

DCC Leads the Way Revolutionizing Technical Education at Our New Mechatronics Lab

The presence of First Lady Dr. Jill Biden and U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona at the grand opening of DCC's Mechatronics Lab on October 6 underscored the importance of the new facility – for the Hudson Valley and the country as a whole.

Their visit was among the first stops on the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America tour to bolster education and training efforts that promote advanced manufacturing.

Located in The Center of Excellence for Industry & Innovation at Fishkill, a name newly unveiled that day, the lab will be a hub of learning for our region – connecting students with employment opportunities and tech companies with much-needed workers. With hands-

on training and state-of-the-art equipment, it will provide pathways to well-paying jobs and career advancement.

Planning for the event began long before the RSVPs came in. Everything was set up and ready to go the week prior. However, when DCC's Event Team, led by Chief of Staff and Vice President for Institutional



Effectiveness Dr. Susan Rogers, received the exciting news that the White House would be attending, the occasion became even more momentous.

The entire community came together to make the grand opening a success. DCC faculty and staff from every division collaborated to ensure the timely reconfiguration of the event space and a smooth experience for our guests.

Before 8 a.m. on the day of the event, a line began to form outside the building. Despite the rain, guests continued to arrive, many of them dressed in suits and toting umbrellas. Over 200 people were present to celebrate the achievement. Among them were members of our Board of Trustees, the Board of Directors for the DCC Foundation and the DCC Association, alongside elected officials and community leaders.

The program featured key supporters of the lab – from Congress, New York State, Dutchess County, SUNY and the advanced manufacturing industry – culminating in speeches by Dr. Biden and Dr. Cardona.

In his introduction for Dr. Biden, Electrical Technology student Robert Bohl shared what the new facility means to him. "This lab isn't just a place," he said. "It's



a bridge between abstract concepts and reality. It makes learning more accessible and engaging, helping students like me prepare for a successful transition into the workforce.”

“The new Mechatronics Lab will help students get the skills they need for the growing businesses right here preparing them for careers making everything from display screens to jet engines to semiconductors,” Dr. Biden said in her remarks. “As a community college professor myself, I’m so excited to see how this work changes people’s lives.”

A news story and links to additional media coverage can be found [here](#). View the [full program](#), with speeches by DCC President Dr. Jordan; SUNY Senior Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges and the Education Pipeline Johanna Duncan-Poitier; Council of Industry President Harold King; Empire State Development President, CEO and Commissioner Hope Knight; Dutchess County Executive William F.X. O’Neil; U.S. Representative for New York’s 18th Congressional District Pat Ryan; U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona; DCC Electrical Technology Student Robert Bohl; and First Lady of the United States Dr. Jill Biden.



White House Stop Two: DAY ONE

After the ribbon cutting at the Mechatronics Lab, the First Lady and Secretary of Education traveled to Poughkeepsie to support the DAY ONE Early Learning Community in Poughkeepsie. The College is working with DAY ONE to connect graduates of their successful [Teacher Apprenticeship Program](#) with certificate and associate degree opportunities at DCC, in addition to providing pathways for transfer to our partner four-year schools, such as New Paltz, Oneonta and Marist.

“This partnership is the perfect fit,” Dr. Jordan said in his remarks, “It combines three of our four major focus areas – literacy, teacher education and childcare – and positions us to further help families gain financial relief by increasing access to skills and credentials.”

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.



VIPs in Action: Darrah Cloud



Darrah Cloud brings a bounty of creative experience to the DCC Board of Trustees, where she serves as board secretary. Not only is she an award-winning dramatist with an impressive list of stage, screen and publishing credits, but she also teaches writing and actively serves her community, with a special focus on housing equity.

An alum of the prestigious Iowa Writers’ Workshop, Cloud earned an MFA in Poetry and a second MFA from the University of Iowa in Playwriting. She currently teaches graduate MFAW programs at Goddard College and Southern New Hampshire University, and has taught not only at a number of colleges and universities but also with the New York State Correctional System.

She has also served as the town supervisor for Pine Plains.

Asked what being on the board means to her, she responded that it “[melds] my professional lives as a writer, a Town Supervisor, and a professor of creative writing together into one mission: to promote education accessibility for everyone by creating and sustaining a college that is relevant to today’s needs, and a community of learners that influences and partners with its larger community to make learning a way of life.”

What’s Next for DEI?

Access to higher education has the potential to transform lives, leading to better-paying, more fulfilling careers. We all know this, and it’s probably a big part of the reason we each choose to work here.

However, we also know that not every student completes their goal of attaining a postsecondary credential, certificate or degree. DCC’s opportunity programs — such as **CSTEP**, **EOP**, **Think Ahead** and **TRiO** — focus on creating more equitable outcomes for historically disadvantaged groups by providing additional resources, such as academic coaching, financial aid counseling and specialized tutoring.

TRiO Director Dr. Melissa Carlo brings her experience and passion for student services to her new interim role as DCC’s Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). “It’s important to think about DEI holistically,” she stated. “And, we have to remember that we are here because of our students — each with their own unique set of needs.”

An image hanging in Dr. Carlo’s office — and depicted at the bottom of this page — illustrates the difference between equality and equity. Each person needs to stand on a differently-sized box to see over the fence. This is the first step. A step further would be removing the fence altogether.

DCC’s Diversity Council is steadily working to celebrate, recognize and include the educational needs of our **diverse** community; promote **equity** for all; and practice **inclusion**, contributing to a collaborative campus culture where everyone is able to authentically express themselves.

Three of the council’s current priorities are to develop **best practices for hiring** to attract and retain a more diverse faculty and staff, put together a **calendar of events** to encourage more collaboration and communication between different affinity groups, and hold **two student forums** before the end of the academic year to incorporate student views.

Already, they have brought back student representation on the council and taken on a student intern for the CDO. More important work to come!

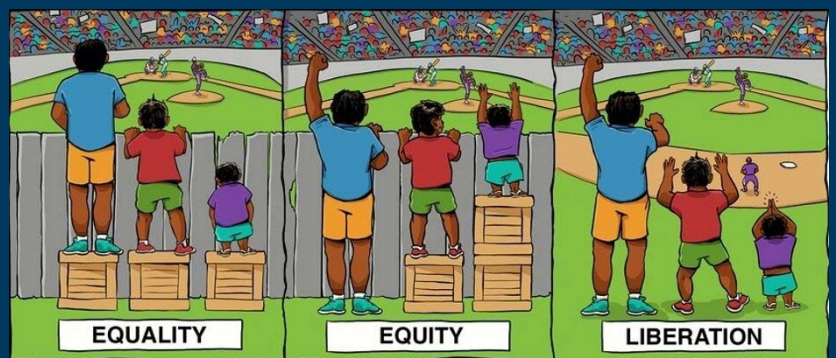


Image Credit: A collaboration between **Center for Story-based Strategy & Interaction Institute for Social Change**.

Alumni Highlight: Shoshana Akins, MPH

A 2008 graduate of DCC's honors program and the daughter of DCC Professor of Engineering Dr. Leah Akins, Shoshana Akins is helping shape policies to advance the Biden-Harris Administration's equity goals. She was appointed to the [Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity](#) (ACTE) by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg on August 17.



She is one of 24 leading experts selected from an applicant pool of over 240 for a two-year term with the ACTE beginning this fall. The committee will meet regularly to discuss and inform public policy, focusing on underserved groups and how the federal government can better align infrastructure improvements with community needs.

In addition to serving on the ACTE, Akins is the manager of public participation planning at the [Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission](#) in Philadelphia, where she has worked for over eight years doing outreach and urban planning work specifically centered on civil rights and environmental justice policy. She says the role is a perfect synthesis of her interests in policy, public health and urban planning, and a true culmination of her professional and educational experiences.

Akins earned her bachelor's in sociology and journalism from Suffolk University and her master's in public health from Drexel University. As a liberal arts student at DCC, she worked on the College newspaper and laid the groundwork for her future scholarship and career. "The small class sizes meant more interaction with professors," Akins shared, "and I was able to develop connections with my classmates, who became my first colleagues."

Some of her favorite professors throughout her academic years were at DCC, and she cites her experience in those classrooms as key building blocks for her professional career. She specifically credits Dr. Joe Allen, chair of the English department and professor of one of her most memorable classes, ENG 226, with helping her develop her analytical skills and organize her thoughts into clear points, skills that continue to serve her well in her policy and advocacy work.

Future Stars Documentary Screening & Workshop

Area high school students were invited to DCC on Friday, October 13 for a morning of inspiration and practical advice about overcoming financial limitations and other obstacles to improve their future employment opportunities and their lives.

After opening remarks from Associate Dean of Enrollment Mike Roe, the students watched the documentary "American Nightmare/American Dream," directed by Diana Devlin, who introduced the film and was on hand later for questions. The documentary is about the struggles and triumphs of four women who broke down barriers to escape poverty, get a college degree and pave the road for others.



Panel discussions, interactive exercises and workshops followed, including a Q-and-A with three of the women featured in the film. Students also learned about DCC programs, how to get financial aid and apply for college, how to effect change in their lives and their environments, and how to support others along the way. The sessions were led by representatives from DCC – including Admissions Counselor Steven Posada and Diane Donohue from Student Financial Services – as well as local community groups, students and creative professionals. You can learn more about the documentary [here](#).

SUNY Operation Inform Rated as Highly Informative

On Friday, September 29, the Admissions Office hosted the first of eight statewide SUNY Operation Inform programs. Sixty two counselors attended from several counties in the Hudson Valley, as well as 44 SUNY college admissions representatives.

After opening remarks by Dr. Jordan and Associate Director of Admissions Meredith Chapman from North Country Community College, attendees broke into workshops about the value and transformative power of a SUNY education. Along with the SUNY workshops, DCC offered sessions highlighting our Aviation and Mechatronics opportunities.

Despite the deluge of rain, the event was a success, and all attendees rated the overall day as “good” or “great.” One counselor wrote, “Wonderful program and very informative! I always leave DCC events feeling valued and respected as a school counselor – thank you!”

According to Associate Dean of Enrollment Mike Roe, “We were pleased to have the opportunity to join with SUNY System Administration to provide this service to our school counselors, who play a significant role in the college search process. Helping every student find a great fit for success is our shared goal, and we’ll continue to embrace every opportunity we have to remind them of all DCC has to offer.”



Reducing Turnover by Serving Customer Service

As many businesses, both within and beyond the Hudson Valley can attest, hiring and retention challenges have hit hard in the last few years.



DCC’s Office of Workforce and Education Development, in collaboration with Wakefern Food Corp., has identified a promising solution.

Since 2016, DCC has been delivering a successful tiered customized leadership program to ShopRite, a grocery chain owned and operated by Wakefern. The training has helped their associates work together more effectively and provide a better customer experience. As an added benefit, it has reportedly reduced turnover and improved the company’s ability to develop talented associates from within.

When Wakefern learned about our new Hospitality & Tourism (HNT) program, and more specifically, the Essentials of Customer Service course created by Assistant Professor of Business Management Maureen Gittelman, they engaged DCC to brainstorm how they could tap into these new programs to help solve their labor challenges.

The result was a new grant-funded program to engage emerging talent sooner. Customized by Gittelman to reflect ShopRite’s core values and service commitments, the Pre-Leadership & Customer Service Program taught participants skills and strategies to succeed in the field.

The course ran virtually during the summer for 20 hours over 10 weeks. “We know [Wakefern] was thrilled with the outcome,” said Workforce Development Liaison Laraine Kautz, “as they are already requesting additional sessions for 2024.”

Campus Notes



Walk Out of the Darkness

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and on Saturday, September 30, members of the DCC community, including President Jordan and SUNY Chancellor Dr. John B. King Jr., crossed the Walkway Over the Hudson side by side in the [Out of the Darkness Community Walk](#).

The walk was part of a nationwide effort led by the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) to help save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide. Big thanks to DCC team captain Hanna Brinnier from the Counseling Center. See a brief [video from the event here](#)



Fall Family Festival This Sunday

Dress up the kiddos, and invite your loved ones to do the same. All are welcome to attend our second annual [Fall Family Festival](#) on Sunday, October 29 from 2 to 5 p.m. on the Washington Quad.

Students, alumni, faculty and staff are encouraged to bring their parents, siblings, spouses, partners and/or kids to enjoy the fun, inclusive event. Enjoy food, live music, pumpkin- and face-painting and more. It's sure to be a *spooky* good time!



Cannabis Showroom Tour

General licensing of cannabis dispensaries opened in New York on October 4, and DCC's Fishkill location hosted the Hudson Valley leg of The Official Dispensary Showroom Tour on Friday, September 21 and Saturday, September 22.

Over the two days of the event, attendees learned directly from the teams who had hands-on experience applying for and launching licensed legal cannabis dispensaries in New York State.

The event was sponsored by The Bronx Community Foundation, Dutchie, Temeka, KayaPush, and Cannabis Workforce Initiative – in partnership with organizations helping to propel the New York cannabis industry.

Campus Notes



Transportation For Life Summit

On Friday, September 22, DCC was proud to host the Transportation for Life Summit.

The summit brought together experts from mental health, education and community organizations to help transportation entities better respond to mental health incidents. The event marked the first collaboration among state agencies to address suicide prevention in public spaces and overall mental health awareness.

Attendees learned how public spaces and transportation systems could be used to raise awareness of suicide prevention, as well as effective interventions and ways to promote workplace wellness and support employees. [Learn more here.](#)



Handel Lecture Series Highlights Eleanor Roosevelt's Role in WWII

On October 12, author and journalist Shannon McKenna Schmidt delivered a lecture highlighting Eleanor Roosevelt's courageous and unconventional support for U.S. troops during World War II. The lecture, which is part of the Handel Foundation Endowed Chair to Perpetuate the Legacy of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt series, included an historical account of America's most traveled First Lady, whose unwavering support for the U.S. troops included a rigorous five-week journey to the front lines of the Pacific theatre in 1943.



New Interim Title IX Coordinator Coreen Sims

Congratulations to Coreen Sims on her appointment as interim Title IX Coordinator.

For the last thirteen years, Sims has been DCC's assistant director of human resources management and an adjunct instructor in the business department.

With twenty-five years in the field, she brings great insight to this role. Sims shares, "We must all remember that it is not only the responsibility of the Title IX Coordinator, but it is our responsibility as a community, to provide a safe and secure environment, free from discrimination for our employees to work, but for our students to learn."

Campus Notes



Art Installation to Commemorate 85th Anniversary of Kristallnacht

From November 9 to December 8, the Mildred I. Washington Gallery will host KRISTALLNACHT, a multi-media installation by Dean Goldberg. The series of photographs tells a fictional story of a Jewish woman and a Nazi soldier who meet on The Night of Broken Glass when Nazis broke store windows and vandalized Jewish businesses all over Germany.

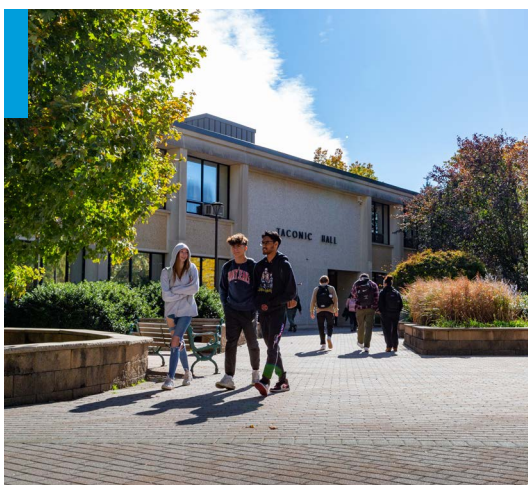
The opening reception is being held on Wednesday, November 8 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. and will be followed by a keynote presentation and panel discussion featuring the artist, Dr. Werner Steger and journalist Rosemary Armao.



Faculty Art Exhibit

Our Fall 2023 Faculty Art Exhibition opened at the Mildred I. Washington Art Gallery on October 4. The show includes ceramics by Associate Professor Lindsey Guile and Instructor Jessica Murphy; fiber art by Associate Professor Holly McCabe, Instructors Leslie Fandrich and Kayla Thompson; animation by Instructor Jeremiah Jones; photography by Instructor Mick Bodnar; collage by Instructor Kristen Rego, a wall sculpture by Eric Ehrnschwender, oil paintings by Amber Synnett and Professor Dana Weidman, shirt designs by Jesse Navarra, and an artist book by Instructor Jennaway Pearson.

The show runs through October 27. We hope you'll visit the gallery and see the work of our talented PVAC faculty!



Fall Open House

Our Fall Open House will be held at the Poughkeepsie campus on **Saturday, November 11** from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Yes, you read that right; it's now on Saturday, due to the tremendous success of Accepted Students Day this past spring, which was also moved to a Saturday. The self-guided program gives prospective students and their families the chance to learn about DCC's academic programs, financial aid opportunities, student activities and residence hall through tours and conversations with faculty and our student services professionals.

Campus Notes

New Hires – Welcome to DCC!

Alexa Akselband, counselor, Mental and Physical Health Services

Holly Bertolatti, bus driver, Student Transport/Facilities

John Iadarola, bus driver, Student Transport/Facilities

Remy Naumann, part-time library clerk, Library

Orianna Santiago, part-time library clerk, Library

