



Stetson University

GAINS THE DISTINCTION IT DESERVES

Colleges of Distinction helps universities and colleges attract and serve students most likely to thrive in their unique environments. It's this mission that enabled the organization to partner with Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, in order to **strengthen its marketing efforts through third-party validation and introduce prospective students to the University's unique benefits and offerings.**

Stetson University's Goal for Increasing Enrollment

While already known for its well-respected College of Law, Stetson University wanted to distinguish its undergraduate programs within Florida's higher education market. Many schools, for example, boast an engaged faculty body, but Stetson University has a longstanding reputation for providing a particularly relationship-rich education for students, setting Stetson apart with supportive and collaborative faculty at the heart of it. Since 99% of classes are taught face-to-face, as opposed to online, Stetson also wanted to highlight its strong

residential and in-person experience for undergraduate students. Further, Stetson University understood the importance of having third-party validation for prospective students and their parents. The school can promote its own unique offerings and benefits, such as academic excellence and career readiness, but having an outside party affirm them helps assure prospective students and their families about the value of a Stetson University education.

Stetson University / About Stetson University

What Others Are Saying About Us

Don't just take our word for the quality of education at Stetson University - take a look at what other higher-education evaluators are saying about us. You'll find that Stetson ranks in the top 15% of all colleges and universities in the United States. In a survey by The Princeton Review, the number one response from our students was simple: "Happy."

A grid of 12 award badges is displayed, including:

- BEST COLLEGES USNews REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES SOUTH 2025
- BEST COLLEGES USNews BEST VALUE SCHOOLS 2025
- BEST COLLEGES USNews SOCIAL MOBILITY 2025
- BEST COLLEGES USNews MOST INNOVATIVE 2025
- THE PRINCETON REVIEW 2025 THE 3RD BEST COLLEGES
- THE PRINCETON REVIEW 2025 GUIDE TO GREEN SCHOOLS
- COLLEGES OF DISTINCTION 2024-2025
- COLLEGES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT DISTINCTION 2024 2025
- COLLEGES OF EQUITY & INCLUSION DISTINCTION 2024 2025
- COLLEGES OF INTERNATIONAL DISTINCTION 2024 2025
- HIGHER EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AWARD 2024
- HIGHER EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AWARD 2024



It's the outside validation and the CoD badges that, I think, help resonate with a parent or a student as opposed to us just saying it without anything to back it up. I think those are some of the things that are really important to prospective students' families.

— **DR. JEFFERY GATES**

Senior Vice President of Enrollment and Marketing

STETSON
UNIVERSITY



The Challenge

Stetson University wanted to set its undergraduate program apart in a higher education market that is otherwise saturated with other universities and colleges. As a small private university outside of Orlando, it can be a challenge to compete with many of Florida's larger public schools that have significantly more resources, reach, and brand recognition. Stetson University knew it would need to highlight specific offerings beyond any generic third-party validations that larger schools tend to rely on.

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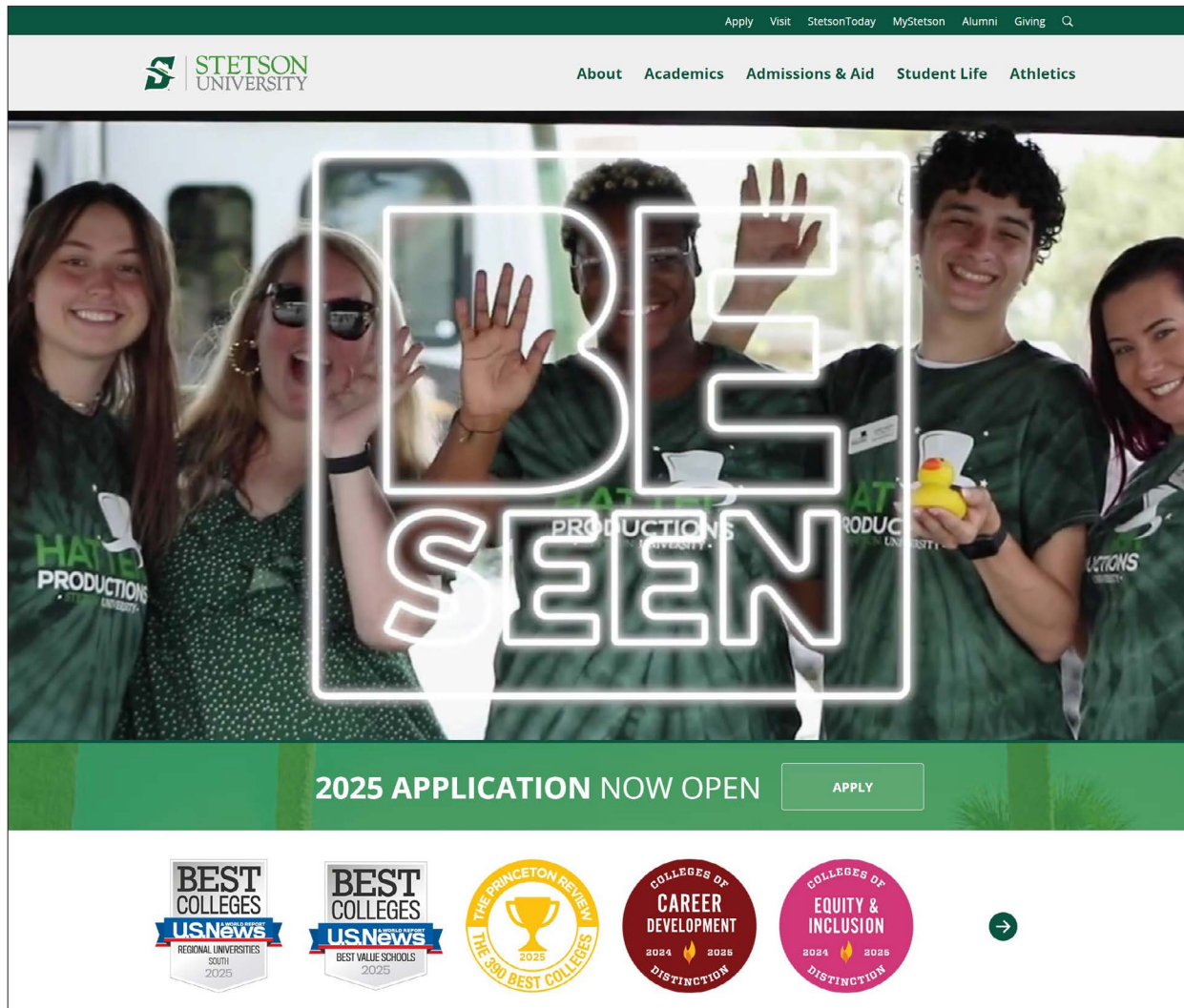
The third-party badges not only reveal the university is strong in general, but also that it's doing really well in a few specific areas.

— DR. JEFFERY GATES



Dr. Jeffery Gates, Stetson's Senior Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing, understood that being more specific about what, exactly, Stetson University did well through the affirmation of a third-party organization was key. In fact, he had partnered with Colleges of Distinction (CoD) in his previous job at another university in New York—and once he arrived at Stetson University, he was quick to partner with CoD again. Ultimately, he felt Colleges of Distinction could assist him and his team's efforts with their marketing and enrollment goals.

The Solution



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The selection process was smooth. We were asked specific questions about our strategy and outcomes with respect to our students, which we always like to share. Colleges of Distinction’s process allowed us to highlight the amazing students at Stetson.

— DR. JEFFERY GATES

Stetson University first applied to become a Colleges of Distinction member, after which Colleges of Distinction evaluated the school in four categories—Engaged Students, Great Teaching, Vibrant Communities, and Successful Outcomes—to determine which awards would best align with its offerings and profile. Once Stetson University was approved, the school was provided with third-party endorsement insignia, marketing collateral, pre-written press releases, and access to CoD’s marketing team. Unlike other ranking systems that favor “top” programs with domineering brand names, Colleges of Distinction provided Stetson University with a holistic and values-focused evaluation that resulted in membership for an affordable price.



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We put the badges on our print pieces and emails that we send out to high school counselors promoting our school.

We also use our badges in our social media efforts, our marketing postcards, and our website. I really enjoy the individuality of the badges. We're a college with many different offerings, and so being able to point to the badges that highlight a unique and particular aspect of our school is important.

— DR. JEFFERY GATES

The Result

Stetson University added the CoD badges to a host of its marketing collateral: the university website, social media communications, email campaigns, printed pieces, and more. The school also added the CoD badges to a “What They’re Saying About Us” page on its website. Additionally, the badges appear on digital signs across campus and other third-party websites promoting the school (e.g. Stetson University’s Niche profile). As a result, the university can point to third-party validation when speaking to prospective students and their parents about why it might be a great fit from an academic, social, and career perspective. As Stetson University continues to develop its offerings—especially its commitment to strong faculty support and their investment in students’ success—the university hopes to continue to rely on CoD’s unique third-party validation to meet its marketing and enrollment goals.

Colleges of Distinction’s team has been working in higher education since 2000 to help prospective students find schools that are truly a good fit for them, all while helping great institutions gain the distinction and visibility they deserve.



**COLLEGES OF
DISTINCTION**

**Become a
member today.**

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