

ONE

IN A

1,000,000

SUNY COMMUNITY COLLEGES' ONE MILLIONTH DEGREE AWARDED!

Introduction

A Message from Interim SUNY Chancellor Dr. John B. Clark

Reaching one million degrees awarded is a milestone made possible by our trustees, community college presidents, faculty, staff and students over nearly 60 years. To commemorate this historic event, each of our 30 community colleges symbolically recognized the “one-millionth degree” at commencement. Some gave each graduate a commemorative certificate, while others chose an individual for special recognition.

This publication is a compilation of those honors and recognizes important student and faculty success at our campuses.

Mirroring the populations it set out to serve, the Class of 2007 comprises traditional-aged students, single parents, working adults, international students, those learning English as a second language and many individuals who were the first in their family to attend college.

Community colleges serve as the bridge to a brighter future. Nearly a quarter of SUNY’s baccalaureate degree recipients each year got their start at one of our community colleges. As you may know, earning a four-year college degree equates to \$1 million more in wages over a working lifetime.

The stories in this book are powerful reminders of the positive impact community college graduates have on economic development and workforce training locally, statewide, and nationally.

A Message from NYSUT’s President Richard C. Iannuzzi

In 2007, SUNY community colleges awarded their one millionth degree. This is a remarkable achievement that spanned nearly 60 years in the making. Over those 60 years, one million lives were forever transformed through the power of education. Today, these campuses continue to serve as the gateways to higher education for thousands of individuals.

NYSUT applauds all the graduates of these noble institutions who have realized their dreams and achieved their goals by applying their knowledge, talents and skills to become productive employees of their local work force or by continuing their education at a four-year college or university. Moreover, we are indebted to the faculty and professionals working in these institutions who have dedicated their professional life to unlocking the full potential of their students.

NYSUT is proud to be a part of this publication. The stories of students and faculty members within this book serve as concrete examples of the important role that our community colleges play in changing the lives of their students, in providing a well-educated work force for their local communities and serving as economic engines for the state as a whole.



Table of Contents

Introduction	inside front cover
<i>Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Adirondack</i>	2
<i>Broome</i>	3
<i>Cayuga</i>	4
<i>Clinton</i>	5
<i>Columbia-Greene</i>	6
<i>Corning</i>	7
<i>Dutchess</i>	8
<i>Erie</i>	9
<i>Fashion Institute of Technology</i>	10
<i>Finger Lakes</i>	11
<i>Fulton-Montgomery</i>	12
<i>Genesee</i>	13
<i>Herkimer County</i>	14
<i>Hudson Valley</i>	15
<i>Jamestown</i>	16
<i>Jefferson</i>	17
<i>Mohawk Valley</i>	18
<i>Monroe</i>	19
<i>Nassau</i>	20
<i>Niagara County</i>	21
<i>North Country</i>	22
<i>Onondaga</i>	23
<i>Orange County</i>	24
<i>Rockland</i>	25
<i>Schenectady County</i>	26
<i>Suffolk County</i>	27
<i>Sullivan County</i>	28
<i>Tompkins</i>	29
<i>Ulster County</i>	30
<i>Westchester</i>	31
<i>Professor Bios</i>	32
<i>History</i>	36
<i>SUNY Community Colleges map</i>	inside back cover
<i>Fast Facts</i>	back cover

Lynn Springer



Lynn Springer and her daughters, Ann and Julia

"I really didn't think I could do it, but I found out I could do a lot more with my life."

- Lynn Springer

Lynn Springer, a 38-year-old mother of three in Queensbury, NY, is a proud product of the SUNY System.

Lynn previously earned an associate's degree in business at ACC and, in 2007, received a second associate's degree, in liberal arts/humanities and social science. Next, she plans to pursue a four-year degree in psychology through the SUNY Plattsburgh Extension Center at ACC.

"My experience here really broadened my horizons," she said, following the 2007 ceremony. "I really didn't think I could do it, but I found out I could do a lot more with my life."

She had help. With assistance from ACC's Office of Accessibility Services, Lynn graduated with a 3.92 GPA, despite having a learning disability, and she found the support of her co-workers and supervisors at the local restaurant where she works to be immeasurable.

ACC held its 45th annual commencement ceremony on May 17, 2007 at the Glens Falls Civic Center.



President Laurence Spraggs presents Student Trustee Vicki Papastrat with a ceremonial millionth degree for the entire graduating class.

Vicki Papastrat

"The Class of 2007 symbolizes a new achievement for the SUNY community colleges and for the hundreds of thousands of students who have come before."

- President Laurence Spraggs

At the Broome Community College graduation, the Class of 2007 in its entirety was awarded a ceremonial Millionth Degree, by President Laurence Spraggs.

"As we recognize the 60th anniversary of BCC, we are all also able to join in another celebration, one that marks a significant milestone for all of SUNY's Community Colleges," said President

Spraggs. "More than 1,000 BCC students receive their degrees tonight, and across the state, more than 32,000 will graduate from a community college. The Class of 2007 symbolizes a new achievement for the SUNY community colleges and for the hundreds of thousands of students who have come before. Congratulations to you all."



Gregory Michael Szczepanski got a jumpstart on his higher education in high school.

Gregory Michael Szczepanski

"Education is more than just the completion of courses. The skills needed in today's society involve working with people, often in a team environment."

- Gregory Michael Szczepanski

Balancing a diverse course load with teamwork in sports, committees, and board service, Mike forged an education at Cayuga that was true to his beliefs - and a strong platform for his future.

Serving on the College Board of Trustees was just one of many ways Gregory Michael Szczepanski represented his peers at Cayuga Community College. Mike was also elected to two terms as Student Trustee, tapped by the Board in 2007 to serve on the search committee for Cayuga's seventh president, served two years as a Faculty Student Association member and one year on the College's Sports Board.

Often seen jogging to his next meeting or class with a lacrosse stick in hand, Mike competed as a freshman and sophomore on Cayuga's Division III men's lacrosse and soccer teams.

An early start helped him complete this challenging program. Mike first registered at Cayuga as a high school senior. Once enrolled as a matriculated student, he joined in a variety of campus and community-outreach events. To help raise funds for student clubs, Mike inaugurated Cayuga's annual Winter Flea Market—a mega-garage sale for area residents, held in the college gym.

The Auburn, N.Y., native graduated from Cayuga in May 2007 with three associate's degrees: an A.S. in liberal arts/mathematics and science, an A.S. in business administration, and an A.A.S. in criminal justice/police science. Since graduation, Mike has enrolled at the University at Albany as a junior. He plans to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree, dual-majoring in biological science and business administration. He hopes to parlay his skills, knowledge, and experience into an upper-level management position by the time he is 30 years old.



Noreen Barcomb receives her degree.

Noreen Barcomb

"With one doctor, two pharmacists, and a physician's assistant in the family, and I only had a high school diploma, I knew I wanted more."

- Noreen Barcomb

As she walked across the stage to receive her A.A. S. degree in business information technology, CCC's Valedictorian, Noreen Barcomb, was all smiles. Knowing her family was somewhere in the crowd and there to help her mark this momentous occasion, this proud mother of four (and "Nana" to four grandchildren), had achieved the goal she set a few years earlier to graduate from Clinton Community College.

"I started thinking more about what I might do when my youngest went off to college and I needed something more to fill my time," Noreen said. "With one doctor, two pharmacists, and a physician's assistant in the family, and I only had a high school diploma, I knew I wanted more."

When Noreen began her educational quest, she enrolled in CCC's College Entry and Life Experience Credit Program. She took classes online and in the classroom and admitted, "I loved it!"

As a busy working mom, Noreen found time to support her community in the many positions she held over the years, such as being a stenographer, a director of religious education at her parish church as well as secretary and bookkeeper. She has served the Chazy Central Rural School, the Chazy Youth Hockey and the Chazy Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary in a variety of capacities. Noreen is a New York State Notary Public, a member of Clowns International, a member of Phi Theta Kappa, and a 4-time award winner in CCC's Literary Art Magazine, Cliffhanger.

Following graduation, she said, "I'm not going to do anything different, I just feel a real sense of accomplishment. I am a more confident person after this and I have a much better feeling about myself."



Columbia-Greene Community College Board of Trustees Chairperson Nancy Patzwahl, right, prepares to award a degree to Tamesha Scott of Hudson.

Tamesha Scott

"The institution was so supportive and generous to me. It's definitely an asset to the community." - Tamesha Scott

If Tamesha Scott has her way, she'll return to C-GCC's serene campus someday to teach nursing.

"Tamesha really is one in a million," said C-GCC President James Campion. "She is the quintessential community college success story -- a returning adult student who has established a significant pathway to success."

A graduate of Hudson High School, Tamesha began her C-GCC career as an early admit student in 1992. She studied elsewhere for a time, but returned to C-GCC full-time in 2002, first majoring in pre-nursing and later individual studies.

The 32-year-old mother of two was a peer tutor at C-GCC, where she was on the President's List twice. She also worked in the college bursar's office and was a member of Sigma Delta Mu, the

national Spanish honors society. Tamesha, who graduated with a 3.38 grade point average, also recently earned the college's Mustapha Diversity Award.

Following her graduation in May 2007, Tamesha went on to attend Russell Sage College on a full scholarship. She is studying nursing and plans to complete the school's M.S. program and go on for a Ph.D. in the field as well.

"I'm going to miss Columbia-Greene Community College terribly," she said, musing on her future plans. "It was a wonderful experience as a returning adult student. The institution was so supportive and generous to me. It's definitely an asset to the community. If I hadn't gone to C-GCC, I never would have obtained my scholarship to Russell Sage."



Rita Kennedy and her family



Rita A. Kennedy

Throughout Rita's journey at CCC, several opportunities crossed her path that continually revived forgotten passions.

Rita A. Kennedy was raised as the youngest of five children in Elmira Heights, NY. Although there were plenty of times the family struggled financially, there was always plenty of love and respect to go around. Her father taught her and her siblings to face challenges with strength and courage, while her mother nurtured each of them with patience, perseverance and unconditional love.

Although she was content working in the office of a local grocery store, after graduating high school in 1984, she recalls a consistent longing for a college degree.

In 1985, Rita's relationship with Corning Community College began. She enrolled in a human resource program, which allowed her to continue working while earning college credit. But Rita withdrew from college during her first semester, not realizing the regret she would later experience.

In 1987, Rita was married and working full-time. In the six years that followed, she raised and home-schooled her two sons. She

continued doing so in 2003 but also found time to return to CCC. Throughout Rita's journey at CCC, several opportunities crossed her path that continually revived forgotten passions. As she interacted with fellow students through tutoring for business law and mathematics, she rediscovered a passion for helping others succeed.

By volunteering for college events like Math Day and Chem Bowl, Rita was encouraged by the college professors' and high school students' desire to participate and provide extracurricular activities. Phi Theta Kappa offered her an avenue to refine leadership and communication skills as she served the college and neighboring communities as a chapter officer.

Rita is very proud to be a graduate of Corning Community College with honors, distinction, program honors for Business Administration, and a second degree in Math/Science. She looks forward to continuing her college career at a nearby four-year institution, realizing her dream of becoming a mathematics educator for secondary school students and/or community college students.



Dutchess Community College President Dr. David Conklin with One Millionth Degree recipient Janet Brendli

Janet Brendli

"What impressed me and the trustees most about Janet was always her enthusiasm and dedication. She took the responsibility of being student trustee seriously and performed very ably in this position." - President D. David Conklin

Janet Brendli, a resident of Poughkeepsie, NY, received two associate degrees in early childhood education at the 2007 Dutchess County Community College spring commencement. For the year prior, she had served as the student trustee on the Dutchess Community College Board of Trustees.

"Ms. Brendli demonstrated excellent communication and leadership skills as our student trustee," said President D. David Conklin. "She established an excellent rapport with her fellow trustees, and exhibited unusual maturity for a student on the board, interacting on an equal basis with community leaders (who served with her).

Her appearance and manner were always professional, but what impressed me and the trustees most about Janet was always her enthusiasm and dedication. She took the responsibility of being student trustee seriously and performed very ably in this position."

Active in the DCC community, Janet was a member of the Student Government Association and served as the organization's Commissioner of Academics. She was also a member of the Early Childhood Club and the women's cross-country and track and field teams.



At Erie Community College, the entire Class of 2007 was recognized as one in a million.

Artelia Lewis

Despite juggling multiple responsibilities, Lewis maintained an impressive 3.05 GPA.

Erie Community College student Artelia Lewis graduated in May 2007 with an associate degree in mental health substance abuse counseling.

A 50-year-old single mother of four daughters, Artelia has worked full-time since she started at ECC in 2003. Despite juggling multiple responsibilities, Lewis maintained an impressive 3.05 GPA.

She has overcome several challenges, including substance abuse, mental health issues and domestic violence, on her journey to become the successful woman she is today.

Now, Artelia is putting her ECC degree to use as the supervisor for the Job Club and Enrichment Program at Western New York Independent Living, Inc. In Fall 2007, she enrolled in the social work program at Buffalo State and anticipates graduating in May 2009.

Natallia Pilipenka



Natallia Pilipenka, one of FIT's Fashion Design students, with two classmates on commencement day (from left: Kenix Cheng, Hae-Jin Song, and Natallia Pilipenka).

"My parents couldn't make it from Belarus to attend graduation, but they are very pleased with the career I have chosen and very proud of my accomplishments." - Natallia Pilipenka

Remember the name Natallia Pilipenka. You might wear a garment with her label on it one day.

This young fashion designer, who graduated in May 2007 from the Fashion Institute of Technology with a BFA degree in Fashion Design, won two prestigious awards at the college's annual fashion show. Her prize-winning ensemble was also featured on the cover of the Women's Wear Daily issue, which featured the show.

Born in Ukraine and raised in Belarus, Natallia studied foreign languages at the Belarussian State University in Minsk. But she was interested in a career in fashion.

"I made my own clothes when I was growing up," she explained. "My parents had three kids to support and we didn't have much money to spend on clothes. My mom made our clothes and taught

me to sew, knit, and crochet. I made my first sweater when I was 12. When it came time for college, I found that you could take a course on how to make a pattern, but there were no schools where you could study fashion design."

As a university student, she had the opportunity to work at a camp in Maine for four summers as part of a student exchange program.

After experiencing life in America, Natallia decided to move to New York in 2001. She looked at several colleges that offered degrees in fashion design, and enrolled at FIT in 2003 because of its strong connections to the industry. During her years at FIT, in addition to being recognized for her design talents, she also received honors for scholastic achievement. She was on the Dean's List for two years and graduated summa cum laude.



Adult learner Colleen Vallone was recognized on May 19, 2007, at FLCC's 39th Annual Commencement Ceremony.

Colleen Vallone

"FLCC has allowed me the opportunity to reach my full potential and demonstrate capabilities I wasn't aware I had."

- Colleen Vallone

Colleen Vallone, one of three Finger Lakes Community College students to receive the 2006-07 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, graduated with an associate in science degree in physical education studies. She earned a 4.0 GPA, was a member of the FLCC chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, and was named to the FLCC Dean's List.

In 2006, Colleen received a Coca Cola Scholarship Foundation Scholarship, which recognizes academic excellence at a two-year college. She also received the FLCC Alumni Association Scholarship, which is awarded to an adult learner.

"FLCC has allowed me the opportunity to reach my full potential and demonstrate capabilities I wasn't aware I had," Colleen said of

her experience at the college. "I have developed a passion for learning, and I am constantly striving to do quality work."

She served as president of FLCC's Physical Education Club, president of the Avon Attack Soccer Club, second vice president of the Lioness Club of Avon, and as a volunteer instructor for the American Red Cross. She was involved with Avon Foodlink and served as a youth ministry instructor for her church. Colleen will attend SUNY Brockport in Fall 2007 and has been accepted into the Honors Program there.



FULTON MONTGOMERY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Samantha L. Rankins, a 2004 graduate from Johnstown High School, represented SUNY's millionth community college graduate at the Fulton-Montgomery Community College commencement.

Samantha L. Rankins

"The FMCC nursing program is very hard, but it's worth it! Everyone in the program shares struggles and forms a family throughout the program."

- Samantha L. Rankins

Samantha didn't originally plan on attending FMCC. In fact, she had made plans to attend college out of state. For family reasons, Samantha made a last-minute decision to stay closer to home and enrolled in FMCC's General Studies program in 2004.

During the fall semester, Samantha began working as an aid in a local hospital, and she loved it. She decided to apply to the FMCC nursing program and was accepted for the fall 2005 semester.

"The FMCC nursing program is very hard, but it's worth it! Everyone in the program shares struggles and forms a family throughout the program," Samantha said. Nursing students study together, go to lunch together, and form a support network for one another.

Samantha now works as a medical/surgical nurse at Nathan Littauer Hospital, located in Gloversville, New York. Once she passes her board exams, she aspires to work in the Intensive Care Unit, because, she says, she likes the fast pace in the ICU.

Samantha's plans also include pursuing a bachelors' degree in nursing through online, study through SUNY Plattsburgh and to eventually become a Nurse Practitioner or Nurse Anesthetist.

Samantha is a third generation FMCC nursing graduate. Samantha's mom and grandmother are both registered nurses at Nathan Littauer Hospital and graduates of the FMCC nursing program.



Pictured from left to right are: John Ryan, then-SUNY Chancellor; Lisa Nucci; and Stuart Steiner, President of Genesee Community College.

Lisa Nucci

Lisa Nucci is an inspiration to her son, Tyler.

Lisa Nucci's 12-year-old son, Tyler, took pictures of her walking across the stage and receiving her associate's degree in science, physical therapist assistant studies.

At age 45, Lisa was graduating from Genesee Community College, after deciding to return to college in her forties to pursue a new career in the health care field. Prior to graduation, Lisa had spent 20 years working for Kodak.

"It's been very rewarding," Lisa told a reporter after the ceremony. Before putting her degree to use and completing her clinic work over the summer, Lisa and her son took a bicycle trip along the New York State Canal, from Buffalo to Albany.

Jessica Susenburger



Chairman of the Board of Trustees Donald J. Snyder ('04), who presided at the ceremony, along with Jessica Susenburger, President HCCC Student Government, and HCCC President Dr. Ronald F. Williams

"The best things in life can come from taking a chance and succeeding!"
- Jessica Susenburger

One of two student speakers at Herkimer County Community College's 39th annual commencement exercises was student government president Jessica Susenburger. She inspired her classmates with brief quotes from author Ralph Waldo Emerson and inventor Benjamin Franklin on topics such as the investment in knowledge and leadership.

But perhaps what left the most lasting message with fellow students and the 1,500-plus guests in the audience were Jessica's own words, 'The best things in life can come from taking a chance and succeeding!'

At HCCC, Jessica served as vice president of Phi Beta Lambda and was on several campus committees, such as the Faculty-Student Association, the Middle States Accreditation Committee and the Alcohol and Other Drugs Committee. Her participation in student government at HCCC set an example for her peers who worked alongside her - she encouraged them to ask questions, take risks, and be open to learning from others.

A high honors graduate and member of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, Jessica continues her studies in business administration at SUNY Geneseo.



Lillian Baisley



Lillian Baisley

*"I'm happy and excited about this. It's a different kind of challenge."
- Lillian Baisley*

Lillian Baisley's construction career came to a sudden end in October 2003 when a 1,200 pound steel road plate snapped its chain and came crashing down on her left leg. Four years after the accident, Hudson Valley Community College helped her return to work – this time in a profession that may help prevent the accident that injured her.

Lillian, mother of three and stepmother of two, began a career in materials testing following her graduation from HVCC in May 2007, utilizing her degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology.

"I was always good in math and my cousin told me to look into engineering," Lillian said of her decision to pursue the degree. "I wanted to work in a field where I might be able to prevent what

happened to me from happening to someone else. The safety aspect of (materials testing) is what drew me in."

With a titanium rod in her leg and two years of rehabilitation, Lillian showed her perseverance just by learning how to walk again, but she knew her career in road construction was over.

Even today, she says, she has trouble standing or sitting for long periods of time. Her new career promises both challenges and satisfaction.

"I really did enjoy working in construction, being outside a lot and having something to show for the work I did, but I'm happy and excited about this," she said. "It's a different kind of challenge."



Jason Scott

Jason Scott

"I'm not sure what I'd like to do as a career yet, but JCC offered a great opportunities to explore."

- Jason Scott

Jason Scott, who earned an A.S.: Individual Studies at Jamestown Community College, served as president and treasurer of JCC's Student Senate and was a member of the Faculty Student Association board and the college's health and safety committee.

A dean's list student throughout his time at JCC, Jason served as a student ambassador in the admissions office and as a volunteer for the Scandinavian Folk Festival, Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign, and at a local soup kitchen. He received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence and was named to the third team of the Phi Theta Kappa 2006 All-New York Academic Teams.

"One of the first things I noticed about JCC was how friendly and helpful the professors are," Jason said. "They really make an effort to get to know you as a person, not just as a student. I was really impressed with the small classes and friendly atmosphere."

Jason is now pursuing a bachelor's degree in mathematics at SUNY Geneseo, and he plans to attend graduate school. "I'm not sure what I'd like to do as a career yet, but JCC offered a great opportunities to explore."



Lindsay Z. Cook



Lindsay Z. Cook

"Jefferson has provided two great years for me. I think the transfer (to Cornell University) will be so much easier because I'm prepared for the course work. I'm prepared for the sense of independence." - Lindsay Z. Cook

On May 18, 2007, Lindsay Z. Cook of Sackets Harbor graduated from JCC with an associate of science degree in business administration. She will be attending Cornell University in the fall to pursue a bachelor of science degree in applied economics and management.

Lindsay was an 'early admit' to JCC, taking college classes while she was concurrently enrolled at South Jefferson Central High School. She earned 35 college credits, many of which counted toward her high school diploma. After one additional year spent as a full-time student at Jefferson, Lindsay is entering Cornell University with junior standing. She also took full advantage of the many scholarship opportunities offered by Jefferson, applying for and being awarded scholarships that completely offset the cost of her senior year tuition.

Despite being only 17 years old, Lindsay fit right in at Jefferson and in fact, found the classroom interaction with older students to be

beneficial in her studies. She was the founding president of the Business Club and one of a handful of students selected to participate in the Jreck Leadership Seminar.

Lindsay is an Honors Program graduate and was the recipient of Jefferson's Division of Enrollment Management & Student Life Student of the Year award. With her 3.94 GPA, she earned a spot on the President's List each semester at Jefferson and was named a Distinguished Academic All-American Athlete by the National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association for the 2006-2007 season.

Lindsay's story is one that truly demonstrates how the opportunities offered by community colleges can transform lives. Not only has Jefferson helped prepare Lindsay academically - JCC has also provided Lindsay with a financial advantage in her pursuit of a bachelor's degree.



Selma Mujevic



Selma Mujevic proudly holds her first of two degrees from Mohawk Valley Community College.

While attending MVCC as a dual-major student, Selma took a part-time job on campus to help support her family and continued to help raise her younger brother and sisters.

Selma Mujevic, of Utica, was born June 18, 1987, in the Montenegro Region of the former Republic of Yugoslavia. While civil war engulfed Yugoslavia and eventually led to the country's breakup, Selma and her family fled to New York City when she was just two years old.

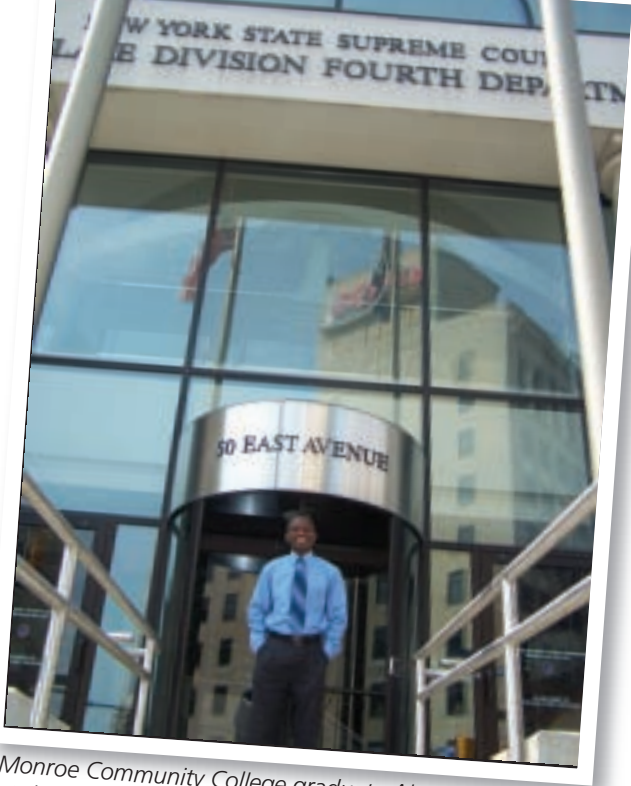
For the next 12 years, the Mujevic family lived in a one-bedroom apartment in the city and her parents, who didn't speak English, struggled to provide for Selma, her brother and her twin sisters.

In 2001, with the health of Selma's grandfather failing, her parents decided to move the family back to Montenegro. It was here that Selma completed eighth grade and the first three years of high school. As Montenegro sought independence, the country's social and economic situation wasn't in keeping with the dreams Selma's parents had for their children.

Once again, the family came to New York, this time settling in Utica. Selma was able to finish high school in 2005, and she immediately enrolled at MVCC the following fall.

Selma earned an Associate in Applied Science for Media Marketing and Advertising Management with a GPA of 3.98 in Spring 2007. Her second degree, an Associate in Science for Liberal Arts and Sciences, will be completed in December.

Selma is also the recipient of the SUNY Empire State Diversity Honors Scholarship and earned spots on the National Dean's List, Who's Who Among Students, The President's List, Phi Theta Kappa, she also participated in many leadership activities on and off campus.



Monroe Community College graduate Akpo Olorokor stands at the M. Dolores Denman Courthouse in Rochester where he spent more than 50 hours working as part of a service-learning criminal justice course.

Akpo Olorokor

"It takes a lot of sacrifices to be successful..." - Akpo Olorokor

Monroe Community College graduate Akpo Olorokor is one in more than a million. In just four years, he moved from a country with about 120 million people to become one of the million of SUNY community college graduates in the system's history.

Akpo remains humbled by his status. "It takes a lot of sacrifices to be successful," he says.

In July of 2003, Akpo moved to Rochester from Warri, a city in the Delta state of Nigeria. He left behind a big family – his father, a prominent senior lawyer, his mother who teaches in an elementary school, and his nine brothers and sisters, including a twin. He had taken college courses back in his home country, but decided to start fresh and enroll at MCC.

Upon his graduation on June 5, Akpo received an associate's degree in criminal justice, the Dennis A. Pelletier Memorial Scholarship, an award honoring the longtime Monroe County legislator, and a service-learning seal of distinction.

Akpo worked 200 hours in the Monroe County District Attorney's office as part of three service-learning courses in which students work in the community while meeting academic goals. He intentionally chose the courses, although they created extra work, in order to learn the American judicial system because it is so different from Nigeria's parliamentary system.



Ricardo Cortez

Ricardo Cortez

NCC wishes Ricardo all the best as he heads to C.W. Post to study biology and one day, fulfills his dream of becoming a doctor.

Twenty-five year old Ricardo Cortez may be a young man, but he's had a lot of experience in his life. He was born in El Salvador when it was in the midst of a civil war and came to the United States with his mother and younger brother when he was six. When he was nine, he fell seriously ill and ended up in the hospital. Ricardo was eternally grateful to the doctors who were so kind to him and the government that helped provide the resources to pay for his recovery.

When the Cortez family first came to America, they were struggling and sometimes close to homeless. Ricardo credits his mother Maria, with her hard work and ever-present smile as his inspiration to keep his spirits up and keep moving ahead.

Ricardo recovered and graduated from high school in 2001. He attended NCC for two and a half semesters, but felt so strongly about the attacks on New York and Washington on 9/11 that he

enlisted in the military. Ricardo served three years in the army, 12 months of which were in Iraq.

Even while he was serving in the military, Ricardo was thinking about his education. He was determined to return to NCC as soon as he returned to New York. In fact, Ricardo made several phone calls from Baghdad to Dr. Carol Farber, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who assisted him in his quest to return to college.

Ricardo also did another important thing while he was in Iraq: he became a U.S. citizen. After returning to the United States in 2005, he returned to school in the spring of 2006. He was impressed by the kindness of the people he met at NCC. And in turn, NCC staff and faculty have been greatly impressed by him.

Ricardo graduated in 2007 as a liberal arts major, president of the Honors Club, and NCC's honorary millionth degree.



Shanta Dege balances the demands of raising a four-year-old daughter and excelling in a challenging nursing program at NCCC.

Shanta Dege

"I saw a lot of things I thought I would never get to see. I plan on getting a bachelor's and a master's degree and hopefully become a nurse practitioner," - Shanta Dege

Shanta Dege is a 20-year-old nursing graduate of Niagara County Community College. Throughout the program, she was able to balance the demands of raising her four-year-old daughter, Keyaira, and the rigors of a difficult program of study that will lead to a rewarding career.

"To be a mom and to handle this program was especially difficult. You have to want it very badly to achieve anything in nursing," Shanta said. "Thankfully I have a good support system."

"I have to have day care in order to go to school," she said. "My daughter loves it at NCCC. She is upset on days when school is closed like at Thanksgiving and she does not attend. I am amazed at how much she learns, even in one day. It makes me happy to know that she is in a place where she is happy and learning."

Shanta was also learning - more than she ever thought she would, and with each semester, gaining more and more first-hand experience. In her first semester, she would go to Schoellkopf Nursing Home one day a week. In the second semester, it was a rotation at Children's Hospital for maternity and DeGraff Hospital for medical/surgical. After that, she would go to Mt. St. Mary's for cardiac, Children's for pediatrics, and do observations in the pediatric and neo-natal intensive care units. In her final semester, she was at ECMC doing orthopedics, neurological, and emergency room observations.

She added that NCCC's accredited nursing program is what drew her to the campus, saying it is very well known, having a reputation for being tough but also for producing some of the best nurses in New York.



President Dr. Gail Rogers Rice reads the proclamation to Adam diVincenzo and the rest of the commencement participants on May 19. (Photo by Kathy Goodrow)

Adam diVincenzo

"Receiving the Millionth Student Certificate really took me by surprise, but it was an honor and a pleasure to have received such an achievement."

- Adam diVincenzo

At the Saranac Lake campus of North Country Community College (NCCC), one graduate's name was randomly picked from a list of 304 – Adam diVincenzo.

Adam, a sophomore student from Norwood, NY, was clearly surprised when he was chosen as North Country's symbolic graduate. Just as all the other graduating students had done, when his name was called, he went up to the dais – but for Adam, the proceedings were halted and a proclamation was read by NCCC President Dr. Gail Rogers Rice. His walk to receive his degree was met with wild applause.

"Adam diVincenzo was one of the top students in the NCCC Sports and Events Management Program," said Larry McFaddin, Director

of the program. "Adam's dedication and perseverance to academic success in his career field has led him to a degree from NCCC and acceptance to Cortland State's Sport Management Program this Fall. The opportunities SUNY has provided to him are a testament to the excellence of the entire college educational system in New York State."

North Country Community College not only salutes Adam diVincenzo, but each and every other NCCC graduate in the Class of 2007.



Ivy Smith and her family



Ivy Smith

"OCC taught me to never underestimate myself or my ability to be successful."

-Ivy Smith

Extraordinary. Intelligent. Strong.

These are just a few of the words that describe Ivy Smith, a 2007 graduate of the human services program at Onondaga Community College. In addition to her pursuit of excellence in the classroom, Ivy also spent her time at Onondaga as a leader, counselor and mentor inspiring fellow students across the campus. She emerged as a student leader early in her College career, despite having to overcome personal struggles.

"My professors and fellow students at Onondaga were always encouraging me to keep going," said Ivy. "They taught me to never underestimate myself or my ability to be successful."

Originally from New York City, Ivy came to Syracuse in 2005 to attend college. During her freshman year, she participated in an internship at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida for which she earned a full semester of college credit.

In her second year, Ivy eagerly applied to be a part of a milestone event in the history of Onondaga - she was chosen by Human Services Professor Tina May, to be one of the first resident assistants in the historic opening of state-of-the-art student residence halls in fall 2006.

"Ivy is a strong, professional and prepared young woman who brought so much to each class" Professor May said. "She consistently set high standards in her commitment and performance and she willingly encouraged her fellow students to reach these standards as well."

After graduation, Ivy stayed at Onondaga as a summer resident assistant in the residence halls. This fall, she will attend SUNY Binghamton to pursue a degree in human development.



SUNY ORANGE

Laura Butler



Laura Butler receives her degree

I was nervous about going to college, but the people at SUNY Orange changed my whole outlook. They helped me grow up and get ready for my next step."

During her first semester at SUNY Orange, Laura Butler worked a full day before the 60-minute commute to Laura's night classes on the College's Middletown campus.

Divorced since Laura was in the fourth grade, Diane lovingly raised Laura and her older brother, Thomas, as a single parent. Often times, money was tight. When it came time for Laura to choose a college, SUNY Orange's affordability and location were deciding factors, as was its strong academic reputation in the Hudson Valley.

From those humble beginnings as a shy night student, Laura blossomed into a force on campus, becoming actively involved in the Student Senate, the Criminal Justice Club and the Campus Watch. All the while, she retained her job at Peck's Market - the one she's had since she was 14.

"Laura is exactly what you look for in a student leader," said Steve Harpst, the College's director of student activities. "She grew into her role and learned from her experiences. I'm confident she will

take those experiences and use them long after she leaves here. She fulfilled the old adage, 'you get out of it what you put into it.'"

A student senator and sitting member on several Senate committees, Laura says being a part of those various organizations helped her assimilate to college life, a transition she was intent on accomplishing prior to transferring to a four-year school.

"SUNY Orange allowed me to save some money while also seeing if I really liked criminal justice before I invested a lot of time and money," Laura said. "Also, the staff and faculty give you a lot of attention. I was nervous about going to college, but the people at SUNY Orange changed my whole outlook. They helped me grow up and get ready for my next step."

Laura Butler overcame many obstacles en route to acquiring her dual SUNY Orange degrees. Laura intends to resume progress toward her bachelor's degree with her sights ultimately set on law school.



Graduate David J. Rojas (Photo by The Journal News)

David J. Rojas

David has been accepted to the prestigious College of Art & Design at SUNY Purchase and plans to earn his Bachelors in photography.

Rockland Community College symbolically recognized David J. Rojas as its "millionth graduate" at its 46th Commencement Ceremony held on June 3. RCC faculty chose David J. Rojas, of Garnerville, to symbolize the millionth graduate because of the strength and courage with which he has overcome health challenges, graduating from RCC in seven years' time with an A.S. in Photography.

David was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor right after finishing his freshman year at North Rockland High School in 1996. Although brain surgery and cancer treatments left him with memory loss, double vision, third-degree burns and difficulty walking, he was determined to earn a college degree.

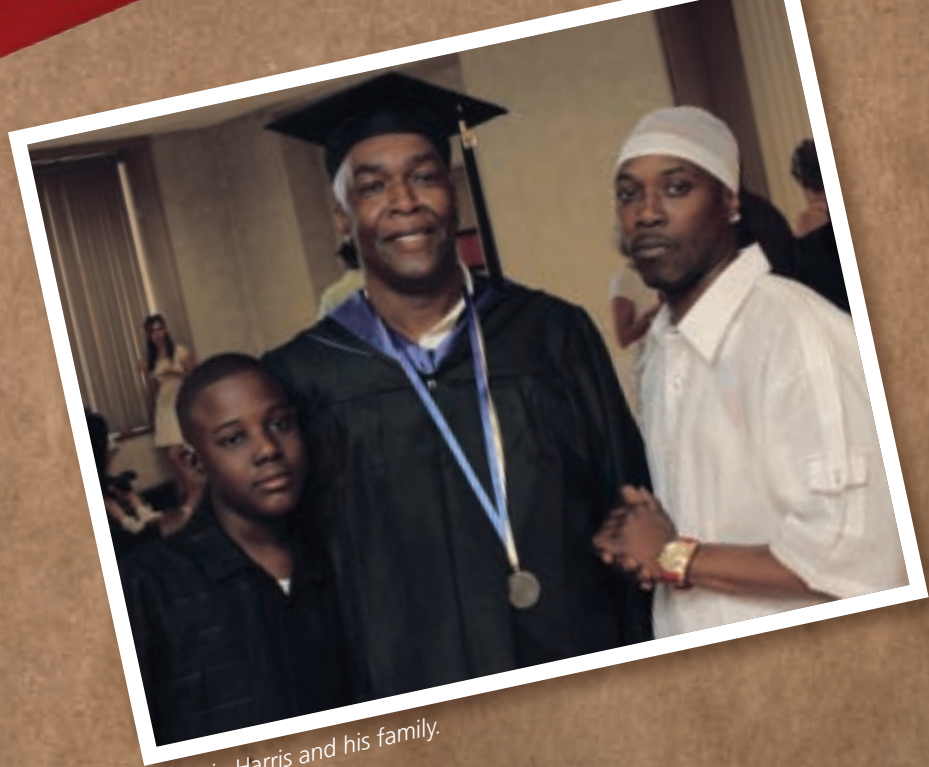
With the help of his father, David Rojas Sr., David found a way to persevere in his education goals. Rojas Sr., an NYPD officer sidelined by an injury, attended every RCC class with his son and took notes

so David could concentrate on the lecture. But photography, according to Rojas Sr., is David's "own domain." He takes all the pictures himself, with his father providing only technical assistance in the darkroom.

When Dr. Cliff L. Wood, College President, announced that David had been chosen as the millionth graduate, the audience gave the student a standing ovation.

David has been accepted to the prestigious College of Art & Design at SUNY Purchase and plans to earn his Bachelors in photography. His goal is to teach photography and to live independently. His photographs are currently on display at the Rockland Independent Living Center in the Nanuet Mall.

Reggie Harris



Reggie Harris and his family.

"I have lived my dream. I have a college diploma. I'm happy doing what I'm doing now (which is) helping people.

- Reggie Harris

Reggie Harris graduated in May 2007 with an A.S. degree in Human Services. "A college education lets me know that I achieved something," Reggie said during a recent interview.

Reggie moved to Upstate New York from New York City seven years ago, after his mother died. He was grieving and had turned to substance abuse when a minister from Cobleskill, NY, saw him on a street and empathized with him, offering Reggie help if he would move Upstate.

Reggie moved to Schenectady and decided to pursue his dream of a college education at SCCC. During this time, he also worked at the Schenectady YMCA, where he is currently a Senior Case Manager.

Reggie was very involved in the SCCC community, especially in the Human Services Club, which later merged with the Volunteer Organization to form the Human Services Volunteer Organization (HSVO). He served in multiple roles in both clubs and, in his last year,

was the President of HSVO. One of the activities he is most proud of HSVO for taking part in is feeding the hungry in Schenectady on Sundays, the one day of the week where a meal is not provided for the needy in the city.

Reggie also took part in other charitable activities, including caring for AIDS victims and volunteering for community service through his church. When asked why he is so passionate about human services, Reggie responded, "So many people have given to me. I just try to give back."

Reggie was recognized for his dedication to helping others by being named the recipient of the SCCC Community Service Award, which is presented to the SCCC graduating student who has contributed most to the general welfare of the off-campus community. He was also one of two recipients of the Schenectady County Human Right Commission's' Human Rights Award for Individuals.

- By Liz Wingfield, SCCC student



Patrick Schipp



Patrick Schipp

"Some people say that certain jobs are better suited to specific individuals or sexes. I believe that all areas of human endeavor need diversified representation because it is in these differences that new perspective is gained." - Patrick Schipp

Patrick Schipp of Brentwood, a 2007 graduate of Suffolk County Community College's School of Nursing, was chosen to represent the college as its "millionth degree" recipient.

"Some people say that certain jobs are better suited to specific individuals or sexes. I believe that all areas of human endeavor need diversified representation because it is in these differences that new perspective is gained," said Patrick of his chosen field.

Patrick also earned the 2007 Student Vanguard Award, presented by SUNY's Center for Innovation in Career Development. The Vanguard Award recognizes outstanding secondary and post-

secondary level students who are enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs that are not traditional for their gender. One of 20 finalists, he was the only male community college student in the state chosen to receive one of six awards.

In March, he attended the award ceremony at the 2007 Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTEA) Conference in Albany, where he met the other Vanguard winners at a celebratory dinner. Since the recognition program was initiated by the Career Options Institute in 1993, more than 100 students enrolled in programs leading to non-traditional careers have been recognized.



Steven Gomez, the College's celebratory one-millionth graduate during the college's 43rd commencement.

Steven Gomez

"It would be nearly impossible to achieve the first step of our success without some form of assistance from a loyal, warm, and dedicated faculty, staff, family and even friends." - Steven Gomez

Steven Gomez was selected as SCCC's "one-millionth graduate" and also as the student speaker at the college's commencement ceremony. When he addressed his classmates, he praised those who have helped him along the way.

"It would be nearly impossible to achieve the first step of our success without some form of assistance from a loyal, warm, and dedicated faculty, staff, family and even friends, who with patience and perseverance stood by our side, ready and willing to help us at a moment's notice. And, therefore it is to them that we owe a great deal of gratitude and respect. It is to them that we owe this day," he said.

Sullivan County Community College also recognized the SUNY milestone by honoring all its graduates and giving them wristbands that said "1 in a Million...Sullivan Grad 2007."

The College also presented several awards during the ceremony. John Armstrong and Carl Graham received the Chancellor's Awards for Student Excellence. Carl Graham also received the Trustees' Award for Civic Achievement. The Faculty Award for General Excellence was presented to Steven Gomez. Associate Professor Dr. S. Gregg Erickson received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.



Maribeth Evans receives a hard-earned nursing degree.

Maribeth Evans

"Without a college education, one will never know the roads that might be open." - Maribeth Evans

At TC3, Maribeth Evans serves as an example of the hard work and determination in overcoming obstacles that so many students exhibit.

Like many students, Maribeth didn't take a traditional path to higher education. She was born in the Philippines, but her mother brought her family to this country for a better future. Maribeth took advantage of the opportunity and was a successful business person before she realized she needed the opportunities a degree would afford.

While still owning and operating an adult care home, she came to TC3 to get a nursing degree. In addition to finishing something

she had started nearly 20 years earlier, Evans viewed her decision to return to school as a teaching moment for her own children.

"My children know that college education is expected," she said. "I wanted to be able to show them that at any time, with any kind of life one might lead, a determined person can go to college and be successful. Without a college education, one will never know the roads that might be open. I have a very successful business, but I wanted more. I wanted to have a college degree."

Christopher Kakolewski



Ulster President Donald C. Katt presents Christopher Kakolewski with his diploma. Photo by B. Robert Johnson.

"I have learned the importance of commitments and the value of others' knowledge." - Christopher Kakolewski

Christopher Kakolewski came to Ulster County Community College to study Geology in Fall 2005. He graduated as part of the Class of 2007, with an Associate in Liberal Arts: Math and Science.

While on the SUNY Ulster campus, Chris served as treasurer of the Student Government Association and attended the State University of New York Student Assembly conferences.

He was an active member of the Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society and the Finance Committee of the Ulster Community College Association. Chris also participated in the Earth Science

Club, which helped bring astronomer, author, and columnist Bob Berman to campus as part of Ulster County Community College's John Burroughs Natural Science Lecture Series.

After graduation from SUNY Ulster, Chris transferred to SUNY Stony Brook to continue his studies in Geology. Chris's aspiration is to become a professor of Geology, ultimately completing his doctorate.

"I have learned the importance of commitments and the value of others' knowledge," said Chris of his time at SUNY Ulster.



Ernestine Williams-Mayo addresses her classmates at the Westchester Community College commencement.

Ernestine Williams-Mayo

As the oldest of five children, my parents instilled a life-changing principle in me. They told me, "You must set an example." Products of the "old school" philosophy, my parents, who were exposed to limited education, knew education was the key to a successful life and employed every opportunity to stress this fact.

Growing up in the Williamsburg projects of Brooklyn, New York, money was scarce. Fortunately, at the age of 14, I entered a community leadership initiative that taught business skills to teenagers. I emerged from the program with honors. High school was another challenge. Not satisfied with the local options available to me, my mother fought for me to be admitted to Franklin K. Lane High School. I graduated in the top 10 percentile.

My church also affected my life. I was a Sunday school teacher, and later served as a delegate to National Baptist Conventions as an orator, events planner, caterer, and financial secretary. In 1974, I entered the corporate world as a full-time clerk-typist, retiring in 1996. During my tenure, I attempted to lead by example. My character and work ethic led to a desire to do my best in everything I did, opening doors for other young people, including my siblings.

Believing that everyone has something to share with others, I decided to participate in student activities at WCC. I became a member, and later, president, of the Green Team, an environmental organization that I helped become a legitimate college club. Then I moved on to revive the Professional Engineers' Society. I joined the Black Student Union and became a member of the Christian Fellowship Club. Later, I took on various other roles within student government, ultimately becoming Student Senate President. Academically, I was a member of the Dean's list and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

All of my achievements stemmed from that one principle my parents instilled in me at a very early age. Their philosophy worked.

I will strive to continue to break new ground and set an example not only for my brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews in addition to my own four children and seven grandchildren, but also to be a positive influence on others who cross my path in life.

- By Ernestine Williams-Mayo

Faculty voice

Joel Humphrey Assistant Professor, Biology
Cayuga Community College

"Every time I enter a classroom I think about the distinct opportunity I have to positively impact my students' futures. The need for an educated workforce is increasing, and we are lucky enough to be living in a time when a college education or workforce training is an option for virtually anyone - individuals of all ages, cultures, socioeconomic status, and academic experiences."

I enjoy working at Cayuga Community College because it is an institution that believes the students come first. Every decision we make has the students' best interest in mind and this unique allegiance promotes a mutual respect between the students and the faculty and staff.

The inclusive nature and flexibility of community colleges make them inherently accessible. Community colleges not only offer the unique opportunity to learn within various disciplines, but also provide students with the skills necessary to advance academically.

Janet Brav Professor, Advertising & Marketing Communications
Fashion Institute of Technology

"The best aspect of my job is seeing my students land their first jobs in the communications industry and following their progress as their careers advance."

It has been my great pleasure to teach advertising and marketing communications at FIT for 26 years. I love the wide variety of unique career programs we can offer our students as a community college. We prepare students for careers in art & design and business & technology. Founded to support the fashion industries, we have grown to include many disciplines relating to style, culture, and commerce.

The best aspect of my job is seeing my students land their first jobs in the communications industry and following their progress as their

One often unrecognized and underappreciated result of a community college education is a direct impact on quality of life that translates to civic success cycled into the local community.

It is remarkable that SUNY Community Colleges have invested in the future of New York State by providing opportunities that have dramatically changed the lives of more than one million students. I am honored to be a part of the SUNY Community College system at such a prestigious time in its history.

careers advance. It's really a thrill to have former students come back to my classroom as guest speakers to share their industry experiences with my current students. Being able to introduce students to a dynamic career and to have a positive impact on their lives is incredibly rewarding.

Professor Brav is a 2005 recipient of the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching.



George J. Searles, Ph.D. Professor, Humanities
Mohawk Valley Community College

"I'm proud that community colleges succeed in being all things to all people. We serve non-traditional and traditional students equally well; indeed, my own two sons both began their college studies at MVCC."

I've been teaching at Mohawk Valley Community College since 1976, specializing in journalism, workplace communications, contemporary poetry, and Latin. I remain wholly enthusiastic about the role of community colleges because they provide the opportunity for higher education to persons who would not have access to it otherwise. I especially enjoy working with first-generation college students, and I am politically committed to empowering the disadvantaged.



Christopher Otero-Piersante Assistant Professor, English
Monroe Community College

Caitlin, 23, with severe Cerebral Palsy, arrives in her high-powered wheel chair, but it's no match for what she has inside. Her utterances, translated by her interpreter, deliver clarity and truth, about the way we measure ability. Urbanite Elyn, home schooled, is only 16, yet she astounds the 20 somethings with her wisdom about women's rights. Chelsea, 25, goes to peace marches in D.C., but she is riddled by witnessing her friend's suicide. Underneath her anarchistic black garb, there's rebellion - rebellion against not giving up so easily. Justin, 19, grew up with a speech impediment and lisp, but this "homeboy" can recite lines from any popular film

verbatim with perfect impersonations. Feyza's 18 year old Pakistani features are neatly concealed by her hijab, but not her emotions. She listened to a Marine's experience in Iraq and never spoke an accented word, but her eyes swelled for the soldier and those lost children. Dave, 33, a devout Christian and strict Republican, adopted a son and supported a foster child. His tattooed body resides in the spirit. Me, learning about the "real deal" from my comp and lit students at Monroe Community College, my alma mater, and married to my own colleague? Cool.

Angelique Stevens Instructor, English
Monroe Community College

"... through education we can make incredible strides in just a generation's time."

MCC helped me revive the spirit of my late father. Dying of alcohol disease, he lived a wandering life both on and off the reservation. But during his sober years, the best in his life, he attended MCC during the 70's, becoming an activist for American Indian rights. An MCC anthropologist became his mentor and later become my colleague. Like my father, I attended MCC 30 years into life, both having earned Masters Degrees despite the social statistics against us. My father became a counselor. I became a literature professor who developed an American Indian literature course. In my classrooms, my father lives through me, through my students, exploring the best we can offer as humans, despite frailties, knowing through education we can make incredible strides in just a generation's time.



M. Debra DeSanto Assistant Professor, Biology Department
Nassau Community College

"Teaching at a community college allows you to meet such a culturally diverse population."

I have been a faculty member at Nassau Community College since 1977. While I was a student at NCC in the early 70s, I decided that my goal was to teach at the college and to give back the same quality education that I was fortunate enough to receive.

When you are at an institution for so many years, there are so many memorable experiences with students. Teaching at a community college allows you to meet such a culturally diverse population. One student that stands out came to NCC after attending two nearby four-year institutions and dropping out. This particular student was floundering and did not have any direction. I began to mentor her. She felt comfortable and registered for one of my courses. This young lady ultimately went on to register for several of my courses and eventually obtained her AAS degree. After graduation, she accepted a full-time position in a local hospital. After working for about three years, she went back to college full time

and was awarded her Bachelor's Degree. I received a letter from her recently telling me that she just received her Master's degree and began full-time employment in her dream job as a research librarian.

Our college motto "Where Success Starts ... and Continues" certainly was true for me and for so many others.



Dr. Kathleen L. Eisele English, Reading & Communication
Onondaga Community College

"Many of my students enroll with some uncertainty but also with such hope of fulfilling their goals."

The diversity in my English classes continues to inspire me even after 26 years as a faculty member at Onondaga Community College. Each semester, my classrooms include recent high school grads, international students, workers returning for retraining, older women who have raised families, two-year career degree students, transfer students, and certificate students. I am always surprised by the number of students who want to make their families and themselves proud by being the first college graduate. Many of my students enroll with some uncertainty but also with such hope of fulfilling their goals. SUNY community colleges provide opportunities for all students, whatever their backgrounds. At Onondaga, we say that our promise to students is the experiences needed to "Explore, Discover and Transform." Perhaps, the SUNY system also makes that promise and now has one million recipients as a measure of its great success.



Timothy J. McHeffey Assistant Professor, Business Administration
Suffolk County Community College

"There's nothing else like watching your students come back to work right here in the community, raise their own families here - give back. It's a wonderful cycle."

Tim McHeffey believes strongly in the opportunity that a community college degree can bring. He encourages his own four children to begin there. He says that wherever a student attends - public or private - the education level is a direct reflection of the quality of the instructors. He added that there is a great deal of enthusiasm on campus for your own college, but that having a connection to the "finest university system in the world" is "the best of all worlds."

McHeffey embraces the community college experience and as a part of Suffolk's first graduating class, he is immersed in serving the

campus and surrounding communities.

McHeffey's students capture this mission while they're in school... so they can take it with them, to serve others.



Dr. Christolyn A. Williams Associate Professor, Global Literature
Westchester Community College

"Every year, I witness the most extraordinary day in the life of students. Commencement opens up a whole new world for the Community College student. I know because I have been there."

Ten years after graduating from Westchester Community College, I returned as a full-time faculty member. I have taught at Westchester Community College since 1997 and my application to join the faculty at my alma mater was no accident. Young men and women may arrive at our campus without basic skills, some unwilling applicants and others deeply skeptical that education will change their lives. These students leave the college transformed - their reading, writing and critical thinking skills are fully developed and they have an enhanced awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship. They depart ready to make enormous contributions to their communities.

I am thrilled to be a part of SUNY's celebration of its one millionth community college degree. As a product of the SUNY system and as a faculty member, this celebration is particularly personal and rewarding.



A Brief History of the SUNY Community Colleges

The creation and explosive growth of SUNY's thirty community colleges as distinctive "open-door" colleges is a remarkable accomplishment in New York's higher education history. In post-World War II New York State, the community college movement began with scattered private junior colleges and technical institutes, with a growing recognition of the need for community-based general and transfer education, two-year technical training, and broad access.

The State of New York enacted enabling legislation in 1948 that established the State University of New York and, in separate action, the community colleges that would fall under the SUNY umbrella. One-third of the costs would each be financed by local contributions, student tuition, and state aid; and "chargebacks" were established as a means of allocating local sponsor costs among the home counties of out-of-county students attending community colleges.

The growth of New York's community college network proceeded slowly at first and then at a rapid pace in response to the diverse educational needs of their students and their communities. Eighteen community colleges were in existence by 1960, and by 1972, a network of thirty-six comprehensive locally sponsored community colleges, under the program and oversight of the State University, covered the state, providing broad access to 121,783 full- and part-time students.

The six community colleges in New York City, with their more than 60,000 full-time equivalent students, were a part of and coordinated by SUNY until 1975, at which time the Board of Higher Education of New York City, as the single board of trustees for these colleges, became the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York, making the New York City community colleges a part of the CUNY system. This excludes the Fashion Institute of Technology, which remains a part of the SUNY system.

Today, the 30 SUNY Community Colleges are the primary New York State two-year institutions of higher education that serve the general education and workforce education needs of the state's citizens. They serve more than 200,000 students per year, approximately half of all SUNY enrollments.

The role of the SUNY community colleges, within the System, within their communities and within the State, strengthens with each year. Individually and as a group, the community colleges are increasingly recognized for the critical role they play in meeting higher education, general education, workforce development and community development needs across New York State.

THE STATE UNIVERSITY *of* NEW YORK
COMMUNITY COLLEGES



Community College Fast Facts

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

Credit Enrollment

2006-07: 162,466

2005-06: 161,784

Headcount Credit Enrollment (Fall 2006)

Total: 209,067

Full-Time: 121,037

Part-Time: 88,030

Non-Credit Registrations

(2005-06): 212,500

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (Fall 2006)

White Non-Hispanic: 142,763 (68.3%)

Black Non-Hispanic: 21,150 (10.1%)

Hispanic: 14,553 (7%)

Asian/Pacific Islander: 6,374 (3%)

Native American/Alaskan: 1,151 (0.6%)

Non-Resident Alien: 3,486 (1.7%)

Unknown: 19,590 (9.4%)

Facilities

555 buildings

15.7 million square feet

Employees (as of Fall 2006)

Total: 24,405

Full-Time: 11,674

Part-Time: 12,731

Full-Time Instructional Faculty: 4,403

SUNY Learning Network

Online Enrollments (2005-6): 57,726

* 62.7% of Total SUNY Enrollment

Degrees & Certificates Granted

2005-06

Total: 30,054

Undergraduate Certificates: 1,478

Associate's Degrees: 27,462

Bachelor's Degrees: 1,070 (FIT only)

Master's Degrees: 44 (FIT only)

Tuition Assistance Program

(TAP) recipients

55,200 (\$93.8 million)

