

HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CELEBRATES A RECORD 1,504 GRADUATES AT RED BULL ARENA ON MAY 17



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From the Editor’s Desk

HCCC Happenings is on the College’s website at <http://www.hccc.edu>

Items for the July newsletter are due by Friday, June 9, 2023.

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HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CELEBRATES A RECORD 1,504 GRADUATES AT RED BULL ARENA ON MAY 17

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) held its 46th Commencement Ceremony on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at Red Bull Arena in Harrison, NJ. Approximately 1,504 graduates, a college record, were joined by family, friends, elected officials, the College’s Trustees, and HCCC faculty and staff. New Jersey Senate President Nicholas Scutari delivered the keynote address, and Sally Elwir delivered valedictory remarks.

Among the graduates were 13 students from Hudson County high schools who completed their associate degrees while still attending high school. There were also nine graduates who are incarcerated or reentry citizens.

“As members of the Class of 2023 embark upon the next chapters of their lives, we know they will continue to demonstrate the fortitude, perseverance, and leadership that brought them success as HCCC students,” said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. “We celebrate them and their families.”

Representing the 22nd District, New Jersey State Senator Nicholas Scutari is a strong education proponent. He co-sponsored the New Jersey STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Scholars Grant Pilot Program that builds upon existing STEM educational programs and creates new ones. Senator Scutari received his undergraduate degree from Kean College (now Kean University), his Master’s degree from Rutgers University, and law degree from the Thomas Cooley Law School at Western Michigan University. Currently the President of the New Jersey Senate, he serves as Chair of the Joint State Leasing and Space Utilization Committee.

HCCC Class of 2023 Valedictorian Sally Elwir is a Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship Semifinalist who received her Associate in Science (A.S.) degree in Criminal Justice. She was President of the HCCC Student Government Association and Vice President of the Beta Alpha Phi Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society.

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ON THE COVER: *The achievements of Hudson County Community College’s Class of 2023 were celebrated at Red Bull Arena on May 17.*

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOSTS NJ REENTRY CORPORATION’S INAUGURAL SUMMER TRAINING INSTITUTE

On Wednesday, May 10, the New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) held a press conference to launch its Summer Training Institute for court-involved young adults at Hudson County Community College’s (HCCC) Culinary Conference Center.



This innovative program will provide 175 court-involved young adults, ages 18-25, with comprehensive job training and industry-recognized credentials that will ready them for a variety of in-demand and family-sustaining careers. Participants will have the opportunity to take courses on general construction and forklift operation while earning OSHA 30 certification. Participants can also take culinary courses, Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) courses at RJW Barnabas, and courses on phlebotomy and becoming a peer recovery specialist (a professional who has successfully completed the recovery process and now helps others going through the same process). Additionally, they can learn Microsoft basics and receive Cisco Certification.

Pictured: Participants in the press conference at HCCC announcing the launch of NJ Reentry Corporation’s inaugural Summer Training Institute, including NJRC founder and chairman, former New Jersey governor James McGreevey, HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber, and others.

services, such as enrollment in federal and state benefit programs such as Medicaid and SNAP, plus the offerings of the Francine A. LeFrak Wellness Center that provides medical, behavioral, and dental health screenings. Additionally, the Hudson County Department of Housing and Community Reintegration will provide supportive family services to participants.

Courses will take place this summer over two sessions. Group 1 begins on June 26 and concludes on July 28, while Group 2 runs from July 31 through Aug. 31. Classes are from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. each day. Interested participants can register online at njreentry.org or via Eventbrite, or

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Summer Training Institute participants will also gain access to NJRC’s full array of wraparound

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOSTS HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SUMMIT



Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' President and CEO, Dr. Antonio R. Flores.

"Town Hall" panel discussion featuring, from left: HCCC Latino Advisory Council Liaison Wendy Martinez; HACU President and CEO, Dr. Antonio R. Flores; HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber; and Assistant Professor of Modern Languages, Speech and Communication Studies Gilda Reyes. The Summit also featured a roundtable with Dr. Flores and members of the media invited by HACU.

On Thursday, May 4, 2023, Hudson County Community College welcomed Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) President Dr. Antonio Flores and other HACU leaders and members, higher education representatives, state legislators, and corporate and community leaders in the organization's "HACU on the Road" visit. The full-day program was held at the HCCC Culinary Conference Center, 161 Newkirk Street in Jersey City, NJ. Several hundred individuals, including HCCC students, faculty, and staff attended the day's meetings and activities. A community luncheon involved representatives of colleges, universities, businesses, and community agencies from New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.

Designed to promote dialogue about the state of Hispanic higher education, the "HACU on the Road" Summit engaged chancellors and presidents

of colleges and universities, superintendents of Hispanic-serving school districts, corporate leaders, faculty, staff, students, media and other supporters. The event presented opportunities for attendees to learn more about HCCC best practices, HACU programs and initiatives, priority issues surrounding Hispanic college and university students and communities, and to develop alliances and partnerships.

"Hudson County Community College is a proud member of HACU, and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "We were honored to host 'HACU on the Road,' and to welcome Dr. Flores, his colleagues, other summit participants, and to engage our college and tri-state colleges, universities and communities in important discussions."

The "HACU on the Road" Summit began with a HACU/HCCC leadership meeting led by Dr. Flores and Dr. Reber. Lunch with the community members followed. Later, Dr. Flores, Dr. Reber, HCCC Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dr. Yeury Pujols, HCCC Latino Advisory Council Liaison Wendy Martinez, and HCCC Assistant Professor of Modern Languages, Speech and Communication Studies Gilda Reyes conducted a "Town Hall" panel discussion. A roundtable with Dr. Flores and members of the media followed the Town Hall, and a closing reception concluded the Summit.

Thousands of Hispanic students benefit from HACU internships, scholarships, college retention and advancement programs, pre-collegiate

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HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE SALUTES ITS LEAGUE EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to the following Hudson County Community College faculty, staff and administrators who received the 2022-2023 Excellence Award from the League for Innovation in the Community College. The League formally recognized all Excellence Award winners at its Innovation Conference in March.

Each 2022-2023 League Excellence awardee received a specially cast pewter medallion; an Excellence Award certificate; and a copy of the League Awards Program.

Congratulations to Antonio Acevedo; Eric Adamson; Daisy Baiza; Dr. Jeanne Baptiste; Anita Belle; Dr. David Clark; Patricia Clay; Dr. Christopher Conzen; Dr. Heather DeVries; Chastity Farrell; Michael Ferlise; Matt Fessler; Veronica Gerosimo; Karen Hosick; Dr. Ara Karakashian; Matt LaBrake; Jose Lowe; Lori Margolin; Sylvia Mendoza;



Jedediah Palmer; Dr. Raffaella Pernice; Doreen Pontius; Laurie Riccadonna; Dr. Paula Roberson; Dr. Gretchen Schulthes; Cathie Seidman; Catherine

Sweeting; Jeremiah Teipen; John Urgola; Lilisa Williams; and Dr. Burl Yearwood.

MILESTONES

Congratulations to the following on their anniversaries with Hudson County Community College!

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year

Dalisay Bacal

5 Years

Upasana Sethi-Pagan

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year

Luis Aguayo

Arefa Ali

Hannah Allen

Daniella Araoz

Gina Calderon

Kadiatou Camara

Leandra Cancel

Kaivan Cuellar

Omega Dickerson

Mitesh Kalathiya

Corazon Lacsamana

Felipe Nunes

Prit Patel

Janna Roberts- Gervais

Megha Sanghavi

Paulina Sonza

Bruce Vereen-Nealous

5 Years

Joseph Arce

Latyra Danner

Darius Gilmore

Alexandra Plante

10 Years

James Wiggins

Semester Start-Up Events SAVE THE DATE FALL 2023

College Service Day

Wednesday, August 23, 2023
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

All College Adjunct Faculty Orientation

Thursday, August 24, 2023
6 p.m.

Convocation

Wednesday, August 30, 2023
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

NOTE: Convocation is for all students, faculty, and staff.

HCCC SALUTES ITS ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS



Pictured from left, representing the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM): Daisy Baiza, Administrative Assistant; Ronny Canales, Administrative Support Specialist; Jasmine Ngin, Office Assistant; and Yvon Groeneveldt, Senior Lab Technician.



Anna Krupitskiy, Vice President for Human Resources, delivers greetings.



Dr. Christopher Reber, HCCC President, offers remarks.

On Wednesday, April 26, the Office of Human Resources welcomed administrative professionals from throughout College to a special luncheon at the Gabert Library's sixth-floor atrium. Two lucky winners received prizes!

HCCC FACULTY RECOGNITION



Pictured from left: Katie Sweeting, Professor, English; Dr. Sirhan Abdullah, Associate Professor, Health Services, Medical Assisting and Medical Billing/Coding; Dr. Alison Wakefield, Dean, Humanities, Social Sciences, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Academic Foundations English (AFE); Michael Ferlise, Assistant Professor, Sociology and Anthropology; and Kathryn Buckley, Assistant Professor, English.

On Wednesday, May 10, Hudson County Community College celebrated its faculty members, including those who have been granted tenure and/or a promotion effective during the 2023-24 academic year.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) WEBINARS

Choosing Kindness (All Employees, Live, Wednesday, June 21, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.) A little bit of kindness can go a long way, but it isn't always easy. Kindness is also a skill that can be developed. In this session we will review some tips to lead a kinder life.

The Power of Perseverance and Grit (Leaders and Managers, Live, Wednesday, June 28, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.) In this session we will examine the work of Dr. Angela Duckworth ("Grit") and consider how we might integrate powerful "grit" strategies into our lives and our work

PTSD: Let's Get the Facts (Prerecorded; available 24/7 through June 30) – You've heard about it. What is it, what are its causes and how is it treated? This webinar will explore and discuss Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We will discuss the definition, common myths vs. facts, symptoms, relationship, self-care and treatment.

To sign up for these webinars, visit eap.ndbh.com, enter company code HCCC, and scroll down to the "Check Out Our Webinars" box. Questions? Connect with your EAP account manager, HR department or 800-624-5544.

REGISTER NOW
for Summer II
classes at HCCC!

Earn up to 12 credits!



**SUMMER II begins on
Wednesday, July 12, 2023**

For more information contact:

admissions@hccc.edu

text (732) 509-4222

or call (201) 714-7200

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS RECEIVE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR PARTNERSHIPS IN EQUITY (NAPE) AWARDS

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) is pleased to announce that Lori Margolin, Associate Vice President of Continuing Education and Workforce Development, and her Gateway to Innovation Team, and Natalia Vazquez-Bodkin, Associate Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), received awards from the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE). The awards were presented at the NAPE National Summit for Educational Equity in Washington, D.C.

The NAPE Teamwork Award, which recognizes an education team that succeeds in promoting DEI in career and technical education (CTE) or Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), was presented to the HCCC Gateway to Innovation Team. The team includes Associate Vice President Margolin; Workforce Pathways Director, Anita Belle; Career and Academic Counselor, Rimsha Bazaïd; Business Developer, Dan Brookes; Healthcare Coordinator, Denise Carrasco; Associate Director, Laurice Dukes; Finance and Technology Student Success Coach, Evani Greene; Healthcare Student Success Coach, Afrodite Hernandez; Program Assistant, Ojanae Marshall; Finance and Technology Coordinator, Hiram Miranda; and Alumni Manager, Maria Lita Sarmiento.

The NAPE Heart and Hope Award was presented to Natalia Vazquez-Bodkin. The award recognizes a person who manages major projects or programs with hope, works intentionally with heart, and has made a major impact by ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion in education leading to high-wage, high-skill, in-demand programs of study and careers.

"We are very proud to congratulate Lori, Natalia, and their colleagues for receiving these awards," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "Student success and DEI are the bedrock of our core values and everything we do at Hudson County Community College. Thanks to their efforts and the commitment of the entire HCCC family, our students and community members benefit from cutting-edge programs that provide transformational opportunities."

The HCCC Gateway to Innovation (GTI) program was developed to achieve lasting, sustainable improvement in the county's workforce



Pictured from left: Lori Margolin, Associate Vice President of Continuing Education and Workforce Development, co-recipient of the NAPE Team Award with the Gateway to Innovation (GTI) Team; and Natalia Vazquez-Bodkin, Associate Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, recipient of the NAPE Heart and Hope Award.

ecosystem, reducing socioeconomic inequities for Hispanic/Latino and African American students. The program addresses the unprecedented, systemic challenges exacerbated by COVID-19, with the goal of achieving lasting improvement in the workforce ecosystem. GTI works to STABILIZE students' basic supports and enhance financial health; ENGAGE alumni and provide job placement

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HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE RECEIVES '2023 MOST PROMISING PLACES TO WORK IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES' NATIONAL AWARD



Pictured from left, Dr. Christopher Conzen, Executive Director, Secaucus Center and Early College Programs; Elana Winslow, Associate Professor, Business; Raffi Manjikian, Instructor, Chemistry; and Anna Krupitskiy, Vice President for Human Resources.

For the second year in a row, Hudson County Community College (HCCC) has received the national "2023 Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges" Award. The College is one of twenty colleges in the United States to receive this honor from *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* and the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD). The award was presented to the College at NISOD's annual meeting in Austin Texas, May 27-30, 2023.

"2023 Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges" recipients are recognized for exceptional commitment to diversity in all forms

– including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, class, and veterans – through best in-class student and staff recruitment and retention practices, inclusive learning and working environments, and meaningful community service and engagement opportunities.

To select the awardees, the "Most Promising Places to Work" research team uses a web-based survey to examine areas such as innovative programs, family friendliness, salaries/benefits, and professional development opportunities. The "Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges" team reviewed HCCC's on-boarding and evaluation, new faculty and staff orientation, professional development, and work-life practices, as well as salaries and benefits. They learned that HCCC is steadfast in its commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and encourages:

- Culturally aware curricula;
- Recruitment of – and opportunities for – diverse populations, including administration, faculty, staff, and students;
- Diversity training and education that is available to everyone;

- Mediation of differences that may arise among community members to attain the best possible solutions and compromises; and
- Diverse conversations and discussions without censure or hostility.

"Last year, HCCC was recognized as 'a beacon for diversity,' and this year's award reflects our continued commitment to advancing equity and excellence," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "Everyone at HCCC – trustees, faculty, staff, students, and benefactors – work to make the College a welcoming, safe, and inclusive place to work and learn. 'Hudson is Home' is not just a slogan, it is affirmation of the sense of belonging we foster here, and the fulfillment of our mission, vision, and values. We share this award with our entire HCCC family!"

Hudson County Community College serves one of the most ethnically and racially diverse areas of the United States. HCCC's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion promotes a climate that embraces and celebrates differences while championing inclusive practices, policies and procedures in all College activities. In 2019, the College established the President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (PACDEI). In its first year, PACDEI launched a college-wide climate survey with approximately

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We've been celebrating..



Hudson Scholars

On Wednesday, May 3, Hudson County Community College celebrated its inaugural class of students graduating from the Hudson Scholars Program.



Scholar Bowl

Tiana Malcolm (third from right) and her team, The Flying Mongooses, won the PTK Catalyst Scholar Bowl at Phi Theta Kappa's annual convention at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in April.



DEISPP Award Ceremony

The College honored a new cohort of students completing the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Student Passport Program (DEISPP) at an event on Friday, May 5.



NSLS Induction Ceremony

Students meeting the required criteria received their Foundations of Leadership certificates during the College's National Society of Leadership and Success ceremony on Friday, May 5.



Kente Graduation

HCCC recognized the educational and cultural achievement of students representing the African diaspora at its Kente Graduation ceremony on Monday, May 8. Dr. Darryl Jones (left), Vice President for Academic Affairs, delivered the keynote address. Omega Dickerson (Class of 2023, right) led the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing."



Culinary Friends & Family Event

On Saturday, May 6, HCCC's Culinary Club held its 10th Annual Friends & Family Events at the Culinary Conference Center.

2nd Annual HCCC Pride Walk

On Friday, April 21, members of the College community participated in HCCC's second annual Pride Walk across the Journal Square Campus.





Graduation Celebrations at Journal Square and North Hudson Campuses

The Journal Square and North Hudson Campuses both hosted barbecues for the Class of 2023.



Early College

Eleven of the thirteen 2023 Early College graduates are students at High Tech High School! They were honored in a special ceremony on Tuesday, May 16 and are pictured with Dr. Burl Yearwood (left), Dean, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and Dr. Christopher Conzen (right), Executive Director, Secaucus Center and Early College Programs.



Grad Salutes

The Journal Square and North Hudson campuses held Graduates Salutes – sponsored by Lakeland Bank – to help the Class of 2023 get ready for the big day!



EOF Graduation Ceremony

The Education Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program held a luncheon and award ceremony for its graduates on Wednesday, May 10.



Annual Lavender Graduation Ceremony

The College honored the achievements and contributions of graduating LGBTQIA+ students at a Lavender Graduation Ceremony on Thursday, May 11.



Grad Formal

Graduates and guests danced the night away at the Graduation Formal on May 15, held at Hudson House.



ESL Grads

On Tuesday, May 16, HCCC honored graduating students from the Class of 2023 who began their journeys in Hudson's ESL Program during the "ESL to Graduation: A Celebration" event.

Alpha Sigma Lambda Induction

Alpha Sigma Lambda, the oldest and largest national honor society for non-traditional students, held its induction ceremony on May 12.





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Ms. Elwir is a frequent speaker at HCCC Town Hall and Board of Trustees meetings. She interned for the Hudson County Prosecutor’s Office, and volunteered for “It’s On Us,” an advocacy group dedicated to combatting sexual assault.

“I feel strongly about public safety and ensuring that people’s concerns are taken seriously. It is important that someone in the criminal justice field fight for social justice from the government and for the people, which I am confident in doing,” Ms. Elwir said.

Coming from a large family of Middle Eastern descent, Ms. Elwir speaks English and Arabic. She participated in a federal work-study program, and serves on the HCCC JED Campus Team, supported by the nonprofit JED Foundation, an organization that helps protect emotional health and prevent suicide among teens and young adults. She is also a member of the HCCC Student Affairs Committee of the All College Council (the HCCC participatory governance organization), and Student Conduct Board. She volunteers for the Hudson Helps Resource Center and Hope House, an emergency shelter for homeless women with children; and works for HCCC’s Office of Student Life and Leadership. Additionally, Ms. Elwir has served as an HCCC College Student Success Mentor.

To view the 2023 Commencement Ceremony:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 2ZSxfcQGnI>





HCCC CLASS OF 2023 VALEDICTORIAN SALLY ELWIR EXEMPLIFIES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADVOCACY

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) Class of 2023 Valedictorian Sally Elwir is passionate about higher education, social justice, and volunteering. At the College's 46th Commencement Ceremony on Wednesday, May 17, she shared her higher education and community service journey. The event was held at Red Bull Arena in Harrison, NJ.

While working toward her HCCC Associate in Science (A.S.) degree in Criminal Justice, Ms. Elwir participated in a federal work study program and gave back to the Hudson County community. She advocated for the health and well-being of college students at HCCC monthly Town Hall and HCCC Board of Trustees meetings, and discussed issues that impede student success at a conference with Governor Phil Murphy.

Tenacious and motivated to achieve academic excellence, Ms. Elwir maintained a 4.0 GPA, Dean's List status, and served as Vice President of the HCCC Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society. She was a semifinalist for the 2023 Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship for her exceptional academic ability, leadership, service, and determination.

Ms. Elwir is adept at juggling her studies with other roles and responsibilities. She served as 2022-23 President of the HCCC Student Government Association; serves as a College Student Success Mentor; serves on the Student Conduct Board; is a member of the All College Council Student Affairs Committee; and works with the JED Foundation for mental health support. As President of the HCCC Criminal Justice Club, Ms. Elwir hosted a self-defense training session and panel. Her volunteer work has benefitted the HCCC Office of Student Life and Leadership, Hudson Helps Resource Center, and Hope House, an emergency shelter for homeless women and children.

A member of a large Middle Eastern family, Ms. Elwir is a first-generation college student who speaks English and Arabic. She developed leadership skills in the HCCC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Student Passport Program. To promote multicultural activities and social events at the College, she organized the Arab Heritage Month Fashion Show and International Fashion Show, the Spring Mixer, Women's History Month event, Halloween Dance, and Winter Festival.



Sally Elwir, Hudson County Community College Class of 2023 Valedictorian.

A proponent of criminal justice reform, Ms. Elwir has addressed the socioeconomic injustices of the "war on drugs," and assisted victims of sexual assault. While interning for the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, she observed trials; shadowed an attorney, detectives and agents; and researched Megan's Law files and data. Ms. Elwir is a Community College Representative for the "It's On Us" Caucus Chair Leadership Program. She took master classes on sexual assault and prevention on college campuses.

"I plan on continuing my college education because I aspire to become a drug court attorney. My goal is to help those who struggle with addiction get recovery and a second chance," Ms. Elwir said. "I also feel strongly about public safety and ensuring that people's concerns are taken seriously. It's important that someone in the criminal justice field fights for social justice from the government and for the people, which I am confident in doing."



HCCC Alumni: *Get Involved!*

Did you enjoy your experience at HCCC? Are you willing to contribute time? Do you want to inspire others with your success stories? Are you looking for career support?

If so join, socialize, and network!

For information about the College's Alumni Association and membership benefits, please email alumni@hccc.edu.

PTK NEWS



Beta Alpha Phi Chapter inducted more than 100 new members at its induction ceremony on Friday, April 28.



On Saturday, May 6, the Beta Alpha Phi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa volunteered at the National MS Society's Walk MS and in the gardening program at Liberty State Park.

HCCC LEADERS RECEIVE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR PARTNERSHIPS IN EQUITY (NAPE) AWARDS

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services; RECOVER by expanding access to short-term healthcare training and credentials and opportunities for recession resistant work; and PROSPER by deepening relationships with employers and creating experiential learning opportunities for students in recession-resistant industries.

HCCC GTI met or exceeded goals of training students, awarding credentials, job placement, screening students for benefits, working with area employers in recession-resistant sectors to define in-demand skill sets, recruiting industry experts as mentors, delivering workshops, developing experiential learning opportunities, and mapping competencies to curricula and degree programs. Through these initiatives, HCCC uplifted, empowered, and provided pathways to a better future for thousands of students and alumni, as well as dislocated retail, hospitality, and low-wage essential workers.

In January 2021, JPMorgan Chase awarded HCCC an \$850,000, one-year investment to fund GTI. HCCC GTI was so successful that the award was increased by \$200,000 and extended to January 2023.

As Associate Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at HCCC, Natalia Vazquez-Bodkin leads by contributing to the creation of diversity

policies and procedures and equitable services. She oversees the Opportunity Meets Innovation Grant (OMIG), an award of \$500,000 from the State of New Jersey for Academic Year 2021-2023; co-chairs the President's Advisory Council for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (PACDEI), which consists of more than 42 participants; and successfully led the College through the Method of Administration (MOA) Civil Rights Compliance Review for Career and Technical Education programs of study with the New Jersey Department of Education.

Ms. Vazquez-Bodkin notes that financial support from the OSHE Opportunity Meets Innovation Grant enabled HCCC to support faculty, staff, students, and community members through several innovative initiatives, programs, and events. One such program is the homegrown, grassroots initiative, entitled Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Student Passport Program (DEISPP), that was created in response to the emotional impact of COVID-19 and the social unrest that the community was experiencing. Another is the eCornell Diversity and Inclusion certificate program that is offered to HCCC employees free of charge. Many other programs were made possible with this funding, including Title IX and Sexual Harassment Training, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summer Retreats, and ALICE in-person active shooter training.

PTK Catalyst

Tiana Malcolm, Biana Monteiro, Alexis Negron, Birva Pinto, Klaudia Zwonik, and Professor Ted Lai attended Catalyst, Phi Theta Kappa's annual the convention, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center from April 20 to April 23. Tiana and her team won the PTK Scholar Bowl. Klaudia served as the voting delegate for Beta Alpha Chapter.

Spring Induction

Beta Alpha Phi Chapter's Spring Induction was held on April 28. Alumna Ana Estefany Polanco and Middle States President Dariel Nunez were guest speakers. HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber, Dr. Lisa Dougherty, Dr. Darryl Jones, and Dr. Heather DeVries also addressed the inductees and their guests.

The 2023-2024-chapter officers were installed after the induction of the new members. Congratulations to new president Shemia Superville and her cabinet!

HCCC HOSTS HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SUMMIT

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support, and career development opportunities. HACU promotes the development of member colleges and universities; improves access to and the quality of postsecondary educational opportunities for Hispanic students; and meets the needs of business, industry and government through the development and sharing of resources, information and expertise. The organization's activities include improving legislation and government support for U.S. member institutions, building the institutional capacity of its members, and promoting strategic alliances.

About the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), founded in 1986, represents 500 colleges and universities in the United States, Latin America, Spain and school districts throughout the U.S. HACU is the only national association representing existing and emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). The Association's headquarters is in San Antonio, Texas, with regional offices in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento, California.

HCCC HOSTS NJ REENTRY CORPORATION'S INAUGURAL SUMMER TRAINING INSTITUTE

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in-person at the NJRC Training Center located at 195 Campus Drive in Kearny, NJ on June 1 and June 6. Interested participants can also email scastillo@njreentry.org for more information.

HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber stated, "Hudson County Community College and NJRC have a close working partnership. We have been honored to work together to provide 'industry-recognized' credentials to NJRC program participants across a wide range of skills-based training including phlebotomy, welding, culinary, and computer basics. The NJRC Summer Training Institute will provide young adults with skills and a direction, which will establish future careers."

Speakers at the launch included New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) Founder and Chairman, former New Jersey Governor James McGreevey, HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber, and NJ Council of County Colleges President Dr. Aaron Fitchner. Labor organizations such as the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) and the Eastern Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters also participated. Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Workforce Development Nicholas Toth spoke about investing in the state's labor force. Local leadership including Jersey City Council President, Joyce Watterman, and Hudson County Department Director of Housing and Community Reintegration Frank Mazza also participated in the event, along with Jenny Davis, the Chief of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Pastor Raul Ruiz of the New Jersey Coalition of Latino Pastors and Ministers read the opening prayers and spoke about the importance of community engagement, and Tamika McReynolds, First Lady of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Jersey City and Hot 97's DJ Wallah discussed the importance of summer programs and youth engagement. Reverend Ritney Castine of the Mount Pisgah AME Church in Jersey City concluded the event with closing remarks and a prayer.

About NJ Reentry Corporation

The New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) is a non-profit agency with a social mission to remove all barriers to employment for citizens returning from jail or prison. The NJRC is premised on the ambition to create an environment which promotes pro-social norms, encouraging the establishment of attachments to positive rehabilitative cultures, strengthening bonds among peers who promote positive norms and values, and promoting family reunification. Participants receive individualized assessments and treatment plans that first address essential needs, including housing, treatment, mental health care, medical care, and access to health insurance and other public benefits to secure these essential needs.

The daily expense of supervising a probationer is twenty times less than the average expense of incarcerating an individual in prison or jail. The costs of imprisonment is increasing while the benefits are decreasing substantially. NJRC's capacity to secure public safety for communities depends upon their ability to improve management to the thousands of individuals in New Jersey who are under probation and/or parole

supervision. Proper recognition must be given to persons without resources as post-release success frequently depends on the quality and services amongst support provided within a community.

Furthermore, gainful employment is the most critical aspect of post-prison reentry. Job training, employment counseling, as well as employment placement programs are essential tools for effective reintegration and workforce development.

The NJRC was developed subsequent to the successful implementation of a pilot reentry model in Hudson County/Jersey City in 2014 with the support of Governor Christie's administration. The Hudson County/Jersey City reentry model was initiated through a series of strategic partnerships between the Hudson County Department of Corrections (HCDOC), the New Jersey Department of Family Services (DFS), and local non-profit providers. Also included are the Jersey City Employment and Training Program (JCETP) and Integrity House, a substance abuse treatment provider, both with decades of experience serving court-involved individuals.

The HCDOC recognized that addressing the need for addiction treatment and successful return to society would result in improved public safety and established a Community Reintegration Program funded in part by a federal Second Chance Act grant. The program has been recognized by the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Institute of Justice "as being at the forefront of the reentry field." The project is one of only seven in the country to be included in a gold standard evaluation by the National Institute of Justice.

HCCC HONORS THE MEMORY OF PROFESSOR MICHAEL DE MATAS



Members of the De Matas family with Dr. Christopher Reber, HCCC President; and Nicole Bouknight Johnson, HCCC Vice President for Advancement and Communications.

Professor Michael De Matas dedicated 12 years of his life to Hudson County Community College. As a math professor and tutor, he taught HCCC students and touched the lives of many in the College community.

On Monday, May 1, the College dedicated a bench in Prof. De Matas' memory at Culinary Plaza Park. The bench has been provided to HCCC by his loving daughter, Maureen De Matas, to memorialize her father's impact.

CREATIVE WRITING STUDENTS TOUR STRAND BOOK STORE



On Wednesday, May 3, the Creative Writing class taught by Assistant Professor Kathryn Buckley enjoyed a trip to the Strand Book Store in the East Village of New York City. Due to the generosity of the Office of Student Life and Leadership, each student was able to select a new book. Following the excursion, the students enjoyed New York-style pizza and discussed their semester and future writing goals.

Some of the students had their classwork published in the student publication, *Crossroads*, and participated in a reading on Thursday, May 11. The Spring 2023 edition of *Crossroads* is available online at <https://www.hccc.edu/student-success/resources/documents/crossroads-2023.pdf>

Foundation Art Collection

The Hudson County Community College Foundation Art Collection of 1,825+ works is installed in the public areas of campus buildings. The entire College is an educational art museum. This Collection reveals aspects of America's and New Jersey's rich artistic and cultural history from the Hudson River School period to today. In recent years, the College's acquisition efforts have focused on strengthening its American and New Jersey modern and contemporary collections.

Each month, this page in *HCCC Happenings* provides updates on artists whose works are in the Collection, and new additions to the Collection.

Donor Acknowledgements:

Thank you the Chambliss Giobbi for donating the wonderful mixed-media work by Ed Giobbi.

Thanks to Martha Posner for donating the beautiful catalogues of her works.

Artist News

Congratulations to this year's Student Foundation Art Award Winners: The two \$500 Purchase Awards went to **Elaf Hussein** for her watercolor, "Romina: The First Frost" and **Simone Colta** for her drawing, "La Zimnicea."

The four \$150 art-supplies gift-certificate awards went to Tashionna Green, Travis Muniz, Eliza Nunez, and Lucas Pinheiro. Thank you to the many talented artists who participated in the contest.

The work of **Pacita Abad** (1946 – 2004) is installed in a lobby of Filipino and Filipino-American art on the 3rd floor of the Gabert Library. A major exhibition of her work runs through Sept. 3 at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. It will then travel to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. In a recent review of the exhibit in *The New York Times*, Alex V. Cipolle writes that the exhibit seeks to give long overdue attention to this wonderful artist. Victoria Sung, the Walker associate curator of visual arts, said, "I just felt like she was an artist who had been so underrecognized and overlooked for so many years" said Ms. Sung, the show's curator. "One of the central questions I grappled with was how an artist like Pacita — who was remarkably prolific and whose works have such a robust physical presence — was at once visible and invisible.... She was at the center of her communities, artistic and otherwise, but, like so many other women artists of color, was relegated to the margins when it came to mainstream art spaces and art histories.... It's only now that Pacita's work is being recovered in the context of American art histories, but also Philippine, Southeast Asian and transnational art histories."

The recognition of long-neglected artists seems to be a "thing" this spring: **Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith** continues to get wonderful reviews for her



Elaf Hussein, Romina; The First Frost (2021),
Watercolor on Paper, 12" x 9"

exhibit at the Whitney Museum in New York City through August 13. You can see her work on the 4th floor of the Gabert Library as well. In a recent interview in *Hyperallergic*, the artist says of this long-overdue retrospective, "In this long journey, it is step by step, hand over hand, something like climbing a rope.... A partial culmination of a life's work. Few artists have the advantage of viewing their work in hindsight; this is the gift the Whitney has given to me and those who have followed my work. There is no measure for this; it goes beyond." For more of the interview, see: [Jaune Quick-to-See Smith on Her Life's Journey in Art \(hyperallergic.com\)](#)

Sometimes we install an artwork because of the artist's skill, and wonder, "How else can this be relevant?" Then, suddenly it becomes quite relevant. Take for example, the costume designs that New Jersey artist, **Sister Mary of the Compassion, OP**, made in the mid-20th century for a production of a four-hundred-year-old play by Francis Beaumont called, "The Knight of the Burning Pestle." For educational purposes, our gouaches installed on the 7th floor of the North



Simone Colta, La Zimnicea (2020),
Pen on Paper, 12" x 9"

Hudson campus are charming and well-executed. They also raise questions about the nun artist, who lived in a monastery in Union City and had taken a vow of silence. How did she end up doing these works?

To our surprise, "The Knight" play was recently performed in downtown New York City, and got a wonderful review in *The New York Times*. The paper notes that the raucous disruption of public events, which we see frequently today, was old news by 1607 when this "tricksy, loopy, wildly self-referential" play was written. A satire about the theater, "The Knight" is a play within a play. It starts with an Elizabethan acting troupe working to put on a new show. The locals are upset that nearby business owners aren't represented well, and insist on making a local grocer the hero. Calling part of the play, "beautifully silly," the reviewer notes that some sections of the play don't age well (but how well does anything age after 400 years?) Still, the play is "a satire of theater that is also a valentine to it, to the transport of becoming swept up into a play, to the wonder of seeing someone just like you onstage."

We welcome anecdotes and information about how the Art Collection benefits our community. If you have enjoyed using the Art Collection in your teaching, your studies, or your everyday life, please let us know! Contact ASiegel@hccc.edu and tell us the story of how the Art Collection works for you.

To make a monetary gift in support of the Foundation Art Collection, please contact Nicole Bouknight Johnson at (201) 360-4069 or nicolebjohnson@hccc.edu

To donate artwork, find detailed information here:
www.hccc.edu/community/arts/foundation-art-collection/index.html

Explore the Foundation Art Collection using our new online searchable tools!
Go to www.hccc.edu/community/arts/foundation-art-collection/category-collection-search.html

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS presents



HCCC HOSTS CREATIVE PLACEMAKING LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



Conference attendees prepare to have refreshments during a networking social on May 11.

Jeremiah Teipen (left), Professor and Coordinator, Computer Arts, and Digital Art and Design, and Laurie Riccadonna, Professor and Coordinator, Studio Arts, participating in the conference.

On Thursday, May 11 and Friday, May 12, Hudson County Community College hosted the 2023 Northeast & Mid-Atlantic Creative Placemaking Leadership Summit at the Journal Square Campus. This conference brought to HCCC several hundred city planners, community

leaders and activists, artists, and others from throughout the Northeastern United States.

Several members of the College facilitated or participated in several of the sessions: "Managing Gentrification in Journal Square" (Dr. Christopher

Reber, HCCC President); "Hudson County Community College: The Arts and Community" (Dr. Yeury's Pujols, Laurie Riccadonna, Eric Adamson, Jeremiah Teipen, Michelle Vitale); and "Taking a Closer Look: The College's Art Collection and Gallery Tour" (Michelle Vitale).

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Instagram: www.instagram.com/dineenhullgallery

For more information, email: mvitale@hccc.edu or visit www.hccc.edu/community/arts/doca-culture.html

HCCC HOLDS RIBBON-CUTTING FOR NEWLY FURNISHED ROOFTOP TERRACE



On Friday, May 12, Hudson County Community College officially opened the newly furnished rooftop terrace of the Gabert Library. The rooftop terrace is situated just off the Library's Sixth Floor lobby.

This space will be open to the College community during most business hours, weather permitting.

FOOD FUELS MINDS CELEBRATION EVENTS



On Friday, May 5 and Wednesday, May 10, the Journal Square and North Hudson campuses held respective "Food Fuels Minds" celebrations. These free events highlighted HCCC student stories and artwork about food, hunger, family, support, struggle and success. The events included many food options.

SPRING THEATRE FESTIVAL



On Thursday, May 11 and Friday, May 12, Hudson County Community College's Theatre Arts Program presented its Spring Theatre Festival, an exciting end-of-term celebration of work by HCCC's Theatre Arts students.

CONTINUING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS



Maria Lita A. Sarmiento, Alumni Manager, presented the topic of "Interview Questions," as part of the GTI "Tips & Techniques To Ace An Interview Workshop."



Denisse Carrasco, Healthcare Coordinator for Gateway to Innovation healthcare certificate programs, presented the topic of "Interview Preparation," as part of the GTI "Tips & Techniques to Ace An Interview Workshop."



The Gateway to Innovation - Enhanced Certified Nurse Aide class completed their Skills Evaluation on Friday, May 12.

Continuing Education & Workforce Development (CEWD) launched a workshop to assist students and alumni in preparing for an interview. They discussed different topics such as "Writing an Impressive Resume," "Dress to Impress," "Preparing for an Interview" and "How to Address Interview Questions." The attendees actively participated during the workshop, and felt more prepared for the Job Fair on May 23, 2023 in Jersey City hosted by CEWD.

For more information, contact: Maria Lita A. Sarmiento, Alumni Manager, msarmiento2@hccc.edu

Current program update:

The Enhanced Certified Nurse Aide class completed their Skills Evaluation on Friday, May 12. According to the skills evaluator, "All did well." As a result, these (9) students are now eligible for the NJ Nurse Aide Written Examination. We are positive that they will continue to also do well with their exams! We wish them best of luck on passing the written exam!

Upcoming programs:

Pharmacy Technician Program coming soon (starting at the end of June 2023; schedule TBD)
Patient Care Technician (PCT) 13 coming soon (September 2023; schedule TBD)

For more information, contact:

Denisse Carrasco, Healthcare Coordinator, Continuing Education & Workforce Development
dcarrasco@hccc.edu

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SUMMER 2023 PROMOTION
\$146 (25% Off)

When you also register for a Summer ESL Intensive class.
(Regular Price: \$195)

JULY July 10 – Aug. 3 (4 weeks, 20 hours) Tuesdays & Thursdays 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	AUGUST Aug. 7-31 (4 weeks, 20 hours) Tuesdays & Thursdays 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
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Learn more about ESL classes at
www.tinyurl.com/HudsonESL

Upcoming Programs

PROJECT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (ONLINE)

Mondays & Thursdays (36 Hours)
Monday, June 5, 2023, Through July 17, 2023 (No Class On 7/3)
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Instructor: Susan Serradilla-Smith
Price: \$1,200 (Payment Plans Are Available for Students & May Be Covered by Your Employer)
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/live-online-project-management-certificate-program-summer-2023-registration-577598070377>

PUBLIC SPEAKING IN TODAY'S WORLD! (ONLINE)

Mondays (3 Sessions)
Monday, June 5, 2023, through June 19, 2023
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Instructor: Mary Anne Kochut
Price: \$120
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/public-speaking-in-todays-world-registration-607702373157>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Friday, June 9, 2023
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Price: \$77
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2023-tickets-596007754237>

NICET SOIL TESTING CERTIFICATE PREPARATORY COURSE (ONLINE)

Saturdays & Sundays (32 Hours)
June 10, 2023, through July 2, 2023
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Price: \$350
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nicet-soil-testing-certificate-preparatory-course-registration-60749721037>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Friday, June 16, 2023
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Price: \$77
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2023-tickets-596007754237>

MICROSOFT OFFICE EXCEL INTERMEDIATE LEVEL (IN-PERSON)

Thursdays (5 Sessions)
June 22, 2023, through July 20, 2023
6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Instructor: Johnstone Libutsi
Price: \$145
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/microsoft-office-excel-intermediate-level-registration-607733857327>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Department of Continuing Education, 161 Newkirk Street, Room E504, Jersey City, NJ 07306
(201) 360-4224 | CE@hccc.edu | www.hccc.edu/continuingeducation

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

SAT PREP

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Summer Youth & Teen Programs

July 10 – August 25 Ages 9 - 15

Choose from any of our Culinary Arts programs, SAT Test Prep classes, CPR, and Photography offerings.

TO REGISTER: <https://tinyurl.com/HCCCSummerYouth>
QUESTIONS? Contact (201) 360-4224 or cguerra@hccc.edu



HCCC RADIOGRAPHY STUDENT WINS STATE COMPETITION



Congratulations to Lissette Chiriboga, a 2023 HCCC graduate of the Associate in Science in Radiography program on her first-place finish in the Emma Wolfe Student Competition, sponsored by the New Jersey Educators in Radiologic Imaging (NJERI) and New Jersey Society of Radiologic Technologists (NJSRT). The event was held at the annual NJSRT meeting on March 29. About 100 students from 11 radiography programs in New Jersey competed.

HCCC RECEIVES '2023 MOST PROMISING PLACES TO WORK IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES' NATIONAL AWARD

Continued from page 5

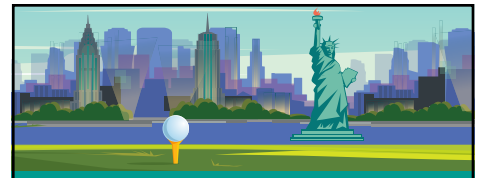
800 students, employees, and members of the Board of Trustees participating.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning evaluated the data and created comprehensive representations that were formally shared with the entire HCCC community for review and input. Four overarching goals were established:

- Supporting an inclusive culture of care at HCCC; creating DEI infrastructure, training programs, and initiatives across the College.
- Weaving diversity, equity, and inclusion guidelines and practices into recruitment and hiring practices, screening committee procedures, promotion considerations, and succession planning.
- Creating clear and transparent processes for safety, security, and incident reporting that are free of intimidation and respectful of confidentiality.
- Building community and a sense of belonging for students by advancing their academic development, professional growth, and personal transformation.

Transparent and inclusive processes at HCCC are truly owned by the College community and include monthly Town Hall meetings; implicit bias training; inclusion of faculty and staff at national conferences; opportunities for members of the College community to participate in the eCornell Diversity and Inclusion Certificate program free of charge; a competitive tuition reimbursement program for faculty and staff; a broad range of regularly scheduled employee development workshops; and much more.

"This is an exciting time to be part of HCCC," states Anna Krupitskiy, Vice President for Human Resources. "Dr. Reber, the Trustees, and the entire HCCC community work together to ensure a welcoming, collegial environment where everyone is respected, treated with dignity, and afforded opportunities to grow and realize their full potential."



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Monday, July 10, 2023
Forest Hill Field Club
Bloomfield, New Jersey
9.am. shotgun start



SCAN TO REGISTER

or go to <https://tinyurl.com/HCCGolf23>

Any questions, please contact: foundation@hccc.edu

We look forward to seeing you for a day of outstanding golf and fun!



We are here for you!

Are you experiencing stress, depression, or anxiety?

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Hudson County Community College cares about you and wants to help.

Please complete the General Concern Form at <https://tinyurl.com/HCCC-Care>.



A member of the CARE Team will respond to you shortly.

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OUT of the BOX PODCAST



Tune in to our monthly podcast for a timely discussion about education, people, programs, events, issues, and solutions that affect those who live and work in Hudson County.

To listen, visit www.hccc.edu/outofthebox.



COLLEGE EVENTS CALENDAR

For the most up-to-date information, please visit <https://www.hccc.edu/calendar>. Hudson County Community College reserves the right to modify the calendar as necessary.

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ALUMNI CORNER

Christian Rodriguez Class of 2021

Associate of Arts – Psychology

What factors led you to decide to attend Hudson County Community College?

I decided to attend Hudson County Community College because it was affordable, close to home, and just felt like the right institution for me. I was undecided in my major when I started at HCCC. Luckily, my time at HCCC allowed me to realize my love for psychology.

What is your favorite memory of the College, in or out of the classroom?

My favorite memory of the College was HCCC Commencement 2022. I had the pleasure of attending HCCC's first Commencement post-COVID, which was phenomenal! Hearing all the speeches and being surrounded by hundreds of graduates was an amazing feeling. That commencement was like no other, and it was so nice to graduate with my best friends. I will always cherish that day as it marked my transition from HCCC student to HCCC graduate. Another HCCC memory that I cherish is the HCCC Student Leadership Recognition Ceremony. It was an honor to commend our hardworking student leaders. I had the pleasure of assisting in organizing that event, and it made my day to see so many student leaders there. HCCC has truly been a home to me, and I will cherish every memory I've made here.

How did you become interested in your major?

I became interested in psychology because I knew I wanted to help people. Psychology is such a people-oriented major, and just learning about people and the brain fascinates me. I learned so much in my psychology courses at HCCC, and I'm glad I made that decision. I hope to utilize the knowledge I've learned by taking more classes at HCCC for my future career.

How did your time at HCCC prepare you for your career?

My time at HCCC prepared me immensely for my life now. I had the pleasure of being the Student Government Association president from 2020-2021, and I gained so many skills that I apply now as an Event Assistant for the Office of Student Life and Leadership. HCCC also had various leadership opportunities that I participated in, like the DEI Student Passport Program, Safe Space Trainings, Clubs, Student Organizations and much more! Additionally, just getting to learn from my professors was amazing. They taught me so much that I am applying now, and I'm glad that I came to HCCC. The countless people whom I've met here have helped me along every step of my journey.

What is a typical workday for you?

A typical work day would be assisting with events

for the Office of Student Life and Leadership. We do a variety of events that change from day to day. We go on a variety of trips. Also, we host numerous social, educational, and cultural events. Every day is a different experience!

What has been the most memorable project/case you have worked on?

The most memorable project I've worked on would have to be the first-ever HCCC Pride Parade! It was an idea brought up by Veronica Gerosimo, Assistant Dean of Student Life and Leadership, and it was such a fantastic event. We walked with a big pride flag from the Journal Square Student Center to the STEM Building and then to the Culinary Plaza Park. We had a gorgeous rainbow arch as we arrived and refreshments for everyone who joined. We also had organizations like Project LOL, Hudson Pride Center, and LGBTQIA+ student organizations from Saint Peter's University and New Jersey City University. It's important to honor our LGBTQIA+ community members, and I'm thankful I had the opportunity to plan such a monumental event.

Who are your biggest inspirations that have impacted your work in some way?

My biggest inspirations are my colleagues at the Office of Student Life and Leadership. We do so many events for our HCCC community, and we truly make magic happen. I have learned so much from every team member, the skills and experience they bring are exceptional. I cherish everyone's input and have learned that our office epitomizes teamwork. It truly takes a village to do what we do, and we do it amazingly. They inspire me every day. Also, my parents are huge inspirations in my life. The values they've taught me are essential to my daily life. My parents also support me wholeheartedly in my professional and personal goals, and I genuinely appreciate them so much.

What advice would you give to recent HCCC graduates?

I would tell recent HCCC graduates to continue achieving their goals! Use the skills you've gained at HCCC and continue working towards achieving your dreams!

What advice do you have for students starting college careers?

I would tell them to utilize all the opportunities present at HCCC. Don't miss out on professional development opportunities, leadership opportunities, networking opportunities, and more. Those experiences will help you in your future career, and you will be thankful that you did so! I would also tell students what support services are available to them if they ever need support. Life can be complicated, and it's important to acknowledge when you need assistance.

