

A LEGACY of OPPORTUNITY

Steven R. King's Commitment to TESU and Its Students

When Steven King, MBA '15, BSBA '93, began his academic journey, he was like many TESU students – an ambitious adult learner juggling a career, family and coursework.

His academic success enhanced his vibrant career, and he is now committed to ensuring that others have the same opportunity. As a proud TESU alumnus, philanthropist and chair of the TESU Foundation Board, King focuses on programs that remove financial barriers and improve access to higher education. The University's Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) initiative, made possible through King's and his wife Kay's support, has saved students more than \$10 million in textbook and learning material costs since the program launched in 2016.

"TESU's mission to provide flexible, high-quality learning opportunities for self-directed adult learners resonates deeply with me," said King. "Kay and I are focused on initiatives that support students in their degree completion. As someone who has earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree from TESU, I understand the dedication and effort required to achieve academic goals as a working adult. We are deeply committed to helping students overcome obstacles that prevent them from completing their degrees. We know how transformative education can be, and we believe

every student should have the support they need to succeed."

King understands the value of an accessible, accredited degree program at an affordable price better than most. As an alum of the School of Business and Management and the incoming chair of the TESU Foundation Board, he is also a respected business leader with more than 27 years of progressive experience in the financial services and information technology sectors.

In addition to his current role as managing partner at Tulloch Investments LLC, King is also an investor, strategic advisor or board member for several early-stage technology companies. He is the former executive chairman of Nuxeo (later acquired by

Hyland Software). Before that, he was the CEO of Recommend, a leading eDiscovery and information analytics provider. In 2010, King became the president and CEO of DocuSign, guiding the company to more than \$20 million in revenue. He led ZANTAZ Inc. as its president and CEO earlier in his career. Under his guidance, the company became a market leader in cloud-based content archiving and e-discovery solutions. He also held executive positions at E*TRADE and ultimately became the CEO of E*OFFERING, a pioneering online investment bank under the E*TRADE umbrella.

"Working in the tech industry for a Silicon Valley firm at that time was

exhilarating and rewarding, but I knew a bachelor's degree would help advance my career. I researched and discovered Thomas Edison State University [then] College,"

Steven King, center, displays his honorary degree accompanied by TESU Board Chair Michael Toscani, left, and TESU Provost Cynthia Baum, right.



he said. “Its online component didn’t exist yet, but the flexibility to work at my own pace while earning college credits did, and it was a perfect fit for me. Throughout my professional life, I’ve had the good fortune of being in the right place at the right time. My degree helped ensure I was prepared to take advantage of those opportunities. I am forever grateful to this university and committed to giving back in any way possible.”

During the University’s 2024 Commencement ceremony, King was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, in recognition of his achievements and positive impact. During his acceptance speech, he lauded TESU graduates and their families in attendance, stating, “I know from experience that you have faced challenges that might have seemed insurmountable without your family’s support. I began my education three decades ago, and I’m sure my story mirrors that of many graduates and students.”

The Kings have worked with TESU’s leadership to structure their philanthropy around initiatives like the ZTC program.

“A significant challenge adult learners face is the cost of required course materials,” noted Merodie A. Hancock, Ph.D., president of TESU. “A recent study found that the average cost for textbooks or learning materials per college course was \$153, an expense many students do not anticipate when they enroll. As a result, up to 65% of students nationwide attempt to complete coursework without essential materials even though they realize it may negatively impact their success. Our ability to integrate free learning resources into our degree programs is largely thanks to Steve’s efforts in tandem with the TESU Foundation’s work and individual supporters who provide funding for the development, integration and expansion of free textbooks and learning materials.”

In addition to the University’s ZTC program, the Kings have supported the launch of TESU’s Credit Predictor Pro

platform. The free tool helps prospective students assess prior learning credits and their potential application toward a degree. The platform also allows them to create comprehensive professional profiles encompassing certifications,



Photo: Heartstrings Photo Co.

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STEVE KING, MBA ’15, BSBA ’93

credentials and other training experiences that may be translated into college credits. The Kings also provide funding to support the School of Business and Management’s doctoral orientations, research symposiums and networking sessions as well as TESU’s Annual Golf Classic and scholarship programs.

“I can’t think of a better way to demonstrate TESU’s unique niche in higher education than Credit Predictor Pro, which will inspire potential users to pursue or complete their degree. My wife Kay and I are delighted to support the University in making it possible for more prospective students to utilize this tool,” stated King.

King has been an invaluable member of the TESU Foundation Board since 2013.

“Serving on the Foundation Board offers a chance to advocate for strategic endeavors that empower students and give back to the institution that has played an essential role in my academic and professional journey. I am inspired by the opportunity to contribute to the University’s initiatives, particularly those that support student success and enhance its capacity to reach even more learners,” said King. “I’ve always been passionate about education’s role in changing lives. I feel privileged to be a part of TESU’s commitment to students and have seen firsthand how its innovative approach allows students to balance their education with personal and professional obligations. It’s motivating to be part of an institution dedicated to addressing the needs of non-traditional students, providing them with a pathway to success. My passion for the transformative role of education runs deep, and I am privileged to be an instrumental part of TESU’s commitment to adult learners.”

King continues to play a pivotal role in the institution’s mission.

“Education is the key to unlocking potential and creating brighter futures. Kay and I also believe giving back is an important way to leave a legacy,” said

King. “Supporting initiatives that reduce barriers to degree completion allows us to contribute to something greater than ourselves and pave the way for the next generation of leaders and innovators. We believe that paying it forward for others provides life-changing opportunities for students and their families.”

To learn more about the School of Business and Management programs, visit tesu.edu/business. For more information about the Zero Cost Textbook initiative, visit tesu.edu/ztc. To know whether your prior learning or expertise equates to college credits, check out the Credit Predictor Pro platform: credithpredictor.org/cpl/#/ tesu/login