

HCCC 25th Anniversary Foundation Holiday Gala
Thursday, December 8, 2022
6:00 p.m., Culinary Conference Center



Thank you, Nicole, and good evening, everyone! It is indeed a pleasure to be with you this evening! On behalf of the entire Hudson County Community College family, I'd like to begin by thanking all of you for your support of our students and our College's transformational mission. To our many donors, thank you for investing in our students' success!

This evening, we offer our deep thanks and gratitude to HCCC Foundation Chair, Monica McCormack Casey; our Foundation officers; and the HCCC Foundation Board of Directors. Will all members of the HCCC Foundation Board please stand and accept our appreciation? Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your dedication and commitment to the College and our students!

And we offer heartfelt thanks to HCCC Board of Trustees Vice Chair Bakari Lee, Trustee Pamela Gardner, Trustee Emeritus and Harrison Mayor James Fife, and all members of the HCCC Board of Trustees for their leadership, advocacy, and support of our students and our mission! Thank you, caring Trustees!

We thank Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise; Chief of Staff, Craig Guy; Hudson County Commissioners Anthony Romano, Yraida Aponte-Lipski, and all members of the Hudson County Board of Commissioners; other elected representatives; and local, regional, statewide and national leaders for supporting and partnering with HCCC to help us build a 21st Century college that is truly responsive to our community's needs.

We offer deep thanks and gratitude to Vice President for Advancement and Communications, Nicole Johnson; Dean of Business, Culinary Arts, and Hospitality Management, Dr. Ara Karakashian, and their teams; to our inspirational Chef Instructors and Culinary Arts students; Foundation Art Collection curator, Dr. Andrea Siegel; and to everyone who worked so hard to make this evening a success. Thank you, dear colleagues and friends!

There is a very special person missing this evening – Trustee Karen Fahrenholz, who passed away on Thanksgiving Day. Karen served our HCCC family as a dedicated and diligent Trustee for 14 years, as a staunch member and supporter of the Foundation Board of Directors, and as an advocate for the College and our students. Karen's smile, warmth, humor and love brightened each and every Gala and important HCCC gathering. We miss her so much!

This evening, we also acknowledge the passing in August of another member of our HCCC family, a force who was key to the Culinary Arts program and to making the Foundation Gala one of the most anticipated and enjoyable events in Hudson County, Chef Paul Dillon. Chef Paul served HCCC

for almost 40 years in several teaching and leadership positions. Two years ago, we honored Paul at this Gala with the HCCC Foundation's Distinguished Community Service Award. This gentle, loving, and caring man made a difference in the lives of thousands of students, faculty, staff, and community members.

The recently endowed Paul Dillon Scholarship Fund has been established to provide scholarships in perpetuity for HCCC Culinary Arts students, thanks to contributions from many of Paul's colleagues, family members, and friends, and a \$50,000 investment by an anonymous donor to bring this scholarship fund to the endowment level. We welcome Paul's daughters – Kieva and Meghan, and Meghan's husband, Christopher Oricchio, who are here this evening.

Please join me in a moment of silent remembrance of Karen Fahrenholz and Paul Dillon. [Moment of Silence.] Thank you.

As Nicole mentioned, diversity, equity and inclusion – and student success – are the cornerstones of our College Mission. HCCC students tell us again and again that being respected and valued – along with the sense of belonging and the open communication students experience here – make them feel they are part of an extended family. Our students tell us that “Hudson is Home.”

Because community colleges serve students who navigate significant barriers and life challenges beyond their control, fewer than 40 percent of U.S. community college students earn a certificate or degree within six years of enrollment. This has a huge impact on students and their families, and on the future of communities and our country's economy.

HCCC students are enormously hardworking and grateful for the opportunity of a college experience, degree, and all that means for their futures. But they are also significantly challenged with balancing work and studies, food and housing insecurity, physical and mental health issues, and needing a dedicated person to prod, rally, and support them in getting across the finish line. The vast majority of our students are the first in their families to pursue a higher education degree, and they need help navigating the complexities of college studies.

Recognizing this, our caring college community developed “Hudson Helps” and “Hudson Scholars” – cutting edge programs designed to mitigate barriers and help all students succeed. Both programs have had profoundly positive outcomes in narrowing equity gaps and significantly increasing student retention and completion.

The Hudson Helps Resource Center supports students by providing food, clothing, assistance for financial emergencies, mental health and social work counseling, research of external funding support, tax preparation assistance, referrals to child care and health care agencies, and much more.

And the national award-winning Hudson Scholars Program offers one-on-one, high impact mentoring and support, personal and academic advisement, early academic intervention, rich and meaningful programming, and financial stipends tied to academic milestone attainment. These

program components, especially in combination, are exceedingly rare in higher education.

While the Hudson Scholars program is people intensive and financially costly to provide, it has led to incredible outcomes. The now nearly 1,800 students in our Hudson Scholars Program, and our companion EOF Program, are persisting and completing their studies and achieving their goals at three or four times the completion rates of all students. Will Hudson Scholars and EOF coaches, staff, and students who are here this evening please stand and accept our heartfelt thanks and congratulations!

Donations and other financial support, coupled with the increased revenue from improved retention – indeed, student success revenue – have supported our goal of eventually scaling the Hudson Scholars program and model to all Hudson County Community College students. Initiating and sustaining results-driven programs like “Hudson Helps” and “Hudson Scholars” are only possible thanks to the generosity and commitment of people and organizations, including many of you this evening.

This evening, we are thrilled to announce a new Endowed Scholarship Fund – the Hudson Scholars Program Endowment – that will generate perpetual funding assistance as needed to support student success through part of the interest earned from the fund’s principle. Our initial goal for the endowed fund is \$3 million over the next several years through multiple gifts, grants, and investments, and – particularly appropriate to note at this 25th anniversary Gala – we eventually hope to grow the fund to \$25 million.

As we announce this new fund, I am thrilled to share that we have already raised nearly \$400,000 in initial gifts and pledges to this and other newly endowed scholarship and program funds. These endowed funds will grow over time through ongoing gifts and grants, and through investment of the donated funds using strategies designed to grow the principal relative to inflation. And the endowed scholarships will honor donors and those they choose to recognize in perpetuity through naming of the endowed funds.

Our HCCC Endowment that we announce and begin this evening will provide a perpetual financial margin of excellence in support of our students and mission, irrespective of fluctuations in government funding or economic challenges that the future might bring. Growing this endowment over the years is now a Foundation funding and investment priority. While endowment principle will be invested to increase over time relative to inflation, part of the interest earnings from the principle will be used to continue to support students, and sustain the program and its outcomes, year after year.

This evening, we are honored to acknowledge and thank those helping us pioneer endowment investments for our Hudson Scholars Program and other scholarships – in addition to gifts already mentioned and the revenue that this phenomenal Gala is generating for immediate scholarship support. These generous donors and leaders are making this 25th Anniversary of the Foundation Gala the most successful ever.

We thank Foundation Chair Monica McCormack-Casey and her family, who have established the Richard J. McCormack Scholarship Endowment in honor of their brother, the talented, generous, and well-known photographer and civic leader. Monica and family, we offer our heartfelt thanks for your life-changing gift, made possible by many contributors, which will memorialize Richard and honor him through the success of students, year after year.

A familiar face behind the camera at many HCCC events is photographer Roy Groething. Roy is here this evening. Roy has inspired all of us by creating and funding a \$25,000 scholarship endowment in memory of his parents, Eric and Irene Groething. Roy, thanks for your gift that will touch and change the lives of so many, year after year.

Thanks to the commitment and leadership of our faculty, we will introduce a campaign to create the Javedd Khan Endowed Prize next spring in memory of the late, beloved Professor Javed Khan. Two annual prizes will be presented to students through this endowment that will be funded by many members of the HCCC Family.

This evening, we also acknowledge other lead donors who've supported tonight's Gala with gifts of \$10,000 and above:

- Natalie Brathwaite, Vice President of Government Affairs and Public Relations at Fidelity Investments, and our HCCC Foundation Secretary;
- Stephen Aluotto, President and CEO of NK Architects;
- Andrew Campbell, President and Owner of Eastern Millwork, Inc.;
- Neil Gardner, Division President for FLIK Hospitality Group;
- Phillip Johnston, longtime friend and college donor, a member of the HCCC Foundation, and former Foundation Board Chair;
- Steve Lipski, Executive Director of Jersey City Road Runners and also a member of our Foundation Board.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for your generosity and commitment to our students' success!

Several donors have recently established major gift-level endowments ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

- We thank our friend and partner, Ted Domuracki, President and Founder of MAST Construction Services, Inc.;
- We thank long-standing patron, current Foundation Executive Committee member and former Foundation Board Chair, Jim Egan, and his wife, Kathy Egan, who were the first individuals to make an endowed gift of \$50,000 that will support our Hudson Scholars Program. Jim and Kathy, thank you for being pioneers and for inspiring our moving to the next level of excellence as a college that champions students and their welfare!
- We also thank John C. Harris, Co-Founder, President, and CEO of ASPIRE Technology Partners. Thank you for your trust and support, John and colleagues!
- And we thank Don Scarinci, Managing Partner of Scarinci Hollenbeck, Attorneys at Law. Thank you for your generosity and trust, Don and colleagues!
- I am also proud to be counted among this group of endowment contributors with the creation of the Christopher M. Reber Endowed Scholarship that I am funding through payroll deduction. My scholarship will support international, DACA, and other students.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking all of these individuals and organizations, in addition to one more that we'll announce shortly.

This evening, we are celebrating nearly \$600,000 in recent endowment gifts, other gifts, pledges and Gala revenue. This represents a College and Foundation record! Thank you all for your support of our students and their success!

And, now, we are thrilled to honor an organization that we have come to know because we share values and goals associated with best practices in support of student degree completion, transfer, gainful employment, and the achievement of our students' goals. In other words, Hudson County Community College, and the organization we honor this evening, are jointly committed to the success of all college students. The individual and her organization that we honor this evening have made an inaugural gift to the new "Hudson Scholars" Program Endowment. This evening, we honor Ellucian, one of the world's largest higher education technology support organizations; and Ellucian President and CEO, Laura Ipsen.

Started just two years ago by Ellucian, our technology partner, the Ellucian Foundation shares our core belief that education is transformational. The Ellucian Foundation's Progress, Accomplishment, Thriving, Hope – or PATH – Scholarship Program has provided 65 colleges and universities with more than \$1 million in grants for scholarships to over 1,100 students. We are proud and grateful that HCCC was a recipient of \$25,000 to be awarded to students for tuition and living expenses.

Additionally, the Ellucian Foundation has made a \$50,000 endowment investment in "Hudson Scholars" that will amplify our capacity building efforts and help us scale this program to all HCCC students in perpetuity.

Ellucian CEO and President Laura Ipsen was recently named one of the Top 100 Influencers in the 2022-23 State of EdTech Report issued by EdTech Digest. President Ipsen was also named the recipient of the 2022 Female CEO of the Year Award at the 10th annual CEO Globee World Awards, among many other honors too numerous to mention. It is my great pleasure, and deep honor, to present the Hudson County Community College Foundation's 2022 Distinguished Community Service Award to President Laura Ipsen and the Ellucian Foundation.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming, honoring, and thanking our friend – Ellucian President and CEO, Laura Ipsen.