

HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOLDS DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ANNUAL MEMORIAL



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CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



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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 March newsletter are
due by Friday, February 13, 2026

Please send your news items, comments
and suggestions to:

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HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOLDS DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ANNUAL MEMORIAL

While advocating economic and racial equity, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. declared, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Jailed 29 times for acts of nonviolent protest, Dr. King dedicated his life to advancing civil rights and social justice. The late U.S. Representative John Lewis described such activism as "good trouble," acknowledging that the pursuit of justice may continue across lifetimes and generations. More than a half century after his assassination, Dr. King's vision continues to inspire dialogue, understanding, and action rooted in shared human experience.

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) hosted its Fourth Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at the HCCC Culinary Conference Center in Jersey City. The event brought together students, faculty, staff, and community members to honor Dr. King's enduring legacy and reflect on the ongoing pursuit of equity and civil liberties. HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber delivered welcoming remarks, emphasizing

the importance of engaging in meaningful dialogue and collective responsibility.

Kevin D. Richardson, a member of the Exonerated Five and a nationally recognized criminal justice reform advocate, delivered the keynote address. Mr. Richardson became a symbol of wrongful conviction following the 1989 Central Park jogger assault and rape case. He and four other Black and Hispanic teenagers were imprisoned based on coerced confessions obtained after more than 24 hours without access to food, water, bathrooms, or legal counsel. In 2002, Matias Reyes confessed to the crime, and DNA evidence confirmed his guilt, leading to the exoneration of the five men.

Since his exoneration, Mr. Richardson has devoted his life to advocacy and education. He partnered with the Innocence Project to raise awareness about wrongful convictions and launched C.P.R. (Courage, Perseverance, and Resilience), a workshop designed to help young people understand their civil rights and navigate police encounters. Through the Kevin

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ON THE COVER: Kevin D. Richardson of the Exonerated Five participates in a powerful fireside chat during Hudson County Community College's MLK Celebration on Thursday, January 29, where he was honored with a commemorative plaque by HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber and the College's Cabinet, and recognized for his enduring advocacy and leadership by U.S. Congressman Rob Menendez and Anthony Romano, Chair of the Hudson County Board of Commissioners.

NAACP MLK BREAKFAST



Pictured from left: Sabrina Bullock, International Student Assistant; Larry Anderson, Jr. Admissions Recruiter of North Hudson Campus; Paula Jno-Ville-Roney: EOF Counselor; James S. Solomon, 50th Mayor of Jersey City; Rosa Perez: EOF Administrative Support Specialist; Keisha Taylor: Assistant Director, Student Life & Leadership, of North Hudson Campus; and Robert J. Menendez Jr., U.S. Congressman for New Jersey's 8th District.

On Saturday, Jan. 24, 2026, representatives from Hudson County Community College (HCCC) attended the Jersey City NAACP Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast. Held at the Marriott Newark Liberty International Airport, the event centered on the theme "A Legacy That Lives On: Honoring Years of Courage, Commitment, and Community."

The morning was filled with powerful insights, featuring a keynote address by Reverend Dr. Ralph M. Branch, Jr., and a profound tribute to the late Captain Thomas Gerald Taylor, the trailblazing first African American Jersey City firefighter who founded this annual tradition. The breakfast provided a meaningful opportunity for HCCC staff to network with community leaders and local students, gaining valuable perspectives from their diverse life experiences.

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXPANDS GATEWAY TO INNOVATION PROGRAM WITH BANK OF AMERICA CHARITABLE FOUNDATION GRANT

Bank of America Charitable Foundation awarded the Hudson County Community College (HCCC) Foundation a \$150,000 grant to expand the nationally acclaimed HCCC Gateway to Innovation (GTI) Program. The funding will support paid, work-based learning opportunities for students.

"We are profoundly grateful to Bank of America Charitable Foundation for this investment in our Gateway to Innovation program," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "The funding will help us develop and pilot the GTI Experiential Learning Opportunities Program as a scalable model. We will employ collaborations with business leaders, labor unions, workforce development partners, public agencies, and community organizations to create high-impact learning opportunities for our students and the people of Hudson County."

The College will develop the Experiential Learning Opportunities Program featuring non-credit, work-based learning including job shadowing, mentoring, internships, and structured feedback to enhance career progression and economic mobility. The grant will support a credential-based internship model serving 50 students and fund a full-time

Internship Coordinator. Participants will receive wraparound supports, including transportation, childcare, digital access, and services through the HCCC Hudson Helps Resource Center, which offers food pantries, career support, mental health services, and community referrals.

HCCC's School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development launched GTI in 2021 to address post-pandemic economic challenges by connecting individuals to recession-resistant career pathways. The program provides equitable access to family-sustaining wages and helped thousands of students and community members earn industry-recognized credentials in finance, health care, information technology, and logistics. GTI has received national recognition as a Bellwether College Consortium Workforce Development Award finalist and earned the League for Innovation in the Community College's 2022-2023 Innovation of the Year Award.



Bank of America Charitable Foundation awarded HCCC a \$150,000 grant to expand the acclaimed HCCC Gateway to Innovation (GTI) Program. Pictured here, the College's GTI Career Panel of professionals who share insights on pathways, skills, and emerging trends.

"Bank of America is committed to lending, investing, and giving in order to build thriving communities by addressing issues fundamental to economic mobility," the Bank of America Charitable Foundation wrote. "Providing support to organizations like the Hudson County Community College Foundation that are offering critical services and programs is just one of the ways we are helping improve the quality of life in the communities we serve."

NEWS FROM HUDSON COUNTY EXECUTIVE CRAIG GUY

Hudson County Executive Craig Guy Breaks Ground on Mercer Park Pavilion, Prepares for 2026 Open Space Trust Fund Awards

As temperatures remain frigid throughout New Jersey, Hudson County Executive Craig Guy is preparing for the spring and summer by working to improve our county and municipal parks. 2025 was a big year for green space in Hudson County. In May, County Executive Guy celebrated the 20-year anniversary of the Open Space Trust Fund, announcing \$11.7 million in awards throughout all 12 Hudson County municipalities. Municipalities use these funds to upgrade their parks and green spaces. Like in Hoboken, where County Executive Guy and municipal officials broke ground on Maritime Park, an 8.7-acre waterfront park located at the former Union Dry Dock site. Maritime Park will include a modern skatepark, a flexible lawn, a new learning pier for marine education, a living shoreline of marshes and tide pools, a playground with natural-materials, a public plaza inspired by the Castle Point bluffs, a community building with meeting space and a rooftop observation deck, expanded beaches, and an extension of the Hudson River Waterfront

Walkway. We are seeing upgrades like these throughout Hudson County and we are excited to announce our 2026 Open Space Trust Fund award recommendations later this year.

County Executive Guy is also hard at work upgrading our county parks. On January 12 County Executive Guy, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners Anthony L. Romano, and Commissioner Jerry Walker (D-3) celebrated the groundbreaking of a brand-new pavilion at Mercer Park in Bayonne. The groundbreaking was also attended by Jersey City Councilwoman Denise Ridley (Ward A) and Hudson County Register Jeffrey Dublin. This exciting project will create an outdoor community space complete with room for concession stands and new bathrooms, enhancing the park's ability to host events and providing residents with a welcoming space to gather.

"This pavilion is more than a structure; it's a gathering place where families and neighbors

can come together, celebrate, and create lasting memories. It reflects the shared commitment of my administration and the Board of County Commissioners to invest in our communities while expanding opportunities for minority-owned businesses," said Craig Guy, Hudson County Executive. "I am especially proud that this project will be built by MDW Construction Service, a minority-owned contractor rooted right here in our community. This effort represents a meaningful investment in the neighborhood and a defining accomplishment for Commissioner Jerry Walker. I thank Commissioner Walker for his tireless advocacy and dedication to delivering a space that truly reflects and serves the residents of his district."

While it may seem like summer is a long way away, Hudson County Executive Craig Guy is working to ensure our parks and green spaces are top notch and safe for all residents.



MILESTONES

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

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Five Years
John Urgola

10 Years
Christine Petersen

25 Years
Sandra Aviles
Taramatty Persaud

RESIGNATIONS

Rebecca Shaffer, Academic Counselor, Hudson
Scholars Effective January 7, 2026

APPOINTMENT OF FULL-TIME STAFF

Charlene Bayemi, Director of Grants and
Sponsored Programs Effective February 23, 2026

Eileen Canavan, Clinical Site Manager,
Nursing Effective January 21, 2026

Lucas Manrique, Academic Counselor,
Hudson Scholars Effective January 21, 2026

Alex Vasquez, Academic Counselor, Hudson
Scholars Effective January 21, 2026

APPOINTMENT OF FULL-TIME FACULTY

Robert Hamer, Instructor, Hospitality
Management, Tenure-track
Effective January 21, 2026

Joanie Scott, Instructor, Nursing (Medical-Surgi-
cal), Tenure-track Effective January 21, 2026

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPO- RARY FULL-TIME FACULTY

Robert Maurer, Instructor, Culinary Arts
Effective January 21, 2026

MODIFICATIONS TO STAFFING TABLE

Christopher Ciely, Senior Executive Assistant,
Finance to Finance Operations Manager, Finance
Effective January 21, 2026

David Clark, Dean of Student Affairs to Dean of
Student Affairs Effective January 1, 2026

Matthew Fessler, Dean of Enrollment Services to
Dean of Enrollment Services Effective January
1, 2026

N/A, Director, Student Accounts to Director,
Accounts Receivable Effective January 21, 2026

EMPLOYEE PERKS

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

*Did you know our EAP assists employees
with Professional Development?*

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

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

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



Heart Health Month: Show Your Heart Some Love

February isn't just about candy hearts and valentines — it's also American Heart Month, a perfect reminder to show our real hearts a little extra love. Heart disease remains one of the leading health challenges for adults, but the good news is that small, everyday habits can make a big difference. As an organization, we can help employees protect their heart health by encouraging movement, reducing stress, and creating a workplace culture where well-being is part of the routine.

This month is a great opportunity to pause and think about simple ways to support your heart health during the workday. These are all meaningful steps that can help keep your heart strong.

Below you'll find a collection of helpful
resources to explore as part of our
February Heart Health focus.

About Heart Disease:
<https://www.cdc.gov/heart-disease/about/index.html>

Prevent Heart Disease At Any Age:
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/how-to-help-prevent-heart-disease-at-any-age>

Learn to Live Bulletin:
https://www.learntolive.com/Library/LibraryItem/48?code=LUCET_0010h00001YsMVUAA3

American Heart Association: Life's Essential 8:
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8>

YouTube: CVS Health Tips in a Minute:
Heart Health:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8_K0yq7T7s

UW Medicine Heart Health Tips:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30RstK9EeoQ>

SAVE THE DATE

Women's Panel for International
Women's Day

March 6, 2026 | 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 pm.
Culinary Conference Center, 161 Newkirk
Street, Scott Ring Room, E211, Jersey City

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
(TODAS)

April 23, 2026 | 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Cross Campus Event
STEM Building, 263 Academy Street,
Multipurpose Room 103, Jersey City

Special Thanks and Recognition (S.T.A.R.)

April 27, 2026 | 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Culinary Arts Conference Center, Banquet Hall
By Invitation: Full-time and Part-time
Honorees, Supervisors, and Guests

Administrative Professionals' Day

April 29, 2026 | 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Location: TBD



*This is an exciting time to work at HCCC.
Come join an award-winning institution!*

For Recruitment and Job Opportunities visit:

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

HUDSON HELPS RESOURCE CENTER FASHION SHOW WELCOMES STEVE MADDEN AS GOLD SPONSOR FOR FEB. 25 EVENT

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) proudly welcomes Steve Madden, Ltd. as the premier sponsor of the Hudson Helps Resource Center (HHRC) Career Closet Fashion Show, an annual fundraiser that supports student success and workforce readiness.

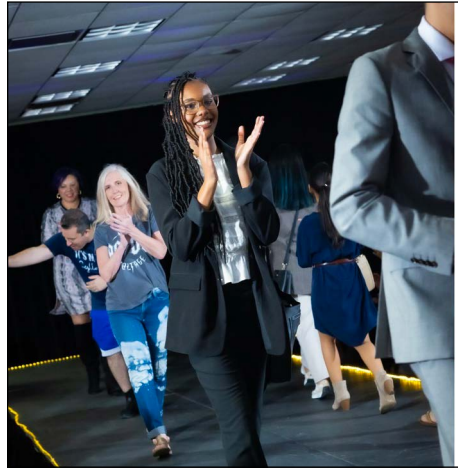
As presenting sponsor, Steve Madden made a \$10,000 leadership investment to advance Hudson Helps initiatives that address students' basic needs and remove barriers to academic and career achievement. Additional sponsorship and in-kind donation opportunities remain available in support of the event.

"Steve Madden Presents the 2026 Career Closet Fashion Show: Your Runway to Success" will take place on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at the HCCC Culinary Conference Center in Jersey City. HCCC students, faculty, and staff will serve as runway models. Following the show, the clothing will remain with the College's Career Closet for students preparing for interviews, internships, and employment.

Purchasing professional attire can pose a challenge for students entering the workforce, especially when financial resources are limited. While skills and experience are critical, first impressions matter. Since its launch in 2021, the HHRC Career Closet has distributed more than 1,000 pieces of professional clothing to over 330 students, helping them build confidence and present themselves professionally.

The College extends special thanks to HCCC Instructor of Chemistry Raffi Manjikian and his spouse, Steve Madden, Ltd. Privacy Counsel and Assistant Secretary Beata Safari, whose advocacy helped secure this sponsorship.

"The HCCC family is deeply grateful to Steve Madden for supporting our students beyond the classroom," said HCCC President Dr.



HCCC students and staff on the runway at the last fashion show.

Christopher Reber. "Investments in programs like the Hudson Helps Resource Center and Career Closet ensure our students have the tools they need to succeed as they transition into professional environments."

The sponsorship builds on an ongoing partnership between Steve Madden and HCCC. The company previously served as Gold Sponsor of the inaugural Career Closet Fashion Show in February 2024.

"At Steve Madden, meaningful impact starts with showing up for the communities we serve," said Gregg Meyer, Chief Sustainability Officer. "We're proud to continue our partnership with Hudson Helps and HCCC."

Proceeds from the Fashion Show support the Hudson Helps Resource Center, which addresses food and housing insecurity, financial emergencies, and other essential student needs. Organizations and individuals interested in supporting the event may contact Katherine Acosta, Director of Hudson Helps, at kmorales@hccc.edu.

CERTIFICATE COMPLETERS OF IEE EMPLOYEE TRAINING INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND EXCELLENCE TRAINING FOR SPRING 2025 AND FALL 2025

Spring 2025

Lloyd Kutkelvin
Judy Abreu
Katherine Sorto
Annie Barran
Ruth Abadie Alana
Josianne Payoute
Katy-Ann Blacker
Marolla Youakim
Carlos Ortiz
Fabiola Occean
Bianca Schnarr
Cynthia Dewhart
Amreen Fatima
Rehab Bensaid
Wajia Zahur
Steffi Jane Montenegro
Kenia Sandoval
Yesenia Lopez

Fall 2025

Michael Whelpley
Angela Tuzzo
Yavuz Guner
Elizabeth Perez
Ciro Romero
Mona Mokdessi
Sony Thomas
Michelle Paradies
Serena Gonzalez
Maritza Reyes
Javier Paz
Dale Chandler
Keischa Taylor
Dickson Emeh
Sarah Andrews
Nancy Saliba
Upasana Sethi-Pagan
Lisa Bogart
Marlenne Andalia

'THE BROTHERHOOD' BARBERSHOP EVENT



The Brotherhood, in collaboration with EOF, Academic Affairs, and campus partners, hosted its first Barbershop Talk at the Journal Square Campus. The event blended meaningful conversation with community care, featuring several local barbers who provided haircuts to approximately 14 students. The experience fostered connection, confidence, and engagement, reinforcing the importance of culturally responsive spaces that support student success.

PROFESSIONAL NOTES

Katie Sweeting, Professor of English, traveled to Pune, India, in January to serve as the keynote speaker at the Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce English Department's International Conference, "Language, Literature and Culture in Transition."

The conference convened scholars, educators, and researchers from around the world to examine how language and literature respond to social, cultural, and technological change. As the keynote speaker, Professor Sweeting shared insights drawn from her

teaching, scholarship, and engagement with contemporary literary studies, contributing to a global dialogue on evolving cultural narratives and academic practice.

Professor Sweeting's invitation to keynote this international conference reflects both her scholarly expertise and the growing global impact of faculty work. Her participation strengthens international academic partnerships and highlights the College's commitment to global engagement and excellence in the humanities.

Foundation Art Collection

The Hudson County Community College Foundation Art Collection features more than 2,100 works displayed throughout public spaces across campus, transforming the entire College into a living educational art museum. The Collection highlights the rich artistic and cultural heritage of America and New Jersey, spanning from the Hudson River School to the present day, with recent acquisitions strengthening its modern and contemporary holdings.

Each month, HCCC *Happenings* spotlights artists represented in the Collection and introduces new additions.

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Alexandra Szechenyi for the recent donation in memory of Humbert Lucarelli of Marino Marini's *Arlucchino (Harlequin)* (1974), a framed, original, aquatint etching, signed by the artist.

Thank you to Herman and Wendy Klarsfeld for a generous donation of two dozen antique artifacts from all over the world. We look forward to installing them later this year in our global antiquities area on the sixth floor of Gabert Library.

ARTIST NEWS

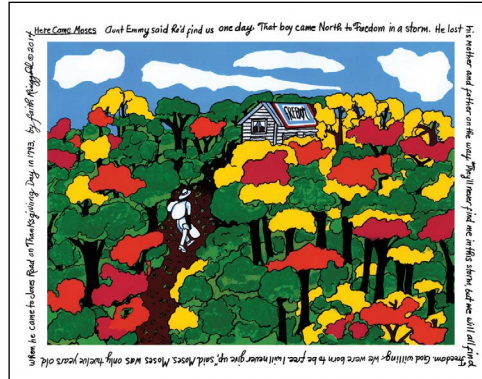
Artist **Faith Ringgold** took on tough subjects. Both of her works in the Foundation Art Collection deal with the period of American enslavement and the Underground Railroad (the name for the secret paths that enslaved people took to freedom). You can see her work on the third and sixth floors of the Gabert Library. In a recent review in *The New York Times* of a show of her works at Jack Shainman Gallery in New York City, writer Will Heinrich notes, "It can seem hard these days to reconcile joy and outrage, hard to understand how a single history could contain so much pain alongside so much beauty, let alone one person's artistic expression. But Ringgold demonstrated



Faith Ringgold, Coming to Jones Road: Under a Blood Red Sky #8, 2007, Digital Print with Hand Lithography, 12 x 12 in.

that an artist could make work about anything that struck her as worth thinking about, from the terrors of slavery to a simple bouquet. Her sensibility, her humanity, was strong enough to unify them all."

Artist **Yoko Ono** broke new ground in the 1960s when she insisted her work was meant to be touched. Here is the Museum of Modern Art recently discussing this breakthrough:



Faith Ringgold, Here Come Moses, 2014, Serigraph, Framed: 21 x 29 in.

"Don't Touch the Art?" How Yoko Ono Challenged a Museum Taboo - (<https://tinyurl.com/2sd4jkna>) Ono's Studio Director, Connor Monahan, says that touch creates connection and communication, which is "what people need to create peace." The Foundation Art Collection work is too fragile to be touched. As the video points out, if you touch art, oils on your fingers will create an impression that over time will be etched into the surface. Even though touching art is fun, this is why we put art in plexiglass boxes at HCCC—so more people, over time will be able to enjoy it.

We welcome anecdotes and information about how the Foundation Art Collection benefits our community. If you have enjoyed using the Art Collection in your teaching, your studies, or your everyday life, please let us know! Contact ASiegel@hccc.edu and tell us the story of how the Art Collection works for you.

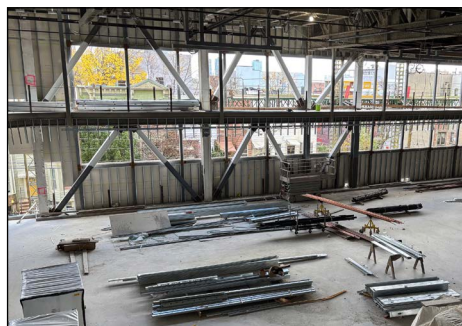
To make a monetary gift in support of the Foundation Art Collection, please contact Nicole Bouknight Johnson at (201) 360-4069 or nicolebjohnson@hccc.edu.

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

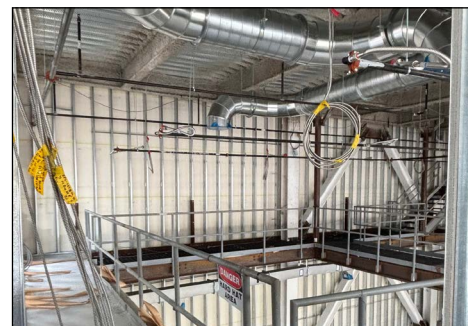
Explore the Foundation Art Collection using our new online searchable tools! Go to www.hccc.edu/community/arts/foundation-art-collection/category-collection-search.html.

CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRESS

Hudson County Community College continues to advance the construction of its Center for Student Success, a transformative facility designed to centralize student support and expand opportunities for learning, wellness, and engagement. Significant progress has been made in recent months as the College moves closer to opening a state-of-the-art space that will bring together academic resources, student life areas, and innovative instructional environments. When completed, the Center will serve as a dynamic hub—modern, accessible, and purposefully built to strengthen the student experience from enrollment to graduation.



The future gymnasium will offer students a modern venue for athletics, wellness activities, intramural sports, and campus-wide events.



A flexible black box theater will provide an adaptable performance space for classes, student productions, workshops, and community events.

OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS presents



All Are Welcome **February 5 to April 10** **Journal Square Campus**

The Benjamin J. Dineen III and Dennis C. Hull Gallery turns 10 as Hudson County Community College (HCCC) celebrates 50 years of educational service, engagement, and excellence. The cultural philanthropists, Dineen and Hull, donated many works from their personal art collection to HCCC, which helped to revolutionize the arts at the College. *All Are Welcome* emulates Dineen and Hull's legacy of acceptance and support, highlighting their collected paper and print works by internationally acclaimed artists Kiki Smith, Barbara Krueger, and Chakaia Booker, among others.

All gallery visits and program participation require an RSVP to mvitale@hccc.edu. Gallery visits are by appointment only with hours between 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

HCCC AT INVEST: NEW JERSEY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

On Wednesday, Jan. 14, Hudson County Community College (HCCC) President Dr. Christopher Reber was interviewed by Abby Lindenberg, Founder and CEO of Capital Analytics Associates, sharing insights on his career and leadership in higher education. The summit convened hundreds of New Jersey business and regional leaders for a morning of networking and expert discussions focused on opportunities and challenges shaping the state's business and investment landscape.

The *INVEST Magazine* interview of Dr. Reber is available at <https://capitalanalyticsassociates.com/chris-reber-president-hudson-county-community-college/>



Hudson County Community College President Dr. Christopher Reber was featured in an interview at the INVEST: New Jersey 6th Edition Leadership Summit on Jan. 14.

SPRING 2026 COLLEGE SERVICE DAY



From left: Philip Johnston Award recipients Carrie Rong Xiao and Dr. Issam El-Achkar, with Dr. WeiDong Zhu, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Saint Peter's University.



American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) President Dr. DeRionne Pollard brings greetings to HCCC faculty and staff during the opening of College Service Day.

Hudson County Community College held its semiannual College Service Day (CSD) on Wednesday, January 21, bringing the College community together for a day of reflection, recognition, and professional growth. Dr. DeRionne Pollard, President and CEO, of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), addressed the body.

The Philip Johnston Award for Excellence in Teaching was presented to Carrie Rong Xiao, Assistant Professor of Accounting, and

Dr. Issam El-Achkar, Professor of Mathematics and Electronics Engineering Technology. The College extends special appreciation to Dr. El-Achkar for generously donating \$1,000 of his award to the HCCC Foundation.

The day also included a presentation by the Institute for Citizens & Scholars, Concepts and Connections, led by Dr. Rachel Piontak, Program Officer, Faculty Institute, and Dr. Janett Cordovés, Senior Strategic Consultant.

PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY NEWS



Pictured from left: Dr. Patrick Moore, Angela Tuzzo, Prof. Ted Lai, Sarah Khan, and Desiree volunteering at the New Jersey Reentry Corporation in Kearny on Christmas Day 2025.

NISOD Scott Wright Student Essay Contest – Call for Submissions Deadline is March 6.

Students are invited to apply for the NISOD Scott Wright Student Essay Contest, which celebrates the impact of encouragement and mentorship in higher education. Student authors must write a 500-word (or less) essay describing a faculty member, staff member, or administrator who inspired them to complete a course, finish a semester, or graduate—and how that support helped them achieve their goals.

Three winning student authors and the individuals featured in their essays will each receive \$1,000, along with complimentary registration to the International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence (May, Aus-

tin, TX), a hotel stay (up to three nights), and up to \$400 for travel. Winning essays will be published on NISOD and Community College Week websites, and each winner's college will receive a complimentary NISOD membership.

Please visit <https://www.nisod.org/membership/student-essay-contest/> for details.

Service Project at New Jersey Reentry Corporation

On Christmas Day, Sarah Khan, Desiree Page, chapter advisors Angela Tuzzo and Professor Ted Lai, and Dr. Patrick Moore volunteered at the New Jersey Reentry Corporation's distribution of hot meals.

LIUNA LEADERS ENGAGE CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT STUDENTS ON LABOR RIGHTS



HCCC's Construction Management Honors Club students received real-life updates on construction worksite practices from officers of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA).

Nicole Vecchione, Director of Research, and Percy Lujan, Organizer, from the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) visited the Hudson County Community College Construction Management Honors Club to educate students about labor rights in the construction industry.

The speakers discussed LIUNA's ongoing efforts to address unsafe working conditions and unfair labor practices at local construction sites in Jersey City. Their advocacy has

contributed to Department of Labor stop-work orders issued at several locations across the city.

During the session, Ms. Vecchione and Mr. Lujan highlighted critical issues affecting construction workers, including wage theft, worker misclassification, labor law violations, and safety concerns. They also outlined the rights and protections available to workers and emphasized the importance of ethical labor practices within the construction profession.

OPEN HOUSE



SATURDAY, APRIL 11
10 a.m - 1 p.m.

Journal Square Campus
Culinary Conference Center
161 Newkirk Street, Jersey City, NJ

SATURDAY, APRIL 25
10 a.m - 1 p.m.

North Hudson Campus
4800 Kennedy Blvd.,
Union City, NJ

Registration is required!
Scan the QR code or go to
www.hccc.edu/openhouse
to register!



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>

FIFTH ANNUAL STEMtASTIC SCIENCE FAIR INSPIRES YOUNG SCIENTISTS AT HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) proudly hosted the Fifth Annual STEMtastic Science Fair on Thursday, Jan. 15 in the College's STEM Building, welcoming students from Dr. Michael Conti Public School #5 for a dynamic day of hands-on science learning.

The STEMtastic Science Fair aimed to spark curiosity and enthusiasm for STEM fields through interactive, experiential learning. Throughout the day, students actively participated in six engaging activity stations that introduced core scientific concepts in accessible and exciting ways.

"The STEMtastic Science Fair reflects our commitment to early STEM education and meaningful community partnerships," said Dr. Burl Yearwood, Dean of STEM at Hudson County Community College. "By opening our STEM facilities to young learners, we hope to inspire curiosity, confidence, and a lifelong interest in science and innovation."

Dr. Christopher Reber, President of Hudson County Community College, emphasized the broader impact of the event.

Students rotated through six hands-on stations that explored Newton's Third Law of Motion through physical demonstrations; introduced encryption and decryption concepts related to coding and cybersecurity; showcased laser engraving technology used in modern manufacturing; examined the pH of household chemicals; demonstrated light refraction in water; and provided a safe, simulated introduction to blood typing and medical science. Educators and volunteers guided students at each station, encouraging collaboration, inquiry, and critical thinking.

"This experience allowed our students to see science come alive beyond the classroom," John Rivero, Principal of Dr. Michael Conti Public School #5 said "The hands-on activities helped students build confidence, ask questions, and begin to see themselves as future scientists and engineers."

Now in its fifth year, the STEMtastic Science Fair continues to strengthen the partnership between Hudson County Community College and Dr. Michael Conti Public School #5 while empowering students through immersive, hands-on STEM learning opportunities.



Raffi Manjikian, Instructor, Chemistry, assists students from Jersey City's Public School #5 with a chemistry-related activity.

PLAYWRIGHTS' FESTIVAL



On Monday, Dec. 15, the Theatre Arts Program held a Playwrights' Festival. Pictured are Professor Joseph Gallo and participating students.

STUDENT ART EXHIBITION



In December, original artwork by students at Hudson County Community College was exhibited at the Benjamin J. Dineen and Dennis C. Hull Gallery. On the last exhibit day, the students participated in an Art Talk to discuss their works, inspirations, and techniques.

DISNEY-INSPIRED WINTER WONDERLAND



The College welcomed HCCC student parents and their children to a Disney-inspired Winter Wonderland event on December 13, during which attendees enjoyed games, crafts, and delicious holiday treats. The children in attendance received gifts from a special visitor!

OPEN FORUM

Middle State Commission of Higher Education (MSCHE)

Self-Study Preparation Visit with Dr. Suzan Harkness

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

JOURNAL SQUARE CAMPUS:

Student Center, 2nd Floor Multipurpose Room

NORTH HUDSON CAMPUS:

Multipurpose Room

For more information about HCCC 2028 Self Study, please use the link below:

<https://www.hccc.edu/abouthccc/msche/index.html>



CONTINUING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS



Hudson County Community College celebrated its expanding partnership with the New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC), honoring five students at the HCCC Winter Graduation ceremony for successfully completing the Hot Food Proficiency Program, and announcing a new pilot collaboration with NJRC and GreenpointXR to enhance the College's welding program through immersive, technology-driven training.

Celebrating Student Success at the HCCC Winter Graduation

The HCCC Winter Graduation on Dec. 16, 2025 celebrated five students from the New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) Hot Food Proficiency Program for successfully completing their academic requirements.

We extend our sincere gratitude to HCCC's leadership, faculty, and staff whose vision and commitment made this initiative possible. Their continued investment in innovative, inclusive programs is transforming lives and strengthening our community—one graduate at a time.

Hudson County Community College, NJRC Welding Program, and GreenpointXR Launch Immersive Welding Training Pilot Partnership

The Hudson County Community College Welding Program, in partnership with the New Jersey Reentry Corporation, has announced a pilot collaboration with solution provider GreenpointXR to enhance the existing welding program with an immersive, technology-driven welding training module. This addition strengthens the program's ability to prepare students for high-demand careers while improving institutional efficiency and workforce alignment.

This innovative partnership integrates extended reality (XR) headsets, advanced welding simulators, learning management system (LMS) integration, and real-time analytics into a unified training environment. Through this agreement, HCCC students are prioritized for access, ensuring they are first in line to benefit from these advanced training opportunities.

According to the American Welding Society, 84 percent of employers report difficulty finding qualified welders. The collaboration with GreenpointXR allows HCCC students to benefit from enhanced welding instruction that accelerates skill acquisition, enhances safety, and supports certification readiness.

By reducing reliance on consumable materials such as gas and metal, GreenpointXR reports that virtual welding training can lower instructional costs by up to 56 percent while also decreasing safety incidents by more than 30 percent, based on national Virtual Reality welding studies. The scalable nature of XR technology enables HCCC to train more students in a flexible learning environment.

Implementation will begin with a strategic pilot phase in the spring, followed by evaluation and potential full integration into HCCC welding courses.

CONTINUING EDUCATION UPCOMING PROGRAMS

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 | 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Price: \$81

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-winter-2026-dates-tickets-1980006204859?aff=oddtcreator>

VALENTINE'S DAY COOKIES (IN-PERSON)

Saturday, February 14, 2026 | 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Price: \$150

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/valentines-culinary-dinner-tickets-1981939022970?aff=oddtcreator>

NICET LEVEL II HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION CERTIFICATION PREP COURSE

Mondays and Wednesdays

February 18, 2026, through March 25, 2026

6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. | Price: \$375

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nicet-level-ii-highway-construction-inspection-certificate-prep-course-registration-1978627397810?aff=oddtcreator>

TOEFL TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAM PREPARATION (IN-PERSON/ONLINE)

Saturdays | February 21 2026, through March 28, 2026

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$263

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/toefl-test-of-english-as-a-foreign-language-winter-26-exam-preparation-tickets-1980484732147?aff=oddtcreator>

ATI TEAS TEST PREPARATION WORKSHOP WINTER 2026 SCIENCE/MATH ONLY (ONLINE)

February 28, 2026, through March 28, 2026

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Price: \$152

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ati-teas-test-preparation-workshop-winter-2026-sciencemath-onlyonline-tickets-1980486597727?aff=oddtcreator>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Saturday, February 28, 2026

9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. | Price: \$81

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-winter-2026-dates-tickets-1980006204859?aff=oddtcreator>

KNIFE SKILLS COOKING CLASS (IN-PERSON)

Saturday, February 28, 2026

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$110

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/knife-skills-cooking-class-tickets-1981946416083?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

Nickey Boyd, A.S., Culinary Arts, HCCC Class of 2015

Owner and pastry chef at Sweets by Nickoy in Jacksonville, FL. She has previously worked as a pastry chef (and executive pastry chef) at various restaurants and hospitality groups.

What brought you to HCCC?

What made it the right choice for you?

I realized HCCC was the right choice for me because it was local, the class sizes were small and there was a lot of diversity – people with different educational levels and from all walks of life alongside you in each class.

How did you become interested in culinary arts?

I watched my mom and dad cook a lot growing up. It took me a while to realize it was also a passion of mine but after doing a lot of cooking and baking at home, I started to consider a career in the culinary industry.

What got you interested in pastries, and pastry arts as a career path?

I actually prefer cooking savory dishes, but it was initially a business decision as I assumed pastries would be the best way to start a business. I figured that it was probably easier to sell cupcakes than savory dishes, but now, based on my experience in the industry, I realize that either direction would have paid off for me. Ultimately, I do love creating beautiful desserts for people.

How did your time at HCCC help prepare you for your career? What was your first job after culinary school?

My time at HCCC prepared me for my career because we got to see what the real world was like through the eyes of our instructors. It was refreshing being taught by individuals who attended the culinary program at HCCC and worked in the fields we were heading into, so they were able to give us stories and advice from both their personal and professional experience.

My first job after graduating was at Chocopain in Jersey City. Working there increased my love and appreciation for French pastries. I learned



so much working there and still use some of the techniques today.

Tell us about Sweets by Nickoy!

Sweets by Nickoy is the business I started after culinary school. It's a space where I get to create classic yet high-end desserts for parties and weddings. It is also a way that I give back by offering my services and products at low to no cost for people who would like the experience but probably can't afford it.

What inspired you to give back like that?

I initially started offering my services for free when I didn't have clients and would bake for my church, but when I saw how happy it made people, I realized I wanted to bring that happiness to anyone in need. I've baked for churches, friends, the community, and even for hospitals during COVID.

I'm sure it made an impact by showing others that there are still kind-hearted people that can do something they love without there being a cost involved and purely for the enjoyment of others.

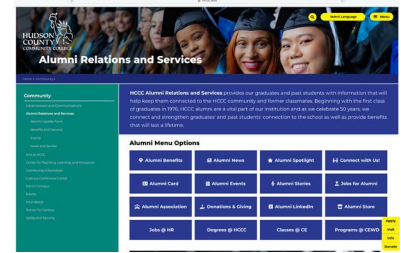
What advice do you have for students who want to follow in your footsteps?

One piece of advice I would offer is to never give up on your goals and dreams. There's room and space in this world and in this industry for all of us to win. Also, when you feel like you've made it to the top, reach your hand down and help those who started where you were.

Any favorite memories of HCCC you'd like to share?

I met lots of memorable people during my time at HCCC, including Chef Lontoc, Chef Puk, Dr K., and Ms. Webb. I made tons of friends along the way as well.

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!

HCCC HOLDS DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ANNUAL MEMORIAL

Continued from page 2

Richardson Foundation, he continues to promote social responsibility, criminal justice reform, and transformative futures.

"Every year, we celebrate Dr. King's accomplishments and reflect on the common thread of truth speaking to power, past and present,"

said Dr. Reber. "It requires dialogue, determination, and tenacity. We are proud to honor the past and work to ensure our civil liberties are upheld with civility, in the courageous spirit of leaders like Dr. King."

Watch the video: <https://youtu.be/d054zMs16DQ>



The Alumni Association has launched its new Instagram page!

**Follow us at
@hccc_alumni**

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Union City, NJ 07087
Phone (201) 360-4600

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One High Tech Way
Secaucus, NJ 07094
Phone (201) 360-4388

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50 FACES OF ALUMNI:

As part of Hudson County Community College's 50th Anniversary, we celebrate 50 Faces of Alumni: Fifty and Forward — a campaign recognizing the vital impact alumni have on the College, the workforce, and the community. The initiative highlights 50 graduates from diverse backgrounds, industries, and levels of achievement. "50 Faces" is available online at <https://www.hccc.edu/community/alumni-services/50-faces/index.html>.

50 Faces of Alumni

"I view each challenge as an opportunity for growth and this mindset is the cornerstone of my academic and professional journey"



Courage Labhan
Engineer at Type One Energy
Associates in Science, Engineering
Science, Class of 2020

50 Faces of Alumni

"When I decided it was time to go back to school, there was no question—HCCC was where I belonged."



Alexandra Velez
Founder/CEO of Velez Consulting Services
Computer Science A.S. Cybersecurity
Option, Class of 2022

Alumni Association 2026 Alumni Meetings

- Tuesday, April 7, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- 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 Street, Multipurpose Room, Jersey City or virtually.

Alumni Association Events:

Interested in attending these events, please email us at alumni@hccc.edu

March

March 21, 2 p.m.
Alumni Association Broadway Show

May

May 16
Alumni Reunion - Alumni Association
BBQ Networking Event
Washington Square Park, Jersey City Heights

April

April 21, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Alumni Job Fair in collaboration
with Career Services & Community
Education and Workforce Development

HCCC Alumni: Get Involved!

Join, socialize, and network!

For information about the College's Alumni Association and membership benefits, please email alumni@hccc.edu.

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



COLLEGE EVENTS CALENDAR

For the most up-to-date information, please visit <https://www.hccc.edu/calendar>.

Hudson County Community College reserves the right to modify the calendar as necessary.

