COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE of Funeral Service

Proudly Serving as a Non-Profit Institution for Higher Education

2026 – 2027
Catalog

415 Barren Springs Drive
Houston, Texas 77090
1-800-628-1580
281-873-0262
Fax: 281-873-5232
Website: www.commonwealth.edu
Email: information@commonwealth.edu

COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

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

CATALOG

2026 – 2027

Catalog Volume 22, Published and Effective April 1, 2026

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, marital status, 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 officer:

René Altheimer
Registrar
415 Barren Springs Dr.
Houston, TX 77090
(281) 873-0262 or r.altheimer@commonwealth.edu

Commonwealth Institute 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

Texas Funeral Service Commission
1801 N. Congress, Suite 11-800
Austin, TX 78701
512-936-2474
Fax: 512-479-5064
www.tfsc.texas.gov

Texas Workforce Commission
Career Schools and Colleges
101 East 15th Street
Austin, TX 78778
512-936-3100
www.twc.texas.gov

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Publication Info and Policy Against Harassment & Discrimination	2
Welcome Letter from the President of Commonwealth Institute	6
Section 1 – Academic Calendar	
2026	7
2027	8
Section 2 – About Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service	
Mission Statement of CIFS	10
Ethics and Integrity Statement	10
Learning Objectives of CIFS	10
History of CIFS	11
Accreditation	12
Approvals	12
Memberships	12
Statement of Ownership	13
Board of Regents	13
Administration & Staff	14
Faculty	15
CIFS Advisory Board	16
Section 3 – Campus Facilities	
Hours of Operation	17
Security	17
Weather Closures	17
CIFS Social Media	17
Location	18
Building, Furniture & Grounds	18
Computer Lab/ Internet Use	19
Smoke-Free Building	19
Campus Parking	19
Student Lockers	19
Disabled Persons	19
Library	19
Clinical Facilities	20
County Funerals	20
Section 4 – Student Life	
Recreation & Culture	21
Student Body	21
Living Accommodations Off Campus	21
Alumni Services	21
Placement/Job Information	21
Student Council & Honor Society	22
Photo/Video/Social Media Release Policy	22
Section 5 – State Licensing Requirements	
General Rules	23
Students Seeking Licensure in Texas	23
NBE Certification	24
CIFS Certification Examination	24
Licensure Examinations	25
NBE and Licensure	25
NBE Pass Rate, Graduation Rate, and Employment Rate Disclosure	25

Section 6 – Admission & Enrollment Policies

Minimum Standards for Admission 26
Applications & Acceptance 26
Communication 26
How to Apply for Admission 27
Suggested Application & Enrollment Timetable 27

Section 7 – Academic Policies

Grading 28
Satisfactory Academic Progress 29
Make Up Examinations 29
Final Examinations 29
Grade Reports & Transcripts 29
Course Audit Policy 30
Transfer Credit 30
Policy for Granting Credit 31
Credit by Examination 31
Academic Recognition 31
Commencement 31
Awards 32

Section 8 – General Policies

Program and Course Modality Policy 33
On-campus Attendance Policy 33
Online Attendance Policy 33
Attendance Appeal Procedure 34
Withdrawal Procedure 34
Leave of Absence 34
Academic Warning 34
Remedy of Academic Warning 34
Academic Dismissal 35
Termination Procedure 35
1098-T 35
Grievance Procedure 36
Proctored Examinations 37
Dress Code 37
Pregnancy Policy 37
FERPA & Disclosure of Student Information 38
Student Behavior 38
Student Responsibility & Conduct 38
Stalking 38
Mental Health 38
Health 39
Emergency Procedures 39
Missing Student Policy 40
Weapons Policy 40
CIFS Active Shooter Protocol 40

Section 9 – Tuition, Fees, & Financial Policies

Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service 42
Certificate in Funeral Directing 42
Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service-Online 42
Certificate in Funeral Directing-Online 42
Payment Plan 43

Late Payments 43
Types of Payment Accepted 43
Books 43
Examination Fees 44
Federal Title IV Programs Available 44
General Information Regarding Federal Loans 44
Return of Unearned Title IV Funds 45
Eligibility 45
How to Apply for Federal Financial Assistance/Financial Aid 46
Veteran Benefits 46
VA Rehabilitation 47
Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) 47
Scholarships 47
Cancellation Policy 47
Refund Policy for both A.A.S. and Certificate in F.D – On-campus or Online 48
Refund Policy for Student called to Active Military Service (TEC 132.0611) 49

Section 10– Programs of Study

Associate of Applied Science Degree 50
Associate of Applied Science Degree-Online 50
Externships and Labs: Campus & Online 51
Graduation Requirements for A.A.S. (campus and online) 52
Couse Sequence (A.A.S. & Online A.A.S.) 53
Certificate in Funeral Directing 54
Certificate in Funeral Directing-Online 54
Graduation Requirements for Online Certificate in FD 55
Course Sequence (Online Certificate in F.D.) 56

Section 11 – Course Descriptions by Area

How Coursework is Classified 57
Public Health & Technical 57
Business Management and Professional 58
Social Sciences/Humanities 59
Legal, Ethical & Regulatory 59
General Education 59
Certificate Specific 60
Approved & Regulated by TWC Statement 61

Section 12 – Additional Campus Resources

The National Museum of Funeral History 62

Welcome 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 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

2026

DEC. 31/JAN. 1	New Year's Eve/Day, office closed
JAN. 5	Winter Quarter Begins, 1st and 3rd Quarter of Specialized and Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
JAN. 19	Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no classes/office closed
FEB. 1	Close of Enrollment for Spring 2026 Quarter
FEB. 16	President's Day, no classes/office closed
FEB. 20	Open House
MARCH 16-19	Winter Quarter Final Exams
MARCH 20	End of Winter Quarter
MARCH 21 through April 5	Quarter Break
APRIL 3	Good Friday, office closed

APRIL 6	Spring Quarter Begins, General Education Core, 2nd and 4th Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
MAY 1	Close of Enrollment for Summer 2026 Quarter
MAY 25	Memorial Day, no classes/office closed
JUNE 15-18	Spring Quarter Final Exams
JUNE 19	End of Spring Quarter; Commencement Ceremony
JUNE 20 through JULY 5	Quarter Break

JULY 6	Summer Quarter Begins, 1st and 3rd Quarter of Specialized and Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
AUG. 1	Close of Enrollment for Fall 2026 Quarter
AUG. 21	Open House
SEPT. 7	Labor Day, no classes/office closed
SEPT. 14-17	Summer Quarter Final Exams

SEPT. 18	End of Summer Quarter
SEPT. 19 through OCT. 4	Quarter Break

OCT. 5	Fall Quarter Begins, General Education Core, 2nd and 4th Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
NOV. 1	Close of Enrollment for Winter 2027 Quarter
NOV. 26-27	Thanksgiving Holiday, no classes/office closed
DEC. 14-17	Fall Quarter Final Exams
DEC. 18	End of Fall Quarter; Commencement Ceremony
DEC. 19 through JAN. 3	Quarter Break
DEC. 24-25	Christmas Holiday, office closed

2027

DEC. 31/JAN. 1	New Year's Eve/Day, office closed
JAN. 4	Winter Quarter Begins, 1st and 3rd Quarter of Specialized and Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
JAN. 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no classes/office closed
FEB. 1	Close of Enrollment for Spring 2027 Quarter
FEB. 15	President's Day, no classes/office closed
FEB. 19	Open House
MARCH 15-18	Winter Quarter Final Exams
MARCH 19	End of Winter Quarter
MARCH 26	Good Friday, office closed
MARCH 20 through April 4	Quarter Break

APRIL 5	Spring Quarter Begins, General Education Core, 2nd and 4th Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
MAY 1	Close of Enrollment for Summer 2027 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
JULY 5	Independence Day observed, no classes/office closed

JULY 6	Summer Quarter Begins, 1st and 3rd Quarter of Specialized and Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
AUG. 1	Close of Enrollment for Fall 2027 Quarter
AUG. 20	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

OCT. 4	Fall Quarter Begins, General Education Core, 2nd and 4th Quarter of Specialized & Related Courses (Orientation Day for New Campus Students)
NOV. 1	Close of Enrollment for Winter 2028 Quarter
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
DEC. 24	Christmas Eve, office closed
DEC. 31	New Year's Eve, office closed

2028

JAN. 3	Winter Quarter Begins, 1st and 3rd 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.

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY STATEMENT OF COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service operates with integrity and conducts itself in an ethical manner. The Institute does NOT: provide false or misleading information with regard to accreditation, engage in illegal conduct, present false information to students/staff/constituents, nor perform/condone any other conduct generally regarded as unethical within higher education and/or the funeral service profession. These ethical standards apply both on campus and to the online environment.

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 on Drew Street until 1966, when it was purchased by the Pierce Organization; who moved the college to Dennis Street. 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, the founding chairman 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 on the west side of Houston, 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 classroom, a library, a computer lab, an arrangement office, 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.

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service (CIFS) and the Funeral Service associate degree program offered by CIFS 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.

APPROVALS

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service is approved by the Texas Veterans Commission under the provision of Title 38, U.S. Code for VA educational benefits to train veteran and other eligible persons for approved programs and courses required for those programs.

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 Funeral Service Commission as an anatomical facility.

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
- Library & Information Resources Network
- National Associated Colleges of Mortuary Science
- National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association
- National Funeral Directors Association
- Texas Distance Learning 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

STEVEN A. TIDWELL, CHAIRMAN
Senior Vice President (retired), Service Corporation International

ROBERT M. BOETTICHER, SR., VICE-CHAIRMAN
Chairman of the Board, National Museum of Funeral History

CODY L. LOPASKY, PRESIDENT
President and Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

W. BLAIR WALTRIP, VICE PRESIDENT AND TREASURER
Independent Consultant, Family & Trust Investments

JANET S. KEY, SECRETARY
Supervising Legal Assistant, Service Corporation International

GENEVIEVE G. KEENEY-VAZQUEZ, MEMBER
President, National Museum of Funeral History

TAMMY R. MOORE, MEMBER
Vice President, Chief Accounting Officer, Service Corporation International

THOMAS L. RYAN, MEMBER
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, Service Corporation International

STAN SZAFRAN, MEMBER
Director of Trust Services, Service Corporation International

SUMNER JAMES WARING, III, MEMBER
President, Service Corporation International

STUART E. MOEN, MEMBER
Professor Emeritus and Retired Dean, Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

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
M.S. University of Houston
B.S. University of Houston
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
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

CAMPUS STAFF

R. RENÉ ALTHEIMER
Registrar
Title IX Coordinator

SHANE BAKER
Instructor
B.A. Sam Houston State University
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

FELICIA DYNAMITE
Instructor
B.T. State University of New York-Canton
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

FINN GUTTERY
Librarian
M.L.S. Texas Woman's University
B.A.I.S. University of Oklahoma

DAVID HERN
Clinical Lab Assistant
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

MELISSA HOWELL
Financial Aid Advisor
B.A. Eastern Kentucky University

MARYAN McELLIGOTT
Admissions Counselor
B.A. University of Central Oklahoma
Professional Licensure: Texas, Washington

MARLENE PERRY
Financial Aid Advisor
B.S. St. Mary's University

SHANNON REGISTER
Dean of Distance Education
M.Ed. Texas A&M University-Victoria
B.S. University of Georgia
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

ISSACHAR ROLDAN
Admissions Counselor
A.A. Miami Dade College

DAVID TAYLOR, JR.
Clinical Coordinator
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

JAMIE WALKER
Clinical Lab Assistant
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

FACULTY

DR. TATSIANA AUTUSHKA
Ph.D. Belarusian State University-Minsk
M.S./B.S. Belarusian State University

DR. AMY BAXLEY
Ph.D. Liberty University
M.Ed. Indiana University Bloomington
B.G.S. Indiana University Southwest

SHERROD BROWN
B.A. Ottawa University
A.A.S. Dallas Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

ANGELA CARTER
M.A. Indiana Wesleyan University
B.S. Indiana Wesleyan University

DR. JOSEPH CONDE
D.B.A. University of the Incarnate Word
M.B.A. National American University
B.A.S. South Texas College
A.A.S. San Antonio College
Professional Licensure: Texas

JENNIE FREDRICKSON
M.B.A. Western Governors University
B.S. University of Central Oklahoma
A.A. Butler County Community College
Professional Licensure: Kansas

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

DR. STEPHEN HENRY
Ph.D. University of Texas
M.S. University of Texas
B.A. Washington 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

JORDAN MULLENS
B.T. State University of New York-Canton
A.A.S. Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

JEFFERY PERRY
M.A. University of Houston-Clear Lake
B.S. Sam Houston State University

ADRIENNE PIERCE
B.A. Oklahoma State University

DR. ANITA RENO
Ph.D. University of Texas Medical Branch
B.S. Mount St. Mary's University
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

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

NICOLE STACKHOUSE
M.S. University of Florida
B.S. Miami University
A.A.S. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
Professional Licensure: Texas

MANDY WEAVER
M.S. Angelo State University
B.S. Angelo State University

CIFS ADVISORY BOARD

The CIFS Advisory Board is comprised of local funeral service practitioners and associated constituents; as well as a public, non-funeral service representative. 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) 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

Anthony Crespo
Forest Park – The Woodlands

Eleanor Glona
Grand View Funeral Home

Jewel Hamrick
Texas Funeral Service Commission

Tom Sherman
Dodge Chemical Company

Don Strickland
Funeral Directors Life

Dwayne Thomason
Thomason Funeral Home

Jamie Walker
All Faith's Mortuary

Dr. James White
Texas Southern University

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 (central time), 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 a visitor card during their campus labs. 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, damaged, or stolen ID card is $25. **All visitors will be required to check in at the security desk and receive a temporary visitor's badge.**

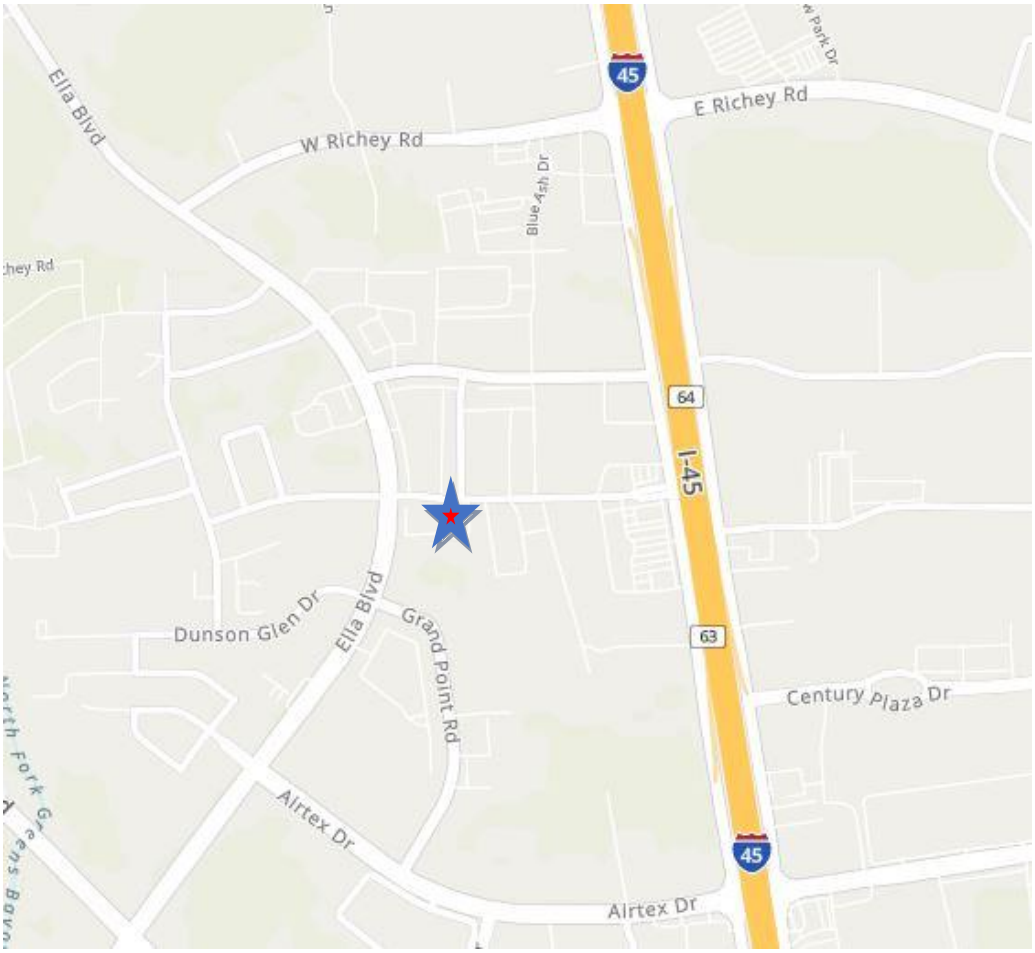
NOTE: Please report a lost, stolen, or missing ID card to the school office immediately!

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. Every effort is made to ensure that all weather-related closures are announced on the school's website, social media (see below), 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.

CIFS OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook.com/cifsgoals linkedin.com/school/cifsgoals



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 1-45 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 3 large classrooms, 2 dedicated clinical laboratories, an arrangement conference room, 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 the National Museum of Funeral History.

COMPUTER LAB/INTERNET USE

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; including charging stations for personal devices. 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 away from building entrances.** 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 are 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 lecture course or clinical 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 features collections to support Commonwealth Institute's educational programs with texts, eBooks, and videos. The collection also includes archived magazine titles and current professional funeral journals. The Library includes reading and study areas, a group study area, computer access stations, and video-viewing equipment. Students are encouraged to come in

and browse the shelves. Distance learners may participate in the Books-By-Mail program by using an item's "Hold" function in the online library catalog.

Information about the library's collection, including links to full-text materials, is available 24/7/365 via an online public access catalog at: library.commonwealth.edu. The Reference collection and Special archive collections, available for in-house research, include early mortuary periodicals, rare early trade catalogs, and other special collections.

Our Library's holdings are supplemented by membership in the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN®). LIRN is a consortium of over 300 private colleges and universities that serves a diverse and international student population. Our membership makes available 24/7/365 access to full-text electronic journals, newspaper, and bibliographic databases, as well as electronic reference sources covering a wide array of subjects, to any web enabled device.

The Library provides computer assisted instruction to both students and faculty via information literacy sessions, orientations, and one-on-one instruction. Tutorials for the use of our resources are placed on the Library's Portal at library.commonwealth.edu and are available 24 hours a day. Access is available to anyone with a library account, from anywhere in the world that has an internet connection.

The college library is open and available Monday through Thursday, 8:00 AM to 1:30 PM.

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. Also housed in the embalming laboratory is a dissected human cadaver. Through a partnership with the University of Texas Willed Body Program, the in-house cadaver is used as an anatomy resource in conjunction with lecture courses.

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.

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, and microbiology; as well as the theory of embalming itself.

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 (Texans, Astros, Rockets, etc.), 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, campus and online, come from all over the United States, and this results in constant faculty and student exposure to various perspectives, cultures, and practices. The opportunity also exists to make valued friends and future professional contacts nationwide.

LIVING ACCOMODATIONS OFF CAMPUS

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.** 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 keep in touch with the college, meet other graduates, reminisce about their school days, and continue to network and foster professional relationships with fellow CIFS graduates. Alumni Association events and benefits include luncheons, scholarships, continuing education classes, 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

The Commonwealth Institute Career Center maintains a database of prospective employers concerning job positions for current students and graduates, for both full and part-time employment. The Career Center also provides resume building/critique, interview help, and assistance with LinkedIn profiles.

Current job openings are posted on the school website under the Alumni section. Additionally, employers are invited to attend Career Fairs, held at CIFS each year, where they can recruit prospective employees and conduct interviews. 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. Students from each class cohort 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 full-time, 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.

PHOTO/VIDEO/SOCIAL MEDIA RELEASE POLICY

Applicants and students of CIFS, by virtue of attendance at campus and other college functions, grant permission to the college to capture their image/likeness via photographic, video, or other means for the purposes of social media, publications, promotion of the college, etc. Permission may be denied or revoked, but this must be submitted to the CIFS office, in writing prior to the event and/or the image being captured.

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 mortuary college (and possibly other education); 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 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. To see if the academic programs at CIFS meet the educational requirements in your state, please review the listing of states in the ***General Disclosures*** section of the ***Licensing Requirements*** page on the CIFS website www.commonwealth.edu.

If CIFS does not satisfy your state's educational requirements for funeral service licensure, then you will be unable to enroll in our programs. However, if you plan to seek licensure in a state, other than your state of residence (and CIFS meets that state's requirements), then you may proceed with enrollment. In these circumstances, a signed attestation form regarding the intended state of licensure is required.

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 address 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
1801 N. Congress, Suite 11-800
Austin, TX 78701

Phone: (512) 936-2474 Email: info@tfsc.texas.gov Website: 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, pass a criminal background check, graduate from an accredited mortuary college, score a minimum scaled score of 75% on each section of an approved licensing 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 CERTIFICATION

A student who desires to sit for either section of the National Board Examination (NBE) administered by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (ICFSEB) must first be certified as eligible by Commonwealth Institute to the ICFSEB. The ICFSEB does not allow certification for only one section of NBE (partial certification) for AAS Degree graduates. Additionally, Commonwealth Institute does not send transcripts to the ICFSEB. The certification process is completed electronically by the college.

CIFS 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 both length and format to the National Board Exam (NBE). 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.

Like the NBE, 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. 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 the Board Review course (MSCI 2202 and CERT 2201 depending on program)**. A passing score is required for graduation and for certification to the ICFSEB in order to sit for the NBE.

Students that fail the Certification Exam with a score of less than 80% will also fail the Board Review course. This will delay graduation and necessitate retaking Board Review when offered again. However, students that fail the Certification Exam may walk and participate during their intended commencement ceremony because they were candidates for graduation during that term.

NOTE: Students in their final quarter who are ineligible to graduate, for ANY reason, will be ineligible to sit for the CIFS Certification Exam(s) and will earn a grade of "F" in the Board Review course. The course must then be repeated when rectifying the reason(s) for graduation ineligibility.

National Board Examination (NBE)

LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS

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

NBE AND LICENSURE

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

The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, Inc. develops and creates the NBE. 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 the NBE. Please see the Conference's website 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 in the Directory of Accredited Programs. 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, 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
- Be a citizen or legal resident of the United States*
- 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.
- Satisfy ONE of the following academic requirements:
    - Graduate in the upper one-fourth of the applicant's high school class
    - Transfer ALL 20 General Education Core credit hours (AAS degree only)
    - Have completed 16 semester hours of previous college credit with a 2.0 GPA (Certificate only)
    - ACT composite score of 21
    - SAT combined score of 990 (If taken after April 1, 1995)

If none of the above 4 academic requirements are met, then an applicant must take and pass the college's entrance examination. Commonwealth Institute uses a standardized, online assessment created and provided by a third-party. An applicant is allowed only one attempt of the entrance examination per annual application cycle (i.e. if a new application fee is required, then a new entrance exam attempt may also be required).

NOTCIFS is not SEVIS approved by the Department of Homeland Security to accept international students.

APPLICATIONS & ACCEPTANCE

Applications are completed online though the school website using the student's full legal name, 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. 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. Following the acceptance deadline, all applicants for the upcoming term will receive either an acceptance letter or a letter of rejection. ***NOTE: Submitting all documents by the stated acceptance deadline neither guarantees nor constitutes acceptance into a program.***

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.

It is the students' responsibility to keep their name, address, phone number, and email address current with the administrative office. Any changes MUST be communicated with your admissions counselor.

HOW TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION

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. Mail an official, sealed transcript from ***EACH*** university, college, or vocational/technical school that you attended 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

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, a Letter of Eligibility, and any other documents that are requested by the school certifying official (SCO). 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, submit the required fee, submit all official transcripts, and complete the entrance examination (if applicable).

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 https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa. *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 Months Prior to Enrollment: Upon acceptance, CIFS will forward orientation and registration information to you. At this point, you should confirm any arrangements/information not yet finalized.

Section 7
Academic Policies

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service (CIFS) 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 per week for an eleven-week period of instruction or ten hours of laboratory instruction. A course lecture hour or laboratory instruction hour consists of one fifty-minute period. Students receive grade points according to the following system:

Grade	Numerical Range	Point Value per Credit Hour
A	90-100	4.0
B	80-89	3.0
C	70-79	2.0
D	60-69	1.0
F	0-59	0.0
TM	Terminated by CIFS	0.0
W	Withdrawal by student	
TR	Transfer Credit	
CR	Credit/Credit by Exam	
I	Incomplete	
AU	Audit	

All courses require a minimum passing grade of "C" or 70% 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 10th 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, 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 courses. **If a student is unsuccessful in earning a "C" letter grade or better, then 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, then 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 complete their program 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. Late submissions or students arriving late for a final exam will be deducted **20%** 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. Official transcripts may be ordered using the transcript request form on the school website and submitting the required fee. Any academic quarter for which an outstanding balance is owed to the college may be excluded from the transcript until the balance is paid.

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, was completed **less than 3 years** from the date of application, and a grade of "C" or higher was earned.
- 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. After providing evidence, they may attempt the challenge examination. An administrative fee of $250 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, and examinations are only offered on campus.

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 to 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 props or 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.
- Animals/pets are not allowed at commencement. Service animals are ONLY allowed with documentation, and the college must provide approval prior to the day of the 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.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

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

PROGRAM AND COURSE MODALITY POLICY

At the time of application and enrollment, students must select the modality of their program; either on campus or online. Changing modality requires terminating the current program enrollment contract and reapplying for the new program modality. Modality changes may only occur during quarter breaks.

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 as 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 campus student who accumulates absences of more than 10% of their scheduled class hours in a quarter, will have their enrollment with CIFS 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 8th 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 for the duration of an academic program. 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. An approved leave of absence, after the 8th week of the academic term, may not extend past the end of the 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 will be dismissed for academic reasons, and their enrollment agreement will be terminated. Any 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 an academic program **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. Termination of enrollment, for any reason, will incur a $100 administrative fee. 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 Admissions for re-enrollment procedures. This will include re-applying (new application, application fee, and the $100 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. Please note, simply submitting documents and paying fees does NOT automatically constitute re-acceptance into a program. Additionally, please note from Section 6 that new enrollees are given priority over re-enrolling students.

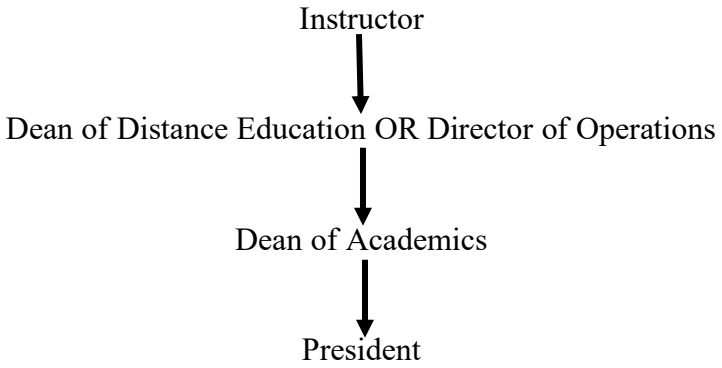
Upon a student's **third termination** of enrollment from CIFS, the student will be permanently dismissed and not eligible to re-enroll.

1098-T FORM

Students are responsible for keeping a valid address on file with the school. For 1098-T purposes, changes of address will not be accepted after December 1st. IRS form 1098-T will be mailed to students and postmarked no later than January 31st of each year.

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 Distance Education OR Director of Operations, 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 Academics) 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 the Texas Workforce Commission (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. **CIFS reserves the right to require a student to take a proctored examination onsite in Houston, Texas.**

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 for all assessments (examinations and quizzes.) The use of a webcam, a microphone, and a reliable high-speed internet connection is required. Every student should be aware that they are being video and audio recorded during each examination and those recordings are evaluated to ensure exam integrity and academic honesty. Students are required to have video and audio turned on throughout the entire exam and placed in a position where the student's entire face is visible throughout. Failure to comply with the standards will result in a "0" for the exam or quiz and/or possible termination from the program. Please know that browser extensions and/or software downloads may be required on the student's computer to enable remote proctoring. This may negate the usage of public or workplace computers.

Students will be asked to verify their identity via a valid photo I.D. (for each online assessment), and they will be required to scan the room and work area. The proctor should be able to easily view the workspace, which includes the work surface, the area above and below the desk or work area, all sides of the work surface, and finally the student. Make sure you show the desk area, not just the space around you. Scan slowly so the images do not blur. Additionally, some written assignments may utilize a third-party resource, like *Turnitin,* to ensure academic integrity (i.e. to protect against plagiarism, use of AI assistance, etc.).

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.

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 and Dean of Academics. 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 will be prohibited from participating in embalming clinical activities. These may be completed after the conclusion of the pregnancy (and nursing period if applicable). The student realizes that a delay in completing clinical requirements will delay the completion of the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Funeral Service program.

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.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR & CONDUCT

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 a strict adherence to 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, ethics, 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. 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.

MENTAL HEALTH

CIFS cares about our students, their well-being, and their mental health. A list of mental health resources is available from the CIFS office. If a CIFS staff or faculty member is made aware of a credible suicidal threat by a student, either verbally or in writing, then the student's emergency contact may be notified.

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), Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (www.dshs.state.tx.us), or any local immunization clinic. For students in the greater Houston area, Harris County Clinics are listed below.

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 Meningococcemia 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. When 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, then 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 $189 per quarter credit hour.

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE IN FUNERAL SERVICE

If the general education courses are taken at CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be **$18,622**. This total includes:

- $50 application fee due with application
- $50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation
- $18,522 tuition (98 quarter credit hours multiplied by $189)

If all general education courses are transferred to CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be **$13,519**. This total includes:

- $50 application fee due with application
- $50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation
- $13,419 tuition (71 quarter credit hours multiplied by $189)

CERTIFICATE IN FUNERAL DIRECTING

This program is not offered on campus. For online Certificate in Funeral Directing costs, please see below.

Online Classes

The online tuition rate is $205 per quarter credit hour.

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE IN FUNERAL SERVICE - ONLINE

If the general education courses are taken at CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be **$20,190**. This total includes:

- $50 application fee due with application
- $50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation
- $20,090 tuition (98 quarter credit hours multiplied by $205)

If all general education courses are transferred to CIFS, then the total tuition and fees will be **$14,655**. This total includes:

- $50 application fee due with application
- $50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation
- $14,555 tuition (71 quarter credit hours multiplied by $205)

CERTIFICATE IN FUNERAL DIRECTING - ONLINE

The total tuition and fees are **$9,940**. This total includes:

- $50 application fee due with application
- $50 graduation fee due 30 days prior to graduation
- $9,840 tuition (48 quarter credit hours multiplied by $205).

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 10th 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. In some cases, these may be ebooks. 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.

NOTE: Online general education courses use ebooks.

EXAMINATION FEES

National Board Examination:	$570.00 ($285.00 per section); payable to the ICFSEB
Texas Mortuary Law Examination:	$89.00; payable to the TFSC
CIFS Challenge Examination:	$250.00; payable to the CIFS

Licensure exams 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 the Title IV Federal Student Financial Aid Program, 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)

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)

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)

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)

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. If you have outstanding federal student loans, and you are enrolled in school at least ½ time, then your loans can be put into "in-school" deferment status. Visit https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/InSchoolDeferment-en-us.pdf to complete the necessary form.

6. 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.
7. Entrance counseling and a master promissory note are requirements for receiving subsidized and unsubsidized student loans.
8. 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.

ELIGIBILTY

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 https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa. 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 two (2) months prior to your scheduled enrollment date. To see a how-to video on filling out and completing the FAFSA form, visit: https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out

4. Allow 2-3 business days for the Department of Education's processing center to process your FAFSA. Once the Department of Education processes your FAFSA, you will receive a FAFSA Submission Summary 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 two 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 two months prior to enrollment.

The Veteran is responsible to pay all tuition at the beginning of each quarter. Certain benefits are paid directly to the Veteran, after the application and certification process is complete. Chapter 33 is paid directly to the school. Veterans exceeding 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 45 days prior to enrollment. 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
NorthStar Memorial Group 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.

If textbooks have been mailed to a student who cancels their enrollment within the stated period, then the books must be shipped back to the college (at the student's expense), or the student will be charged for them.

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 IN FUNERAL SERVICE

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**. Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service (CIFS) and the Funeral Service associate degree program offered by CIFS 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.**

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, prepare necessary funeral home paperwork, perform funerary 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.

As a part of this academic program, students will also become certified crematory operators through the Cremation Association of North America (CANA). This training is provided online and is embedded in the Cremation and Modern Funeral Service course.

To earn the A.A.S. degree, the student must fulfill all requirements for the General Education courses, 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 the 20 credit hour General Education Core, 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.

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE IN FUNERAL SERVICE – ONLINE

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 physical, 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. These translate 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 embalming of at least 10 human remains. Competency in numerous embalming tasks will be assessed.
- **The Restorative Art Lab** consists 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 during the Funeral Directing course. Embalming is done during the 3rd quarter of specialized courses; one afternoon per week according to a preset schedule. During the 4th quarter of specialized courses, campus students will complete both the Restorative Art Lab and the Funeral Directing Externship arrangements. These 4th quarter requirements typically take place during normal school hours.

Online AAS: Online degree students may choose between two distinct paths to complete their lab and externship requirements. One path is intended to allow those students currently working in funeral service to complete a portion of their requirements at their place of employment (provided certain criteria are met), and the other path is designed for those who need to complete all requirements on campus. During the Embalming II course (3rd quarter of specialized courses), students will officially select their path and sign up for their scheduled time on campus – 2 to 5 days depending on path. The available dates/weeks generally start around the beginning of the 4th quarter of specialized courses and run through the last week before final exams and exit exams. The two path options are outlined on the next page.

Path A - For those who DO NOT work in funeral service or cannot complete the requirements at their place of employment.

- You will come to the CIFS campus for all 3 lab/externship requirements.
- **You will be on campus for a full week (Monday - Friday).**
- Weekly groups in this path option will be limited to **5 students.**
- More information is sent with the signup calendar (dress code, times, etc.).

Path B - For those who DO work in funeral service AND can complete some designated requirements at their place of employment.

- You will complete your funeral directing requirements at your funeral home - 5 first calls & 5 arrangement conferences (real OR simulated).
- You will complete AT LEAST 9 embalming cases at your funeral home (more is acceptable but 9 are required).
- The labs/externships (FD and Embalming) done at your funeral home must be completed under the supervision of a designated preceptor.
- PRIOR to starting any offsite labs, you will need to schedule and complete a physical or virtual site inspection and virtual/telephonic preceptor training (all in one session).
- Your place of employment must complete the CIFS affiliation agreement.
- You will also come to the CIFS campus to complete 1 embalming case and the restorative art lab hours.
- **You will be on campus for 2 days** (versus an entire week).
- Each group in this path option will be limited to **10 students**.
- More information (required documentation, preceptor requirements, etc.) will be discussed when scheduling your inspection.

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, specialized, and related courses either by transfer or through enrollment for a total of 98 quarter credit hours. A minimum of 30 quarter credit hours are required to be completed at CIFS (Residency Requirement);
- Pass each academic 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;
- Pass each section (Arts and Sciences) of the CIFS Certification Exam;
- 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
- Complete 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
GENERAL EDUCATION CORE COURSES						
GE Quarter	**(Offered Spring & Fall)**					
*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.
	Total Hours:				**220**	**20**
SPECIALIZED AND RELATED COURSES:						
First Quarter	**(Offered Winter & Summer)**					
MSCI 1411	FS Past and Present	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1601	Anatomy	66	0	0	66	6 qtr.
BUSI 1403	Small Business Management	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1308	Funeral Merchandising	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
BUSI 1301	Business Communication	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
	Total Hours				**220**	**20**
Second Quarter	**(Offered Spring & Fall)**					
MSCI 1304	Embalming I	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 1310	FS Ethics and Compliance	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
BUSI 1402	Business Law	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 1313	Microbiology	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 1407	Funeral Directing & Externship	44	0	10	54	4 qtr.
*SOCI 1301	Intro to Sociology	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
	Total Hours				**230**	**20**
Third Quarter	**(Offered Winter & Summer)**					
MSCI 2305	Embalming II & Externship	33	0	10	43	3 qtr.
MSCI 2314	Mortuary Law	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 2409	FS Administration	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 2315	Pathology	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI 2316	Restorative Art I	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
*HIST 1302	United States History II	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
	Total Hours				**230**	**20**
Fourth Quarter	**(Offered Spring & Fall)**					
MSCI 2202	Board Review & Externship	22	0	5	27	2 qtr.
MSCI 2612	FS Psychology and Sociology	66	0	0	66	6 qtr.
MSCI 2317	Restorative Art II & Lab	22	10	0	32	3 qtr.
MSCI 2403	Cremation and Modern FS	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI 2306	Embalming III & Externship	33	0	10	43	3 qtr.
	Total Hours				**212**	**18**
	Grand Total	**1067**	**10**	**35**	**1112**	**98**

**Denotes a General Education course, completed prior to admission or taken at Commonwealth*

CERTIFICATE IN FUNERAL DIRECTING

The Certificate in Funeral Directing program is NOT offered on campus. It is only available online.

CERTIFICATE IN FUNERAL DIRECTING – ONLINE

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 will not have the academic credential for licensure in states where 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.

As a part of this academic program, students will also become certified crematory operators through the Cremation Association of North America (CANA). This training is provided online and is embedded in the Cremation and Modern Funeral Service course.

To earn the Certificate in Funeral Directing, students must complete 48 quarter credit hours of specialized and related coursework (three, eleven-week quarters). This program may be completed in 9 months. A clinical component is not required for this program.

The Certificate in Funeral Directing program is ONLY available via online instruction. Courses taken online 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 (Online)

- Completion of all courses either by transfer or through enrollment for a total of 48 quarter credit hours;
- A minimum of 30 quarter credit hours must be completed at CIFS (Residency Requirement);
- Pass each academic course with a minimum final letter grade of "C";
- Pass the CIFS Certification Exam (Arts Section);
- 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 SERIVCE
CERTIFICATE IN FUNERAL DIRECTING

Prefix & Number		Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Extern	Clock Hours	Credit Hours
SPECIALIZED AND RELATED COURSES:							
First Quarter		**(Offered Spring & Fall)**					
MSCI	1310	FS Ethics and Compliance	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
BUSI	1402	Business Law	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
CERT	1402	FS Past and Present	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI	1407	Funeral Directing & Externship	44	0	10	54	4 qtr.
		Total Hours				**175**	**15**
Second Quarter		**(Offered Winter & Summer)**					
BUSI	1503	Small Business Management	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI	1509	FS Administration	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
MSCI	2314	Mortuary Law	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
BUSI	1201	Business Communication	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
MSCI	2308	Funeral Merchandising	33	0	0	33	3 qtr.
		Total Hours				**187**	**17**
Third Quarter		**(Offered Spring & Fall)**					
CERT	2201	Board Review	22	0	0	22	2 qtr.
MSCI	2612	FS Psychology and Sociology	66	0	0	66	6 qtr.
MSCI	2403	Cremation and Modern FS	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
CERT	1402	Science and Pathology for FD's	44	0	0	44	4 qtr.
		Total Hours				**176**	**16**
		Grand Total	**528**	**0**	**10**	**538**	**48**

Section 11
Course Descriptions by Area

HOW COURSEWORK IS CLASSIFIED

Courses are classified as either general education OR specialized and related courses. General education courses 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 (27 quarter credit hours)**
- **Business Management and Professional (24 quarter credit hours)**
- **Social Sciences/Humanities (10 quarter credit hours)**
- **Legal, Ethical, & Regulatory (10 quarter credit hours)**
- **General Education (27 quarter credit hours)**
- **Certificate Specific (10 quarter credit hours – ONLY available in the Certificate Program)**

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 academic level (1 or higher indicates college level coursework). The second digit refers to the value of each course in quarter credit hours. The third and fourth digits refer to the alphabetical course sequence within the subject field. NOTE: General education courses use collegiate departmental prefixes and are enumerated using the standard semester hour value for the second digit.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND TECHNICAL

MSCI 1601 Anatomy (6 quarter hours)
Prerequisite: BIOL 1408 Biology I
This course is an introduction to correct anatomical terminology and the basic organ systems of the body. Particularly emphasized are those systems providing the foundation for embalming, pathology, public health, and restorative art. (66/0/0/6)

MSCI 1304 Embalming I (3 quarter hours)
Prerequisite: MSCI 1601 Anatomy
This course introduces the student to the process of chemically treating human remains to reduce the presence and growth of microorganisms, to temporarily inhibit organic decomposition, and to restore an acceptable physical appearance. Topics include foundational terminology, governmental regulations, ethics, death and the human body, instrumentation, embalming analysis, basic chemistry, and embalming chemistry/chemicals. (33/0/0/3)

MSCI 2305 Embalming II & Externship (3 quarter hours)
Prerequisite: MSCI 1304 Embalming I, MATH 1314 College Algebra
A continuation of Embalming I. Topics include feature setting, pre-embalming procedures, incisions, sutures, anatomical/linear guides, pressure and injection, drainage methods, and cavity treatment. The student is required to actively participate in a minimum of ten (10) embalming cases. Cases must be completed either on campus or with a pre-approved off-site preceptor. The final case MUST be completed on campus. (33/0/10/3)

MSCI 2306 Embalming III & Externship (3 quarter hours)
Prerequisites: MSCI 2305 Embalming II & Externship
The final course in the embalming series. Topics include the embalming treatment and the handling of special or difficult cases. The student is required to actively participate in a minimum of ten (10) embalming cases. Cases must be completed either on campus or with a pre-approved off-site preceptor. The final case MUST be completed on campus. (33/0/10/3)

MSCI 1313 Microbiology (3 quarter hours)
Prerequisite: BIOL 1408 Biology I
This course examines the basic principles of microbiology and how they relate to funeral service. Personal, professional, and community hygiene/sanitation are also discussed. (33/0/0/3)

MSCI 2315 Pathology (3 quarter hours)
This course examines disease processes and their impact on the human body. Emphasis is placed on those conditions which relate to or affect the handling of human remains. (33/0/0/3)

MSCI 2316 Restorative Art I (3 quarter hours)
This course is an introduction to the basic principles of restorative art. Topics include: basic terminology, ethics, anatomical structure, facial markings, facial proportions/profiles/shapes, the use of photographs, and wax modeling supplies/instruments. (33/0/0/3)

MSCI 2317 Restorative Art II & Lab (3 quarter hours)
Prerequisite: MSCI 2316 Restorative Art I
A continuation of Restorative Art I and consists of both lecture and lab. Topics include: facial features, hair and restoration, general restorative treatments, color theory, and mortuary cosmetology. The campus laboratory is designed to supplement the theoretical information provided in the lecture class. Students model facial features from wax and practice the application of cosmetics. (22/10/0/3)

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL

MSCI 2202 Board Review & Externship (2 quarter hours)
This course is designed to acclimate each student to the expectations of licensure examinations. As applicable, this course will help prepare the student for academic success on state law exam(s), the National Board Exam, and the CIFS Certification Exam. As a part of this capstone course, each student must conduct five (5) arrangement conferences either on campus or with a pre-approved off-site preceptor. These may be real or simulated. (22/0/5/2)

BUSI 1301 Business Communications (3 quarter hours)
This course is a survey of the basic principles of effective communication skills as they relate to funeral service. Emphasis is placed on soft skills, etiquette, and the use of technology. (33/0/0/3)

MSCI 2403 Cremation and Modern Funeral Service (4 quarter hours)
This course is intended to give the student an overview of cremation including proper procedures, legal considerations, services, and merchandise. In addition to cremation, growing trends such as pet funerals, green funerals, and hospitality are also discussed. As a part of this course, the student will complete crematory operation certification as a final project. (44/0/0/4)

MSCI 1407 Funeral Directing & Externship (4 quarter hours)
This course is a survey of the practices and procedures for conducting various religious, fraternal, military, and secular funeral ceremonies. The student will also be required to document attendance at/participation in five (5) different types of funerary activities and/or services. (44/0/10/4)

MSCI 1308 Funeral Merchandising (3 quarter hours)
This course is an introduction to the basics of merchandising as they apply to funeral service. Topics include: caskets, outer burial containers, cemeteries, cemetery products, other merchandise, purchasing, pricing, display, and sales. (33/0/0/3)

MCSI 2409 Funeral Service Administration (4 quarter hours)
Prerequisite: MSCI 1407 Funeral Directing & Externship
This course is an overview of funeral service operations and management with a focus on the duties, responsibilities, and expectations of funeral service practitioners. Topics also include: notification of death, transfer of remains, at-need arrangements, prearrangements, and funeral home operations. (44/0/0/4)

BUSI 1403 Small Business Management (4 quarter hours)
This course examines the operations, benefits, and risks of managing a small business. Emphasis is placed on business formation, development, management, marketing, human resources, accounting, and the use of technology. (44/0/0/4)

SOCIAL SCIENCES/HUMANITIES

MSCI 1411 Funeral Service Past and Present (4 quarter hours)
This course is a survey of the history of funeral service with emphasis on the individuals, events, and forces that have influenced contemporary funeral practices. Funeral service associations, education, licensure, and career expectations are also discussed. (44/0/0/4)

MSCI 2612 Funeral Service Psychology and Sociology (6 quarter hours)
This course examines the basic principles of psychology and sociology as they relate to funeral service. Topics include: counseling, grief, mourning, bereavement, aftercare, crisis intervention, family structure, social influences, and factors of change. (66/0/0/6)

LEGAL ETHICAL AND REGULATORY

BUSI 1402 Business Law (4 quarter hours)
This course examines the basic principles of business law and how they relate to funeral service. Topics include: bodies of law, the judicial system, contract law, sales, bailments, negotiable instruments, agency, employment, and business organizations. (44/0/0/4)

MSCI 1310 Funeral Service Ethics and Compliance (3 quarter hours)
This course provides a framework of ethics and compliance as they relate to funeral service. The student will learn to develop a strong set of professional ethics and understand what is required for OSHA and FTC compliance. (33/0/0/3)

MSCI 2314 Mortuary Law (3 quarter hours)
Prerequisite: BUSI 1402 Business Law
This course is an introduction to the legal rights, duties, and responsibilities of the funeral service practitioner and the funeral establishment. Topics include: preneed, wills, estates, torts, cemeteries, crematories, disposition, sources of law, right to control, liability, and licensure. (33/0/0/3)

GENERAL EDUCATION

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)

SOCI 1301 Introduction to Sociology (3 quarter hours)
A survey of the basic concepts in sociology including social organization, culture, socialization, groups, social institutions, and social change. (33/0/0/3)

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)

CERTIFICATE SPECIFIC

CERT 2201 Board Review (2 quarter hours)
This course is designed to acclimate each student to the expectations of licensure examinations. As applicable, this course will help prepare the student for academic success on state law exam(s), the National Board Exam, and the CIFS Certification Exam. (22/0/0/2)

CERT 1402 Funeral Service Past and Present (4 quarter hours)
This course is a survey of the history of funeral service with emphasis on the individuals, events, and forces that have influenced contemporary funeral practices. Funeral service associations, education, licensure, and career expectations are also discussed. (44/0/0/4)

CERT 2403 Science and Pathology for Funeral Directors (4 quarter hours)
This survey course is designed for those students not pursuing embalming licensure. Students are introduced to the basic applications of science within funeral service. Included are general anatomy, the embalming process and the preparation room, the basics of microbiology and pathology, and an overview of restorative art. (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.

Cody L. Lopasky, MA, CFSP
President

Section 12
Additional Campus Resources

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. The college and the museum share the same physical building complex as neighbors. 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 the 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!