, and newly remodeled classrooms; along with leading licensed funeral service practitioners employed as faculty.

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service was among the first mortuary colleges to offer two distinct learning tracks for student success; a completely on-campus program and an online program with on-campus clinical practicum experience.

## ACCREDITATION STATEMENTS

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as an Institution of Higher Learning and is authorized to offer instruction leading to the Associate of Applied Science Degree (A.A.S.).

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is recognized by the Texas Workforce Commission to offer instruction leading to the Certificate in Funeral Directing.

The Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service and Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service are accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097 (816) 233-3747. Web: [www.abfse.org](http://www.abfse.org)

## APPROVALS

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is approved for the education and training of veterans by the Texas Workforce Commission.

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is approved and regulated by the Texas Workforce Commission Career Schools and Colleges.

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is licensed by the Texas Funeral Service Commission as a funeral establishment.

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is approved by the Texas State Anatomical Board to use human cadavers.

## MEMBERSHIPS

Commonwealth Institute's commitment to the community and the profession is illustrated by the following institutional or staff memberships:

- 100 Black Women of Funeral Service
- Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practitioners
- Cremation Association of North America
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation
- Houston Metropolitan Funeral Directors Association
- Houston Funeral Directors and Morticians Association
- International Cemetery, Cremation, and Funeral Association
- International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards
- Library & Information Resources Network
- National Associated Colleges of Mortuary Science
- National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association
- National Funeral Directors Association
- Texas Funeral Directors Association
- Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
- Veterans Administration

## **STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP**

The name of the incorporated business as stated in its amended articles of incorporation is Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is a Texas non-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization which is governed and overseen by the Board of Regents and the President, as Chief Executive Officer.

### **CIFS BOARD OF REGENTS**

#### **STEVE A. TIDWELL, CHAIRMAN**

*Senior Vice President, Service Corporation International*

#### **ROBERT M. BOETTICHER, SR., VICE-CHAIRMAN**

*Director of Special Projects, Service Corporation International*

#### **R.L. WALTRIP, CHAIRMAN EMERITUS**

*Founder and Chairman Emeritus, Service Corporation International*

#### **CODY L. LOPASKY, PRESIDENT**

*Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service*

#### **W. BLAIR WALTRIP, VICE PRESIDENT AND TREASURER**

*Independent Consultant, Family & Trust Investments*

#### **JANET S. KEY, SECRETARY**

*Senior Legal Assistant, Service Corporation International*

#### **GENEVIEVE G. KEENEY, MEMBER**

*President, National Museum of Funeral History*

#### **TAMMY R. MOORE, MEMBER**

*Vice President, Corporate Controller, Service Corporation International*

#### **THOMAS L. RYAN, MEMBER**

*Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, Service Corporation International*

#### **STAN SZAFRAN, MEMBER**

*Director of Trust Investments, Service Corporation International*

#### **SUMNER JAMES WARING, III, MEMBER**

*Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, Service Corporation International*

## ADMINISTRATION

### **CODY L. LOPASKY, CFSP**

#### **President & School Director**

M.A. University of Houston-Victoria

B.A. Texas State University

A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

Professional Licensure: Texas

### **JAMES W. ROBINSON, CFSP**

#### **Dean of Academics**

B.S. University of Houston

A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

Advisor: National Funeral Service Honor Society

Professional Licensure: Texas

### **CHRISTOPHER C. LAYTON**

#### **Dean of Students**

M.Ed. University of Houston

B.A. Arizona State University

Certificate in Mortuary Science, Cypress College

Title IX Coordinator

Professional Licensure: Texas

### **PATRICA T. MORENO**

#### **Registrar**

Diploma, Commonwealth College of Sciences

Alumni Association President

Professional Licensure: Texas

### **JESSIKA JENKINS, CFSP**

#### **Director of Operations**

M.Ed. Texas Tech University

B.S. Texas A&M University

A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

Professional Licensure: Texas

### **R. RENÉ ALTHEIMER**

#### **Admissions Counselor**

Title IX Coordinator

## FACULTY & STAFF

### **MADELEINE CRESPO**

M.Ed. University of Arizona  
B.S. University of Arizona  
A.A.S. Institute of Funeral Service  
Professional Licensure: Texas

### **MELISSA DAVIS**

#### **Librarian**

M.L.S. Sam Houston State University  
B.A. Henderson State University

### **JENINE D. FASTUCA**

M.L.A. Houston Baptist University  
B.S. Indiana University of Pennsylvania

### **DR. CATHARINE FLANNER**

Ph.D. Capella University  
M.C.J. University of Colorado  
B.S. Metropolitan State University  
A.A.S. Arapahoe Community College  
Professional Licensure: Texas

### **LOUISE GOHMANN, CFSP**

M.Ed. Concordia University  
B.A. Indiana University  
Diploma, Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science  
Professional Licensure: Florida, Indiana, Kentucky

### **JANE HEMBERGER**

M.Ed. Boston College  
B.F.A. University of California Berkeley  
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service  
Professional Licensure: Texas

### **DR. STEPHEN HENRY**

Ph.D. University of Texas  
M.S. University of Texas  
B.A. Washington University

### **SHANTELE D. HOLTS, CFSP**

#### **Distance Education Coordinator**

Ed.S. Northcentral University  
M.A. University of Houston–Clear Lake  
B.S. Prairie View A&M University  
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service  
Professional Licensure: Texas

### **DONALD KESSLER**

M.S. Texas A&M University  
B.S. Wright State University

### **CALVIN LEWIS, CFSP**

M.I.S. Indiana University  
B.A. Indiana University  
A.A.S. Mid-America College of Funeral Service  
Professional Licensure: Indiana, Kentucky

### **GUSTAVE MILBURN, JR.**

M.A. University of Texas at San Antonio  
B.S. Texas A&M University

### **MARLENE PERRY**

#### **Financial Aid Advisor**

B.S. St. Mary's University

### **REMO PORTELLI**

M.S.W. Fordham University  
B. A. Upsala College  
Certificate of Proficiency, Funeral Directing- St.  
Louis Community College  
Professional Licensure: Texas

### **SYLVIA SANCHEZ**

#### **Receptionist & Admissions Assistant**

### **JENNAFER SCHNAUTZ**

M.S. Texas A&M University  
B.S. Rice University

### **DAVID TAYLOR, JR.**

#### **Clinical Coordinator**

A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service  
Professional Licensure: Texas

### **DR. MICHAEL WICKER**

Ed.D. Stephen F. Austin State University  
M.I.S. Stephen F. Austin State University  
B.A. Stephen F. Austin State University

## CIFS ADVISORY BOARD

The CIFS Advisory Board is comprised of local funeral service practitioners and associated constituents. These members have a vested interest in the continued success of the institute and its graduates.

The purpose of the board is to ensure that the academics being taught reflect the current realities of the funeral service profession. A vital link is thus provided between the classroom and the working world of funeral professionals. Members advise the institute and its administration on contemporary professional practices, industry standards, trends, institute policies, etc. The CIFS Advisory Board meets at least annually.

In addition to the listed members, the CIFS National Honor Society president (or other student designee selected by the class) is also a member of the Advisory Board. This student representative allows the student body to have a voice in institute planning and governance.

**Andy Anderson**  
*Brenham Memorial Chapel*

**Patrick Crespo**  
*Heights Funeral Home*

**Arnell Johnson**  
*Stripling Funeral Service*

**Jordan Mullens**  
*Schmidt Funeral Home*

**Lois Nelson**  
*Cypress-Fairbanks Funeral Home*

**William Russo**  
*Sacred Hope Funeral Home*

**Tom Sherman**  
*Dodge Chemical Company*

**Jamie Walker**  
*All Faith's Mortuary*



# Section 3

## Campus Facilities

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Commonwealth Institute is open and available to students Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, except during designated holidays. Campus lecture classes are scheduled Monday through Thursday during the following times:

First Hour.....8:00 - 8:50 AM

Second Hour...9:00 - 9:50 AM

Third Hour...10:00 - 10:50 AM

Fourth Hour..11:00 - 11:50 AM

Fifth Hour....12:00 - 12:50 PM

\*Embalming laboratory sessions for campus students are held from 1:00 to 4:30 PM, Monday through Thursday during the designated academic term, and on Friday as necessary. Every effort is made to complete lab by 4:30 PM; however, this may vary depending on the individual case(s). Online student embalming laboratory sessions follow a different schedule (See Externships & Labs).

### **SECURITY**

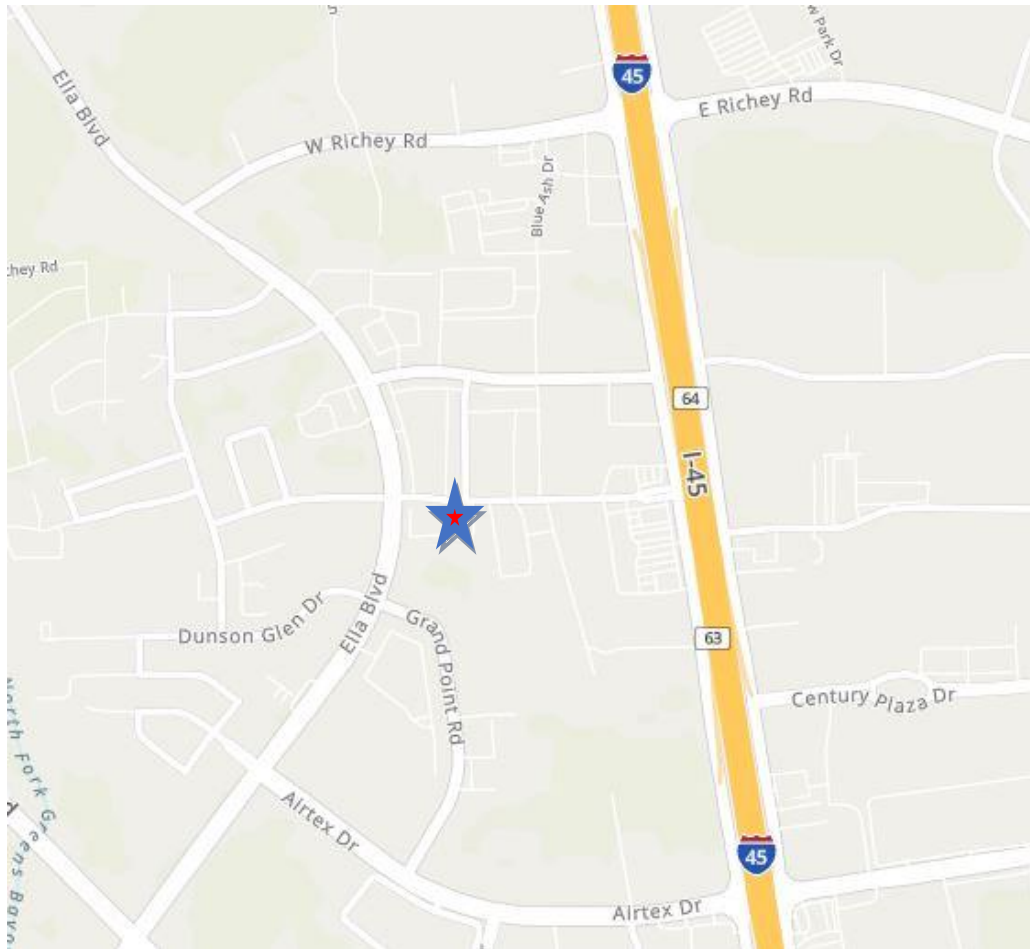
The entire complex is monitored by 24-hour security personnel on site. All activity is monitored and recorded by surveillance cameras as well. The school and adjacent museum facilities have restricted access. Students are given a campus ID/keycard to access the school facilities during their tenure. Campus students receive this during orientation, and online students receive this during their lab week. The ID card is **REQUIRED** to enter the campus building. Enrolled students arriving without their ID card will be denied access. The fee to replace a lost or stolen ID card is \$25. All visitors will be required to check in with the security desk and receive a temporary visitor's badge.

**NOTE:** Please report a lost, stolen, or missing ID card to the school office immediately!

### **WEATHER CLOSURES**

Commonwealth generally follows Houston Independent School District (HISD), Spring Independent School District (SISD), and Klein Independent School District (KISD) when it comes to system-wide weather-related closures and delays. This does not include individual school closures or non-weather-related closures. Additionally, Commonwealth often follows the local colleges concerning closures and delayed starts.

Local television stations and their accompanying websites list Houston area school closures due to inclement weather. Every effort is made to ensure that all weather-related closures are announced on the school's website, it's social media, and on the online course platform. In all cases, students should use good judgment regarding their individual situations as they relate to poor weather and travel conditions. Students should never jeopardize their life, health, or safety.



## **LOCATION**

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is located at 415 Barren Springs Drive on the north side of Houston, Texas and is near both Interstate 45 North and George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

From I-45 southbound, exit at Richey Road; continue south on the service road to Barren Springs Drive (main entrance to Commerce Park North) turn right on to Barren Springs. The college is approximately 3 blocks on the left from the I-45 service road.

From I-45 northbound, exit at Airtex Road, go left on Airtex to Ella Blvd., turn right on Ella Blvd., proceed to Barren Springs Dr., and turn right. You will see the college on the right side.

## **BUILDING, FURNITURE, AND GROUNDS**

Commonwealth's campus includes 2 large classrooms, 2 dedicated clinical laboratories, a computer lab, a secure testing center, the Dr. George Poston Memorial Library and Learning Resource Center, a student lounge, and faculty and staff offices.

Commonwealth also shares the educational complex at 415 Barren Springs Drive with two other entities: the National Museum of Funeral History and the American Funeral Service Training Center.

## **COMPUTER LAB**

The student computer lab is open and accessible to students during normal school business hours. The lab features individual computer workstations that can be utilized for academic and professional purposes. The lab is also networked for printing capability. Please see the Student Handbook and/or the school website for complete policy information on intellectual property protection and use of institutional technology resources.

## **SMOKE-FREE BUILDING**

The school complex is a smoke-free facility. Smoking, including vapes or e-cigarettes, is not permitted anywhere inside the building. **Smoking is permitted only in designated areas.** Students are asked to dispose of cigarettes in the receptacles provided for them and not on the school grounds.

## **CAMPUS PARKING**

Ample student parking is provided on the east side and in back of the school complex. The parking lot on the west side of the building is reserved for museum guests. Students are also prohibited from parking in the row of spaces between the guard shack and the school van's portico, adjacent to the back entrance. These spaces are marked "STAFF" and reserved for faculty and staff only. Automobiles are to be parked only in designated parking spaces. Unauthorized cars parked in handicapped spaces or along curbs will be towed at the owner's expense.

## **STUDENT LOCKERS**

Student lockers are available for use in the student lounge. Please see the Student Handbook for complete information and policies on student lockers.

## **DISABLED PERSONS**

Commonwealth is a ground level facility with access for disabled persons. Commonwealth operates in compliance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and accepts students without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, veteran status, or disability.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require the institution to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities. However, reasonable accommodations do not include fundamental alterations to course requirements. Furthermore, accommodations cannot be made that would effectively place an undue administrative or financial burden on the Institute.

## **LIBRARY**

The Dr. George Poston Memorial Library and Learning Resource Center has approximately 4,500 texts, e-books, videos, magazines, and subscribes to over 25 periodicals and newspapers in the funeral profession. The library is arranged in open shelves, enabling students to browse and make their own book selections.

The library includes reading and study areas, a group study area, photocopier, computer access stations, and video-viewing equipment. Bibliographic information about the library's material collection is available via an online public access catalog at [cifslibrary.follettdestiny.com](http://cifslibrary.follettdestiny.com). The resource center provides internet access, full-text periodicals, newspaper databases, and other electronic reference sources. The reference collection of print volumes includes bibliographies, atlases, periodical indexes, and other reference sources. Special archive collections include early mortuary periodicals, early trade catalogs, and other resources.

Instruction in library research methodology and current research technology is provided for individuals and classes under the direction of a professional librarian. Contact Mrs. Melissa Davis for assistance by calling 1-800-628-1580, Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM (CST) or by emailing [library@commonwealth.edu](mailto:library@commonwealth.edu) at any time.

The library's holdings are supplemented by membership in the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN), a library consortium of over 60 private colleges and universities serving a diverse and international student population. LIRN provides on and off campus access to many full-text, bibliographic, and electronic journals and databases covering a wide array of subjects.

## **CLINICAL FACILITIES**

Commonwealth's clinical facilities are located on the premises. The three-suite embalming laboratory is able to accommodate the preparation of approximately 400 human remains annually. The Institute's clinical program provides that vital link between theory and practice and helps to integrate and apply knowledge gained in restorative art, pathology, anatomy, microbiology, and chemistry; as well as the theory of embalming itself.

Additionally, the Institute also has a restorative art laboratory. In this setting, students apply the theoretical knowledge gained in restorative art lecture courses to wax modeling and reconstruction of facial features as well as mortuary cosmetic application.

## **COUNTY FUNERALS**

Unique to the educational opportunities at Commonwealth is the student's ability to participate in the Harris County Social Services funerals. Students not only embalm and voluntarily cosmetize, dress, and casket the remains, they also have the voluntary opportunity to assist with actual funeral services under licensed supervision. Friday is the Harris County funeral day on which Commonwealth students can participate in approximately twelve services a week.

# Section 4

## Student Life

### RECREATION AND CULTURE

Houston, the nation's fourth largest city, is known as the Bayou City and is well deserving of that name. In addition to affordable housing and exceptional public transportation, there is tremendous excitement in living in a culturally rich environment. There is an endless list of all that Houston has to offer, including: major sporting events, concerts, close beaches, NASA Space Center, cultural festivals, museums, abundant parks, and of course, great food!

### STUDENT BODY

One of CIFS's distinct assets is the diversity of its student population. Students come from all over the United States and some foreign countries. This results in constant faculty and student exposure to various perspectives and practices throughout the world. The opportunity also exists to make valued friends and future professional contacts nationwide.

### LIVING ACCOMODATIONS OFF CAMPUS AND HOUSING

It is the responsibility of the student in locating satisfactory living accommodations. Students may choose any housing they wish. The school does not recommend nor assist with locating accommodations. **CIFS does not provide on or off campus housing.** Several apartment and townhouse complexes are located within the same office park as the campus. In addition, the Houston area newspapers and the internet provide innumerable listings of available housing. Students must make their own arrangements for housing, and CIFS assumes no responsibility for any problems between landlord and student.

### ALUMNI SERVICES

The Alumni Association was founded in May of 1997. This association was put together so that graduates could visit, keep in touch with everyone, meet other graduates, reminisce about their school days, and continue to foster the necessary professional relationships with fellow CIFS graduates. Alumni Association events and benefits include luncheons during the National Board Exam review, scholarships, discounts on continuing education classes, cruises with CEU programs, and all-class reunions at the TFDA Conventions. New graduates receive a one-year membership at no cost. For additional information on the Alumni Association, please refer to the Alumni section of the school's website.

### PLACEMENT/JOB INFORMATION

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service maintains a list of prospective employers concerning job positions for students and graduates, for both full and part-time employment. Current job openings are posted on the school website under the Alumni section. Additionally, prospective employers are invited to attend the Open House, held at CIFS each spring and fall where they can conduct interviews at that time. Many requests for employment are filled each year. CIFS does not guarantee employment to any student or graduate, as this is a decision which must always be made between employer and prospective employee.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL & HONOR SOCIETY**

Commonwealth encourages student participation in campus governance through the Commonwealth Institute Student Council. Student representatives, from each class cohort, are selected by each class to participate in the campus wide committee. The Student Council organizes various campus/community activities throughout the year and also gives the student body a collective voice to address concerns and issues.

The National Funeral Service Honor Society is also represented on the campus. The purpose of the honor society is to offer service and leadership to CIFS, as well as promote academics and fellowship among all students enrolled at Commonwealth.

The Honor Society members sponsor study groups, assist as hosts at graduation and other college functions, and assist Commonwealth's recruiting efforts. Membership is by invitation and open to students who are enrolled fulltime, with a GPA of 3.5 or higher for any grading period. Dues and other criteria are set by the honor society itself.

A faculty member is assigned as an advisor to each the Honor Society and the Student Council. Activities vary from year to year, and events are planned with the student body's interest and schedules in mind. All activities planned by the Honor Society or Student Council are coordinated through the faculty sponsors with approval from the administration.

### ***MCENANY & MOEN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD***

This award is presented to the member of the National Funeral Service Honor Society who has shown the greatest improvement in grade point average during the academic year. The award is named in honor of the Honor Society's charter President and the former Dean of Academics at CIFS.

# Section 5

## State Licensing Requirements

### GENERAL RULES

As a general rule, most states require that candidates for funeral directing and/or embalming licensure fulfill licensing requirements as follows: be a high school graduate; provide proof of U.S. citizenship; complete one or two years general collegiate coursework; complete mortuary college; pass national or state board examinations; serve an internship/apprenticeship; and pass a state-specific mortuary jurisprudence exam. **Applicants are advised to contact the licensing authority in the state in which they wish to practice in order to obtain the specific requirements of that state.**

There are no uniform licensing laws governing funeral service in the United States; each state sets its own requirements. The length of the apprenticeship, the amount of college required, specific courses within the general coursework, and the order in which all requirements must to be met *vary* greatly from state to state. **It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that licensure requirements have been met.** Questions concerning individual state requirements should be directed to the licensing authority in the state(s) in which you intend to practice.

The licensing agencies of some states require a prospective student to notify the agency prior to enrollment in mortuary college, as well as complete pre-mortuary college educational requirements. Applicants must meet any mandated pre-mortuary college state licensing requirements prior to admission. For detailed information, please refer to the Commonwealth's website [www.commonwealth.edu](http://www.commonwealth.edu) and go to the Licensing Requirements section. Candidates may also visit the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards website [www.theconferenceonline.org](http://www.theconferenceonline.org) for more details.

**Some states prohibit applicants with misdemeanor and/or felony convictions from obtaining a license.** In most instances, these matters are handled on a case-by-case basis. Prospective students who might be affected by this should clear this matter prior to seeking enrollment by communicating directly with their state funeral service licensing agency.

### STUDENTS SEEKING LICENSURE IN TEXAS

Texas Funeral Service Commission  
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 2-110  
Austin, TX 78701

Phone: (512) 936-2474

Email: [info@tfsc.texas.gov](mailto:info@tfsc.texas.gov)

Website: [www.tfsc.texas.gov](http://www.tfsc.texas.gov)

Texas requires applicants for licensure to be at least 18 years of age, hold a high school diploma or GED certificate, graduate from an accredited mortuary college, score a minimum scaled score of 75% on each section of the National Board Examination, score a minimum of 75% on the Texas Mortuary Law Examination, and complete a period of provisional licensure for a maximum of 24 consecutive months in which the provisional licensee must perform 45 cases under the direct supervision of an approved funeral director and/or embalmer.

## **NBE & SBE CERTIFICATION**

A student who desires to sit for the National Board Examination (NBE) or State Board Examination (SBE) administered by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (ICFSEB) must first be certified by Commonwealth Institute to the ICFSEB. The ICFSEB does not allow certification for only one section of NBE (partial certification). Additionally, Commonwealth Institute does not send transcripts to the ICFSEB.

## **COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE CERTIFICATION EXAM**

The Commonwealth Institute Certification Exam is the most recent in a long line of successive exit exams utilized by the college. The Certification Exam is developed and administered by Commonwealth Institute, and it is similar in length and format to both the National Board Exam (NBE) and the State Board Exam (SBE). The Certification Exam may be computer-based or written. It is solely up to the discretion of Commonwealth Institute as to how it is administered and by which format. Passing the Certification Exam proves that a student has mastered the funeral service curriculum and is therefore ready to be CERTIFIED to sit for the NBE or SBE.

Like the NBE and SBE, the Certification Exam has two sections – Arts and Sciences. AAS Degree students will take both sections; just like the NBE. Certificate in Funeral Directing students will take only the Arts section; just like the SBE. Students must achieve a score of 80% or higher on EACH section of the Certification Exam (Arts & Sciences for AAS Degree students and Arts only for Certificate students). Section scores are not averaged. **The Certification Exam is the final exam for MSCI 1020 Board Review**, and a passing score is required for certification to the ICFSEB in order to take either the NBE or SBE after graduation.

Students that fail the Certification Exam with a score of less than 80% but pass the Board Review course with an overall letter grade of “C” or better will graduate. However, after graduation it is the student’s responsibility to retake one or both failed sections of the exam through the Certification Remediation Program. Students that fail the Certification Exam AND fail the Board Review course with an overall final letter grade of “D” or “F” will be required to retake Board Review when it is offered again; just like any other academic course. Such students are not deemed a graduate until the course is passed successfully.

***NOTE: Students in their final quarter who are in ineligible to graduate, for ANY reason, will be dropped from Board Review with a grade of “W” assigned. The course must then be repeated when rectifying the reason(s) for graduation ineligibility.***

## **CERTIFICATION REMEDIATION PROGRAM**

Students that graduate but are ineligible for NBE/SBE certification due to their Certification Exam score(s) must complete remediation in order to be certified. This is done post-graduation, at a time of the student’s choosing, and it is voluntary for those that desire certification to the ICFSEB. However, it is advised that students desiring certification should act quickly so that the information learned in school stays fresh.

Remediation involves retaking of the Certification Exam to improve a graduate’s score(s). The exams are taken through a module located with the CIFS online courses. The cost for remediation is \$150 which covers online hosting and proctoring. This fee includes two (2) attempts per exam section; if needed. Additional attempts will incur additional fees. Once a score of at least 80% has been achieved for each applicable section, the student will then be certified to the ICFSEB and can take either the NBE or SBE (depending on their program of enrollment). There is NO timeline or requirement to complete certification remediation.



# National Board Examination/State Board Examination

## LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS

It is the student's responsibility to complete and submit the application for the National Board Examination (NBE), State Board Examination (SBE), and/or any other licensure-related exams along with the correct fee and within the necessary time frame. Additional information can be found at [www.theconferenceonline.org](http://www.theconferenceonline.org) for NBE and SBE information.

## NATIONAL BOARD EXAMINATION, STATE BOARD EXAMINATION, AND LICENSURE

At present, the computer-based National Board Examination consists of two sections (embalming sciences and funeral directing arts) containing 170 questions each. Students completing the Associate of Applied Science Degree must take the National Board Examination as a requirement for licensure in Texas (and many other states). Students completing the Certificate in Funeral Directing and planning to seek licensure in Texas must take the Arts Section of the State Board Examination; consisting of 150 questions.

The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, Inc. develops and creates the NBE and SBE. The exams are administered by appointment at Pearson VUE testing sites throughout the country. Students must be certified by Commonwealth Institute in order to sit for either the NBE or SBE. Please see The Conference website [www.theconferenceonline.org](http://www.theconferenceonline.org) for testing locations and other application information.

## NBE Pass Rate, Graduation Rate, and Employment Rate Disclosure

National Board Examination pass rates, graduation rates, and employment rates for this and other ABFSE-accredited programs are available at [www.abfse.org](http://www.abfse.org). To request a printed copy of this program's pass rates, graduation rate, and employment rate, go to the administrative offices at 415 Barren Springs Drive, Houston, TX, 77090, e-mail [information@commonwealth.edu](mailto:information@commonwealth.edu), or call (281) 873-0262.

# Section 6

## Admissions & Enrollment Policies

### MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION

The minimum standards for admission to the programs at Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service are:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Graduate from an accredited four-year high school or its equivalent (such as a recognized G.E.D.). If any official school documents are in a foreign language, they will need to be translated and certified that the applicant has completed formal education requirements equivalent to high school graduation in the United States. The translated documents need to be accurate before submission.

### APPLICATIONS

Applications are completed online through the school website, and they are processed in the order in which they are received. However, in all cases, new enrollees are given priority over re-enrolling students and students transferring from other ABFSE accredited programs.

### COMMUNICATION

All students must provide a valid email address. Official CIFS communication occurs through the email provided on the application for admission. A student who desires to utilize an email address different than the one provided on the application must immediately notify CIFS staff in writing. Only one (1) valid email address should be used when communicating with CIFS, to avoid missed messages. Students are responsible for checking their email on a daily basis. Information emailed to students' official email accounts is considered to be sufficient public notification. In addition to utilizing the resources available on campus, CIFS encourages our students to communicate openly and honestly with their families and employers on all matters; especially those areas relevant to academic progress, personal concerns, and disciplinary action.

**It is the students' responsibility to keep their address, phone number, and email address current with the administrative office.**

### HOW TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION

The deadline for acceptance is 60 days prior to the start date of each academic quarter. You must be accepted by that date to be considered for the upcoming term.

#### **Steps to apply for admission:**

1. Complete an Application for Admission on the CIFS website and electronically submit the \$50.00 application fee. The application fee is valid for one (1) year from the date of application. A new fee is required for all subsequent applications after one year AND when applying for a different program.
2. Mail an official, sealed copy of your final high school transcript directly to CIFS. If you have a GED certificate, then contact your state education agency and request that the certificate and certificate transcript be mailed directly to CIFS.

3. Contact ***EACH*** vocational/technical school, college, or university that you attended and request a final official transcript be mailed directly to CIFS. This is required regardless of the credit earned, degree path, or transferability.
  - Digital transcripts from *E-Script* and/or *Parchment* are acceptable.
  - Official digital transcripts should be sent to: [transcripts@commonwealth.edu](mailto:transcripts@commonwealth.edu)
4. (For AAS Degree ONLY) If you plan to receive benefits from the Veteran's Administration, then you must also submit a certified copy of your **DD-214, official military transcripts, and a Letter of Eligibility**. **Additionally, you must send a copy of all documents submitted to the VA for your student file, per VA requirements. Please contact CIFS prior to applying for VA benefits.**

After CIFS has received the completed application, fee, and all other required supporting documents, the CIFS Admissions Counselor will review the application and notify the applicant of the next step(s) necessary in the application process.

## **SUGGESTED APPLICATION & ENROLLMENT TIMETABLE**

Applicants are encouraged to complete all preparations for enrollment early. The following is the recommended timetable.

**Six Months Prior to Enrollment:** Complete an application for admissions and submit the required fee.

**Five Months Prior to Enrollment:** Send the Institute any loan forms, V.A. forms, etc. for certification of acceptance. If you are planning to receive Financial Aid you need to complete the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). *Only students enrolling into the Associate of Applied Science Degree program may be eligible to receive Title IV funding.*

**Four Months Prior to Enrollment:** Confirm with the admissions department that all of the requirements have been met or submit any missing documents.

**Three Months Prior to Enrollment:** Complete any of the above that has not been accomplished. If applicable and desired, begin the HBV vaccination series.

**Two Month Prior to Enrollment:** Upon acceptance, CIFS will forward orientation and registration information to you. At this point, you should confirm any arrangements not yet finalized and/or request any additional information you might still need.

# Section 7

## Academic Policies

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service provides academic programs that are rigorous and challenging, consistent with other institutions of higher learning. CIFS has established the following criteria to measure good standing, academic recognition, and satisfactory progress.

### **GRADING**

The following grading system is used in all specialized courses in determining the student's level of achievement. All courses carry a specific number of quarter hour credits. A quarter hour shall be considered as the equivalent of one course hour of lecture, or two hours of laboratory per week for an eleven-week period of instruction. A course hour consists of one fifty-minute period. Students receive grade points according to the following system:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Range</b>	<b>Point Value per Credit Hour</b>
A	93-100 (90-100)*	4.0
B	84-92 (80-89)*	3.0
C	75-83 (70-79)*	2.0
D	66-74 (60-69)*	1.0
F	0-65 (0-59)*	0.0
TM	Terminated by CIFS	0.0
W	Withdrawal by student	
TR	Transfer Credit	
CL	Credit for prior learning	
CR	Credit by Exam	
I	Incomplete	
AU	Audit	

\* *Numbers in parenthesis denote the numerical range for General Education courses only.*

All specialized courses require a minimum passing grade of "C" or 75% in order to progress to the next academic term. The letter grade of Incomplete (I) may be given at the discretion of the course instructor. This temporary designation indicates the student completed all but a minor portion of the required work in the course. The student must complete the work and have the Incomplete removed from their grade record by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the end of the quarter or the grade will be changed to "F".

To calculate the student's Grade Point Average (GPA), add the total number of Grade Points earned and divide by the total number of hours taken, excluding credit hours with a grade of W, TR, CL, CR, I, or AU. When a course is repeated, the higher of the grades earned will take precedence and the grade point average will be calculated as if the course were taken only once.

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

CIFS requires students to earn a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) to graduate. A student should be making satisfactory progress toward the completion of their program of study. The student must be proceeding through the program at a pace allowing for completion within the maximum time of 1 ½ times the normal program length. The following cumulative grade point average will be used to determine satisfactory academic progress.

0-20 quarter hours	1.6 cumulative GPA
21-40 quarter hours	1.7 cumulative GPA
41-60 quarter hours	1.8 cumulative GPA
61-80 quarter hours	1.9 cumulative GPA
81-97 quarter hours	2.0 cumulative GPA

Student success is paramount at CIFS. In order to support and enhance student success, students are required to successfully complete each academic quarter with a letter “C” grade or better for all specialized courses. **If a student is unsuccessful in earning a “C” letter grade or better, they will need to repeat that course before proceeding with their academic schedule.** CIFS offers all academic courses in a timely manner; however, if a student needs to repeat a course for an unsuccessful grade, their enrollment agreement will be terminated. The student must then re-apply/re-enroll in order to repeat the failed course(s) before continuing their academic schedule. A student has up to **three attempts** to successfully complete and pass all courses. If, at any time, a student cannot pass a course after three attempts, then they will be academically dismissed from CIFS without consideration of re-enrollment.

## MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS

Students are expected to submit all assignments and take all examinations as scheduled. Due to the timely nature of our profession and the duration of instruction, **CIFS does not allow any make-up examinations or assignments.** If a student misses a significant amount of academic work, then they may be advised to withdraw or request an official leave of absence (See LOA policy) so that their academic record is not adversely affected.

## FINAL EXAMINATIONS

Final examinations will be scheduled during the last portion of each academic quarter. All final examinations will be comprehensive. Since a final examination is required as part of the final grade, all students must take the final examination to complete each course in which they are enrolled. Students arriving late for a final exam will be deducted **10%** of the possible points for the exam, regardless of actual earned score.

## GRADE REPORTS & TRANSCRIPTS

Students are provided a report of academic progress upon completion of each quarter. Online and campus students may view their course grades at any time on each individual course; thereby monitoring academic progress. At the midpoint of each term, faculty and/or administration confer and advise with anyone struggling academically. Official transcripts may be ordered using the transcript request form on the school website and submitting the required fee. A student with an outstanding financial obligation to the college or in default on federal student aid programs, will have transcript(s) withheld until the debt is paid. No student academic information will be distributed until all financial obligations have been satisfied.

## COURSE AUDIT POLICY

If an individual wants to officially register for a class without earning a letter grade or credit, the course may be scheduled as an audit after all students registering for credit have been accommodated. The cost incurred is the same as if the course were taken for credit (exceptions may exist). Title IV Financial aid funds and V.A. benefits cannot be applied to audited courses.

- Non-student auditors must adhere to CIFS policies governing dress code, behavior, harassment and discrimination. Auditors are required to participate fully in the class. Auditors are expected to participate in graded activities such as: homework, group projects, laboratories, and exams. The instructor is not required to grade any written assignments that may be submitted by an auditor. Expectations should be clarified with the course instructor at the start of the quarter.
- Restrictions on admission to courses with educationally necessary prerequisites and with extensive laboratory or clinical activities may be imposed, with possible exceptions.
- No person who is ineligible for readmission by reason of having been dropped by CIFS for academic or other reasons shall be eligible to audit classes.
- A course scheduled for audit will appear on the auditor's record with the symbol "AU". If the auditing non-student does not meet the attendance qualifications, they will be terminated by CIFS.
- Auditing of an online course is allowed by permission ONLY and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## TRANSFER CREDIT

CIFS will recognize and accept hours only from accredited universities, colleges, and community colleges under the guidelines of SACS accreditation or an equivalent recognized by the US Department of Education. CIFS will not accept transfer credit for specialized courses taken more than **3 years** from the date of application. Students who previously completed any clinical course work (embalming, restorative art, and funeral directing) at an ABFSE accredited program may request to receive credit for these cases. It is the students' responsibility to initiate this discussion with the previous institution/program prior to attending CIFS in order to receive credit and certification. In these instances, credit is awarded on a case-by-case basis. The documentation and/or certification required in order to receive credit for prior clinical cases will vary based on the previous institution. In general, clinical cases completed previously at CIFS will be accepted without issue for students that leave the AAS Degree program and re-enroll at a later date.

Students desiring to seek transfer credit are advised to consult the Admissions Office prior to enrollment for evaluation of transfer credit. If transfer credit is granted, the grade of "TR" will appear on the student's official transcript. Only the grades earned at CIFS will be used in computing the student's GPA. Students contemplating admission with transfer credit should note that many states require students to attend mortuary college for a period of not less than twelve months. To be eligible for graduation from CIFS, students must complete a minimum of 30 quarter hours in residency at CIFS.

CIFS does not warrant the acceptance of its credits at other academic institutions. Acceptance of CIFS credits for transfer is strictly a function and a decision of the receiving institution.

## POLICY FOR GRANTING TRANSFER CREDIT

CIFS will accept transfer credit earned at another institution in accordance with commonly accepted, good practice in higher education, provided the following criteria are met:

- Coursework from a regionally accredited institution or from a nationally recognized agency such as CLEP, evidenced by an official transcript, may be accepted only for the General Education courses.
- Coursework from other ABFSE accredited mortuary colleges or programs may be accepted, if it parallels that of CIFS courses and was completed **less than 3 years** from the date of application.
- A cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (“C” average) must be achieved in all transfer courses. No transfer credit will be given for courses with a grade of “D” unless the transfer GPA policy is satisfied. No grades of “F” or “W” will be accepted as transfer credit.
- Transfer credit will not be awarded for grades of “T/TR” or “C/CR.” Previous coursework must show an earned letter grade to be eligible for transfer credit.
- For reapplying/re-enrolling students, CIFS coursework taken previously is only eligible for transfer credit into a new enrollment if completed **less than 5 years** from the new date of application.

## CREDIT BY EXAMINATION

CIFS recognizes that some students may enroll with background education or experience that has given them sufficient knowledge in a particular area of academia. Once a student provides evidence of such experience, they may be eligible to receive credit by examination. After following the necessary steps, they may attempt the challenge examination. An administrative fee of \$125 will be charged for each challenge exam. A maximum of **18 quarter hours** may be given through credit by exam. If a student has previously received any type of letter grade from CIFS, then they will not be eligible to complete the credit by examination. No challenge examination may be given to improve an existing letter grade.

## ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Degrees and Certificates will be awarded *with Honors* to graduating students having a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. Students with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher will graduate *with Honors and Distinction*. Students graduating with a cumulative GPA of 4.0 will graduate *with Honors and Distinction* along with earning the Mu Sigma Alpha Award.

## COMMENCEMENT

There are important differences between commencement and graduation with which you should be familiar. Commencement refers to the ceremony, officiated by the President of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service, where you share the excitement and importance of your academic accomplishments with peers, family, and friends. It is also a time for the CIFS administrators and faculty to pay special tribute to you for the outstanding efforts you have shown. In general, the CIFS commencement ceremony is approximately one to two hours in length. There is no limit for the number of guests a student may invite, and there are no tickets issued. Seating is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**Participating in a commencement ceremony does not certify graduation nor confer a degree.** Students who are eligible to participate in commencement are those who complete their degree requirements by the end of the current quarter. Commonwealth may consider other eligible students as those who lack no more than six credit hours to be completed next quarter and maintain a GPA of 2.0 or greater at the time of commencement.

Graduation is the certifying of degrees. The Associate of Applied Science Degree or the Certificate in Funeral Directing becomes official after all graduation requirements have been completed and verified by the CIFS registrar's office and it is posted to the official transcript.

All candidates participating in the Commencement ceremony will be required to wear the academic regalia significant to CIFS. Students do not wear regalia, academic/honor cords, and/or sashes from previously attended colleges or universities.

- Traditional black regalia will be worn by all graduates and may not be altered, modified, or decorated in any way. In keeping with the dignity of the ceremony, no additions to the regalia will be allowed. Candidates with altered regalia will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony.
- The ONLY exception to the above policy is the top of the mortar board (cap). This may be decorated, but please practice discretion.
- Only CIFS issued caps and gowns, academic and veteran cords, and/or stoles may be worn at the Commencement ceremony.
- **Use CAUTION** in selecting your graduation footwear. You will be required to stand for long periods of time, walk long distances, and use stairs/ramps.
- Information on purchasing caps, gowns, and tassels will be provided. Honor cords and other regalia for applicable candidates will be issued at the Commencement ceremony.

## **THE FOLLOWING RECOGNITIONS OCCUR DURING THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY**

### *ROBERT L. WALTRIP CHAIRMAN'S AWARD – Outstanding Achievement*

This award is named in honor of the Founder and Chairman Emeritus of Service Corporation International and Chairman Emeritus for the CIFS Board of Regents. This award is selected by the class and presented to the graduate whom the class feels demonstrates the greatest professionalism and greatest promise in funeral service.

### *DR. GEORGE H. POSTON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*

The scholarship is awarded to the student who has exhibited the highest proficiency in the courses of Embalming and Restorative Art. The award is named in honor of a previous CIFS president.

### *A.O. SPRIGGS RESTORATIVE ART AWARD*

This award is presented to the student whose lab project and overall academic achievement in the area of Restorative Art demonstrates knowledge of facial expression, manual dexterity, and attention to detail. The award is named in honor of a previous faculty member, funeral service educator, and author.

### *EVERETTE BALLARD, JR. MEMORIAL EMBALMING AWARD*

This award is presented to the student who has exhibited the greatest proficiency in embalming from a practical aspect. The award is named in memory of a CIFS graduate, CIFS Alumni Association member, and longtime sales representative for the Dodge Company.

### *HONORS GRADUATE AWARDS*

1. Students are recognized with Honors for maintaining a 3.0-3.49 Cumulative GPA.
2. Students are recognized with Honors and Distinction for maintaining a 3.5 or higher Cumulative GPA.
3. Students are recognized with the Mu Sigma Alpha Award for maintaining a 4.0 Cumulative GPA.



# Section 8

## General Policies

Developing and maintaining a good class attendance record is an important facet of each student's professional development. Each student is expected to attend all classes as scheduled, on time, and to remain in the classes for their full duration. The student also has the responsibility to complete assigned work and be present for the examinations at the time they are administered to the entire class.

### **ON-CAMPUS ATTENDANCE POLICY**

CIFS's attendance policies are based on students being present and participating in class activities during the scheduled class meeting time. Instructors check and record attendance in each class hour. To be counted present, the student must be in attendance for the entire period. Students arriving late or leaving early will be marked absent. Absences are NOT classified as excused or un-excused. The daily attendance is transferred weekly to the Master Attendance Record. Any AAS student who accumulates absences of more than 10% of their scheduled class hours in a quarter, will have their enrollment with CIFS terminated. Any Certificate of Funeral Directing student who is absent for more than 10% of the total course hours will have their enrollment terminated.

Students enrolled under various Veterans' programs or other funding agencies will be required to meet the requirements for attendance of the sponsoring organization. Additionally, a negative attendance record can affect most forms of Title IV funding.

### **ONLINE ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students enrolled in online courses must meet certain attendance standards. All students enrolled in online courses at CIFS are expected to maintain ongoing course engagement in order to uphold positive academic standing with the college. In an online environment, "attendance" is more than just logging into a course. Online attendance is measured by students' academic engagement with the course content, course tools, course instructor, and with other students in the course.

During the first week of class, all online students are expected to log in to their courses, view each course syllabus and pertinent messages, and become familiar with course layouts, schedules, and due dates. Throughout the academic quarter, all CIFS students are expected to maintain an ongoing online presence in their online courses by participating in course related activities. This may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Reading announcements
- Submitting assignments
- Taking examinations or quizzes
- Posting to discussion boards or forums
- Contacting instructors with questions about material
- Carrying out any other requirements set forth by an instructor

An online student may be terminated if they have more than two consecutive assignments missing in a single online course and/or they have missed all scheduled assignments for a single week in all of their enrolled courses combined.

Federal regulations require that online students establish attendance/participation in coursework each term to be eligible for Title IV funding. CIFS verifies student attendance in accordance with this regulation. Students who have not established attendance/participation in online courses may have their Title IV funding eligibility adjusted.

### **APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR AN ATTENDANCE TERMINATION**

A student may appeal an attendance termination. Documentation supporting medical or family emergencies must be submitted to the Dean of Academics within three business days of the termination notification.

### **WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE**

Students who wish to withdraw from CIFS prior to the end of the quarter are required to complete a written Withdrawal Form and submit it to CIFS. The Withdrawal Form will include (1) intended withdrawal date (2) specific reason(s) for withdrawal (3) if he/she plans to return at a later date, and (4) his/her permanent mailing address. Absence from scheduled classes will not be regarded as formal withdrawal. Failure to comply with this policy can result in the recording of failing grades in all courses in which the student is enrolled. The deadline for submitting a completed and approved Withdrawal Form is the end of business on the last business day of the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the quarter. Students following proper withdrawal procedure will have a “W” recorded on the official transcript.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Leaves of absence may be granted only in emergency situations and for military service obligation. A leave of absence may not exceed twelve school days (on campus) or 3 consecutive weeks (online), and only two leaves of absence are permitted during any consecutive 12-month period. A student requesting a leave of absence must do so in writing. An official Leave of Absence Form is available upon request. The request must contain the specific start and return dates and a reason for the requested leave. If a student fails to return from leave as scheduled, their enrollment will be terminated, and a proper refund will be made in accordance with the refund policy of CIFS; if any refund is due. All exams and make-up work must be completed within seven class days upon returning from leave. No Leave of Absence will be authorized after the completion of the 8<sup>th</sup> week of any academic quarter.

### **ACADEMIC WARNING**

At the end of each quarter, student progress is evaluated. Students are placed on academic warning for the subsequent quarter by failing to maintain a cumulative grade point average that meets the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements explained in a previous section. Students who fail to maintain the GPA requirements at the end of their second consecutive academic warning quarter will have their enrollment terminated by CIFS.

### **REMEDY OF ACADEMIC WARNING**

Once a student’s grade point average has improved and they meet the satisfactory academic progress requirements, they will be removed from Academic Warning and return to good standing with the school. Failure to remedy the status of Academic Warning will result in the termination of a student’s enrollment.

## ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

At the end of each quarter, student progress is evaluated. A student earning a letter grade of “D” or “F” in any course, other than the General Education core, will be dismissed for academic reasons, and their enrollment agreement will be terminated. Any specialized course in which a final letter grade of “C” or better was not achieved must be repeated.

If the student desires to remedy an academic dismissal termination, then they will be required to reapply and get re-accepted into their academic program. This will include a new application, a new application fee, and a \$100 administrative fee. Once the failed course(s) are successfully completed, the student will then move forward with the remainder of the program. Full course tuition will be charged to repeat failed course(s).

Students who have unsuccessfully attempted any single course **three times** will be permanently dismissed from CIFS without consideration for re-admission.

## TERMINATION PROCEDURE

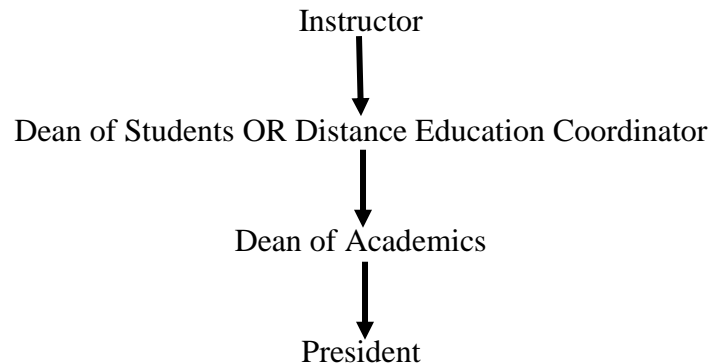
A student who either voluntarily withdraws from CIFS or is dropped by the school will have their enrollment terminated. A student’s enrollment may be terminated for the following reasons:

- Official withdrawal
- Academic dismissal
- Attendance policy violation
- Failure to pay tuition and/or other fees
- Student conduct/behavior policy violation

If a terminated student wishes to re-enroll at CIFS, then they will need to contact the Admissions Counselor for re-enrollment procedures. This will include re-applying (new application, application fee, and an administrative fee) and re-acceptance, and the process must be completed by the stated acceptance deadline for the quarter in which they wish to re-enroll. Upon a student’s **third termination** of enrollment from CIFS, the student will be permanently dismissed and not eligible to re-enroll.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

CIFS has an open-door policy. Therefore, students are welcome to visit directly with faculty and staff. For course-related issues, students are encouraged to first address the matter with their instructor, if possible. If the problem is not resolved, then the student may proceed to the Dean of Students OR the Distance Education Coordinator, the Dean of Academics, and the CIFS President, **IN THAT ORDER**.



CIFS has established a grievance procedure to be used by our students to ensure their right to due process. This right to due process is administered without regard to race, color, religion, gender identity and gender expression, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The grievance must be submitted in writing to CIFS within 30 days of the event. Failure to file any grievance within the specified time periods shall be deemed a waiver thereof.

If the grievance reaches the level of the Dean of Academics, he/she shall investigate the alleged grievance, and an attempt will be made to resolve the matter informally with the parties involved.

A member of CIFS's administration (Dean of Students or Distance Education Coordinator) may act as the hearing officer and resolve the matter of alleged violation through an informal hearing. The legal rules of evidence do not apply at the informal hearing. Evidence that possesses probative value and is commonly accepted by reasonable people in the conduct of the affairs may be admitted. The student is presumed innocent of the alleged violation unless the hearing officer is convinced by the evidence that the student is guilty of the violation. The hearing officer may impose one or more of the following penalties, if the student is found guilty of the alleged violation: suspension of eligibility for extracurricular activities, letter of warning, suspension for up to the remainder of the current quarter, restitution for damages, denial of degree, or permanent severance from Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service.

A student is entitled to appeal the decision of the hearing officer or Dean of Academics to the President of CIFS. The President shall review the matter and render the final decision in a timely manner. No reprisal of any kind will be taken by the Board of Regents, an administrator, or an employee of CIFS against any person bringing a grievance under this procedure.

**Students must address their concerns about CIFS or any of its educational programs by following the outline in the official grievance procedure.** CIFS is responsible for ensuring and documenting that all students have received a copy of the school's grievance procedures and for describing these procedures in the CIFS published Catalog. If, as a student, you were not provided with this information, then please inform school management.

**Students dissatisfied with CIFS's response to their complaint or who are not able to file a complaint with the school, can file a formal complaint with TWC, as well as with other relevant agencies or accreditors, if applicable.**

**Information on filing a complaint with TWC can be found on TWC's Career Schools and Colleges Website at <http://csc.twc.state.tx.us/>.**

## **PROCTORED EXAMINATIONS**

Some courses or elements of our curriculum require proctored examinations.

If on-campus proctoring is required, then please contact CIFS at (281) 873-0262 to arrange a proctored exam. Examinations in the CIFS testing facility are by appointment only. Appointments are on a first-come, first-serve basis. At times, testing facility space is at a premium; therefore, CIFS requires 24-hour notice when cancelling an examination appointment. Failure to contact CIFS regarding a cancellation or repeated cancellations (even with 24-hour notice) may result in the loss of future scheduling privileges.

**All CIFS online courses utilize a third-party remote proctoring service.** The use of a webcam, a microphone, and a reliable/high-speed internet connection is required.

CIFS reserves the right to require a student to take a proctored examination onsite in Houston, TX.

## **DRESS CODE**

Funeral service is generally a conservative field, and CIFS expects you to take pride in your personal appearance. Personal grooming and a businesslike appearance are vital to each student's success.

For daily classes, business casual clothing is acceptable, as long as it does not cause a disruption in the educational environment. Hats and sunglasses are not permitted in the classroom. On days of field trips and guest speakers, students are expected to dress in the mode of contemporary funeral service practitioners: navy or black suits, white shirt or blouse, dark shoes, conservative ties, and avoid extreme hair styles.

Any student that is out of compliance with the dress code policy will be issued an absence for the day and removed from class. This removal from class may adversely affect the student's academic success.

Please see the complete Dress Code policies in the Student Handbook.

## **FERPA & DISCLOSURE OF STUDENT INFORMATION**

Commonwealth Institute complies with the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974*. For the complete policy, please refer to the Student Handbook and/or school website.

## **PREGNANCY POLICY**

If a student is pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or becomes pregnant during the quarter in which she participates in the clinical embalming externship, then she will be expected to immediately notify the clinical coordinator. Such a notification shall be oral and in writing.

The student shall have the option to remain in the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service program throughout the pregnancy period, but they must take a leave of absence from all embalming clinical activities. The student realizes that a delay in completing clinical requirements may delay the completion of the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service program.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

CIFS maintains the inherent belief that all students should exhibit the behavior consistent with that of individuals entering the professional field of funeral service. This expectation is not just in the classroom setting but also in interactions with CIFS staff and fellow students; as well as through all avenues of communication. The ethical standards by which you will be held include paramount beliefs in honesty and integrity - that which you would exhibit with the grieving families and trusting public you will serve. Additionally, you will be held to strict adherence of confidentiality. Your guiding principle should always be, "Is this acceptable behavior for how I would treat families in the funeral home?"

Commonwealth Institute recognizes that students are both citizens and members of the academic community. Upon enrolling in the Institute, each student assumes an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the Institute's function, mission, and goals.

Students are expected to obey the penal and civil statutes of local, state, and federal government along with the Institute's policies, regulations, and administrative rules. For additional information on CIFS Student Behavior Policies, please see the Student Handbook.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY & CONDUCT**

Detailed information with regard to student conduct is supplied in the Student Handbook and during orientation. In general, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is socially acceptable and brings credit to themselves, the Institute, and their chosen profession. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action or suspension in accordance with Institute policies.

## **STALKING**

Stalking is defined as repeated conduct directed at a specific person whether that person is a total stranger, acquaintance, current or former intimate partner, or anyone else that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety, for the safety of a third person, or to feel emotional distress. Such behavior is prohibited. Stalking behaviors include, but are not limited to repeatedly pursuing, following, waiting, or showing up uninvited to or near a residence, workplace, classroom, or other places frequented by the person, surveillance or other types of observation including staring or "peeping," and repeated unwanted communication, including face-to-face communication, telephone calls, voice messages, emails, text messages, written letters, gifts, or any other communications that are unwelcome by the receiver.

## **HEALTH**

Students are encouraged to carry proof of insurance to facilitate hospitalization in the event of an emergency. Health services are not provided by the Institute. If desired, then local students are encouraged to seek immunization assistance from the Texas Department of Health Services ([www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)), Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services ([www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)), or any local immunization clinic. For students in the greater Houston area, Harris County Clinics are as follows:

### **Harris County Public Health Cypress Station (WIC) Clinic**

221 FM 1960 West, Suite A, Houston, Texas 77090  
(713) 407-5800

### **Harris County Public Health Humble Clinic**

1730 Humble Place Drive, Humble, Texas 77338  
(281) 446-4222

### **Harris County Public Health Antoine Clinic**

5815 Antoine, Houston, Texas 77091  
(713) 602-3300

CIFS recognizes the importance of meeting the guidelines set forth by OSHA and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) with regard to Universal Precautions and endeavors to comply with all regulations. These regulations are intended to keep individuals as safe as possible from infections resulting from the handling of human remains.

All students are encouraged to consult their personal physician concerning preventative vaccination and susceptibility testing. It is recommended to have the preventative HBV vaccination to protect you against infection by the Hepatitis B virus, the Meningococemia vaccine to protect you from bacterial meningitis, and the Tdap vaccine to protect you from Tetanus and Diphtheria. The Hepatitis B vaccine is available for individuals who might come into direct contact with blood or body fluids. This vaccine, administered prior to exposure to the virus, consists of a series of two or three injections given over a six-month period. Please refer to the earlier Suggested Enrollment Timetable or sign a waiver for the HBV vaccination at the time of enrollment.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

If required to evacuate a classroom/building, then students will proceed to a clear and safe area away from the evacuated building. As each student evacuates, they are reminded to leave their personal belongings and follow the evacuation directions that are posted in each designated teaching area. There will be *no* use of any communication device while attending any emergency procedure unless directed to do so.

If required to shelter in place, the students will follow the directions of the faculty member in the classroom and move quickly away from any door or window, sit on the floor and remain silent until such time that first responders deem it safe to evacuate the building/facility or an “ALL CLEAR” notification is given.

CIFS will participate in campus-wide fire drills. These drills will be scheduled periodically to remind students and staff of the proper notification and evacuation procedures.

Students are informed about the campus safety procedures in the event of an emergency during orientation as well as in the Student Handbook.

## **MISSING STUDENT POLICY**

Members of the CIFS community should immediately report missing persons to the Administrative office. Within CIFS, responsibility for investigation of missing person reports rests with the Dean of Students. There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person. Administration and responding officers will carefully record and investigate the factual circumstances surrounding the disappearance.

If, after investigation, it is determined that an on-campus student has been missing outside of normal tardiness or truancy, then CIFS will notify both the student's designated contact person and local law enforcement that the student is missing.

The lead law enforcement agency in missing person cases originating from CIFS is the Precinct 3 Constables Office. CIFS will notify the Precinct 3 Constables Office within 24 hours of determining that an on-campus student has been missing for 24 hours. Reports of non-campus students missing will be referred to the police department having jurisdiction over the student's local residence, if known, or the student's permanent residence if a local residence cannot be determined.

## **CIFS WEAPONS POLICY**

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service security officers who are authorized to possess weapons may do so within the scope of their authority. No other persons are permitted to possess weapons on Institute property.

## **CIFS ACTIVE SHOOTER PROTOCOL**

The threat of an active shooter situation is taken seriously by Commonwealth Institute. In the event of an active shooter situation on or near campus, the following protocols should be followed in order to minimize possible injury and/or loss of life. Above all, remain calm and follow any orders from faculty, school administration, and/or law enforcement officials. Students should refrain from using cellular phones – even to notify the authorities. These can be fluid and evolving situations that require constant alertness which is hindered by the use of cellular phones and other communication devices. Designated staff members will alert the authorities on behalf of the school.

### **Inside the Building**

At the notification by administration or if gunshots are heard, faculty in the classroom are to do the following: immediately lock the classroom door(s), turn out the lights if the classroom has windows, barricade the door(s) if possible, and quietly instruct students. Students should remain as calm and quiet as possible, get close to the floor, and be ready to evacuate.

When and if it is deemed safe to evacuate the building, students and faculty in the classroom will be notified by school staff or law enforcement. Once instructed to evacuate, personal belongings should be left behind because they can slow an evacuation, and they create a visual threat of weapons concealment for responding law enforcement. If evacuation is ordered, then students, faculty, and staff should follow the designated evacuation routes posted throughout the facility and in all classrooms. Deviations to these routes should ONLY occur when a planned evacuation route is blocked by the presence of an active shooter or when told differently by responding law enforcement. Once outside, everyone should move quickly and keep their hands visible if law enforcement is on the scene. Anyone exiting the building into the student parking areas should make their way across the south side of the property to the west side parking area between the museum and Ella Blvd. Anyone exiting through the front door of the school should follow Barren Springs Dr. also to the west side parking area between the museum and Ella Blvd. During an evacuation, do not stop to move wounded people.



### **Outside the Building/In the Area**

In the event of an active shooter in the area outside the school but not physically inside the building, the entire facility will be placed on lockdown. This announcement will be made by administration and communicated to students and faculty. During lockdown, no one will be allowed to enter or exit the facility. As with an active shooter inside the building, students and faculty in the classroom should lock the door(s), turn out the lights in classrooms with windows, remain quiet, and stay close to the floor. An “ALL CLEAR” announcement will be made to inform everyone when it is safe to exit the classrooms and building.

### **In the Immediate Vicinity**

In the event of an active shooter being present in a person’s immediate vicinity (in the same room, in the same hallway, etc.), they should follow three sequential options depending on the situation: run, hide, and fight back. If possible, it is always advisable to run in the opposite direction from the active shooter and evacuate the facility. Do not stop until reaching the gathering point in the west side parking area, and do not stop to move wounded people. If evacuation is not possible, hide from the active shooter; especially in an area that is difficult for the shooter to access. If running and/or hiding are not viable options, attempts should be made to take action against the shooter. This can involve fighting and using improvised weapons and should be done with aggressiveness, commitment to action, and an intent to incapacitate the shooter.

NOTE: Fighting back against an active shooter should only be done as a last resort when your life is in imminent danger!

## **Section 9**

# **Tuition, Fees, and Financial Policies**

Tuition will be determined according to the modality of enrollment (Online or On-campus). Tuition payments are due by the first day of the quarter for on-campus students. Tuition for online students is due two weeks prior to the start of the quarter to ensure timely delivery of books. Tuition and Fees are subject to change without prior notification.

### **On Campus Classes**

The on-campus tuition rate is \$171 per quarter credit hour.

#### **ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE IN FUNERAL SERVICE**

If the general education courses are taken on campus at CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be \$16,687; payable as follows: \$50 application fee due with application, \$50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation, and \$16,587 tuition (97 quarter credit hours multiplied by \$171).

If all general education courses are transferred to CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be \$12,583; payable as follows: \$50 application fee due with application, \$50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation, and \$12,483 tuition (73 quarter credit hours multiplied by \$171).

#### **CERTIFICATE IN FUNERAL DIRECTING**

If the general education courses are taken on campus at CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be \$10,189; payable as follows: \$50 application fee due with application, \$50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation, and \$10,089 tuition (59 quarter credit hours multiplied by \$171).

If all general education courses are transferred to CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be \$6,769; payable as follows: \$50 application fee due with application, \$50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation, and \$6,669 tuition (39 quarter credit hours multiplied by \$171).

### **Online Classes**

The online tuition rate is \$187 per quarter credit hour.

#### **ONLINE ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE IN FUNERAL SERVICE**

If the general education courses are taken on campus at CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be \$18,239; payable as follows: \$50 application fee due with application, \$50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation, and \$18,139 tuition (97 quarter credit hours multiplied by \$187).

If all general education courses are transferred to CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be \$13,751; payable as follows: \$50 application fee due with application, \$50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation, and \$13,651 tuition (73 quarter credit hours multiplied by \$187).

## **ONLINE CERTIFICATE IN FUNERAL DIRECTING**

If the general education courses are taken on campus at CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be \$11,133; payable as follows: \$50 application fee due with application, \$50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation, and \$11,033 tuition (59 quarter credit hours multiplied by \$187).

If all general education courses are transferred to CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be \$7,393; payable as follows: \$50 application fee due with application, \$50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation, and \$7,293 tuition (39 quarter credit hours multiplied by \$187).

### **PAYMENT PLAN**

CIFS offers quarterly and monthly payment plans to assist students in financing their education. The default plan is to pay tuition on a quarterly basis – for each academic term. For students who choose to enroll in the monthly payment plan, payments are expected to arrive the first day of each month. For online students, the first monthly payment is due 2 weeks prior to the start of each quarter. Students in the final quarter of enrollment will only be allowed to split their tuition into two monthly payments. Following acceptance, please contact the college registrar to discuss the payment plan options.

Any student who has formally withdrawn with a balance owed to CIFS automatically forfeits the option for the payment plan upon any future reenrollment. Additionally, any student who violates the terms of a monthly payment plan will be ineligible for such a plan in the future.

### **LATE PAYMENTS**

If the monthly tuition is paid after the 5th day of the month, then a \$15.00 late fee will be added to the account balance of the current month. If tuition is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, then the student will forfeit their monthly payment plan and full tuition will be due for the remainder of the program. If tuition is not paid in full by the 20th of the month, then the student will be terminated and a \$100.00 administrative fee will be added to the student's account. The student is responsible for all fees on their account including any collection and attorney fees. There is a \$50.00 Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) fee for any returned check given to the Institute for any type of payment. All fees are subject to change without notice. Students that have had checks returned forfeit the option to utilize a tuition payment plan.

### **TYPES OF PAYMENT ACCEPTED**

CIFS accepts various forms of payment including: credit cards, debit cards, cash, money orders, cashier's checks, and personal checks. Credit/debit card payments are accepted in person, through our student portal, or via the Credit Card Form available on the school's website. Payments are NOT accepted over the phone. Do not mail cash! Cash payments are accepted in person ONLY.

### **BOOKS**

All required textbooks are included in the cost of tuition. All students who pay tuition are entitled to one set of textbooks as required by classes. Books will not be released to any student until tuition is paid. CIFS is not responsible for textbooks that have been stolen, lost, or damaged. Students will be directed on how to purchase additional textbooks in such cases. On-campus students may pick up their books on the first day of each quarter or sooner if tuition and academic requirements have been met. Online student books will be mailed to the

address we have on file no earlier than two weeks prior to the start of the quarter. It is the student's responsibility to ensure a current mailing address is on file. All books are sent via **UPS/ Signature Required**. If you would like your books delivered to your work address, then you must contact the school in writing at least 3 weeks before the start of the quarter. Textbooks that are returned to CIFS will be held for pick up or will be mailed again at the student's expense.

## **EXAMINATION FEES**

National Board Examination:	\$570.00 (\$285.00 per section); payable to the ICFSEB
Texas State Board Examination:	\$285.00 (Arts Section); payable to the ICFSEB
Texas Mortuary Law Examination:	\$89.00; payable to the TFSC
CIFS Certification Remediation:	\$150 (includes 2 attempts per exam section); payable to CIFS
CIFS Certification Examination:	\$39.00 per section (no charge per section for first attempt); <i>this only applies to any graduate prior to January 1, 2018.</i>

CIFS administers only the Certification Exam. The other exams/fees are governed by entities other than CIFS and are subject to change without notice.

## **FEDERAL TITLE IV PROGRAMS AVAILABLE**

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service participates in Title IV Federal Assistance, and the purpose is to remove the financial barriers that prevent access to educational opportunities. Financial Aid programs available to students are:

### **FEDERAL PELL GRANT**

This is a need-based federal grant designed to assist the student with her/his degree plan. ([www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov))

### **DIRECT SUBSIDIZED LOAN**

This is a need-based federal loan available to dependent and independent students. The amount of eligibility is set by the Department of Education. Interest on this loan is deferred while in school and during your grace period, which is 6 months after graduation or date of withdrawal. ([www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov))

### **DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN**

This is a loan available to independent and dependent students and the amount of eligibility is set by the Department of Education. Interest is charged on any dispersed amount and during the student's 6-month grace period following graduation or date of withdrawal. ([www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov))

### **DIRECT PARENT PLUS LOAN**

This is a need-based loan available to qualifying parents of dependent students to use for expenses related to cost of attendance not covered by grants and other student aid. Dependent students whose parents request a Plus loan are eligible to borrow up to the cost of attendance less any other financial assistance received. This loan is a credit-based loan. ([www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov))

## GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING FEDERAL LOANS

1. All loans are subject to the government's origination fee as required by the Department of Education regulations.
2. All loans are subject to interest applied to the principal and are required to be repaid by the student.
3. Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized loans have a six-month grace period beginning on your graduation day or date of termination. Repayment starts after the grace period.
4. Repayment of Parent Plus loans begins once your loan has been fully disbursed (paid out). You may request a deferment while the student is enrolled in the AAS program at least half time.
5. Defaulting (failure to repay) on loans permits the loan guarantee agency and federal government to take any legal measures to collect the loan, including denial of issuance or renewal of your professional license.
6. Entrance counseling and a master promissory note are requirements for receiving subsidized and unsubsidized student loans.
7. Exit counseling prepares you for loan repayment. This is required when you graduate, withdraw, or drop below half time enrollment.

## RETURN OF UNEARNED TITLE IV FUNDS

1. Federal regulations state that students may forfeit a portion of their federal student financial assistance if they fail to complete the program of study in which they were enrolled.
2. This policy includes students either receiving or eligible to receive federal student assistance authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act.
3. Title IV includes Pell Grants; Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans; and Parent Plus Loans awarded under the Federal Family Educational Loan programs and Direct Loan Programs.
4. This policy includes students that withdraw or terminate from Commonwealth Institute after a specific timeframe and/or during the first 60% of any quarter (disbursement period).
5. Eligible Title IV students not completing the required 60% of any quarter are considered NOT to have earned all the federal assistance awarded during that disbursement period.
6. The unearned portion will be determined by using the Department of Education's guidelines and returned to the lending agency according to the prescribed guidelines.
7. In some cases, the return of unearned Title IV funds to the lending agency will result in the student owing Commonwealth Institute for a portion of the tuition and fees.
8. Return of unearned Title IV funds also may result in the student owing a refund on unearned Federal assistance to the U.S. Department of Education.

## ELIGIBILITY

A student is eligible to receive federal assistance if they meet the following criteria:

1. An applicant must be one of the following: a U.S. citizen or national; a U.S. permanent resident or other eligible noncitizen; or a citizen of the Freely Associated States: the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republics of Palau and the Marshall Islands (These students can only receive aid from some of the FSA programs and do not have an A-number/ARN).
2. Be enrolled and accepted in the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service (**Certificate in Funeral Directing students are not eligible for Title IV Funds**).

3. An applicant must demonstrate a financial need for Pell Grants and direct subsidized loans.
4. An applicant cannot owe an overpayment for previously awarded Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), or student loans.
5. An applicant cannot be in default for previously awarded loans.
6. A student must make **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS** as presented in the Academic Policies under **GRADING** to continue to receive financial assistance. Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress will result in suspension of financial assistance until the student achieves the academic progress standard.
7. The Law suspends aid eligibility for students convicted under federal or state law of selling or possessing illegal drugs.
8. If you are a male, aged 18 through 25, you must comply with the Selective Service permission to register by checking a box on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
9. Eligible students must be enrolled at least ½ time.

## **HOW TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE/FINANCIAL AID**

*An applicant, to be considered for Title IV Federal Financial Assistance, must do the following:*

1. The applicant must have been accepted to CIFS as outlined in the admission policies before any financial aid is processed.
2. Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at the U.S. Department of Education's web site [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Please use **CIFS school code 003556** to have application routed to the school. You must complete the FAFSA using your previous year's income tax return.
3. Apply for Financial Assistance using the FAFSA at least four (4) months prior to your scheduled enrollment date.
4. Allow four to six weeks for the Department of Education's processing center to process your FAFSA. Once the Department of Education processes your FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) and CIFS will receive an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR).
5. If an applicant's FAFSA is chosen for verification by the U.S. Department of Education, then verification paperwork will be requested by the CIFS Financial Aid Office. Documentation requested should be submitted to the Financial Aid Office within five working days from date of request.
6. All financial aid documentation and a signed and dated CIFS Award Letter must be completed four weeks prior to the first day of class. If you have not received and accepted the Award Letter, then you will be required to pay your tuition according to the payment plan policy.

## **OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

### **VETERAN BENEFITS**

Veterans requesting educational benefits should contact Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service's Registrar for assistance in obtaining VA benefits. To ensure that your benefits are available when classes start, the applicant should have all paperwork completed and accepted by the school five months prior to enrollment. The Veteran is responsible to pay all tuition at the beginning of each quarter. Benefits are paid directly to the Veteran, after the application and certification process is complete. Chapter 33 is paid directly to the school. Veterans missing more than 20 hours of class time within a month or exceed the absenteeism policy as described in the CIFS Catalog will forfeit their benefits according to the VA guidelines. Veterans taking a Leave of Absence will forfeit their benefits during their leave and will be reinstated upon re-enrollment. Veterans are required to meet satisfactory progress standards as prescribed in CIFS Catalog to ensure continued benefits. Failure to do so will also forfeit your benefits.

### **VA REHABILITATION**

The applicant must meet the same enrollment requirements as the Veterans benefits. The applicant must submit their voucher to the Registrar's Office 60 days prior to enrollment. Benefits are paid directly to Commonwealth Institute. Benefits may vary according to the VA guidelines.

### **TEXAS REHABILITATION COMMISSION (TRC)**

Applicant must meet the TRC requirements to be eligible for TRC benefits. Applicant must have TRC voucher approved and presented to the Registrar's Office 30 days prior to enrollment. The maximum benefit is \$3,000 from TRC. Any class hours missed by the student will not be covered by TRC. To be eligible for TRC benefits the applicant must apply through the Department of Education using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for Pell Grants. Tuition not covered by TRC or Pell Grants can be paid out of pocket, or if the student is enrolled in the A.A.S. degree they can obtain student loans to cover the additional tuition. The student is required by TRC to submit a copy of their transcript and attendance to their TRC counselors.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

R.L. Waltrip Scholarship  
Dr. George Poston Memorial Scholarship  
Houston Funeral Directors and Morticians Association Scholarship  
Houston Metropolitan Funeral Directors Association Scholarship  
Southeast Texas Funeral Directors Association Scholarship  
Texas Sales Club Scholarship  
100 Black Women of Funeral Service Scholarship  
Texas Funeral Directors Association Scholarship  
American Board of Funeral Service Education Scholarship  
International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards NBE Scholarship  
Various state association scholarships  
Select Educational Trust Second Career Scholarship  
SCI Mortuary Science Scholarship

## **CANCELLATION POLICY**

A full refund will be made to any student who cancels their enrollment within 72 hours of the first day of the academic term for which the enrollment agreement has been signed. If a student's enrollment is cancelled by either the student or the Institute after the first 72 hours, then the school may retain not more than \$100 in any administrative fees charged, as well as items of extra expense that are necessary for the portion of the program attended and stated separately on the enrollment agreement.

## **REFUND POLICY FOR ALL STUDENTS (Campus & Online)**

1. Refund computations will be based on scheduled course time of class attendance through the last date of attendance. Leaves of absence, suspensions, and school holidays will not be counted as part of the scheduled class attendance.
2. The effective date of termination for refund purposes will be the earliest of the following:
  - (a) The last day of attendance, if the student is terminated by the school; or
  - (b) The date of receipt of written notice of official withdrawal from the student.
  - (c) Ten school days following the last date of attendance.
3. If tuition and fees are collected in advance of entrance, and if after expiration of the 72-hour cancellation period the student does not enter/start school, then not more than \$100 in any administrative fees charged shall be retained by the Institute.
4. If a student enters a program and withdraws or is otherwise terminated after the cancellation period, then the Institute may retain not more than \$100 in any administrative fees charged for the entire program. The minimum refund of the remaining tuition and fees will be the pro rata portion of tuition, fees, and other charges that the number of hours remaining in the portion of the course or program for which the student has been charged after the effective date of termination bears to the total number of hours in the portion of the course or program for which the student has been charged, except that a student may not collect a refund if the student has completed 75 percent or more of the total number of hours in the portion of the program for which the student has been charged on the effective date of termination.
5. Refunds for items of extra expense to the student, such as books, tools, or other supplies are to be handled separately from refund of tuition and other academic fees. The student will not be required to purchase instructional supplies, books and tools until such time as these materials are required. Once these materials are purchased, no refund will be made. For full refunds, the school can withhold costs for these types of items from the refund as long as they were necessary for the portion of the program attended and separately stated in the enrollment agreement. Any such items not required for the portion of the program attended must be included in the refund.
6. A student who withdraws for a reason unrelated to the student's academic status after the 75 percent completion mark and requests a grade at the time of withdrawal shall be given a grade of "incomplete" and permitted to re-enroll in the course or program during the 12-month period following the date the student withdrew without payment of additional tuition for that portion of the course or program.



7. A full refund of all tuition and fees is due and refundable in each of the following cases:
  - (a) An enrollee is not accepted by the school;
  - (b) If the course of instruction is discontinued by the school and this prevents the student from completing the course; or
  - (c) If the student's enrollment was procured as a result of any misrepresentation in advertising, promotional materials of the school, or representations by the owner or representatives of the school.

*A full or partial refund may also be due in other circumstances of program deficiencies or violations of requirements for career schools and colleges.*

### **REFUND POLICY FOR STUDENTS CALLED TO ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE (TEC 132.0611)**

A student of Commonwealth Institute who withdraws as a result of the student being called to active duty in a military service of the United States or the Texas National Guard may elect one of the following options for each program in which the student is enrolled:

- 1) If tuition and fees are collected in advance of the withdrawal, a pro rata refund of any tuition, fees, or other charges paid by the student for the program and a cancellation of any unpaid tuition, fees, or other charges owed by the student for the portion of the program the student does not complete following withdrawal;
- 2) A grade of incomplete with the designation “withdrawn-military” for the courses in the program, other than courses for which the student has previously received a grade on the student’s transcript, and the right to re-enroll in the program, or a substantially equivalent program if that program is no longer available, not later than the first anniversary of the date the student is discharged from active military duty without payment of additional tuition, fees, or other charges for the program other than any previously unpaid balance of the original tuition, fees, and charges for books for the program; or
- 3) The assignment of an appropriate final grade or credit for the courses in the program, but only if the instructor or instructors of the program determine that the student has:
  - (a) Satisfactorily completed at least 90 percent of the required coursework for the program; and
  - (b) Demonstrated sufficient mastery of the program material to receive credit for completing the program.

The payment of any refunds will be totally completed such that the refund instrument has been negotiated or credited into the proper account(s) within 60 days after the effective date of termination.

# Section 10

## Programs of Study

### ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE

The Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service is issued to students who complete the college level curriculum of funeral service arts and sciences. This degree is designed to lead students to licensure and employment as a funeral director and embalmer. **The A.A.S. Degree in Funeral Service program and Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service are accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097 (816) 233-3747.**

Website: [www.abfse.org](http://www.abfse.org)

The Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service (A.A.S.) is designed to teach students the skills and abilities essential for employment as an embalmer and funeral director. Graduates of this program will be able to disinfect, preserve, and/ or restore human remains through embalming and restorative art for the purposes of viewing, services/rites, and final disposition. They will learn how to conduct various funeral service ceremonies. Additionally, they will be able to conduct funeral arrangement conferences with families, conduct necessary funeral home paperwork and management tasks, and be aware of proper workplace safety guidelines for funeral service personnel.

Graduates of this program may find entry-level employment as an apprentice/intern/provisional licensee with funeral homes, embalming services, cemeteries, and affiliated funeral service companies. Individuals seeking these credentials must also meet the requirements of the appropriate state licensing agencies.

To earn the A.A.S. degree, the student must fulfill all requirements for the General Education Core of 24 quarter credit hours as outlined in this catalog section, the Specialized and Related Courses, and all clinical labs and externships. The A.A.S. degree is an accelerated program. Students will be able to complete the program in 15 months (five, eleven-week quarters). If a student transfers all of the General Education Courses, then they will be able to complete the program in 12 months (four, eleven-week quarters). The A.A.S. degree program is intended to be taken as a full-time curriculum. Classes are not allowed to be taken on a part-time basis except in certain, special circumstances whereby transfer credit has been granted.

### ONLINE ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE

A student may elect to complete the Associate of Applied Science degree via online instruction. Courses taken through this option follow the same academic term and length, rigorous academic coursework, and admission requirements as those on campus. The online course instructional delivery will follow the on-campus classroom instruction so that all students, regardless of modality, are learning the same information at the same time.

**This program is NOT delivered in a self-paced or correspondence method approach.** In general, online course topics/lessons are presented on a weekly basis. All online courses will have at least one weekly assignment to assess the material presented that week. Students may go through material and complete assignments according to their own schedule; provided that weekly deadlines are met. In most instances, it is

neither required for students to log in at a specific time nor interact with instructors and/or other students in real-time. However, regular participation and substantive online interaction are strictly required.

All quizzes and exams will be delivered through the school's Learning Management System (LMS) - Canvas. To ensure exam security and academic honesty, a third-party remote proctoring service is utilized. This involves the use of a webcam, microphone, and high-speed/reliable internet. However, CIFS reserves the right to require that exams be administered in a proctored setting.

## **EXTERNSHIPS AND LABS: CAMPUS & ONLINE**

All A.A.S. degree students, campus and online, must complete the curricular labs and externships as a requirement for graduation. This translates the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom into practical, hands-on experience. Included are the three following areas: funeral directing, embalming, and restorative art.

- **The Funeral Directing Externship** consists of two parts, activities and arrangements. The activities portion requires students to attend and observe 5 different types of live funeral services/ceremonies outside of the classroom. The arrangements portion involves students completing 5 arrangement conferences from first-call to contract – these may be completed in a mock setting on campus.
- **The Embalming Externship** may be completed wholly on campus. All students will actively participate in the arterial and cavity embalming of at least 10 human remains. Competency in numerous embalming tasks will be assessed.
- **The Restorative Art Lab** consists of 10 hours of clinical instruction regarding wax restoration, feature modeling, and mortuary cosmetology. Students will use photographs to recreate an entire face; with a focus on facial proportions and the specific facial features. This lab must be completed on campus.

**Campus AAS:** In general, campus degree students will complete all lab and externship requirements on the CIFS campus. The only exception is the Funeral Directing Externship activities which cannot be completed in a mock setting and is an assignment in a 1<sup>st</sup> quarter specialized course. Embalming is done during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of specialized courses – one afternoon per week according to a preset schedule. During the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of specialized courses, campus students will complete both the Restorative Art Lab and the Funeral Directing Externship arrangements. These 4<sup>th</sup> quarter requirements typically take place during normal school hours.

**Online AAS:** Online degree students are required to travel to CIFS, at their expense, to complete all three requirements; other than the Funeral Directing Externship activities which follow the same format as that of the campus students (i.e., an assignment). All three externships and labs are completed in one week (Monday-Friday). In rare circumstances, a week may not suffice due to the availability of embalming cases. However, CIFS has numerous sources for embalming cases and makes every effort to ensure that all requirements are completed within the allotted time.

During the Embalming II course (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of specialized courses), online students sign up for their week on campus after being contacted by the Institute's Clinical Coordinator. The available weeks generally start around the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of specialized courses and run through the last week before final exams and exit exams. The sign-up schedule is completed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Online student groups are

limited to a maximum of 5 students per week. During a student's week on campus, they will complete a minimum of 10 clinical embalming cases, the restorative art lab hours, and the funeral directing externship arrangements. Each day starts at 9:00 AM and goes until the last embalming case for the day is completed.

***NOTE: Online students are responsible for all costs associated with travel, transportation, lodging, food, etc.***

For additional information on labs and externships, see Section 5 in the Student Handbook.

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE A.A.S. PROGRAM (Campus or Online)**

- Completion of all general education and specialized courses either by transfer or through enrollment for a total of 97 quarter credit hours. A minimum of 30 quarter credit hours are required to be completed at CIFS (Residency Requirement);
- Pass each specialized course with a minimum final letter grade of "C";
- Achieve a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in all coursework completed at CIFS;
- Discharge of all financial obligations to Commonwealth Institute 30 days prior to commencement;
- For those receiving federal student loans, complete financial aid exit counseling; and
- Completion of all three clinical requirements: embalming, restorative art, and funeral directing.

# COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

## ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE

Prefix & Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Extern	Clock Hours	Total Credit Hours
<b>GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES:</b>						
Completed Prior to Admission or Taken at Commonwealth						
BIOL 1408	Biology I	66	0	0	66	6 qtr.
ENGL 1301	Composition and Rhetoric I	55	0	0	55	5 qtr.
HIST 1302	United States History II	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MATH 1314	College Algebra	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
PSYC 2301	General Psychology	55	0	0	55	5 qtr.
<b>Total Hours:</b>					<b>264</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>SPECIALIZED AND RELATED COURSES:</b>						
<b>First Quarter</b>		<b>Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service</b>				
BUSI 1302	Operating a Business	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
BUSI 2304	Business Communication	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1115	Occupational Safety and Ethics	22	0	0	22	2 qtr.
MSCI 1201	Anatomy I	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 1212	Funeral Directing & Externship	33	0	10	43	3 qtr.
MSCI 1317	History of Funeral Service	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
<b>Total Hours</b>					<b>230</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Second Quarter</b>		<b>Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service</b>				
BUSI 2301	Business Law	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1118	Sociology of Funeral Service	22	0	0	22	2 qtr.
MSCI 1202	Anatomy II	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 1203	Embalming I	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 1307	Microbiology	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1314	Mortuary Administration	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
<b>Total Hours</b>					<b>220</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Third Quarter</b>		<b>Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service</b>				
MSCI 1204	Embalming II & Externship	33	10	0	43	3 qtr.
MSCI 1208	Restorative Art I	22	0	0	22	2 qtr.
MSCI 1219	Mortuary Law	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 1306	Forensic Pathology	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1313	Funeral Merchandising	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
<b>Total Hours</b>					<b>186</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Fourth Quarter</b>		<b>Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service</b>				
MSCI 1005	Embalming III & Externship	22	10	0	32	2 qtr.
MSCI 1020	Board Review	11	0	0	11	1 qtr.
MSCI 1109	Restorative Art II & Lab	22	11	0	33	2 qtr.
MSCI 1310	Thanatochemistry	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1316	Counseling/Grief	44	5	0	49	4 qtr.
OFAD 1307	Office Accounting	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
<b>Total Hours</b>					<b>213</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1067</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1113</b>	<b>97</b>

## **CERTIFICATE in FUNERAL DIRECTING**

The Certificate in Funeral Directing is issued to students who complete the college level curriculum of funeral service arts. It is designed to teach students the skills and abilities essential for employment as a funeral director. It is the students' responsibility to verify that the Certificate program is recognized in the state for which they are seeking licensure. **This academic program is designed to meet specific state or professional needs. It is not accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Students graduating from this program are not eligible to take the National Board Examination or any state board examination for which graduation from an ABFSE accredited program is required.**

Graduates of this program will be able to prepare, other than by embalming, a dead human body for final disposition. They will learn how to conduct funeral service ceremonies of various religious, fraternal, military, traditional, humanistic, and non-traditional customs. Additionally, they will be able to conduct funeral arrangement conferences with families, conduct necessary paperwork in funeral home management, and be aware of proper workplace safety guidelines for funeral service personnel. Graduates of this program may find entry-level employment as an apprentice/intern/provisional licensee with funeral homes, cemeteries, pre-need sales, and affiliated funeral service companies.

To earn the Certificate in Funeral Directing, students must complete 20 quarter credit hours of general education courses and 39 quarter credit hours of specialized and related coursework (three, eleven-week quarters). The general education courses may be completed at CIFS or transferred from an accredited college or university. Students receiving transfer credit for the general education courses may complete this program in six months (two, eleven-week quarters). A clinical component is not required for this program.

## **ONLINE CERTIFICATE in FUNERAL DIRECTING**

A student may elect to complete the Certificate in Funeral Directing program via online instruction. Courses taken through this option follow the same academic term and length, rigorous academic coursework, and admission requirements as those on campus. The online course instructional delivery will follow the on-campus classroom instruction so that all students, regardless of modality, are learning the same information at the same time.

**This program is NOT delivered in a self-paced or correspondence method approach.** In general, online course topics/lessons are presented on a weekly basis. All online courses will have at least one weekly assignment to assess the material presented that week. Students may go through material and complete assignments according to their own schedule; provided that weekly deadlines are met. In most instances, it is neither required for students to log in at a specific time nor interact with instructors and/or other students in real-time. However, regular participation and substantive online interaction are strictly required.

All quizzes and exams will be delivered through the school's Learning Management System (LMS) - Canvas. To ensure exam security and academic honesty, a third-party remote proctoring service is utilized. This involves the use of a webcam, microphone, and high-speed/reliable internet. However, CIFS reserves the right to require that exams be administered in a proctored setting.

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CERTIFICATE IN FUNERAL DIRECTING PROGRAM (Campus or Online)**

- Completion of all general education and specialized courses either by transfer or through enrollment for a total of 59 quarter credit hours;
- A minimum of 30 quarter credit hours must be completed at CIFS (Residency Requirement);
- Pass each specialized course with a minimum final letter grade of "C";
- Achieve a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in all coursework completed at CIFS; and
- Discharge of all financial obligations to Commonwealth Institute 30 days prior to commencement.

# COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

## CERTIFICATE in FUNERAL DIRECTING

Prefix & Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Extern	Clock Hours	Credit Hours
<b>GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES:</b>						
Completed Prior to Admission or Taken at Commonwealth						
BIOL 1408	Biology I	66	0	0	66	6 qtr.
ENGL 1301	Composition and Rhetoric I	55	0	0	55	5 qtr.
MATH 1314	College Algebra	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
PSYC 2301	General Psychology	55	0	0	55	5 qtr.
<b>Total Hours:</b>					<b>220</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>SPECIALIZED AND RELATED COURSES:</b>						
<b>First Quarter</b>		<b>Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service</b>				
BUSI 1302	Operating a Business	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1115	Occupational Safety and Ethics	22	0	0	22	2 qtr.
MSCI 1212	Funeral Directing & Externship	33	0	10	38	3 qtr.
MSCI 1219	Mortuary Law	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 1313	Funeral Merchandising	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1317	History of Funeral Service	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
<b>Total Hours</b>					<b>225</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Second Quarter</b>		<b>Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service</b>				
BUSI 2301	Business Law	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1020	Board Review	11	0	0	11	1 qtr.
MSCI 1118	Sociology of Funeral Service	22	0	0	22	2 qtr.
MSCI 1314	Mortuary Administration	44	0	0	49	4 qtr.
MSCI 1316	Counseling/Grief	44	5	0	49	4 qtr.
OFAD 1307	Office Accounting	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
<b>Total Hours</b>					<b>219</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>649</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>59</b>



# Section 11

## Course Descriptions by Area

### HOW COURSEWORK IS CLASSIFIED

Courses are classified as either general education OR specialized and related courses. General education are those foundational courses traditionally offered in freshman and sophomore years at institutions of higher learning. The specialized and related courses are those that are considered to be major-specific. Specialized courses are identified by the prefix MSCI (mortuary science). Related courses are those other than the general education but with a prefix other than MSCI.

### Coursework is divided into the following areas:

- **Public Health and Technical (32 quarter credit hours)**
- **Business Management and Professional (24 quarter credit hours)**
- **Social Sciences/Humanities (10 quarter credit hours)**
- **Legal, Ethical, & Regulatory (7 quarter credit hours)**
- **General Education (24 quarter credit hours)**

**Course Enumeration:** Each course is numerically identified according to the course enumeration system. The four-letter prefix represents the department or area. The first digit of the course number indicates the course level (1 or higher indicates college level coursework). The second digit refers to the value of each course in semester credit hours. The third and fourth digits refer to the course sequence within the subject field.

### PUBLIC HEALTH AND TECHNICAL

**MSCI 1005 Embalming III & Externship...**2 quarter hours, Prerequisite: MSCI 1204 Embalming II or by permission. The student will learn the embalming treatment and the handling of special cases. The student is required to actively participate in the arterial and cavity embalming of ten (10) human remains minimum. Cases must be completed under the direct supervision of Commonwealth Institute's clinical embalming instructors or Commonwealth's clinical supervisor. Cases are available at Commonwealth Institute's preparation room. (22/10/0/2)

**MSCI 1109 Restorative Art II & Lab...**2 quarter hours, Prerequisite: MSCI 1208 Restorative Art I or by permission. A continuation of Restorative Art. 1, the student will learn color theory, cosmetic applications, wax treatments, suturing, non-wax treatments, hair restoration, hypodermic tissue building, and death masks. The laboratory is designed to supplement the theoretical information provided in the lecture class. Students model facial features from wax and affix to a plastic skull and practice mixing and applying cosmetics to a facial mask. (22/11/0/2)

**MSCI 1115 Occupational Safety and Ethics...**2 quarter hours. The student will learn workplace safety guidelines as related to funeral service personnel. This will include: Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidelines for Hazard Communication Standard, Formaldehyde Monitoring, Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, Infection Control and Preparation Room Requirements. Ethical behavior and standards are explored. (22/0/0/2)

**MSCI 1201 Anatomy I...**3 quarter hours. In this course, the student will learn correct terminology and the basic organ systems of the body. Topics include skeletal, digestive, excretory, respiratory, integumentary, endocrine, reproductive, and nervous systems. (33/0/0/3)

**MSCI 1202 Anatomy II**...3 quarter hours, Prerequisite: MSCI 1201 Anatomy 1 or by permission.

A continuation of the study of the systems of the body, the student will learn the muscular, lymph, and circulatory systems. (33/0/0/3)

**MSCI 1203 Embalming I**...3 quarter hours, Prerequisite: MSCI 1115 Occ. Safety & Ethics or by permission.

The student will learn the history of embalming, early contributors to the field and their influence to the embalming procedures. The student will learn the instruments, equipment, and chemicals used in the embalming process. The student will learn how to perform case analysis and determine which procedure(s) will be used. (33/0/0/3)

**MSCI 1204 Embalming II & Externship**...3 quarter hours, Prerequisite: MSCI 1203 Embalming I or by permission.

The student will learn linear and anatomical guides and anatomical limits and how they will apply them to the embalming process. They will learn methods of creating injection pressure and how to calculate solution strengths. They will learn the various chemicals and their properties used in the embalming process. The student will learn how to perform cavity embalming and the importance of this procedure. The student is required to actively participate in the arterial and cavity embalming of ten (10) human remains minimum. Cases must be completed under the direct supervision of Commonwealth Institute's clinical embalming instructors or Commonwealth's clinical supervisor. Cases are available at Commonwealth Institute's preparation room. (33/10/0/3)

**MSCI 1208 Restorative Art I**...2 quarter hours.

An orientation and introduction to restorative art. The student will learn terminology, terms of anatomical direction, bones and muscles of the cranium, facial proportions, facial profiles, geometric head shapes and detailed study of the parts of the features. Also included are the classifications and descriptions of facial markings. (22/0/0/2)

**MSCI 1306 Forensic Pathology**...4 quarter hours.

Student will learn general disease processes including terminology related to disease; causes of disease, cellular reaction to injury; structural abnormalities, inflammation and repair; neoplasms and cysts; various diseases of the blood, heart, blood vessels, digestive system, respiratory tract, urinary and reproductive systems, nervous system, bones and joints, and endocrine glands. (44/0/0/4)

**MSCI 1307 Microbiology**...4 quarter hours.

Students will learn aspects of microbiology related to the causative agents of disease, methods of transmission, and techniques for disinfection and sterilization. Topics include but are not limited to: beneficial microorganisms, pathogens, host-parasite interactions, natural and acquired immunity, bacterial morphology, and physiology. (44/0/0/4)

**MSCI 1310 Thanatochemistry**...4 quarter hours.

Students will learn the fundamental concepts of chemistry, atomic structure, the periodic table, valence, and chemical equations. They study types of solutions, are introduced to organic chemistry and biochemistry and will learn how chemistry is used in the embalming process. (44/0/0/4)

## **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL**

**BUSI 1302 Operating a Business**...4 quarter hours.

The student will learn the practical considerations involved in starting and operating a business. Topics include analyzing potential market, acquiring financial backing, establishing record-keeping systems, making marketing and pricing decisions, managing financial and human resources, purchasing, controlling inventory, sales forecasting, meeting legal requirements, and using professional resources. (44/0/0/4)

**BUSI 2304 Business Communications**...4 quarter hours.

The student will learn the principles of effective written and oral business communications. Activities include writing business messages for a variety of business situations, writing both formal and informal business reports and presenting business data orally. (44/0/0/4)

**MSCI 1020 Board Review**...1 quarter hour; Prerequisite: Completion of or concurrent enrollment of the last academic quarter courses and eligible for graduation.

This course is customized to acclimate each student to the expectations of licensure examinations. Including both current rules and regulations of the state(s) in which they intend to seek licensure and subject matter found on the National Board Examination (or comparable examination). As applicable, this course will help prepare the student for academic success on state law exam(s) required of individuals seeking licensure in the various parts of the country and on the National Board Examination. (11/0/0/1)

**MSCI 1212 Funeral Directing & Externship**...3 quarter hours.

A course in directing the various types of funeral services. The student will learn funeral service professional ethics and the role of the funeral director in conducting various religious, fraternal, military, traditional, non-traditional, and humanistic funeral ceremonies including cultural, ethnic, and geographic customs. The student will also be required to document attendance at/participation in differing types of funerary activities and/or services. (33/0/10/3)

**MSCI 1313 Funeral Merchandising**...4 quarter hours.

A course in funeral home management and practice that reviews the aims and objectives of the funeral home practitioner. The student will learn the component parts and the construction of caskets and outer burial containers and how to professionally arrange the selection room and the methodology for pricing funeral service merchandise. Various experts from the funeral service profession provide special presentations and/or field trips that will incorporate the theoretical with practical aspects of funeral service merchandising. (44/0/0/4)

**MCSI 1314 Mortuary Administration**...4 quarter hours.

A course in funeral home management and practice. The student will learn contemporary code of ethics for funeral service, various facets of funeral service practice including: the steps from first call to final disposition, funeral records and forms, Social Security and Veteran benefits, professional relationships, establishing and maintaining funeral home facilities and equipment, and supervision and training personnel. The student will also learn the techniques in conducting the funeral arrangement through role-play exercises. (44/0/0/4)

**OFAD 1307 Office Accounting**...4 quarter hours.

This course is designed to develop an understanding of an accounting system. The student will learn how to analyze business transactions and how they relate to the accounting cycle, primarily a small service and merchandising business. The student will learn journalizing, posting, preparing a trial balance, completing financial reports and computing payroll and payroll taxes, and use of the computer as a business tool. (44/0/0/4)

## **SOCIAL SCIENCES/HUMANITIES**

**MSCI 1316 Counseling/Dynamics of Grief**...4 quarter hours.

The student will learn how grief affects the deceased's family and the role of the funeral in grief resolution. Grief reactions, grief cycles, and the various stages of grief will be explored. The student will learn an understanding of the basic methods and procedures of grief counseling and the many elements that a funeral director brings into the counseling session. The student learns to recognize and understands his/her own personal resources for coping with loss situations. (44/5/0/4)

**MSCI 1317 History of Funeral Service**...4 quarter hours.

This course traces the development of funeral service from the ancient Egyptians to modern times. The students will learn the historical roots of modern practices. (44/0/0/4)

**MSCI 1118 Sociology of Funeral Service**...2 quarter hours.

A general survey of sociology, the orientation, definition, application and purpose of culture, mores, folkways, and the study of the family unit. The students will learn how each of these impact death rituals. (22/0/0/2)

## **LEGAL ETHICAL AND REGULATORY**

### **BUSI 2301 Business Law...4 quarter hours.**

A course in the principles of law which form the legal framework for business activities. The student will learn the legal framework for business activities that includes applicable statutes, torts, contracts, personal and real property, wills and trusts, and consumer law. (44/0/0/4)

### **MSCI 1219 Mortuary Law...3 quarter hours.**

This course will provide the legal fundamentals that apply to funeral service. The students will learn the corporative state laws, rules, and regulations that pertain to funeral service; laws regarding the rights and duties and responsibilities of funeral service professional; and licensure requirements for funeral directors, embalmers and funeral establishments. (33/0/0/3)

## **GENERAL EDUCATION CORE**

### **BIOL 1408 Biology I...6 quarter hours.**

A contemporary course in which the student will learn the applications of the scientific method, cellular and molecular biology, biochemistry, classical and human genetics, and virology. (66/0/0/6)

### **MATH 1314 College Algebra...4 quarter hours.**

Topics include quadratics, polynomial and exponential functions, graphing, linear equations & inequalities, factoring techniques and algebraic fractions. (44/0/0/4)

### **ENGL 1301 Composition and Rhetoric I...5 quarter hours.**

This course provides students with the rhetorical foundations that prepares them for the demands of professional writing. The student will learn how to recognize and deploy the strategies and processes that translate into effective written products in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes. (55/0/0/5)

### **PSYC 2301 General Psychology...5 quarter hours.**

The student will learn the elementary principles of human behavior. (55/0/0/5)

### **HIST 1302 United States History II...4 quarter hours.**

A survey of U.S. history from the end of Reconstruction to the present. The student will learn how the United States emerged as a world power and the subsequent assumption of international responsibilities. (44/0/0/4)

**APPROVED AND REGULATED BY THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION, CAREER  
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, AUSTIN, TEXAS.**

**The information contained in this Catalog is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cody L. Lopasky', written in a cursive style.

Cody L. Lopasky, MA, CFSP  
President

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## Section 12

### Additional Campus Resources



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
FUNERAL HISTORY

<https://www.nmfh.org/>

Another asset that Commonwealth Institute has, to which no other mortuary college in the world can attest, is the National Museum of Funeral History. Students learn funeral service through interaction with the Museum's exhibits, which truly make the heritage of this great profession come alive.

The Museum teaches history, sociology, ethics, religions, lifestyles and a myriad of other lessons. Students at CIFS will experience sights and sounds of funeral history along with obtaining information that students can never receive anywhere else.

The National Museum of Funeral History is a jewel in the crown of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service. Couple this rich educational resource with excellent instruction and a genuine love of funeral service, any student will be hard pressed to locate a better combination!

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