DCC Connects

January 2025 -



n Jan. 16, DCC hosted its third annual ConvoCon, a conference-style event that has become a much-anticipated tradition in the academic year. Held in the newly refurbished Greenspan Dining Room, the brighter, more spacious venue set the stage for a day of collaboration, celebration and forward-thinking discussions.

The program began with a continental breakfast and a welcome from Chief of Staff and Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness Dr. Susan Rogers, followed by a panel discussion featuring six community leaders and moderated by Professor of History Dr. Andrew Rieser.

During lunch, President Jordan delivered remarks reflecting on the four town halls held throughout the fall semester, each focused on a lens of the College's **2023-28 Strategic Plan**—Students, Learning, Community and Growth. Looking ahead and guided by DCC's Wildly Important Goal (WIG) of achieving 5,000 students in credit-bearing programs by 2028, he outlined plans to turn strategy into action.

These plans include the development of Centers of Excellence to align academic disciplines with regional needs, expanding programs such as HVAC and launching a new automotive program, and



CONVOCON

investing in a more connected, tech-driven campus. "We must continue to evolve as an institution that supports economic mobility, innovation and community impact," said Dr. Jordan. "Our future and the future of the students we serve is bright, and it is ours to shape together."

The Length of Service Awards ceremony followed, led by Human Resources and emceed by Dr. Rogers. Thirty-six colleagues were recognized in person for milestones ranging from 10 to 50 years of service.

Two breakout sessions, offered in the morning and afternoon, provided opportunities to dive deeper into important topics, while a Human Resources









Meet and Greet gave faculty and staff a chance to connect with new colleagues. Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success Brian Sondey presented findings from the National Institute for Student Success, focusing on strategies to improve enrollment and retention (view slides here). Performing and Visual Arts Chair Dr. Tommy Costello shared an inspiring vision for a Center of Excellence for the Arts, emphasizing its potential as a hub for creativity, collaboration and community engagement.

Throughout the day, attendees were invited to visit tables hosted by campus offices, programs and external partners, each showcasing projects and resources that support DCC's mission. Faculty and staff could hear directly from their colleagues about innovative ideas and new opportunities, such as updates on Brightspace, the Direct Support Professional (DSP) microcredential, Mechatronics/Electrical Technology (ELT), PTECH and the JED Campus initiative for improving student mental health and wellness. External partners, including Ad Astra, Snap-on Industrial and KG+D Architects shared their collaborations with the College and offered insights into campus upgrades and future developments.

Filled with energy and excitement, ConvoCon set a positive and inspirational tone for the spring semester, reinforcing our shared mission of serving the community and empowering our students.

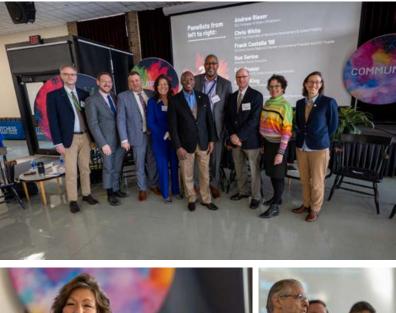
VIPs in Action The Future of Our Community

ConvoCon opened with a panel discussion featuring six key DCC stakeholders and moderated by DCC Professor of History Dr. Andrew Rieser. Kicking off with a playful icebreaker—Crest or Colgate?—the conversation quickly transitioned into a dynamic exploration of how DCC can best serve our students and our region.

Panelists included Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino, Poughkeepsie City School District (PCSD) Superintendent Dr. Eric Rosser, Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce President/CEO and DCC Trustee Frank Castella ('99), inaugural SUNY Vice Chancellor of Workforce Development Chris White, Council of Industry President/CEO Harold King, and SUNY New Paltz Vice President for Enrollment Management Stella Turk. Each brought unique insights from their respective areas—local government, P-12 and higher education, business and the manufacturing industry.

The discussion highlighted the College's impact across multiple fronts:

- **P-12 Partnerships:** Dr. Rosser called DCC "an asset" to the work of PCSD, citing increased access to concurrent college courses and arts education, the launch of a Universal Pre-K program at DCC and the growth of P-TECH to serve school districts across Dutchess County.
- Workforce Development: Panelists spoke about the College's critical role in addressing regional





workforce needs, such as the emergency medical services (EMS) shortage and manufacturing skills gap, in addition to teaching the essential 21st-century "soft skills" that a liberal arts education provides, like interpersonal communication and critical thinking, and preparing citizens of our democratic society.

• Addressing Barriers to Education and Employment: Housing costs, childcare and transportation were identified as key barriers to both education and employment in the Hudson Valley. Panelists agreed on the importance of working together to address these challenges to expand access and opportunity.

The collective expertise of the panel demonstrated the power of partnerships in tackling the region's challenges and driving progress. "Their presence underscored the vital connections we maintain as we work together to foster an enriching educational environment," said President Jordan. "These relationships continue to create meaningful pathways for our students and amplify the College's impact across the region."

Help Us Build the DCC Website!

Have an update or additional information to highlight what's unique about your program or office? Send it our way! www.sunydutchess.edu/web-request.



Meet Our New Director of Diversity & Compliance, Felicia Ellzy-Smith!

DCC is beginning 2025 with a new chief diversity and compliance officer in the Institutional Effectiveness unit, Felicia Ellzy-Smith, who has devoted her career to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice (DEISJ). With extensive experience spanning teaching, curriculum development, teacher supervision, drug and alcohol counseling, and DEI leadership—combined with a master's in education and a bachelor's in history from Bloomsburg University— Ellzy-Smith brings broad expertise and a unique perspective to her role.

As a key member of the President's Executive Leadership Team, she provides strategic DEISJ leadership, overseeing policy, compliance, Title IX coordination, campus engagement, training and advocacy. She is positioned to make a transformational impact across the College, ensuring DCC fosters an inclusive and equitable environment.



"I've been saying this since I was a little girl—I was born to educate and love."

Demonstrating her action-oriented approach, Ellzy-Smith attended her Dec. 4 lunch with the president's Diversity Council prepared with a brochure outlining her "90-Day Plan for Transformative DEI," summarized below:

- First 30 days: Assess campus climate, review policies and engage key stakeholders.
- **Days 31-60:** Develop DEI strategy, update compliance policies and launch training programs.
- Days 61-90: Implement programs, measure impact and report on progress.

Ellzy-Smith looks forward to connecting with students, faculty and staff through meet-and-greets, training sessions and community events. She is committed to promoting inclusion, enhancing collaboration and ensuring DCC remains proactive in achieving its DEISJ goals.

Outside of work, Ellzy-Smith is a proud parent who enjoys traveling, discovering new restaurants and exploring wineries. Her passion for education and building understanding makes her an invaluable addition to DCC.

Meet TeamDynamix, Here to Improve Your IT Experience!

IT Services is excited to introduce their new help desk ticketing system, TeamDynamix. After thorough review and feedback from over 30 SUNY campuses already using the system, IT is confident it will streamline ticketing procedures to better serve our community.

The initial phase will replicate the current ticket process. You can still submit tickets by emailing helpdesk@sunydutchess.edu, but email responses may look slightly different. Open tickets will be migrated to the new system, so you don't have to resubmit those.

The second phase will include web forms to improve ticket routing and handling. Eventually, TeamDynamix will include knowledge base articles for more information and support.

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.

Fred Herbst

Associate Dean of Instruction & Learning/Pre-Collegiate Programs & Title III



"We're changing lives—whether it's a high school student, an ESL learner, or through the broader impact of Title III. Our work transforms not just our students' lives but also their family's trajectory. It's why I love working at community colleges." Fred Herbst's journey to DCC has been 24 years in the making. In 2000, he was a candidate for a ceramics faculty position but was hired by Corning Community College before DCC could interview him. This past August, Herbst officially joined DCC as associate dean of instruction & learning/pre-collegiate programs & Title III, bringing over two decades of experience as an educator and administrator.

Originally from a small town in Wisconsin, Herbst earned his bachelor's in art from UW-Stevens Point and a Master of Fine Arts in ceramics at the University of North Texas. He started his career at Brookhaven College in Dallas before accepting the position at Corning and has been in New York ever since. Over his 22 years at Corning, Herbst rose through the ranks—from instructor to tenured professor of art—and took on increasing leadership responsibilities, including program director, chair of the humanities division and even interim provost during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, he moved to the Hudson Valley to serve as dean of the School of Arts, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences at Rockland Community College.

At DCC, Herbst oversees a range of areas, such as ESL and HSE, the Title III grant, the Academy of Music, partnerships with school districts and other colleges, and the College Connection dual enrollment program. "There's not just one way students get to DCC," Herbst shared. "What I appreciate about this role is the chance to identify all those paths and work

on making them clearer and more accessible."

Fun facts about Fred: An accomplished ceramicist, Fred has exhibited his wood-fired stoneware and porcelain across the U.S. and built multiple wood-fired kilns, including one currently in use at Domaine de Boisbuchet in France.

Brooke Ellsworth

Associate Dean of Instruction & Learning/Curriculum Assessment & Compliance



"It's all about growth, impact and inclusivity when it comes to how we think about what we do here, which is to graduate students for a better life and world."

DCC welcomed Brooke Ellsworth as its newest associate dean of instruction & learning on Jan. 15, rounding out a multi-talented team dedicated to supporting and growing a diverse student body. Her focus area—curriculum assessment and compliance—centers on continuous improvement and collaborating with faculty, campus leadership and external partners to foster program and student success.

With more than 12 years in higher education, Ellsworth began her career at the New School, where she earned a Master of Fine Arts in poetry. Her early involvement in curriculum development expanded her scope beyond her discipline and led her into leadership positions, where she continues to drive meaningful change for nontraditional students. In her most recent role as director of educational assessment at Mercy University, among other initiatives, she launched a Credit for Prior Learning program to better serve adult learners through stronger noncredit-to-credit pathways. At SUNY Orange, she restructured the Center for Student Success, working to streamline resources to improve student outcomes as part of a Title V grant. She's applied a student success lens to all her endeavors from assessment and accreditation to curriculum redesign and advancing student support interventions.

Currently pursuing an Ed.D. in transformative leadership at New York University, Ellsworth is exploring inclusive pedagogy and equity in assessment in the community college space. She looks forward to applying her research at DCC and working closely with faculty to ensure that all learners receive a high-quality education that prepares them to thrive in 21st-century careers.

Fun facts about Brooke: Originally from Massachusetts, Brooke moved to New York at age 18 and to Poughkeepsie in 2017. She is a proud mom to 8-year-old Julian, is an animal lover with three rescues—two dogs and one cat—and outside of work, she enjoys writing, gardening and hiking.

Celebrating the Holiday Season Together

DCC's holiday traditions, old and new, brightened the month of December—providing the opportunity to connect and celebrate with colleagues.

The Teaching Learning Center (TLC) kicked off the season on Dec. 12 with a holiday potluck, bringing faculty and staff together for good conversation and delicious homemade goods amidst the finals frenzy.

On Dec. 13, the DCC Events Committee hosted its inaugural Jingle & Mingle holiday party at Duces Grill in Poughkeepsie, complete with great food, lively music and camaraderie.

The celebrations continued on Dec. 18 as Human Resources held their annual Holiday Gathering in the Ritz Lounge, featuring finger foods, hot cocoa, live music by talented student musician Jevaughn Brown, and prizes generously provided by the DCC Foundation and Follett Bookstore.

Rounding out the festivities, DUE hosted its holiday luncheon on Dec. 19 at Zeus Brewing Company, offering a relaxed and enjoyable change of pace for the last meeting of 2024.













It's a Sign! New Printer, New Possibilities

Central Services (otherwise known as The Mailroom) opened its doors to the campus community on Dec. 5 to show off its latest piece of equipment. The new multifunction printer can create anything from stickers and posters to banners, window signage and more—increasing DCC's in-house capacity to bring creative projects to life and make our campus stand out.

Sample projects were on display during the open house, giving faculty and staff a preview of the printer's impressive capabilities. Central Services is enthusiastic about utilizing this innovative tool as a resource for the entire community. They've already started collaborating with key offices such as the DCC Foundation, Marketing and Communications, Admissions, Student Activities and Athletics to develop eye-catching materials.

As with any new technology, there will be a learning curve, with some trial and error along the way. To ensure success, the team plans to start small, focusing on building expertise and exploring the printer's full potential. Faculty and staff are encouraged to connect with Darren and Vinny to discuss their project ideas and turn their visions into reality.



The second week of December was filled with musical cheer at DCC, as the Performing Arts (PFA) program and the Academy of Music (AOM) showcased their talents for the community.

Over the course of two days, the PFA program hosted three concerts in the James & Betty Hall Theatre, with all performances also streamed online. Links to the recordings are included below for those who want to relive the music or experience it for the first time.

- Dec. 5: DCC Jazz Ensemble, directed by Joe North.
- Dec. 13: Student Recital, featuring students in PFA applied music lessons, including voice, viola, piano, clarinet and composition.
- Dec. 13: DCC/Academy of Music Chorus, directed by John Howell, and the Mid-Hudson Community Orchestra, led by Rich Simons.

The concerts featured a blend of student and community musicians. Among the chorus members were Associate Professor of History Dr. Michael Boden, Associate Professor of Art Lindsey Guile and Director of Instructional Technology and E-Learning Chrisie Mitchell.

"It was a pleasure to collaborate with Joe North (jazz ensemble) and Rich Simons (orchestra) throughout the semester as they prepared their programs," said Chorus Director and Assistant Professor of Music John Howell. "All three concerts showcased students in the Performing Arts program as well as community members, including DCC faculty and staff, alumni, and students from Poughkeepsie High School."

Standout performances also came from AOM students and instructors, whose remarkable talent, dedication and passion resonated with audiences. The AOM's first piano studio recital featured the gifted students of Janet Frommer and Sandra Grebs, while Dan Stevens's third guitar recital highlighted both soloists and ensemble performances on guitar and ukulele. The community jazz combo, directed by Nicholas Salomone, made its debut in the Mildred I. Washington Art Gallery, creating an unforgettable synergy of music and art alongside Rachel Pollack's exhibit.

Salomone, who also serves as the AOM administrative assistant, shared, "The Academy's recent goal has been to expand student performance opportunities. The December recital series exemplified this, with the addition of a piano studio recital and the community jazz combo performing in a new venue, the Washington Art Gallery."

The December PFA and AOM events were a powerful celebration of the vibrant creativity within our community and a reminder of music's unique ability to bring people together.







DCC Out and About:

Falcons are making an impact—both within the College and in the greater community. Each month, we'll highlight standout moments and achievements from our faculty, staff and students.

Admissions Outreach Strengthens Post-Secondary Pathways

The Admissions team has been hard at work in the community, growing connections that bridge post-secondary education, college and career. Through innovative outreach initiatives, DCC is empowering students not only to envision their futures but to take meaningful, concrete steps toward achieving their dreams.



BOCES Blitz: Linking Career Training to College Success

DCC's Admissions team partnered with Dutchess BOCES' Career and Technical Institute in early December for the second annual BOCES Blitz. The three-day event connected students with opportunities to earn DCC college credits through articulation agreements in programs ranging from early education and allied health to architecture and visual arts.

For the first two days, Admissions counselors gave classroom presentations, introducing students to the exciting possibilities at DCC. An Instant Admissions Day took place on the third day, resulting in 49 applications to DCC—seven more than last year!



Presentation, Tour and (Aero)Dynamic Lesson Take Learning to New Heights

On Dec. 6, Beacon High School students concurrently enrolled in calculus at DCC explored the practical applications of math in aviation during a visit to the Aviation Education Center at Hudson Valley Regional Airport. The event, organized through a collaboration between our Admissions Office, Office of Instruction and Learning, Math Department, and Math and Science Center, included an admissions presentation, a guided tour and a handson activity titled "Variations in Aerodynamic Flight."

Led by Math Instructor Bethann Zehnbauer and Math and Science Center Director Jennifer Kurtz, the activity demonstrated how calculus concepts apply to real-world aviation challenges, offering students an engaging and inspiring look at the intersection of education and career opportunities.

Send Us Your Stories

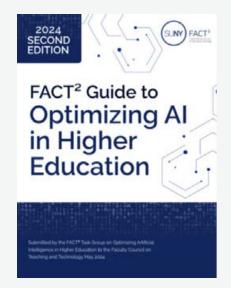
We're always looking for great content to feature in DCC Connects and on social media—and the best stories come from you, our colleagues. From student success to class trips and professional milestones, we're here to share and celebrate your news! Send your stories at www.sunydutchess.edu/media.

DCC Out and About:

Dr. Dana Gavin Advances Al Literacy in Higher Education

Writing Center Director Dr. Dana Gavin has been a SUNY leader in exploring the impacts of AI in higher education. This winter, she shared her expertise internationally and in her hometown of New Orleans at the Digitally Engaged Learning (DEL) and Modern Language Association (MLA) conferences.

On Dec. 13, she participated in one of DEL's online **In Between** sessions dedicated to exploring and promoting digital tools and spaces. She joined Billie Franchini and Jeffrey Riman, co-chairs of SUNY's FACT² Task Group, for an hour-long discussion on the creation and evolution of the **SUNY FACT² Guide to Optimizing Al in Higher Education**, which Dr. Gavin co-authored. The panel highlighted the guide's origins in 2023, the 2024 revision process, and the future of generative Al in higher education.



Two of Dr. Gavin's papers were also selected for inclusion in the MLA conference held Jan. 9-12. In the first session, a panel titled "Exploring AI Literacy in Business Communication," sponsored by the Association for Business Communication, she presented a full paper titled "Ethical Engagement: AI Literacy and Student-Author Empowerment," which examined the evolving role of AI in academia. Later, she participated in a roundtable titled "Textual Futures and Generative AI," sponsored by the Electronic Literature Organization, "[A] curious thing': Critical AI Literacy for Scholarship," an abbreviated section of her forthcoming book, "Generative AI and the Future of the Humanities: Reading, Writing, Teaching, Labor."

Dr. Gavin's leadership and scholarship continue to shape the conversation around the ethics and implementation of AI in higher education. Her upcoming publications and presentations, including her inprogress book, promise to further advance these vital conversations.



Optimize Your Office Hours!

When setting your office hours, a good practice is to make them tentative until you poll your students for their availability. You want to make sure your office hours are as convenient for your students as possible.

Read more about the Teaching Learning Center (TLC) at www.sunydutchess.edu/tlc.



Ready for Your Close-up?

Refresh your professional profile with a new headshot! Book an appointment with Eric Greenop today—call ext. 8398 or email eric.greenop@sunydutchess.edu.

Upcoming Events

Each month, we'll highlight a few key upcoming events in DCC Connects. To view a full list, visit www.sunydutchess.edu/events.

Next Month is Black History Month!



The Black History Committee has an exciting lineup for Februaryview the full schedule at www.sunydutchess.edu/bhm. Highlights include:

STEM panel and Networking Event: Feb. 11

Inspiring Talks: Historian and Fulbright Scholar Antumi Toasijé (Feb. 5/6), renowned "Art-ivist" Nikkolas Smith (Feb. 6) and acclaimed writer Aaliyah Bilal* (March 4).

*Co-sponsored with the Women's Activities Committee.

Club Fair

Jan. 28. 12:30–2 p.m. • Greenspan Cafeteria, Drumlin Hall

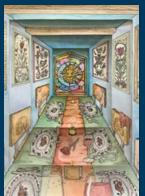
This once-a-semester event offers a chance to learn more about various opportunities available to students, including the Student Government Association, clubs, student resources offices and other DCC organizations. Help spread the word to our student body, and stop by to familiarize yourself with student activities!



Falcons Home Games

Support our student-athletes by attending a game this semester! Women's basketball is already underway, with women's softball and men's baseball on deck. View the full schedule at dutchessfalcons.com/calendar.

Mildred I. Washington Art Gallery



There's always something inspiring to experience in the Mildred I. Washington Art Gallery! Visit during regular hours (Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., and Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.) and don't miss the chance to attend an opening reception or artist talk. Spring 2025 Student Art Exhibition Jan. 21-Feb. 21

Water: Paintings by Daisy de Puthod and Jean-Marie Martin Feb. 24-March 28 Reception for the Artists: March 7, 3-6 p.m.

From the Foundation

Reminder: Scholarship Application Open Through Feb. 18!

Over \$175,000 in scholarship funding is available for DCC students who are returning in the fall or graduating and continuing to a four-year college.

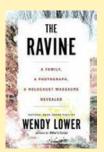
Encourage your students to apply and take advantage of the Writing Center's in-person and online scholarship essay workshops. Information is available at www.sunydutchess.edu/scholarships.



The Ravine: A Family, A Photograph, A Holocaust Massacre Revealed

Lecture by Dr. Wendy Lower

Feb. 13, 7-8:30 p.m. • James & Betty Hall Theatre



Dr. Wendy Lower (Claremont McKenna College) will discuss her groundbreaking investigation into a single photograph documenting the horrific final moment of a family's murder in Ukraine. The lecture is presented by the Greenspan Trust-Handel Foundation Endowed Chair in Holocaust and Genocide Studies with support from The June and Aaron Gillespie Forum.

Save the Date

Giving Day

March 4, 2025

Mark your calendars for March Forth on March 4th! This special day celebrates the power of giving to transform lives and uplift our community. By coming together, we can create opportunities, inspire success and strengthen the bonds that make us who we are. Join the DCCF in marching forth toward a brighter future!

Our Community's Bridge to the Future Gala

March 29, 2025

The DCC Foundation will host its annual gala at The Grandview in Poughkeepsie on Saturday, March 29. This event will celebrate the transformative power of education and raise funds to support over \$800,000 in scholarships, grants and programming the Foundation provides each year. Stay tuned for more details!

Have an on-campus event to add to the Events Calendar? www.sunydutchess.edu/web-request Submit a web request at



Campus Notes



As of the first day of the spring semester, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success Scott Schnackenberg reported that spring enrollment is up from this time last year. There are 3,745 students enrolled in 40,444 credits for the 0 more credits (+2%) than we had last year. There are 393 new

current term-135 more students (+3.7%) and 800 more credits (+2%) than we had last year. There are 393 new matriculated students enrolled compared to 370 last year. New student applications for spring are up 9% (1,093 vs. 1,005). Continuing student enrollment is up by 112 students (3.5%).

There are 265 students checked in to Conklin Hall, with the likelihood of another 5 or so still to come. Last year, we had 220 students, so we will have increased occupancy over 20%. For the second year in a row, fall-to-spring retention in the residence hall has been higher than typical.

Looking forward, there are 1,831 applications for next fall, an increase of 7% over where we were last year. Applicants using the DCC application are up 11%, while those using the SUNY application are down 1%, so we are up significantly on our higher-yield applications.

Break the Bot! EdSights Chatbot Introduced at ConvoCon

If you've been on our external website lately, you may have seen we have a new and improved web bot. Powered by EdSights, the creators of the Falco chatbot that has been texting students since fall 2023, the tool is designed to enhance the user experience and help visitors find information more quickly.

The Office of Enrollment and Student Success offered a hands-on demonstration at ConvoCon, encouraging faculty and staff to try to "break" the bot by asking it questions. This effort is ongoing, so please keep testing it. If you encounter incorrect, incomplete or improvable answers, email them to enrollmentandstudentsuccess@sunydutchess.edu. Let's work together to maximize this tool's potential!



The Fantastic Winter Fox

Sometimes wildlife photography requires you to carefully study animal behavior, look for tracks and stake out a location where you think your subject might pass through. Other times, it jumps out from behind a bush and strolls right in front of you. The latter is what led to this photograph of a majestic red fox on campus. The fox, possibly stirred from the construction happening at Hudson Hall, led Multimedia Content Producer Eric Greenop on a short chase around Dutchess Hall to CBI where its photograph was captured from a respectful distance.

The image was posted on the DCC social media accounts where it garnered a lot of attention—amassing 61 reactions on Facebook and over 360 likes on Instagram!



Personnel Updates

New Hires Welcome to DCC!

Charles Ackerman, part-time reading and literacy tutor, The Center for Academic Achievement

Matthew Caragine, groundskeeper I, Grounds

Jennifer Darby, part-time faculty, Biology

Tracy Derrell, credit-free instructor, HSE

Brooke Ellsworth, associate dean of instruction & learning/curriculum assessment & compliance, Instruction & Learning

Felicia Ellzy-Smith, director of diversity and compliance, Institutional Effectiveness

Nadine Finlayson, part-time faculty, Nursing

George Haddad, part-time faculty, Paralegal

Paige Healey, lab coordinator EMS programs, Allied Health and Biological Sciences

Amy Montanez, part-time faculty, Accounting

Glicerio Moura, part-time faculty, Nursing

Peace Olumbummo, instructor of nursing, Nursing

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Jaime Ransome, part-time faculty, Visual Arts Edgar Rivera Cash, part-time faculty, Behavioral Sciences

Victoria Strauss, part-time faculty, Math Nicholas Streva, housekeeper I, Custodial Services Samantha Zabawski, program assistant, Academic Advising

Olga Zemskova, part-time faculty, Math