

# HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



## HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOSTS FIRST-EVER LITERACY FORUM FEATURING PANEL DISCUSSIONS WITH EXPERTS



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

Items for the January newsletter are due by Friday, December 13, 2024.

Please send your news items, comments and suggestions to:

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**HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOSTS FIRST-EVER LITERACY FORUM FEATURING PANEL DISCUSSIONS WITH EXPERTS**

**L**iteracy is the cornerstone for lifelong learning and success, but New Jersey has fallen behind. Despite being fifth in the United States for adults who hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, New Jersey has the fifth lowest literacy rate in the nation. According to *World Population Review*, 17% of Garden State adults lack basic prose literacy skills, and only 42% of third graders met or exceeded reading proficiency standards in 2023.

Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation to mandate literacy screenings in grades K-3 beginning next year. He established the Office of Learning Equity and Academic Recovery to provide online resources and free training that address post-pandemic literacy issues that

disproportionately affect multilingual learners, and Black, Latino and disabled students.

To explore this crisis and determine solutions, Hudson County Community College (HCCC) held a Literacy Forum on Thursday, November 14, 2024. Panels of literacy experts and community leaders discussed how to improve literacy for better outcomes in primary and secondary education as well as employment and other aspects of life.

The panels were:

- “Early Childhood Literacy” with Peggy Kaye, author and early childhood education teacher; Sharon Benjamin, HCCC Adjunct Professor, Speech, Composition and Reading; Dr. M.

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**ON THE COVER:** Educational leaders converged at Hudson County Community College for its first Literacy Forum on Nov. 14. Special guests included HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (foreground, second from left) and James McGreevey (right), former New Jersey Governor and Executive Director and Chairman of New Jersey Reentry Corporation.

**HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER REBER JOINS COLLEGE PRESIDENTS FOR CIVIC PREPAREDNESS**

**W**hat makes an informed voter? How does one discuss social, economic, and political issues with people of different views? How can people with opposing ideologies work toward the common good? How do colleges balance the complexities of freedom of expression and open debate?

Historically, college campuses form the bedrock for cultivating free speech and civic responsibility in American society. Hudson County Community College (HCCC) President Dr. Christopher Reber, who has long championed diversity, equity and inclusion, recently joined more than 100 higher education leaders nationwide in College Presidents for Civic Preparedness, a new initiative from the Institute for Citizens & Scholars. The Princeton-based organization is committed to upholding free expression and designing new programs to promote democratic engagement among students, faculty, and the public.

Launched in 2023, the College Presidents for Civic Preparedness consortium is dedicated to guiding the next generation of well-informed, productively engaged and committed citizens; defending free expression, civil discourse, and critical inquiry as essential civic norms; and increasing thoughtful engagement and

better understanding by students for the effective functioning of democracy. The consortium has grown from 15 members at its start to 112 today. These leaders make three civic commitments: educate students on the tenets of democracy; prepare students for a vibrant, diverse, and contentious society; and protect and defend free inquiry.



*HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber recently became a member of the national consortium, College Presidents for Civic Preparedness.*

“Engaging in constructive, inclusive, respectful, and sometimes uncomfortable conversations about issues helps us understand one another,” Dr. Reber said. “The consortium helps empower us to equip students with the knowledge and skills to be productive and committed citizens.”

Consortium suggestions to advance civic commitment include hosting speaker series on diverse viewpoints, expanding course offerings centered on civic preparedness, offering

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## TRAILBLAZING LEADERSHIP: HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIR JEANETTE PEÑA INSPIRES AT HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION

Approximately 200 Hudson County Community College (HCCC) students, faculty, and staff celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month by enjoying a rousing keynote speech from Jeanette Peña, Chair of the HCCC Board of Trustees, at HCCC's North Hudson Campus in Union City. Not only is Peña the first Hispanic to hold this position, but she is also the first Hispanic woman to do so, making her a true Hudson County trailblazer.

As the daughter of immigrants from Cuba, Peña's role as the first Hispanic Chair of the Board of Trustees is especially significant as Hudson County Community College is a majority-minority institution with 55% of students identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Many HCCC students were born outside of the United States, and many speak English as a second language. HCCC is a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and received the 'Outstanding Member Institution Award' from the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) in 2023.

The diversity of HCCC's Hispanic presence was on full display at the event, as students from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and beyond were all in attendance. "Chair Peña's ascension to HCCC Chair is inspiring not only to Hispanic students but to the HCCC community as a whole," stated HCCC Chemistry Instructor Raffi Manjikian, who helped organize the event as co-chair of the President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (PACDEI) alongside colleagues Joseph Caniglia, Executive Director of the North Hudson Campus, and

Diana Galvez, Associate Director of the North Hudson Campus and PACDEI co-chair.

Peña is a lifelong advocate for public education and a longtime member of the HCCC family who taught as an adjunct professor at HCCC and served on the Foundation Board for over a decade. She is the Director of Special Services and Organizational Accountability at Union City Public Schools. Notably, she is also a member of the New Jersey State Board of Education after being appointed by Governor Phil Murphy in 2024. Peña earned her Master of Arts degree in education from Seton Hall University and her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Rutgers University. She also holds a Professional Diploma in School Psychology from New Jersey City University.

Peña regaled the audience with a compelling story of why education is so important to her. Her grandmother was a lifelong and avid reader but was forced to stop attending school in her native Cuba during the sixth grade so that she could take care of her siblings after her mother passed away. Additionally, Peña's mother, who attended the event virtually, was a teacher in Cuba before being forced to flee the country after the Communist Revolution. Peña stressed that while this is her family's history, it's something everyone can relate to as "this is a story somewhere in all of our family's timelines." Peña emphasized the importance of education by stating, "They can take everything away from you, but they can't take away your education," something her grandmother told her as a young woman.



HCCC Board of Trustees Chair Jeanette Peña inspired approximately 200 members of the HCCC community at the College's signature Hispanic Heritage Month event in Union City.

Peña's parents worked hard to give her a wonderful childhood in Union City, and her father worked from sun up to sun down both as a bus driver for NJ Transit and at the family's bodega. Peña is a proud lifelong resident of Union City and has no plans to ever leave her place of birth. She reminded those in attendance that "Hudson County is a wonderful community." HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber stated that "Chair Peña's passion for education is matched only by her dedication to Union City and Hudson County, which we all call home."

On being the first Hispanic woman to serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees, Peña gave sage advice to all in attendance: "Bring yourself to the table and make yourself part of the conversation."

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## HUDSON COUNTY EXECUTIVE STOPS AT HCCC ON LISTENING TOUR



Hudson County Executive Craig Guy visited Hudson County Community College on Wednesday, Oct. 30 as part of his County-wide "Listening Tour." The session gave the College community an opportunity to state their concerns, ask questions, and hear about upcoming developments.

## IN MEMORIAM: SCOTT RING

It is with profound sadness that Hudson County Community College acknowledges the passing of Scott Ring, a cherished leader, visionary, and dear friend. Ring, a former publisher of *The Jersey Journal*, served as the founding Chair of the HCCC Foundation Board of Directors, holding the position for an impressive decade. His dedication, passion, and commitment laid the groundwork for countless opportunities that have benefited our students and community.



His unwavering support and belief in the transformative power of education earned him the Foundation's esteemed Heritage Award, a testament to his enduring impact. To honor his legacy, a room in the Culinary Conference Center bears his name — a reminder of his indelible mark on HCCC.

Scott will be greatly missed, but his spirit and legacy will live on in the work we continue to do, inspired by his example.

# MILESTONES

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

## FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

**One Year**

*Danielle Lopez*

**Five Years**

*Connie Silletti-Cafaro*

## PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

**One Year**

*Luisa Gomes*

*Janet Nieto*

# THE 4TH ANNUAL HUDSON IS HOME (HIH) EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM



*HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (left) with faculty members from the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.*



*Pictured from left: Raffi Manjikian, Stephanie Sanchez, Priyanka Mistry, Nydia James, Kristofer Fontanez, and Sonam Dorji.*



*HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (center) with Ismael Ramos-Penaherrera (left) and Frederick Medina.*

View Nominations for 2024 at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/HCCCHIH24>

The 4th Annual Hudson Is Home (HIH) Employee Recognition Program, held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, was a heartwarming celebration of dedication and excellence within the HCCC community. This year's event received over 250 nominations, highlighting the outstanding contributions of our colleagues who consistently go above and beyond in their commitment to students, fellow staff members, and the broader community. The program provided a special opportunity to acknowledge the tireless efforts and unwavering support of those who help make Hudson County Community College a vibrant and impactful place to learn and work. Congratulations to all the nominees and honorees for their exceptional service and dedication to the HCCC family!



**HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE** will be closed in observance of winter recess. Beginning Friday, December 20, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. through Wednesday, January 1, 2025.

**EXCEPT FOR:**

*Au Pair courses offered by Continuing Education and Workforce Development will meet as scheduled online Saturday, December 21 and Sunday, December 22.*

# SAVE THE DATES!



**COLLEGE SERVICE DAY**  
Wednesday, January 22, 2025

**ALL COLLEGE ADJUNCT FACULTY ORIENTATION**  
Thursday, January 23, 2025

## Engage, Empower, Educate: Every Action Counts!



Teaching and Learning Symposium on Social Justice in Higher Education 2025

**SAVE THE DATE**  
February 24 -  
February 28, 2025

Ready to make an impact in higher education? Join us at the virtual Teaching and Learning Symposium on Social Justice in Higher Education 2025.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
Paula Roberson, Ed.D., Director, Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation  
(201) 360-4775 | [proberson@hccc.edu](mailto:proberson@hccc.edu)



## HCCC HOLDS JOURNAL SQUARE OPEN HOUSE ON NOV. 2



At the Culinary Conference Center, Dr. Ara Karakashian, Dean of Business, Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management, discusses the School's offerings with guests.

## HUDSON HELPS RESOURCE CENTER HOLDS RESOURCE FAIR



On Wednesday, Oct. 30, Hudson County Community College's Hudson Helps Resource Center held a Resource Fair to connect students with local organizations and their available services.

## CIVIC PREPAREDNESS

*Continued from page 2*

student orientations for civic preparedness, and promoting voter education initiatives.

HCCC promotes civic engagement with programs, seminars, and activities in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- The President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion that weaves DEI goals into every facet of College life to improve representation throughout.
- The HCCC Annual DEI Summer Retreat with guest speakers like Rev. Al Sharpton, Founder and President of the National Action Network, and Dr. Jelani Cobb, Dean of Journalism at Columbia University. Over 250 faculty, staff, and community leaders participate.
- The Annual Teaching and Learning Symposium on Social Justice in Higher Education that welcomes over 1,400 attendees from across the globe to discuss racial equity, the justice system, healthcare, climate change, corporate responsibility, and much more. Speakers at the national event include university presidents, authors, activists, faith leaders, and elected officials.
- Dr. Reber leads and co-chairs the New Jersey Presidents' Council (NJPC) Committee on Social Justice, supporting best practices and lessons learned in the social justice arena.

"Higher education has a responsibility to provide students with critical skills and knowledge to participate effectively in our Constitutional democracy," said Rajiv Vinnakota, President of the Institute for Citizens & Scholars. "College campuses are among the most diverse spaces in our country, and college is an important time for students to develop the habits, practices, and norms to live in a multicultural and interconnected democracy. Doing so can create a ripple effect, making young people more optimistic and increasingly committed about their future and our nation."

## 'OUT OF THE DARKNESS' WALK



On Sunday, Oct. 20, Hudson County Community College's Office of Mental Health and Wellness Counseling, Active Minds and Phi Theta Kappa collaborated to participate in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's "Out of the Darkness" fundraiser, to "raise awareness and much-needed funds, strongly sending the message that suicide can be prevented, and that no one is alone."

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION

*Continued from page 3*

As Chair, Peña has a vision of prioritizing the College's role as a launchpad to gainful employment and family-sustaining wages for Hudson County residents. She explained that while a college degree may not be for everyone, everyone can benefit from credentialed training in fields ranging from electrician and HVAC technician to cosmetologist, and HCCC's workforce development programs

and credentialed training can unlock these opportunities. Peña knows the value of these jobs firsthand, recalling that early in her career, her husband earned more than she did as an electrician.

When asked what Hispanic Heritage Month means to her, Peña replied "It means celebrating our every day. We're very proud of

our heritage. It's a great opportunity to share our rich mosaic of cultures both with other members of the Hispanic community, and with those outside of the community. I believe that as people, we all have a lot in common, but that 15% or so that makes us different is what makes the world a special place."

# Foundation Art Collection

The Hudson County Community College Foundation Art Collection of 2,000+ works is installed in the public areas of campus buildings. The entire College is an educational art museum. This Collection reveals aspects of America's and New Jersey's rich artistic and cultural history from the Hudson River School period to today. In recent years, the College's acquisition efforts have focused on strengthening its American and New Jersey modern and contemporary collections.

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

## Artist News

The late **David Beck** made a marvelous print, *Dodo MMVII*, which can be seen in the North Hudson library. A new website features many works he created: <https://www.davidbeckartwork.com>. Several of his flora and fauna pieces are automated (for example, if he carved a butterfly, you can turn a small handle and the butterfly's wings will flap). There are short films on the site you can watch to see the amazing works in motion. The music that accompanies these videos was often written and performed by the artist himself.

If you like **Robert S. Neuman's** 1962 print *Pedazos del Mundo #8* (Pieces of the World) on the fifth floor of Gabert Library and you are interested in seeing more of the artist's work, you can look at a free recent documentary *Robert S. Neuman: Pieces of the World* (<https://tinyurl.com/RobertsNeuman>). The strength of the film is that it shows the range of the artist's work. Because of the weakness of the audio, it may be better to watch silently.

**Joyce Kozloff's** works are installed on the fifth and sixth floors of the Gabert Library. She works with maps in a real and metaphoric way. In a *Hyperallergic* review of her recent exhibitions: *Rooted in Our Imaginations of Resistance* (<https://tinyurl.com/am6bpkd6>), Hrag Vartanian writes, "A few months later, in April, I walked inside of Kozloff's nine-foot-tall 'Targets' (2000) on display at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin (<https://tinyurl.com/Joyce-Kozloff>). Entering into the large spherical sculpture you are confronted by painted maps of places the US has aerial bombed, often rendered upside down or sideways, along with tactical information and oil field locations. It is a prescient work, one that can disorient you with its immersive beauty and engulf you in the luxury of seeing the world's violence from a distance. For some of us that threat of danger seems like it is creeping closer; for others it is already all around. In

art like this I feel implicated, and I wish more art accomplished that by highlighting our own complicity, even if it seduces us with gorgeous patterns before revealing darker truths." Art has a wide variety of powers. We are grateful to artists who bring difficult truths to light. Vartanian also discusses the work of **Elizabeth Catlett** in this review.

Again, if you like **Elizabeth Catlett's** work (on view at 870 Bergen, on the fourth floor of 70 Sip Avenue and on the third floor of the Gabert Library), you might enjoy this fulsome review in *Hyperallergic* of her new show at the Brooklyn Museum: *Elizabeth Catlett's Life as a Revolutionary Artist* (<https://tinyurl.com/ElizabethCatlett>) which is on view through January 19, 2025. When Catlett moved to Mexico in 1947, she became part of an artists' group called Taller de Gráfica Popular (the People's Graphic Workshop/TGP). This group of artists "assumed a duty to represent the lives of marginalized people in their art as part of a greater liberatory project." Catlett's work honors working-class Black and Indigenous peoples on both sides of the US/Mexico border. If you read the review carefully, you will find a copy of the print *Gossip*, which we are honored to have on view at the College.

The Foundation Art Collection had a work on the cover of a local newspaper, the *River View Observer*! The article featured information about the numerous works you can see on campus about Native American Heritage. Check out the *River View Observer* November 1-November 15, 2024 by Ad Vantage Publishing Inc - Issue ([https://issuu.com/riverviewobserver/docs/novemerone\\_2024\\_novemberfifteenth\\_river\\_view\\_obs](https://issuu.com/riverviewobserver/docs/novemerone_2024_novemberfifteenth_river_view_obs)).

As we face a new year, we are reminded of long-time wildlife activist Jane Goodall's message about hope. Hope, she suggests, is not something you just feel. Instead, hope is



*The work Dodo MMVII by David Beck is a 2007 Archival Pigment on Somerset Satin White 300 gsm paper. It measures 26" x 33". You can see this picture at the North Hudson Library.*

a byproduct of taking action for a good cause. In the coming year, may you find the courage to take action for the greater good, and thus, may you find hope. Thank you for all your good deeds this 2024.

**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](mailto:nicolebjohnson@hccc.edu).

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

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

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

**23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL GOLF OUTING**

*In Memory of Philip Johnston*

**Monday June 23, 2025**

**Forest Hill Field Club, Bloomfield, New Jersey**

**10 a.m Shotgun Start**

For more information, please contact: [foundation@hccc.edu](mailto:foundation@hccc.edu)



OFFICE OF  
**CULTURAL AFFAIRS**  
 presents



## SHIFTING HORIZONS BRINGS A FRESH PERSPECTIVE TO HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Artist Jason Mimami discusses his piece *Apparent Movement of the Sun* with HCCC students and faculty at the *Shifting Horizons* exhibit.

A new art exhibit at Hudson County Community College (HCCC) titled *Shifting Horizons* brings a fresh perspective to the College by inviting us to interpret the landscape around us in new ways.

The exhibit features work from an array of prominent artists, including Michele Fenniak, Nikki Lindt, Jason Minami, Lina Puerta, Christopher Schade, Riley Strom, and Rachael Wren.

Professor Laurie Riccadonna, the Coordinator of Studio Arts at HCCC and curator of *Shifting Horizons*, explains that the exhibit “explores the profound relationship between humanity and nature through the lens of landscape. Landscapes possess the unique ability to inspire and connect us to the natural world. Landscapes are not just representations of what we see but how we interpret our surroundings through our minds as much as our eyes. In our fast-paced, technologically saturated urban environments, landscapes offer an

escape – a portal to a world where time slows down, where we can reconnect with a place, a moment, and ourselves. The works exhibited in *Shifting Horizons* convey a sense of awe and wonder. The works engage and enrich our connection to the world around us, our place within it, and a call to action to protect our environment.”

While all the pieces have their own story to tell, several pieces from Nikki Lindt’s *Sonic Rhythms* series make this call to action in a particularly unique and compelling way. To create these paintings, Lindt traveled to the Swedish Arctic, Canada’s Narrows Bay, and beyond, recording the sonic waves of the thawing caused by global warming and painting while listening to the subsurface soundwaves. The headphones that accompany each piece allow viewers to hear an MP3 recording of these sonic waves for themselves, offering a first-hand perspective on this important environmental issue.

Lindt states, “With a natural world that feels more and more distant as it seems to

slip between our fingers, I hope to cultivate feelings of excitement for and closeness to our natural world. It is through these feelings of excitement, hope, and connection that I believe we can better step in the direction of a respectful and healthy relationship within our interwoven communities of humans and non-human beings alike.” Lindt’s work has been covered by notable media outlets ranging from *Forbes* and the *Financial Times* to CBS’s *Sunday Morning Magazine*.

The exhibit also combines local and global elements in a profound way, with artwork from glazier Jason Minami, who honed his craft of glassblowing in Hawaii and teaches at a non-profit glass studio focused on serving youth through glass arts in Newark, NJ, and mixed media artist Lina Puerta, who was born in New Jersey and raised in Colombia. Puerta has had solo exhibitions at the New York Botanical Gardens and the Sugarhill Children’s Museum of Art and Storytelling, and her work has been covered in *Hyperallergic* and *The New York Times*, among other publications.

On September 27, a reception for *Shifting Horizons* gave HCCC students the unique opportunity to view the exhibit, network and socialize with peers, and meet the artists, and learn more about their work firsthand in an intimate setting. HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber said, “The fascinating *Shifting Horizons* exhibition is another great example of how art is enriching the student experience at HCCC.”

*Shifting Horizons* was also featured as part of Arts 14C’s Art Crawl Journal Square in September and the prestigious 35th Annual Jersey City Art and Studio Tour in October.

## Unlock Life-Changing Opportunities for Deserving Students This Season

Your gift to the Hudson County Community College Foundation directly empowers students to overcome financial barriers and achieve their dreams.

Your generosity opens doors to education and allows students to focus on their academic success and personal growth. Together, we can create brighter futures for individuals and our community.

Ring in the season and support students by donating now: [www.hccc.edu/foundation](http://www.hccc.edu/foundation)  
 For questions, or to give through ACH, wire, or check contact: 201-360-4069 | [foundation@hccc.edu](mailto:foundation@hccc.edu)



**Make your gift today and change a life forever.**



## PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY NEWS



*Congratulations to (from left to right) Kenia Sandoval, Nube Cabrera, and Eman Mahmoud for completing the five Edges of PTK Edge.*



*Isra Ibrahim volunteered in the gardening program at Liberty State Park on Saturday, Nov. 2.*



*Beta Alpha Phi inducted more than 100 students at its semiannual ceremony on Monday, Oct. 28.*



*Pictured clockwise from left: Prof. Ted Lai and Instructor Raffi Manjikian with Phi Theta Kappa members Ashley Medrano and Mina Abdelmaseeh at a blood drive sponsored by Beta Alpha Phi chapter on Nov. 6.*

## HCCC STEM STUDENTS COMPETE AT RESEARCH CONFERENCE



**O**n Nov. 8, 2024, students from Hudson County Community College's (HCCC) B2B program participated in the GS-LSAMP STEM Research Conference held at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ.

This conference offered an invaluable opportunity for students to showcase their dedication and hard work. Guided by Professors Clive Li and Fidelis Foda-Kahouo, the students'

projects highlighted their academic strengths and reflected the College's commitment to developing future leaders and innovators.

These experiences demonstrates the high-quality education and research opportunities available to our students.



*Are you experiencing stress, depression, or anxiety?*

*Difficulty adjusting to the College environment?*

*Dealing with mental health and wellness?*

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



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

The form is NOT monitored 24/7. A member of the CARE team will respond to your request during regular business hours.

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



## 'GET YOUR MIND RIGHT' EVENT



*Doreen Pontius, Director of Mental Health Counseling & Wellness (center) with seniors from University Academy Charter High School.*

**O**n Saturday, Nov. 9, radio personality Tamika McReynolds hosted a live edition of her show, "Get Your Mind Right: Part III" at the Culinary Conference Center. Doreen Pontius, Director of Mental Health Counseling & Wellness, spoke to seniors from University Academy Charter High School about mental health. Congressman Rob Menendez and New Jersey State Senator Angela McKnight also attended the event.



## CONFERENCE COVERAGE – HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



A delegation of staff and students from Hudson County Community College attended the 39th annual conference of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) in Gaylord, CO, Nov. 1-3. Attendees are pictured with HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (second from left) and Dr. Yeury Pujols, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (right).

## LITERACY FORUM

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Jawaad Hussain, Reach Out and Read NJ Co-Medical Director; Mark Hill-Lloyd, Trinity Faith Church in Jersey City; Jackie Anderson, Early Literacy Program Manager, Jersey City Public Library Learning Center; Cheresse T. Bracey, author and CEO of Reading Reaps Rewards Early Childhood Enrichment Program; and Amanda Jacobs, Director of Academic Planning and Solutions, Early Learning, Scholastic. The discussion was moderated by James McGreevey, former New Jersey Governor and Executive Director and Chairman of New Jersey Reentry Corporation.

- “Facilitating Language Literacy Success for All, an HCCC Student Panel” was moderated by Dr. Angela Pack, HCCC Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education, and included HCCC students Daniel Sherman, Diana Valdez, Vanessa Gil, Cristal Perez, John Acosta, and Marcelo Laboriel.

“Providing foundational reading skills prepares individuals for academic success, college readiness, and economic prosperity,” said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. “We enjoyed learning about opportunities that help instill reading habits and enable the people of our community to thrive in their academic endeavors and careers.”

## AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE



On Saturday, November 9, student members of the HCCC American Chemical Society (ACS) chapter attended Hofstra University for the 2024 Frances S. Sterrett Environmental Chemistry Symposium. Hudson County Community College students filled the room, along with roughly 45 attendees, who enjoyed various presentations about microplastics research.

Topics at the symposium included unveiling threats, innovative detection, and strategic mitigation of microplastics. The

ACS students were joined by their advisor, Raffi Manjikian, Instructor of Chemistry. Dr. Clive Li, Assistant Professor of Engineering Science, Dr. Fatma Tat, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, and Theodore Lai, Professor of Mathematics and advisor of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK). The students enthusiastically shared how much they appreciated learning about this environmental chemistry issue and are hopeful to attend further events offered by ACS locally and nationally.

## "MY ITALY STORY"



Michael Notardonato (background third from right) star of "My Italy Story", which was presented at the College on Nov. 7, stands with the playwright, Professor Joseph Gallo (background, second from right) and HCCC Theatre Arts students.

My Italy Story by noted NJ playwright and storyteller Joseph Gallo is a nostalgic exploration of family, heritage and the ties that bind us. Spurred by pleas to help reunite his fractured family, a young man quits his job as a New York account executive and travels to Vallata — the tiny Italian town of his ancestors. Not until he returns home, however, does he discover a secret that unlocks his past.

## CHAIR ACADEMY: GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Chair Academy is a premier leadership development organization for higher education and organizational leaders. Its vision centers around developing inclusive and influential leaders whose purpose is to advance academic and administrative leadership, regardless of position. Each program session provides a learner-centered approach to ongoing growth and development that is relevant, meaningful, practical, and resourceful.

In June of 2022 and 2023, Joseph Caniglia, Executive Director of the North Hudson Campus, Angela Tuzzo, Associate Director of Student Life and Leadership, Dr. Jose Lowe, Director of EOF, and Lilisa Williams, then Director of Faculty and Staff Development, attended two in-person week-long sessions for the Chair Academy. Each of them graduated from this two-week-long intensive and engaging program. In October 2023 and 2024, Raffi Manjikian, Instructor of Chemistry, also

graduated and completed the Chair Academy program.

Each participant in the Chair Academy is expected to work through a DiSC Assessment. This assessment was developed based on psychologist William Moulton Marston's behavioral theory. DiSC stands for the four main personality profiles described in the DiSC model: (D)ominance, (i)nfluence, (S)teadiness and (C)onscientiousness. The DiSC report identifies an individual's personality and behavioral style and describes their behavior in various situations. The participants' DiSC assessments helped them better understand how they respond to challenges, how they influence others, their preferred paces, and how they respond to rules, procedures, and general structure. The hope is that this recognition, in turn, ignites teamwork, leadership, and communication in the workplace and in personal situations.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS



### Chase Financial Health Summit

The School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development – Gateway to Innovation (HCCC-GTI) team hosted the Chase Financial Health Summit with Melissa Prashad and her team of Chase Leaders, October 30, 2024 on the Journal Square campus.

The Financial Health Summit provided invaluable information illustrating the importance of financial health while empowering individuals to manage their everyday personal finances effectively. Students, alumni, staff, faculty, and Hudson County constituents learned about concepts of planning, earning, saving, investing, and borrowing that will help empower them to make confident decisions and build a strong financial future.

This is one of Chase's social impact programs to support the local community. It reflects Chase's commitment to equity in alignment with the HCCC-GTI goal of providing our community with the financial knowledge and resources needed for a more sustainable future.

### Academic Workforce Pathway Program

On October 10, 2024, Amandeep Tiwana, an EOF student and member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, was celebrated at the HCCC Fall 2024 Dean's List Celebration. Amandeep, the first student from the Academic Workforce Pathways Program, was honored for achieving a remarkable 3.70 GPA and making the Spring 2024 Dean's List.

The Division of Academic Affairs, Hudson County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Hudson County Department of Family Services and Reintegration, and the Academic Workforce Pathway Program (AWPP) proudly congratulate Amandeep on this outstanding achievement. As the first AWPP student reintegrated into the community, Amandeep is set to graduate in May 2025 with an Associate's Degree in Medical Sciences - Pre-Professional Nursing. This milestone marks a significant step in Amandeep's academic and professional journey.



### The Art of Coffee: A Culinary Exploration

Continuing Education and the Culinary Arts Institute partnered with the New Jersey Coffee School for an immersive journey into the world of coffee at "The Art of Coffee" event on November 2. The event uniquely blended cultural exploration, the science of brewing, and culinary delights for coffee enthusiasts and food lovers alike.

For more information on Continuing Education's culinary programs, please contact Chastity Farrell at [cfarrell@hccc.edu](mailto:cfarrell@hccc.edu) or visit <https://tinyurl.com/ywuw5ve3>.

### CE Project Management Partnership with The International Rescue Committee

The Office of Continuing Education (CE) is proud to collaborate with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an organization dedicated to supporting individuals impacted by humanitarian crises. The IRC helps people affected by conflict and disaster to survive, recover, and regain control of their lives. Their efforts focus on ensuring safety from harm, improving health, increasing access to education, enhancing economic well-being, and empowering individuals to influence decisions that affect their lives.

In 2023 and 2024, CE partnered with IRC clients, providing Project Management training, equipping them with valuable tools to aid their recovery, growth, and employment. Our Project Management program provides participants with a comprehensive understanding of various principles and processes involved in effectively managing a project of any size in any industry. We are honored to contribute to the IRC's mission of empowering people to rebuild their lives and are actively exploring ways to deepen this meaningful collaboration.

To learn more about this program, please contact Alexis Muniz at [amuniz@hccc.edu](mailto:amuniz@hccc.edu).

#### UPCOMING CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AVAILABLE AT:

[www.hccc.edu/continuingeducation](http://www.hccc.edu/continuingeducation)

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development

161 Newkirk Street, Room E504, Jersey City, NJ 07306

(201) 360-4224 | [CE@hccc.edu](mailto:CE@hccc.edu)

## COLUMBUS/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY GUIDED NYC WALKING TOUR



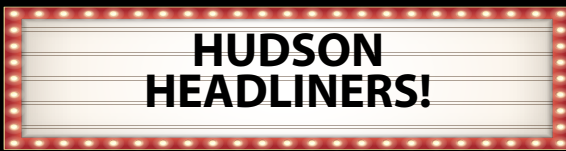
Another year, another Columbus Day – or is it? The students in Professor Rodiger’s ESL Level 3 Reading Class participated in a guided walking tour in Lower Manhattan on October 7 to learn about the many places that bear witness to the robust impact made by indigenous people. Of the many questions the students had throughout the tour, only one was left unanswered: Why do we still call the second Monday in October “Columbus Day” instead of “Indigenous Peoples’ Day”?

## ESL READING CLASS TAKES GREAT ADVENTURES DURING FALL TERM



Following a successful meeting at “Pizza with the President” in September, the students from Instructor Sonja Rodiger’s ESL Level 2 Reading/Academic Discussion class were deeply impressed by the interest HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber took in the many questions they prepared. Dr. Reber himself suggested they continue the conversation at a later date in the classroom, much to the delight of students. During the highly anticipated class visit, the students confirmed their positive impressions: they feel proud to attend an institution whose President takes them seriously and is truly invested in their success.

**Hudson County Community College**  
invites you to the premiere of our new video series ...



Don’t miss our first, four-minute production about the nationally award-winning Hudson Scholars Program featuring our President, Dr. Christopher Reber, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Dr. Lisa Dougherty, and Associate Dean of Advisement Dr. Gretchen Schulthes.

They are joined by Hudson Scholars:  
Michael Cardona, Nina Resurreccion, Sonny Tungala and Shemia Superville

Take a look -

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

Watch for news about the next Hudson Headliners!

## A HEALTHY OUTLOOK



On Oct. 9, Hudson County Community College in Jersey City held its Faculty & Staff Wellness Fair, and among those in attendance were (left to right) AFT Local 6026 Treasurer Tess Wiggins, President Patrick Del Piano and Secretary Marta Cimillo. The event provided them with an opportunity to meet with prospective members ahead of Hudson CCC Support Staff Federation’s contract negotiations, which are set to begin in January.

HCCC’s Theatre Arts Program Presents:

## 2024 PLAYWRIGHTS' FESTIVAL

Luis Diaz  
Natassja Freeman  
Sara Mendoza  
Brian Neal  
Kaitlyn Rea  
J.M. Segriff

MONDAY,  
DECEMBER 16, 2024  
6 p.m.  
FREE!

Gabert Library  
71 Sip Avenue,  
Room L-506,  
Jersey City, NJ



## 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.

# ALUMNI CORNER

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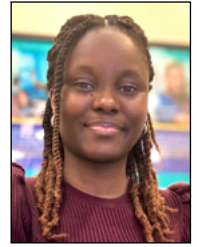
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Invest in the education of an HCCC student by making your gift of any amount today.



## Kadiatou Camara, HCCC Class of 2023 A.S., Medical Science Preprofessional Pre-Nursing



This month, HCCC *Happenings* spoke with Kadiatou Camara, a recent HCCC graduate. Kadiatou works as an Enrollment Support Assistant at HCCC and is pursuing her bachelor's degree in nursing.

### How did you decide to attend HCCC?

When I came to the United States from my home country, Guinea, in 2018, my father put me into an English language institution in New York to learn English. However, it was not an academic institution, and so he helped me enroll at Hudson County Community College so that I could learn academic English.

### What made HCCC the right choice for you?

I first came to Hudson County Community College only to learn English. After completing my English courses, I fell in love with the College and its people. I especially love how diverse it is. I decided to take all my prerequisites here before transferring to a four-year institution. I like being in places where I feel valued and respected, and where my voice can be heard, and I found that at Hudson County Community College.

### Any favorite memory of HCCC you'd like to share?

I have a lot of favorite memories of HCCC! One of them is when I started working as a Peer Leader. Before I started working as a Peer Leader, I used to be very shy, and it was difficult for me to approach new people. When I started working as a Peer Leader, my personality changed in a positive way, and it empowered me to explore a new version of myself. I was no longer shy about approaching people, and out of nowhere, I started advocating for students to meet their needs. That was something I never

thought I could do. Working as a Peer Leader made me realize that I can do a lot for students by advocating for them. That experience is something that I will never forget.

### Where did you go after HCCC and what are you up to these days?

After I graduated from HCCC, I enrolled at Fairleigh Dickinson University to pursue my bachelor's degree in nursing. I am currently working on my BSN and progressing towards that goal.

### What advice do you have for students who are just starting at HCCC?

The advice I have for new students at HCCC is to get involved. This is one way for students to explore their strengths and weaknesses. Getting involved at HCCC is an opportunity for students to engage with their peers, develop leadership skills, and approach others with respect and professionalism. HCCC is a diverse community. If a student is comfortable interacting with a diverse population, this can be an advantage for them to easily interact with people from all over the world because every culture has its own way of being approached and communicating.

### What's next on the horizon for you?

Next up for me is attaining my bachelor's in nursing and starting my career as a registered nurse.



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

**If so join, socialize, and network!**

For information about the College's Alumni Association and membership benefits, please email [alumni@hccc.edu](mailto:alumni@hccc.edu).

