

HCCC Happenings

A publication of the Communications Department



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HONORS MORE THAN 1,540 GRADUATES AT THE COLLEGE'S 48TH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY



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HCCC Welcomes Inaugural
Director of Athletics and
Vice President for Human Resources

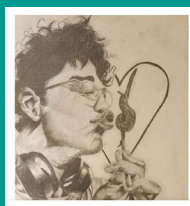


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From the Editor's Desk

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

Items for the July newsletter are due by Friday, June 13, 2025.

Please send your news items, comments and suggestions to:

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HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE HONORS MORE THAN 1,540 GRADUATES AT THE COLLEGE'S 48TH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) celebrated the academic achievements of more than 1,540 students at the College's 48th Annual Commencement ceremonies. The event was held Wednesday, May 21 at Sports Illustrated Stadium, 600 Cape May Street in Harrison, NJ.

HCCC recognized graduates who completed, or will complete, their degree requirements during the Summer II 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Summer I 2025, and Summer II 2025 terms.

Valedictorian Lidia Khayrulina addressed her classmates, their families, the HCCC Board of Trustees, faculty, and other honored guests at the ceremony. (Editor's Note: For more information about Lidia, see related article on page 12.)



ON THE COVER: Hudson County Community College graduated its largest class ever at their 48th Commencement Ceremonies on May 21, 2025 at Sports Illustrated Stadium.

HCCC PARTICIPATES IN SAVE LATIN AMERICA FAMILY HEALTH FESTIVAL

On Sunday, April 27, Hudson County Community College participated in the Save Latin America Family Health Festival at Union City High School. This event provided hundreds of families with free health services, information, and access to local social programs.

Pictured from left: Dr. Yeurys Pujols, Vice President for Institutional Engagement and Excellence; HCCC President Dr. Chris Reber; and SLA President and Founder, Anthony Ibarria. (Photo courtesy of Atabey Consulting)



ATD COACHES CONCLUDE HCCC SITE VISITS FOR YEAR



HCCC's Achieving the Dream Leadership and Data Coaches made their final visit to campus for the 2024-25 academic year.

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WELCOMES INAUGURAL DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) added two new members to its administrative team, directing the new Athletics Program and leading Human Resources.

Jonathan Sisk is the College's inaugural Director of Athletics and will lead the development of the HCCC Athletics Programs that will eventually include ten varsity sports. He is an athletics leader with more than 10 years of experience managing intercollegiate athletics programs, primarily within the National Junior College Athletic Association in three regions. Mr. Sisk served at Malcolm X College and Wilbur Wright College, both part of the City Colleges of Chicago system. He began his career at Queens University of Charlotte and served as Director of Athletics at Barber-Scotia College, Central Carolina Community College (all in North Carolina), and SUNY Adirondack in New York. Originally from Ninety-Six, South Carolina, Mr. Sisk earned his Bachelor's degree in Sports Management from Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, and his Master of Education degree in Sports



Hudson County Community College announced that Jonathan Sisk (left) has been named the College's inaugural Director of Athletics, and Bob DiMartino the new HCCC Vice President of Human resources.

Administration from Wingate University, also both in North Carolina.

Robert DiMartino is the College's new Vice President for Human Resources (HR). He is an experienced HR leader across various industries and ownership structures and has held leadership roles at PepsiCo-Frito Lay, Hess Oil, Louis Vuitton-Moët-Hennessy USA, Polo Ralph Lauren, Bacardi, and CoWorx Staffing Services. Mr. DiMartino earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering

from New Jersey Institute of Technology and began his career with BASF as a process engineer. Having experienced a labor strike at a chemical plant, Mr. DiMartino decided to pursue a Juris Doctor degree from Brooklyn Law School focusing on labor and employment law, and transition his career from engineering to Human Resources. His expertise includes leadership coaching, talent management, labor relations, optimizing Human Resources functions, driving performance management, fostering high-performance cultures, succession planning, mergers and acquisitions, organizational design, change management, total rewards strategies, regulatory compliance, and labor and employment law.

"The entire HCCC family welcomes Jonathan Sisk and Bob DiMartino," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "Jonathan is the ideal candidate to help build and launch our long-planned and exciting athletics program beginning next year. Bob brings a wealth of HR knowledge and experience to help lead our Office of Human Resources. Our HCCC community looks forward to their leadership."

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT WINS NISOD NATIONAL STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

The mentoring relationship between student and instructor fosters growth through engagement, skills development, and sharing wisdom and insight.

Such is the case with Hudson County Community College (HCCC) student Felix Cintron and HCCC Chemistry Instructor, Raffi Manjikian. Their bond is captured in Felix's essay, one of three selected as winners from more than 160 entries in the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) National Student Essay Contest. Students were asked to describe a faculty member, staff member, or administrator who encouraged them to persevere in their studies, finish a semester, or graduate from college. Felix nominated Instructor Manjikian as his inspiration for pursuing his college degree. Felix and Instructor Manjikian each received a \$1,000 prize, travel, and lodging to the NISOD International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence in Austin, Texas later last month. Felix's essay will be published on the NISOD website, and the College will receive a complimentary 2025-2026 NISOD membership.

The relationship began in an unlikely place: Felix was Instructor Manjikian's personal

trainer, guiding him through strength training techniques and supporting and monitoring his progress. They connected instantly over fitness. Although Felix felt comfortable in the discipline of a gym environment, his conversations with Instructor Manjikian broadened into deeper life reflections. Felix had spent years longing for goals beyond physical fitness advocacy. Instructor Manjikian, the HCCC Chemistry Instructor, All College Council Vice-Chair, and President's Advisory Council on Institutional Engagement and Excellence (PACE) Co-Chair, convinced Felix to reach his full potential with three seemingly simple words: "Hudson is Home." The pronouncement and accompanying encouragement compelled Felix to enroll at HCCC, major in Criminal Justice, and rediscover his love for learning. Instructor Manjikian became a guiding force, pushing Felix to embrace the discomfort of growth, view setbacks as stepping stones, and believe in his abilities.

"The transition was challenging. I had been out of school for more than 35 years and self-doubt started to creep in. These fears loomed large, but Instructor Manjikian never wavered in his encouragement," Felix wrote in his essay, "Navigating My Journey: From Early Stages to Graduation." "My journey has been shaped by



HCCC student Felix Cintron (left) won the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) National Student Essay Contest for recounting how his relationship with Instructor Raffi Manjikian (right) transformed his life.

resilience, determination, and the kindness of a mentor who saw my potential before I did. Looking back, I realize that my story is not just about education, it is about transformation, the power of mentorship, the importance of taking chances, and the courage to step into the unknown."

"Felix Cintron exemplifies why it's never too late to pursue a dream that may have laid dormant," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber. "Raffi Manjikian proudly demonstrates the HCCC community's power to transform lives and to truly make 'Hudson Home.' The entire HCCC family congratulates them both."

Continued on page 15

MILESTONES

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

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year

Alexa Andrade
Sarah Andrews
Ariana Calle
George Hill
Kadira Johnson
Keisha Taylor
Mylz Wilson

10 Years

Heather Devries
Paula JnoVile Roney

20 Years

Gregory Burns

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

One Year

Analyne Aponte
Abdessamad Belguebli
Rehab Bensaid
Shanta Carter
Lisa Fernandez
Gauri Gangaram
Jamia Jones
Sharayah Manwah
Miranda Martinez
Eva Quezada
Kayla Sandomenico
Jelani Scriven
Anna Starzec
Cristal Ventura Flores

EMPLOYEE PERKS

Employee Assistance Program

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

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development

<https://www.nisod.org>

LinkedIn Learning

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

APPOINTMENT OF FULL-TIME STAFF

Carlos Alvarez, Academic Counselor, Hudson Scholars (May 19, 2025)

Faizan Aslam, Registrar Coordinator (May 16, 2025)

Belinda Austin, Associate Director, Advisement, North Hudson Campus (May 19, 2025)

Karyn Barrera, Academic Counselor, Hudson Scholars (May 19, 2025)

Kelvin Clark, Academic Counselor, Hudson Scholars May 19, 2025

APRIL HIGHLIGHTS: CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE, OUR PURPOSE, AND OUR POTENTIAL!

April was a month filled with events that brought us together, celebrated our community, and reminded us of the bright future ahead. Here's a look back at the wonderful moments we shared:

April 23 – Administrative Professionals Day

We kicked off the festivities with a heartfelt celebration of our amazing administrative professionals! Hosted in the STEM Multi-purpose Room, the luncheon was a chance to relax, connect, and show appreciation for the folks who keep everything running smoothly behind the scenes. Attendees introduced themselves with fun facts, shared laughs, and enjoyed a delicious meal. Goodie bags added a sweet touch, and a few lucky winners walked away with prizes thanks to a ticket raffle. It was a joyful afternoon of gratitude and camaraderie!

April 24 – Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day (TODAS)

The next day, the campus was buzzing with youthful energy as we welcomed our future leaders for TODAS! The children participated in fun and engaging interviews, sharing their dreams of becoming doctors, neurosurgeons, entrepreneurs, CEOs, scientists, and more. Their enthusiasm and big dreams reminded us all that the future is not only bright—it's brilliant! The day wrapped up with smiles, inspiration, a renewed sense of purpose....and ice cream!

April 29 – Virtual Professional Development Day

Professional growth took center stage during our Virtual Professional Development Day. Dr. Christopher Reber opened the event with a warm welcome, setting the tone for a day of learning and reflection. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Lisa Dougherty, brought a perfect blend



Jo Ann Kulpeksa, Student Services Assistant, Hudson Hub One Stop Student Services Center (right) is joined by her twin sister Michelle and HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber as she is celebrated as a retiree during the STAR Luncheon on April 30.



Aura Matias, Administrative Support Specialist (center) is joined by HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber (left) and Joseph Caniglia, Executive Director of the North Hudson Campus during her recognition of 40 years of service to the College at the STAR Luncheon on April 30.

of wit and wisdom, leaving attendees feeling inspired and energized. From breakout sessions to thought-provoking discussions, the day was a powerful reminder of the value of lifelong learning.

April 30 – STARS Recognition Event

We closed out the month with a standing ovation for our dedicated faculty and staff at the annual STARS event. This cherished tradition honors milestone years of service—from five to an incredible 45 years! The celebration was filled with heartfelt moments, shared memories, and deep appreciation for the individuals who make HCCC shine. It was a beautiful tribute to the commitment and passion that define our community.

In Summary

From appreciation to aspiration, April was a month that showcased the very best of HCCC. Here's to our people, our purpose, and the promise of what's to come!

APPOINTMENT OF FULL-TIME STAFF

Aires Gomes, Facilities Worker (June 1, 2025)

Gina Lauria, Academic Counselor, Hudson Scholars (May 19, 2025)

Marna Moezz, Associate Director, Advisement, JSQ Campus (May 19, 2025)

Crystal Newton, Career and Transfer Coach (May 19, 2025)

Carlos Ortiz, Academic Counselor, Hudson Scholars (May 19, 2025)

Manuel Preciado, Financial Aid Advisor (May 16, 2025)

Hannah Wright, Academic Counselor, Hudson Scholars (May 19, 2025)

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- Adoption services

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- Continuing education
- Financial aid and scholarships
- College consultation

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- Pet insurance or trainers
- Moving and relocation
- Transportation
- Meals and groceries

Concierge

- Travel Planning
- Car rental
- Dining and entertainment
- Budgeting resources
- Community legal

Career & Work

- Resume writing and editing services
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- Career counseling
- Community resources
- Interview tips

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- Specialty care
- Gyms and fitness centers
- Nutritionists
- Health coaches
- Alternative medical providers

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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>



APPROVAL OF FACULTY PROMOTIONS

The following faculty are recommended for promotion to the rank of Professor effective Academic Year 2025-26.

Sirhan Abdullah, Professor of Health Sciences

Peter Cronrath, Professor of Business

Joseph Gallo, Professor of Theatre Arts

Denise Knapp, Professor of Human Services

Azhar Mahmood, Professor of Chemistry

The following faculty are recommended for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor effective Academic Year 2025-26.

Clive Li, Associate Professor of Engineering Science

Jihan Nakhla, Associate Professor of Medical Assisting

Fatma Tat, Associate Professor of Chemistry

Mohammad Abdallah Qasem, Associate Professor of Physics

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY FULL-TIME FACULTY

Nicolas Barrios, Instructor, Exercise Science and Personal Fitness Training (August 16, 2025 - June 15, 2026)

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY FULL-TIME STAFF

Karina Arango, Student Success Manager (Grant-funded June 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025)

Maryam Arkkou, Financial Aid Assistant (May 16, 2025 - November 15, 2025)

Fabiola Ocean, Student Success Manager (Grant-funded June 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025)

Betzabe Reyes, Administrative Support Specialist (May 25, 2025 - December 31, 2025)

Victoria Vasquez, CTE Senior Assistant Director (Grant-funded May 19, 2025 - June 30, 2025)

New Host Venue for 2025!

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

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

10:00 a.m. Shotgun Start



Any questions, please contact: foundation@hccc.edu



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.



Sarah Brayer, *Crescent Glow* (2017). Silkscreen and Chine-collé on unryu Mulberry paper with Phosphorescent Pigment, 21" x 26"

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Charles and Annie Kessler who recently donated 60 art books, 312 art catalogs and brochures, and one poster to the Foundation Art Collection. These wonderful objects will be organized and shelved this summer. Thank you to Dennis Hull for the lovely Stangl pottery. Stangl was a New Jersey pottery factory from the 1800s – 1970s. Many works of Stangl pottery can be seen on exhibit at the North Hudson Library and the Gabert Library.

ARTIST NEWS

New Jersey artist **Barbara Madsen**, whose print work is installed on the first and fifth floors of the STEM Building, recently exhibited her sculpture and silkscreen prints at The Blanc, an arts space in midtown Manhattan through May 1 in a solo show called, *Barbara Madsen Unseen: Assembly Required*. This reminds us of a long-ago interview with the artist in *Art Critical*, where she talked about a relationship between art and anger. Her points seem relevant to the present moment, when she talked about her work as, “a documentation of excess and hyper-consumption.” The interviewer said, “But I don’t feel you’re making a value judgment against accumulation or consumption.”

The artist replied, “Absolutely. I strongly believe that angry diatribe is a failed strategy. You can’t reach people by screaming at them. If you can engage people through looking closely, then you might have a chance at a conversation.” <https://artcritical.com/2015/06/13/eric-sutphin-madsen-moseni/>

What other successful strategy can help in a difficult time? A recent article in the *American Alliance of Museums, Center for the Future of Museums* blog by Elizabeth Merritt suggests optimism; Merritt says, “research shows that cultivating optimism isn’t just a feel-good exercise, it’s a practical tool, a prerequisite for making change.” She talks about the work of Kevin Kelly, “At a time when anything like utopia may seem utterly out of reach, Kelly advocates for pro-topias instead: futures that are not perfect, but a little bit better than the present. Just enough better to give us more reasons to hope than to fear. These small changes for the better yield, over time, what Kelly calls the compound interest of incremental improvement. ‘We should be optimistic not because we believe that our problems are smaller than we thought....We should be optimistic because we believe that our capacity to solve

problems is greater than we thought....and gigantic problems require gigantic optimism.” For more information, or more hope, go here https://www.aam-us.org/2025/04/29/cultivating-optimism-signals-of-hope/?utm_source=American+Alliance+of+Museums&utm_campaign=e2db9f9bed-FieldNotes_2025_May5&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0-e2db9f9bed-67748658

Looking at art can also help shift one’s thinking. New Jersey artist **Nancy Cohen**’s work is on view in the Hudson Helps office on the third floor of the 70 Sip Avenue building. Some new pieces were on exhibit through May 31 in a group show called, *Beyond the Threads: Women’s Fiber Show*, at the Ria X Gallery in Montclair. You can see a show catalog here: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61c0f0a0797079521ee02fb9/t/67fc26ab453b621ef974ebba/1744578223385/Beyond+the+Thread+Catalog.pdf>

If you like the **Sarah Brayer** work on view at the cafeteria in the North Hudson building, you can see more of her work in an “online exhibit” at Ronin Gallery: <https://www.roninalgallery.com/artists/Brayer-sarah>

Barbara Kruger, whose work is installed on the second floor of the 2 Enos Place Building, has a new project, an artwork on a Ukrainian Intercity Train which will travel throughout Ukraine from May 1 – July 14. The artist works with words and typeface. Emblazoned on the side of the train are words in Kruger’s emblematic signage. Here is a translation from Ukrainian of what is written on the train: “Another Day Another Night Another Darkness Another Light Another Kiss Another Fight Another Loss Another Win Another Wish Another Sin Another Smile Another Tear Another Hope Another Fear Another Love Another Year Another Strife Another Life.”

Oleksandr Pertsovskyi, the chief executive of Ukrainian Railways, said: “Ukrainian Railways is excited to work with one of the world’s most renowned artists to bring the message of solidarity to Ukrainians as well as the message of our country’s resilience to the world. Throughout the full-scale war we have become far more than just public transport and constantly seek new creative ways to make an impact.” <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/04/22/barbara-kruger-to-unveil-new-text-work-on-ukrainian-train>

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.

OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS presents



Bands of different genres will perform live at Cultural Affairs' Rooftop Concert Series.

The Office of Cultural Affairs is producing a three-night concert series at the Gabert Library Atrium (71 Sip Avenue, 6th Floor) on May 29, June 5, and June 12. The concert is in partnership with local record label, Brilliant/Skull, the brainchild of alumnus Jack Engdall. Jack Engdall is a welcomed addition to the Cultural Affairs Office after recently graduating from Montclair State University with a bachelor's degree in Film and Television.

Engdall curated the new series featuring East Coast bands. The last night celebrating local jazz band, The Wonder Collective, features several HCCC alumni. Local vendors and the HCCC Art Club are selling merchandise, and the concerts are accompanied by visual art projections. The events are free and open to the public with proper identification. Doors open at 7 p.m. and music begins at 8 p.m.

Follow Us

For more information, email:
mvitale@hccc.edu or visit

www.hccc.edu/community/arts/doca-culture.html

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HUDSON B.E.S.T. COMPLETES ITS FIRST COHORT WITH SUCCESS



Hudson B.E.S.T. Cohort pictured with Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Darryl Jones, Dean of the School of BCH, Dr. Ara Karakashian and faculty mentors Elana Winslow and Dr. Peter Cronrath.

The first Hudson County Community College (HCCC) B.E.S.T. cohort brought together an incredible group of students who achieved a great deal this year. We kicked off the program in September with a brunch and closed the year with another in May.

Each student partnered with an inspiring mentor from their field of interest, who supported their academic and professional development. Students visited the HCCC Career Closet, where they learned how to dress for success and discovered the valuable resources that Hudson Helps provides at the College.

During a special Career Development event, students engaged with the remarkable Ms. Liza Giuliano, Vice President and Program Manager

of Global Human Resources—Community Partnerships at Bank of America. She shared her professional journey, offered job-seeking advice, and discussed the human resources field. Students also viewed a LinkedIn video presentation, and the talented Roy Groething captured professional headshots for their profiles and other professional uses.

The B.E.S.T. students attended the Chase Financial Summit, where they gained insight from leaders in banking and finance. The event offered valuable professional development and networking opportunities. Students also participated in an engaging virtual session with Chaeri Doh from the Federal Reserve Bank, who delivered an informative and captivating presentation.

Students formed three teams to take part in the Bloomberg Finance Trading Challenge, competing against 2,400 university teams worldwide.

In November, several students shared their experiences and reflections with the HCCC Board of Trustees.

To expand their learning beyond the classroom, students explored Wall Street and the Financial District on a group trip. Richard Walker, Associate Director of Institutional Engagement and Excellence Training, led an inspiring, interactive workshop on perception, inclusiveness, and equity, helping students bring these important topics to life.

Students also competed in the Rutgers Business School New Jersey County College Case Competition, where they delivered a polished presentation on IKEA—showcasing thorough research, innovative ideas, and contagious enthusiasm.

Finally, B.E.S.T. students presented a creative and exciting entrepreneurial idea at the internal Mission 50 Pitch Competition.

CELEBRATING CREATIVITY: WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR 15TH ANNUAL FOUNDATION ART AWARDS



"Slug Love"
by Izzy Gonzalez



"Heart"
by Eliza Nunez

For the 15th straight year, the HCCC Foundation held its annual Foundation Student Art Awards, recognizing outstanding student talent in the visual arts. This year's contest continues a strong tradition of honoring creativity and artistic excellence among the College's student body.

Two exceptional works won the prestigious \$500 purchase Award: *Slug Love*, a graphite pencil drawing by Izzy Gonzalez and *Heart*, an acrylic on watercolor painting by Eliza Nunez. These two outstanding pieces are slated to join the College's growing Foundation Art Collection, where they will live alongside works by world-renowned artists such as Pablo Picasso, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and many more.

Gonzalez reflected on the important role creating art plays in her life, explaining that, "Making art is more than a hobby for me - it's what I truly want to do in my life. Art has multiple functions for me, with one of those functions being capturing personal moments and experiences that bring me joy in remembering them. Spending hours on each miniscule detail - while painful - helps me recall the beauty in everything I see. Those little details make up wonderful memories that I do not wish to forget. Despite not pursuing a major in art, the joy of creating art is irreplaceable in my life; I don't know what my life would be like without it."

Nunez states, "I want my work to evoke emotion and convey a meaningful message

for both the viewer and myself. Most of my work is inspired by my own emotions and films. I began creating art because it has always been a part of who I am. Sometimes I become so deeply involved in my work that it feels obsessive and incredibly intense; other times, it's less so. However, there is hardly a day when I do nothing related to art. For me, art is much more than a habit. I feel compelled to paint because the physical act of creating brings me joy."

Additionally, \$150 gift certificates were awarded to contestants Susan Chapas, Iris Garcia, Leilani Greywolf, and Zhaoujun Guo in recognition of their impressive submissions.

The selection process was made possible through the thoughtful deliberation of a dedicated panel of judges, including Art Professors Jeremiah Teipen and Michael Lee; Dean of Student Affairs Dr. David Clark; Administrative Assistant Marta Cimillo; and several gallery and community representatives such as Darius Gilmore, Salma Abdelwahed, and Jack Engdall. Their time and expertise played a crucial role in highlighting the diverse and innovative talent on display this year.

Congratulations to all of the winners, and sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the event, made possible through the support of the HCCC Foundation. The Foundation Student Art Awards not only uplifts our artists but also strengthens the social and cultural fabric of our College community.

SPRING LEARNING COMMUNITY DAY PRESENTATIONS



On Wednesday, April 30, 2025, Hudson County Community College students enrolled in Spring 2025 Learning Community courses prepared posters and oral presentations at the semiannual Learning Community Day at the Student Center. A learning community is a cluster of two or more courses, often with the same theme. The faculty of each respective course coordinate class work, assignments, and field trips to assist the linked group of students with discovering and exploring connections between distinct and unseeingly fields of study.

Fall 2025 Startup Dates



Friday, Aug. 22
College Service Day

Monday, Aug. 25
All College Adjunct
Faculty Orientation

Wednesday, Aug. 27
New Student Convocation

PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY NEWS



Phi Theta Kappa, Beta Alpha Phi Chapter induction ceremony on April 27th.

Beta Alpha Phi Inducts New Members

On Sunday, April 27, during its 30th Anniversary Induction Ceremony, Beta Alpha Phi—Hudson County Community College's Phi Theta Kappa Chapter—inducted more than 120 students who met Society qualifications as new members. The chapter also held a changing-of-the-guard ceremony in which the 2025-26 officers took their oaths of office.

Dale P. Parnell Faculty Distinction Recognition

Congratulations to Professor Ted Lai on his selection as a 2025 Dale P. Parnell Faculty Distinction Recognition honoree by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)! This award, named in honor of former AACC President and CEO Dale P. Parnell, was established to recognize faculty members making a difference in the community college classroom.

Prof. Lai was unable to attend the AACC Annual Conference in Nashville, TN, but his medallion was shipped to him. This award represented a fitting conclusion to a milestone year.



Prof. Ted Lai (right) displays his Dale P. Parnell Faculty Distinction Recognition from the American Association of Community Colleges; Sandra Aviles is pictured at left.

New Jersey Community College Student Leadership Summit

On Friday, April 25, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges hosted its annual New Jersey Community College Student Leadership Summit at Brookdale Community College. The day was filled with engaging activities—presentations, workshops, and recognition of the New Jersey All-State Academic Team—that promoted awareness about the challenges community colleges are facing, and building an impactful campus through community connections and ethical leadership; and meeting representatives from other community colleges.



Marolla Youakim (left) and Mina Abdelmaseeh at the New Jersey Community College Student Leadership Summit in April.

PROFESSIONAL NOTES



Congratulations to **Brianna Casagrande**, Associate Director of Career & Transfer Pathways, for receiving the Outstanding Graduate Achievement Award in Higher Education/Student Affairs. The Montclair State University Counseling Department at the College for Community Health honored her at the 2025 Scholarship and Awards Ceremony on April 15. The department selected Casagrande as the alumna recipient representing the Counseling, Higher Education, and Student Affairs cohort.



At HCCC, ESL Means “Engagement Supports Learning!” While ESL traditionally stands for “English as a Second Language,” it could just as easily stand for Engagement Supports Learning at HCCC. Instructor Sonja Rodiger-Radovic’s students certainly prove that point. Throughout Spring 2025, they actively participated in campus events that supported their English language development and strengthened their connection to the HCCC community. Rodiger-Radovic extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who warmly welcomed her students, integrated them into events, and supported their language learning through inclusion and engagement.

In Spring 2025, her students attended events such as:

- The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Memorial
- The Continuing Education and Workforce Development Career Readiness Workshop
- The Teaching and Learning Symposium on Social Justice in Higher Education
- The ESL Resource Center’s Conversation and Pronunciation Workshop Series
- The Women in Business Interactive Discussion with HCCC Trustee Stacy Gemma, hosted by the School of Business, Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management
- The “Writing about Art” Workshop by the HCCC Poetry and Language Collective

We've been celebrating ...



SIGMA KAPPA DELTA INDUCTION

Members were inducted into the Omicron Epsilon chapter of Sigma Kappa Delta at Hudson County Community College in a ceremony on April 24.



LAVENDER GRADUATION

The College honored the achievements and contributions of graduating LGBTQIA+ students at a Lavender Graduation Ceremony on Thursday, May 1.

GRADUATION LUAU AT NHC

The Office of Student Life got the Commencement festivities started with a Graduation Luau at the North Hudson Campus on Tuesday, May 6.



GRAD SALUTE

The Class of 2025 entered celebration mode during Graduation Salutes at North Hudson Campus (April 17) and Journal Square Campus (April 23).



GRADUATION LUAU AT JOURNAL SQUARE CAMPUS

Hudson County Community College held a Graduation Luau at the Journal Square Campus on Wednesday, May 7.



HUDSON SCHOLARS GRADUATION

The Hudson Scholars Program celebrated a cohort of graduates at a ceremony on Friday, May 2.



KENTE GRADUATION

HCCC recognized the educational and cultural achievement of students representing the African diaspora at its Kente Graduation ceremony on Tuesday, May 13.



PSI BETA INDUCTION CEREMONY

Congratulations to our newest Psi Beta members, inducted on May 15! We're proud to celebrate your academic achievement and dedication to psychology.



ACADEMIC AWARDS

On Wednesday, May 14, we celebrated our students' successes at The Annual Academic Achievement & Excellence Awards in the Culinary Conference Center.

ESL TO GRADUATION: A CELEBRATION

On Thursday, May 15, HCCC honored graduating students who began their journeys in Hudson's ESL Program during the "ESL to Graduation: A Celebration" event.





EOF GRAD

The Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program recognized outstanding students at its EOF Graduation Celebration on Friday, May 9.



AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY INDUCTION

The HCCC chapter of the American Chemical Society (ACS) held its induction ceremony on Friday, May 9.



CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT GRADUATION

On Monday, May 12, the College honored students in its Construction Management program who earned Stackable Credit Certificates.



THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESS

The National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) welcomed new members at its induction ceremony on Monday, May 5.

EARLY COLLEGE GRADUATION

Students received recognition for their achievements in the Early College Program during a ceremony held on Friday, May 16.



STUDENT LEADER & CLUB RECOGNITION

HCCC recognized student club executive board members and their advisors during a Student Leader & Club Recognition event on Monday, April 21.



GRADUATION FORMAL

Graduates and guests danced the night away at the Graduation Formal on May 14, held at Hudson House.

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASS OF 2025 VALEDICTORIAN SHARES HER HIGHER EDUCATION JOURNEY AT THE COLLEGE'S 48TH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

A first-generation Russian immigrant, Lidia Khayrulina worked at a local newspaper when she heard about Hudson County Community College (HCCC). The information was so compelling and welcoming that Lidia set her mind on building a meaningful career through higher education at HCCC.

On Wednesday, May 21, 2025, Lidia addressed her classmates, their families, the HCCC Board of Trustees, faculty, and other guests as Valedictorian of the Class of 2025 at the College's 48th Annual Commencement Ceremony. The event took place at Sports Illustrated Stadium in Harrison, NJ.

"I had doubts about my English, being older than most students, and whether I would belong in a college environment," Lidia says. She put aside her fear of failing, took the placement test, mastered English as her second language, and began studying for her HCCC Associate in Science degree in Business Administration. That moment marked a turning point in her life.

A Jersey City resident, Lidia is an HCCC Foundation Scholar, 2025 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship Semifinalist, and New Jersey Council of County Colleges "New Jersey Student



of the Year" nominee. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society, the PTK New Jersey All-State Academic Team, National Society of Leadership and Success, and Sigma Kappa Delta English Honor Society.

Lidia's academic journey is rich in growth and discovery, excelling in Business Administration and other programs. She participated in the College's innovative B.E.S.T. (Business Education Supplemental Training) program, Bloomberg Financial Challenge, Mission 50 Competition, and Rutgers University Business School-New Jersey Council of County Colleges Competition. Lidia also served as a project-based marketing intern at the nonprofit We Care Movement that assists families, single-parent households, and

youth, and she has started a new marketing internship with a startup beverage company.

Lidia participated in a variety of extracurricular activities, clubs, and volunteer opportunities. As an Executive Board Member of the Model United Nations, she was an HCCC delegate at the Harvard National Model UN Conference in Boston. She is active in the Girls Who Code, Environmental, Business and Accounting, and Sisters Empower Sisters clubs. Lidia attended the Phi Theta Kappa Middle States Summer Leadership and Honors Institute and Regional Conventions. An environmental advocate, she volunteers for Friends of Liberty State Park and Hackensack Riverkeeper to help make Hudson County a healthier, more beautiful place to live and work.

Committed to her newly adopted home in the United States, Lidia noted that she never expected to find such a strong community in Hudson County. "I've been motivated by the many student-led projects, the extracurricular activities, and the meaningful support the College offers."

"Lidia embodies the finest ideals of Hudson County Community College students. Her personal experiences, academic achievements, and dedication make her an inspiration to all," said HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber.





THE CULINARY ARTS INSTITUTE'S SUCCESSFUL FINALE



The Culinary Arts Institute (CAI) wrapped up the school year with a host of memorable events that showcased the talent, dedication, and passion of its students, faculty, and staff.

Kicking things off on May 3, the annual Culinary Club Friends and Family Food Fest welcomed over 150 guests to the third floor of the Culinary Conference Center. The event offered a nostalgic culinary journey, as club members prepared and served dishes inspired by their childhoods. From the first bite to the final dessert, attendees were treated to an experience that reflected the club's core values of Passion, Discipline, and Excellence.

On May 6, emotions ran high at the Culinary Exit Dinner, a cherished tradition that bids farewell to graduating students. The heartfelt evening, filled with gratitude and reflection, brought together faculty and students for a thanksgiving-style meal that, as always, stirred both appetites and emotions.

Beyond the kitchen, CAI 121 Product ID and Purchasing students expanded their industry knowledge with a private tour of the Driscoll facility in Wayne, New Jersey. The behind-the-scenes look at various departments gave students valuable insight into large-scale food production and distribution.

Capping off the week, Culinary Club members received VIP treatment at the acclaimed Jean-Georges restaurant in New York City. Greeted personally by the chef, students enjoyed a rare tour of the restaurant's state-of-the-art kitchen—a true once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the aspiring culinarians.

With a full plate of experiences, the CAI community ended the year with pride, inspiration, AND A HUNGER FOR WHAT'S NEXT.

HCCC SHORT FILM *STALLED!* PREMIERES AT GABERT LIBRARY

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) proudly announced the world premiere of an original short film, *STALLED!* on Monday, May 12, at the Student Center. This special event showcased the creative talents of HCCC's Theatre Arts students, who wrote and performed in the film and highlighted the College's commitment to storytelling, innovation, and community engagement. Professor of Theatre Arts Joseph Gallo directed the film.

The evening featured a screening of the film followed by a Q&A session with the filmmakers, cast, and crew.

STALLED! offers a unique look at what happens when ordinary circumstances take an unexpected turn — all within the most unlikely of settings.



Scenes from the reception and premiere of STALLED!



A scene from the film.

CELEBRATING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AT THE HONORS STUDENT SHOWCASE



The Honors Program held its semiannual Student Showcase on May 7, featuring Honors students' term projects in a variety of disciplines.

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) invited the entire college community to the Honors Student Showcase on Tuesday, May 7. The signature event celebrated the hard work, research, and academic achievements of students in the HCCC Honors Program.

The showcase featured a series of student presentations covering a wide range of disciplines, including science, literature, sociology, business, and the arts. Attendees engaged with students as they shared their original projects, research findings, and creative works developed during the Spring 2024 term.

The Honors Student Showcase reflected the high academic standards and interdisciplinary spirit of the Honors Program. The HCCC community recognized the dedication and intellectual curiosity of top-performing students.

NISOD NATIONAL STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

Continued from page 3

Instructor Manjikian shared: "I am incredibly proud of Felix and truly humbled to have played a role in shaping his path. Witnessing his growth — his curiosity, perseverance, and passion — over these past few years has been both an honor and a pleasure. Seeing him now, on the brink of a new academic chapter as he graduates from HCCC this semester, fills me with joy. I am excited to watch his dedication and talent continue to lead him to new heights."

"Each year, NISOD's Student Essay Contest celebrates the powerful impact that faculty, staff, and administrators have on student success. These inspiring essays highlight the dedication, mentorship, and support that make a real difference in students' lives," said Kris Tolman, NISOD Interim Associate Director. "We are honored to recognize both the students who share their stories and the individuals at our member colleges who inspire them."

To read Felix's winning essay, go to: <https://www.nisod.org/membership/student-essay-contest/submission/?essayToken=12795be2d054817bbce90ae46afa51ffe4027a37>.

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

HUDSON HEADLINERS! Now Featuring Construction Management



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

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

Tune into –

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

Watch for news about the next Hudson Headliners!



REGISTER NOW!

for Fall 2025 Classes



Community College Opportunity Grant

FREE TUITION for Eligible Students through the Community College Opportunity Grant (for those who qualify) For more information, go to: www.hccc.edu/freetuition



HCCC Offers Classes in Multiple Modalities

On-Campus, Online, Remote, Hybrid (On-Campus/Online), Hybrid (Remote/Online), and Immersive Telepresence Video (ITV)

Students must register at least one day prior to the first class meeting.

15-Week Fall Term
Thursday, August 28, 2025

12-Week Quick Term
and Classes at Secaucus Center
Thursday, September 18, 2025

7-Week Online Classes
Fall Online A and Fall 7-Week 1:
Thursday, August 28, 2025

Fall Online B and Fall 7-Week 2:
Saturday, October 25, 2025

Fall Course Schedule available for viewing NOW at www.hccc.edu/schedule!

APPLY NOW for Fall classes at www.hccc.edu/apply!

For more information on how to register, go to www.hccc.edu/admissions/register-for-classes

For more information contact:
admissions@hccc.edu
text (732) 509-4222
call (201) 714-7200



HCCC Faculty and Staff

- Who are your favorite local businesses?

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

Do you have a favorite coffee shop, deli, or restaurant? How about a bookstore, barber-shop, autobody, or other establishment near HCCC's campuses or beyond? Let us know!

By sharing the names of businesses you frequent, you'll help us connect with them about advertising opportunities in our guide.

Your recommendations will ensure that our guide features businesses that truly matter to the HCCC community. Send us your suggestions today and help us build a resource base that benefits both HCCC and our local economy – it's a win-win!



To submit: Scan QR code or click link below:

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

Any questions? foundation@hccc.edu



HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE presents

JUNETEENTH:

CELEBRATING AS WE PUSH FORWARD



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rev. Paul P. Martin, Esq.
Mt. Pisgah AME Church,
Jersey City

Reverend Paul P. Martin, Esq. is an ordained Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and a respected attorney with over three decades of legal experience. He serves as the 13th Pastor of the Historic Mt. Pisgah AME Church in Jersey City. Rev. Martin has led congregations across New York and New Jersey. As a seasoned trial attorney, he has handled high-profile cases including the Martha Stewart investigation, the Sean Bell case, and the New York Governor Paterson inquiry. A frequent legal analyst, his commentary has appeared on NBC's *Today Show*, CNN, HLN, and Fox News.



SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

Asha DaHomey
Tap Dancer, Songwriter,
Producer, and Director

Asha DaHomey is a tap dancer, international performing artist, educator, choreographer and creative force. She has worked with world-class artists, musicians, and choreographers including Esperanza Spalding, Michelle Dorrance, Dormeshia, Jason Samuels Smith, Toshi Reagon, Soles of Duende & The Wolphonics.

Thursday, June 19, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Gabert Library, Benjamin J. Dineen, III
and Dennis C. Hull Gallery
71 Sip Avenue, Sixth Floor, Jersey City, NJ

The evening includes songs, dance and performances.
Food and refreshments will be provided.

This celebration is open to all HCCC students, faculty, staff and community.

RSVP: <https://form.jotform.com/251174307459055>



CONFERENCE COVERAGE

HCCC Attends HACU National Capitol Forum on Higher Education



Pictured from left: Dr. Jose Lowe, Director of EOF; Dr. Yeurys Pujols, Vice President for Institutional Engagement and Excellence; and HCCC students Emily Gonzalez, Leonardo Amador, and Angel Bermudez at the HACU 30th Annual National Capitol Forum on Higher Education.

A delegation from Hudson County Community College attended the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' (HACU) 30th Annual National Capitol Forum on Higher Education in Washington, DC on April 29 and 30, 2025. The two-day Capitol Forum featured policy briefings on Hispanic-Serving Institution priorities and delegation visits to Capitol Hill to meet in person with congressional leaders to advocate for HSIs and the students they serve.

Eastern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (EASFAA) 2025 Annual Conference, Foxwoods Resort, CT



Members of HCCC's Financial Aid leadership at the Eastern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (EASFAA) 2025 Annual Conference, from left: Christine Petersen, Associate Director; Sheila Aitouakrim, Associate Director; and Sylvia Mendoza, Dean of Financial Aid.

The Hudson County Community College Financial Aid team presented "Innovative Strategies to Boost FAFSA Completion Rates: Leveraging Technology and Targeted Communication" at the EASFAA 2025 Annual Conference in May. The presentation explored innovative strategies to boost FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion rates. The team also invited feedback from colleagues on the comprehensive approaches they have implemented at their institutions to encourage FAFSA applications and improve accessibility for students and families.

THINK FAST! IMPROV TEACHER INSPIRES ACTING STUDENTS WITH ON-THE-SPOT CREATIVITY



Master Improv teacher Scotty Watson conducted a recent workshop with Professor Gallo's Intro to Acting students. (Photo Credit: Joseph Gallo)

HISTORY MEETS THE SPOTLIGHT: A DAY WITH HAMILTON AT WEEHAWKEN AND BROADWAY



On Tuesday, April 29, Dr. Christopher Cody and Prof. Joseph Gallo led approximately 45 students, faculty, and staff to the historic dueling grounds in Weehawken, NJ, where Alexander Hamilton met his untimely demise. Following a brief history lecture from Dr. Cody and a theater discussion from Prof. Joseph Gallo, the group traveled to Broadway to see the hit musical, *Hamilton*.

A DAY IN D.C.: HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE, CIVIC INSIGHT, AND CULTURAL ADVOCACY



On Monday, April 28, Dr. Ara Karakashian, Prof. Elana Winslow, and Dr. Christopher Cody led a group of approximately 40 History students and History Club members to Washington D.C. The group visited the Holocaust Museum, stopped at the White House, and met with the Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). In supporting these learning experiences, HCCC continues to honor the many lives lost in the Holocaust and Armenian Genocide.

CONTINUING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS



From left to right: Instructor Hisani DuBose, students Christopher Febles, Giovanni Garcia, Maureen Gallagher, Sebastian Buria, Giovanni Turcios, Stephanie Sanchez, and Sean O'Keefe.



Pictured from left: Giovanni Garcia, Christopher Febles and Giovanni Turcios.

NJ Film Academy Launches First Class at Hudson County Community College!

On Monday, April 28 we proudly hosted the inaugural class of the NJ Film Academy at Hudson County Community College. The room was buzzing with excitement as eager students filled the space, ready to dive into the captivating world of scripts, TV production, and the dazzling glamour of the film and television industry.

We are thrilled to provide these aspiring filmmakers and industry enthusiasts with this incredible opportunity to explore and develop

their talents. Our goal is to inspire and support the next generation, and we can't wait to see where their passion and dedication take them. Here's to a bright future ahead—perhaps one day, we'll be seeing their names in lights! Stay tuned for more updates from the NJ Film Academy as we continue to nurture talent and ignite creativity in our community.

For more information, contact:
HCCCFilmAcademy@hccc.edu



Financial literacy in action—GTI students join M&T Bank for an engaging Money Mentorship session.

GTI's Money Mentorship Initiative with MT&T Bank

As part of Hudson County Community College's Gateway to Innovation (GTI) program, we've partnered with M&T Bank to launch our Money Mentorship initiative—a practical and impactful financial literacy series designed to empower students with real-world money management skills. Through personalized guidance and interactive workshops led by financial professionals, students gain essential knowledge in budgeting, credit building, saving, and long-term planning.

This collaboration not only builds financial confidence but also connects students directly with industry professionals who serve as mentors. The initiative supports GTI's commitment to career readiness by helping students make informed financial decisions as they prepare for sustainable employment pathways.

By equipping our students with these tools, we are investing in their futures—both personally and professionally.

For more information, contact Mylz Wilson at mwilson@hccc.edu.

SUMMER YOUTH & TEEN PROGRAMS AT HCCC

JUL. 7–AUG. 22 | AGES 9–15



Both middle school and high school students experience a variety of engaging and enriching programs at Continuing Education's Summer Youth & Teen Programs. Our unique one- and two-week, hands-on programs are offered in partnership with the College's Culinary Arts Institute. Programs emphasize self-discovery, cognitive reasoning, and cooperative thinking using a hands-on approach.

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

TO REGISTER:

<https://tinyurl.com/SUMMERatHCCC>

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

CONTINUING EDUCATION Upcoming Programs

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Monday, June 9, 2025 | 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$77

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2025-dates-tickets-1256827738599?aff=oddtcreator>

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (IN-PERSON)

Monday, June 16, 2025 | 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Price: \$77

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-life-support-bls-certification-spring-2025-dates-tickets-1256827738599?aff=oddtcreator>

PROJECT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (ONLINE)

Mondays and Thursdays | June 2, 2025, through July 10, 2025 (no class on 7/3) | 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Price: \$1,270 (Payment plans are available for students and may be covered by your employer)

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/live-online-project-management-certificate-program-summer-2025-registration-1348749308489?aff=oddtcreator>

MICROSOFT OFFICE EXCEL INTERMEDIATE LEVEL (IN-PERSON)

Tuesdays (5 Sessions) | June 3, 2025, through July 1, 2025

6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. | Price: \$145

Instructor: Johnstone Libutsi

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/microsoft-office-excel-intermediate-level-registration-1333932310449?aff=oddtcreator>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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

ALUMNI CORNER

Alex Velez

A.S. Computer Science (Cybersecurity), Class of 2022

Alex is a Senior Cybersecurity Engineer at Provident Bank and the founder of Velez Consulting Services.



How did you decide to attend HCCC? What made it the right choice for you?

I decided it was time to get my degree after working in the IT industry for over 10 years and not making much progress career-wise. I knew it was time to pursue further education.

I am a Hudson County native and HCCC is a landmark in our community. Once I made the decision to go get my degree, I knew HCCC was my choice.

What was your next step after HCCC?

Considering my hectic lifestyle, I decided to continue my education at Western Governors University. As a fully accredited online school with asynchronous learning, it provides me the perfect opportunity to work at my pace while also providing me with the industry certifications needed as part of the cost of attendance.

Tell us about your current role.

I do several things! By day, I am a Senior Cybersecurity Engineer at Provident Bank. By nights and weekends, I am an entrepreneur as founder of Velez Consulting Services and a full-time student at Western Governors University. During the day I work to provide vulnerability management and incident response to keep my employer secure. As an entrepreneur, I do it all as I wear many hats to keep my passion project going.

How did you get into information technology/cybersecurity?

I started my career in IT back as a high schooler in Union City! We had a special program called Teen Techs that involved teaching students foundational skills in computer repair, networking and support for high school credit and work study. From there, I continued to pursue technology at The Chubb Institute, which was right across the street from HCCC! Then, after working in NYC for a few years, I decided to pursue my love of technology and cybersecurity at HCCC. I started on this path by pure chance as I was given a choice in high school for an elective -- join JROTC or Teen Tech. The rest was history.

What advice would you give to women who want to follow in your footsteps and work in this field?

There are many experiences I've gone through in my career, which has included many ups and downs.

My advice for succeeding in today's world is to look for community to build a network; this will help put you in front of the right people.

Next, I would advise you to build a personal brand. I always found myself as the only woman in the room and often the youngest one, so I needed to make sure I controlled the narrative of how my peers saw me. I decided I wasn't going to let others decide who I was, I was going to show them. This is where my personal brand empowered me to shine while staying true to myself.

Also, understand that this is HARD. You will be underestimated, dismissed, and overlooked time and time again. You will need to work harder than everyone else just to be taken as seriously as your male peers and you will be held to a higher standard because any mistakes will be judged harder. Make sure you prepare yourself mentally for these uphill battles by knowing yourself and building a strong community around you, and continue marching on.

As for the materials to study and how to get into cybersecurity, it changes daily thanks to the rise of new technologies and frameworks. With the rise of generative AI and now Agentic AI, technology is changing at an exponential rate. It is impossible to know it all. Therefore, I recommend staying curious and hungry for knowledge by staying on top of trends, going to conferences, networking with people in the industry, being humble, and always pursuing knowledge. The rest is up to you and what you like.

Tell us about a challenge you overcame to get to where you are today.

There are countless challenges I can draw from but ultimately it came down to being the first of many things: the first to graduate high school, the first to go to college, the first to learn English, the youngest team member in IT, the only female in an IT Team, and the first to make strides by building the path in front of me so those behind me can walk easier. Every moment was about learning how to do something for the first time, failing, trying consistently, and somehow making it to the other side of every challenge as a better and wiser version of myself.

Any favorite memories or classes at HCCC?

I have so many favorite moments, but I fondly remember my days in Cultures and Values with Professor Javedd Khan. His class fundamentally challenged me. It forced me to use every ounce of will to meet his level of expectations because what he saw in me was something I didn't know I was capable of. His assignments challenged me to think and defend my reasoning and helped



Alumni Survey:

As we kick off HCCC's 50th Anniversary celebration, we want to hear from you! Share your experiences and insights by completing our survey today:

https://hccc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_77111qlENrf4heu

Your voice matters, and we appreciate your input!

What's New?

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

50th Anniversary: From September 2025 through September 2026, we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Hudson County Community College. This year-long celebration will include Homecoming, Alumni Reunion, and networking events. If you are interested in participating, please update your information and email us at alumni@hccc.edu.

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

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

Continued on page 20

Hudson County Community College Board of Trustees

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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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myhudson.hccc.edu
www.hccc.edu

ALUMNI CORNER

Continued from page 19

me grow a passion for prose I didn't know I had in me. Those Saturday 9 a.m. classes were brutal, but I made so many friends from that class that I am still in contact with today! His class helped me discover my love for writing. May he rest forever in peace, for I am of Khan.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Hudson County Community College changed my life. It was an odyssey of seven years to finish a two-year degree. I worked so hard to make this achievement happen. Along the way Hudson became a home to me. It afforded me countless opportunities and put me in front of amazing

people and information I didn't have access to before.

It was the foundation I was in desperate need of. I've grown to love the College so much that to this day I continue to be a part of it as a mentor, as a contributor via my business, as an advocate, and as a volunteer. I hope to become an instructor for the Cybersecurity program one day so I can give back to future students in the community as this college has done for me. Until then, I continue to march forward on the path to my master's degree.



Welcome to the Alumni Association!

HCCC Alumni: Get Involved!

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

If so join, socialize, and network!

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

**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.

