Welcome. In this course we will challenge your thinking on many issues facing our country and the world. As a Columbia Southern University faculty member I am committed to your education, considering your needs, motivations, interests, capacities, and goals. You most likely chose Columbia Southern because it meets your need to balance career, family, and education. I chose Columbia Southern because I can have a broad impact on creating social change agents who seek solutions to the causes of problems. I am committed to Columbia Southern's goal to help people world-wide realize their capacity to contribute to their well-being and that of society. Collectively, we can make a difference to social order, in areas such as government, economics, international affairs, and health.

Outside of Columbia Southern University, I am Vice President of a not-for-profit agency that works to improve health care in U.S. detention and confinement facilities. In this executive capacity, I participate on the management team and oversee agency grant and research projects related to criminal justice health care systems. In this position, I have conducted technical assistance and lead accreditation site teams to over 500 jails, prisons, and juvenile detention and confinement facilities. I write detailed case study analyses of correctional health care systems, and extensively lecture throughout the country on bioethical, health system management, and quality improvement issues.

I have earned degrees in health services administration, public administration, and psychology. I have a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Nebraska, Omaha. I am no stranger to distance education. My doctorate is in health services from Walden University, a distant-learning program. I pursued my doctorate while managing a career, consulting and lecturing throughout the country, and raising a family. It was seven long challenging years, but I am glad for the experience. My point here is that I gained, through my experience, an appreciation of and empathy for distance education. I am committed to helping you achieve your academic goals at Columbia Southern University, and am available by e-mail (scott.chavez@columbiasouthern.edu) or by telephone (312-360-0390) to answer course-related questions, to discuss career choices, or just to commiserate about e-learning.

I would like to know from you, your present work situation, your career goals, what Columbia Southern degree program you are in, how far along you are, and any issues or questions that you might have related to the course.

Let me conclude with one of my favorite Mark Twain quotes, for it underscores the importance of what you are doing. “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do.” Remember, your sacrifice and self-discipline to complete your course work today will have far-reaching rewards for you and society tomorrow.