

The State University  
of New York

SUMMER

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VALLEY  
VIEW

The Hudson Valley  
Community College  
Magazine

College Tackles  
COVID-19 Challenges

In Memoriam: Former  
President Drew Matonak

New STEM High School  
on Campus this Fall



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Summer 2021

Roger A. Ramsammy, Ph.D.  
President

Dennis Kennedy '95  
Executive Director of Communications and Marketing

Eric Bryant  
Teresa Farrell  
Staff Writers

John Heiser  
Graphic Design

Vincent Giordano  
Photographer

Please send your comments and feedback via email to editor@hvcc.edu or via mail to:

Editor, Valley View  
Hudson Valley Community College  
GUN 267, 80 Vandenberg Ave.  
Troy, NY 12180

For more information about the college's Foundation and Alumni Association, contact (518) 629-8012 or email alumni@hvcc.edu.

Regina LaGatta '73  
Executive Director, Foundation/  
External & Government Affairs

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## CAMPUS NEWS

### Nine Faculty and Staff Members Receive SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence

Instituted in 1972 by the State University of New York, the Chancellor's Award recognizes exceptional contributions to the university system by dedicated professionals. Recipients must show a markedly strong dedication to their work or scholarship. Since its inception, more than 190 faculty and staff members from Hudson Valley Community College have received the Chancellor's Award.

The recipients from 2020 and 2021 include:

**EXCELLENCE IN CLASSIFIED SERVICE**



**Donna Craver, Data Analysis Coordinator I, Marvin Library (2020)**

Donna began her career at Hudson Valley's Marvin Library in 1992 as a clerk and she has served the library and Hudson Valley

students for nearly 30 years. In her current position, she helps oversee and maintain the reserve textbook collection and is involved in processing and tracking new reserve textbooks for student use. She also provides outstanding service to students while working at the first floor circulation desk.

**EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**



**Elissa Baker, Senior Instructional Designer, Distance Learning (2021)**

For nearly 15 years, Elissa has been an integral member of the college's Center for Distance and Online Learning staff as an online learning

support specialist and instructional designer. She helps faculty develop and refine their online curriculum and collaborates with others in her department to deliver services and technical troubleshooting for faculty, staff and students.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in Spring 2020, Baker helped nearly 300 faculty members over the course of a two-week span move their course content online through boot camps and other training sessions. She later expanded the boot camp into a seven-week summer course to help faculty prepare for the shift to remote learning in Fall 2020.



**Gayle Healy, Director, Center for Careers and Transfer (2020)**

Gayle has served as director of the Center for Careers and Employment and later as director of the Center for Careers and Transfer since joining the college in 2008.

In her current role, she oversees not only the application of the college's numerous transfer agreements with four-year colleges and universities, but also counseling and outreach for the thousands of current students and alumni who are looking to begin their careers.



**John Heiser, Director of Creative Services, Communications and Marketing (2021)**

As the college's Director of Creative Services, John is responsible for overseeing and designing the majority of publications and print projects used to market and promote the college and its programs.

Heiser has been recognized for making significant technology upgrades in his area, which not only led to faster and better print and design work but, in many cases, saved the college from relying on outside vendors.



**Jennifer Moran, Advising Specialist, Individual Studies (2020)**

An advising specialist in the college's largest and most diverse academic department since 2009, Jen has built a reputation for student advocacy and made it her goal to collaborate with other departments to help ensure her student advisees' success.

**EXCELLENCE IN FACULTY SERVICE**



**Patricia Blacklock, Associate Professor, Liberal Arts and Individual Studies (2021)**

Since 1997, Patty has been an education specialist and advisor at the college. She has displayed a commitment to supporting students through advisement, teaching and coaching.

Besides tracking student progress for a 300-advisee caseload, she also serves as an adjunct faculty member, teaching College Forum, a course that shows first-year students how to access and take advantage of the academic support services at the college.

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(Chancellor's, continued from previous page)



**Michael Connell, Associate Professor and Education Specialist, Computer Learning Centers (2020)**

Michael has been teaching in the Computer Learning Center since 2006 and previously served as a program director at the Capital District Educational Opportunity Center. He is a 20-year veteran of the United States Air Force.

During his career with Hudson Valley's Computer Learning Center, Michael has assisted thousands of students and has been active in a wide variety of campus activities.



**Michael Shea, Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Chemistry and Physics (2020)**

Michael has been a faculty member at the college since 2010 and has been praised for his innovative and creative teaching, his service to students in the Science Study Center and his willingness to take on leadership roles on campus. He has led efforts to create hands-on instructional materials for chemistry students and acts as his department's coordinator for the first-level chemistry courses for non-majors.



**EXCELLENCE IN LIBRARIANSHIP**  
**Valerie Lang Waldin, Associate Professor and Faculty Librarian, Marvin Library (2020)**

Val has been an integral part of the Marvin Library since her arrival on campus in 2002.

As a reference librarian, she has developed numerous study guides and resources for students and is also recognized as a champion of open educational resources (OER). Val has developed an OER comprehensive subject guide and over the past two years, OERs have saved Hudson Valley students more than \$250,000 in potential textbook costs.

## Retirees

The following faculty and staff members have retired during the past year (as of Spring 2021):

**DALE BUTTON**, Assistant Professor, Applied Technologies

**ANNE DEARING**, Professor, English, Foreign Languages & English as a Second Language

**TIMOTHY DENNIS**, Professor, Civil, Construction, Industrial & Mechanical Technologies

**MARTHA DESMOND**, Department Chair, Nursing

**RICHARD EDWARDS**, Director, Physical Plant

**ANN EVANCOE**, Associate Professor, Biology, Chemistry & Physics

**TOM GARDNER**, Assistant Professor, Building Systems Technologies

**SUZANNE GARHART**, Associate Professor/ Education Specialist, Individual Studies

**PETER GEMELLARO**, Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice

**ANN GEISENDORFER**, Department Chair, Criminal Justice, Forensic Science and Public Administration

**THERESA GIL**, Professor, Education & Social Sciences

**JAMES HAMILTON**, Professor, Advanced Manufacturing Technology

**NANCY HOWE**, Professor, Education & Social Sciences

**DEBRA KOWALSKI**, Coordinator for External Programs, Workforce Development

**SUSAN KUTRYB**, Department Chair, Mathematics and Engineering Science

**JAMES LABATE**, Professor/Education Specialist, Learning Centers

**VALERIE LANG WALDIN**, Associate Professor, Library

**DAVID LARKIN**, Professor, Advanced Manufacturing Technology

**JAMES MACKLIN**, Director of Planning and Research

**AMY MCEWING**, Coordinator, Technology Academic Advisement Center

**JOHN MCMAHON**, Assistant Professor, Applied Technologies

**RONALD MULSON**, Professor, Education & Social Sciences

**KAREN PALLESCHI**, Professor, Dental Hygiene

**MARIA PALMARA**, Department Chair, English, Foreign Languages & English as a Second Language

**DEBORAH PEARCE**, Assistant Professor, Mathematics & Engineering Science

**MARY PETTEGRASSO**, Associate Professor, Computing & Information Science

**ELIZABETH RICCIO**, Professor, Dental Hygiene

**WILLIAM SMITH**, Associate Professor, Applied Technologies

**KELLY SAYERS**, Assistant Professor, Business Administration

**JEFFREY SCHOONMAKER**, Professor, Biology, Chemistry & Physics

**SUSAN SETTLER**, Employment Services Specialist, E.O.C.

**DAVID SOLDINI**, Associate Professor, Business Administration

**MICHAEL SUCH**, Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice, Forensic Science & Public Administration

**KATHLEEN SWEENER**, Executive Director of Student Development and Wellness

**LISA VAN WIE**, Director of Financial Aid

# CAMPUS NEWS

## In Memoriam: Board of Trustees Vice Chairman Joe Kapp



A great friend and colleague of the college, Joseph Kapp, Ph.D., passed away on Aug. 5, 2020 after being involved in a tragic accident at the Schenectady-based Innovative Test Solutions.

Once a student at Hudson Valley, Joe went on to achieve great things and give back to the college and the community in so many ways. A true friend and a remarkable leader, Joe was appointed to the college's Board of Trustees in 1999, and served on the board for more than two decades, most recently as vice chairman. His legacy is marked by the sense of pride and commitment he showed for our students and our mission. Joe will be missed by the entire college community.

## New Appointments: Board of Trustees



**PHILIP J. DANAHER** - An attorney and lifelong

Rensselaer County resident, Phil currently serves as counsel to the Rensselaer County Legislature as well as corporation counsel for the City of Rensselaer and Grafton town attorney. He was elected to the county legislature from 2010 to 2018, representing East Greenbush. Admitted to the New York State Bar in 1986, he has operated a private law practice with an emphasis on family law, bankruptcy law and municipal law since 1991.



**FLORA FASOLDT** - Flora retired from a 35-year

career as a speech and language therapist at Capital Region BOCES in 2018. She was town supervisor and town councilwoman for Sand Lake, in addition to serving as a member of the Rensselaer County Legislature. She also has volunteered for several community and professional organizations.





# CAMPUS NEWS

## Global Classroom High School Initiative Expands College's Reach

High school students from around the globe now have the opportunity to take college-level courses thanks to the college's new Global Classroom High School Program.

The initiative, an offshoot of the College in the High School program, offers online courses at a reduced tuition cost for students who are still in high school but ready for college-level work. Launched in Summer 2020 with an outreach effort in Costa Rica, this summer, student registrations in Global Classroom courses are coming in from Armenia, Russia, Pakistan, Qatar, Turkmenistan and elsewhere around the world.

Officials at the students' home high school must attest that they are ready for college-

level work and certify that they are a high school student, eligible for the course. All courses are offered online and use online educational resources (OER), which means the faculty have digital textbooks or other materials that can be shared with students at no additional cost.

The college plans to have an ongoing slate of online college courses that can be offered each semester as part of the Global Classroom High School

Program. The initiative is one of several outreach efforts designed to build Hudson Valley's global impact.



## College Establishes Veterans Resource and Outreach Center

United States Marine veteran Dan Wargo has brought his years of military experience to his role as the newly-

appointed coordinator of the college's Veterans Resource and Outreach Center (VET-ROC).

with PTSD following his deployment, began in Suffolk County in 2012 and has since been duplicated in counties around the state.

The VET-ROC offers connections to peer mentors, the Armed Forces Club, veteran benefits and scholarships, and other campus resources and support services.

Dan's goal with the Dwyer Program, and in his role as a point of contact for all military-related activities on campus, can be summed up with the phrase, "veterans serving veterans."

"No matter what branch of the Armed Services, we are taught to have each other's backs," says Dan. "And that is what we will continue to do here at Hudson Valley's VET-ROC."

The VET-ROC is the first office on campus that deals exclusively with student veteran issues. Importantly, it also houses Rensselaer County's PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Program, which offers peer-to-peer counseling for veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury, and provides guidance for veterans looking to reintegrate into civilian society. The Dwyer Program, named after a US Army medic who struggled



## eSports Debuts as Newest Athletic Program

Start a new intercollegiate athletic program during a global pandemic? If the new offering is eSports, no problem!

In the fall of 2020, the college added eSports as its newest intercollegiate sport, tapping not only into the global growth of competitive gaming but also the chance to have students play from home for the first several seasons of competition. When other intercollegiate sports like basketball, baseball and softball were shut down due to COVID-19, Hudson Valley eSports took off.

The college was one of the inaugural members of National Junior College Athletic Association Esports (NJCAA), which offers a platform for competitive gaming in Super Smash Bros,

Fortnite, Overwatch, Rocket League, Madden NFL and other popular games.

It didn't take long for the Viking eSports teams to find success. This spring, a Call of Duty - Warzone team of Elijah Harris and Ryan Closson defeated Northeastern Technical College, 3-1, in the best-of-three championship to claim the program's first national title.

Interested students may contact the eSports program via Discord (@HVCCesports) and follow the @HVCCesports Twitter page for information on the Vikings' new program and recruitment possibilities.



## Ballston Spa Central School District and College to Open "Spa Academy" This Fall

Ballston Spa Central School District and Hudson Valley Community College are teaming up to launch a new and innovative high school model called the Spa Academy. The Academy is a "school within a school" tailored to students' individual needs and designed to allow high school students to complete a portion of their studies in a college environment and earn college credit at the same time.

Beginning this fall, 45 students will be able to complete a portion of their studies at the college's TEC-SMART extension center in Malta, with classes offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day in both in-person and remote

formats.

The goal of the Spa Academy is to provide students with a non-traditional educational environment which maximizes their personal strengths while focusing on their individual needs. Students will have the opportunity to earn a high school Regents diploma and enroll in credit-bearing college courses

simultaneously, with the potential to continue in a two-year degree program at Hudson Valley after finishing their high school studies.







## Engineering Science Student Earns NASA Summer Internship

Edward Molina, who will be entering his second year in the college's Engineering Science program this fall, was accepted to the Summer 2021 NASA NY Space Grant Consortium summer internship, which brings together high achieving engineering and computer science college students from around the state.

Hosted by international aeronautics corporation Lockheed Martin, students will meet for 10 weeks to collaborate on project-based learning and problem solving.

The internship comes with a small stipend and the chance to work with some of the brightest collegiate minds in the state. Although the experience will take place virtually, Edward said he's excited to start.

Edward said his main area of interest is in computer systems engineering, which he hopes to pair with a dual major in computer science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute after he finishes his Hudson Valley degree next year.

## College Partners with Albany International Airport to Launch New Aeronautical Technology Institute

Hudson Valley Community College is partnering with Albany International Airport to open a new Aeronautical Technology Institute and create an Aviation Maintenance Technician School (AMTS) located at the airport.

The AMTS will be an educational facility certificated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to train aircraft mechanics for careers in the airline industry, and it is envisioned as one part of the college's new Aeronautical Technology Institute. The institute also aims to offer both degree and certificate programs and non-credit, short-term workforce training programs taught by college faculty.

Programs and courses will be conducted in Hangar 1 at the Albany International Airport, which will have more than 12,000 square feet of classrooms, labs and shop space for instruction and hands-on training when renovations are completed later this year.

The need for aviation maintenance technicians is already strong and will continue due to the retirement of those currently working in the field. A 2019-2020 Aviation Technician Education Council Pipeline Report noted that 33 percent of airframe and powerplant technicians in the country are at or nearing retirement age. The report also indicated that the industry will need to produce another 2,700 mechanics over the 2019 output each

year to meet U.S. market demand over the next two decades.



## New Academic Programs

Two new academic programs have been approved for Fall 2021:

### ELECTRIC AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES (A.O.S.)

Classroom, laboratory and hands-on experience in theory, operation, diagnosis and overhaul of all modern automotive system components, including the knowledge and skills necessary to diagnose and repair the technologies associated with hybrid and electric vehicles, advanced driver assistance systems and vehicle cybersecurity.

### WELDING AND FABRICATION (A.O.S.)

Classroom, laboratory and hands-on experience in fabrication and welding, along with instruction in areas like CAD, metrology and metallurgy, provide an advanced education not available in other welding programs.



## New Chairperson for Education and Social Sciences Department



**ELIZABETH YANOFF, PH.D.** was named the department chairperson for the Education and Social Sciences Department.

Yanoff has had a two-decade career in teaching and most recently was a tenured

faculty member at the Thelma P. Lally School of Education at The College of Saint Rose. She served as department chair for undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs at Saint Rose.

She takes over a department at Hudson Valley that includes all of the college's academic programs related to teacher preparation as well

as faculty and curriculum in history, philosophy and the social sciences.

She will oversee students pursuing Early Childhood, Early Childhood Administration and Adolescence Education associate degrees as well as those in the Special Education Assistant, Teaching Assistant and Early Childhood Administration certificate programs.

## New Transfer Agreements Established

The college has recently signed several new or renewed transfer agreements:

### RENSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

- Engineering Science (A.S.) to multiple engineering B.S. programs

### UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

- Radiologic Technology (A.A.S.) to Medical Imaging Radiography B.S./B.P.S.
- Diagnostic Medical Imaging (Certificate) to Medical Imaging Sciences/Ultrasound, B.S./B.P.S.
- Biotechnology (A.S.) to Medical Technology B.S.
- Biological Sciences (A.S.) to Medical Biotechnology B.S.

### RUSSELL SAGE COLLEGE

- Physical Education Studies (A.A.) to Physical Education B.S.
- Community Health Navigation (A.A.S.) and Health and Wellness Studies (A.S.) to Public Health B.S.

### SUNY CORTLAND

- Exercise Science (A.S.) to Exercise Science B.S.
- Physical Education Studies (A.A.) to Physical Education B.S.

### SUNY POLYTECHNIC

Transfer agreements for 29 unique bachelor's degree programs, including: Accounting, Biology, Business Administration, Civil Engineering Technology, Chemical Dependency Counseling, Computer Information Systems, Cybersecurity, Engineering Science, Health Information Management, Human Services, Nursing, and Public Administration Studies.



# New STEM High School on Campus this Fall

Capital Region high school students looking for pathways to in-demand careers will have more options this fall thanks to an innovative new high school that will be housed right on the college's main campus.

The college is partnering with Questar III – the BOCES organization for Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene counties – to create the Questar III and HVCC STEM High School, which will be housed in Lang Technical Building, the longtime home of the college's advanced manufacturing and computer aided drafting programs.

An incoming freshman class of some 70 students from around the Capital Region will take advantage of several career-focused educational pathways in the fields of computer information systems; engineering technology; environmental science/protection technology; and health science.

The high school/college hybrid program places students on the fast track to a college degree, while saving their families thousands of dollars in possible tuition costs. The school includes a mix of high school and college-level courses as well as hands-on mentorship experiences with local businesses and organizations.

"Creating a strong educational pathway from the region's secondary schools, through our college and extending onward into careers, is what this new high school is all about," said President Roger Ramsammy. "We are so excited to be part of this new partnership with Questar III."



Students will earn up to 63 college credits toward an associate degree at no additional cost to their local school districts – tuition, fees, books and instructional materials will be covered. Students will study in class with their fellow high school students, as well as in blended classes with college students.

The hope is that the new high school will grow with a new freshman class each year. The school is being funded in part through NYS Education Department Pathways in Technology and Smart Scholars - Early College High School grants.

FIND OUT MORE:



# College Tackles COVID-19 Challenges

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, students, faculty and staff have stepped up to help one another and the greater community. Now, the college is preparing to welcome students back to campus for Fall 2021 classes.

Here are a few examples of how Hudson Valley provided support to its community during an unprecedented challenge.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS

- In the spring of 2020, the college froze tuition rates at the 2019 rate: \$200 per credit or \$2,400 per semester. The freeze has continued; tuition rates for Fall 2021 remain the same.
- Free textbooks were provided to students in Winter and Spring 2021 Sprint classes.
- Full-tuition scholarships and free textbooks were provided for high school students in more than 50 College in the High School courses for the summer of 2021.
- As of July 1, 2021, the college's Foundation has awarded \$116,656 in emergency relief aid to students to help cover the costs of housing, transportation, utilities, tools, books, clinical supplies, and tuition, and an additional \$280,138 in scholarships and \$25,250 in year-end merit and student achievement awards.
- The college's "Virtual Food Pantry," made possible through contributions from the Student Senate and Faculty Student Association, has provided \$123,625 in e-gift cards to grocery stores for students.

## ACADEMIC AND CAMPUS SUPPORT

- The college purchased 400 new laptops, and refurbished an additional 200, to loan out to students studying remotely.
- The college's call center reached out to all students to address questions and provide assistance on the switch to online and remote learning and the challenges associated with COVID-19.
- The college provided mobile placement testing at high schools, with the option of no-cost "Head Start" remedial programs in math, science and English, delivered on-site, remotely or online, for students who needed them.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Rensselaer County's Emergency Operations Center was activated on campus in March 2020, and the college became an official Point of Distribution for emergency medical supplies and personal protective equipment needed by public safety departments and other agencies in the county.
- The college served as a COVID-19 testing site for Rensselaer County from May through September 2020. More than 15,000 people were tested on campus in parking lots adjacent to the college's Bulmer Telecommunications Center.

- The college's Conway Ice Rink served as a New York State Homeland Security COVID-19 test kit assembly site where the New York National Guard assembled more than 10.4 million test kits for delivery statewide.
- A Rensselaer County vaccine distribution center opened on campus in January 2021 and provided thousands of vaccines for county residents and students.
- Hudson Valley's students, faculty and staff also supported the health and safety of our community by donating PPE, manufacturing face shields, hosting community food drives and volunteering to assist with contact tracing for Rensselaer County, among other efforts.





# Drew Matonak Remembered



Andrew "Drew" Matonak, sixth president of Hudson Valley Community College, passed away on Nov. 7, 2020 in Charleston, SC, after a brave but difficult battle with a rare form of cancer. His passing came just two years after his retirement from leadership of the college.

Drew led the college through 13 years of growth and innovation in academic programming, but he will be remembered most fondly as a genuine, caring and compassionate leader; a mentor, colleague and friend.

Over the years of his presidency, Drew often spoke about his decision to attend Butler County Community College as a young man. He would tell listeners that it was the defining moment in his life. Butler was where he found self-confidence, real mentorship and the genesis

of a four-decade career dedicated to promoting community college education.

As he retired, Drew said that Hudson Valley Community College would always hold a special place in his heart. After his years of service, he holds a special place in ours as well.

Those wishing to remember Drew may consider a gift to the President Andrew J. Matonak Student Leadership and Scholarship Fund. Supporting this scholarship is one way to give back to those who follow in his path. Visit [www.hvcc.edu/giving/](http://www.hvcc.edu/giving/) online if you would like to contribute.

VISIT TO GIVE TODAY:





# A Look Back:

# Commencement 2021



You work hard for two years, four years, and well, maybe even longer, to achieve your dream – a college diploma!

Then, COVID-19 throws a monkey wrench into your celebration plans. That's been the reality for thousands of Hudson Valley students over the past two years, who have persevered and kept their education dreams alive despite everything a global pandemic has thrown at them.

With restrictions on large-scale gatherings easing incrementally this past spring, college administrators wanted to do everything possible to create an in-person, on-campus Commencement experience for members of the Class of 2021.

Following what were slowly-evolving changes to the state's restrictions, the college was able to hold four separate school-based Commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 15, with each graduate allowed two guests to attend the Joe Bruno Stadium ceremonies.

Graduates from both the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2020 - the latter able to participate in only a virtual ceremony last year - were invited to walk the stage and pick up their diplomas.

"We knew that our students were hoping for an on-campus commencement and a way to celebrate with their fellow graduates," said President Roger Ramsammy.

"Thanks to dozens of staff and faculty members who worked tirelessly over the spring on logistics and set-up, we made it happen. It was a beautiful day, and I could not be more proud of our staff who made this happen, and our graduates who were able to celebrate in person."

The college also held a virtual ceremony for those unable to attend the in-person event. Hosted by alumnus John Gray '83 and filled with student profiles, musical performances and congratulatory messages, the virtual Commencement, as of late June, had received over 7,000 views on YouTube.

VIEW 2021 COMMENCEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:





## Pravindra Persaud: Exercise Science

Hopeful emigrant, honor society president, future physical therapist, one-time homeless student.

It's hard to put a label on Pravindra Persaud, a 2021 graduate of the Exercise Science program, but it's accurate to say his life has been challenging. With perseverance and humility, he's been up to the challenge.

Pravindra spent much of his early childhood on a small farm owned by his grandparents off the coast of Guyana in South America. Up at 5 a.m. to feed the chickens and let the goats and sheep into a pasture, it certainly wasn't your typical American childhood of smartphones and fast food. He moved to the United States to get an education beyond what his rural Guyanese setting could provide, ending up in the Bronx at age 13.

Accepted into the Bronx Academy of Health Careers—a public high school—he did well academically, but poverty forced his family into homelessness at one point and he wasn't able to focus on his schoolwork.

"Growing up, my family was poor, my grandfather was the only one who was working and he was a teacher at the time," Pravindra said. "When I came over here [to the US] with my mom, I ended up being homeless for a while. My high school had an honor society and I got inducted my junior year and started to get involved, and that made me even more committed to getting involved once I got to college and inspired to make the most of the opportunity."

Elected president of Hudson Valley's chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) international honor society in 2020, he helped steer the chapter to more fundraising and philanthropic work. Even during the pandemic, members volunteered regularly at the local food bank and have created fundraisers to support causes here in the Capital Region and around the world.

"I felt like I had an opportunity, a purpose, a drive to help those that are in need, so that's why I applied for the president position at PTK.



I don't want other people to feel the way I felt when I was homeless and be in the situation I was in," he said. "We want to help people get back on their feet."

Despite completing a majority of his courses online due to the pandemic, Pravindra said he's worked hard to make the most of the opportunities Hudson Valley has offered. In addition to his leadership role in Phi Theta Kappa, he also had an internship in the college's athletic training department – good exercise for his future career as a physical therapist.

That career goal, oddly enough, has its origins way back on his grandparents' farm, where he sometimes needed to care for and rehabilitate

injured farm animals. Always interested in pursuing a health care career, he figured that he could translate those skills.

"I know I've got a long way to go. But I've kind of got my plan laid out," he said. "This fall I'm going to transfer to Russell Sage College because they have a great Physical Therapy program there. I'm hoping to get my doctorate eventually, probably another six more years."

When some people tell you they want a career that can help make a difference in people's lives, you might get the sense they are just trying to impress. With Pravindra Persaud, you get the impression he's speaking from the heart.

## Trisha Leydet: Respiratory Care

Trisha Leydet was looking for a career that could:

- A. Pay the bills
- B. Serve as an inspiration to her two young children
- C. Fulfill her desire to help people when they needed it the most

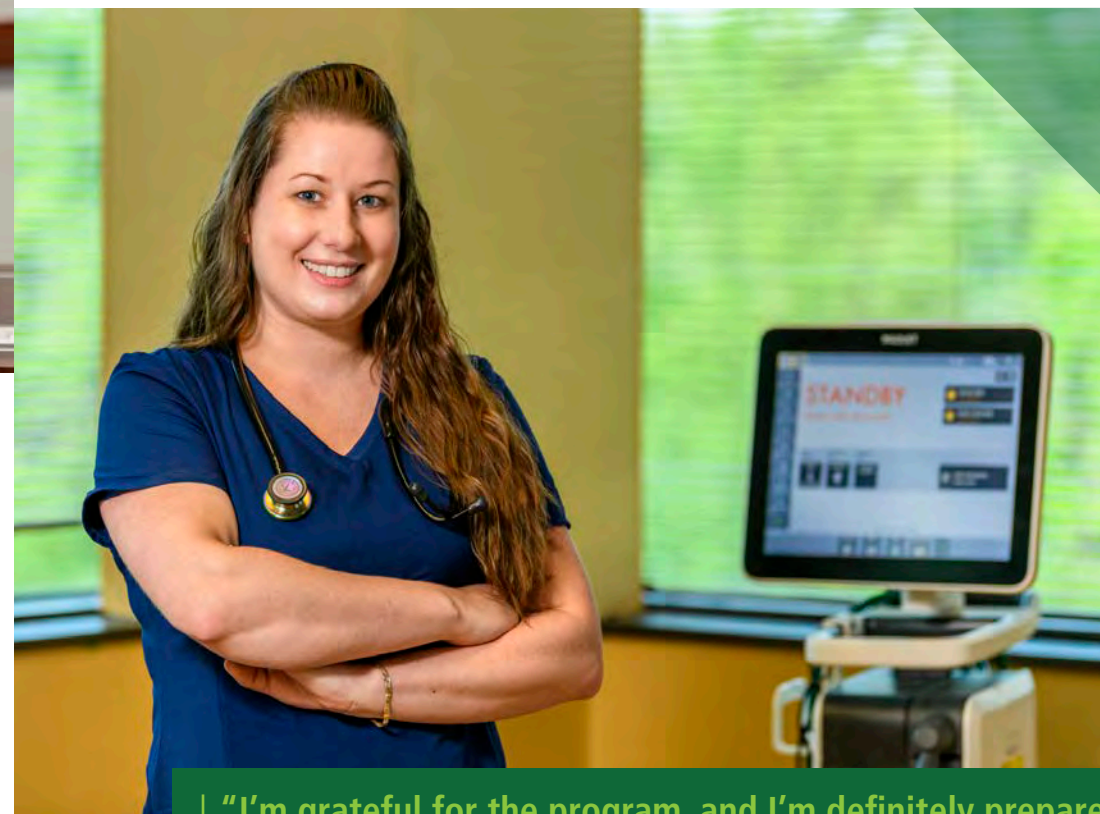
"I've always just enjoyed helping people and been drawn to things that would help me do that," she said. "When I graduated from high school, I worked as a CNA for about nine years. I became a phlebotomist and then I thought, now is the time to find a new career, and so I came across the Respiratory Care program, and here I am!"

With a global pandemic ramping up at the close of her freshman year, Trisha's two years in the intensive allied health program that educates Registered Respiratory Therapists were anything but normal. As a mother of two young children, she juggled Zoom lectures, clinical rotations and the common struggles that come with raising two-year-olds and four-year-olds.

"Because of COVID, their home daycare was closed at that time, so it was very difficult to find a balance of school work and having my kids home with me. I had to get them into a routine of 'Mommy's in class now. Here's your snack. Here's your juice. Please watch a show while Mommy does class.'"

Trisha said the fact that students in her program were able to finish their clinical rotations this year—even completing an ICU rotation during second wave of COVID—made a big difference in her education.

"It was great experience because once we're out of school these are the patients we are going to be working with if it spikes up again," she said. "I'm very excited to be graduating. In hindsight I look back, and it seems like those two years went by so quickly, but when I think of everything that I've learned and where I am today compared to what I knew two years ago, it's a big change. I'm grateful for the program, and I'm definitely prepared to go out into the workforce."



Trisha already has a job lined up at St. Peter's Hospital, working full time during the day shift so she can be home with her kids at night. And although her children are a bit too young to appreciate the trials and tribulations she's been through over the past two years, maybe someday they'll understand the challenges she went through to achieve her degree.

"It was challenging but, in the end, it makes you a stronger person, more adaptable. We made it through together!"

**"I'm grateful for the program, and I'm definitely prepared to go out into the workforce."**



# ALUMNI PROFILES

Summer 2021

## Garry Polmateer: Alumni Giving Back

Garry Polmateer '99 considers himself fortunate. Fortunate to have made the choice to attend Hudson Valley when he was accepted to a host of other prestigious four-year engineering schools. Fortunate for the chance to ditch engineering after two semesters when it turned out he really was, deep down, an "art major." Fortunate enough to work hard at building up a company, Red Argyle, which was recently noted on *Inc.* magazine's list of the country's fastest growing privately-held companies.

So fortunate that he decided it was time to give back to his alma mater. Polmateer recently endowed the Hudson Valley Community College Foundation's Art for Good Scholarship, which is funded to provide the cost for art supplies for six Fine Arts students.

Garry's story is one many Hudson Valley alums can relate to. His twin passions in high

school were engineering and art. Guess which one the guidance counselor recommended he pursue? After being accepted at RPI, RIT and Worcester Polytechnic, Garry and his parents looked at their options and determined Hudson Valley offered a fantastic value with the same caliber engineering foundation courses.

But two things happened after his first year at Hudson Valley. First, Garry realized that engineering might not be the career field he was interested in, and second, he saw the host of other opportunities that the college provided.

"I changed majors every semester for the next three semesters. I just dabbled in everything that Hudson Valley had to offer; a little psychology over here, a little anatomy and physiology over there. It was so liberating and so affordable to go to Hudson Valley and just try different things. I think that really shaped the rest of my path. I was just a curious person, and Hudson Valley really accommodated that with all that it had to offer."

When Garry finally cycled back to his love of art, he was inspired and challenged by the faculty, especially Professors Thom Lail and Tara Fracalossi, who, in part, were his inspiration for giving back. "I considered those art classes boot camp, but in a good way. They really hammered a discipline into their students. But at the same time, Thom and Tara have provided constant advocacy for the program."

While finishing his bachelor's degree in fine arts at The College of Saint Rose, Garry had been working a part-time job in IT. When graduation came, he said he could either move to Brooklyn and be a struggling sculptor or take the generous job offer his employer was offering and do art on the side.

He chose the latter and it ended up being a smart move. After a decade of work in the non-profit world, a former co-worker who



had started Red Argyle invited Garry to join him as a partner.

"I started working out of my basement 10 years ago, and now we're at 45 employees, and doing a ton of work with companies around the world," he said.

Red Argyle focuses on creating customer management and process solutions for companies using a software called Salesforce, which touts itself as the world's #1 customer relationship management (CRM) software solution. Along the way, Garry and his business partner, Tom Patros, have also made sure the company has had a philanthropic compass.

"Red Argyle is part of Pledge 1%, so, as a company, one percent of our time and profits go to non-profits. We've been a big supporter of the Regional Food Bank, and I served on their board of directors for three years. We've seen real growth over the past three years as a company, so we're thinking about how to build a legacy of giving back."

"My personal passion is making art," he said. "When I was a student, I was lucky enough to be able to go beg money from my parents or sell some stuff on eBay to pay for my art supplies. I know there are students who could really use this. The real trigger was when George Floyd was murdered and I really tuned in to the conversations and the moment. I wanted to put together a fund that combines my love of art and also recognizes in some way how important art has been for the BLM discourse. I wanted this fund to help inbound students who might not have the means to take on this extra expense."

For more information about donating to the Art for Good Scholarship Fund, contact the college Foundation at [foundation@hvcc.edu](mailto:foundation@hvcc.edu) or (518) 629-8012.

# ANNUAL FUND

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The Annual Fund plays a pivotal role in the Foundation's efforts to support the college. Through donations to the Annual Fund, we are able to support:

- Student Success
- Diversity Efforts
- Academic Programing
- Enrollment
- Faculty and Staff Development
- Community Engagement
- Campus Renovations and Enhancements
- Scholarships
- Student Emergency Fund
- Student Honors Program
- Second Chance Scholarships
- International Initiatives
- Enrollment Initiatives

Our giving priorities for 2020-2021 include:

- Advanced Manufacturing Technology

- Day Care Student Support Fund
- PTK Student Membership Support Fund
- Campus Food Pantry
- Automotive Department
- Digital Media and Fine Arts Department
- COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund
- Pride of Our Nation Exhibit

### WAYS TO GIVE

**ONE-TIME GIFT:** Your participation matters. Every gift, no matter its size, makes a difference in our students' lives.

**RECURRING GIFT:** Show your ongoing commitment to the college with a recurring gift, which will allow you to continue to support Hudson Valley automatically with gifts that add up over time.

**PLANNED GIFT:** A planned gift is an opportunity to leave a legacy with a charitable contribution to the Hudson Valley Community

College Foundation. Your gift will create a lasting effect, enabling the college to sustain educational excellence well into the future.

### SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Aside from financial gifts, there are other ways you can show your support for the college:

- Refer a high school student to the college
- Help students and alumni with career networking
- Offer student internship opportunities
- Host an alumni gathering
- Update your contact information

If you are interested in more information about these opportunities, contact [foundation@hvcc.edu](mailto:foundation@hvcc.edu) or (518) 629-8012.

# CLASS NOTES

**RICHARD MILWARD '69** - "I retired March 5, 2020 - the day before my 71st birthday, and about a week before COVID lockdowns started. Married and divorced twice after HVCC, I have two fantastic grandkids, both in college, and my daughter has a book coming out!" See <https://www.charliebirdtown.com/>

**AARON FATH '07** - Aaron is an assistant professor at the University of Southern Mississippi and just finished his fourth year as a faculty member there.

**WAI KIT CHAN '13** - CPL, a full-service design firm for more than 45 years, welcomed Wai Kit Chan, EIT, to the structural engineering team as a structural designer to its team in Albany, NY. Passionate about problem-solving and developing sustainable, structural solutions, he brings extensive project experience in

bridge inspection, water/wastewater facilities, utility structures, monorail crane systems, transportation structures and facility condition assessments.

Prior to joining CPL, Chan served as Structural Engineer at CDM Smith, Inc. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering with a structural emphasis from the University of Michigan and an Associate of Applied Science degree in engineering science from Hudson Valley Community College.

**CHELSEA GANDARA JEWELL '13** - "I graduated from the HVCC RN program at the age of 23. I started my HVCC journey at the age of 18 and my daughter attended the Viking Child Care Center on campus from the time she was four months old until she was ready for kindergarten. Having a child at

such a young age and attending college was challenging but well worth it. My education has provided a more stable life for my family. Without the assistance I received from the Viking Child Care Center, I don't know how I would've ever done it. I am now 31, married and have since had two more babies that I was well prepared for thanks to my career."

**STEPHANIE TYSKI '18** - Stephanie graduated this year from Paul Smith's College, summa cum laude, with her bachelor's degree in Park and Conservation Management.

To submit an item for Class Notes, go to [www.hvcc.edu/alumni](http://www.hvcc.edu/alumni)

SEE GARRY'S  
STORY ONLINE:





# HVCC North - College Looks to Grow Saratoga County Presence

The college announced in August plans to expand its physical footprint and its ability to serve students at its extension center in southern Saratoga County.

A new STEM Education Center planned to be constructed adjacent to the current TEC-SMART building will transform the Malta site into "HVCC North."

HVCC North will allow the college to increase access to education and workforce training opportunities in the growing fields of healthcare, STEM and skilled trades. One major beneficiary and a key partner in the growth of HVCC North will be GlobalFoundries, located just down the road in the Saratoga Technology + Energy Park. The international chip fab has already committed a \$500,000 donation to the project to establish the GlobalFoundries Workforce Training and Apprenticeship Center at HVCC North.

"We hope that the facility will not only attract students from the northern region who now have to commute to Troy, but also be a catalyst for increased workforce training programs and partnerships in the region," said President Roger Ramsammy. "The facility will be a workforce training site for our short-term, credit-free courses and create greater flexibility and options for our students. Ultimately, we're seeking to broaden the education pipeline and support the local workforce demand by building on our existing talent and strength in workforce training."

A planned two-story, 14,500 square foot STEM Education Center will include labs for microbiology, anatomy and physiology, chemistry and biology, along with classrooms, support space and offices. Updates and renovations to the existing classrooms, labs, computer facilities, and office areas at the current TEC-SMART facility will round out the \$12.5 million project.

