

DCC's 65th Commencement *A Jubilant Celebration of Resilience and Community*

Over the past four years, higher education has undergone monumental changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At DCC, faculty, staff and students have quickly (and nimbly!) adapted to this new educational landscape, demonstrating resilience and flexibility. Under the leadership of our Board of Trustees and administration, we have navigated uncertainty and embraced transformation, becoming more collaborative and connected than before.

This year's commencement ceremony exemplifies our evolution. For the first time, students and their families and friends enjoyed welcoming remarks in both English and in Spanish – from ISC Chair Margaret Craig and Diversity Council Co-chair Steven Posada – fostering an increased sense of inclusiveness and belonging.

Another notable change this year is that we had two student commencement speakers. Human Services program graduates Amani Deloatch and Amanda Faustini-Wiersum shared inspiring stories of how finding community helped them overcome obstacles and emerge as successful student leaders, highlighting the power of camaraderie and support.

The 2024 commencement address was given by Dr. Livia Santiago-Rosada, appointed as commissioner of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health during the pandemic. She reflected, "On the other side of isolation, there is connection. And here we are, together, reconnecting at this commencement, this celebration of community, knowing you have all overcome and learned and achieved against adversity."

Dr. Jordan, in his remarks, acknowledged the challenges faced by the graduating class, stating, "More than half of you began your studies during, or in the immediate aftermath of, the pandemic ... It was a time when it might have been easy to lay low and retreat from your goals and aspirations. Yet, you chose to use that time as motivation. You reached out to expand your circle, take on a new challenge, and actively connect with and support one another."

Reflecting on the event, Board of Trustees Chair Michael Dupree shared, "Graduation is always a proud moment, with students and their families excited to celebrate their achievements. But this year's event was especially jubilant! I found myself sharing every bit of their joy as we welcomed them into the DCC alumni community." A full recording of the 2024 commencement ceremony is [available here](#). You can also check out our [recap video](#) and view the [photo album](#)!



Prep & Provisions: A Graduation Tradition

The eve of graduation buzzed with excitement at the annual graduation information session and barbecue, relocated to Falcon Gymnasium due to anticipated rain, which indeed arrived. A robust turnout of over 300 attendees included graduating students and their families alongside faculty, administration and staff. Director of Student Activities Matt Hanlon provided a thorough briefing on the next day's commencement program, covering essential logistic and security details. Students and parents expressed their gratitude, sharing that they felt well-prepared and confident ahead of the ceremony. Amidst celebratory conversations, guests savored a tasty meal courtesy of Chartwells.



VIPs in Action:

More Faculty and Staff Voices!

In our [May issue of DCC Connects](#), we listed the PSO executive leadership for the 2024-25 academic year. This month, we are sharing information about the leadership of two PSO Councils – the Instructional Staff Council (ISC) and Administrative Staff Council (ASC).

ISC

Allied Health and Behavioral Science	Gordon Lake**
Business, Aviation and Construction Professions	Maureen Gittelman*
Behavioral Sciences	Rita Woodcock**
English and Humanities	Tina Iraca**
History, Government and Economics	Karin Riedl*
Mathematics and Computer Science	Tammy Powell-Kopilak*
Nursing	TBA*
Physical Sciences, Engineering and Technology	Manish Jadhav**
Performing, Visual Arts and Communications	Margaret Craig*

* 2-year term through 2025

** 2-year term through 2026

ASC

The 2024-26 ASC leaders are Janette McCoy (chair), Jenn Kurtz (vice chair), and Whitney Morris (secretary).

PSA Updates

Since our last publication, Thomas D'Ascanio – who has served on PSA since its inception last year – was promoted to assistant director of student accounts. As he is now part of PSO, he has had to step down from his role as chair.

The updated PSA executive leadership for 2024-25 is as follows: Matt Palmatier (chair), Laura Fitzmaurice (vice chair), Phyllis Black-Ruffell (secretary), and members at large: Mary Ramaglia, Mike Costakis, Jason Goldsbery, Jenni Oyler, Ryan Vitek and Kaina Rivera. The role of delegate is currently vacant.



Was It Something I Said?

Understanding and Improving Your Approach to Difficult Conversations.

On May 15, the Diversity Council, in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources and the Teaching Learning Center (TLC), presented a workshop on improving communication



strategies for difficult conversations. AVP of Human Resources Dr. Irene Okwang, Assistant Dean of Student Services and Interim Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Melissa Carlo, and Professor of Math and TLC Faculty Coordinator Carla DelTreste-Jutt talked about how communication problems can occur between and among people of different ages, cultures, personalities and work styles.

As an illustration of that concept, the workshop began with an exercise. The group broke into teams and the participants were asked to complete a simple jigsaw puzzle without talking to each other or using nonverbal communication. It showed how groups find a way to solve challenges, and how communication breakdowns can happen. It was a good metaphor for working teams and the problems they can face.

This was followed by a group discussion on how to become more conscious of your half of the communication – because, Dr. Okwang stressed, it takes two to communicate, and misunderstanding is very common. In fact, Dr. Okwang added, that in any given difficult communication, you can expect to be misunderstood.

The presenters then reviewed individual communication styles and tactics for separating information from emotion, which included staying objective, practicing empathy and using emotional intelligence. They emphasized that to be a better communicator, it would help to try to understand the other person's point of view – which would go a long way to improve any conversation. Stay tuned; follow-up workshops to come.

Student Awards

Athletics Award Recognition Ceremony and Banquet

The Athletics Department hosted its annual award ceremony in Falcon Hall on May 7, bringing together student-athletes, coaches, and members of DCC faculty, staff and administration to celebrate outstanding achievements by all teams during the 2023-24 academic year. In addition to recognizing the Falcons who competed in five of our traditional athletic programs – men’s basketball, women’s basketball, men’s soccer, women’s volleyball, and women’s softball – members of our co-ed esports team earned awards for the first time this year.

The guest speaker, women’s basketball alumna Kamryn Hammond ‘20, has won numerous distinctions for both her athletic and academic achievements throughout education. A DCC and University of New Haven graduate, Hammond continued to play basketball through graduate school at John Jay, completing her master’s in criminal justice this past May.

Director of Athletics Matt Paquet shared, “The 2023-2024 season was a great success for Dutchess Athletics. I am so incredibly proud of everyone who is a part of the DCC Athletics Department and how they’ve represented Dutchess in our community. They have laid the foundation for another amazing year in 2024-2025 and I cannot express how incredibly grateful I am for everyone’s hard work this season. Congratulations again to our student-athletes on all of their individual and team accolades.”

“I’ve enjoyed getting to know many of the student-athletes, coaches and support staff. I admire the staff’s dedication to creating a positive intercollegiate experience and I am especially appreciative of the expansion of initiatives to support academic success,” said Marcia Butland, assistant dean for enrollment and student success: social and emotional support.



Opportunity Program Students Celebrate their Achievements – Together

CSTEP, EOP and TRiO students shared the stage in a recognition ceremony on May 14. It was the first time since CSTEP moved to Instruction and Learning that students from all three programs were celebrated together.



“Personally, I think it was a great success,” said Dr. Melissa Carlo, assistant dean of Student Services and director of TRiO. “It is always heartwarming to see the students and my colleagues support one another. Also, it allows students to see they are part of a network of support programs that are committed to their success.”

Graduating students had an opportunity to recognize a faculty or staff person who has been instrumental in helping them throughout their time at Dutchess, so in addition to family and friends, a broad range of administrators, faculty and staff attended – so many that the reception venue had to be moved to Greenspan Cafeteria.

Congratulations to all our opportunity program students!



Nurse Pinning Ceremony

The 26th annual Nurse Pinning Ceremony was held on May 16 in the James and Betty Hall Theatre, marking the entrance of 41 new nurses into the healthcare profession. View a recording of the ceremony [here](#).

Honors Convocation Brings Community Together

The DCC Foundation Honors Convocation, held at the Grandview in Poughkeepsie on May 15, celebrated community connections and outstanding student achievements. This year's event was unique, inviting both incoming and continuing scholarship students alongside their donors. Dr. Jordan highlighted the transformative impact of scholarships, emphasizing the unique bond between recipients and benefactors. "Your hard work and dedication have not gone unnoticed," he told graduating students, urging them to carry forward their passion and perseverance.

In 2024, the DCC Foundation awarded 227 scholarships totaling over \$300,000, thanks to generous benefactors, including past and present faculty and staff. These awards, from academic support to memorial scholarships like the Melanie Chianese Memorial Scholarship, extend beyond financial assistance to enriching student experiences at DCC. Since its inception in 1997, the Honors Convocation has recognized students who exemplify academic excellence, leadership and community service. These recipients, balancing academic rigor with work, family and volunteer commitments, embody resilience and impact both on campus and in the community.

The heartfelt gratitude expressed by scholarship recipients underscores the Foundation's mission to support initiatives that profoundly benefit students, faculty and staff. Tiffany Lopez, recipient of the Dutchess County Youth Board and Coordinating Council Scholarship, reflects: "This scholarship has been a blessing, motivating me to pursue my career goal of serving others."

For Kiara Ramos, Junior League of Poughkeepsie Scholarship recipient, recognition is a testament to dedication: "I am thankful for the opportunity to continue my education with this scholarship." These sentiments echo across recipients like Kyle Schmitt and Geena Charles, affirming the scholarships' role in opening doors and alleviating financial burdens.

Amani Deloatch, recipient of the American Association of Women Scholarship, values the support as a first-generation college student: "I am humbled and hope to pass on this kindness in supporting women in education."

The Honors Convocation celebrates achievements and inspires a spirit of paying it forward, with students' stories resonating as testaments to the power of scholarships in fostering success and opportunity.

If you're interested in investing in DCC students by donating to one of the existing scholarships or setting up a new one, contact Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Executive Director of the DCC Foundation Diana Pollard at pollard@sunydutchess.edu or visit [our donation page](#).



Help us Build DCC's Digital Presence!

Need to update something on the website? Easy! Fill out our simple web request form at www.sunydutchess.edu/web-request. This helps us keep organized and efficient.

Have a story to share? We love collaborating with our colleagues to make stories come to life. Whether it's an upcoming or past event, a student success story, a field trip, class project, or something else - we want to know about it! Send us info at www.sunydutchess.edu/social.



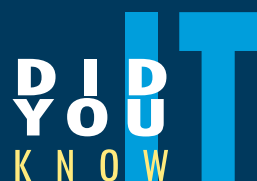
Campus Notes

ENROLLMENT Updates

As of June 24, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success Scott Schnackenberg reported that both summer and fall enrollment are up. There are 1,534 students enrolled in a total of 8,822 credits for the summer term – 84 more students (+6%) and 945 more credits (+12%) than this time last year. There are 2,266 students enrolled in a total of 26,305 credits for the fall term – 254 more students (+13%) and 2,601 more credits (+11%) than this time last year. There are 1,652 continuing students currently enrolled for fall – 291 more than this time last year. Fall applications are also up, so far 3,581 applications – 65 more (+2%) than this time last year. The Residence Hall is looking promising as well, with 172 deposits received – 46 more than this time last year.

Driving Success

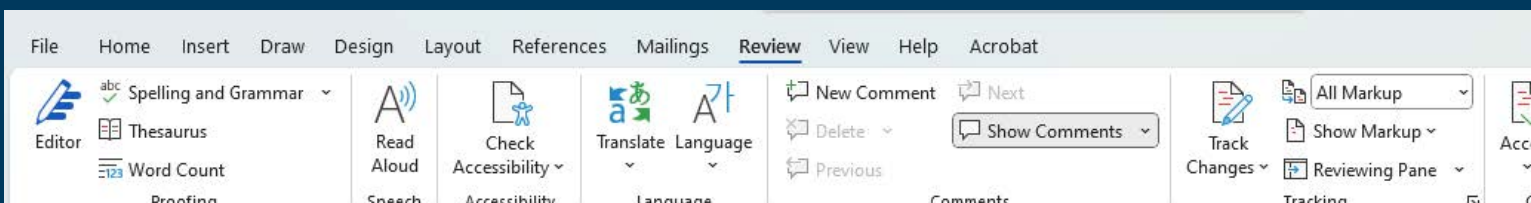
The DCC Foundation's 34th Annual Golf Tournament and Dinner was held on May 20 at McCann Memorial Golf Course in Poughkeepsie. With perfect weather, 84 enthusiastic golfers, 15 dedicated volunteers, and fantastic gift-bag giveaways from 12 local organizations, the event was a huge success. The day was filled with fun, great golf, and fabulous food catered by Christo's. Established with the support of Jack Orcutt's family, one of DCC's founding faculty members, this year's tournament raised over \$68,000 for scholarships and other support initiatives. Check out the photo album [here](#).



Microsoft lets you create accessible documents – while you're building them.

Microsoft's Accessibility Assistant offers clear and simple guidance directly within the flow of work. It helps you catch accessibility issues during the doc creation process, ensuring that your content is comprehensible to all individuals, irrespective of their visual or auditory abilities.

You can find the Accessibility Assistant under the **Review** tab in Microsoft Core 365 apps including Word, Excel and PowerPoint (under **Options** in Outlook):



If you're not currently using Microsoft 365 Apps, log into www.microsoft365.com with your DCC email account and select the app you'd like to use.

The DCC IT Department understands the importance of creating and sharing accessible content, helping to ensure our digital information is usable by everyone. In the coming months, we hope to introduce additional features and technologies to support this initiative.

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.

Campus Notes

Showing Our Pride in Poughkeepsie



Saturday, June 8 was a beautiful day for Poughkeepsie Pride! After marching in the parade, holding a banner featuring a design by visual arts graduate Alicia Smith '24, members of the LGBTQIA+ of DCC Committee made their way to Wayras Park. There they tabled alongside staff from the Counseling Center, Health Services, and Academic Housing, sharing information about services and support for our queer community on campus. On behalf of the LGBTQIA+ of DCC Committee (Michael Hall, Mary Ramaglia, Dana Gavin, John Howell, Tom Trinchera, and Jay Brown), Chair and Associate Professor Lindsey Guile thanked Associate Professor of Art Holly McCabe and her spring 2024 graphic design class for collaborating on designs for their banner and stickers, along with Instruction & Learning and the DCC Foundation for their generous sponsorship.

A Falcon in Finland

Last month, Professor of Communications, Media Arts and Film and Director of the Mildred I. Washington Gallery Dana Weidman presented at the Maple Leaf and Eagle Conference in Finland. Her participation was made possible by the DCC Foundation and the Dr. Mary Louise Van Winkle Professional Staff Teaching Learning Center Fund. Organized by the North American Studies program at the University of Helsinki, the event brought together more than 90 scholars from colleges and universities across the U.S., Canada, France, Italy and Finland. Her paper, "*Rethinking Rethinking Nanook of the North*," examines the challenges and controversies of accurately portraying history in film. Read it in the 2023-24 edition of DCC's literary and arts magazine, *The Community*, available at the Ritz Library and the Writing Center!



Championing Undergraduate Research at the Annual Beacon Conference



Every year, the Beacon Conference recognizes, celebrates, and showcases the academic achievements of outstanding students at community colleges in the mid-Atlantic region. This year, it was DCC's turn to host the conference, which was held on June 7 at the Poughkeepsie campus with Professor Mark Condon and Assistant Professor Mariana Melo serving as co-directors. Chief of Staff and Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness Dr. Susan Rogers opened the conference with welcoming remarks.

Participating students, from a wide range of disciplines, presented their work in panel discussions and posters. The conference concluded with an awards ceremony, where all participants were recognized and panel award winners were formally announced. Said Dr. Melo, "Many judges had a hard time selecting the most outstanding paper, such was the level of excellence of the students' work."

Campus Notes

Veterans in the House!

On June 1, Congressman Pat Ryan held a Veterans Resource Fair at DCC's Falcon Hall. It was designed to help connect veterans, servicemembers, and their families to resources in the area. President Jordan welcomed the participants on behalf of DCC. "We have a long history of supporting our men and women who have served," he said.

"Our veterans, servicemembers, and military families make huge sacrifices to protect and serve our nation," said Congressman Ryan. "It was a privilege to personally thank them and help deliver the support they deserve."

Representatives of over 35 community partners and organizations—as well as Rep. Ryan's caseworkers—were there to directly assist attendees, including Assemblyperson Didi Barrett's and Senator Rob Rolison's offices, Stewart Dawes from DCC's Veteran Services Office, and DCC's student chapter of Active Minds.



From left are Senator Rob Rolison; Dutchess County Legislator Dr. Lisa Kaul; DCC Alumni and Active Minds Club Alumni Co-advisors Amanda Faustini-Wiersum '24 and Amani Deloatch '24; Assemblymember Didi Barrett; DCC Human Services Instructor and Active Minds Club Advisor Tomasine Oliphant; Congressman Pat Ryan; and DCC President Dr. Peter Jordan.

New Hires - Welcome to DCC!

Robin Alpert-Hayes, academic coach, Academic Advising

Desmond Barnett, instructor, Drinking Driver Program

Russhaun Bass, housekeeper I, Custodial Services

Maya Beck, BLS skills instructor, Credit Free - EMT Program

Kathleen Champion, registered practical nurse, Health Office

Laurissa DeCarlo, academic coach, Academic Advising

Brahein Ebanks, office assistant, Health Office

Andrea Gerardi, CSTEP academic coach (part-time), Educational Opportunity Program

Kristin Hannon, program assistant, Academic Advising

Jillian McIntosh, accountant, Business Office

Keith Punchar, auto & equipment mechanic, Building & Equipment Maintenance

Title Changes, Promotions & Appointments - Congratulations, Colleagues!

Thomas D'Ascanio, assistant director of student accounts, Student Financial Services

Francisco Roche-Escalera, assistant director of admissions/diversity and equity, Admissions