

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **AIU ONLINE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED**

American InterContinental University Online is proud to announce that Brent Messer, a 2005 graduate of the University, has been selected as the third recipient of the prestigious Distinguished Alumni Award. Mr. Messer received a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts with a concentration in Visual Communication from AIU Online. Since his graduation, Mr. Messer has worked for the Alachua County, Florida government. This past August he was promoted from Web Services Manager to Head of the Applications Division. When not working, he spends much of his time volunteering for local organizations.

Mr. Messer, a resident of Alachua County since 1983, was selected as AIU Online's Distinguished Alumni Award Winner from hundreds of applicants. The judging panel, consisting of AIU administrators, selected him for his educational, civic and professional accomplishments. Shortly after graduating from Alachua County's Santa Fe High School in 1994 he enlisted in the Army and served until 1998. Messer now lives in Jonesville with his wife Evelyn.

The award judges said Mr. Messer's commitment to his community made him stand out from other nominees. While, in the months prior to his June 2005 graduation, he was offered challenging positions elsewhere in the country, Messer felt that it was important to remain in Alachua County. "I like to think of myself as one of the locals who loves his community and I wanted to give back the best way I know how," he said. "AIU helped me build the skills and knowledge that can make this community a better place for its citizens."

While Messer's contributions to Alachua County are easily visible – he designed the county's new logo, visible on billboards, signage, and county government cars – he is most proud of the invisible, or rather, un-visible, work he does. A dedicated proponent of web accessibility, Messer founded the SWAT movement in Alachua County. SWAT stands for Serious Web Accessibility Thinking. Those involved with SWAT are dedicated to educating web content providers and designers about the best ways to, and the need to supply accessible and usable web content for persons with disabilities.

The AIU Online Distinguished Alumni Award is not the only recognition Mr. Messer has received for his achievements. His work for Alachua County has garnered, for him and for the team of programmers and designers he leads, several awards for management practices and design. Messer has also shared some of his programming, design, and management skills at conference presentations. In June he spoke to a standing-room-only crowd at the annual Transforming Local Government Conference in Seattle.

Mr. Messer has four different books on Project Management and Information Technology topics in various stages of production. He also runs a boutique web design firm, db studios.

“I always had big dreams, but when I was struggling to balance a full-time job, commitments to my family, and attending a traditional university, there were times I doubted I’d ever reach the end zone. Then I discovered AIU Online where I was able to regain control of my schedule. What I learned at AIU Online, combined with my drive to succeed, has allowed me to reach, and even surpass, my goals. I’m amazed at how much I am able to do, and how well prepared I am to do it,” opined Messer.

When not working, Messer serves as Administration Officer for the local Civil Air Patrol, helps with the Keep Alachua County Beautiful program and chairs the local Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center’s Advisory Board. He and his wife Evelyn are now putting the finishing touches on a new home they will move in to in early 2008.

As AIU Online’s Distinguished Alumni Award winner, Mr. Messer and his wife will be flown to AIU Online headquarters just outside of Chicago where he will attend the award ceremony and be presented with a plaque commemorating his achievement.

One of the country’s largest providers of online education, AIU Online offers career-relevant Associate, Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees across a variety of disciplines. It has more than 40,000 alumni around the world.

AIU Online’s Distinguished Alumni Award competition is held twice a year and is open to graduates from any of the University’s degree programs. For further information, contact, [alumni@aiuonline.edu](mailto:alumni@aiuonline.edu) or call 1-877-221-5800.

### **About AIU Online**

AIU is an international university with campuses located in Atlanta, Georgia; Los Angeles, California; Weston, Florida; Houston, Texas; London, England; and Dubai, United Arab Emirates (The American University in Dubai). AIU Online is the web-based virtual campus of American InterContinental University. For more information, see [www.aiuonline.edu](http://www.aiuonline.edu).