

EXECUTIVE BIOGRAPHY

Mary A. Papazian, Ph.D.
President
Southern Connecticut State University

Mary A. Papazian, president of Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Conn., has enjoyed a notable career as an educator, administrator and scholar of English literature.

Appointed as the university's 11th president in December, 2011, Papazian oversees an institution of 10,300 students, 434 full-time faculty, 1,100 staff and an operating budget of \$210 million. Her first day at Southern was Feb. 1, 2012, and since then she has led a period of institutional enhancement.

A major construction program is changing the face of campus. In September, 2012, a new home for the School of Business opened its doors, and in spring 2015, a new Academic Laboratory Science Building and a major renovation of Buley Library were completed. The science building features Connecticut's first research center devoted solely to the cutting-edge field of nanotechnology, and the newly named Werth Center for Coastal and Marine Studies, supported by a \$1.5 million endowment from the Woodbridge-based Werth Family Foundation.

The new science building will be a launching pad for the growth of Southern's STEM programs in alignment with the needs of a 21st century economy. In spring, 2015, Papazian and New Haven Mayor Toni Harp announced a new bioscience partnership linking the university, the City of New Haven and its burgeoning biotechnology industry. The Biotechnology Academic and Career Pathway, or BioPath for short, will include four academic pathways, including a new major in biotechnology and graduate-level certification programs in areas such as pharmaceutical or healthcare management.

To further this and other partnerships in the sciences, Papazian established the Office for STEM Innovation and Leadership, headed by Christine Broadbridge, professor of physics and a widely recognized expert in the cutting-edge field of nanotechnology.

Papazian's urban initiatives will soon extend into Bridgeport, where the university is developing a multi-pronged initiative with city leaders, focusing on areas such as education, business and environmental science. This includes the potential establishment of a Center for Applied Sustainability through which faculty and students would engage in projects in environmental and urban sustainability, sustainable communities, and sustainable leadership and business practices.

Under Papazian, sustainability has become a focal point of Southern's mission. As a result, the university has received numerous awards and recognition in leading national publications for its greening initiatives, including building design, energy efficiency, recycling programs, and the innovative efforts of its students.

Addressing pressing issues of retention and graduation rates that are currently facing many public institutions of higher education, Papazian instituted a Student Success Taskforce at

Southern, enhancing services to, and support for, students and creating a clear path to a college degree.

At the graduate level, curricular changes have also been introduced to meet workforce needs and the time constraints of adult, professional workers. A new, accelerated M.B.A., for example, offers the opportunity to earn the degree in 17 months through a combination of Saturday and online courses. A fully online master's program in sport and entertainment management is now offered, and new computer science graduate tracks are available in the growth fields of cybersecurity and software development – listed as the number one career field for 2014 by Forbes magazine.

Papazian is also extending the university's reach internationally. Southern has established faculty-led study abroad programs to new locations including Italy, Belize and Peru, and is building partnerships with institutions in China, Vietnam, Armenia and Liverpool, England.

Papazian has taken an active role in the regional community as a member of the New Haven Regional Leadership Council, chair of the Connecticut Campus Compact governance sub-committee, president of the Greater New Haven Heart Walk and a director of New Haven Promise, a scholarship and support program created to promote college education as an aspiration for all New Haven Public School students. In 2014, she received the Athena Leadership Award, presented annually by the Greater New Haven and Quinnipiac chambers of commerce to women who “strive toward the highest levels of personal and professional accomplishment, who excel in their chosen field, devote time and energy to their community in a meaningful way, and forge paths of leadership for other women to follow.”

At the state level, she was selected as a member of a delegation to Complete College America, a national conference that assists states to increase the numbers of students earning college degrees and to close attainment gaps between traditional and under-represented populations.

Prior to Southern, Papazian most recently served as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Lehman College in The Bronx, which is part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system. A professor of English, with a focus on the works of John Donne, an English poet who wrote during the Renaissance era, Papazian holds a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

She lives in Woodbridge, CT, with her husband, Dennis R. Papazian, a long-time professor of history and founding director of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, and their two daughters, Ani and Marie.