

HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOLDS TOPPING OUT CEREMONY, HOISTS THE FINAL BEAM ON THE CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS



The new center will house an NCAA gym, fitness center, science labs, theater, classrooms, and administrative offices.

In this issue

HCCC Student
Selected as Intern
for Port Authority
of New York and
New Jersey



Page 2

Hudson Helps
Resource Center
Awards Inaugural
'Human Needs
Are Basic Needs'
Scholarships



Page 5

Arab Student Association Hosts
Inspiring Ramadan Iftar
at Journal Square Campus



Page 7



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| HR News | 4 |
| PTK News | 8 |
| 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 June newsletter are due by Friday, May 9, 2025.

Please send your news items, comments and suggestions to:

Communications Department
 26 Journal Square, 14th 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 HOLDS TOPPING OUT CEREMONY, HOISTS THE FINAL BEAM ON THE CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

College student centers are hubs for academic and social engagement, cultural events and activities, and student resources, where students, faculty, staff and the community fellowship and develop a sense of belonging.

On April 17, nearly one year after the groundbreaking, Hudson County Community College (HCCC) hoisted into position the last steel beam of its new Center for Student Success. HCCC held the Topping Out ceremony at 2 Enos Place on the College's Journal Square Campus in Jersey City. The event began at 11 a.m. with students, faculty and staff signing the last beam. At 12:30 p.m., Dr. Nicholas Chiaravalloti, HCCC Vice President for External Affairs, Strategic Directions, and Senior Counsel to the President introduced HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber, Hudson County Executive Craig Guy, New Jersey State Senator Raj Mukherji, Hudson County Commissioner Anthony Romano, Jr., HCCC Trustee Chair Jeanette Peña, HCCC Student Government Association President Nina Maria Resurrección, and Hudson County Building and Construction Trades Council President Patrick Kelleher, all of whom delivered remarks. The beam was lifted at 1:00 p.m., with music and activities adding to the celebration.

The Topping Out Ceremony is an ancient Scandinavian tradition that celebrates the construction milestone and recognizes the



architects, engineers, and laborers for every plan, beam, bolt, and weld. The project team and others sign the beam and raise it with an evergreen tree and American flag attached.

The 11-story, 153,186 square-foot HCCC Center for Student Success resides one block from the Journal Square PATH. The tower will replace several of the College's small, segregated, and aging buildings. The blueprint includes 24 classrooms; full-size National College Athletics Association (NCAA) gymnasium to facilitate the debut of the College's Athletics Program; fitness center; black-box theater; health sciences laboratories; 85 offices; eight conference rooms; a "University Center" for sister colleges and partners to offer baccalaureate instruction; expanded student services areas; and more.

Continued on page 9

ON THE COVER: Hudson County Community College (HCCC) celebrated the Topping Out of the College's Center for Student Success, now under construction in the Journal Square area of Jersey City, NJ. Pictured here (holding the banner from left) Hudson County Commissioner Chair Anthony Romano, Jr., New Jersey State Senator Raj Mukherji, HCCC Trustee Chair Jeanette Peña, Hudson County Executive Craig Guy, Hudson County Building and Construction Trades Council President Patrick Kelleher; (second from right) HCCC Trustee Vice Chair Pamela Gardner, and (far right) HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber.

HCCC STUDENT SELECTED AS INTERN FOR PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

The School of Business, Culinary Arts, and Hospitality Management is proud to announce that Leonardo Amador was recently selected as a spring 2025 intern for the Port Authority of NY/NJ. He will experience meaningful career opportunities within maritime, supply chain, and logistics industries related to transportation, logistics, and distribution at the Port Authority.

Leonardo is very involved at HCCC and within his community. He is a tutor with Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) and is part of the inaugural cohort of Hudson B.E.S.T., part

of the Business Higher Education Forum.

Leonardo is an industrious individual with a strong passion for life-long learning. His skills range from customer service to team leadership. Leonardo exhibits excellent communication, organizational, and interpersonal skills. While at HCCC, he has always looked for opportunities allowing him to grow both professionally and personally.



SENATE PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING



Advocating for the future! On Wednesday, March 25 the Senate Public Budget Hearing at New Jersey Institute of Technology brought together representatives from 10 of New Jersey's 18 community colleges. Presidents, students (including some from HCCC), trustees, alumni, and leaders—proudly sporting their college gear—voiced the importance of investing in community colleges in the state budget.

HCCC HONORED WITH TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION BRONZE AWARD



Lori Margolin, Associate Vice President, Continuing Education and Workforce Development, holding the College's Hudson TMA Bronze Award.

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) was proud to be recognized with a Bronze Award by the Hudson County Transportation Management Association (Hudson TMA) at a special luncheon on Thursday, March 27.

The award celebrates HCCC's commitment to creating and supporting transportation programs that offer employees sustainable commuting options. As a division of the Hudson County Improvement Authority, Hudson TMA honors organizations that help reduce traffic congestion and promote environmentally-friendly transportation choices.

HCCC was among several outstanding employers acknowledged for making a positive impact on local transit and commuting. The College is proud to be part of this important initiative and remains committed to supporting greener, more accessible transportation solutions for the community.

JERSEY CITY HONORS TRAILBLAZING LESBIANS AT VISIBILITY DAY AWARDS CEREMONY ON APRIL 25



Mayor Steve Fulop's LGBTQ+ Taskforce celebrated Lesbian Visibility Day with a ceremony recognizing the contributions of Jersey City's lesbian community. HCCC's Assistant Dean, Student Life and Leadership Veronica Gerosimo received a Citation, honoring her efforts in fostering student engagement, leadership development and inclusive campus experiences.



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

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



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>**



MILESTONES

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

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year
Ivy Altamirano
Joselito Rosal
Thomas Stokes

Five Years
Albert Williams

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year
Emajonite Etienne
Jonathan Goodman
George Haniotis
Christine Kelly
Bryan Samaniego-Pico

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>

SUMMER HOURS

The summer four-day week will begin Monday, May 19, with the first Friday off scheduled for Friday, May 23. The five-day schedule resumes on Monday, August 18.

The daily hours of operation during the summer four-day weeks will be 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, and the College will not be open for regular business on Fridays. Employees are asked to reduce their lunch breaks to 30 minutes to help compensate for the shorter hours of operation during the week. College activities on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during this period will be minimized to reduce energy and other operating costs.

Should you have any questions about this schedule, please contact the Office of Human Resources or your supervisor.

APPOINTMENT OF FULL-TIME STAFF

*Salma Abdelwahed,
Coordinator of Cultural Affairs, April 9, 2025*

*Robert DiMartino,
Vice President for Human Resources, May 5, 2025*

*Zachary Forrest,
Associate Director for Veterans Affairs and
International Student Services, June 2, 2025*

*Dominique Maynard,
Director of Hudson Hub One Stop Student
Services Center, April 29, 2025*

*Lillie O'Hara,
Program Coordinator for Continuing Education,
April 9, 2025*

*Jonathan Sisk,
Director of Athletics, April 28, 2025*

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY FULL-TIME STAFF

*Mariam Amer, Academic Advisor
April 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025*

*Perla De Aza Paniagua, Academic Advisor
April 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025*

*Samantha Ramirez, Academic Advisor
April 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025*

*Farimah Mazzotta, Visual Arts and Design
Equipment and Labs Manager (Grant-funded)
April 9, 2025 to June 30, 2025*

REAPPOINTMENT OF COLLEGE LECTURERS, NON-TENURED, FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26

Griselda Frane, Nursing and Health Professions

Carmen Pelardis, Nursing and Health Professions

Nancy Saliba, Nursing and Health Professions

MODIFICATIONS TO STAFFING TABLE

*From: Payroll Office Assistant, Part-time (2) to:
Assistant Director, Payroll, Salary Grade:113,
April 9, 2025*

*Nicholas A. Chiaravalloti, from Vice President for
External Affairs, Special Initiatives, and Senior
Counsel to the President to Consultant, Effective
July 1, 2025*

*Lori Margolin, Associate Vice President for
Continuing Education and Workforce Develop-
ment to Vice President for Strategic Initiatives,
Continuing Education and Workforce
Development (From Grade: 122 to Cabinet)
Effective: July 1, 2025*

REAPPOINTMENT OF TENURE-TRACK FACULTY FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26

*Annie Barran, Instructor, Nursing
Nursing and Health Professions*

*Jonathan Cabrera, Instructor, Criminal Justice
Humanities and Social Sciences*

*Christopher Cody, Instructor, History,
Humanities and Social Sciences*

*Sharon Daughtry, Instructor, Business, Business,
Culinary Arts, and Hospitality Management*

*Yavuz Guner, Instructor, Computer Science
Science, Technology, Engineering, and
Mathematics*

*Elizabeth Hallacy, Instructor, ESL, Humanities
and Social Sciences*

*Gabriel Holder, Instructor, Medical Billing and
Coding Nursing and Health Professions*

*Marissa Lontoc, Instructor, Table Service,
Business, Culinary Arts, and Hospitality
Management*

*Raffi Manjikian, Instructor, Chemistry, Science,
Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*

*Steffi Montenegro, Instructor, Nursing, Nursing
and Health Professions*

*Josue Perez, Instructor, Philosophy, Humanities
and Social Sciences*

*Sebastian Pieciak, Instructor, Speech/ Communi-
cations, Humanities and Social Sciences*

*Soviesky Pujols, Instructor, English, Humanities
and Social Sciences*

*Sonja Rodiger-Radovic, Instructor, ESL,
Humanities and Social Sciences*

*Keeley Thornton, Instructor, ESL, Humanities
and Social Sciences*

*Kade Thurman, Instructor, Sociology, Humanities
and Social Sciences*

*Amanda Velez, Instructor, ESL, Humanities and
Social Sciences*

*Benedetto Youssef, Instructor, English,
Humanities and Social Sciences*

*Amaal Ogburn, Director of Faculty and Staff
Development (Director I) to Director of Faculty
and Staff Development (Director II) (From Grade
117 to Grade 119) Effective: July 1, 2025*

*Alexa Riano, Senior Executive Assistant to the
President and Board of Trustees to Senior
Executive Administrator/Chief of Staff
Effective: July 1, 2025*

HUDSON HELPS RESOURCE CENTER AWARDS INAUGURAL 'HUMAN NEEDS ARE BASIC NEEDS' SCHOLARSHIPS



In collaboration with the Tepper Foundation and NJ Council of Community Colleges, Hudson Helps launched a student art and writing scholarship opportunity centered on the theme of basic needs—an invitation for students to share their lived experiences, challenges, and hopes related to housing, food security, mental health, and other essential needs.

Over 80 heartfelt submissions were received, each one a powerful reflection of the struggles and resilience that define the basic needs journey. From these, 12 finalists were selected. A selection committee then chose the top three winners—who will receive scholarships of \$1,500 (3rd place), \$3,000 (2nd place), and \$5,000 (1st place)—as well as four honorable mentions, each receiving a \$500 mini scholarship.

Congratulations to our:

Honorable Mentions: Stephanie Mendez, Ja'Nya Graham, Jalisa Martinez, and Mark Reyes-Mackliff

3rd Place: Chinelo Ossai for the poem “The Forgotten” — a poignant reflection on invisibility and hope

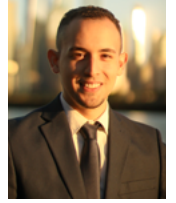
2nd Place: Meera Seleem for the short story “Between the Streets and Stars” — a narrative of resilience and aspiration

1st Place: Alina Espinal for the acrylic painting “Hierarchy of Needs” — a visual exploration of what it means to survive and thrive

These student voices are a reminder that behind every statistic is a story—and through creativity and courage, they’ve brought the conversation about basic needs to the forefront.

PROFESSIONAL NOTES

On Monday, March 31, Cristhian C. Altamirano who serves as the Associate Director of the Early College Program, successfully defended his dissertation titled “Graph Comprehension among Developmental Mathematics Students Through a Sociocultural Perspective” to earn his doctorate (Ph.D.) in Educational Psychology from Rutgers University. His work was two-fold: (a) he created an instrument designed to assess graph comprehension among viewers for single-bar graphs and (b) he found that developmental math students were significantly underperforming in graph comprehension compared to their college-level math peers. He also found that when one assesses both groups of students using a culturally-responsive assessment, especially when the graph depicts articles of everyday life we are all familiar with, the graph performance difference between both developmental and college-level math students disappear.



This work would not have been possible without the generous support from several individuals at the College. A special thank you goes to Dr. Burl Yearwood, Dean of STEM, and Professors and Faculty Coordinators Claudia Delgado, Kewal Krishan and Dr. Issam El-Achkar. Without their support and the support of their faculty and students, this milestone would not have been possible.

CULINARY ARTS INSTITUTE VISITS INDUSTRY BUSINESSES



In April, students enrolled in the Purchasing and Product Identification Class of the Culinary Arts Institute visited Whole Foods in Paramus, NJ. Students met with management and toured the facility, learning about the uniqueness of the business and its foundations in offering high quality foods. Students visited areas of the business that are not accessible by the general public. This trip was made possible through the efforts of Marissa Lontoc and Diana Ramirez, both Instructors for Table Service at the College.

Also in April, Baking and Pastry students enrolled in the Culinary Arts Institute visited the commissary for Balthazar Bakeries located in Englewood, NJ. Students learned how a production facility produces thousands of breads and pastries on a daily basis. The students met with front-line machine operators, supervisors, and chefs of the corporation. We thank Marissa Lontoc for her efforts in arranging this educational experience for our students.

HCCC STUDENTS SELECTED AS FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP VOLUNTEERS AT METLIFE STADIUM



Mina Abdelmaseeh and Marolla Youakim have been selected as official volunteers for the FIFA Club World Cup at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford this summer!

They are two of only 9,000 volunteers chosen from over 51,000 applicants worldwide, making this an incredible achievement and an exciting opportunity to be part of one of the biggest sporting events on the planet.

As volunteers, they will take on a variety of important roles — from assisting guests with seating and carrying flags, to supporting media teams and preparing accreditation passes, among other responsibilities.

Congratulations, Mina and Marolla — HCCC will be cheering you on as you represent our community on the world stage!

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.

This is just a shout-out of thanks to all the students who trained to work on our 2024-25 Foundation Art Collection art-placard-writing project funded by a generous grant from the Jersey City Arts + Culture Trust Fund. Thank you, students, for your good work so far. We look forward to the wonderful writing that's now in process!

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Kiiwii Bacon | Cristina V. Negron |
| Samantha Esther Bautista | Grace Ortiz |
| Dale Brooks | Kendra Pantino |
| Judith Broome | Janvi Patel |
| Veronika Cepeda | Valeria Pizan Perez |
| Stephanie Chimborazo | Natalie Preston |
| Mercedes Fielding | Sandra Rendon |
| Iris Garcia | Amareese Rivera |
| Luz Gonzalez | Meera Saleem |
| Ambar Grullon | Mhek Saleem |
| William Kunga | Saskia Solorzano |
| Darlene Lawrence | Estefania Taborda |
| Rashida Lee | Denisse Ortiz Villar |
| Marcella Mahone | Desiree Ortiz Villar |
| Jasmin Ngoy Mbale | Marolla Youakim |
| Kayla Montalvo | |



Artist Unknown, Miles Davis "Kind of Blue", ca. 1990s, Offset Lithograph, 56.5" x 41.75." Look for student research on this work—part of the Jersey City Arts & Culture Trust Fund grant—coming soon to the website and a nearby placard!

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 and tell us the story of how the Art Collection works for you.

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

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

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

If you're an HCCC student and you're interested in getting paid to learn to write about art this May, there are still spaces open. Please contact Andrea at ASiegel@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 course with undulating greens.

10:00 a.m. Shotgun Start



Any questions, please contact: foundation@hccc.edu



HCCC Faculty and Staff

- Who are your favorite local businesses?

As part of HCCC's upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration, we are creating 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, barber-shop, 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 base that benefits both HCCC and our local economy – it's a win-win!



To submit:

scan QR code or click link below:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/690308a929fb4e05b7b24cfc30a0636>

Any questions? foundation@hccc.edu



OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS presents



Sculptor Sherwin Banfield (right) presents during "Hip Hop Happenings" at the North Hudson Campus on Thursday, April 10.



The community gets in on the dance therapy session at "Hip Hop Happenings." Many thanks to the team whose offices sponsored this event: Joseph Caniglia (North Hudson Campus), Chastity Farrell (Continuing Education and Workforce Development), Doreen Pontius (Mental Health Counseling and Wellness Center), and Veronica Gerosimo and Keisha Taylor (Student Life and Leadership).



Cultural Affairs held the fourth annual "Words Worth" poetry festival on April 10 and 11.

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

ARAB STUDENT ASSOCIATION HOSTS INSPIRING RAMADAN IFTAR AT JOURNAL SQUARE CAMPUS



For the second year in a row, the Arab Student Association (ASA), under the supervision of Prof. Saliha Yagoubi, hosted an inspiring Ramadan Iftar on March 6, 2025, bringing together students, faculty, and esteemed guests for an evening of community, reflection, and celebration. The event featured distinguished speakers, including the former President of the Jersey City Board of Education, Musab Ali, Shahab Khan and Activist Juweria

Arjumand who joined the gathering, and shared her advocacy for minority rights. Each speaker delivered powerful and motivational speeches to students and shared inspiring insights with the attendees.

Adding to the significance of the evening, Professors Qasem Mohammed and Dr. Salim Bendaoud from the School of STEM attended with their families, leading the pre-Iftar prayer



and fostering a spirit of unity. The event was filled with engaging activities, including arts and crafts for children, henna tattoos, and more, creating a welcoming atmosphere for the community.

This annual Iftar not only celebrated the holy month of Ramadan but also reinforced HCCC's commitment to welcoming all identities and traditions.

PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY NEWS

Hudson County Community College Nursing Student Receives Phi Theta Kappa Hites Transfer Scholarship

Marolla Youakim pursued her dream of becoming a nurse practitioner from Egypt to the U.S., finding a second home at Hudson County Community College (HCCC). Struggling with a heavy course load in her first semester, she joined HCCC's Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF), which helped her thrive academically and personally. She finished her first semester with a 4.0 GPA, joined honor societies, and took on leadership and service roles.

Marolla was recently named a recipient of the prestigious 2025 Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Hites Transfer Scholarship—one of only 22 students selected from nearly 2,800 applicants to receive the \$7,500 award.

"Marolla Youakim is a shining example of how students achieve their dreams at Hudson County Community College," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber.

Marolla's leadership spans a wide range of campus and community roles. She has served as President of the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society, Vice President of Scholarship for PTK,



HCCC student Marolla Youakim was awarded the prestigious \$7,500 Phi Theta Kappa 2025 Hites Transfer Scholarship, selected from nearly 2,800 students nationwide.

and held positions in student government, peer mentoring, academic coaching, and the EOF program. She has also supported students with disabilities and helped others navigate financial aid processes.

Beyond campus, she volunteers with her church, helps hospice patients, and has assisted with food and gift drives for those in need. Her service also includes contributions to local shelters, food banks, and environmental clean-ups.

The Hites Scholarship is funded by the Hites Family Community College Scholarship Foundation and the PTK Foundation.



Congratulations to Mayte Molina for completing PTK Edge.



Kenia Sandoval (left) and Prof. Ted Lai (right) volunteered at the annual Friends of Liberty State Park Salt Marsh Cleanup on Saturday, April 12.

CULINARY ARTS INSTITUTE (CAI) CREATE A RAMADAN IFTAR BUFFET



On March 18, 2025, students from the Culinary Arts Institute (CAI) were invited to once again create a Ramadan Iftar Buffet for the Jersey City Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs. More than 15 HCCC students and faculty members took part in this event, held at the William Brennan Courthouse in Jersey City. The gathering attracted over 50 attendees who savored a meal that was entirely halal.

GIRLS WHO CODE AND CYBERSECURITY CLUB SHINE AT KEAN UNIVERSITY HACKATHON



On March 22, 2025, students from the Girls Who Code and Cybersecurity Club participated in Kean University's 12-hour Hackathon event. The group was accompanied by club advisors Professors Raffi Manjikian and Yavuz Guner, as they joined the dynamic day of innovation, learning, and collaboration. The event featured a series of interactive workshops, insightful speaker panels, and an intense, hands-on hackathon competition. This immersive experience provided students with valuable opportunities to collaborate with their peers and network with professionals from across New Jersey's technology landscape. They showcased their skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. The School of STEM proudly celebrates Xena and all the students who participated in this incredible event, demonstrating not only their technical expertise but also their commitment to advancing innovation in the tech industry.

CONFERENCE COVERAGE



Senior Instructional Designer Callie Martin co-presents "Building an Inclusive Future at HCCC" with Josh Gaul, Chief Digital Learning Officer at Edge, during the EdgeCon conference on April 10.

Center for Online Learning Team attends EdgeCon Conference

At the EdgeCon conference at Seton Hall University on April 10, Matt LaBrake, Executive Director of the Center for Online Learning, accepted the NJEdge Accessibility in Digital Education Award on behalf of Hudson County Community College — a recognition of our ongoing commitment to equitable and inclusive online learning.

A special shoutout to our amazing Center for Online team for their dedication to creating accessible, high-quality learning experiences for all students! Additionally, Senior Instructional Designer Callie Martin co-presented "Building an Inclusive Future at HCCC" alongside Josh Gaul, Edge's Chief Digital Learning Officer. Their session highlighted how HCCC is leading the way in designing inclusive and accessible digital learning environments.



Scenes from PTK Catalyst in Kansas City, Mo., during which Marolla Youakim (top left) was awarded the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) 2025 Hites Transfer Scholarship; Angela Tuzzo (top right) was presented the Distinguished College Administrator Award; and student leaders with faculty members Ted Lai and Raffi Manjikian.

HCCC Shines at the 2025 AACC Conference

A team of dedicated Hudson County Community College (HCCC) colleagues recently attended the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, where they represented the College with pride and professionalism.

Ariana Calle and Doreen Pontius presented on the innovative Social Work Intern Program, while Nic Mangal highlighted the Hudson Scholars Program and its impact on student success. Dr. Lisa Dougherty joined a panel discussion on "Leading with Care," stepping in on behalf of HCCC President Dr. Chris Reber.

At the gala, Jennifer Valcarcel, Dr. Azhar Mahmood, and HCCC's partnership with Frank

Beta Alpha Phi Makes Presence Known at PTK Catalyst 2025

Beta Alpha Phi, Hudson County Community College's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, was highly commended at PTK's international convention, Catalyst.

Marolla Youakim received the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) 2025 Hites Transfer Scholarship, the international honor society's most prestigious and largest scholarship offering. Hites Scholars are selected by a panel of independent judges. Only 22 students were selected from a pool of nearly 2,800 applicants for \$7,500 awards.

PTK recognized 25 college administrators with Distinguished College Administrator Awards during PTK Catalyst 2025, including HCCC's own Angela Tuzzo, Associate Director, Student Life and Leadership. The award recognizes college administrators working directly with student leaders to solve problems on campus and in their communities. Honorees have taken an active interest in supporting high-achieving students and developing student leaders.

Mazza from the Hudson County Department of Family Services and Reintegration were recognized with award nominations—an honor that reflects the strength and dedication of our community partnerships.

Congratulations to all involved for their outstanding contributions and for putting HCCC on the national stage!



TOPPING OUT CEREMONY

Continued from page 2

"The Center for Student Success will centralize and consolidate student services and complement the architecture of the surrounding area while driving local economic development," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "It is the final segment of the HCCC Facilities Master Plan. We are not just celebrating the last beam going up, but how it correlates to helping our students reach new heights in their higher education achievements."

"As Hudson County Executive, I am proud of the vital role my Administration played in securing the funding to make this Center for Student Success possible, and I am grateful for our partnerships with state leaders and labor in this effort," said Hudson County Executive, Craig Guy. "This Center will ensure our students have the modern resources they need to build their skills and confidence, allowing them to be successful in the workforce. The Center is symbolic of what we can accomplish when we work together for the betterment of all our students."

HCCC pioneered the urban campus concept by integrating learning environments, cultural spaces, public areas, and workplaces within Jersey City's Journal Square, the heart of Hudson County, New Jersey. As an essential part of the neighborhood that engages and serves Hudson County's residents and businesses where they live, the HCCC Journal Square Campus is the catalyst for the area's development. County Executive Craig Guy has referred to The Center for Student Success as "the epicenter of study, creativity, activity, and collaboration between students and the surrounding communities."

The HCCC Center for Student Success construction utilizes the newest, environmentally sustainable materials and systems. Funding for the \$96.3 million tower is supplied by proceeds from the sale of HCCC properties and the College's reserve funds, the County of Hudson, and New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), among others. The grand opening is scheduled for Fall 2026.

A delegation of HCCC presenters and Award of Excellence finalists at the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Conference in Nashville, TN.

CONTINUING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Sigma Kappa Delta Induction for AWPP Student

On April 24, 2025, Jamilette Huaranga, an Academic Workforce Pathways Program student, was inducted into Hudson County Community College's (HCCC) Sigma Kappa Delta chapter, Omicron Epsilon. Sigma Kappa Delta is the English Honor Society for Two-Year Colleges.

Jamilette began her higher education journey in AWPP in August 2023 and maintains a 4.0 GPA while incarcerated. She is currently pursuing an Associate of Science in Business Administration degree.

The HCCC Academic and Workforce Pathways Program (AWPP) provides education and training to incarcerated individuals at the Hudson County Correctional Facility (HCCF). AWPP is one of the only programs in the United States offering a full degree program in a county jail. Students in the program receive personal support from academic coaches, which facilitates the continuation of their coursework upon release.

For more information on the AWPP Program please contact the School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development at 201-360-5327.

CONTINUING EDUCATION Upcoming Programs

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Monday, May 5, 2025 | 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$77
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2025-dates-tickets-1256827738599?aff=oddtcreator>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Saturday, May 10, 2025 | 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$77
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2025-dates-tickets-1256827738599?aff=oddtcreator>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Monday, May 19, 2025 | 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$77
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2025-dates-tickets-1256827738599?aff=oddtcreator>

TOEFL PREP (IN-PERSON)

Saturdays | May 17, 2025, through June 21, 2025
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$225
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/toefl-test-of-english-as-a-foreign-language-exam-preparation-at-hccc-tickets-1256821790809?aff=oddtcreator>

BIENVENIDOS A CONCEPTOS BÁSICOS DE COMPUTACIÓN (IN-PERSON)

Tuesdays (7 Sessions) | May 27, 2025, through July 8, 2025
6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. | Price: \$150 | Instructor: Ruth Abadie
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bienvenidos-a-conceptos-basicos-de-computacion-registracion-1316359810629?aff=oddtcreator>

ATI TEAS TEST PREPARATION WORKSHOP SPRING 2025 (ONLINE) Science/Math Prep Only

Date: Saturdays, May 31 - June 28, 2025
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$143
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ati-teas-test-preparation-workshop-spring-2025-online-tickets-1256827447729?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



SUMMER YOUTH & TEEN PROGRAMS

July 7 – August 22

Ages 9 - 15

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

Both middle school and high school students experience a variety of engaging and enriching programs at Continuing Education's Summer Youth & Teen Programs.

Our unique one- and two-week, hands-on programs are offered in partnership with the College's Culinary Arts Institute. Programs emphasize self-discovery, cognitive reasoning, and cooperative thinking using a hands-on approach.

All Summer Youth Programs take place on our main campus at Journal Square.



DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY



CPR & FIRST AID FOR TEENS



SAT PREP
Math Prep/Language Arts Prep



CULINARY PROGRAM



TO REGISTER:
<https://tinyurl.com/SUMMERatHCCC>

QUESTIONS?
Contact (201) 360-4224
or Carmen Guerra at cguerra@hccc.edu

Hudson County Community College NJ Film Academy Introduction to the Entertainment Industry

Join Us Now! Learn More
Understanding the Entertainment Industry
Various Stages of Production
Professional Expectations in Film and Television

CONTACT US: hcccfilmacademy@hccc.edu

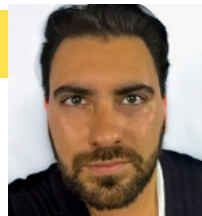


REGISTER FOR AN
INFORMATIONAL SESSION
SCAN THE QR CODE

ALUMNI CORNER

Paolo Minguzzi

A.F.A. in Computer Arts, Class of 2009



Paolo is a Managing Partner at VujaDe Ventures, a venture capital firm focused on solving global problems by investing in AgTech, DeepTech, LegalTech and HealthTech. After his time at HCCC, Paolo graduated from NYU and participated in the VC Lab program. You can read more here: <https://vujade.vclab.fund>

What made HCCC the right choice for you?

At the time, the College's proximity to my residence and the strong faculty were key factors. HCCC stood out to me for its excellent program offerings and solid infrastructure, which provided the right foundation for my academic and professional journey.

Tell us about your educational journey after HCCC and getting into venture capital.

After HCCC, I initially transferred to Montclair State University. However, I was soon accepted into NYU, where I had the flexibility to craft a multidisciplinary curriculum tailored to my needs. This allowed me to take courses across various schools, including Wharton, to acquire the tools necessary to manage a highly complex technology consulting business.

At that time, I ran a consulting firm helping medical practices transition to paperless systems and comply with the emerging requirements of the Affordable Care Act. To scale these efforts, I co-founded Hudson Netcare LLC to expand IT services for doctors. Though the partnership didn't ultimately work out, it led to the launch of VujaDe Enterprises LLC, through which I began investing in other ventures such as Advanced Screening LLC, a consulting firm co-founded with Farrukh Babar—now owner of MED SCREEN LABORATORIES INC.

As the businesses grew rapidly, I made the decision to return to Chile with my wife and two daughters for family reasons. From there, I continued consulting using the same business model, traveling frequently between Chile and California. This led to my entry into the venture capital space via the VC Lab.

I applied to the VC Lab accelerator and was accepted into Cohort 7, which is regarded as the equivalent of a master's-level education in private equity and venture capital. The experience gave me the tools, network, and framework to structure a focused fund strategy.

How did you become interested in AgTech? Why are you passionate about it?

My interest in agriculture is rooted in family—my ancestors were farmers in Italy, so there's a deep, personal connection to the land and food systems. More recently, I'm driven by the urgency to solve critical issues in food production, sustainability, and supply chain resilience. AgTech sits at the intersection of these global challenges.

What is space agriculture?

Space agriculture is the science of growing plants in non-Earth environments—such as on the International Space Station (ISS), the moon, or Mars—where Earth-like conditions (gravity, atmosphere, soil) are absent or significantly altered.

This interdisciplinary field blends plant biology, controlled environment agriculture, and systems engineering to enable sustainable food production beyond our planet.

Why it matters:

- In Space:
 - o Life Support: Plants recycle carbon dioxide, generate oxygen, and help purify water.
 - o Food Security: Reduces dependence on resupply missions from Earth.
 - o Crew Health: Provides both nutritional value and psychological well-being during long missions.
 - o Systems Integration: Forms the foundation of regenerative life support systems for deep space habitats.
- On Earth:

We are applying these advanced technologies—such as LED-optimized growth chambers, precision hydroponics, and closed-loop systems—to tackle urgent terrestrial problems. These include food insecurity, environmental degradation, and supply chain disruptions.

We're actively deploying space-agriculture innovations to transform the first mile of a sustainable, decentralized food supply chain—without relying on ultra-processed food. This includes: Localized food production, improved food safety and nutritional content, reduction of food miles and carbon emissions, and enhanced resilience against global disruptions like pandemics and climate change.

What advice would you give current HCCC students who aspire to work in venture capital?

First and foremost, find a mentor—someone whose success inspires you—and then study how to master your craft. For me, Ray Dalio has been a key influence, especially his "5-Step Process" for achieving goals.

Also, take care of your psychology first—develop mental resilience. Once your mindset is strong, you become limitless. Then, identify a field or mission that resonates so deeply with you that it becomes an obsession. When you're obsessed with the mission (not just the money), you'll naturally push beyond limits and innovate with purpose.



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_77111q1ENrf4heu. *Your voice matters, and we appreciate your input!*

What's New?

Updated Alumni Web Pages: 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>

50th Anniversary: From September 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. To participate, please update your information and email us at alumni@hccc.edu

Alumni Benefits: HCCC offers various services to support its 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 school 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!

Hudson County Community College Board of Trustees

Jeanette Peña, *Chair*
 Pamela Gardner, *Vice Chair*
 Edward DeFazio, Esq., *Secretary/Treasurer*
 Lisa Camacho, *Student Alumni Representative*
 Joseph V. Doria Jr., Ed.D.
 Frank J. Gargiulo
 Stacy Gemma
 Roberta Kenny
 Vincent Lombardo
 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

FOLLOW US ON:



myhudson.hccc.edu

www.hccc.edu

ALUMNI CORNER

Continued from page 11

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION: Elizabeth M. Perez, A.A.S., Hospitality Management Culinary, 2011, joins the HCCC Alumni Association as the new Secretary. She is a Senior Human Resources Business Partner with over 14 years of experience in developing and implementing strategic HR initiatives and also is an adjunct instructor at HCCC.



On March 18, the HCCC Alumni Association held a website launch event at the Student Center. Pictured with Atim Oton, Alumni Relations Coordinator (second from left) and Nicole Johnson, Vice President for Advancement and Communications are, from left, HCCC alumni Kristofer Fontanez, Elvin Dominici Encarnación, Assistant Vice President at Morgan Stanley, Angela Tuzzo and Royal Ross. (Photo courtesy of Abou Traore)



Alumni Relations and Services participated in Grad Salutes at both campuses and gave t-shirts to the students in preparation for Commencement, and registered over 100 individuals who joined the HCCC Alumni Association. Graduating students can head to our website to join the association at <https://www.hccc.edu/community/alumni-services/alumni-update-form.html>

Ignite HCCC's Future

Give \$20.25 to pay it forward to future HCCC grads.



Your gift opens a world of possibilities to HCCC students and our community. Together, we can help ensure the future of our students. Help us bring students' dreams to life. **Make your \$20.25 gift to support tomorrow's graduates.** Thanks to you, HCCC's future is bright!

Su donación abre un mundo de posibilidades para los estudiantes de HCCC y nuestra comunidad. Juntos, aseguramos el futuro de nuestros estudiantes. Ayúdenos en hacer realidad los sueños de los estudiantes. **Haga su donación de \$20.25 para apoyar a los graduados de mañana.** ¡Gracias a usted, el futuro de HCCC es brillante!

You Can Make a Difference.

DONATE NOW: www.hccc.edu/foundation

For questions, or to give through ACH, wire, or check contact: foundation@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.

