

HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION 26TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY GALA DAZZLED WITH 'OOOHS' AND 'AAHS'!



In this issue

2023 Alumna
Joins HCCC
Board of Trustees



Page 2



HCCC's Winter Graduation:
A Memorable Milestone
for All Involved

Page 5

Online Learning at HCCC
Continues to Grow with Launch
of Six New Fully Online Programs

Page 9



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

HR News 4
 PTK news 9
 Continuing Education Programs 10
 Alumni Corner 12

From the Editor’s Desk

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

Items for the February newsletter are due by Friday, January 12, 2024.

Please send your news items, comments and suggestions to:

Communications Department
 162-168 Sip Avenue, 2nd Floor
 Jersey City, NJ 07306
 Phone: 201.360.4060
 Fax: 201.653.0607
communications@hccc.edu

PLEASE NOTE:

Digital photos must be high resolution JPG. This means 300 dpi at actual print size.

Images in this issue used for other purposes is strictly prohibited without the express advance consent of the Communications Department. Permission to use these photos may be requested by submitting a detailed summary to communications@hccc.edu.

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION 26TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY GALA DAZZLED WITH ‘OOOHS’ AND ‘AAAHS’!

Enchanting aerialists, world-class cuisine that showcased popular dining trends over the past 40 years, decades-themed décor and music, and live demos were showcased at the 26th Annual Hudson County Community College (HCCC) Foundation Holiday Gala on Thursday, December 7, 2023.

The fundraising event was held at the HCCC Culinary Conference Center, 161 Newkirk Street in Jersey City, NJ. The memorable evening, which also marked the 40th anniversary of the College’s acclaimed Culinary Arts Institute (CAI), began with a welcoming Champagne Station courtesy of HCCC alumnus’ Fred Fogg Productions. Aerialists on a lollipop lyra served guests ‘Cirque de Soleil’ style, upside down while pouring bubbly. Later, guests posed for red carpet photos as they entered the Ballroom. Hors d’oeuvres by HCCC Chef Instructors Rob Maurer and Enmely Soriano were served throughout the evening.

Those in attendance were encouraged to explore the CAI kitchens and enjoy food inspired by four decades of culture – all prepared and served by HCCC CAI professional chef instructors, their students, and alumni. Included were:

- "Seafood Bar & Vodka Luge" - Chef Kevin O’Malley’s ice sculptures took center stage with seafood favorites and Robert Hamer’s martinis through the decades.
- “The Groovy 1970’s” - Chef Gary Bensky prepared Benihana-style filet mignon, Katz’s-inspired pastrami, and other 1970’s delights.
- “1980’s Celebration Kool” - East met West in the 1980’s and 1990’s with the combined talents of Chefs Kim Fong and Anthony Clode: seared

chicken and smoked duck Galantines, foie gras pate with prosciutto, vegetarian terrines, chicken a la king pot pie, chimichurri, and more.

- “Livin’ in the 1990’s” - Chef Jasmine Pascua served crab cakes, tamarind lollipop chicken wings, Filipino BBQ, and much more.
- “The 2000’s Sunrise” - Sushi and Sashimi Bar plus steamed oysters, prepared by Chef Puk.
- “Breads Through the Decades” - Chef Courtney Payne offered bruschetta, pretzel nuggets, avocado toast, white pizza, panini bread bowls, and more.
- “The Doctor’s Bar” - Dr. Peter Cronrath shook things up with his mastery of mixology.
- “The Exploration Room” - Live demonstrations showcased the College’s Schools of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), Humanities and Social Sciences, Nursing & Health Sciences, and Continuing Education & Workforce Development.
- Works from the Foundation Art Collection and Student Art were displayed on the third floor. The Foundation was the driving force behind the establishment of the College’s Permanent Art Collection in 2006. The collection now boasts more than 1,850 pieces of fine art by internationally renowned artists.
- After the Program – Desserts by Chefs Matthew Siciliano and Margaret Wong, chocolate showpieces by Chef Stephane Motir.
- The Fine Details were provided by Janine Nunez (bartending); and Marissa Lontoc, Tonja Webb, and Diana Ramirez (service).

Continued on page 3

ON THE COVER: *Scenes from the Hudson County Community College Foundation’s 26th Annual Gala on Thursday, Dec. 7. In center photo: Andrew Campbell, President of Eastern Millwork Inc. (second from right), is presented with the Distinguished Community Service Award. Campbell is pictured with, from left, Nicole Bouknight Johnson, Vice President for Advancement and Communications; Dr. Christopher Reber, HCCC President; and Monica McCormack-Casey, Chair of the HCCC Foundation Board of Directors.*

2023 ALUMNA JOINS HCCC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2023 Hudson County Community College valedictorian Sally Elwir took the oath of office as Student Alumni Representative to the Board of Trustees.

Elwir graduated *summa cum laude* in May with an Associate of Science in Criminal Justice degree. She maintained a 4.0 GPA and 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.

Elwir is currently studying Government and Politics/Criminal Justice at Fairleigh Dickinson University.



Sally Elwir, HCCC Class of 2023, participates in her first meeting as Student Alumni Representative to the HCCC Board of Trustees in November 2023.

[Editor’s Note: Please see the “Alumni Corner” on page 12 of this issue to learn more about Elwir.]

HCCC FOUNDATION 26TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY GALA



Aerialists on a lollipop lyra served guests 'Cirque de Soleil' style, upside down while pouring champagne.



This "Lady in Red" (center) with Fred Fogg Productions greeted Gala guests Hollywood red carpet-style.



Chef Kevin O'Malley celebrating 40 years at HCCC.



Chef Gary Bensky celebrating 38 years at HCCC.



Chef Sami Khouzam (an alum) celebrating 35 years at HCCC.

Continued from page 2

The Hudson County Community College CAI is nationally recognized for its award-winning curriculum, small class sizes, intensive hands-on lessons, and programming that emphasizes teamwork, discipline, technique, and proper service. Alumni include James Beard "Rising Star Chef" nominee Bruce Kalman, *Chopped* champion Claude Lewis, celebrity chef Jesse Jones, and *America's Test Kitchen* tester Rene Hewitt. The 72,000 square-foot CAI/Conference Center features state-of-the-art kitchens and classrooms including a bakery, ice sculpting studio, fish-and-butchery room, and mock-hotel hospitality suite. CAI kitchens were featured in TLC's "Cake Boss" and Progresso Soup's "Ring-Ring" commercials.

Andrew Campbell, President of Eastern Millwork, Inc. (EMI) located in Jersey City, received the 2023 Distinguished Community Service Award. EMI's partnership with the College has helped build a national model for workforce development.

"Every year, the HCCC Foundation recognizes the people and partners who support our students and help advance our innovative programs," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "Thanks to the generosity of Foundation benefactors, our students have transformative opportunities that help them attain degrees or certificates, pursue in-demand and well-paying careers, and fuel our regional economy."

Mr. Campbell and EMI work with the College as a valuable partner of the HCCC Schools of Continuing Education and Workforce Development and STEM. One of the nation's top manufacturers of custom architectural woodwork, EMI prides itself on using technological innovation to create high-end designs without sacrificing Old World craftsmanship. Through the EMI Holz Technik Dual Education Program that Mr. Campbell founded, qualified high school students are hired as apprentices who split their time between studies and work, and receive a full benefits package and annual raises. Upon program completion, the apprentices earn their Associate in Applied of Science (A.A.S.) degree in Advanced Manufacturing from HCCC, and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in Technical Studies from Thomas Edison State University with no college debt.



Gala attendees at the Vodka Luge.



Dr. Catherine Sirangelo (left), Dean of Nursing and Health Professions, with Dr. Alison Wakefield, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences.



Chef Kevin O'Malley with CAI students at the Seafood Bar.



Karen Hosick, Instructor | Coordinator, Personal Fitness/Exercise Science (center) performs health screenings representing the School of Nursing and Health Professions.



The Culinary Arts Institute serves up a dazzling array of desserts.



Chefs Cristina Vazquez and Courtney Payne with Culinary Arts Institute students.



Chef Kim Fong (left) and a CAI student oversee a 1980s-themed course.



CAI students help prepare the evening's delicacies.

At evening's end, Dr. Ara Karakashian, Dean of the School of Business, Culinary Arts, and Hospitality Management helped mark the milestone anniversary of the program by recognizing three esteemed faculty for their combined 110+ years of service to the College: Chef Kevin O'Malley, Chef Gary Bensky, and Chef Sami Khouzam. Karakashian added, "We wouldn't be celebrating a distinguished history of providing the highest quality culinary arts, baking and pastry, and hospitality education without you."

Foundation sponsorships and donations support scholarships, books, and more for

deserving students. For details on giving, please go to <https://www.hccc.edu/community/foundation>

The HCCC Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation providing tax-exempt status to contributors. Established in 1997, the Foundation generates financial support for the College's growth, awards scholarships, provides seed money for new programs and stipends for faculty development, and supports cultural enrichment. Since its founding, the Foundation has awarded nearly \$4 million in scholarships to over 2,000 students. Each year the Foundation provides \$40,000 to assist students with course materials.

HCCC LIGHTS UP CULINARY PLAZA PARK FOR THE HOLIDAYS



On Wednesday, Dec. 6, Hudson County Community College held its annual lighting of the Culinary Plaza Park. This holiday tradition began in 2018 shortly after the passing of Michael Reimer, Dean of Student Services, who

had been organizing the event with the Student Government Association.

The event included the song stylings of the Hudson County Community College Chorus

(colloquially known as H4C), hot beverages, and the collection of non-perishable food items for the College's Food Pantries.

MILESTONES

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

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year

Patricia Clay
Gabriel Holder
Victor Moruzzi
Laura Riano Mendez
Diana Sanchez
Michael Smith
Bernadette So-Goodlin

5 Years

Fidelis Foda-Kahou

15 Years

Monika Chappilliquen
Patrick Moore
Jeremiah Teipen
Alison Wakefield

20 Years

Laurie Riccadonna Lewis

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year

Keane Cadogan
Carol Fasano
Hyun Joon Shin
Liana Tabatadze
Caren Urena Flores
Marolla Youakim

5 Years

Marvin Alas
Ernest Fiabu
Cynthia Morrison

15 Years

Stanley Parrales

25 Years

Anuchit Pukdeedamrongrit

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) WEBINARS

Boosting Your Brain Power

(All Employees, Live, Wednesday, Jan. 17, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

The brain, like the rest of the body, improves with exercise. Learn simple strategies and techniques for boosting your brain power!

Leading Employees Through Change

(Leaders and Managers, Live, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

Change is inevitable in all organizations. Employees will handle change differently and rely

on their leader to guide them through the process. Learn how to effectively support your team as they adjust.

Staying Healthy as You Age (Prerecorded; available 24/7 through Jan. 31) – Adopting healthy habits and behaviors will contribute to a productive and meaningful life as you age.

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 call 800-624-5544.

HUDSON IS HOME (HIH) EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARDS CEREMONY



Director of Communications Jennifer Christopher (center) a.k.a. as "HCCC's Wonder Woman" by her team, HIH Inspirational Leadership Award nominee, with members of the Communications team.



Nancy Lasek and Qamar Raza, HIH Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award nominees, with HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (left) and Vice President for Human Resources Anna Krupitskiy.



Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Dr. Burl Yearwood (center), HIH Inspirational Leadership Award nominee, with HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (left) and Vice President for Human Resources Anna Krupitskiy.

On Tuesday, Nov. 21, Hudson County Community College held its annual "Hudson is Home (HIH)" Employee Recognition Program awards event at the Culinary Conference Center. More than 180 Hudson employees – full- and part-time – received nominations in one (or more) of eight award categories: HIH Inspirational Leadership Award; HIH Diversity Award; HIH Innovation Award; HIH New Team Member Award; HIH Collaboration and Team Achievement Award; HIH Outstanding Teaching Award; HIH Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award; and HIH Part-time Spotlight Award.

HCCC'S WINTER GRADUATION: A MEMORABLE MILESTONE FOR ALL INVOLVED

While graduation ceremonies are often thought of as springtime affairs, 430 Hudson County Community College students earned their credentials and graduated at the College's 2023 Winter Graduation ceremonies, held on December 4 and December 5.

The Winter Graduation ceremonies took place in the Scott Ring Room at the Culinary Conference Center. Over 500 students completed their degrees during the Fall semester, and a total of 107 students were cheered on by family, friends, faculty and staff in the audience. Because the event was live-streamed, many graduates even had loved ones tune in remotely from overseas to watch them graduate.

Graduates heard from HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment, Dr. Lisa Dougherty, and Assistant Dean of Student Life and Leadership Veronica Gerosimo, who congratulated them on their success so far and reminded them that no matter where the next steps of their journey take them, they will always be part of the HCCC family because "Hudson is Home." Additionally, they were reminded that no matter how long it took them to complete their degrees, or what trials and tribulations they faced along the way, their degrees are the culmination of all of the hard work, and credentials that they will have forever.

Student speakers for the two evenings included Payton Liberto, who graduated with an A.S. in Computer Science, and Guadalupe Romero Carrera, who graduated with an A.S. in Business Administration. Payton shared his story of overcoming challenges he faced in high school to get to where he is today. He skipped his high school graduation

due to discouraging words and feelings around this accomplishment. After some time away from school, he rediscovered his passions and motivation - both in computer science and in fulfilling his mother's dream of seeing him earn his degree. More than a few people in the room needed to dry their eyes when Peyton's mother joined him at the podium and embraced him.

Guadalupe spoke about coming to HCCC from her native Mexico, the hard work that it took to get to this point, and the sacrifices made by her family. Because the event was being live-streamed, she was able to speak directly to her family back home in Mexico and deliver a message of gratitude to them in Spanish; another moment that will live on the minds of those in attendance. Guadalupe also implored her fellow graduates to slow down, savor the moment, and celebrate this accomplishment



Student Speaker Payton Liberto, Computer Science A.S.



Student Speaker Guadalupe Romero Carrera, Business Administration A.S.

before getting back to focusing on the next steps of their academic and career journeys tomorrow. Afterwards, students and their loved ones celebrated with coffee and desserts in the Banquet Room.

Although these graduates were awarded their degrees now, they will still have the opportunity to hear their names called and walk across the stage at Red Bull Arena in May at HCCC's 2024 Commencement Ceremony.

Whether it's during the winter or the spring, graduation is a significant milestone, so let's all join together to give HCCC's newest alumni a round of applause and our best wishes going forward.

VEOLIA DONATES \$25,000 FOR STEM SCHOLARSHIPS



On Tuesday, Dec. 12, Veolia North America presented the Hudson County Community College (HCCC) Foundation with a \$25,000 gift to fund scholarships for STEM students at the College. Veolia helps customers address their environmental and sustainability challenges in energy, water and waste.

Pictured from left: Monica McCormack-Casey, Chair of the HCCC Foundation Board of Directors; Alan Weland, Vice President/General Manager of NJ Utilities Operations at Veolia; Miriam Ibrahim; Jocelyn Castillo; Natalie Mejia; Dr. Christopher Reber, HCCC President; Malaya Allen; Kevin O'Connor, Vice President of External Affairs at Veolia; and Nicole Bouknight Johnson, HCCC Vice President for Advancement and Communications.

HCCC HOLDS FALL NSLS INDUCTION



Inductee Benna Rahman provided the student address.

On Friday, Dec. 1, Hudson County Community College held its semiannual induction of members into its chapter of The National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS). The NSLS currently has more than 800 chapters and nearly 2 million members nationwide.

The College inducted more than 120 members, all of whom met the requirements for induction, including orientation, leadership training, and team meetings.

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.

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.



Untitled by Larry Fink, ca. 2002, Photograph, 19.625" x 17.25" (framed) You can see this work in the Gabert Library, 71 Sip Avenue in the 4th Floor Lobby area.

Donor Acknowledgment

Thank you to Judge Herman Klarsfeld, Wendy Klarsfeld and Dr. Jonathan Klarsfeld for the generous donation of 41 ancient objects and artifacts from Egyptian, Etruscan, Eskimo, African and other cultures.

Thank you to Pat Kaplan for the art books for our art library.

Thank you to Leslie Cecil and Kenneth Pollinger for the wonderful donation of two artworks by Creighton Michael.

Artist News

Rest in peace, **Larry Fink**. The photographer, whose work can be seen on the 4th floor of the Gabert Library, died November 25 at the age of 82. His obituary in *The New York Times* quotes

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.



These two works were exhibited at the 26th Annual Foundation Gala, where we showcased Foundation Student Art Award winners and new donations. From left to right: Portrait of Louis Valtat by Auguste Renoir (1919) Black and White Lithograph. Louis Valtat is considered as one of the leaders and founders of the Fauvist movement (meaning "the wild beasts" for their wild, expressionist-like use of color). He was friends with the artist, Renoir, and designed theater sets with Toulouse-Lautrec (see image at right). Thank you to Mark Gottlieb for the generous donation of this work. Right: May Belfort by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1895), Lithograph in Color. May Belfort was born in Ireland. She first became famous as a comedian and singer in the London music halls. After she moved to Paris, she became famous there as well. Thank you to the Carol Adler Revocable Trust for the generous donation of this work. You can see it on the 5th floor of the Gabert Library.

his gallerist, Robert Mann, who said Mr. Fink's photographs, "were like film stills from some incredibly volatile moment, and you can read the whole narrative from beginning to end; that was his gift." According to an interview in the *Times* in 2011, Mr. Fink said he was driven by what he called "sensual empathy." The photographs were meant to be "political, not polemical... But the necessary methodology is conventionally in-your-face... Not like other practitioners, who are in your face for the sake of being in your face. I am in your face because I want to be your face. I like to say that if I was not a photographer, I would be in jail. I want to touch everything. My life is profoundly physical. Photography for me is the transformation of desire." There is a lot to think about in that statement.

Faith Ringgold, whose work can be seen on both the 3rd and 6th floors of the Gabert Library is also having a solo exhibition, *Faith Ringgold: Freedom to Say What I Please*, at the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts through March 17, 2024. The exhibit focuses on a story quilt

Ringgold made titled, *Picasso's Studio*. According to the Mattatuck Museum where Ringgold has also exhibited her work, "A story quilt is a type of quilt that tells a story through pictures, sound, scents and textures." Ringgold is famous for her quilts. A recent review of the current show in the online arts magazine, *Hyperallergic*, reports that the exhibition title comes from part of the story inscribed on *Picasso's Studio*, "You asked me once why I wanted to become an artist and I said I didn't know. Well, I know now. It is because it's the only way I know of feeling free. My art is my freedom to say what I please. [It's not important] what color you are, you can do what you want [with your] art. They may not like it, or buy it, or even let you know it; but they can't stop you from doing it."

If you like the work of **Melissa Meyer** in the reception area of the 2nd floor Financial Aid Office at 70 Sip Avenue, you might enjoy seeing her solo exhibit of works on paper at Anders Wahlstedt Fine Art 526 West 26th Street, Suite 508, New York City, through January 19

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

IN MEMORIAM: PHILIP JOHNSTON

The Hudson County Community College family honors Philip (Phil) Johnston, a member of the HCCC Foundation Board of Directors since 2000, and Chair from 2010 to 2012, who passed on Friday, Dec. 15, 2023.

Johnston joined the HCCC Foundation at the invitation of Dr. Glen Gabert, HCCC President Emeritus, after meeting each other at an annual Holiday Gala. His company, Johnston Communications (now JC Solutions), created the College's fiber optics network during the mid-

1990s. The significant cost savings enabled the College to flourish and grow.

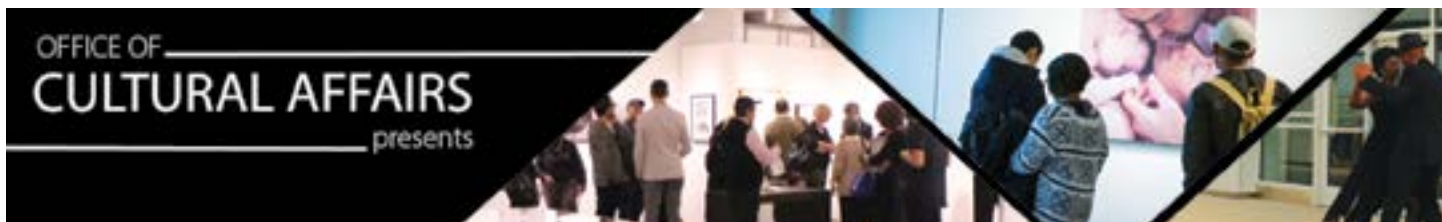
Johnston served on the boards of directors of the local Pioneer Boys and Girls of America, the West Hudson/South Bergen Optimist Club, and the HCCC Foundation's West Hudson fundraising committee.

Johnston was a supporter of the HCCC Foundation Golf Outing since its inception in 2003, and through his membership with the Forest

Hill Field Club, sponsored the College, enabling the event to be held there.

"Phil's tireless support, generosity, and commitment to HCCC, our foundation, the faculty, and especially our students will not be forgotten," said HCCC Foundation Chair Monica McCormack-Casey.





'HONORING 60 YEARS OF VOTING RIGHTS AND CIVIL RIGHTS' EXHIBITION LAUNCHED



On Tuesday, Dec. 5, the Office of Cultural Affairs held a reception to commemorate the installation of "Honoring 60 Years of Voting Rights and Civil Rights" at the Benjamin J. Dineen III and Dennis C. Hull Gallery.

The exhibition was curated by Dorothy Anderson (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences) and several of her African-American History students: Sergio Herrera-Nunez Rios, Anthony Cavaliere, Rafy Garcia Alvarado, Tyshara Bonaparte, Jaya Jones, and Tashonia Roney.

HCCC STUDENT ART EXHIBITION

Every semester HCCC's Office of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the Fine Arts and Studio Arts program, celebrates student success with an end-of-the-semester HCCC Student Art Exhibition. The celebrated students are graduating from Hudson, and the exhibit showcases the talents of Studio Arts and Computer Arts students. Curated by Professors Laurie Riccadonna and Jeremiah Teipen, over 50 works were displayed in the gallery for the first two weeks in December. A wide variety of paintings, 3-D design, digital prints, animation, drawings, and more were exhibited, and the show closed with a reception and student presentations on December 15, 2023. Please join us every semester to see students shine in the Benjamin J. Dineen III and Dennis C. Hull Gallery.



Watercolor by Emily Gonzalez, Fine Arts.

Installation view of the computer arts program



Follow Us

For more information, email: mvitale@hccc.edu
 or visit www.hccc.edu/community/arts/doca-culture.html
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/dineenhullartgalleryhccc
 Instagram: www.instagram.com/dineenhullgallery

Hudson County Community College's 2024 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Annual Memorial

Please join us as we celebrate the life and legacy of one of our country's most inspirational and impactful leaders.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
NDABA MANDELA
 Grandson of Nelson Mandela, Co-Founder & Chairman of Africa Rising Foundation. Recently named one of the "28 Men of Change" by BET.

Thursday, January 18, 2024
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Gabert Library, 71 Sip Avenue,
Benjamin J. Dineen III and
Dennis C. Hull Gallery and Atrium,
Jersey City, NJ

Food and refreshments will be served at noon.

PLEASE REGISTER AT:
<https://tinyurl.com/HCCC-Legacy>

This Memorial is open to all HCCC students, faculty, staff, and community members.

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES SPOTLIGHT



Pictured with HCCC film students, the discussion panel at Louis Armstrong's Black & Blues on Nov. 15, from top left: Jackie Harris, Julie Anderson, Sacha Jenkins, and Pamela Morgan

Film students at Hudson County Community College attended a special screening of Apple Original Films' documentary, *Louis Armstrong's Black & Blues* on Wednesday, Nov. 15 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. The event, presented by the Newark Museum, also included a discussion with Sacha Jenkins, director and producer; Julie Anderson, producer; Pamela Morgan, founder and director of Women in Media; and Jackie Harris, executive director of Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation.

"As with most out-of-class learning experiences, some were apprehensive at first," said the course instructor, Walter Lindsey. "After reading some of their film responses, all were happy they had this experience."



Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Alison Wakefield, Professor Joseph Gallo, and Dr. Christopher Cody recently attended the NJ Council for the Humanities: NEH Community College Roundtable. The event was held at Mercer County Community College on Friday, December 8. Dean Wakefield, Professor Gallo, and Dr. Cody, participated in roundtable discussions on the state of the humanities in community colleges today, the important impact that the humanities have on student success, and on grant opportunities that exist for NJ community colleges.

ESL STUDENTS FLEX CLASSROOM LEARNING AT CAMPUS EVENTS

Submitted by Sonja Rodiger-Radovic, Instructor of English as a Second Language (ESL)



During the fall of 2023, Prof. Sonja Rodiger's ESL Level 3 Reading/Academic Discussion students were lucky: their class time coincided with several enriching events that were held on campus. In September, the students conversed with Hudson County Community College President Dr. Christopher Reber during

"Pizza with the President." In October, they met with the Culinary Club and attend the Hudson Helps Fall Resource Fair. On Nov. 6, they visited the "Mental Health Stories" exhibition. The students prepared questions in class ahead of each event, actively interacting with the College community and reporting feedback to the class.

Some of Prof. Rodiger's ESL College Student Success students were treated on Nov. 14 and 21 to a five-star, white tablecloth, exquisite four-course meal, thanks to a collaboration with Chef Marissa Lontoc and her Advanced Table Service class.

PROFESSOR HOSICK'S FITNESS POP-UPS BRING TRANSFORMATIVE HEALTH INSIGHTS TO THE STUDENT LOUNGE

When you walk into the Student Center lounge, you're accustomed to seeing students studying, socializing, and lining up to order at Libby's Café. But if you happened to walk through the lounge on a Friday this past semester, you may have been surprised to see people stretching, doing jumping jacks, and using foam rollers.

You didn't accidentally walk into Planet Fitness – you encountered the Health and Fitness pop-up event series organized by Personal Fitness and Exercise Science Instructor Karen Hosick.

Students, faculty, and staff had the opportunity to get their blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen saturation levels checked.

They also had the chance to partake in a three-minute step test to gauge their cardiovascular fitness and have their target heart rate calculated to track the intensity of their workouts.

Participants were also able to have their flexibility assessed through stretching exercises and to have their body composition (body fat percentage and muscle mass) assessed.

Learning these numbers was an eye-opening experience for many participants. Not only did they benefit from obtaining this crucial and potentially life-saving information, but they also learned about which areas they could improve upon and received personalized advice on how they could get better over time. This motivated participants to add

exercise into their routines, which brings innumerable benefits ranging from weight loss, a stronger immune system, and improved cardiovascular health to mental health benefits such as reduced stress and increased levels of energy.



While participants gained invaluable information and advice about their personal health levels, the events also benefitted the Personal Fitness and Exercise Science students who were able to gain vital real-world experience working with participants, instructing them on technique, and explaining what their results meant. Professor Hosick explained, "The fitness Pop-Ups are a win-win because our students gain confidence in their skills while improving the health and fitness of the HCCC community."

This hands-on experience will help these students as they pursue careers in exciting fields like physical therapy and personal training.

If you didn't get a chance to join in last semester, you'll have plenty of chances to join in at upcoming fitness pop-ups that will take place during the Spring semester.



Are you experiencing stress, depression, or anxiety?

Difficulty adjusting to the College environment?

Dealing with mental health and wellness?

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



Please complete the General Concern Form click here: <https://tinyurl.com/HCCC-Care> or scan the QR code.



The form is NOT monitored 24/7.

A member of the CARE team will respond to your request during regular business hours.

If you need immediate help call or text 988 or visit <https://988lifeline.org>

Get Connect-ED with HCCC!

Hudson County Community College has implemented Connect-ED, a text- and voice-messaging emergency-alert system in the event of a crisis or emergency that poses an immediate and life-threatening danger to the College community.

For more information, go to: <https://www.hccc.edu/administration/communications/emergency-notification.html>



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.

PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY NEWS



Najwa Essaki, Rolla Youakim, Stefany Alarcon with her sister, and Nicolle Hansen volunteered at the Fountain of Salvation Church on Friday, Nov. 23. The Beta Alpha Phi Chapter packed over 1,000 meals for the needy between Thursday and Friday.



On November 18, Nicolle Hansen and her mother volunteered in the gardening program at Liberty State Park.



On Friday, Nov. 17, Beta Alpha Phi Chapter held its semiannual new member induction at the Culinary Conference Center. Guest speakers included Dr. Christopher Reber, HCCC President; Dr. Christopher Conzen, Executive Director of the Secaucus Center and Early College Programs; Diego Villatoro, 2019 alum and President of the Beta Alpha Phi Alumni Association; and Mateo Armas, North District President and member of Alpha Epsilon Phi Chapter at Bergen Community College. Denifer Garcia performed a musical selection on saxophone.

Finch College Alumni Association Foundation Scholarships

Congratulations to two 2023 Hudson County Community College and Phi Theta Kappa alumnae who have received scholarships from the Finch College Alumni Association Foundation. Marlene Andalia earned an Associate of Arts – Liberal Arts, Psychology and is attending Montclair State University. Ella Mukasa earned an Associate of Science – Business Administration and is attending Emory University.

Although Finch College, based in New York City, closed in 1976, its alumni association continues to support 2-year students in the tri-state region to attend a 4-year college.

ONLINE LEARNING AT HCCC CONTINUES TO GROW WITH LAUNCH OF SIX NEW FULLY ONLINE PROGRAMS

With the launch of six new fully online programs in the past six months, Hudson County Community College continues to make significant strides in expanding access to college education and reaching more students than ever before through its robust catalog of online and hybrid courses.

Powered by a dedicated team of online learning professionals, the Center for Online Learning (COL) at HCCC supports faculty across the College's four Academic Schools in designing, developing, and delivering an innovative, interactive, and accessible online curriculum.

The addition of these six new fully online programs raises the total number of fully online programs offered through Hudson Online to 16. Notably, these programs are offered across a wide range of disciplines.

Newly added programs include a Certificate in Accounting, an Associate of Arts in Early Childhood Education (Liberal Arts), an Associate of Arts in Elementary/Secondary Education (Liberal Arts), an Associate of Arts in Special Education (Liberal Arts), a Proficiency Certificate in Community Healthcare Navigator, and an Associate of Science in Health Services Option in Public Health.

In addition to these fully online programs, most of the College's 90+ programs can be completed partially online, and Hudson Online's 150+ online and hybrid courses include a variety of online labs and electives. This affords students tremendous flexibility in scheduling their classes by removing barriers students often encounter in finding a course section that meets their needs. Over one-third of HCCC's students take one or more courses online each semester, and approximately 12% of students take their entire course load online.

Hudson Online continues to build momentum. Enrollment in online courses has more than doubled from pre-pandemic levels, and the number of students taking all or most of the courses required for their degree online has increased by 400%. The College's "new normal" following the pandemic demonstrates that demand for online learning in Hudson County and beyond continues to grow. HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber stated, "We firmly believe that online learning is a long-term opportunity that enriches lives and empowers our students and members of our community. We are proud to be a leading institution in this endeavor, and we are committed to continuing to expand our online offerings in the future."

HCCC's online programs and courses meet the needs of various populations, including working professionals who are seeking career advancement

and first-time students who prefer the convenience of online coursework.

Executive Director of HCCC's Center for Online Learning Matthew LaBrake states that "Expanding access to online learning is essential to our mission as a community college, providing members of Hudson County with equitable access to an education they might not be able to obtain otherwise. We are providing students who are working multiple jobs and raising children with a way to take classes in their free time. We provide students with health concerns or lack of transportation with a means to access an education from the comfort of their home."

With full access to all support services that on-site students enjoy, online students don't miss out on HCCC's student-centered and supportive approach that led students to coin the College's motto, "Hudson is Home." These services include use of the College Library's digital resources, 24/7 on-demand virtual writing and tutoring, accessibility services, personal mental health and wellness counseling, IT assistance, academic advising, and career coaching. Online students are also welcome to visit HCCC's two campuses in Jersey City and Union City to take advantage of community spaces and in-person support services.

Continued on page 11

CONTINUING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS



Continuing Education Fall Culinary Classes

On November 19, Continuing Education relaunched its popular Culinary Classes for the Community with the class "Fall Harvest Pies." Students learned the art of creating delicious and comforting pies that showcased the rich flavors of fall. Chef Samantha Piedrahita shared her secrets to making the perfect pie crust, as well as creative finishing techniques such as lattice tops, braids, and decorative cutouts. Students left this hands-on class with their very own apple and cranberry pies to enjoy with their families and friends.

On December 2, Continuing Education ran its "Holiday Cookies and Treats" class, which is taught by Chef Samantha Piedrahita. This family-and-kids-friendly hands-on class combined the joy of baking with the festive spirit of the holiday season. With holiday music playing in the background, students were introduced to a variety of holiday-inspired flavors, spices, and ingredients and learned how

to use colorful icings and embellishments to turn simple cookie dough into festive masterpieces

Culinary Gift Certificates Are Now Available!

Treat your loved ones to an enjoyable culinary experience with our culinary gift certificates! For more information, please email ce@hccc.edu

Learn More and Register for Upcoming Culinary Classes

Whether you are a novice cook or a true gourmet, HCCC Continuing Education's cooking and baking classes will help you raise your culinary game.

Family and Kids Culinary

Spend quality time with your family while having fun learning new skills together. Enroll your children in a program that will enhance their education and provide opportunities for them to shine in a healthy and supportive environment.

No matter what your goals are for you and your children, we have something for you.

Friday Night Dinners

Bring your friends and learn how to prepare a fabulous meal that you get to enjoy right after! Then try your new recipes at home for an exciting meal or to impress your friends at your next party.

Culinary Groups and Parties

Ask us how we can customize a culinary class for your next private group event. Whether for a birthday party, friendly get-together, team-building event, or other occasion, our expert chefs will tailor a special experience for you and your guests in our professional kitchens.

For more information and to be notified of upcoming programs, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/CEculinary>



Center for Adult Transition, ACCESS

The ACCESS Program at the Center for Adult Transition is thrilled to highlight the success of its second Community Partner Engagement Event on November 10, 2023. ACCESS students from cycle three and their support persons gained valuable insights into available resources from local partners such as Computer Care Partners, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Developmental Disabilities, Hudson Community Enterprises, and Project SEARCH. This event has been instrumental in helping students navigate their journey into independent living and shape their paths in academics and the workforce. It has been truly inspiring to witness the participants' enthusiasm as they explore ways to overcome personal and academic challenges, fostering a sense of community awareness around neurodiversity.



Water Workforce Utility Program (WWUP)

The Water Workforce Utility Program (WWUP) wrapped up its final session on November 8, with 14 students successfully finishing the program. The WWUP was an eight-week program with a 50-hour curriculum that provided participants an opportunity to receive an introduction to the water industry and certifications in OSHA 10 and CPR/First Aid. Students also received classes in Basic Math, Customer Service, and Career Readiness. The program has been led by Associate Vice President Lori Margolin; Dean of STEM, Dr. Burl Yearwood; CEWD Director Catherina Mirasol; and CBI Coordinator Joyce Alvarez in partnership with the Director of Jersey Water Works, Paula Vega-Figueroa. Throughout the program, students were able to attend a utility-centered activity facilitated by Michael Assante and John Libitz from Veolia. Students were also invited to interview for internship positions at Veolia, and five out of the seven students who interviewed have continued with the recruiting process. On November 4, students received a presentation by Matthew Maffei, the Apprenticeship Coordinator at New Jersey Water Association. At present, seven students have shown interest in applying to the apprenticeship program and are preparing for their interviews with the help of Natalie Brown, WWUP's Student Success Coach.

Ms. Brown is currently working alongside students who wish to further their education at HCCC or pursue careers in the water industry. Everyone united and celebrated involvement in the water sector at Jersey Water Works' Annual conference on December 13.

Congratulations to the students who accomplished this significant milestone! A heartfelt thank you goes out to our partners and instructors whose dedication made this achievement possible.

CONTINUING EDUCATION Upcoming Programs

JANUARY

CULINARY: PASTA PERFECTION: A HANDS-ON CULINARY JOURNEY
 Saturday | January 6, 2024 | 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Instructor: Marissa Lontoc

PIZZA PERFECTION: A HANDS-ON JOURNEY INTO ARTISANAL PIZZA MAKING
 Sunday | January 7, 2024 | 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Instructor: Samantha Piedrahita

PRECISION BLADES: MASTERING KNIFE SKILLS COOKING CLASS
 Saturday | January 13, 2024 | 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Instructor: Kevin O'Malley

CONVERSATIONAL ITALIAN INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED LEARNERS ONLINE
 Mondays & Thursdays (10 sessions) | January 16, 18, 23, 25, 30, February 1, 6, 8, 13, 15 | 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
 Instructor: Gabriela Fossati | Price: \$98
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/conversational-italian-intermediate-to-advanced-learners-online-registration-768601657247?aff=oddtcreator>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)
 Wednesday, January 17, 2024 | 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 Price: \$77 | <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-blis-certification-january-2024-dates-tickets-775724802767?aff=oddtcreator>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)
 Thursday, January 25, 2024 | 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Price: \$77
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-blis-certification-january-2024-dates-tickets-775724802767?aff=oddtcreator>

PRE-NURSING TEST PREPARATION WORKSHOP WINTER 2024 (ONLINE)
 Saturdays | January 20, 2024 - March 23, 2024 | 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$289
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pre-nursing-test-preparation-workshop-winter-2024-online-tickets-732815078627?aff=oddtcreator>

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE USAGE & READING PREP ONLY WINTER 2024 (ONLINE)
 Saturdays | January 20, 2024 - February 17, 2024
 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$143
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/englishlanguage-usage-reading-prep-only-winter-2024-online-tickets-732860213627?aff=oddtcreator>

CANNABIS HEALTH & SAFETY COURSE
 ONLINE | January 22, 2024 - March 11, 2024 | Price: \$500
 IN-PERSON | Mondays | January 22, 2024 - March 11, 2024 | 6:30 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. | Price: \$500
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cannabis-health-safety-course-registration-746153263497?aff=oddtcreator>

CERTIFICATES IN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT CONSTRUCTION PROJECT PLANNING AND CONTROL
 Mondays | January 22, 2024 - May 13, 2024
 6:30 p.m. - 10:15 p.m. | Location: Remote | Price: \$572

CONSTRUCTION PROCEDURES, MATERIAL AND TESTING
 Tuesdays (Lecture) & Thursdays (Lab)
 January 23, 2024 - May 13, 2024 | 6:30 p.m. - 9:15 p.m.
 Location: Lecture Remote & Lab on Campus | Price: \$1,144

INTRODUCTION TO ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND CALCULATIONS
 Wednesdays | January 24, 2024 - May 8, 2024
 5:30 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. | Journal Square Campus | Price: \$700

CONSTRUCTION CODES
 Fridays | January 26, 2024 - May 19, 2024 | 6:30 p.m. - 9:15 p.m.
 Location: Lecture Remote | Price: \$572
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/certificates-in-construction-management-registration-728364737537?aff=oddtcreator>

UPCOMING CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AVAILABLE AT:
<https://www.hccc.edu/programs-courses/continuing-education/programs/culinary.html>

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

CANNABIS COMPLIANCE COURSE
 ONLINE | January 22, 2024 - March 11, 2024 | Price: \$500
 IN-PERSON | Wednesdays | January 22, 2024 - March 14, 2024 | 6:30 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. | Price: \$500 | L Journal Square Campus
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cannabis-compliance-course-registration-746147115107?aff=oddtcreator>

FEBRUARY

CONVERSATIONAL AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
 Wednesdays (Live Sessions Only) | February 7, 2024 - April 17, 2024
 (No class on 2/21) | 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 Instructor: Jessica Wohlstetter | Price: \$150
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/conversational-american-sign-language-registration-77055200777?aff=oddtcreator>

CULINARY: LOVE ON A PLATE: VALENTINE'S DAY CULINARY CLASS
 Friday | February 9, 2024 | 6:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
 Instructor: Marissa Lontoc

SOULFUL CREATIONS: A JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF SOUTHERN CUISINE
 Saturday | February 17, 2024 | 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Instructor: Rene Hewitt

SCIENCE/MATH PREP ONLY WINTER 2024 (ONLINE)
 **AS PART OF PRE-NURSING TEST PREPARATION WORKSHOP WINTER 2024
 Saturdays | February 24, 2024 - March 23, 2024 | 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$143
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sciencemath-prep-only-winter-2024-online-tickets-732881106117?aff=oddtcreator>

ONLINE LEARNING AT HCCC CONTINUES TO GROW WITH LAUNCH OF SIX NEW FULLY ONLINE PROGRAMS

Continued from page 9

Additionally, the Center for Online Learning (COL) offers an array of service options to students and faculty, including technical support and training, professional development workshops, and course design and maintenance. The COL also provides access to a wide variety of teaching and learning technologies used to deliver content and assessment, promote student engagement, encourage academic integrity, and ensure accessibility in our online courses.

At a time when many students are concerned about college affordability, Hudson Online provides significant value by offering the same high-quality educational experience that HCCC is known for at an economical price. No matter where students live, they can take advantage of the same in-county tuition rates as Hudson County residents, making online learning at HCCC a cost-effective option for students outside our community who may be looking to obtain a degree in a discipline not offered at their local community college. Online students are also eligible for financial aid, just like in-person students.

The successful launch of so many new online courses is a testament to the strong spirit of collaboration between the Center for Online

Learning and HCCC's dedicated and supportive faculty who author the content for online courses. Reflecting on this productive relationship, Dr. Alison Wakefield, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, explains, "Our administration and faculty have had a long and fruitful relationship working alongside the COL. The Executive Director and I came to our positions at approximately the same time and have been in sync from the beginning. Our vision for student success and our ability to assist students along their pathway to graduation is personally very gratifying. I could not be prouder to work with such dedicated colleagues."

The breadth and depth of Hudson Online programming continues to grow, as does the quality of online courses, and LaBrake and the COL team aren't slowing down any time soon. Additional online programs are on the way, including niche programs that will be nationally competitive in cutting-edge, in-demand areas, so stay tuned for more news about online learning at HCCC in the months ahead.

To find out more about HCCC's online programs, visit <https://www.hccc.edu/programs-courses/col/index.html>.

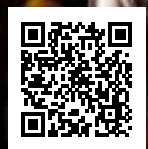
HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Teaching and Learning Symposium on Social Justice in Higher Education

February 26 - March 1, 2024

*Come together!
 Speak out!
 Take action!*

Join and collaborate with over 150 colleges and social agencies to transform and drive positive change!



Hudson County Community College Board of Trustees

William J. Netchert, Esq., *Chair*
 Bakari G. Lee, Esq., *Vice Chair*
 Pamela E. Gardner, *Secretary/Treasurer*
 Edward J. DeFazio, Esq.
 Joseph V. Doria Jr., Ed.D.
 Sally Elwir, *Student Alumni Representative*
 Frank J. Gargiulo
 Roberta Kenny
 Jeanette Peña
 Silvia Rodriguez
 Harold G. Stahl Jr.
 Christopher M. Reber, Ph.D., *College President*

County Executive and Board of County Commissioners

Craig Guy, County Executive
 Anthony L. Romano, Jr., Chairperson
 Jerry Walker, Vice-Chairperson
 Fanny J. Cedeño, Chair Pro Temp
 Yraida Aponte-Lipski
 Robert P. Baselice
 Albert J. Cifelli, Esq.
 Kenneth Kopacz
 William P. O'Dea
 Caridad Rodriguez

JOURNAL SQUARE CAMPUS

70 Sip Avenue
 Jersey City, NJ 07306
 Phone (201) 714-7100

NORTH HUDSON CAMPUS

4800 Kennedy Boulevard
 Union City, NJ 07087
 Phone (201) 360-4600

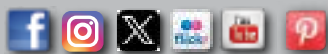
SECAUCUS CENTER

Located at the Frank J. Gargiulo Campus of
 the Hudson County Schools of Technology
 One High Tech Way
 Secaucus, NJ 07094
 Phone (201) 360-4388

**Invest in the education of an
 HCCC student by making your
 gift of any amount today.**

www.hccc.edu/community/foundation/index.html

FOLLOW US ON:



myhudson.hccc.edu
www.hccc.edu

ALUMNI CORNER

Sally Elwir – Class of 2023

A.S. Criminal Justice

We spoke with Sally Elwir (HCCC Class of '23). Sally was the valedictorian for the Class of 2023 and is now studying both Government and Politics and Criminal Justice at Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is also working as an event assistant in the Office of Student Life and Leadership. She was recently sworn in as the Alumni Representative to the HCCC Board of Trustees.



What led you to begin your educational journey at HCCC?

I wasn't the best academically in high school. I returned to my home country of Palestine, and their curriculum is very advanced, so I was behind. I gave up and didn't feel motivated. Living there was a great experience, just not academically.

When I came back from Palestine, I wanted to go somewhere where I could grow and Hudson was the place where I could redeem myself academically. HCCC was also a good financial choice as it enabled me to save money.

What made it the right decision for you?

I always knew I was going to go to community college – I didn't want to start at a four-year college. I felt like community college was a great way to build yourself, meet people, and learn more through the smaller class sizes. I was able to work closely with my professors and receive a lot of one-on-one help from them which helped as well.

What did you study here at HCCC?

I studied criminal justice. I was originally deciding between criminal justice and social work – between those two, I knew that I wanted to pursue something in the humanities. I decided on criminal justice based on the extensive set of career paths it offered. When I started taking classes, I quickly found out that I was passionate about it, and I realized I wanted to go law school.

What is your favorite memory of the College?

When I first got involved at Hudson, we had an Arab fashion show. It was nice to see us spreading awareness of Arab and Palestinian culture and fashion. That was really the start of my involvement here.

What advice do you have for HCCC students who are just beginning their academic journeys and who want to follow in your footsteps to become successful here?

I was by no means the smartest student in all my classes. I was not the smartest in my graduating class – nowhere near that. But what helped me get to where I am was planning and organizing my time well. Don't be afraid to build connections with your professors. Build connections with the staff and faculty. The more involved you are, the more motivated you will be to do well in your classes and to reach your potential.

Also – don't push yourself too hard. I think a lot of students want to overachieve, but there's nothing wrong with not overachieving. It's okay to be part of the crowd. Nobody has to be perfect; nobody has to be President or valedictorian to succeed. You just have to do what's right for you, not for others.

What inspired your interest in politics and law?

I wanted to get into politics to represent the Middle Eastern people and the Palestinian people since we are a small minority group. I enjoyed my American government class and my criminal law class. I don't know what type of law I want to pursue further, but I'm interested in recovery law and labor law.

I am going to be starting a new internship at the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, a group that lobbies legislators to try to pass laws that will protect the environment.

Tell us about your experience as a Palestinian-American in Government and Politics.

I was a minority in that major. Sometimes you felt alone – especially hearing bad things about my country and just being an Arab in general, you can feel like you aren't being accepted as much. One person actually told me to stick to criminal justice, knowing that I was Palestinian. I didn't take it seriously or let it discourage me.

As a Middle Eastern woman, I want to get into that field to promote DEI and to make everyone feel included. I knew that I was a hard worker and I knew that what I was doing was right. If you let their words get to you, then minorities will never get the same opportunities as everyone else. I want to inspire other people like me to get into law, government and politics.

Inclusiveness is big to me – you need to make everyone feel like they're included. Make sure that no one is left out, no matter where you come from.

Tell us about how you became the President of SGA.

The position kind of fell into my lap. All of the executive board members from my first year graduated, so they wanted me to run it since I had the most experience. I wanted to be involved and be the voice of the student body. Serving in the role definitely helped me with my public speaking skills.

What inspired you to choose Fairleigh Dickinson University?

The small classes stood out to me. I like to be in a small community; I learn more that way and build more relationships. The campus was very nice – and the unlimited parking was a plus. Additionally, I received a scholarship from the school.

What's next on your agenda?

My goal after finishing Fairleigh Dickinson is to go to law school and get into labor law or recovery law; I'm still exploring the different career paths ahead of me.

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

