

# HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



## HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE FIRST TO COMPLETE NURSING DEGREES IN NEW JERSEY'S PAY IT FORWARD PROGRAM



### In this issue

NJCCC Presents HCCC Trustee Lee with Ronald D. Winthers Award



Page 2

Hudson County Community College and Rutgers University Partner to Address Food Insecurity and How 'Food Fuels Minds'



Page 3

Recent HCCC Alum Diego Villatoro Gives Back to Future Students with New Scholarship



Page 8



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

*HR News* ..... 4

*PTK news* ..... 5

*Continuing Education Programs* ..... 7

*Alumni Corner* ..... 8

**From the Editor's Desk**

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

Items for the September newsletter are due by Friday, August 11, 2023.

Please send your news items, comments and suggestions to:

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**HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE FIRST TO COMPLETE NURSING DEGREES IN NEW JERSEY'S PAY IT FORWARD PROGRAM**

**N**ursing is one of the most in-demand careers in the United States, but attaining a college degree in this field can be cost-prohibitive for many students.

To close equity gaps in higher education and to support economic growth, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy partnered with the NJ CEO Council and Social Finance to launch the New Jersey Pay It Forward Program in 2022. The first of its kind in the United States, this \$12.5 million program prepares students for careers in growth-fueled industries such as health care, green energy, and Information Technology (IT). New Jersey Pay It Forward is designed to help participants enroll in and graduate from high-quality academic and training programs. The Pay It Forward Program provides zero-interest, no-fee loans, non-repayable living stipends, access to emergency aid funds, and supportive services like mental health counseling for students. After completing one of the eligible academic or training programs, participants who earn above a minimum salary, such as \$49,290 for a family of three, repay their loans, and those funds are then paid forward to finance future students.

Hudson County Community College is the first institution of higher education in New Jersey selected to participate in the health care segment of the Pay It Forward Program. The HCCC Associate of Science (A.S.) in Nursing Degree Program was chosen for its proven, high-quality training, and track record of strong employment outcomes, employer relationships, and experience serving diverse learners. The Pay It Forward Program closely aligns with HCCC's dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion, and student success.

Nineteen HCCC Nursing Program students were among 100-plus students in the state selected as initial program participants. On Thursday, June 15, HCCC graduated 19 students from the



College's Nursing Program and were celebrated with a toast and a pinning ceremony at the HCCC Culinary Conference Center. Attendees included David J. Socolow, Executive Director of the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA); Tara Colton, Executive Vice President for Economic Security at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA); Emily Apple, Director of Economic Security, New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA); Dr. Christopher Reber, HCCC President; Dr. Darryl Jones, HCCC Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Heather DeVries, HCCC Dean of Academic Affairs and Assessment; Dr. Catherine Sirangelo, HCCC Dean of Nursing and Health Professions; Dr. Lori Byrd, Interim Director, HCCC Nursing Program; and representatives from the NJ CEO Council and Social Finance, the nonprofit designing and managing the program.

"The New Jersey Pay It Forward stipend and emergency funds helped me focus on my classes and worry less," said Eunice Rivera, a graduate of the program who accepted an offer to become an intensive care unit nurse at a nearby hospital. "The no-interest loan helps me stay in the here and now,

*Continued on page 5*

**ON THE COVER:** *Graduates of the inaugural Pay It Forward Associate of Science (A.S.) in Nursing Degree Program at Hudson County Community College (HCCC) are toasted by (from center left) Dr. Darryl Jones, HCCC Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Christopher Reber, HCCC President; David J. Socolow, Executive Director of the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA); and Tara Colton, Executive Vice President for Economic Security at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA).*

**NJCCC PRESENTS HCCC TRUSTEE LEE WITH RONALD D. WINTHERS AWARD**

**C**ongratulations to Bakari G. Lee, Esq., Vice Chair of the Hudson County Community College Board of Trustees (left), who was recently bestowed the Ronald D. Winthers Award by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges in recognition of his local, statewide, and national leadership in support of community colleges. He is pictured with Angela Winthers, wife of the late Ronald D. Winthers, Rowan College at Burlington County Trustee Emeritus.



## HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PARTNER TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY AND HOW 'FOOD FUELS MINDS'



Pictured here, a display of graphics on the front windows of the College's Gabert Library designed by Hudson County Community College art students for the "Food Fuels Minds" project.

HCCC students come from diverse backgrounds, but many share experiences reflecting national concerns of food insecurity on college campuses. While an estimated 40% of United States college students are food insecure, 57% of HCCC students report being food insecure. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports that about one of every three college students may skip meals while they attend classes, hold down jobs and internships, take care of family members, and maintain social and professional connections.

The "Food Fuels Minds" project is a collaboration of the HCCC "Hudson Helps Resource Center," faculty and students from the College's Art Department, and Rutgers University. The innovative project is focused on addressing food insecurity and stimulating interest in New Jersey's Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). The project is funded by a grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and designed to engage the College community in sharing their food insecurity experiences.

In late April 2023, HCCC students anonymously shared their personal narratives about food, hunger, family, struggle, support, and success. Forty HCCC art students interpreted these stories into paintings, illustrations, and typographic designs that were displayed in the College's windows and galleries. The art students also produced an original print and digital magazine incorporating their artwork, the narratives, and practical information about how to enroll for SNAP. The magazine is being circulated at College events, on both HCCC campuses, and within the community.

As part of the project, the research team from HCCC and Rutgers devised and offered a toolkit for other institutions to utilize in successfully combating food insecurity. The toolkit includes a film documenting the HCCC project.

HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber said that the College instituted the "Hudson Helps Resource Center" in Spring 2019 to address students' basic needs beyond the classroom. "Our 'Hudson Helps' program promotes student retention and success by removing impediments that prevent students from focusing on their studies," he stated. "Hudson Helps" includes a CARE Team that responds to students in times of difficulty and crisis; food pantries at the Journal Square and North Hudson campuses that provide meals to students and staff, no questions asked; nutritional counseling and SNAP application support; a Career Clothing Closet that assists students with professional and personal attire; emergency financial assistance; "Single Stop" benefits screener; Chromebook loans; Social Services Support (case management and general assistance); and mental health services.

"We are very proud to partner with Rutgers University in addressing this issue of national importance. We look forward to assisting other colleges and universities in making significant differences in the lives of students and their families," Dr. Reber said.

## STATUE OF LIBERTY TRIP



On Sunday, May 7, Hudson County Community College students were led by Professor Saliha Yagoubi and Dr. Chris Cody on a visit to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Under clear blue skies, the group toured both sites and expanded on the lessons learned inside the classroom. The students took a deep dive into the historical immigration experience and learned about America's largest immigration station, which was operational from 1892 to 1954. The students were given an opportunity to search databases and look into the documents of those who came before them. Dr. Chris Cody provided some fun and enlightening insight into the history of Ellis Island. More than 20 students and faculty took part in the excursion, including Professor Raffi Manjikian, who was the appointed photographer, and Professor Rodrigo Romea in support of the students.

## HCCC SPONSORS UNIVERSITY ROW AT CANNABIS WORLD CONGRESS & BUSINESS EXPOSITION

HCCC has been a leader in cannabis education among all community colleges in the state of New Jersey. We are currently offering AS Business Administration-Cannabis Studies, Certificate-Cannabis Business Management, and a Proficiency Certificate-Cannabis Business Agent through the School of Business, Culinary Arts, & Hospitality Management. Courses are offered in online, remote, and on-the-ground modalities. The School of Continuing Education & Workforce Development currently offers specialized online, self-paced and instructor-led courses within specific components of the cannabis industry. Areas include dispensary operations, medical cannabis, therapeutics for pharmacists, and social justice in cannabis.

The College's pioneering efforts were recently put on display in one of the most famous venues in the metropolitan area. On June 1-3, 2023, the College had the pleasure of being the lead sponsor of University Row at the Cannabis World Congress & Business Exposition, held at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City. Fourteen institutions of higher education were present at this year's event, including Cornell University, Rutgers University, Stockton University, and Rowan University. With over 200 vendors in attendance, the exposition was a great opportunity to share our progress with attendees. A special thanks to the following who staffed our booth, in whole or parts of



Pictured from left: James Warren, student; Janine Nunez, Admissions Recruiter; Dr. Ara Karakashian, Dean, Business, Culinary Arts, and Hospitality Management; Elana Winslow, Associate Professor, Business; and Dr. Peter Cronrath, Assistant Professor, Business.



the event: Janine Nunez, Dr. Ara Karakashian, James Warren, Dr. Peter Cronrath, and Professor Elana Winslow. HCCC has grand aspirations for cannabis-based curriculum in the coming years, in areas of culinary arts, baking and pastry, biology, chemistry, and nursing!

To learn more about HCCC's cannabis programs, visit: [hccc.edu/cannabisprograms](https://hccc.edu/cannabisprograms)

## Semester Start-Up Events

SAVE  
THE DATES  
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.*

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) WEBINARS

### Embracing Change

(All Employees, Live, Wednesday, Aug. 23, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

While sometimes exciting, change can also bring about uncertainty, discomfort and fear. In this session, learn strategies for dealing with change to take yourself from surviving change to thriving in it.

### Fostering Agility in Your Workplace

(Leaders and Managers, Live, Wednesday, Aug. 30, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

Workplace agility is an organization's ability to adapt swiftly and collaboratively to ever-changing needs, market demands, technology, and initiatives. Join us to explore tactics for strategically fostering increased agility on your team.

### Engaging Empathy in the Workplaces

(Prerecorded; available 24/7 through Aug. 31) – Often a sad employee is perceived to be a bad employee, yet everyone will suffer a setback at some point in their career due to a change in personal or family health, the death of a loved one, a financial loss, or a change in family caregiving. In order to show empathy and support, coworkers must try to understand the feelings of the person who is experiencing a setback. This can be accomplished through training, listening, connecting, and providing kindness to one another. This webinar will provide a greater understanding of best practices in providing empathy to coworkers and managers while maintaining a professional relationship.

To sign up for these webinars, visit [eap.ndbh.com](http://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.

## MILESTONES

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

### FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

#### One Year

Andrew Adler  
Jonathan Cabrera  
Denisse Carrasco  
Christopher Cody  
Shuang De Jesus  
Evani Greene  
Yavuz Guner  
Brianna Heim  
Afrodita Hernandez  
Raffi Manjikian  
Josh Mariscal  
Hiram Miranda  
Frans Moncayo  
Daniel Ondieki  
Cynthia Perez  
Josue Perez  
Gunes Senturk  
Riddhi Shah  
Katherine Thurman  
Michelle Vera  
Saliha Yagoubi

#### 5 Years

Eric Adamson  
Jonathan Bowman  
Karen Galli  
Kenneth Melewski  
Mohammad Qasem  
Gilda Reyes  
Kathleen Smith-Wenning  
Fatma Tat

#### 10 Years

Joseph Gallo  
Azhar Mahmood  
Lester McRae

#### 15 Years

Salim Bendaoud  
Ara Karakashian  
Evgeniya Kozlenko  
Kewal Krishan  
Lauren O'Gara  
Angela Pack  
Maria Schirta  
Susannah Wexler

#### 20 Years

Syeda Jesmin  
Ahmed Rakki

#### 25 Years

Mirta Sanchez  
David Winner

#### 30 Years

Flordeliza Foster  
Patricia Jones-Lewis  
Linda Miller

#### 35 Years

Sami Khouzam

### PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

#### One Year

Mariam Basta  
Rahul Chawaria  
Gabriel Cisneros  
Maria Lou Riza Dejesus  
Denise Dubron  
Kadira Johnson

#### Mohammad Matari

Ohm Patel  
Robert Presar  
Julie Rosario  
Regina Sevilla  
Robert Sieg

#### 5 Years

Kimberly Romulus

#### 10 Years

Gabriele Rosado



*We are here for you!*

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

Are you experiencing stress, depression, or anxiety?

Difficulty in a course?

Dealing with mental health and wellness?

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

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



**DON'T MISS**  
Hudson County Community College

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](http://www.hccc.edu/outofthebox).

## HCC STUDENTS ARE FIRST TO COMPLETE NURSING DEGREES IN NEW JERSEY'S PAY IT FORWARD PROGRAM

*Continued from page 2*

instead of worrying too much about compounding interest that I would have to pay in the future.”

“I commend the students graduating today on their hard work and dedication in making it to this point,” said Governor Phil Murphy. “I look forward to seeing the first group of graduates from our Pay It Forward Program go on to succeed in their careers and help enable the success of future cohorts of eager students. I know great things are ahead for each and every one of these nursing students, who will significantly assist communities throughout our state by filling critical roles among New Jersey’s healthcare workforce.”

“We are incredibly proud of our first Pay It Forward Program Nursing graduates,” said Dr. Reber. “A college degree is the great equalizer on the path to a sustainable career and enjoyable life. It provides the means to secure one’s family, and to help our community thrive. We are thankful to the State of New Jersey, Social Finance, and the NJ CEO Council for providing the resources to make students’ dreams realities, and for recognizing our Nursing Program as a vital component in helping students attain success.”

“It is an honor to celebrate the very first group of students to complete their studies with support from New Jersey’s Pay It Forward Program,” said David J. Socolow. “Today’s pinning ceremony welcomes a new group of highly qualified, skilled, and compassionate New Jerseyans into the nursing profession, where they will deliver vital care to help their patients heal. These new nurses reached today’s milestone thanks most of all to

their own hard work, but also with support from Pay It Forward zero-interest loans and additional grants that reduced their student debt burdens. I applaud each and every one of them.”

“Congratulations to the first graduates from New Jersey Pay It Forward. With hard work and dedication, along with financing and supportive services from the program, they will soon enter the field of nursing. Best of all, once they secure good jobs, they will enable more students to become nurses,” said Tracy Palandjian, CEO & Co-Founder of Social Finance.

“As a healthcare anchor institution and co-designer of the program, we’ve had the incredible opportunity to work with Hudson County Community College to develop career ladders for those wishing to pursue a degree in nursing,” said Lourdes Valdes, Corporate Director, Workforce Development and Grants, Human Resources Corporate Services, RWJBarnabas Health. “We’re proud to celebrate with the first graduating class, and look forward to continuing to grow our state’s workforce along with our terrific partners.”

In addition to the Nursing Program at HCCC, New Jersey’s Pay It Forward Program serves HVAC and Welding students at Camden County College and Cybersecurity students at New Jersey Institute of Technology. The program aims to add more training programs and to serve more students in the coming years. Governor Phil Murphy has proposed an additional \$2.5 million for New Jersey Pay It Forward in his Fiscal Year 2024 budget proposal.

DISCOVER WHY  
*Hudson is Home!*

REGISTER  
NOW

FALL 2023  
CLASSES AT HCCC!

Fall Course Schedule available  
for viewing NOW at  
[www.hccc.edu/schedule](http://www.hccc.edu/schedule)



Students must register at least one day prior to the first class meeting.

**HCCC Offers Classes in Multiple Modalities**

On-Campus, Online, Remote, Hybrid (On-Campus/Online), Hybrid (Remote/Online), and Immersive Telepresence Video (ITV)

**For more information:**

<https://www.hccc.edu/programs-courses/col/current-course-types.html>

**15-Week Fall Term**

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

**7-Week Classes**

**Fall Online A (1st 7 weeks Online):**

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

**Fall 7-Week 1**

**(1st 7 weeks In-Person and Remote):**

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

**12-Week Quick Term**

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

**Fall Online B/7-Week 2**

**(2nd 7 weeks Online, In-Person, Remote):**

Thursday, October 26, 2023

**APPLY NOW for Fall classes!**

[www.hccc.edu/apply](http://www.hccc.edu/apply)

**For more information on how to register, go to**

[www.hccc.edu/admissions/register-for-classes](http://www.hccc.edu/admissions/register-for-classes)

**For more information contact:** [admissions@hccc.edu](mailto:admissions@hccc.edu)

text (732) 509-4222 | call (201) 714-7200

## PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY NEWS



*Pictured from left: Najwa Essaki, Marolla Youakim, and Prof. Raffi Manjikian at the June 25 Open Run.*



*Michael Salinas' NSF project is on near surface geophysics.*



*Marlenne Andalia (left) and Daryl Moreno volunteering at the Liberty State Park employee picnic on July 4.*

**New York Road Runners Open Run at Lincoln Park**

The New York Road Runners had five Sunday Open Runs from May 28 to June 25. Beta Alpha Phi volunteered on June 4, June 11, and June 25.

**National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates**

Michael Salinas and Roberto Gomez have been selected to participate in the National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates this summer. Michael is in the program at Rutgers University, and Roberto is at Queensborough Community College.

**Fourth of July**

Phi Theta Kappa volunteered on Independence Day (July 4). Beta Alpha Phi Chapter served at the annual picnic for Liberty State Park employees and workers from other state facilities assigned to assist at Liberty State Park on the holiday.

# Foundation Art Collection

The Hudson County Community College Foundation Art Collection of 1,850+ 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.

## Artist News

Can art change attitudes toward climate change? A recent study, inspired by the art of Diane Burko, found art can change attitudes. (You can see Diane Burko's work, *Arizona Landscape*, in the STEM Building in the second floor Dean's Reception Area.) Elaine Velie reported on this finding in the online arts journal *Hyperallergic*. The researchers discovered that using art to convey environmental data eased political perceptions about climate change. How did they study this?

The researchers showed 671 people just the Keeling Curve (a daily record of global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration) on its own, and then showed them Burko's 2020 mixed-media artwork, *SUMMER HEAT, I and II*, about the Keeling Curve, which uses vibrant color to show images of a heating world.

They found that people felt more positive emotions when they saw the art than when they saw just the Keeling Curve. "The study notes that some evidence suggests that emotion changes the way people think about climate change." After seeing Burko's art, "People on both ends of the political spectrum moved toward the middle. This effect, however, was only observed when the scientists asked the participants to reflect on how Burko's artwork made them feel — simply looking



Diane Burko, *Arizona Landscape* (1973), *Silkscreen*, 28" x 36"

at *SUMMER HEAT, I and II* did not change viewers' ideas about climate change."

The researchers were Nan Li, Isabel I. Villanueva, Thomas Jilk, and Dominique Brossard of the University of Wisconsin and Brianna Rae Van Matre of the nonprofit EcoAgriculture Partners. Li said, "This study could pave the way for a transformative shift in climate communications and science communications in general... Highlighting the power of art to provoke emotions and promote self-reflection."

Congratulations to Hudson County Community College's own WOOLPUNK® (also

known as Michelle Vitale, our Cultural Affairs Director) for her exhibit at the Montclair Museum, which was on view through July 30, 2023. You can see WOOLPUNK®'s work on the sixth floor of the STEM Building which is devoted to the art of New Jersey teachers. Her show at the Montclair Museum, created specifically for MAM, was called *Sunflowers & Graffiti'd Sky in the Garden State*. It was based on a photograph of a Jersey City community garden. She had this picture printed on a large-scale banner, and then she embroidered it with donated recycled fabrics to bring attention to clothing waste and landfill issues.

Congratulations also to HCCC's own art Professor Michael Lee, who recently won the prestigious Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation 2023 Individual Support Grant. Over the past two years, Prof. Lee has made a significant—and invisible—contribution to the Foundation Art Collection through his artful installation work. We are especially grateful to Prof. Lee for his work on the Gabert Library sixth floor installation of Henrietta Mantooth's *Jail Birds* works, which bring attention to issues faced by incarcerated people. A short documentary film about the *Jail Birds* installation is now being completed by a Brazilian filmmaker, and features Prof. Lee. We hope to be able to show the finished documentary to the community later this year.

**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](mailto:nicolebjohnson@hccc.edu)

**To donate artwork, find detailed information here:** [www.hccc.edu/community/arts/foundation-art-collection/index.html](http://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](http://www.hccc.edu/community/arts/foundation-art-collection/category-collection-search.html)

## HCCC FOUNDATION HOLDS 21ST ANNUAL GOLF OUTING



Pictured from left: Lilisa Williams, Director of Faculty & Staff Development; HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber; and Sharon Daughtry, Lecturer, Business. (center) HCCC Alum Marc Edma; Past Foundation Chair Philip Johnston; Janine Martino; and Jackie Ross. (right) Jack Murphy and Past Foundation Chair Richard Mackiewicz, Jr.

On Monday, July 10, Hudson County Community College (HCCC) Foundation's 21st Annual Golf Outing donors and attendees enjoyed a beautiful summer day at a premier golf and country club while providing life-changing scholarship support for HCCC students.

Located at 9 Belleville Avenue in Bloomfield, NJ, Forest Hill Field Club, boasts a pristine 18-hole, Tillinghast-designed golf course, and is known as "the Oasis of Bloomfield."

For information about the HCCC Foundation, or to donate, visit <https://tinyurl.com/HCCCFoundationGolf>.

Save the Date!

HUDSON COUNTY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
FOUNDATION

26TH ANNUAL GALA  
will be held on  
Thursday, December 7, 2023  
6 p.m.

Culinary Conference Center  
161 Newkirk Street  
Jersey City, NJ 07306

[foundation@hccc.edu](mailto:foundation@hccc.edu)

## CONTINUING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS



In June, Continuing Education launched a new ESL course titled, "English Pronunciation and Accent Reduction." This Accent Reduction class, created and taught by language instructor Aycha Edwards, is designed to help ESL students improve their English pronunciation and communication skills. The class covered topics such as intonation, stress, linking, and rhythm, as well as the individual sounds of English. Students practice with audio to hear how their speech is developing and receive feedback to help refine their speech and sound more like native speakers. Through practice activities and real-world conversation simulations, students are able to develop their English pronunciation and speaking skills, helping them to become more confident and effective communicators.

### Patient Care Technician (PCT) Apprenticeship Program through NJHealthWorks Scaling Apprenticeship Grant

The Non-Certified CNA - Patient Care Technician (PCT) program, which is part of the Apprenticeship Program through NJHealthWorks Scaling Apprenticeship Grant at HCCC, offers comprehensive training in various healthcare skills.

This program has recently been added to the apprenticeship portfolio at HCCC and has attracted a diverse group of students from different backgrounds, countries, and cultural groups. The program caters to individuals who have just graduated from high school and are eager to kickstart their healthcare careers, as well as older adults who seek to reinvent themselves and transition into the healthcare field. It has also drawn participants who are looking to make a career change from an unrelated field and have a genuine desire to help people and fulfill the needs of patients.

Hudson County Community College believes in providing educational opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds and has created an environment that embraces and leverages differences as strengths. The success of the Patient Care Technician (PCT) program is a testament to the efficacy of a community-based approach to education and highlights the importance of offering such programs. These programs have

proven to be life-changing for participants, enabling them to envision their best selves and become valuable resources for patients in need.

### HCCC and the New Jersey Re-entry Corp. Partner to Provide GED Education

This HCCC/NJRC program offers students the opportunity to enroll in online, self-guided GED courses through GEDworks. This collaboration allows Hudson County Community College to provide comprehensive support to individuals facing obstacles in furthering their education.

The program is designed to be flexible and accessible, with remote learning options available to accommodate diverse schedules and individual needs. Students who join the program will undergo testing to determine their current educational level. Once they pass the assessment, they will begin a self-paced GED course that typically spans a period of three months. Throughout their GED journey, students will have the guidance of a dedicated Student Success Coach who regularly checks in with them and offers resources to address any challenges they may encounter along the way.

Upon successfully passing the GED test, students will have the opportunity to enroll in any of our wide range of programs, including Culinary courses, Phlebotomy certification, Welding certification, and other programs offered by NJRC.



Participants in the Patient Care Technician (PCT) Apprenticeship Program made possible by the NJHealthWorks Scaling Apprenticeship Grant.

### New Jersey Business & Industry Association (NJBIA)

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) has formed several new partnerships with local organizations and businesses, including Save Latin America, Framing General Construction LLC, Provident Bank, and ACE Spirits LLC. These partnerships highlight HCCC's commitment to supporting and collaborating with organizations in order to promote growth and success in the community.

Recently, AP Business Services began hosting HCCC's Open Enrollment ESL Level 1 course in Newark. This course presents a valuable opportunity for small businesses, such as Framing General Construction LLC, to enhance their employees' English language skills, which is crucial for effective communication in today's business environment.

Throughout the summer HCCC will collaborate with Melissa Prashad, the Community Manager for Chase Bank, to provide NJBIA information sessions to small business community members throughout New Jersey. These sessions, which are offered free of charge, will focus on professional development opportunities and aim to equip community members with valuable knowledge and resources that can contribute to their growth and economic prosperity.

HCCC has also recently concluded a successful "Communications for Customer Service" course with WomenRising. This achievement underscores HCCC's dedication to providing practical training programs that directly address the needs of the small business community, regardless of the industry.

Looking ahead, HCCC is working on several new initiatives, including an upcoming pilot "Business Etiquette" online webinar starting on August 20 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. These training programs are offered at no cost, and anyone interested in participating can contact [lrivano@hccc.edu](mailto:lrivano@hccc.edu) for further information.

## Upcoming Programs

Microsoft Office Excel Advanced Level  
Basic Life Support (In-Person)  
Stress Relief Dance & Wellness Workshop  
Basic Life Support (In-Person)  
Cannabis Compliance Course (In-Person, Remote, Online)  
Cannabis Health & Safety Course (In-Person, Remote, Online)  
Certificates In Construction Management (In-Person, Remote)  
Certificate In Engineering Structures

Certificate In Construction Surveying and Site Planning  
Certificate In Construction Project Management  
Certificate In Construction Cost Estimation (Quantity Surveying)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
Department of Continuing Education, 161 Newkirk Street, Room  
E504, Jersey City, NJ 07306  
(201) 360-4224 | [CE@hccc.edu](mailto:CE@hccc.edu)

[www.hccc.edu/continuingeducation](http://www.hccc.edu/continuingeducation)

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# ALUMNI CORNER

## RECENT HCCC ALUM DIEGO VILLATORO GIVES BACK TO FUTURE STUDENTS WITH NEW SCHOLARSHIP

With a Bachelor of Science in real estate finance and a master's in economics, it would be easy to assume that academic success was always a given for Diego Villatoro. But this pathway to success wasn't always so clear to him.

After serving our country as a Tactical Team Leader in the U.S. Army, Diego was at a crossroads. He wasn't 100% sure if going to college was the right choice for him. After hearing positive things about Hudson County Community College from a relative who went here, he decided to give HCCC a try.

Diego grew up in Honduras and came to the United States at age 12. His travels in the military took him to places like South Korea, and he became interested in the way that some countries amassed vast wealth in a relatively short amount of time while countries like his native Honduras struggled economically. This curiosity inspired him to study economics. Diego explains that it was scary starting out as a new, nontraditional student, but that his sense of curiosity and desire to learn were greater than this fear. After enrolling at HCCC, any concerns he previously had quickly disappeared.

HCCC played a pivotal role as a springboard to Diego's academic success. Diego says that the "strong sense of community and the level of care from many of the professors at HCCC made a huge difference." He explained that it was easy to form meaningful connections with professors here and that the high level of academic rigor helped to prepare him for his time at Rutgers. Diego also got involved in the many activities that HCCC had to offer, serving in a variety of leadership roles

including President of Sigma Kappa Delta, Vice President of Leadership of Phi Kappa Theta (PTK), President of the United Veterans Association, and Director of the Inter-Club Council for the Student Government Association. Diego graduated magna cum laude from HCCC in 2019.



After graduating from HCCC, Diego continued his studies at Rutgers University, where he earned his B.S. in real estate finance and his M.A. in economics. Diego is now putting his education from HCCC and Rutgers to work as a Relationship Manager at Bank of America-Merrill Lynch and is in the process of taking his licensing exams to become a financial advisor.

This positive experience at HCCC and the foundational role the college played in his success recently motivated Diego to give back to the HCCC community and help future HCCC students follow in his footsteps by making a first-time gift.

Thanks to the pivotal role that PTK played in his journey, Diego's gift will provide scholarships to two high-achieving students who are members of PTK this coming fall, with plans to partner with HCCC's alumni association to provide additional scholarships to more students in this spring.

While Diego's journey is a unique one, future HCCC students will have the opportunity to traverse down their own paths to success thanks to his generosity and strong commitment to helping others.

## HCCC Alumni: *Get Involved!*



**If so join, socialize, and network!**

For information about the College's Alumni Association and membership benefits, please email [alumni@hccc.edu](mailto:alumni@hccc.edu).

*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?*

