

And, Scene!

Each spring semester, DCC performing arts students enrolled in THE 280 and 281 attend the Region 1 Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) where they hone their skills and make connections with peers and industry experts. Associate Professor of Theatre Thomas Costello and Instructor of Music John Howell accompanied 19 students to Central Connecticut State University for the theatre program, which took place from January 30 to February 3.

"It's a really valuable opportunity for our students, especially in their first two years of college," said Costello. "Not only do they get to immerse themselves in the field and learn from working professionals, but they also have the chance to explore transfer and build their networks."

Over the course of the five-day program, students took part in workshops on everything from stage combat to storytelling; heard from speakers and panelists exploring a range of topics; participated in and auditioned for short plays and monologues; and more. Several DCC students were nominated to compete for a scholarship based on their work in the Performing Arts program's fall 2023 mainstage production of *Bring it On* – including Emma Donnelly and Aaron Williams for acting, Jaelyn Little for musical theatre, and Jude Greenfield for lighting and costume design. Aaron Williams made it to the semifinals, selecting Emma Donnelly as his scene partner. Donnelly shared, "We performed our scene, and Aaron performed his monologue in front of an open audience and a few judges. It was a lot of fun and a great experience performing!"

THE 280 and 281 students submitted overwhelmingly positive feedback after the trip. One student wrote, "KCACTF gives students the opportunity to grow, connect, and discover how big the world of theatre is. It motivates them and gives them the confidence to pursue a career in the arts. Some of us only ever hear about these types of



events, but are never given the chance to attend, but this class is our chance."

The cost of the program is covered in part by a \$375 course fee. The remainder comes from a dedicated DCC Foundation theatre fund, which is supported by ticket sales for DCC theatre productions. "Diana [Pollard] was great about working with me to make this happen," Costello commented, "and audience members feel good that the price of their tickets offsets the cost for this enriching student experience. Imagine that – every dollar our box office makes goes directly to supporting our students. It's amazing!"

This seems to be the perfect segue to share that the DCC Performing Arts Program and Masquer's Guild Theatre Club's next production will be "This is Modern Art," which will run in the Black Box Theatre from April 11 to 13. [More info](#) on our events calendar.

Advocating for DCC at the U.S. Capitol

DCC was well-represented at the 2024 Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Legislative Summit in Washington, DC February 4-7, a college advocacy event that brought together more than 1,000 community college leaders. Dr. Jordan and three members of our Board of Trustees – Lisa Ghartey-Ogundimu, Stephen Caswell and student trustee Maya Chinkan – attended.

Over four days, DCC representatives participated in workshops and heard speeches on key topics such as the new FAFSA, Pell Grant expansion, STEM education and cybersecurity. They also advocated for workforce development legislation and outlined DCC's federal funding priorities to scale up education and training opportunities to close regional workforce gaps in areas including but not limited to advanced manufacturing (mechatronics), aviation and early childhood education.

Chinkan, who last visited DC for a school field trip at age 12, said that returning to Capitol Hill as a community college student leader was a meaningful experience, one she believes will leave a lasting impact. In addition to participating



in an intensive New Trustee Academy and a student advocacy workshop, she met lawmakers and politicians who have the power to influence funding decisions – such as DCC alum and Congressman Marc Molinaro, Congressman Pat Ryan and Congressman Mike Lawler. “I discovered that some of the issues DCC students face, such as food insecurity, are nationwide. The summit gave me the opportunity to learn about resources, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and talk to leaders who support us.” She plans to work with the Student Government Association (SGA) and the Office of Marketing



and Communications to develop a Trustees Report with information about resources available to students.



VIPs in Action:

The DCC Board of Trustees

On February 23 and 24, our board members showed how they are all VIPs in Action. Along with Dr. Jordan and Dr. Rogers,



they participated in an off-campus retreat led by ACCT Facilitator Dr. Bruce Leslie, Chancellor Emeritus, Alamo College District. The focus of the retreat was the value of community colleges and how to better develop and implement policies that will align with and drive our strategic plan and ensure the growth of the College.

To this end, they participated in a robust slate of activities, including self-assessment exercises and workshops to identify areas of improvement and barriers to the current process of policy implementation. This included a working session where the board members reviewed, deliberated on and revised three draft policies, to make sure they met legal and other requirements and were in alignment with the College's strategic plan.

DCC Board Chair Michael Dupree said, "This retreat provided us with another opportunity to build cohesiveness among board members. Our responsibility extends beyond the legal and financial oversight of the College to the community, government, students and donors. The exercises and discussions we participated in with Dr. Leslie reinforced that we are united in pursuing the institution's strategic vision."

Dr. Jordan added, "We were pleased to have Dr. Leslie leading this event, and it's of vital importance to continue these discussions as we develop and reaffirm policies in support of DCC's strategic plan."



Once EOP... Always EOP

Steven Posada is new to the role of Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) coordinator, but he's no stranger to DCC or EOP. For the past seven years, Posada has served as diversity admissions counselor, providing students and their families with bilingual support. While pursuing his bachelor's degree at SUNY New Paltz, he was an EOP student himself.



For Posada, who grew up in the predominantly Hispanic and Latinx hamlet of Brentwood on Long Island, moving to the mostly white town of New Paltz was a major adjustment. "When I went away to college, it was my first time stepping into a space where not everyone was like me," he said. "I was questioning whether I belonged. EOP provided a sense of community within a community, with academic and social support for that crucial transition from high school to college from people who understood where I was coming from and what it was like."

A common refrain for EOP students, "Once EOP...always EOP," speaks to the connection and solidarity the program offers. It was through EOP that Posada began to establish a sense of pride in his identity, which influenced the trajectory of his academic and professional journey. In addition to completing a major in Spanish Liberal Arts, he earned a double minor in Black Studies and Latin American and Caribbean Studies. The thesis for his master's in Higher Education/Higher Education Administration at Stony Brook University was titled "Latinos in Higher Education: Does Equal Opportunity Exist?"

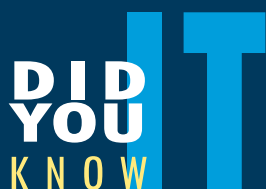
"The place I most felt like I didn't belong is where I ended up," Posada said, pointing out the irony of the situation. "I've devoted my career to higher education, to creating spaces where students feel they are wanted and belong. I look forward to working collaboratively with different offices on campus to best serve our students."

Race and the Difference it Makes

This year's Black Solidarity Reads Lyceum speaker was Dr. Emily Bernard, professor and author of the essay collection, "Black is the Body: Stories from My Grandmother's Time, My Mother's Time, and Mine." The event, held on February 15 in the James and Betty Hall Theatre, was brought to DCC by the Black History Committee with support from the DCC Foundation. Her talk, titled "Teaching Race and the Difference it Makes," centered on the humanities, education, and the relationship between Americans and race.

"Good storytelling requires good listening," said Bernard, emphasizing the importance of learning and empathy in education. Interweaving essay excerpts and stories from her own life with the teachings and writings of others, she led a thought-provoking discussion covering a broad range of themes, such as blackness as a private identity, the spectacle and politics surrounding race, and the pain, hardship and necessity of love.

The audience responded positively, offering thoughtful questions during the closing Q&A segment. DCC faculty, staff and students expressed their appreciation for her perspective and expertise along with a desire for similar future events.



Microsoft Authenticator App



If you've logged into the DCC system from a device outside of our network and noticed a prompt about using Microsoft Authenticator, you're not alone, and you're not imagining things. For now, the system will allow you to skip the prompt, but later this year, IT is going to ask users to download and start using this app. There are a lot of benefits to Microsoft Authenticator—it's fast, free, easy, and most importantly, secure. In our campus-wide, cooperative effort to guard our networks from cybersecurity threats, this will add an extra layer of protection. To learn more about Microsoft Authenticator, see their [website](#).

Remember, the Help Desk can be reached at helpdesk@sunydutchess.edu.

Can't email? Call x4357 or (845) 431-8005.

If you get voicemail, please leave your contact information and a description of your troubles.

All voicemails are automatically generated into tickets.

AVP of Human Resources Dr. Irene Okwang

Dr. Irene Okwang brings a wealth of experience and compassion to her new role as AVP of Human Resources. Originally from Ghana, Dr. Okwang immigrated to the Hudson Valley to start her family and career soon after earning her bachelor's in linguistics. Over the past 17 years, she's raised three children and completed three additional levels of education – her teacher certification from Marist College, Master of Science in Human Resources Management/Personnel Administration from Stony Brook University, and Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership and Management from St. Thomas University.



Dr. Okwang has a long history in the field of education. She began teaching during her high school years at an educational institution owned by her father in Ghana and continued this work in Hyde Park Central School District after she settled in the US. Her journey to the field of human services began at Greystone Programs Inc., where, as a direct support professional (DSP), she served as residence manager, then division director. Upon earning her master's, she embarked on her first human resources role there. Her most recent positions were at SUNY New Paltz and Vassar College, where she cultivated her broad expertise and leadership skills in HR.

Throughout her career, Dr Okwang has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to education and people. "My mindset has always been, 'How can I help?'" she said. "Every choice is about the people you are dealing with and how you make a positive difference in their lives – whether that's teaching them about employment laws, contracts, benefits, helping them navigate difficult personal situations or mediating workplace conflicts. HR is not the proverbial principal's office; HR is being human first and a neutral support to all stakeholders."



Director of the Library Anne Deutsch

Anne Deutsch comes to DCC from SUNY New Paltz where she worked for over 11 years as a research and education librarian and, for most of that time, as the library instruction program coordinator. Her new role as director of the library is a perfect synthesis of her extensive library experience and leadership skills, drawing on her background in nonprofit management and fundraising, information literacy and education.

Deutsch has two master's degrees – one from Queens College in library and information studies and second in curriculum development and instructional technology, from University at Albany. One of the top reasons she chose DCC is that, as a community college, we share one of the core values of libraries

– access. Deutsch is particularly excited about being part of The Learning Commons. "I'm fortunate to have an extraordinary team in the library, and I'm looking forward to collaborating with our colleagues across the College as we develop this robust and integrated learning support model for students."

Campus Notes

Human Trafficking Awareness Forum

On January 31, the Dutchess County Task Force Against Human Trafficking partnered with DCC to give an open forum on campus to raise awareness about this difficult but necessary topic.

In attendance were our new County Executive Sue Serino and Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services (DCFS) Commissioner Sabrina Jaar Marzouka. Presenters included DCC Criminal Justice Instructor Matt Greenstein; Melissa Hardisty from Family Services; Renán Salgado from the Worker Justice Center of New York; and Chris, a survivor, who shared his story.

The participants came away with a more complete understanding of how to recognize the signs of human trafficking, how to respond effectively, and the resources available in Dutchess County, including those at DCC.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Jordan spoke about DCC's commitment to being a resource to the community, providing learning opportunities to benefit both our students and the public. "Whether you're in law enforcement, working as a first responder, a student preparing to enter one of these professions, or simply a person who wants to know how to help, the information and strategies you'll learn today could save someone's life," he said.



Tuskegee Airmen Award

Dr. Jordan received a Tuskegee Airmen Leadership Award at an awards dinner on Feb. 3 at The Villa Borghese in Wappingers Falls. The annual Tuskegee Airmen Annual Tuition Assistance Dinner honors the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American military aviators in the United States. In addition to raising funds for education, the organization honors community leaders or organizations that have advanced the cause of young people in our area.

President of the Major General Irene Trowell-Harris Chapter of Tuskegee, Inc. Duane H. Ware, who presented the award, stated, "Dr. Jordan's life of leadership and service embodies the values, excellence and perseverance we share with our students."

"This award symbolizes the courage and strength of purpose embodied by the Tuskegee Airmen," Dr. Jordan said, "traits shared by the dedicated faculty and staff who inspire and support our students. It means a great deal, both to myself and the College I serve, to be recognized for our work."

Help us Build DCC's Digital Presence!

Need to update something on the website? Submit a web request at sunydutchess.edu/web-request.

Have a story or event to share? Past, present and future DCC stories and events – this is the material we need to engage our audience. Submit your ideas here: sunydutchess.edu/social.



Campus Notes

Enrollment Updates

February 13 was the census date for spring, and Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success Scott Schackenberg reported that spring enrollment is up. There are 3,784 students enrolled in 41,047 credits for the spring term – 324 more students (+9.4%) and 3,664 more credits (+9.8%) compared to this time last year. Tuition and fees for the term are about \$850,000 above the enrollment goal for the term. Roughly one-third of the increase over budget can be attributed to the Direct Support Professional (DSP) microcredential program, which enrolled over 170 students in the spring cohort. Looking forward to the next academic year, applications for fall 2024 are already up 4%.

US Marine Corps Band Concert

Strike up the band! The United States Marine Corps 2nd Aircraft Wing Band was on campus February 16 and 17 for two concerts in the James and Betty Hall Theatre, which were free and open to the public. The performances included a brass quintet then a brass band, followed by a meet-and-greet reception in Ritz Lounge.

Our guests also held workshops for members of the DCC Orchestra and Jazz Ensemble, as well as local band directors, on the afternoon of February 17. These included two rehearsal pieces and a Q&A session.

Special thanks to Captain Daniel Stuckhart for being our liaison to the USMC band, and John Howell, music instructor and supervisor of PFA music program, who was instrumental in bringing the band to DCC and setting up events.



Wear Red for Heart Disease Awareness

Did you know that cardiovascular disease is the number-one killer of women? Or that heart attack symptoms can be very different for women than for men? You might if you know that February is Heart Health Month, an initiative started by the American Heart Association to raise awareness about heart disease and stroke in women. As part of the month's events, on Go Red Day (Friday, Feb. 2 this year), DCC faculty, staff and students were invited to wear red and gather in Hudson Hall to appear in a group photo to show their support. The event was sponsored by the Women's Activities Committee and the Association for Women at DCC.



Campus Notes



Annual Report

Hot off the press! DCC's 2023 Annual Report was just released. Special thanks to Diana Pollard, Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Executive Director of the Foundation, and Assistant Director Burnelle Roser. Pollard says, "I am pleased to share this year's Annual Report, which focuses on thanking supporters for investing in the future, introduces new initiatives geared toward strengthening our community, and highlights all of the great things happening here at DCC!" You can view or download the report from our [website](#), or stop by the Foundation for a copy.

Where in the World is Dr. Jordan?

In a tireless and never-ending quest to improve opportunities for the DCC community, Dr. Jordan has been traveling up and down the East Coast over the past couple of months, networking with colleagues, gathering knowledge, and listening to experts in their fields.



His first stop was New Orleans, where he spent January 23-26 attending the Workforce Development Institute. The annual conference, presented by the American Association of Community Colleges, convenes new and seasoned community college-based workforce and economic developmental professionals.

Dr. Jordan said he "gained invaluable knowledge and contacts that will serve DCC well as we look to expand our program offerings to better serve the needs of the community."

The program featured an array of perspectives highlighting innovative strategies and practices to support workforce and economic development efforts, including aspects of cybersecurity, manufacturing, transportation and apprenticeship, rural economic development and entrepreneurship, among other areas.

Then it was on to Albany, where Dr. Jordan and Board Chair Michael Dupree attended a reception hosted by the NYCCT (New York Community College Trustees) and CUNY at The Egg's Swyer Theatre Lounge on January 30. The reception was an opportunity for community college trustees, presidents, chiefs of staff and board secretaries to mingle and advocate for community colleges with state senators and assemblymembers. State legislators included Didi Barrett, Michelle Hinchey, Rob Rolison, Lea Webb, Joseph Griffo, Peter Oberacker, Samra Brouck and Zellnor Myrie. Assemblymember Patricia Fahy was the guest speaker.

From there it was on to Washington, DC, which you can read more about in the "Advocating for DCC at the US Capitol" article earlier in this issue of DCC Connects. Where will Dr. Jordan go next month? Follow DCC Connects to find out!

Campus Notes

New Hires – Welcome to DCC!

MaryJo Cipollini, development coordinator, DCC Foundation

Jennie Colabella, programmer analyst trainee, Computer Center

Marielle Daeumer, human resources coordinator, Human Resource Office

Anne Deutsch, director of the library, Library

Marisa Fischer, user services liaison, Information Technology

Brianna “Bri” Hicks, residence coordinator, Resident Life

Noemi Labrador, receptionist, DCC Foundation

Dr. Irene Okwang, AVP of Human Resources, Human Resource Office

Kelsey Polikoff, Executive Assistant to VP for I&L, VP for Instruction and Learning

Jonathan Rhea, programmer analyst trainee, Computer Center

Caprese Smith, part-time analyst, Institutional Research and Planning

Title Changes and Appointments

Steven Posada, coordinator of EOP, Educational Opportunity Program

Dr. Melissa Carlo, assistant dean of enrollment and student success, Enrollment and Student Success

