Central Michigan University entered the metro Atlanta market nearly four decades ago, when the military invited education institutions to provide on-base classes for personnel. CMU offered evening and weekend courses so servicemen and women could attend classes at times that didn’t conflict with work responsibilities.

Since then, CMU has expanded its number of metro Atlanta locations, its programs and the kinds of students who attend classes. But one thing remains the same – CMU’s programs in Atlanta continue to focus on flexibility for nontraditional students, said Merodie Hancock, vice president of CMU’s Global Campus.

“We make everything easy except the learning,” Hancock said. “We put services at the student’s fingertips, schedule classes to meet student needs and give them flexibility.”

However, the academic programs aren’t watered down, she added. “We stick to one Central Michigan degree,” whether the student attends the traditional campus in Mount Pleasant, Mich., or earns a degree at CMU’s metro Atlanta locations on Powers Ferry Road, in Tucker or in Fayetteville. “Students get the reputation and rigor of CMU, but they get services that are far more friendly and geared to a nontraditional student.”

As an example, Hancock points to the school’s library services. Students in metro Atlanta can call, chat or text with librarians when they need help with research. The university also schedules librarian visits to classes in Atlanta “to familiarize students with library services and eliminate fear.” They talk to students about research questions and show them databases that are helpful. For each class, the librarians have worked with faculty to find strong resources for students, and they are available seven days a week,” she said.

CMU also has a writing center and a math center to help students with their vital skills.

“A lot of our students have been out of school for years, and they find the idea of being graded on their writing intimidating. At the writing center, we work with students, review the papers and lead them to resources. The math center does the same thing to get them up to speed again,” Hancock said.

In metro Atlanta, Central Michigan University offers master of arts degrees in education and sports administration, a master of public administration and a master of science in administration, with concentrations such as health services, human resources and public administration. All the programs are fully accredited.

Most students earn master’s degrees to advance their careers, Hancock said. “A lot of students are looking for broad-based degrees. They have been successful in their career and they want a degree that will fill in the gaps. They want to learn about leadership, budgeting or organizational behavior, and add these skills to their toolbox as they move up in their career.”

Classes are taught by academics from Michigan and professionals in the field, most of whom work in metro Atlanta. “That leaves students with a strong balance of theory and practice,” Hancock said.

The faculty is aware of the other responsibilities that adult students juggle and do their best to be flexible and understanding.

As part of its commitment to flexibility, CMU offers classes in several formats, including an accelerated, eight-week session that allows students to focus on fewer classes each semester. CMU’s Global Campus schedules traditional classroom courses, hybrid courses that combine online learning with classroom time, and online-only classes. Classes are offered in the evenings or on the weekends.

CMU helps students find financial aid from sources including federal financial aid programs and employer tuition assistance programs. The CMU Veterans’ Resource Center is also ready to help local vets get military education benefits.

“Student referrals are our No. 1 recruiting tool,” Hancock said. “There is no better judge of satisfaction than your students, alumni and faculty. We have very high satisfaction ratings for our service and learning outcomes. We have a history of doing a good job, and we continue to graduate successful students.”

The university also develops custom classes for employers. “We can help them get the program they need in a format they need, whether it is onsite, in our classroom or online,” Hancock noted.

For information about Central Michigan University’s Global Campus in metro Atlanta, go to cmich.edu/Atlanta, call 877-591-2635 or email: Atlanta.Metro@cmich.edu.

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