

# HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



## HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE NAMED FINALIST FOR THREE NATIONAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE



Dr. Azhar Mahmood, Associate Professor of Chemistry and Coordinator of the Construction Management Program

Jennifer Valcarcel, Associate Dean of Career and Transfer Pathways

Justice-Involved Undergraduate Success and Training (JUSTice) Partnership

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## From the Editor's Desk

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

Items for the April newsletter are due by Friday, March 14, 2025.

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](mailto:communications@hccc.edu)

### PLEASE NOTE:

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

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## HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE NAMED FINALIST FOR THREE NATIONAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

A college-corporate partnership that improves socioeconomic mobility and is a national model for second-chance programs. A professor who reduces achievement gaps through innovative strategies and programs. A manager who champions change and improvement and develops new student opportunities. These are the Hudson County Community College (HCCC) finalists for the 2025 American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Awards of Excellence. The national honors underscore AACC's priorities and spotlight promising practices among its 1,000 member colleges.

"We are honored that AACC recognized the outstanding and transformative people and partnerships that mirror our commitment to continually increasing opportunities and improving outcomes for our community," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "Community is at the heart of all we do at Hudson County Community College. We are dedicated to improving our citizens' lives and the regional economy by providing our community with inclusive, high-quality educational programs driven by collaboration and innovation."

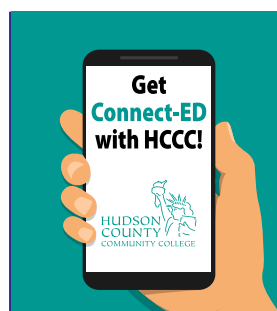
HCCC's Justice-Involved Undergraduate Success and Training (JUSTice) program, a partnership with the Hudson County Department of Family Services and Reintegration, was selected as a finalist in the AACC Outstanding College/Corporate Partnership Award category. The partnership reduces recidivism for incarcerated and

formerly incarcerated individuals and removes barriers to socioeconomic mobility through education, training, support, and employment in high-demand fields. JUSTice is the only program in the nation to offer college degrees virtually in a county jail and offers the sole New Jersey state-certified Phlebotomy program. Hudson County Correctional Center installed internet access and purchased 20 computers to facilitate the program. HCCC faculty receive training to provide virtual instruction. On-campus and workplace programs provide industry-recognized credentials in Computer Basics, Culinary Arts, Welding, and more. HCCC Student Success Coaches assist with transitions to employment. The partnership also includes New Jersey Reentry Corporation and area businesses, unions, and nonprofits. More than 89% of JUSTice program participants earned credentials in 2024.

Dr. Azhar Mahmood, HCCC Associate Professor of Chemistry and Coordinator of the Construction Management Program, is one of just three community college educators in the United States selected as finalists in the AACC Faculty Innovation Award category. Professor Mahmood leads substantive and ongoing innovation. He initiated and developed the HCCC Construction Management degree program, recognized as one of the leading programs of its kind in the United States. Dr. Mahmood developed a scalable model that supports closing achievement gaps and received

*Continued on page 8*

**ON THE COVER:** AACC named Hudson County Community College's Dr Azhar Mahmood, Jennifer Valcarcel, and Justice-Involved Undergraduate Success and Training Partnership as finalists for national Awards of Excellence.



SCAN QR  
FOR DETAILS

**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.**

### Free and Confidential

HCCC will provide this emergency service free of charge to students and employees – there is no charge to sign up. However, mobile service providers may charge a fee for incoming messages depending on an individual's plan.

Personal information entered into the Connect-ED system will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

**Stay informed and get Connect-ED today!**

<https://www.hccc.edu/administration/communications/emergency-notification.html>



## BEYOND THE LECTERN: HCCC PROFESSORS SHARE INSIGHTS ON EDUCATION



Faculty panelists in the Feb. 5 "Beyond the Lectern: Insights from HCCC Professors" event.

On Wednesday, Feb. 5, the Culinary Conference Center's Scott Ring Room buzzed with thought-provoking dialogue as Hudson County Community College (HCCC) hosted "Beyond the Lectern: Insights from HCCC Professors." This engaging panel discussion brought together esteemed faculty members to share their perspectives on the triumphs, challenges, and evolving landscape of education.

Moderated by Student Government Association President Nina Maria Resurreccion, an Exercise Science major, the panel featured:

- Courtney Payne, Assistant Professor, Culinary Arts
- Eric Adamson, Assistant Professor, English
- Dr. Sirhan Abdullah, Associate Professor, Health Sciences
- Laura Samuelsen, Associate Professor, Mathematics
- Antonio Acevedo, Associate Professor, History

The discussion covered a range of topics, from the impact of technology in the classroom to strategies for fostering student engagement and success. Faculty panelists shared personal experiences, highlighting both the rewarding and demanding aspects of teaching in today's academic environment.

Attendees, including students, faculty, and community members, had an opportunity to participate in an open Q&A session, further enriching the conversation. The event underscored HCCC's commitment to academic excellence and student-centered learning, providing a space for meaningful exchanges between educators and the community.

Stay tuned for future discussions as HCCC continues to bridge the gap between academia and real-world impact!



## GRADUATING STUDENTS

### Tell us Your Story!

Hudson County Community College's Communications Department needs your help in identifying unique and exceptional graduate student stories to use in publicity for the upcoming Commencement ceremony as well as future marketing materials.

HCCC's Communications Department will be pitching these stories to media during the Commencement season and would be pleased to hear from students willing to be interviewed. Some past noteworthy stories covered by media included students who:

- *Began studying at HCCC later in life*
- *Have relatives on HCCC staff or of HCCC alumni*
- *Are family members graduating together*
- *"Beat the odds" (earned a degree despite an obstacle, disability, etc.)*
- *First in the family to earn a degree*



SCAN CODE

For more information, please contact:  
Communications Dept. at:  
(201) 360-4060  
[communications@hccc.edu](mailto:communications@hccc.edu)  
or <https://tinyurl.com/HCCCYourStory>

**#TellUsYourStory**  
**#HCCCGRADS2025**

## HCCC OPENS LACTATION PODS



Lactation pod at the Gabert Library (71 Sip Avenue, First Floor).



HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (center) with members of the HCCC FamilyU team.

On Tuesday, Feb. 4, Hudson County Community College held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the opening of two lactation pods that have been installed at the Journal Square and North Hudson (4800 Kennedy Blvd., Seventh Floor) campuses. The pods provide

private space for nursing mothers to breastfeed or pump.

To use a pod, students, staff, faculty, and visitors may scan the QR code, complete the form, and they are then provided with a code to access the pod.

## MILESTONES

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

### FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year  
*David Ayoub*

20 Years  
*Giovanni Stoduto*

### PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year  
*Heather Anderson  
Bhakti Gohel  
Ghina Hamdan  
Aryan Modi  
Jose Rivera  
Katherine Vera*

Five Years  
*Amreen Fatima*

10 Years  
*Rafael Osorio  
Saedel Pensoy*

## SAVE THE DATES

### Friday, March 7

International Women's Day  
12 p.m. - 2 p.m. (Open to All)  
81 Sip Avenue, Multipurpose Room,  
Jersey City, NJ

### Wednesday, April 23

Administrative Professional's Day  
12 p.m. - 2 p.m. (By Invitation)

### Thursday, April 24

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day  
(TODAS) (All Day) (Open to All)

### Tuesday, April 29 (Tentative)

Virtual Professional Development Day  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Online) (Open to All)

### Wednesday, April 30

STARS Luncheon  
12 p.m. - 2 p.m. (By Invitation)

## APPOINTMENT OF STAFF

Kim Hosmer, CTE Career and Transfer  
Specialist (Grant-funded) February 19, 2025

Douglas McKeon, Librarian, College Libraries  
February 19, 2025

Jaime Pardo, Director of CEWD Operations  
and Business Client Training  
March 3, 2025

Luz Tellez, CTE Career and Transfer Specialist  
(Grant-funded) February 19, 2025

## APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY FULL-TIME STAFF

Natalie Mejia, Financial Aid Assistant  
Effective: February 19, 2025 - July 18, 2025

## APPOINTMENT OF FULL-TIME FACULTY

Elizabeth Hallacy, Instructor, ESL  
(Tenure-Track) Effective: January 16, 2025

Amanda Velez, Instructor, ESL (Tenure-Track)  
Effective: January 16, 2025

## APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY FULL-TIME FACULTY

Amanda Fournier, Instructor, ESL  
(Non-tenure Track)  
Effective: January 16, 2025 - May 31, 2025

Ayca Palancilar, Instructor, ESL  
(Non-tenure Track)  
Effective: January 16, 2025 - May 31, 2025

## STAFFING TABLE MODIFICATIONS

Maribel Alvarado-Bikai  
From: Financial Aid Advisor  
To: Assistant Director, One Stop Student  
Services Center,  
Effective Date: February 19, 2025

Jacqueline Castillo  
From: Transcript Coordinator  
To: Assistant Director, One Stop Student  
Services Center

Carmen Garcia  
From: Student Accounts Coordinator  
To: Assistant Director, One Stop Student  
Services Center

From: Senior Assistant Director, Advisement,  
North Hudson Operations and Development  
To: Associate Director, Advisement North  
Hudson Campus

From: Director, DEI of Veterans Affairs and  
International Student Services  
To: Associate Director of Veterans Affairs and  
International Student Services

From: Associate Director of Diversity,  
Equity and Inclusion  
To: Coordinator of Cultural Affairs

## EMPLOYEE PERKS

Employee Assistance Program  
<https://eap.ndbh.com/>  
(company code: HCCC)

National Institute for Staff  
and Organizational Development  
<https://www.nisod.org/>

LinkedIn Learning  
<https://library.hccc.edu/linkedinlearning>



## 2025 COMMENCEMENT Wednesday, May 21, 2025 at 10 a.m.

Sports Illustrated Stadium (formerly Red Bull Arena)  
600 Cape May Street, Harrison, NJ 07029



## PROFESSIONAL NOTES

### Jersey City Writers

In an engaging interview with Jersey City Writers, **Joseph Gallo**, an award-winning playwright and Theatre Arts Associate Professor at Hudson County Community College, shares his journey into writing and theater. Initially aspiring to be a sports broadcaster, Gallo found his passion for playwriting after watching *Death of a Salesman*. He reflects on literary influences like S.E. Hinton and Gabriel García Márquez and lists renowned playwrights who have shaped his work. Gallo discusses his plays, including *Long Gone Daddy* and *My Italy Story*, and expresses his love for Hoboken, calling it his personal "Paris." He advises aspiring playwrights and actors to commit a decade to their craft, underscoring the dedication required for success in theater. The interview is available at <https://us19.campaign-archive.com/?u=aaabcb19f60db2b207aef9a55&id=e88c0b69e0>.

### Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) Faculty Innovation Fellowship

The Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) has selected **Daniel Ondieki**, Instructor of Mathematics, and **Mohammad Qasem**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, to participate in the 2025 cohort of the Faculty Innovation Fellowship.

The BHEF Faculty Innovation Fellowship is designed to empower faculty members to drive innovative, employer-aligned projects that enhance student success. Fellows are nominated by their institution's leadership and engage in a comprehensive program that includes:

- **Developing Capstone Projects:** Each fellow proposes and implements a real-world project aimed at improving student outcomes. Ondieki's and Qasem's respective projects are "Honors Math: Real-World Modeling and Mentorship" and "Renewable Energy Curriculum with Research and Mentorship."
- **Participating in Immersive Sessions:** Fellows attend three multi-day, in-person sessions hosted by various institutions, where they receive expert training in innovation, change management, and leadership.
- **Engaging in Peer and Expert Mentoring:** Throughout the fellowship, participants receive guidance from peers, BHEF members, and a national network of professionals in areas such as business engagement, workforce development, and strategic planning.

By the end of the fellowship, participants are expected to have developed and initiated projects that foster enhanced student success through novel business-higher education collaborations.



*In Celebration of  
Women's History Month*

the School of Business, Culinary Arts, and  
Hospitality Management  
presents

### Women in Business: Interactive Discussion with HCCC Board Trustee Stacy Gemma

**Wednesday, March 5, 2025  
1 p.m.**

**Gabert Library, 6th Floor Atrium,  
71 Sip Avenue, Jersey City, NJ**

*All are welcome.  
Refreshments will be served.*

**For more information,  
please contact:  
Professor Elana Winslow  
at [ewinslow@hccc.edu](mailto:ewinslow@hccc.edu)**

### New Host Venue for 2025!

The Hudson County Community College Foundation is excited to announce that the **23rd Annual Golf Outing** will take place at the Brooklake Country Club on Monday, June 23.

Set upon 150 beautiful acres, Brooklake's championship, USGA-rated course offers a traditional, challenging experience with undulating greens.

**Brooklake Country Club  
Florham Park, NJ  
Monday, June 23  
10:00 a.m. Shotgun Start**



**Details to follow!**

## Join us at a Spring 2025 OPEN HOUSE



**SATURDAY, MARCH 22 | 10 a.m - 1 p.m.**  
**Journal Square Campus**  
Culinary Conference Center, 161 Newkirk Street, Jersey City, NJ



**SATURDAY, APRIL 26 | 10 a.m - 1 p.m.**  
**North Hudson Campus**  
4800 Kennedy Blvd., Union City, NJ

### Join us to:

- Receive a tour of our campus
- Complete an Admissions application
- Engage with different academic programs
- Speak with students, faculty, and staff
- Meet with Financial Aid and find out if you are eligible for free tuition



### Registration is required!

Scan the QR code or go to [www.hccc.edu/openhouse](http://www.hccc.edu/openhouse) to register!



# Foundation Art Collection

The Hudson County Community College Foundation Art Collection of 2,000+ 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

We are sad to report the passing on **Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith**, whose wonderful work, "What is an American" can be seen on the 4th floor of the Gabert Library. Maya Pontone's obituary in the online arts magazine *Hyperallergic* quotes the artist on what art-making meant to her: "I have memory of making things with my hands from mud, leaves, sticks and rocks from very early in my life," she said. She then described how art allowed her to enter "another world, one that took me out of the violence and fear that dominated my life." This can be one of art-making's great powers. Here is a gallerist, Garth Greenan, talking about what the artist meant personally to him: "Jaune's loss is deeply felt and indescribably significant.... She was a beloved mentor and friend and truly one of the most thoughtful and talented human beings I have encountered. She was one of the very brightest lights in contemporary American art. If a more generous person ever existed, I'd like to meet them." We all might be glad to have that said of us after we are gone. The artist was a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. According to the obituary in the online magazine *Artsy*, Smith used her art and her fame "to amplify the voices of Indigenous Americans, drawing attention to issues around land rights. Her innovative paintings and assemblages reclaim lost histories and symbols, providing a poignant critique of the neglect faced by Native Americans."

**Myron Stout's** art is almost all abstract forms in black and white. You can see one of his prints in the North Hudson library. The work recently got a rave review in *Hyperallergic* from art critic and Rutgers Professor John Yau. Stout's work was on view in an exhibition called, "Myron Stout: Charcoal Drawings" at Peter Freeman, Inc. in Soho through March 1. Yau estimates that the artist produced fewer than 60 paintings in his lifetime. The quality of

these few pictures was so high that he earned a museum exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Yau praises Stout's individuality, "In our late capitalist age of industrial fabrication and reproducible art, Myron Stout stands out as a reclusive figure who was never lured by these strategies. With monkish devotion, he produced a small body of modestly sized black and white paintings as well as drawings done in charcoal, graphite, and conte pencil, while living in Provincetown, a remote seaside town at the tip of Massachusetts. Never seeking attention, the artist, who lived from 1908 to 1987, was the subject of only five exhibitions during his lifetime." As we think about how and where we want to live, artists' lives often provide us with imaginative and unexpected ideas about this.

In a time when it is brave to speak basic scientific truths that can help save our species, **Diane Burko's** art practice stands out. You can see her work on campus in the STEM Building second floor Dean's conference room. Her new solo exhibition, "Bearing Witness," at Cristin Tierney Gallery at 219 The Bowery in New York City, includes new and recent mixed-media paintings. It will be on view through March 8, 2025. According to *Artdaily.com*, "Driven by endless curiosity and an unwavering commitment to environmental preservation, Burko has spent five decades 'bearing witness' to the realities of climate change. Her work offers a visual record of these investigations, drawing on visits to extreme environments worldwide—from the Arctic to the Amazon, coral reefs to deserts." The artist says, "I struggle to use the language of paint to develop new vocabulary—to create visual poetry that draws you in, compels you to look closely, and then reveals some ugly truths." Given the dire situation of our planet due to climate change, Burko's work on revealing these "ugly truths" becomes increasingly important.



**Diane Burko, Arizona Landscape (1973), Silkscreen, 28" x 36". Thank you to Benjamin J. Dineen III and Dennis C. Hull for the generous donation of this work.**

You can see **Juan Sanchez's** work on the 3rd floor of the Gabert Library. Congratulations to the artist, who received one of the 2025 Ruth Awards of \$100,000. According to Kim Nguyen, Program Director, Ruth Foundation for the Arts, "Through the many challenges and ongoing complexities of sustaining a creative practice, there are countless artists who endure, who work with exceptional generosity, who are teachers and mentors for each other and for the next generation, who see art as a vehicle for social transformation. The awarded artists embody these values deeply, for not only their investment in their practices but their commitment to others—and we continue to learn from them each day." Here at the College we have seen teachers and students studying Juan Sanchez's work to explore world history. For example, one teacher discussed a Sanchez print on the 3rd floor, "Saint Ernesto de la Higuera" as a way to teach about the role of Argentinian Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (also known as Che Guevarra) in world history.

**We welcome anecdotes and information about how the Foundation 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](mailto: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).



## OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS presents

### HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ARTISTS' EXHIBITION



On Jan. 28, the Hudson County Community College Office of Cultural Affairs presented the opening reception of the College's Civil Rights Exhibition in the Benjamin J. Dineen and Dennis C. Hull Gallery, comprising: "Pathways to Freedom: We Get to Tell the Story," "Curious Matter: A Legacy of Art & Inquiry," and "Poetry as Illumination."

## HCCC Faculty and Staff - Who are your favorite local businesses?



#### To submit:

scan QR code or click link below:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/690308a929fb4e05b7b24caf30a0636>

Any questions? [foundation@hccc.edu](mailto:foundation@hccc.edu)

As part of HCCC's upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration, we are putting together a **LOCAL BUSINESS GUIDE** to support and promote the businesses that make our community thrive, while raising money to support the College, and we need your help. We want to include the places you love!

*Do you have a favorite coffee shop, deli, or restaurant? How about a bookstore, barbershop, autobody, or other establishment near HCCC's campuses or beyond? Let us know!* By sharing the names of businesses you frequent, you'll help us connect with them about advertising opportunities in our guide.

Your recommendations will ensure that our guide features businesses that truly matter to the HCCC community.

Send us your suggestions today and help us build a resource that benefits both HCCC and our local economy – it's a win-win!



## PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY NEWS



*Congratulations to Luke Anthony for completing PTK Edge, and to Jessica Dang for completing PTK Edge and Leadership Development Studies, and Stafford Barrett for completing PTK Edge. It took Stafford about a week to complete all five courses.*



*Esther Pierre, Eman Mahmoud, Desiree Page, Nube Cabrera, and Rehab Bensaid volunteered with members of the Hudson Helps Resource Center at the Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week project at the Saint Peter's University Campus Kitchen on Jan. 24.*



*Beta Alpha Phi members Desiree Page and Sonam Dorji volunteered at the Chinese New Year Parade in Manhattan on Jan. 29.*

## HCCC NAMED FINALIST FOR THREE NATIONAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

*Continued from page 2*

a \$300,000 National Science Foundation grant to support student-run construction management businesses. He guides residential, commercial and industrial Construction Management projects from classroom to on-site construction, and arranges field trips, externships and internships to afford students hands-on experience.

Jennifer Valcarcel, HCCC Associate Dean of Career and Transfer Pathways, is one of only three community college managers in the nation selected as finalists in the AACC Rising Star-Manager Award category. She has streamlined processes, built partnerships, enhanced transparency and communications, and developed new student opportunities. Ms. Valcarcel established the HCCC Transfer Council, cultivated internal and external relationships that resulted in new and updated transfer agreements, and created a robust web presence for students. She led the merger of HCCC Career Services and Transfer Pathways; facilitated the CONNECT transfer program that results in tuition savings, dedicated coaches, and more; guided the Transfer Pathways Council to enhance existing agreements, Early College processes, enrollment, and student engagement; updated the College's Student Success course offerings; and created a monthly newsletter for students, faculty, and staff.

Ms. Valcarcel is the recipient of the 2024 League for Innovation in the Community College Excellence Award.

Winners will be announced at the Awards of Excellence Gala on April 15 during the AACC Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Earn credits and your degree online from home!**



**SPRING 2025**

# HUDSON ONLINE

**ATTENTION STUDENTS:  
7-Week Classes**

**ONB begins on March 22, 2025**

For information on enrolling at HCCC:

Text or Call: 201.509.4222

Email: [admissions@hccc.edu](mailto:admissions@hccc.edu)

Please join HCCC President Dr. Chris Reber for a

# HCCC TOWN HALL



*Learn about important updates  
and have your questions  
answered in real time.*

**Monday,  
April 7  
at 12 p.m.**

*Lunch will be served.*

**In-person at:**

North Hudson Campus  
4800 Kennedy Blvd., Multi-purpose Room  
Union City, NJ

**Virtual at:** <https://tinyurl.com/TH-APRIL2025>



## CONGRESSMAN ROB MENENDEZ PAYS A VISIT TO HCCC



Dr. Burl Yearwood, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (left) introduced U.S. Congressman Rob Menendez (second from left) to a recent Cybersecurity class at Hudson County Community College. They were joined by, from right, HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber, Assistant Professor of Cybersecurity Faisal Aljamal, and Assistant Professor of Computer Science Mohamed Rafiq Siddiqui.

## CONFERENCE COVERAGE



Hudson County Community College presented on January 28 at the AACC Workforce Development Institute in Coronado, California. Pictured from left: Dr. Heather DeVries, HCCC Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Assessment; Renee Richardson, Director of Philanthropy, All Within My Hands Foundation; and Lori Margolin, HCCC Associate Vice President for Continuing Education and Workforce Development.



Dr. Christopher Reber, President, Hudson County Community College (second from left) participated in a panel discussion, "Pathways to Skilled Trades" at the 2025 AACC Workforce Development Institute. Fellow participants included Scott Strawn, Director, Global Applications and Education, Lincoln Electric, OH (moderator, at podium); Dr. Joe Seabrooks, President, Cedar Valley Campus, Dallas College, TX; Julie Parks, Dean, Workforce Training, Grand Rapids Community College, MI; and Dr. Sheree Utash, President, Wichita Area Technical College, KS.



A delegation of administrators, students, and trustees from Hudson County Community College attended the Association of Community College Trustees' (ACCT) National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC. The event is designed to inform and educate community college leaders on federal policy issues that impact postsecondary institutions and students. The group networked with fellow community college leaders and met with their U.S. representatives in Congress to advocate for their support for community colleges and their students.



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>



**Hudson County  
Community College**  
invites you to enjoy the newest  
segment of our video series,  
Hudson Headliners!

**HUDSON HEADLINERS!**  
Now Featuring  
**Construction Management**

The Hudson County Community College Center for Construction Management offers nationally recognized and industry-recognized degree and certificate studies to meet the specific career goals of recent high school graduates, seasoned construction workers, and those transitioning into the industry.

In our newest episode of "Hudson Headliners," you'll learn about our Construction Management academic offerings as well as networking and internship opportunities.

Tune into –

<https://www.hccc.edu/news-media/headliners/index.html>

**Watch for news about the next  
Hudson Headliners!**

## CONTINUING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS



### Basic Spanish, Level I

Continuing Education's Basic Spanish, Level I class, taught by instructor Carmen Guerra, began on February 19. In this class students learn essential vocabulary, basic grammar, and conversational skills to confidently greet, describe, and interact in Spanish.

Please visit the CE website <https://www.hccc.edu/programs-courses/continuing-education/programs/language-institute/index.html> or email Carmen Guerra at [cguerra@hccc.edu](mailto:cguerra@hccc.edu) for more information on our upcoming Spanish classes and to learn more about our other language offerings, such as Italian, Arabic, and French.

### Gateway to Innovation Team Presented a 90-Minute Career Readiness Workshop, "Hire Me!"

CEWD students and Professor Sonia Rodiger-Radovic's ESL 5 class thoroughly enjoyed learning about different career readiness topics such as searching for jobs and optimizing your job search; preparing for the interview; interviewing basics: a checklist; strategies for the interview; how to impress employers during an interview; common interview questions; and post-interview follow up.

Ms. Maria Lita Sarmiento and her Team will be presenting a series of other workshops, so stay tuned. HCCC students are welcome to attend.



## CONTINUING EDUCATION Upcoming Programs

### BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Saturday, March 8, 2025 | 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$77  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-winter-2025-dates-tickets-1080443628979?aff=oddtcreator>

### BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Friday, March 28, 2025 | 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$77  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-winter-2025-dates-tickets-1080443628979?aff=oddtcreator>

### BASIC ARABIC (ONLINE)

Mondays | March 3, 2025, through March 31, 2025  
 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. | Price: \$125  
 Instructor: Mohamed Sarrouiti  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-arabic-level-i-online-course-registration-1081061647489?aff=oddtcreator>

### WELCOME TO COMPUTER BASICS (IN-PERSON)

Saturdays | March 15, 2025, through May 3 2025  
 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. | Price: \$150  
 Instructor: Corazon Lacsamana  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/welcome-to-computer-basics-winter-2025-registration-1225137712879?aff=oddtcreator>

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development  
 161 Newkirk Street, Room E504, Jersey City, NJ 07306  
 (201) 360-4224 | [CE@hccc.edu](mailto:CE@hccc.edu)

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## ALUMNI CORNER

### Yamilka “Mika” Garcia

#### A.A. Computer Arts, HCCC Class of 2016



##### What led you to attend HCCC?

I moved to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic in 2013. I was looking for a school and to start my life here. HCCC was the most approachable. It felt like a door into life in the U.S. and to education.

I also wanted to be close to NYC and the art scene and HCCC aligned with that.

##### How did you start working for the HCCC Foundation Art Collection?

I was interested in working in the arts, and I knew the College had an art collection. One day, I just went to Dr. Andrea Siegel's office and asked, "Are you hiring? I want to work here."

##### Tell us about working for the Foundation Art Collection

I was learning a lot from Dr. Siegel and trying to help as much as possible. I loved working on the Collection behind the scenes. It was quite foundational for what I am doing now. I learned a lot about all the steps it takes to acquire, preserve, install, and show an art collection.

##### Were you always interested in an art career?

I was always interested in art, but it wasn't very accessible in the Dominican Republic. I started college there and was studying architecture as that was the only thing available that was art related. When I moved to New Jersey, I knew I had to get closer to the arts. The accessibility here drew me more into it.

##### Tell us about your next steps after HCCC

I worked in customer service and art handling. I got my first art handling job at MANA Contemporary the same way I got my job with the Foundation Art Collection: simply asking, "How do I work here?" I asked, I interviewed, and I got the job.

I went from there to doing freelance art handling for other galleries. I got jobs in visitor services at the Whitney Museum and the MoMA Design Store. I worked anywhere I could get a job in art.

These experiences brought me to Sotheby's. A record-breaking Monet (The Haystacks) sold for \$100 million, and the picture of me holding it at the auction was on the cover of all the major art magazines. Being a part of the life of a famous work, framing it, and touching it is a powerful feeling.

I'm currently working at Gander & White, a shipping and handling company that specializes in art handling. I'm in project management. When people move homes, I manage the logistics of getting the pieces installed in their new house. We move pieces anywhere in the U.S. and internationally. I also import and export a lot of pieces.

##### Tell us about your educational path after HCCC

After HCCC, I wanted to keep working in the arts and learning more, so I had to wait a while between degrees. I started studying art history at CUNY Hunter in 2019, and between working full-time and taking classes, I graduated last year.

I'm interested in everything and learning new things, so I also completed a certificate in exhibition design at the Pratt Institute. I want to keep learning more. I want to study operations and management of art, but I'd also love to pursue a master's in fine arts.

I want to keep going with collection management and the back-of-house aspect of making things happen, like how to make exhibitions happen for an art collection.

##### Do you have a favorite piece from the Foundation Art Collection?

It's hard to pick a favorite, but installing the arrowheads and artifacts from the Lenai Lenape people at the Library was the most memorable. One of my favorite memories of HCCC is walking around looking for artwork after I found out about the Foundation Art Collection. It was like finding hidden treasures in plain sight.

##### What has your involvement in the arts given back to you?

Art helps to make existence more bearable. I can't imagine what life would be like without art. I can't imagine a world where people don't have the ability to express themselves or the liberty to create something. Even if it's just a pretty piece that doesn't tell you anything, that's also important if it just makes you happy in a world that can be so hard.

##### Have you faced any challenges as a woman in the art world?

The challenges are real. Sometimes, it's hard to not feel like "I'm a woman of color with an accent in the art world." I try not to think that that's what makes things hard because the art world is hard for everybody. It can come through in environments that are mostly people who don't look like me. But I'll just keep learning more and proving that I belong here too.

##### What advice do you have for HCCC students, particularly those who want to work in art?

I'm always asking myself, "How do I get from here to there?" A lot of it is simply asking people, "This is what I want to do. How do I get there?"

Being open to different things is a big part of it. I did customer service; I worked in fast food, but I kept going and trying to get to the places where I wanted to be. Ask questions about how to get to the places you want to get to. Be open to doing different things.

## Alumni Events

### Events at the College for Alumni to Attend

#### Wednesday, March 5, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

In Celebration of Women's History Month, the School of Business, Culinary Arts, and Hospitality Management presents "Women in Business: Interactive Discussion with HCCC Board Trustee Stacy Gemma" at Journal Square Campus, Gabert Library, Sixth Floor Atrium

#### Tuesday, March 11, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Meeting of the Hudson County Community College Board of Trustees, 5 p.m., 70 Sip Avenue, Mary T. Norton Room, or virtually; join at

<https://zoom.us/j/98347157921?pwd=Hnw4NaImFoxibgpdYjffqQoJnDoaBl.1> Passcode: 980112

## What's New?

**Updated Alumni Web Pages:** We're thrilled to share that the Alumni section of HCCC's website has been significantly enhanced! You'll find new features, including alumni spotlights, an expanded events calendar, and direct links to our Alumni LinkedIn group and HCCC merchandise. Explore the updates and stay connected—visit the pages here: <https://www.hccc.edu/community/alumni-services/index.html>

**Alumni Survey:** As we kick off HCCC's 50th Anniversary celebration, we want to hear from you! Share your experiences and insights by completing our survey today: [https://hccc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_77111qlENrf4heu](https://hccc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_77111qlENrf4heu). *Your voice matters, and we appreciate your input!*

**50th Anniversary:** Beginning August 2025 until September 2026, we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Hudson County Community College. This year-long celebration will include Homecoming, Alumni Reunion, and Networking events. Interested in participating? Please update your email by contacting us at [alumni@hccc.edu](mailto:alumni@hccc.edu).

#### Alumni Association and Alumni Benefits:

This year, we're partnering with the Alumni Association to engage and inspire you to get involved! The Association meets six times a year, offering great opportunities to connect, contribute, and stay engaged. Join us for the next meeting on March 11, 2025, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. You can attend virtually at the link below. We look forward to seeing you there! <https://hudsonccc.webex.com/meet/alumni> Password: 28707199608

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# ALUMNI CORNER

*Continued from Page 11*

**Alumni Benefits:** HCCC offers a range of services to support our alumni, including résumé development, workshops, access to computer labs and libraries, and participation in student life programs. With an Alumni Card, you can take advantage of these exclusive benefits and stay connected to the HCCC community! Details here: <https://www.hccc.edu/community/alumni-services/index.html>

**Alumni Giving:** HCCC offers meaningful ways for alumni to give back and support the College and its students. You can sponsor events, students, or classes, or make an annual contribution at a level that works for you. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference. Giving is easy—visit <https://www.hccc.edu/community/foundation/index.html#ways-to-give> to make your impact today!

## The Rise and Voices of Alumni events:

The Rise and Voices of Alumni events offer a platforms for alumni to share their journey, beginning from time at HCCC and extending into post-graduation experiences, with notable achievements, experiences, and challenges. This year, it will feature:

Thursday, March 20: Courage Laban

Monday, May 5: LaTrenda Ross

Saturday, September 20: Jennifer Rivera

## Alumni Workplace Facts

Each month, we will list some of the companies that hire our Alumni.

**Most Hired:** HCCC hires the most Alumni of all employers.

This month, we feature the Healthcare and Hospitals that hire most of our Alumni.

## Most Hired Hospitals:

- o Hackensack Meridian Health
- o RWJBarnabas Health
- o CarePoint Health System
- o Jersey City Medical Center
- o Atlantic Health System

*Alumni Relations and Services compile this information from LinkedIn data.*

## Alumni Stats

From 1994-2024, HCCC graduates have been:

- 63% Female
- 54% Hispanic or Latino
- 49% Between the ages of 20-24 years old

*Each month, we will list some statistics about our Alumni. This information is compiled by Alumni Relations and Services from data collected by Institutional Research and Planning at HCCC.*

## Alumni Success

Here are what some of our alumni are doing after leaving Hudson County Community College.

### Chef Anthony Amoroso

Michelin Starred Chef at Brinker International, Inc, former Corporate Executive Chef at BRGuest Hospitality, and formerly Executive Chef at SeaBlue at The Borgata

**Kiefer Corro**, Health Care Administrator at Hackensack Meridian Health

**Safiatou Coulibaly, MSW, LSW**  
 Social Worker, Legal Aid Society

**Jacquelin Porto**  
 a Vice President at BNP Paribas

# HCCC Alumni: Get Involved!

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

**If so join, socialize, and network!**  
 For information about the College's Alumni Association and membership benefits, please email [alumni@hccc.edu](mailto:alumni@hccc.edu).

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



## 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.

