

# ESPN's Growth in Connecticut Benefits State's Economy, Workforce and Students

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**F**or three decades, it has been a two-way street of success: ESPN has helped Connecticut and Connecticut has helped ESPN.

The state's renewed investment in ESPN's economic growth here is not only good news for the worldwide leader in sports, but for Connecticut's current and future workforce.

Alumni and students of the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) know that first-hand, having played an integral role in the company's phenomenal growth.

Today, more than 100 alumni of Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Connecticut State Universities are employed throughout ESPN, with expertise ranging from programming and production to technology, operations and business.

Numerous alumni have risen through the ranks to key leadership positions, even as the next generation of student interns from the universities continue to be a regular presence in Bristol.

Examples abound of home-grown talent who have helped shape ESPN's development into the preeminent name in sports broadcasting.

With plans to add both jobs and state-of-the-art facilities, future opportunities can be built on the solid foundation already in place.

Norby Williamson, a 1985 graduate of Southern, is executive vice president, production, and oversees all ESPN and ABC game, event and studio production work for the numerous domestic television and radio networks. He began his ESPN career as a production assistant intern while at Southern.

Carol Pandiscia, senior vice president, technology program management and business planning, graduated Eastern in 1989 with a major in communications and a minor in business. She began as an entry level coordinator in the operations department and now oversees project management and business planning for ESPN's technology organization.

Rich Novacki, a Central graduate, is senior director of compensation, responsible for compensation programs for the company's 6,000 employees worldwide (including 3,900 in Connecticut). "I am someone local who works for a worldwide company in my backyard," observes Novacki, a New Britain native.

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## ESPN's Growth Benefits Connecticut

Jose Mendes, a 2002 Western graduate, is a supervisor in commercial operations, and participates in Western's online mentoring program offering career advice to students.

Among the recent interns now employed at ESPN is 2006 Eastern graduate Kacie Warner, who has worked as a media operator on SportsCenter and college basketball.

"The Connecticut universities have provided us the ability to recruit in the local region," says Mike Boissonneault a Central graduate who now leads ESPN's professional staffing and recruitment efforts nationwide. "It's great to give Connecticut kids a chance."

This is only a partial roster of the scores of talented, savvy professionals whose journey began at Central, Eastern, Southern or Western, then advanced via an internship or entry-level foot-in-the-door. With committed, capable faculty, the CSUS universities have a solid track record of accomplished alumni reflected at ESPN and businesses statewide.

As technology continues its accelerated evolution, reaffirming the Connecticut-ESPN connection makes sense for today's workforce and tomorrow's - especially those looking to further transform an ever-changing industry.

A restructured Connecticut higher education system, designed to direct more money to the classroom and less to back office operations, does so as well.

CSUS is squarely focused on its students and Connecticut's future. More than 90 percent of our 36,600 students are from Connecticut and nearly nine in ten graduates stay in the state to pursue their career and contribute to the state's economic vitality and quality of life.

As most everyone knows, ESPN also calls Connecticut home. And if past is prologue, it's quite clear that there's no place like home.

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Connecticut State University System

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