

HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FEATURED IN THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION CASE STUDY

Q CASE STUDY

An Earn-and-Learn Model Closes Skills Gaps

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

WITH SUPPORT FROM Ascendum

In this issue

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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 June newsletter are due by Friday, May 15, 2026

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HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FEATURED IN THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION CASE STUDY

Hudson County Community College’s (HCCC) innovative Holz Technik dual-education program was recently featured as a case study in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Titled “An Earn-and-Learn Model Closes Skills Gap,” the study highlights the College’s partnership with Eastern Millwork, Inc. (EMI) to address workforce shortages in automated custom architectural woodworking design and production.

Eight years ago, EMI Founder and CEO Andrew Campbell struggled to find graduates with the specialized skills his company required. Traditional degree programs often left new hires underprepared, requiring extensive on-the-job training. In response, HCCC and EMI launched the Holz Technik Academy in 2018, creating a unique earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship model.

The program recruits talented high school STEM students who split their time between classroom instruction at HCCC and hands-on training at EMI. Apprentices begin with a \$31,500 salary, full benefits, and annual raises. Over five years, they earn both an Associate of Applied Science degree from HCCC and a Bachelor of Science in Technical Studies through Thomas Edison State University—entirely

debt-free. Graduates move into full-time roles at EMI, earning up to \$70,000 with strong career prospects. Former New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy has called the program “a blueprint for New Jersey’s economic future.”

Participants benefit from both financial support and mentorship. Apprentice Nico Monzon, who initially planned to study architecture, instead chose Holz Technik and gained experience in real-world projects, including design work using AutoCAD. Campbell credits HCCC’s strong support system with helping apprentices succeed.

Since welcoming its first cohort in 2019, the highly competitive program has grown annually and gained national recognition. The model reflects a broader rise in apprenticeships, now totaling about 27,000 registered programs nationwide, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

HCCC has expanded its workforce development offerings from four programs in 2018 to eighteen today, serving more than 12,000 students annually. College leaders emphasize that partnerships like Holz Technik create meaningful pathways for students while meeting evolving industry needs.

ON THE COVER: *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recently published a case study, “An Earn-and-Learn Model Closes Skill Gaps,” on the nationally acclaimed Hudson County Community College-Eastern Millwork, Inc. Holz Technik apprenticeship program.

SAVE THE DATE

2026 COMMENCEMENT
 Tuesday, May 19, 2026
 9:30 a.m.

Sports Illustrated Stadium
 600 Cape May Street
 Harrison, NJ 07029



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.

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMOTES MATTHEW LABRAKE TO ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR DIGITAL LEARNING, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) President Christopher Reber announced the promotion of Matthew LaBrake to Associate Vice President for Digital Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Emerging Technologies.

Mr. LaBrake joined HCCC in August 2021 as Executive Director of the Center for Online Learning and Chief Online Learning Officer. Since then, he has expanded access to high-quality online and hybrid learning, strengthened student outcomes, and built a comprehensive digital learning ecosystem grounded in accessibility, equity, and student-centered design. He led strategic investments in technology infrastructure, established institution-wide course design standards, and developed robust faculty and student support systems.

He co-chairs the College's Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Governance Council, guiding institutional approaches to AI integration and responsible use, and chairs the Online Learning Advisory Council. In these roles, he advances AI literacy among students, faculty, and staff while aligning curricula with evolving workforce demands.

"Matt will continue to lead growing College-wide professional development opportunities related to planning and utilizing Artificial Intelligence in order to achieve positive outcomes in teaching, learning, and institutional operations while mitigating the ethical and equity challenges inherent in the technology," Dr. Reber said.

Mr. LaBrake holds degrees in Informa-

tion Science and Technology and Library Information Science from the University at Albany, SUNY and has earned multiple professional certifications in AI and online learning leadership.



An active contributor to national higher education initiatives, he serves in leadership roles with the Online Learning Consortium and University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA). Under his leadership, HCCC's Center for Online Learning earned the 2025 EDGE Digital Accessibility Award, and he received the 2024 AACC Rising Star-Manager Regional Award.

NEWS FROM HUDSON COUNTY EXECUTIVE CRAIG GUY

Hudson County Executive Craig Guy and Jersey City Mayor James Solomon Partner with Goya Foods to Distribute Food to Residents in Need

On March 31, Hudson County Executive Craig Guy and Jersey City Mayor James Solomon proudly recognized Goya Foods on its 90th anniversary, celebrating the company's continued commitment to supporting communities through meaningful food donations.

In recognition of this milestone, and on the 90th day of the company's anniversary year, Goya Foods generously donated hundreds of pounds of food to Hudson County through its Goya Gives program, an initiative established to combat food insecurity. Hudson County, in partnership with Jersey City, will distribute these items through the county's Department of Aging and Veterans Affairs (DAVA) directly to residents in need, particularly families impacted by stolen SNAP benefits.

During this past month, there has been a rise in SNAP benefit scams and DAVA has supported our community by delivering food to hundreds of families across the County. This critical donation will help ensure that we can continue to support

vulnerable residents, including seniors and families, providing access to nutritious food and essential resources.

"These donations of hundreds of pounds of food will help families throughout Hudson County, especially those who have been victimized by stolen SNAP benefits," said Hudson County Executive Craig Guy. "We are very grateful to Goya Foods for stepping up in a meaningful way and helping us in our effort to support residents who need it most. We remain committed to doing what we can to support residents during difficult times."

"Food security is a right, not a privilege, and no resident should go hungry. I'm grateful to Goya Foods for this generous donation and to County Executive Guy for his partnership in getting these resources directly to the families who need them most," said Jersey City Mayor James Solomon. "In Jersey City, we are committed to ensuring that every resident — including our LGBTQ+ youth and veterans facing housing instability and food insecurity — has access to the nutritious food and es-

sential support they deserve.

Inclusive access to these critical resources isn't just a goal; it's our obligation."

Hudson County and Jersey City proudly recognize organizations like Goya Foods, whose dedication strengthens communities and improves the lives of residents. The County and City extend its sincere appreciation for Goya's continued generosity and commitment to building stronger, healthier communities.

Additionally, on April 7, County Executive Guy, alongside the Department of Aging and Veterans Affairs, proudly donated dozens of bags of Goya foods from the Goya Gives event to the Hoboken Community Center. Joined by Hoboken Mayor Emily Jabour and Congressman Rob Menendez (D-10), these leaders highlighted their shared commitment to fighting food insecurity and supporting residents in need. Together, they continue to strengthen partnerships that make a tangible difference in the lives of Hudson County families.



MILESTONES

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

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

10 Years
David Clark
Patrick Mbong

25 Years
Ines Franco

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

Five Years
Marlenne Andalia
Emily Arowosaye
Hena Arshad
Monteria Bass
Natalie Betancourt
Richard Charles
Urimala Chawaria
Mira Domadiya
Robert Dowd
Andrea Goodwin
Keiry Hernandez
Anthony Jenkins
Matthew McClintock
Tanaisha Myrick
Ayush Patel
Dhyey Patel
Wesley Pena
Karishma Rivers
Djadji Sylla-Samassa
Julieta Veiga Da Souza
Hany Zaky

10 Years
Asia Abazeid
Jamar Johnson
Farhan Khan
Indra Sanders
Ana Velasquez

15 Years
Emmanuel Ankrah
Angelita Tubungbanua

20 Years
Olivia Na

25 Years
George Testa

For Recruitment and Job Opportunities visit:

<https://schooljobs.com/careers/hccc>

EMPLOYEE PERKS

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

Working Advantage
<https://hccc.savings.workingadvantage.com/home>

Did you know our EAP assists with Disaster Preparedness?

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

Congratulations to our colleagues stepping into new roles as full-time staff, temporary full-time staff, and adjunct faculty. We look forward to their contributions and wish them great success in their new positions.

FULL-TIME STAFF

Luis Reyes Alberto, Student Services Assistant, Enrollment Services

Rosemary Carlos, Administrative Assistant, School of Nursing and Health Professions

Amareese Forty, Student Services Assistant, Enrollment Services

Mary Mercado, Associate Director, Business Development, CEWD

TEMPORARY FULL-TIME FACULTY

Nicolas Barrios, Instructor of Exercise Science and Personal Fitness Training

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Rachel Sliker, Adjunct Faculty

Mary Chan, Adjunct Faculty

FACULTY PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to the faculty members recommended for promotion in academic rank for the 2026–27 academic year. This recognition reflects their excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service to the College and community.

Antonio Acevedo, Professor of History

Robin Anderson, Professor of Early Childhood Education

Alison Bach, Professor of English

Evgeniya Koslenko, Professor of English as a Second Language

Kewal Krishnan, Professor of Academic Foundations Mathematics

Raffi Manjikian, Assistant Professor of Chemistry

Craig McLaughlin, Professor of Psychology

TEMPORARY FULL-TIME STAFF

Kadiatou Camara, Admissions Advisor

FULL-TIME FACULTY

Saly Daoud, Instructor of Radiography Program

MODIFICATIONS TO STAFFING TABLE

Jason Figueroa, Associate Director of Hudson Hub One Stop Student Services Center

Matthew Kolbusz, Senior Director of English as a Second Language and Academic Foundations English

Yadeline Tineo, Student Services Assistant, Enrollment Services

Elana Twersky-Winslow, Professor of Business

Faisal Aljamal, Associate Professor of Computer Science and Cyber Security

Lauren Drew, Associate Professor of English as a Second Language

Karen Galli, Associate Professor of English

Lauren O'Gara, Associate Professor of Academic Foundations English

Susannah Wexler, Associate Professor of English

50TH ANNIVERSARY MUNICIPAL PROCLAMATIONS



Pictured (left to right): Jaime Pardo, Director of CEWD Operations and Business Client Training; Hoboken Mayor Emily B. Jabbour; and Anita Belle, Assistant Vice President of Continuing Education and Workforce Development.



Pictured from left: Jaime Pardo, Director of CEWD Operations and Business Client Training and Union City Mayor Brian P. Stack.

The City of Hoboken honored Hudson County Community College with a special proclamation recognizing its legacy of education, workforce development, and community service.

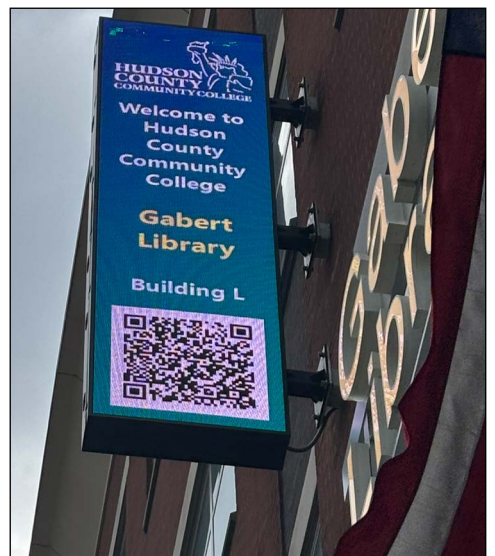
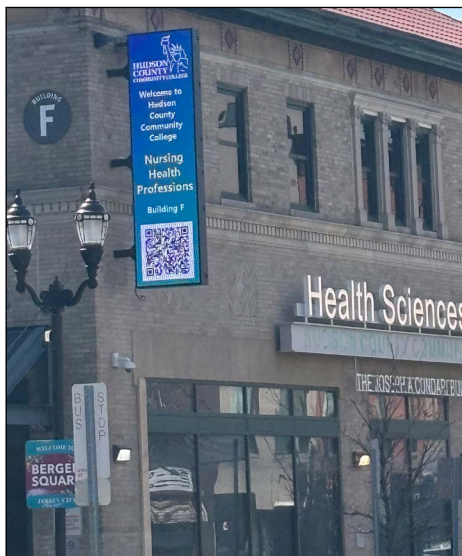
The College was honored to receive a 50th Anniversary Proclamation from the City of Union City, recognizing five decades of transforming lives through education.

Hudson County Community College proudly received a proclamation from the Township of North Bergen in recognition of its 50th Anniversary. This honor celebrates five decades of expanding access to higher education, empowering students, and strengthening the community.



Pictured from left are Commissioner Anthony P. Vainieri Jr., Commissioner Allen Pascual, Jaime Pardo, HCCC Director of CEWD Operations and Business Client Training, Commissioner Hugo Cabrera, Commissioner Claudia Rodriguez, and Robert P. Baselice, Hudson County Commissioner.

NEW CAMPUS SIGNAGE ENHANCES WAYFINDING AT HCCC



Hudson County Community College (HCCC) is pleased to introduce new digital campus signage as part of an ongoing wayfinding program designed to improve navigation and accessibility across College locations.

Recently installed at Gabert Library, the STEM Building, and the Cundari Center, the new signage provides clear, consistent, and user-friendly building identification for students, visitors, and employees. This initiative reflects HCCC's commitment to creating a more welcoming and easily navigable campus environment.

Everyone is encouraged to take note of the new signs and make use of these enhancements when visiting our campuses. Thanks to all departments and team members who contributed to the planning and implementation of this important project.

Foundation Art Collection

The Hudson County Community College Foundation Art Collection of 2,200+ 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.

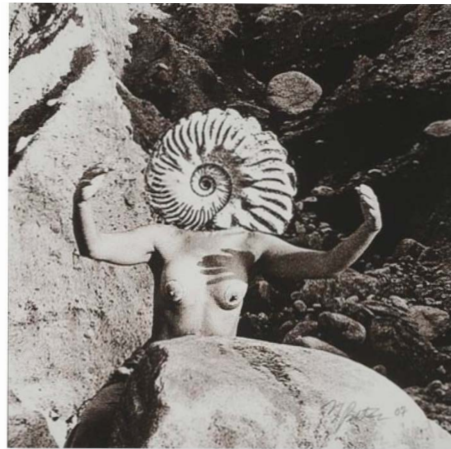
Each month, this page in HCCC *Happenings* provides updates on artists whose works are in the Collection, and new additions to the Collection.

ARTIST NEWS

For the recent exhibit *GODDESSES 3.0* at Ramapo College (March 25 – April 10), we are pleased to note that the Foundation Art Collection was invited to loan a work to our sister New Jersey public college. *Godless Head/Soft*, **Mary Beth Edelson's** 12" x 12" 2007 digital print, was in a place of honor at the entrance to the exhibit, which was curated by Director of the Art Galleries Sydney O. Jenkins and feminist artist and curator Donna Kessinger. The wall script notes, "Mary Beth Edelson's work arises from feminism's double strength. Like the great Goddesses to whom she has dedicated her art, she has (at least) two aspects— political rage and life-giving affirmation. The two merge in an individual identification with the collective ego." — Lucy Lippard

A quick trip to the galleries at Ramapo showed that our work was in good company. Other artists included in the show were **Nancy Spero**, **Carolee Schneemann**, and **Dara Birnbaum**. The concept of *GODDESSES 3.0* was curated as a counterpoint to Ramapo's 2025 exhibition *The Masculinity Project (Incomplete)*.

One of the co-curators, Donna Kessinger, wrote, "*GODDESSES 3.0* is rooted in the understanding that feminist art is not a stable category or a completed project, but an evolving set of practices shaped by historical struggle, embodied knowledge, and continual reinvention. The exhibition brings together foundational feminist artists and contemporary practitioners to examine how the figure of the goddess



The Foundation Art Collection's work "Godless Head/Soft" by Mary Beth Edelson, 12" x 12" 2007 digital print was recently on view in the GODDESSES 3.0 exhibit at Ramapo College.

has been reclaimed, contested, and transformed across generations. The goddess has long functioned within feminist art as a site of projection—symbolizing power, autonomy, rage, spirituality, and resistance to patriarchal structures. Yet the goddess has never been singular or fixed." Hence, the plural "goddesses" in the title.

Surviving as an artist in America can be tough. In response to this problem, Foundation Art Collection artist **Sharon Louden** has formed a non-profit organization, the Institute for Sustained Creativity, whose purpose is to "provide pragmatic solutions that empower artists to build and maintain sustainable creative lives." For more information, go to: What We Advocate For at the Institute for Sustained Creativity — ISC (<https://www.sustained-creativity.org/what-we-advocate-for>)

If you happen to be in Beverly Hills, California this month, you might enjoy **Barry Le Va's** exhibition at Mark Selwyn gallery, including his infamous shattered-glass work. A much more affordable way to see the artist's work is to take the free shuttle from the Journal Square Campus to the North Hudson Campus and visit the library. While you are there, take a look at all six floors of art. There are wonderful things to see. For more information about the California show: Barry Le Va's shattered glass and felt works inaugurate Marc Selwyn's new Beverly Hills space. (<https://artdaily.cc/news/194307/Barry-Le-Va-s-shattered-glass-and-felt-works-inaugurate-Marc-Selwyn-s-new-Beverly-Hills-space>)

Eleanor Antin's work can be seen at the artist's first European retrospective exhibition in Liechtenstein, a 25-kilometer-long country between Austria and Switzerland. For more information about the scope of her work since the 1960s, please read *Eleanor Antin: First-ever European retrospective opens at Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein*. Closer to home, and much easier to find, is her work on the Gabert Library, Sixth Floor. (<https://artdaily.cc/news/194283/Eleanor-Antin--First-ever-European-retrospective-opens-at-Kunstmuseum-Liechtenstein>)

Also in Europe, recently on view at London's Burlington Arcade was an exhibit of art by **Richard Artschwager**. Presented by super-dealer Larry Gagosian, "*Approximate Objects*, an exhibition of sculptural

Continued on page 13

A collection of this scale requires ongoing conservation, archival storage and framing, expert art handling, and professional stewardship to ensure the works remain accessible and preserved for future generations. To support this work, the HCCC Foundation is building an endowment for the Foundation Art Collection and seeking philanthropic support to help preserve, interpret, and share these works with students and the community for years to come.

Please consider supporting the Foundation Art Collection financially by making a gift at <https://www.hccc.edu/community/foundation/index.html> or emailing foundation@hccc.edu for more information on how you can help.

OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS presents



CELEBRATING MILESTONES: 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE CONTINUES AND THE DINEEN HULL GALLERY TURNS 10



Visitors gathered to celebrate a milestone 10th anniversary of the Benjamin J. Dineen III & Dennis C. Hull Gallery, enjoying a rooftop cake cutting while experiencing “All Are Welcome” on its final day on view. Held on April 10 at the Gabert Library, the event brought the community together in reflection, celebration, and shared appreciation of the gallery’s decade of impact.

In March, the *50 Years of Excellence* exhibit at the Museum of Jersey City History came to a close, marking the end of a successful run that welcomed approximately 600 visitors—despite winter holidays and a season of snowstorms. The celebration of Hudson County Community College’s legacy did not end there. The exhibit has since traveled to the College’s Union City campus, where, in partnership with North Hudson administration, *50 Years of Excellence: An Extended Look* has reopened with a refreshed and expanded presentation.

The reimaged exhibit features a nostalgic tree logo drawn from a 1980s yearbook, now prominently displayed across Union City and West New York sites. Visitors can also experience meaningful tributes to Albio Sires, Jeanette Peña, and Sylvia Rodriguez, as well as a special compilation of writings from faculty and staff reflecting on defining “Hudson moments” throughout the years.

The spirit of celebration continued on Friday, April 10 as the College marked the 10th anniversary of the Benjamin J. Dineen and Dennis C. Hull Gallery. The occasion

brought together students, faculty, staff, and community members for an evening of art and live performances. Pianist and current HCCC student Kenneth Chalco-Leon performed, while alumni jazz trio The Wonder Collective provided a lively rooftop terrace soundtrack. Dennis C. Hull joined in welcoming guests, and writer Nancy Mendez Booth greeted attendees at a creative “Welcome Booth” for the *All Are Welcome* exhibit, which showcased works from the Foundation Art Collection’s print and paper holdings generously donated by Hull and the late Benjamin J. Dineen.

RUTGERS ENGINEERING TRANSFER INFORMATION SESSION AT JOURNAL SQUARE CAMPUS

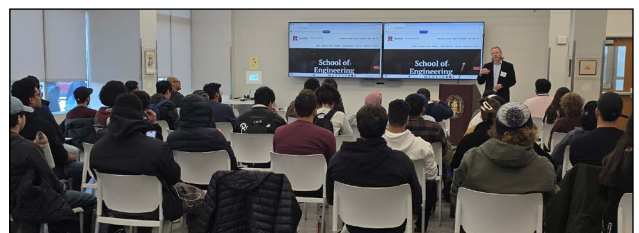
On April 8, our Journal Square campus hosted a transfer-focused presentation on Rutgers University’s Engineering Department in the STEM Building Multipurpose Room. The event was initiated by Dr. Raffaella Pernice as part of an ongoing effort to expand transfer opportunities and resources for students interested in pursuing engineering pathways.

The program was organized through a collaborative effort among the Girls Who Code Club, the STEM Club, and the Society of Physics Students (SPS), highlighting strong student leadership and cross-club engagement. Cristina Negron, president of

SPS, served as the president, guiding the event and facilitating discussion.

Dr. Robert Ciervo of Rutgers University was invited to share information about the engineering transfer process, including admissions expectations and academic preparation. The event drew an audience of over 50 students, reflecting a high

level of interest and engagement from the campus community. Attendees benefited from the opportunity to ask questions and



Dr. Robert Ciervo of Rutgers University addresses students at the Journal Square Campus during an Engineering Transfer Information Session, sharing guidance on admissions, academic preparation, and pathways to engineering programs.

gain practical insight into navigating the transfer pathway to a competitive engineering program.

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION ART COLLECTION CELEBRATES MAJOR ART DONATION FROM BENJAMIN ORTIZ AND VICTOR P. TORCHIA, JR.



“Untitled” (Bus, Crowds of People, and Buildings) by J. Clarke, 1982, Oil on Canvas, 19” x 28”

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) received a landmark gift of more than 200 works of art from collectors Benjamin Ortiz and Victor P. Torchia, Jr., in honor of the College’s 50th anniversary. The donation—featuring paintings, prints, sculptures, antiquities, and 171 antique photographs—significantly enhances the HCCC Foundation Art Collection, with a strong emphasis on works by women artists and artists from Latin America and the Caribbean.

The gift far exceeds the donors’ original plan to contribute 50 works and reflects more than four decades of thoughtful collecting. Ortiz, who began collecting art at age 13, built a career as an independent curator with a focus on Caribbean and Latin American art. Torchia, a former global equities trader, has long supported arts initiatives. Together, they view themselves as stewards of art, committed to preserving and sharing their collection for educational and public benefit.

The connection to HCCC was sparked when artist Vincent Baldassano introduced the collectors to Foundation

Art Collection Coordinator Dr. Andrea Siegel. The donors were drawn to HCCC’s mission as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and its commitment to serving diverse, often underrepresented students. As a community college graduate himself, Ortiz also feels a personal connection to the student experience.

By placing these works throughout HCCC’s campuses in Journal Square and Union City, Ortiz and Torchia aim to make art accessible to students and the broader community, reinforcing their belief that art should be experienced beyond traditional museum spaces.

“HCCC is deeply honored to receive this inspirational donation,” said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber, noting the alignment between the donors’ vision and the College’s mission.

HCCC’s Foundation Art Collection now includes more than 2,200 works and continues to grow through community support. The College plans to build an endowment to preserve and expand the collection, ensuring it remains a vital educational and cultural resource for future generations.

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

Are you experiencing stress, depression, or anxiety?

Difficulty adjusting to the College Environment?

Dealing with mental health and wellness?



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>

The Hudson County Community College Foundation

24th Annual Golf Outing

Monday,
June 22, 2026

Brooklake Country Club
Florham Park, NJ



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOSTS *TEEN MAGAZINE* PEP RALLY FOR UNION CITY HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) welcomed 33 seniors from Union City High School, and three chaperones, for a Teen Magazine High School Pep Rally held on Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

The event provided an engaging and informative experience for prospective students, all of whom arrived having already completed their college applications—an impressive step toward their academic futures. The pep rally offered an opportunity for students to connect with the HCCC community, learn more about the College’s programs and resources, and envision themselves continuing their educational journey at HCCC.



Special thanks go to everyone who contributed to the success of this event—from organizers and staff to faculty and student ambassadors—whose efforts ensured a welcoming and impactful experience for our guests. Their dedication continues to make a lasting impression on prospective students and strengthens HCCC’s commitment to access, opportunity, and student success.

Hudson County Community College was proud to welcome Union City High School seniors to campus for an engaging Teen Magazine Pep Rally experience. Students explored academic programs, connected with the HCCC community, and took an exciting step toward their college journeys. We look forward to seeing these future students thrive at HCCC!

DEAN’S LIST CELEBRATION



Students who achieved academic excellence were honored on March 23 at a special reception celebrating those named to the Fall 2025 (full-time) and 2025 (part-time) Dean’s List. The event recognized their hard work, perseverance, and commitment to success. Congratulations to all of our Dean’s List honorees for their dedication and outstanding achievement.

STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE

Hudson County Community College’s Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment hosted its Spring Conference on Friday, March 27, bringing together team members for a day of connection, reflection, and growth. The conference focused on strengthening collaboration through engaging team-building activities and thoughtful discussions centered on student success.



Throughout the day, participants explored ways to remain aligned with the College’s mission, reaffirming their shared commitment to supporting students both inside and outside the classroom. Sessions emphasized communication, innovation,

and a student-centered approach, encouraging staff to continue creating welcoming and inclusive environments.

The Spring Conference served as a valuable opportunity for colleagues to

recharge, share ideas, and build on the strong foundation that drives Student Affairs and Enrollment forward—ensuring every student has the support they need to thrive.

HCCC FACULTY AND STUDENTS FEATURED IN NATIONAL FILMING ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN THE AGE OF AI

On Thursday, March 19, Assistant Professor of Chemistry Raffi Manjikian and three Hudson County Community College (HCCC) students participated in a special filming opportunity with the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) at Rutgers University–Newark.

The project focused on maintaining academic integrity in an increasingly AI-driven educational landscape—an important and timely topic impacting students and educators nationwide.

Representing HCCC were students Neivi Nuñez Cuevas, Cristina Negron, and Nicolas Neillands, who demonstrated professionalism, insight, and pride in their academic experiences. Their participation also highlighted HCCC's designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), showcasing the diversity and strength of the College's student body on a broader stage.

This experience provided a meaningful and memorable opportunity for the students, allowing them to contribute

their voices to an important national conversation on ethics in education.

The ACUE modules featuring this work are expected to be released this summer. The College community looks forward to seeing the final product and celebrating the contributions of Assistant Professor Manjikian and the participating students.

HCCC STUDENTS EXPLORE HISTORY FIRSTHAND AT PRINCETON SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



HCCC students take in the historic surroundings of Princeton University during an enriching visit that connected classroom learning with real-world exploration.



Inside Princeton's special collections, HCCC students engage firsthand with rare historical materials, gaining a deeper appreciation for research, preservation, and the stories that shape our past.

On Friday, March 27, Dr. Christopher Cody, Dr. Sean Egan, and Associate Professor Antonio Acevedo led a group of 14 Hudson County Community College (HCCC) students on an immersive visit to the special collections and archives at Princeton University Library.

During the visit, students were introduced to the archival process, gaining insight into how rare and historical materials are preserved, cataloged, and made accessible for research. The experience went beyond observation, offering students the unique opportunity

to work hands-on with significant primary source materials.

Among the highlights were a letter written by John Brown to Frederick Douglass, a letter from F. Scott Fitzgerald discussing *The Great Gatsby*, a Suffragette board game from the early 20th century, and a collection of letters related to prisoners of war during the American Revolutionary War.

This hands-on experience brought history to life, allowing students to engage directly with artifacts that shaped the

nation's cultural and political landscape. The trip provided a valuable extension of classroom learning and inspired deeper appreciation for historical research and preservation.

HCCC extends its gratitude to Dr. Cody, Dr. Egan, and Associate Professor Acevedo for organizing this enriching experience, and to the staff at Princeton for their generous support. The visit exemplifies the College's commitment to providing students with meaningful, high-impact learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY NEWS

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS NAMED SEMIFINALISTS FOR PRESTIGIOUS JACK KENT COOKE UNDERGRADUATE TRANSFER SCHOLARSHIP



Hudson County Community College students Marlon Peña Crespo, Neivi Nuñez Cuevas, and Janvi Amit Patel are the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation semifinalists for the prestigious, highly competitive Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship.

Three Hudson County Community College (HCCC) students are semifinalists for the highly competitive Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, selected from more than 1,300 applicants nationwide. Marlon Peña Crespo, Neivi Nuñez Cuevas, and Janvi Amit Patel—of Phi Theta Kappa members—are now in contention for the prestigious award.

The scholarship supports high-achieving community college students as they pursue bachelor's degrees at four-year institutions. Winners receive up to three years of financial support, personalized advising, and access to opportunities such as internships, study abroad, and graduate school funding. Semifinalists are chosen based on academic achievement, leadership, and perseverance.

“Not only are Marlon, Neivi, and Janvi outstanding students, but they are exceptional people who are determined to achieve their academic and career goals,” said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber.

Marlon Peña Crespo, a Computer Science major, is focused on using technology, artificial intelligence, and data analysis to improve accessibility and community services. He plans to transfer to a four-year institution after graduating in May and pursue a career in technology.

Engineering Science major Neivi Nuñez Cuevas began as an ESL student and now serves in multiple leadership roles, including President of the Model United Nations Club and Active Minds Chapter. She is also a Kaplan Leadership Program Scholar and plans to continue building community through her future work.

Biology major Janvi Amit Patel will also graduate in May and transfer to a four-year university. Inspired by her early passion for science, she plans to become a physical therapist and has been active as a tutor, mentor, and student leader.

“The entire HCCC family extends our congratulations and best wishes,” Dr. Reber added.



Nube Cabrera (photo above) received the Distinguished Chapter Member Award on both the regional and international levels. Cabrera is a Criminal Justice major.



Marolla Youakim (left) and Garrielle Baldwin display some of the awards won by Beta Alpha Chapter during the Phi Theta Kappa Middle States Regional Convention.

Congratulations to our Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Beta Alpha Phi Chapter on earning the prestigious Five Star Chapter Plan recognition at the Middle States Regional Convention! This highest level of achievement reflects outstanding commitment to scholarship, leadership, service, and engagement through PTK's Five Star framework.

Beta Alpha Phi was named an MSR Legend at the Middle States Regional Convention in Baltimore, MD. This honor recognizes chapters that go above and beyond to lead, serve, and uplift their communities. From fostering student success to making a lasting impact through service, Beta Alpha Phi continues to represent the very best of HCCC.

AUTISM SPEAKS EVENT FEATURES HCCC ALUMNI

On Tuesday, March 31, 2026, Autism Speaks held its Celebrity Chef Gala at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City. This organization provides access and advocacy for those who have autism. Joseph Valentino earned two A.A.S. degrees at HCCC with cum laude academic standing: A.A.S. Culinary Arts and A.A.S. Culinary Arts-Baking and Pastry Option. He delivered remarks on his inspiration to enter the industry, dating back to his childhood. Joseph also spoke about overcoming challenges and fears leading up to his career in the industry. He was thankful for his experiences at both County Prep High School and HCCC's Culinary Arts Institute. Joseph was employed on HCCC's campus by Flik.



Valentino is photographed with Chef Franklin Becker, Chef Daniel Boulud, and Chef Bobby Flay. Photo courtesy of @PizzeriaBianco and Joseph Valentino.

Joseph is currently enrolled at Fairleigh Dickinson University pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management. He is employed as a

Garde Manger (cold food) Cook at Point Seven in New York City. You may follow Joseph and his progress at @Mr_PrimeRibe_Shrimp98 on Instagram.

THE LISSA SANTIAGO FOUNDATION SECOND ANNUAL GALA - HONORING UNSUNG HEROES



Dr. Yeurys Pujols (center), Vice President for Institutional Engagement and Excellence, and Rosa Perez (second from left), Administrative Support Specialist, EOF, at the Second Annual Gala of the Lissa Santiago Foundation.

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) was proud to attend The Lissa Santiago Foundation's Second Annual Gala – "Honoring Unsung Heroes" – held on Friday, March 20. The event, hosted by the Foundation and founded by HCCC Trustee Lissa Santiago, celebrated individuals whose quiet dedication makes a meaningful impact across Hudson County.

The Lissa Santiago Foundation is committed to supporting residents through essential social aid, including assistance with housing, food, education, and health resources. HCCC's presence at the gala reflects the College's ongoing commitment to community partnership and service, aligning with its mission to support student success and strengthen the broader community.

COMICS & ART AT THE LIBRARY



Members of the College community engage during a "Comics & Art" debut at the North Hudson Library on April 8.

On Wednesday, April 8, the North Hudson Library welcomed students, faculty, and staff to celebrate its expanded art books and new comics and graphic novels collection with a lively scavenger hunt, raffle, and refreshments. The event highlighted the collaborative efforts of donors, art faculty, gallery, and Library staff.

FDU VISIT HIGHLIGHTS TRANSFER PATHWAYS AND STUDENT SUCCESS IN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT



On March 25, Prof. Hyungjoo (Jay) Choi from Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU), along with Gilberto Gil — alumnus of the HCCC Construction Management program — visited our Construction Management students to discuss professional development opportunities available

through transfer pathways to FDU's undergraduate program.

A highlight of the visit was Gilberto Gil's inspiring academic journey. After completing the A.A.S. degree in Construction Management at HCCC, he transferred to FDU to pursue a Bachelor's

degree in Construction Engineering Technology. He now accompanies Prof. Choi in presenting transfer opportunities to students at various institutions, serving as an excellent example of student success and career advancement through articulation partnerships.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT STUDENTS EARN TOP INDUSTRY ROLES, SCHOLARSHIP, AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Branden Farano, a student enrolled in the Engineering Graphics course within the Construction Management program, has been awarded a \$5,000 scholarship through the RCI-IIBEC Foundation Scholarship Program. The RCI-IIBEC Foundation provides scholarships to students pursuing studies in construction engineering, building enclosure sciences, and architecture-related fields.

Bitanya Woldehawaryat, in the Construction Management program, has been awarded an internship opportunity with DOBCO Group.

DOBCO Group is a New Jersey-based construction management, general contracting, and real estate development firm founded in 1989. The company

delivers design-build, construction, and energy solutions across education, commercial, residential, and public sector projects. DOBCO is recognized for integrated project delivery, quality execution, and strong client partnerships.

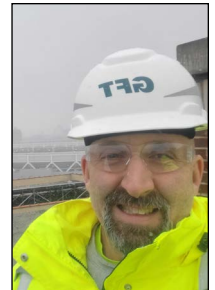
Carl Trezza, a student in the Construction Management program, has been hired by a major construction company, GFT. He is currently working as a Construction Manager/Superintendent, contributing to emergency New York City school construction projects.



**Branden
Farano**



**Bitanya
Woldehawaryat**



**Carl
Trezza**

In his role, Carl is responsible for communication and coordination among various project stakeholders. His duties also include managing project documentation, preparing daily reports, and overseeing inspections.

Foundation Art Collection

Continued from page 6

multiples by Richard Artschwager" (1923–2013) surveyed sixteen editioned works created between 1969 and 2012. Richard Artschwager's *Approximate Objects* take over Burlington Arcade. The Foundation

Art Collection's Artschwager editioned works can be seen on the first floor of 2 Enos Place and at the North Hudson Library. Both are on permanent exhibit. <https://artdaily.cc/news/194352/Richard-Artschwager-s-Approximate-Objects-->

[take-over-Burlington-Arcade](#)

Please check out the wonderfully newly-expanded art-books section in the Gabert Library on the second floor!

CHI ALPHA EPSILON INDUCTION HONORS EOF STUDENT SUCCESS



Hudson County Community College (HCCC) celebrated the academic achievements of its Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) scholars during the Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE) National Honor Society Induction Ceremony held on March 12, 2026.

Chi Alpha Epsilon is a national honor society dedicated to recognizing the accomplishments of students who began their academic journey through access programs like EOF. The organization promotes high academic standards, leadership development, and meaningful

engagement among its members. Students inducted into XAE have demonstrated exceptional commitment by completing college-level coursework and maintaining a strong grade point average.

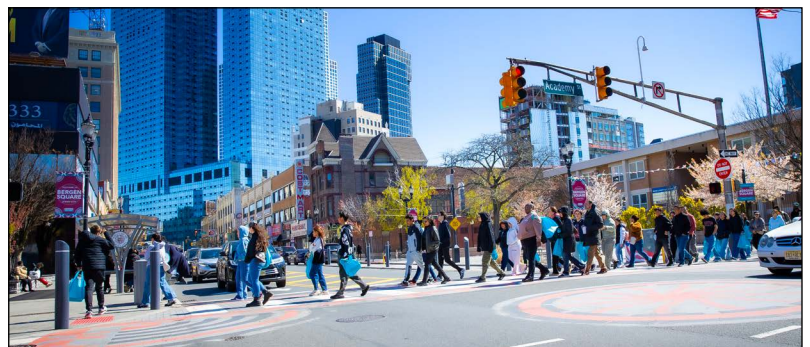
The ceremony highlighted the resilience and determination of EOF students, many of whom entered higher education facing financial and academic barriers. Their induction into Chi Alpha Epsilon reflects not only academic excellence, but also persistence and growth throughout their college experience.

At HCCC, the EOF program plays a critical role in supporting student success through comprehensive advising, academic support, and intentional programming. Chi Alpha Epsilon serves as an extension of that mission, reinforcing the expectation of excellence while building a community of scholars who lead by example. As new members of Chi Alpha Epsilon, these students now carry forward a standard of excellence that will continue to shape their academic and professional paths.

SPRING OPEN HOUSE WELCOMES FUTURE STUDENTS TO JOURNAL SQUARE CAMPUS



Prospective students connect with HCCC STEM faculty to learn more about academic programs, hands-on learning opportunities, and career pathways.



Future students and their families take part in a guided walking tour of the Journal Square Campus, experiencing HCCC's vibrant learning environment firsthand.

On Saturday, April 11, Hudson County Community College hosted its Spring Open House at the Journal Square Campus, welcoming

prospective students and families for a day of exploration and connection. Attendees met faculty and staff, learned about academic programs and student services,

and experienced campus life through guided tours.

AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY AND ART CLUB APRIL COLLABORATIONS



Blending science and creativity, the American Chemical Society (ACS) and Art Club partnered this semester for two engaging experiences: a spring visit to the New Jersey Botanical Gardens and a hands-on cyanotype imaging workshop.

This semester, the chemistry of art was on display as the American Chemical Society (ACS) and the Art Club collaborated on two exciting events.

The first event was a trip to the New Jersey Botanical Gardens on Sunday, April 12. Joined by 25 enthusiastic attendees, ACS faculty advisor Assistant Professor Raffi Manjikian and Joanne Rivera of Student Life and Leadership served as chaperones. Students were able to take advantage of tours for the specialty gardens and the historic Skylands Manor, as well as an opportunity to purchase plants. The site also features numerous hiking trails and nature walks. Students shared their appreciation for the cherry blossoms in bloom and the crisp, clean air.

Tuesday, April 14 in the STEM Building. The two organizations hosted a cyanotype imaging event to encourage learning about the process and practical insights. Cyanotype imaging is a simple process that produces cyan-blue prints using sunlight, ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide. The event started with a brief lecture from Manjikian explaining the science behind cyanotype imaging, an introduction to the activity, and then the activity itself, which involved using opaque objects to create the images. Approximately twelve students participated in the event and took home their artistic masterpieces.

Both organizations intend to continue their work together and host more fun and educational events in the future.

CAREER FAIR CONNECTS STUDENTS WITH EMPLOYERS AND TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES



The Career Fair at Journal Square gave students an opportunity to connect with prospective employers and senior institutions for transfer.

On Wednesday, April 8, Career and Transfer Pathways hosted a dynamic Career Fair, bringing together students, employers, and transfer partners for a day of networking and opportunity. Attendees explored career pathways, gained insights into various industries, and made valuable connections to support their academic and professional goals.

CYBERSECURITY CAREERS EVENT CONNECTS STUDENTS WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS



Students enjoyed a lively talk on April 7 featuring cybersecurity professionals from JCT Solutions.

On Tuesday, April 7, HCCC's School of STEM hosted "Cybersecurity Careers: Real-World Insights & Industry Pathways," featuring guest speakers Steve Mullen, President of JCT Solutions and cybersecurity professional Christopher V. Pastena Jr. Students gained valuable perspectives on career pathways, technical skills, and real-world experiences in cybersecurity and IT, highlighting opportunities for growth in this high-demand field.

HCCC OBSERVES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Hudson County Community College's Office of Human Resources hosted a special International Women's Day Panel Discussion and Luncheon on Friday, March 6, bringing together women leaders from across the College, Board of Trustees, and Foundation Board of Directors. The event provided an engaging forum for panelists to share their professional journeys, leadership insights, and perspectives on advancing equity and opportunity in higher education and beyond.

Celebrated globally on International Women's Day, the occasion honors the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women while also calling for continued progress toward gender equality. The College community gathered in recognition of this important day, fostering meaningful dialogue, inspiration, and connection among colleagues and leaders.

THE HUDSON IS HOME WELLNESS SPOTLIGHT

Women's Health Month: Prioritizing Wellness

May is Women's Health Month—a time to focus on physical, mental, and emotional well-being through awareness and prevention.

Why It Matters

Women have unique health needs across life stages. Preventive care and early detection improve long-term outcomes, especially for heart health, mental wellness, bone health, cancer screenings, and hormonal health.

Key Screenings

Stay current with recommended care:

- Annual well-woman exam
- Mammograms (around age 40+)
- Cervical cancer screening (Pap/HPV)
- Blood pressure and cholesterol checks
- Bone density screening (65+ or as needed)

Mental Wellness

Support emotional health by staying connected, practicing mindfulness, getting enough sleep, setting boundaries, and seeking help when needed.

Healthy Habits

Eat nutrient-rich foods, stay active (150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity weekly), and maintain healthy sleep and stress routines.

Resources

Visit Mayo Clinic Women's Health and Mental Health America for trusted guidance.

Take Action

Make your health a priority—schedule checkups and take small steps toward lasting wellness.

PIZZA WITH THE PRESIDENT



HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (right) engages with students during this popular event.

On Wednesday, April 8, students gathered for "Pizza with the President," where they had the opportunity to connect with Dr. Christopher Reber, share their perspectives, and engage in meaningful conversation in a relaxed setting.

Get your Golden Ticket!

Hudson County Community College Foundation's "50th Anniversary Raffle!"



Tickets \$100 each
Cash Prize One Winner Only (Maximum prize of \$50,000)
 Only 1,000 tickets available - 50/50
Winning ticket will be drawn at the 2026 Gala on Thursday, December 3.
Winner need not be present to win.

All proceeds will support Hudson County Community College Foundation Scholarships/Endowments



To purchase a raffle ticket, scan the QR code.

For information, please contact:

HCCC Foundation
 26 Journal Square
 14th Floor, Jersey City, NJ 07306
foundation@hccc.edu
 (201) 360 4778

License Number: RL 004735-2025



CONFERENCE COVERAGE

Hudson County Community College and several leaders won three national awards at the American Association of Community Colleges' conference in Seattle, WA.



Congratulations to HCCC's own Karen Hosick, whose passion for teaching and student success has earned her the AACC Award of Excellence – Faculty Member of the Year. Her acceptance speech is available at <https://youtube.com/shorts/wm-hTgoy84A?feature=share>

Congratulations to Professor Joseph Gallo for receiving the AACC Award of Excellence – Faculty Innovation! Innovation in Action: Professor Gallo is recognized for bringing creativity and transformative learning to the Theatre Arts classroom. View his acceptance speech at <https://youtube.com/shorts/tUhpM3FDYEs>

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) is honored as a recipient of the AACC Award of Excellence – Advancing Institutional Equity and Belonging. HCCC's commitment to fostering equity, inclusion, and belonging continues to earn national recognition—uplifting every student, every voice, every day. Dr. Yeurys Pujols, Vice President for Institutional Engagement and Excellence, accepts

on behalf of the College. https://www.youtube.com/shorts/98Db_IgNwxU

Visionary leadership in action: Dr. Heather DeVries is recognized for advancing academic excellence and student success at HCCC. Congratulations on being selected as a finalist for the AACC Award of Excellence – Rising Star-Executive.

Congratulations to HCCC's own Amaalah Ogburn for her designation as a finalist for the AACC Award of Excellence – Rising Star-Manager. She is making a powerful impact through her dedication to employee and labor relations excellence.

The College proudly recognizes Professor of Biology Dr. Nadia Hedhli, recipient of the prestigious Dale P. Parnell Distinguished Faculty Recognition from the American Association of Community Colleges. Dr. Hedhli was honored at the AACC Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, celebrating her outstanding commitment to teaching, student success, and academic leadership.



Ignite HCCC's Future

**Give \$20.26 to
pay it forward
to future HCCC grads.**

Your gift opens a world of possibilities to HCCC students and our community.

Together, we ensure the future of our students. Help us bring students' dreams to life. **Make your \$20.26 gift to support tomorrow's graduates.** Thanks to you, HCCC's future is bright!

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

2026 NJCAA Convention



NJCAA, the governing body for two-year collegiate athletics in the United States, representing over 500 member colleges and 70,000 student-athletes, held its 2026 Convention in Kansas City, MO.

Jonathan Sisk, HCCC Director of Athletics attended the 2026 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Convention, presented by Nufabrx, held in Kansas City, MO, from April 13-17 bringing together athletic leaders, coaches, and members to connect, build partnerships, and attend educational sessions.

Aligned with the completion of the Center for Student Success, the College is preparing to expand its athletics offerings. Men's and women's basketball teams are set to begin competition in Fall 2026, followed by men's and women's volleyball in Fall 2027. All teams will compete at the NJCAA Division III level within Region 15, marking an exciting new chapter in student life and campus engagement.



Jonathan Sisk, HCCC Director of Athletics (right) with Dr. Brett Monaghan, Vice President of Championship, Membership, and Sports Governance, National Junior College Athletic Association.

Hire Me! Career Readiness Workshop

On March 19, 2026, the School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development's Gateway to Innovation (GTI) team kicked things off with an interactive, high-impact workshop focused on empowering students with the tools, confidence, and strategies to stand out and win in today's highly competitive job market. From understanding job search techniques to building a strong professional presence, the energy in the room was truly inspiring.

A special highlight of the day was their incredible guest speaker, Susan Tigua, Vice President at Provident Bank who delivered powerful, real-world insights on the current job market outlook, winning interview strategies, exciting, real-time career opportunities.

The GTI team members are so proud of the overwhelming appreciation their students expressed for the guidance, support, and opportunities provided through the program. Students walked away feeling motivated, informed, and

ready to take action. For more information on the Gateway to Innovation's upcoming workshops or how to join their next cohort, please contact gatewaycewd@hccc.edu or call 201-360-5495.

Class Highlight: CEWD's Basic Spanish Level 1

Our Basic Spanish Level I class was a wonderful success! Over the course of four weeks, 15 enthusiastic students attended and successfully completed the program. Participants built a strong foundation in conversational Spanish, learning essential vocabulary, common phrases, and basic grammar in a fun and supportive environment. It was great to see their confidence grow each week, and we're proud of all they accomplished. We look forward to continuing their language journey in future classes!

If you're interested in enrolling in our upcoming Basic Spanish courses or learning more about what other programs we have, please contact ce@hccc.edu or call 201-360-4224.



GTI team members Denisse Carrasco and Ms. Maria Lita Sarmiento presenting workshop attendees tips and tricks for resume building.



Students from the Basic Spanish Level 1 class on their last day with their instructor, Carmen Guerra (not all students are pictured).

CONTINUING EDUCATION UPCOMING PROGRAMS

ATI TEAS PREPARATION WORKSHOP SPRING 2026 (ONLINE)

Saturdays | May 2, 2026, through July 11, 2026 (no class on 7/4) | 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$304
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ati-teas-test-preparation-workshop-spring-2026-online-tickets-1986335358528?aff=oddtcreator>

FROM IDEA TO DIRECTION: DESIGNING YOUR BUSINESS BEFORE YOU BUILD IT (REMOTE)

Mondays and Thursdays | May 4, 2026, through May 28, 2026 | 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. | Instructor: Chastity Farrell
 Price: \$350
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/from-idea-to-direction-designing-your-business-before-you-build-it-registration-1987107601327?aff=oddtcreator>

GRANTS MANAGEMENT 101 (REMOTE)

Tuesdays | May 5, 2026, through June 23, 2026
 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. | Instructor: Sonia Thomas | Price: \$150
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/grants-management-101-registration-1984768051671?aff=oddtcreator>

SERVSAFE® FOOD PROTECTION MANAGER CERTIFICATION (CFPM) (REMOTE)

Tuesdays | May 5, 2026, through June 9, 2026
 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. exam day only)
 Instructor: Chef Enmely Soriano | Price: \$199
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/servsafe-food-protection-manager-certification-cfpm-registration-1985455841870?aff=oddtcreator>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Thursday, May 14, 2026 | 9:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
 Price: \$81
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2026-dates-tickets-1986441755765?aff=oddtcreator>

PROJECT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM SPRING 2026 (ONLINE)

Mondays and Thursdays | May 18, 2026, through June 29, 2026
 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. | Price: \$1,280
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/live-online-project-management-certificate-program-spring-2026-registration-1982686721356?aff=oddtcreator>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Thursday, May 21, 2026 | 9:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$81
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2026-dates-tickets-1986441755765?aff=oddtcreator>

TOEFL TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPRING '26 EXAM PREPARATION (IN-PERSON/ONLINE OPTIONS AVAILABLE)

Saturdays | May 23, 2026, through June 27, 2026
 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$263
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/toefl-test-of-english-as-a-foreign-language-spring-26-exam-preparation-tickets-1986447411682?aff=oddtcreator>

AI TOOLS FOR MODERN PROJECT MANAGERS (ONLINE)

Saturdays | May 30, 2026, through June 27, 2026
 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Instructor: Susan Serradilla-Smarth
 Price: \$499
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ai-tools-for-modern-project-managers-registration-1986821199692?aff=oddtcreator>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development 161 Newkirk Street, Room E504, Jersey City, NJ 07306
 (201) 360-4224/5358 | CE@hccc.edu

ALUMNI CORNER

Catherina Mirasol A.S., Nursing, Class of 2010



What brought you to HCCC? What made it the right choice for you?

I started as an employee in 2006. I moved back to Jersey City after giving birth to my son to live closer to my family. My father found an ad in *The Jersey Journal* for an Administrative Assistant with Continuing Education at HCCC. They were looking for someone with my skill set. What made it the right choice for me was that it was so close to home, the work hours and schedule were perfect for a single parent, and they had a great health insurance plan. HCCC also had a great nursing program and my plan was to go to nursing school while working.

What inspired you to start your own business, Project 5356?

My story starts where my mother's left off. When we were young, she owned three Filipino grocery stores consecutively, but lost her last store to her business partner. She was devastated.

She eventually decided on the stability of a 9-5 and the promise of a pension so she and our father could raise four children and eventually retire. For almost 30 years, she worked for the federal government. But my mom was an entrepreneur at heart, and bureaucracy and the entrepreneurial spirit do not always mix.

My mother coped by keeping that spirit alive any way she could, usually by running the Filipino food stall during our church's carnival. She passed away in 2022 believing that being a business owner wasn't meant to be. After she passed, I thought of her life - how she came to the U.S., already credentialed as a CPA from the Philippines, her dream of becoming a business owner, her struggles, her heartaches. I started to feel a calling for something more. In June 2024, I resigned. I started the process of registering my business, but couldn't think of a name. Around that time, we received her pension payout: \$53.56 for each of us. My heart sank. If my mother had lived, she would only have \$200 left? I thought of her coming home from work frustrated almost every day, and my heart broke for her.

I decided to name my business Project 5356 to remind me of my mother's entrepreneurial spirit and desire to create something for herself. To remind me that there are others like my mother who may be giving up on their dreams because they thought it wasn't meant to be. And to remind people that their dreams and goals always deserve the best of their time and energy, not the leftovers.

What services do you specialize in?

I specialize in grant research and writing, grant management, donor cultivation, and operations.

You are an entrepreneur but also have a strong drive to help those in need through your business. Tell us about that.

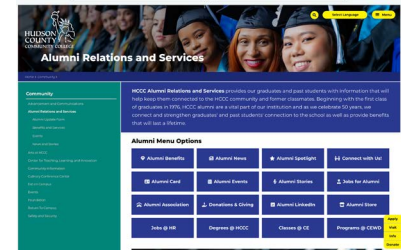
Given the current climate and the government cuts, people are increasingly turning to nonprofits for crucial services. Most of my clients are organizations who advocate for the vulnerable and marginalized. It is an honor to help them in some way, whether through securing funding, implementing donor relations strategies, or organizing their systems so things run more smoothly. One of my first clients is an independent news group that also runs a journalism program written by those who are incarcerated as well as an internship program that gives students the opportunity to sit in court proceedings. When I read about their mission and spoke with the founder, I knew I wanted to help them. I saw an opportunity to use my problem-solving skills and try my hand at donor relations, which I taught myself. I offered my services pro bono for a year as a way to give back.

What advice do you have for HCCC students who want to follow in your footsteps?

I encourage students to follow their curiosities and have as many different work experiences as they can. I've held so many different jobs since I graduated. I earned a B.A. in Communications/Film & Television Production. I did my internship at *Saturday*

Continued on page 20

What's New?



Updated Alumni Web Pages:

Explore the updates and stay connected—visit the pages here: <https://www.hccc.edu/community/alumni-services/index.html>

Alumni Benefits:



With an Alumni Card, you can take advantage of exclusive benefits and stay connected to the HCCC community! Details here: <https://www.hccc.edu/community/alumni-services/index.html>

Alumni Giving:



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 Alumni Association has launched its new Instagram page!

Follow us at
[@hccc_alumni](https://www.instagram.com/hccc_alumni)

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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

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



ALUMNI CORNER

Continued from page 19

Night Live. After college, I worked in a bakery, hospital registration, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, medical billing, and even became a nurse. I took some of these jobs because I needed a job. Some I took because I thought they would be interesting and I loved problem solving. When I went back to school for nursing, I thought I was pivoting in my career. I pivoted back. It was only in hindsight that I realized how all these

experiences tied together to help me navigate my career and ultimately, my business.

What are your goals for the next few years?

I have several. I would love to hit six figures in my business! It’s a dare I have for myself. I want to start a scholarship at HCCC in honor of my parents. I want to live for a period of time as a digital nomad.

50 FACES OF ALUMNI

As part of the 50th Anniversary of Hudson County Community College, we introduce and celebrate our *50 Faces of Alumni: Fifty and Forward*. This campaign focuses on the importance of Alumni to the College, the workforce, and community by highlighting 50 Alumni in various fields, levels of achievement, and from different backgrounds who have studied at the College. “50 Faces” can be seen online at <https://www.hccc.edu/community/alumni-services/50-faces/index.html>

50 Faces of Alumni



“Hudson was the base for everything I am - it was the first step that made it all possible. Hudson will forever be home.”



Silvia Rodriguez
 HCCC Trustee
A founding-era student at HCCC

Alumni Association 2026 Meetings

- Tuesday, July 7, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, September 15, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

All meetings are held at 81 Sip Avenue, Multipurpose Room, Jersey City or virtually.

Alumni Association Events:

If you are interested in attending these events, please email us at alumni@hccc.edu

Alumni Reunion

Thursday, May 7, 2026
 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
 Culinary Conference Center
 161 Newkirk Street,
 Jersey City, NJ

