

ONWARD AND UPWARD, CLASS OF 2023!

This year's graduating class celebrated their achievements at DCC's 64th annual commencement ceremony held at Majed J. Nesheiwat Convention Center on Friday, May 19, joined by an audience of around 1,600 guests including faculty, staff, board members, community leaders, family and friends, with many more attending from home by livestream.

The diverse group of students ranged in age from 17 to 67 and earned degrees and certificates from 48 different academic programs. Of the 865 total graduates in the class of 2023, 89 began in one of DCC's programs designed to strengthen academic preparation such as EOP, CSTEP and TRiO, nearly 48% earned a cumulative GPA of at least 3.2 and 15 finished with a perfect 4.0.

In her commencement address, now-retired Professor of English Jacqueline Goffe-McNish charged the class of 2023 to move confidently into the world using the skills they acquired at DCC: "You can communicate, you can think, you're a team player, you have a moral center, so use what is in your hand!"

Also speaking at graduation were DCC's Chair of the Instructional Staff Council Dr. Matthew Murray, President Jordan, Board of Trustees Chair Michael Dupree, and student commencement speaker Kyle Bredberg '23 in addition to Dutchess County Executive William F.X. O'Neil. The College awarded a posthumous degree for the first time this year for Melanie Chianese, who would have graduated with honors last fall. It was presented to her mother by Dr. Jordan, along with Vice President for Instruction and Learning Dr. Houston and Human Services Program Chair Lacie Reilly.

A full recording of the 2023 commencement ceremony is [available here](#). You can also check out our [recap video](#) and view the [photo album](#)!



From left are Justin Traver, Zeren Smith, Michael Rao, Todd Motter, Nicole Maldonado, Daniel Hegle and Gabrielle Cohen.

Think Ahead's Fifth Graduating Class

Seven students from DCC's Think Ahead program earned their certificates this May, marking their successful completion of the two-year program that provides college experience and teaches work readiness skills to students with disabilities. Think Ahead was developed in partnership with Dutchess County, as part of former County Executive Marc Molinaro's ThinkDIFFERENTLY initiative established in 2015.



President Jordan stands with Dutchess County Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair Josayne Anderson-Tejera and County Executive William F.X. O'Neil.

Dutchess County Celebrates Caribbean American Heritage Month at DCC

Did you know that 42% of foreign-born Dutchess County residents are of Caribbean descent? Our very own President Jordan hails from Barbados, so it was fitting that he should give the opening address for the County's first annual Caribbean American Heritage Month Celebration held at DCC on June 1.

The all-day event of the theme "Better Together in the Diaspora" was coordinated by retired Professor of English Jacqueline Goffe-McNish, born in Jamaica, in partnership with the Dutchess County Diversity and Inclusion Committee led by Josayne Anderson-Tejera. County Executive William F.X. O'Neil, who signed a Proclamation on May 31 officially recognizing June 2023 as Caribbean American Heritage Month in Dutchess County, was also there to show his support.



▶ WATCH THE BROWN BROTHERS PREVIEW

Sarah Wheeler. Participants also enjoyed Caribbean food and music by students Jevaughn and Francois Brown, also known as The Brown Brothers - [have a quick listen!](#)

Among this year's attendees were middle school students from Poughkeepsie and Spackenkill along with members from the College and broader community.

The day's activities included a seminar led by DCC's Assistant Director of HR Coreen Simms, originally from St. Vincent, and a merengue class given by DCC Foundation Development Associate

Juneteenth: A Mini-History

First recognized as a federal holiday in 2021, Juneteenth - also known as Juneteenth National Independence Day, Jubilee Day, Emancipation Day (TX), Freedom Day and Black Independence Day - honors the moment when Union soldiers arrived in Texas in 1865 to announce the end of slavery, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed.



Photo: Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

The day serves as an important reminder of the long-lasting impact of slavery in the United States and the ongoing struggle for racial and social equality and justice, while also being an occasion to celebrate and appreciate Black history and culture.

Below is a short list of resources for learning and exploration:

- A [concise explanation](#) of Juneteenth from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
- A [brief video](#) from the New York Historical Society
- An [article on Opal Lee](#) and her fight to make Juneteenth a federal holiday
- A [library of local African Heritage resources](#) from Dutchess County Historical Society, which includes information on [Dutchess County Equality Trails](#)

VIPs in Action: Introducing our New Student Trustee

Maya Chinkan was recently elected student trustee for the 2023/24 academic year. A general studies major on the nursing track, she is passionate about making a difference in the lives of others – both by serving as the voice of her peers on DCC’s Board of Trustees and pursuing her long-term career goal of becoming a nurse practitioner.

Chinkan heard about the opportunity to get involved in college governance through a friend working in the Student Activities office. She looks forward to growing in her leadership role and says, “I am excited to take on the student trustee position to make sure that DCC is a place where everyone feels welcome and comfortable and that the concerns of my classmates are heard.”



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This summer, Chinkan is busy taking four classes towards her associate degree while also balancing a job. Having grown up in Dutchess County, she enjoys living in the area because of its historical value, beautiful parks, and festivals celebrating different cultures. She also praises the region’s availability of recreational activities like laser tag, bowling and roller skating.

Leaving a (LGBTQIA+) Legacy at DCC



Chair of the Department of Performing, Visual Arts, and Communications/Professor of Speech and Theatre Joe Cosentino has accomplished many firsts throughout his career at DCC, making an impact that will live on long after his retirement in August.

He began in 1990 and immediately got to work increasing visibility of the LGBTQIA+ community on campus by directing the College’s

first plays with gay characters. In 2000, he pioneered the establishment of DCC’s associate degree program in the performing arts, which continues to be an inclusive space for students, faculty and staff.

For the past three years, Cosentino has served as chair of the faculty and staff LGBTQIA+ Ad Hoc Committee he helped create in 2017. In this capacity, he worked with the Registrar and Safety & Security offices to institute a name change policy for students, gave a workshop to faculty on incorporating LGBTQIA+ content into their classes and offered Ally trainings in addition to hosting events such as National Coming Out Day, Day of Silence Against Homophobia and Spirit Day Against Bullying. All of these efforts culminated in DCC being named one of the eight best community colleges in the country for LGBTQIA+ students by Campus Pride Index in 2021.

Looking back on his 33 years at DCC, Cosentino says he always felt very supported in his endeavors: “I am really proud of our College – that everyone has been so open, and that I’ve been able to contribute to the thriving arts and LGBTQIA+ community we have at DCC today.”



In 1999, Joe Cosentino directed DCC’s first gay-themed play, *Fifth of July* by Lanford Wilson.



An Evidence-based Approach to Growth

DCC recently started working with a company called [Lightcast](#) to conduct an Economic Impact Study and Gap Analysis to help inform decisions about where to focus the College's resources.

Now in the data collection and review phase, the project is expected to generate useful insights and statistics that can be used to align program offerings with workforce needs and clearly illustrate its benefits for the region.

Vice President for Instruction and Learning Dr. Raymond Houston said, "We're looking forward to receiving the results from Lightcast. Having up-to-date, objective data is instrumental in assessing how well our programs line up with the needs of the community."

Vice President for Finance and Administration Adam Rathbun said, "College is an investment, not just for students and their families but also for taxpayers and the community as a whole. With the information we receive from the Economic Impact study, we'll be able to demonstrate how that investment impacts the region's development."



A College Stepping-stone



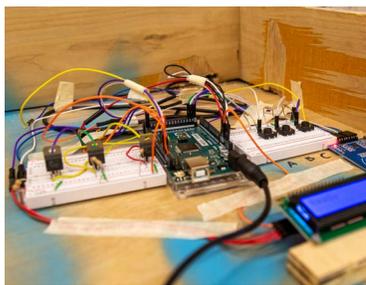
This upcoming fall semester, DCC will be offering a new opportunity to students completing our English as a Second Language (ESL) or High School Equivalency/GED programs. They'll be able to enroll in a three-credit course free of charge!

Taught in English with bilingual support for Spanish speakers, BHS 103: Social Problems in Today's World is scheduled to begin September 6 at DCC @ The Partnership in the city of Poughkeepsie.

On behalf of the DCC Foundation whose generous support covers the cost of the course for eligible students, Executive Director Diana Pollard says, "We're excited to be able to support our ESL and GED students in taking this course and hope it will provide them with the confidence they need to continue their education at DCC."

If you know a student who might benefit or if you would like more information, contact Transition Coach Emma Slate at emma.slate@sunydutchess.edu or (845) 790-3595.

Completing the Circuit



A poster session was held in Taconic Hall on May 12 showcasing the work of six Electrical Technology (ELT) students. The projects, which fulfilled the final requirement for ELT 250 – the last course in the ELT program – demonstrated their practical understanding and technical skills acquired at DCC.

Chair of the ELT program Dan Barbuto was proud of the results saying, "Each student applied their learning to create something personally meaningful to them. For example, one student built an automated chicken coop to reduce the number of tedious and repetitive tasks involved in raising chickens."

Half of the students completing ELT 250 graduated in May while the other three have just a few classes left. Barbuto remarked that the employers who attended the session were eager to draw on the talent pool in the ELT program and stated, "They were ready to hire far more than six students. I have a list of about 30 companies that would hire them."

With the new mechatronics lab in DCC @ Fishkill set to open this fall, enrollment in the ELT program is expected to grow to meet this need!

The Gift of Education

Relationships – and building DCC’s network of support for students – were at the center of this year’s scholarship ceremony held at the Grandview in Poughkeepsie on May 17. After a three-year hiatus, the DCC Foundation’s annual Honors Convocation took place in a new luncheon format, allowing award winners to meet the generous people who helped fund their academic pursuits.

In his remarks, Dr. Jordan encouraged continuing and graduating students: “Take a look around the room at all of the people who believe in you and support your academic endeavors.” To the faculty, staff and outside donors in the audience Dr. Jordan said, “By engaging with and investing in scholarship, you open doors and pave the way for economic and social mobility, and your influence is felt throughout the entire community.”



This year, the Foundation awarded 168 scholarships totaling close to \$170,000 thanks to the altruism of its benefactors. Several of the awards are funded by current or previous members of the College – from the assistance provided by the Association of Women at DCC to the DUE scholarship established in honor of Allan E. Rappleyea, who served for decades on DCC’s Board of Trustees and as the College attorney. Other examples of gifts initiated by faculty and staff include the Academic Achievement, Diversity and Social Justice, and Transfer 101 scholarships.

If you are interested in investing in DCC students by donating to one of the existing scholarships or you wish to set up a new scholarship, contact Foundation Executive Director Diana Pollard at pollard@sunydutchess.edu.



EOP & TRiO Recognition Ceremony

A Student Recognition Ceremony was held in Greenspan Cafeteria on May 9 in celebration of graduating with EOP and TRiO students. View the photos [here!](#)



CSTEP Awards Ceremony

Forty-seven graduating students in the CSTEP program, including 37 noted for earning academic honors during one or more semesters at DCC, were recognized at a ceremony on May 18. See the photo album [here!](#)



Nurse Pinning Ceremony

Welcoming in-person guests for the first time since 2019, the Nursing Department held its annual Nurse Pinning Ceremony on May 18, marking the entrance of 35 new nurses into the healthcare profession. View a recording of the ceremony [here](#).

Campus Notes



Enrollment Updates

Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success Scott Schnackenberg reported on June 12 that fall enrollment is up, for both new and returning students, compared to this time last year. The raw numbers show that there are 281 more students (+19.2%) registered in 3,681 more credits (+21.8%). Nursing students were registered earlier this year than last year, so adjusting for the difference, enrollment is up approximately 230 students and 3,150 credits. Fall applications are also up 557 (+20%) from last year, with the Chancellor's letter to all graduating high school seniors garnering 11 additional new applications last week.



Improved Retention in DCC's Residence Hall

More students will be returning to Conklin Hall next fall as academic success rates have improved dramatically. Director of Academic Housing Kaina Rivera reported that a significantly higher number of students met the eligibility requirements to return and that 131 have already committed to do so, compared with 96 this time last year. She credits growing retention numbers to expanded collaborations with other departments and increased one-on-one support for students. Rivera said, "My team and I are able to call on other departments for support and vice versa. This creates a well-rounded foundation for our students to be supported outside of the classroom that contributes to their academic success."



A View of the Future

The mechatronics lab in our DCC @ Fishkill location is set to open this fall. To help ensure a successful debut, the Marketing & Communications department partnered with colleagues from Instruction and Learning, Electrical Technology and Workforce Education and Development to create a stunning new webpage showcasing mechatronics programs. Complete with a video illustrating the programs in action, the page details our offerings for prospective students and employers. Check it out at sunydutchess.edu/mechatronics.

Campus Notes



Adult Learner Open House

The Office of Workforce Education and Development hosted an informational event on June 8, inviting prospective students to learn about short-term credentials in healthcare, human services, business, tech and more. Marketing efforts resulted in 47 inquiries for programs such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and the Bookkeeping, Networking for the Cloud, and Cannabis Retail Management microcredentials. Chief of Staff & Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness Dr. Susan Rogers said, "Events like the Adult Learner Open House are so important as we continue exploring ways to serve the non-traditional student population. We plan to build on this initial success and conduct similar outreach in the future."



A Tee-rific Time!

The DCC Foundation held its 33rd Annual Golf Tournament and Dinner on May 22 at The Links at Union Vale in Lagrangeville. Ninety-one golfers participated, including President Jordan, who played his first ever 18-hole round. Initially established with generous support from the family of Jack Orcutt, one of DCC's founding faculty members and the first director of student activities, this year's event raised over \$50,000 for scholarships and other support initiatives. Check out the photo album [here](#).

Help us Build DCC's Digital Presence!

Website: Submit a web request to ensure our new site is up to date at sunydutchess.edu/web-request.

Social Media: Share your events, photos and stories using our social media request form at sunydutchess.edu/social.



Campus Notes



Sounds Like Spring

The DCC community enjoyed two concerts this May. The first event on May 6 – a performance by the DCC Chorus, directed by DCC Instructor of Music John Howell, and Mid-Hudson Community Orchestra, conducted by Richard Milan Simons – brought together students and community members. One of the highlights was the performance of Academy of Music Director Dr. Jenny Jieun Park who performed **a marvelous rendition** of Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto in C minor. The Academy of Music student recital, held on May 11 and 12, featured approximately 60 musicians ranging in age from five to 75 and performing solo or as part of an ensemble. Dr. Park shares that, “The recital times are a celebration of music learning and music making. It is always a joy to witness our students come together with a shared love of music and present the fruits of their hard work.”

Interested in joining the fun? Summer Session II starts July 10, with early bird registration until June 26. View more information [here](#).

New Hires – Welcome, Colleagues!

Christopher Benson, part-time instructor, EMT

Margaret Delfino, part-time instructor, ESL

Keely Fell, part-time instructor, EMT

Katrina Gobins, part-time instructor, Workforce Development

Paige Healey, part-time instructor, Paramedic

Nevie Nicole Kaan, part-time instructor, EMT

Susan Masciale-Lynch, part-time academic coach, Enrollment and Student Success

John Morgan, part-time instructor, EMT

Irina Netesova, part-time instructor, ESL

Judy Spanhake, principal program assistant, Facilities

Andrew Tarasoff, part-time instructor, EMT

Ra’Quana Van Duzen, senior office assistant, Registrar