

TRI-C®

TIMES

SEEDS OF SUCCESS



Tri-C's Plant Science and Landscape Technology program takes first place in national competition



FACES OF THE FUTURE

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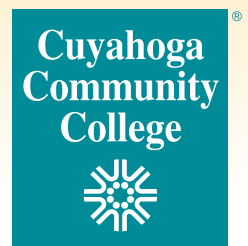


I earned my
first degree
at Tri-C

Confidence

At Tri-C, Rebecca Groth discovered she has what it takes to succeed in college

Rebecca was skeptical about college. She knew she was smart, but didn't know if the college experience would be right for her. Then she came to Tri-C, where she quickly discovered a valuable support network of faculty, staff and fellow students who not only helped her succeed academically — they helped her find a purpose and a future.



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PRESIDENT'S Message

TO OUR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

For 60 years, Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) has helped countless Northeast Ohioans from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances attain academic and career success.

This spring, the College awarded degrees and certificates to more than 1,800 students. Nearly 200 had recently returned after stopping out during the COVID-19 pandemic. At least 50 were still in high school. And more than half were the first in their families to graduate from college.

In this issue of *Tri-C Times*, you'll meet five of our most recent alumni — Laryssa Maruski, Anita Bennett, Devin Short, Lydia Rabne and Evelyn Buchanan — as well as Sheila Miller, who completed the Nursing program in the early 1980s and recently became chief nursing officer at Cleveland Clinic London.

And that's not the College's only tie to the United Kingdom. English professor Casey Coin-Sweeney recently visited the University of Cambridge to present on the importance of teaching environmental concepts in higher education. Read more about her work in this area on pages 22-25.

Because Tri-C relies on significant support from the Collegewide and regional community, it's important that we let them know how it will benefit students and Northeast Ohio.



I HOPE YOU WILL TAKE THE TIME TO REVIEW MY PRESIDENTIAL GOALS FOR 2022-2025, OUTLINED IN THIS ISSUE, TO GAIN A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE COLLEGE'S POST-PANDEMIC DIRECTION.

Through several decades and changes in leadership, Tri-C has maintained one critical focus: ensuring that every citizen, regardless of their circumstances, has access to education and training that leads to a family-sustaining career here in Northeast Ohio.

But things are different now. Our audience is different — older, seeking more flexibility. The workforce is different — more diverse, requiring broader skill sets. It's time to look beyond access and completion to the ultimate goal: post-college success.

Launched in 2019, the Cuyahoga Community College Foundation's Skills to Succeed campaign is already addressing this need. While the campaign recently surpassed its fundraising goal, there is so much more we can do to ensure every student continues to thrive once they leave us.

Moving forward, our rallying cry shall be: *Every student. Every program. Every zip code.*

I hope you will join me in facing these extraordinary times with courage, hope and resolve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MABA". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael A. Baston, J.D., Ed.D.
President, Cuyahoga Community College

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EDITOR

Anthony Moujaes

MANAGING EDITOR

Jarrold Zickefoose

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Erik Cassano

COPY EDITORS

Noelle Bye

Beth Cieslik

WRITERS

Noelle Bye

Erik Cassano

Beth Cieslik

Anthony Moujaes

Jarrold Zickefoose

ART DIRECTOR

Eric Wheeler

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Chris Bacarella

Lauren Beck

Noelle Bye

Tamara London

Chris Tongue

McKinley Wiley

Cody York

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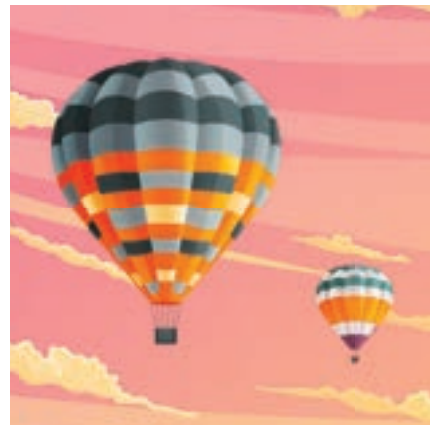
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THE WORLD OF JAZZ COMES TO CLEVELAND

Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, presented by KeyBank, concluded its 44th annual music celebration in June at Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland. Thousands of music enthusiasts from across the region turned out to see performances from world-renowned artists Herbie Hancock, Trombone Shorty, Angélique Kidjo, Christian McBride and more.



CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS

AN INITIATIVE OF NASPA AND THE SUDER FOUNDATION



SUPPORTING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

The Center for First-generation Student Success selected Tri-C for its First Scholars Network of Institutions. College representatives will join peers from across the nation to share resources and knowledge around first-generation student success.

SUMMER 2023



COLLEGE EARNS THIRD 'VOTER FRIENDLY CAMPUS' AWARD

Tri-C continued its national status as a "Voter Friendly Campus," achieving its third consecutive designation for 2023-2024. The honor culminates a two-year cycle of planning and year-round Promote the Vote activities at the College, led by the Government Relations department with support from students, faculty and staff. Tri-C previously earned the honor in 2019 and 2021.



DREAMS AND PASSIONS

Fulfilled

The universe of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) — faculty, staff, administration, donors and especially the students and their families — orbits around one point: Commencement. The celebration of earning a degree or certificate is a moment of energy transfer, and freshly minted graduates from all walks of life set forth on a common path — to pursue dreams and passions, and build their futures.

More than 1,800 students crossed that threshold as part of Spring Commencement.

Each road that led here is as unique as the students themselves: driven by dreams only they can know; performing balancing acts between life and school only they understand; and culminating in an achievement only they can truly savor.

We can, however, all celebrate it.

STORIES BY **Noelle Bye, Anthony Moujaes**
and **Jarrod Zickefoose**

PHOTOS BY **Lauren Beck, Tamara London and Cody York**



Check out tri-c.edu/commencement
for more highlights from the Class of 2023.



Laryssa MARUSKI

FOLLOWS HER PATH

When Laryssa Maruski came to the United States in 2018 as an exchange student, her main goal was to learn English. She planned to return home to São Paulo, Brazil, to continue her academic journey, but then she realized an education in the United States would give her more opportunities.

Maruski found Tri-C® through an English as a Second Language (ESL) program before enrolling as a student.

“Tri-C was the beginning of my studies, but it was more than that — Tri-C helped me succeed during my time here,” she said. “It helped me connect and feel part of the community, and I gained work experience.”

The 25-year-old completed two internships with the Cuyahoga Community College Foundation and Student Engagement Office and received the Jerry Sue Thornton Scholarship. She was also a member of Phi Theta Kappa and named Western Campus Student of the Year for 2021-2022.

In addition to receiving her Associate of Arts, the Rocky River resident was the student speaker for the College’s Spring Commencement on May 19. Maruski encouraged her fellow graduates to follow their own path, pursue their passions and rise above challenges along the way.

Maruski will attend Cleveland State University in the fall to pursue a marketing major and international business minor. She expects to complete her bachelor’s degree in Fall 2024.

Tell me about yourself.

I am passionate about trying new food from different parts of the world, learning about new cultures and experiencing new adventures. I love to travel, watch sports events (especially soccer and basketball) and play video games.

What made you choose Tri-C?

I chose Tri-C for its affordable, high-quality education, and I knew I could be successful with the resources and programs Tri-C had to offer. I have known about Tri-C since

2018 when I enrolled in the Aspire Program for free ESL classes at a local library and started on my associate degree in the summer of 2021.

Describe your Tri-C experience. Has a specific person, class or event played a role in your success?

During my journey at Tri-C, I got involved outside of the classroom as much as I could, which helped me improve my time management, communication and leadership skills.

I think my success was the result of hard work with different people and departments, such as the Tri-C Foundation, Western Campus Student Engagement, Hispanic Council and the Mandel Scholars Academy. The faculty and staff in these departments played a huge role in my success as a student, in my personal development and in my personal life.

How has Tri-C changed your life?

I grew my leadership skills through the Student Government, Joint Student Council, Tri-C Foundation Board, Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Scholars Academy and more. All my professors, colleagues and staff helped me to believe in my potential and myself.

“TRI-C HELPED ME CONNECT AND FEEL PART OF THE COMMUNITY, AND I GAINED WORK EXPERIENCE.”

— Laryssa Maruski



Anita BENNETT

EARNS THIRD DEGREE AT AGE 14

In a span of 10 months, Anita Bennett received three associate degrees and two short-term certificates from Tri-C — all before the end of her freshman year of high school.

Bennett, who turned 15 in June, had been a College Credit Plus (CCP) student at Tri-C for three years and earned two previous associate degrees in August and December 2022. CCP is a dual enrollment program that allows students to take college courses while completing high school.

She received her third degree — an Associate of Science — and graduated summa cum laude for the final time during the College's Commencement in May. She is considering Cleveland State University and Notre Dame College in South Euclid, among others, to pursue a major in early childhood education or small business management this fall.

"Tri-C gave me a huge head start on my career, and this will make my life so much more fulfilling," Bennett said. "I will be able to start my career as an early childhood administrator at age 18."

The Richmond Heights resident is the third of three sisters who came through Tri-C via the CCP program to find early success.

As a CCP student, Bennett had a flexible schedule that offered opportunities to participate in gymnastics classes and mime dance at churches and conferences around the United States. She also was involved in the Alpha Epsilon Eta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Tri-C.

Tell me about yourself.

I am extremely passionate about children and teaching. I have loved working with children my entire life. I always knew I wanted to work in a field that revolved around children. Something unique about me is that I grew up surrounded by many different children. My parents own a five-star licensed Type A home child care. I decided at a young age that I wanted to take over my parents' business when I grew up. This helped shape my educational journey because I already knew what I wanted to be in life. What interests me most

about being a child care administrator is helping children learn and grow. I want to give families all the proper tools and information to help their children become successful adults. I love that this profession will allow me to make a positive impact on many lives.

What made you choose Tri-C?

My mom, sisters, uncle and auntie went to Tri-C before me, so I wanted to continue our family legacy. The Eastern Campus is very close to my home.

Describe your Tri-C experience.

I feel like Tri-C is my second family. I have met a lot of nice people along the way. A counselor, Matthew Kasl, always made sure that my sister and I took the courses that we needed to achieve our long-term goals. I had the honor to meet Eastern Campus President Todd Kitchen and his wife earlier this semester, and we had an amazing time getting to know one another. I also had the honor of meeting Tri-C President Michael Baston, and we had a motivating conversation. Sheila Howard, a program assistant, has always been helpful when I needed to get in contact with different program representatives. She is like family to us.

What's your advice for potential students considering a similar academic or career path?

As a CCP student, you must establish good time management skills and stay focused. It is worth it if graduating college is your goal. CCP will save you a lot of time. Start slow and try one or two courses to see how it works with your schedule. You must be willing to put in the work. You are not too young to achieve any goal you put your mind to. Always believe in yourself!

"YOU ARE NOT TOO YOUNG TO ACHIEVE ANY GOAL YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO."

— Anita Bennett



Devin SHORT

URNS DREAMS INTO REALITY

Devin Short found his career calling while working at a dog shelter in high school. Tri-C helped make his dream a reality.



Fueled by his desire to work with animals and an interest in learning medicine, Short joined Tri-C's Veterinary Technology program and hasn't looked back.

"I love my chosen profession — especially on the days I get to participate in surgery," Short said. "I feel that I made the correct choice in deciding to become a veterinary technician and look forward to continuing to use what I've learned in the field."

The 30-year-old Medina native and Western Campus student graduated magna cum laude with an Associate of Arts in Applied Sciences from the College.

Short put his degree right to work — his extern location extended a job offer that he gladly accepted.

"The veterinary technology program has given me opportunities to learn and grow," Short said. "I'm glad I chose this path and look forward to what the future holds."

What made you choose Tri-C?

I enrolled at Tri-C because of a conversation with my brother. I was at a point in my life where I was unsure what I wanted to do. At the time I was already looking into the courses that Tri-C offers. My brother told me that the role of a veterinary technician may suit me. At first, I shrugged him off, but then I began to think about what he said and realized that he was probably right. At that point, I decided to enroll in the Veterinary Technology program here at Tri-C, and I'm happy I did.

Describe your Tri-C experience. Has a specific person, class or event played a role in your success?

At times the program was challenging, but I had amazing instructors who were always willing to help me whenever something didn't quite make sense. With their help, I not only made my way through the program, but I graduated with honors.

How has Tri-C changed your life?

Tri-C has made my dream a reality, allowing me to pursue my interests and turn them into a career. Due to externships, I knew where I was going after I graduated.

What's your advice for potential students considering a similar academic or career path?

Don't sell yourself short. At times I had doubts about my abilities. However, instead of allowing that to weigh me down, I chose to work harder. If you feel like you can't do something, don't just give up, even when things are looking tough. Keep pushing forward.

"I MADE THE CORRECT CHOICE IN DECIDING TO BECOME A VETERINARY TECHNICIAN AND LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO USE WHAT I'VE LEARNED IN THE FIELD."

— Devin Short



Lydia RABNE

FINDS MEANING AND GRACE IN NURSING

Lydia Rabne was interested in human anatomy and physiology from an early age. Her fascination with the medical profession brought her to Tri-C while still in high school.

Now the Strongsville resident is working her way up the career ladder as a nurse.

“I first knew I had a strong stomach in elementary school when my class did dissections,” Rabne said. “I was interested in anatomy and physiology — other students were getting sick.”

Rabne received her Associate of Applied Science in Nursing during the College’s Commencement in May. The 20-year-old took advantage of the College Credit Plus (CCP) program, which allows high school students to earn college credits.

Rabne works as an LPN, a job she started while completing her associate degree at Westshore Campus. She’s already working on her bachelor’s degree in nursing at Ohio University.

How did you decide nursing was for you?

My faith plays a big part in my life. I feel a call to nursing to show love and share hope with people who are going through hard times. My mom has also been a huge inspiration. She cares for my older brother with special needs with such selflessness and grace.

Describe your Tri-C experience.

All my nursing professors taught me something unique. One of my first clinical instructors, Helena Wilson, had us write about why we chose nursing so we could look back at it as inspiration to keep going. My experience at Tri-C was amazing and empowering. I have a strong foundation to use in my job and in further education.

How has Tri-C changed your life?

Tri-C gave me an affordable, quality education and opened up a variety of opportunities. I’m beginning my job search and have so many medical facilities to pick from. Tri-C is an amazing resource and tries to be accommodating to students’ life circumstances. In high school, I needed testing accommodations for health reasons and was able to receive the help I needed through the Access Centers. I was so grateful that I could test in an environment that met my needs.

What’s your advice for potential students considering a similar academic or career path?

Try to maintain a healthy work-life balance. I wasn’t always the best at taking breaks, and I realize now how important self-care is. You’ll be busy early in the program — especially if you work — but it’s always important to spend time with family, listen to your favorite music, take breaks and exercise.

“I FEEL A CALL TO NURSING TO SHOW LOVE AND SHARE HOPE WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING THROUGH HARD TIMES.”

— Lydia Rabne





Evelyn BUCHANAN

FINDS HER PURPOSE

Evelyn Buchanan wanted to be a role model for her three children. The recent Tri-C graduate set out to show them that hard work and dedication pay off.

The Shaker Heights resident created an enduring example for her children when she graduated with an Associate of Arts degree in the College's Commencement ceremony in May. Buchanan was accepted to Cleveland State University and will pursue majors in psychology and criminology with a minor in neuroscience. She hopes to work in the mental health profession.

"I have always had a fascination with how the mind works, and I want to make an impact by helping those that may suffer from mental illness," she said.

Buchanan, 39, first came to Tri-C in 2004 at age 19 but had trouble defining her goals and left after one semester. After helping her husband register for the Tri-C Basic Police Academy program, she decided to pursue her passion. With the support of her spouse, Buchanan returned to the College in Fall 2021 in the Online Associate of Arts program.

Buchanan graduated cum laude and made the dean's list in Fall 2022.

Tell us about yourself.

I am passionate about my family and providing successful futures for my children. My personal background has shaped my educational journey because I know that my children are watching me.

What made you choose Tri-C?

I first enrolled at Tri-C in 2004. I left after the first semester because I did not know what I wanted to do with my life or what my purpose was. After helping my husband register for the Tri-C Basic Police Academy, I decided I needed to go back

to school. The only difference is this time around I had a purpose, direction and the support of my loving husband to pursue my goals. Tri-C is supportive and understanding of a student's needs and readily available to assist.

Describe your Tri-C experience.

My experience has been tremendously positive! There is a professor at the Western Campus, Julia Krevans, who is amazing. With all my classes online, all the professors have been amazing and understanding. I took an online class with Krevans at a set time, and she was always helpful, caring and ready to jump in and help with anything I may not understand.

How has Tri-C changed your life?

Tri-C put me on a positive course and gave me a sense of pride in myself. I can hold my head high because working hard at Tri-C helped me obtain that, and I will continue to progress.

What's your advice for potential students considering a similar academic or career path?

It is not easy, but as long as you stay motivated, dedicated and keep a line of communication open with all of your professors, you will excel. In life, if it is easy, it is not worth it!

"I HAVE ALWAYS HAD A FASCINATION WITH HOW THE MIND WORKS, AND I WANT TO MAKE AN IMPACT BY HELPING THOSE THAT MAY SUFFER FROM MENTAL ILLNESS."

— Evelyn Buchanan



ADDRESSING NORTHEAST OHIO'S EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS GAP

**KEYBANK'S \$2 MILLION INVESTMENT
TO GROW INNOVATIVE, ACCESSIBLE
TRAINING FOR UNDERREPRESENTED
PEOPLE IN THE WORKFORCE**

STORY BY **Anthony Moujaes**
PHOTOS BY **Tamara London**



When the neighborhood succeeds, everyone succeeds.

That sentiment reflects not just a sense of community and belonging — it's a cornerstone of the deepening partnership between Tri-C and KeyBank to help Northeast Ohioans who are underrepresented in the region's workforce access educational opportunities and reach their potential.

Though it has improved in the last 20 years, representation in the workforce is lower among people of color, according to a report from Team NEO. About one in every five working-age

residents in the region is a minority, which requires investing in talent from diverse groups to create a more inclusive workforce and vibrant economy.

"Helping people achieve the skills, education and capabilities they need to succeed in current and future employment opportunities is a major focus of the KeyBank Foundation's work in the communities we serve," said Eric Fiala, head of corporate responsibility and community relations at KeyBank.





As one of the College's longest-standing partners in supporting low- to moderate-income individuals, KeyBank made an investment to help address Northeast Ohio's employment and earnings gap.

Its recent \$2 million grant to the Cuyahoga Community College Foundation aims to grow innovative and accessible workforce training programs for students like Alex Bryan.

While still in high school, Bryan started at Tri-C's Advanced Technology Academy — which offers students ages 17-24 hands-on training for in-demand careers — and completed the Computer Support Specialist program.

"I chose the Computer Support Specialist program as it's the closest thing to cybersecurity," Bryan said. "This program has laid the foundation for my current path. I'm pursuing an advanced information technology certificate while working toward my associate degree at Tri-C."

The program's professional development class stood out the most to Bryan.

"Regardless of which field we choose, this is an important subject," he said. "It doesn't matter how much you make — money without financial intelligence is money soon gone."

KeyBank's grant will support the College's Workforce, Community and Economic Development (WCED) division, which offers more than 60 credit and noncredit training programs in high-demand fields that pay family-sustaining salaries. There are four core areas of growth within Tri-C's workforce training programs:

- Targeted recruitment aimed at increasing enrollment of underemployed and underrepresented individuals across key industries
- On-demand assistance to support students and make programs affordable
- Responsive curriculum innovation to address industry demands

- Job placement support and increased employer partnerships

"This partnership will have a direct, immediate impact on students and employers and fill a critical need through enhanced workforce preparation," said Megan O'Bryan, president of the Tri-C Foundation.

The grant also helps keep the programs' costs affordable for students and adult learners. Unlike students in credit-bearing classes at higher education institutions, those in workforce training courses are not eligible for Pell Grants from the U.S. Department of Education.

"KeyBank's 30-year partnership with Tri-C has helped people in our community access education and reach their potential," said Kelly Lamirand, KeyBank Cleveland market president and commercial sales leader. "Together, we are enhancing Northeast Ohio's economic vitality and bringing hope and resources to the communities we serve."

More than 3,000 students are enrolled in workforce training programs as of Spring 2023, but more than 75% of them earn low-to-moderate incomes and are seeking a new career with family-sustaining wages.

"KeyBank understands that together we can create economic opportunities through investment in affordable, quality education and training that is accessible to everyone," said Tri-C President Michael A. Baston. "When more people have opportunities to climb the ladder of success, the entire region benefits."

"KEYBANK'S 30-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH TRI-C HAS HELPED PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY ACCESS EDUCATION AND REACH THEIR POTENTIAL."

— Kelly Lamirand, KeyBank Cleveland Market President



A CALL TO

PRESIDENT MICHAEL BASTON OUTLINES GOALS FOR TRI-C IN ROUSING INAUGURATION SPEECH

Tri-C inaugurated Michael A. Baston as its fifth president April 14 at a ceremony that packed the Metropolitan Campus auditorium. A who's who of higher education and Northeast Ohio civic leaders attended the investiture ceremony of the new president, whose inaugural address was a call to action.

Between raucous cheers, Baston discussed the legacy and foundation inherited from his predecessors, as well as his vision for the College's future.

The vibe was celebratory.

Donning regalia of teal and black and the Tri-C presidential medallion around his neck, Baston described his goals for the College in terms of upward economic mobility for all, fueled by degree and certificate attainment. As he enumerated his plans, he enlisted the College community with repeated calls of "Are you with me?"

"We will measure our success not by numbers of students or degrees conferred, but by how much someone's life was improved by their time at Tri-C," he said.

Baston cited four promises of his presidency. Three he had described as a candidate for the position: building an effective community college, expanding the College's reach and influence, and properly purposed leadership. The fourth was introduced during his speech: a commitment to post-college success.

"WE WILL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS NOT BY NUMBERS OF STUDENTS OR DEGREES CONFERRED, BUT BY HOW MUCH SOMEONE'S LIFE WAS IMPROVED BY THEIR TIME AT TRI-C."

— Michael Baston, President

STORY BY **Jarrold Zickefoose**

PHOTOS BY **Noelle Bye, McKinley Wiley**

“At its core, this will be the focus of my presidency — what I hope will one day be my legacy,” he said of his fourth promise. “Every student who comes through our doors will leave with an education and a path to a better life for themselves and their families.”

Baston said that the College would hold itself accountable by establishing measurable student success targets and tracking graduate employment and earnings. He committed to aligning programs with emerging industry demands;

Baston joined Tri-C July 1, 2022. He spent his first 100 days engaging with College students, faculty and staff and the area’s civic, industry and education leaders. He used those discussions to hone a vision for the future of the College as an educational provider that tangibly better the lives of its students and improves the prosperity of the entire region.

“If we can serve the people most in need by providing accessible, flexible education in industries vital to our region and connect them to life-changing work,” he said, “we can create inclusive prosperity for all people in Northeast Ohio.”

ACTION



expanding online opportunities; investing in student-success teams for all credit-seeking students and creating checkpoints to guide their journeys; opening doors for nontraditional students; and deepening community, industry and academic partnerships.

One of many local leaders in attendance, Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb described Tri-C as a creator of wealth for underserved communities.

Board Student Scholar Samantha Franco said, “The enthusiasm Dr. Baston brings to our College is contagious.” Cleveland State University President Laura Bloomberg echoed the sentiment, saying she was eager “to be your partner in advancing the educational vision we share” that access to education is a civil right.

The Creative Arts Academy String Quartet performed “Spring” by Antonio Vivaldi, and the Cleveland Chorale performed a moving a cappella version of “Best Year.”



Are you with me?



NO

Bridges TO NOWHERE

BASTON OUTLINES GOALS FOR FIRST YEARS OF PRESIDENCY

“We’re not just talking about degrees — we’re also talking about shorter-term credentials,” Baston said.” And we’re not just talking about coming to the College and hoping that something good will happen. It’s helping people think about what their purpose is, what their passion is, so they can make better decisions about how they’re going to spend their time with us.”

To clarify options and help students choose a career path, the College is regrouping credit and noncredit programs into six proposed schools: Liberal Arts, Education and Humanities; Creative Arts; Computer Science, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Nursing, Health Careers and Natural Sciences; Business and Entrepreneurship; and Public Safety and Community Service. The number of schools and their titles are not final, but the new model is scheduled to be in place by Fall 2024.

“IT’S HELPING PEOPLE THINK ABOUT WHAT THEIR PURPOSE IS, WHAT THEIR PASSION IS.”

— Michael Baston

STORY BY **Jarrod Zickefoose**
PHOTOS BY **Noelle Bye, Chris Bacarella**

Tri-C President Michael Baston has stated his goals for the first years of his presidency, with the final aim of ensuring that Tri-C students earn credentials of real value that translate into post-college success. This, he hopes, will be his legacy.

Baston’s goals through 2025 are:

- Develop and drive a strategic vision
- Ensure relevancy of programs, facilities and services
- Maintain a sound fiscal environment
- Increase Tri-C’s visibility
- Further enhance our fundraising approach

To realize these goals, the College is evaluating nearly every aspect of its interactions with students and the community.

Tri-C will “design an improved educational experience that allows students to build skills that they can take wherever they go,” Baston said.

“We have to think about doing things differently,” said Karen Miller, provost and executive vice president of Access, Learning and Success. “We’re in a new world and a new environment.”

Citing Google, YouTube and LinkedIn Learning, Baston added, “Our competition is not just with other educational institutions — our competition is with a knowledge base that gives people multiple options for how they learn and acquire skills.”

All Tri-C programs will either prepare students for transfer to a four-year institution or produce work-ready graduates with the skills local employers need.

“No bridges to nowhere,” Baston said.

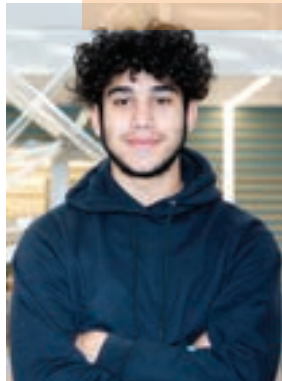
Improving the enrollment process to make it easier to navigate — particularly for those transitioning from noncredit to credit coursework — is also on the agenda. Building a more robust online student support system will help the nearly 50% of Tri-C students who now attend classes exclusively online.

The College’s Workforce, Community and Economic Development (WCED) division will undergo a similar review, taking the temperature of local employers and focusing on filling the skills gap in Northeast Ohio.

“Perhaps the goal that is most relevant to our workforce efforts is ensuring that the programs and training we offer are relevant to students, employers and the wider community we serve,” said Shana Marbury, executive vice president of WCED.

Expanding partnerships is on the agenda, too. For example, the College is in talks with one of the region’s largest steel producers to become its in-house training provider. Additionally, while many WCED credentials now focus on entry-level workers, new advanced credentialing will be created for those already working.

“All students will be on a pathway to a credential of value that supports their personal, career and economic aspirations and aligns with our region’s economic development goals,” Baston said. “Every student. Every program. Every zip code!”



“ALL STUDENTS WILL BE ON A PATHWAY TO A CREDENTIAL OF VALUE THAT SUPPORTS THEIR PERSONAL, CAREER AND ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS AND ALIGNS WITH OUR REGION’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS.”

— Michael Baston

Every student. Every program. Every zip code!



SHEILA MILLER ARRIVED AT TRI-C IN THE 1980S SEEKING A NEW CAREER. SHE GAINED AN EDUCATION AND MUCH MORE.

Editor's Note: 2023 marks Cuyahoga Community College's 60th anniversary. Throughout the year, Tri-C Times will highlight alumni from different eras of the College. In this issue, we visit an alumna from the 1980s.

A lot has changed at Tri-C in the 42 years since Sheila Miller enrolled to pursue a nursing degree. But a couple of fundamental things haven't.

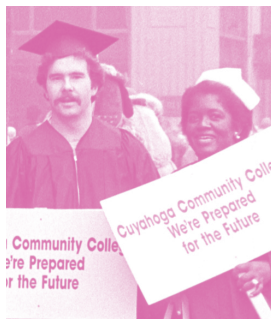
"I came to Tri-C for a lot of the same reasons students go there today," Miller said. "I needed to find a new career, and Tri-C provided a strong educational foundation at a cost that was more affordable than a lot of other options."

Today, Miller is the chief nursing officer for Cleveland Clinic London, overseeing the entire nursing operation for one of the Clinic's largest overseas locations. In 1981, however, she was a young single parent seeking a fresh start.

The Tri-C that Miller knew was different from the Tri-C of today. Living in Bedford, she mostly attended the Eastern Campus in Highland Hills — about 10 years old at the time and only a fraction of its current size.

"I NEEDED TO FIND A NEW CAREER, AND TRI-C PROVIDED A STRONG EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION AT A COST THAT WAS MORE AFFORDABLE THAN A LOT OF OTHER OPTIONS."

— Sheila Miller, Chief Nursing Officer, Cleveland Clinic London



CHARTING A NEW

STORY BY Erik Cassano
PHOTOS BY Chris Tongue



Life at Tri-C

The early '80s coincided with the dawn of electronic learning. Computers were just beginning to find their way into classrooms, and nothing approximating the current internet existed. Cellphones as we now know them hadn't been invented. Chalkboards, overhead projectors and good old-fashioned paper handouts were the main vehicles for classroom learning.

Nursing and health careers, in particular, have evolved in the way students are educated and how health care is delivered. Having worked in the medical field for four decades, Miller has witnessed firsthand how technology, computers and the internet have changed the student experience from the time she attended Tri-C.

She took a year of general education prerequisites before entering the Nursing program and remembers writing essays and term papers '80s-style.

"The most advanced technology we worked with were word processors and electric typewriters," Miller said. "I remember I had a Tandy, the old brand they used to sell at Radio Shack. So much of what we did was on paper compared to now. The class catalog used to come out in this giant book or newspaper-looking publication, and that's how we used to look up the next semester's classes."

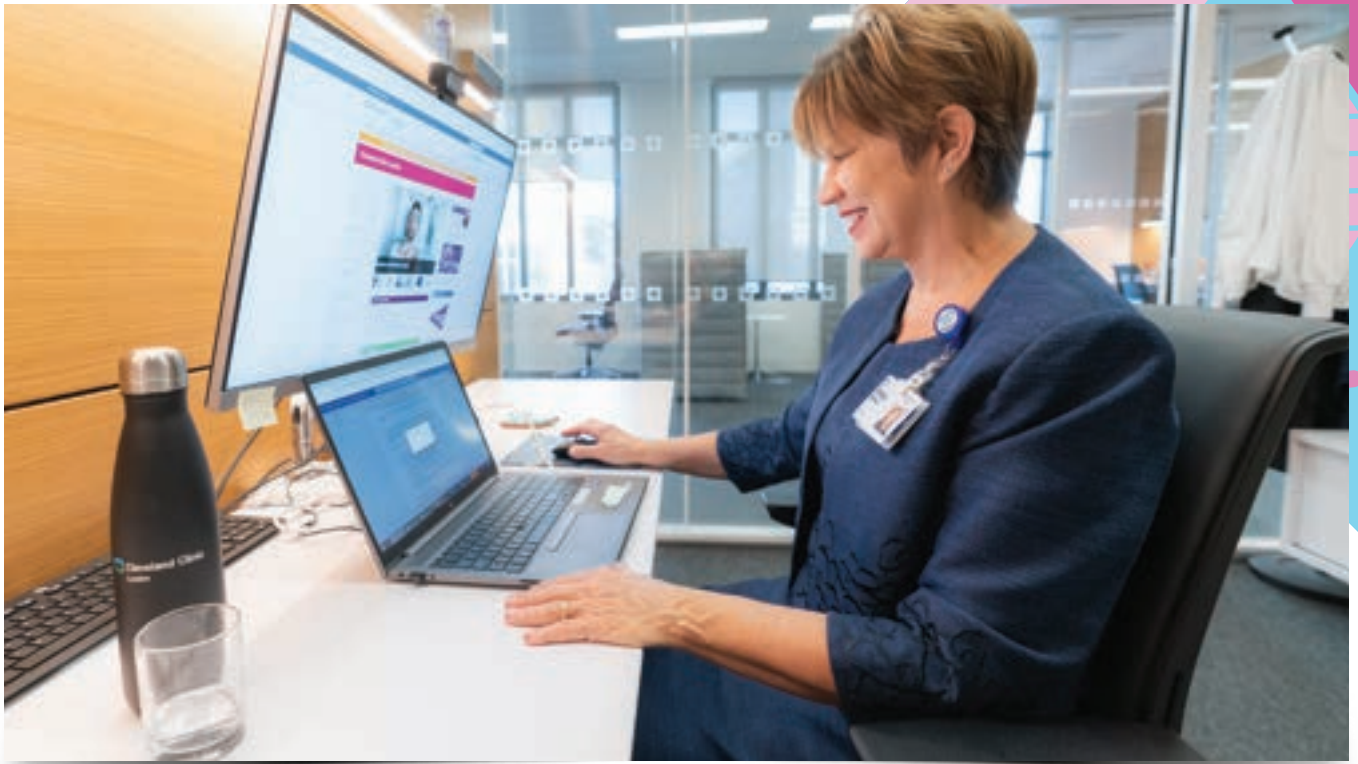
After entering the Nursing program in 1982, Miller did research at the campus library and recorded her professors' lectures on cassette tapes. But her lab experiences were vastly different from what Tri-C currently offers.

"The mannequins they have now are so advanced," she said. "They can simulate different diseases and conditions, and you can interact with them at the bedside. When I was a student, it was basically a dummy. If an instructor wanted to simulate something, they had to read from a script, and you had to almost be an actor and use your imagination."



COURSE





Though so much has changed, some things have not. Much like students today who work hard to complete Tri-C's rigorous nursing curriculum, Miller spent a lot of time with her classmates away from the classroom, fostering close working relationships that lasted for years after graduation.

"I remember talking with my classmates about the things we were learning and how to apply it in a clinical setting," she said. "That was important for me because I was blazing an entirely new trail for myself. I had no family working in health care. I had no background. Talking with my classmates and professors and picking their brains gave me the additional knowledge I wanted.

"All of my professors had worked in the field, which has always been a great benefit of attending Tri-C. But even my classmates had field experience. I remember one had worked at Mount Sinai Medical Center and one at St. Alexis Hospital, which are both gone now."

"ALL OF MY PROFESSORS HAD WORKED IN THE FIELD, WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GREAT BENEFIT OF ATTENDING TRI-C."

— Sheila Miller





Building a career

Like many students, Miller used her Tri-C education and experiences as a springboard. She began working as a hospital nurse shortly after graduation but soon developed an interest in nursing administration.

While continuing to work in the field, she enrolled at Case Western Reserve University, where she earned a Master of Science in nursing and an MBA.

Since 1994, Miller has been a nursing manager and chief nursing officer at various hospitals including Akron General and South Pointe Hospital. She has worked continuously for the Cleveland Clinic since 2005, and she accepted her current position at Cleveland Clinic London in February of this year. The facility is a 184-bed state-of-the-art hospital that opened in March 2022.

“I had expressed interest in international opportunities for a while,” she said. “It’s been a tremendous opportunity to work in another country.”

But even five time zones away, Miller still keeps tabs on her first college alma mater, visiting occasionally and participating in College events. From her time as a student 40 years ago to her current adventure overseas, Tri-C has had a permanent impact.

“Tri-C delivers not only a great education, but a great experience for students,” she said. “The professors are highly knowledgeable, the atmosphere is supportive, the class schedules are flexible, and if you’re willing to work hard and take advantage of the resources there, you can achieve what you want to achieve in life.”

“I WOULDN’T BE WHERE I AM TODAY IF I HADN’T TAKEN THOSE FIRST STEPS AT TRI-C.”

— Sheila Miller





LEARNING

CASEY COIN-SWEENEY BELIEVES COMMUNITY COLLEGES LIKE TRI-C CAN HELP MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION

English professor Casey Coin-Sweeney's personal connection to the environment began when she was a child. Her parents often took her on after-dinner walks near their home in Mentor, and she and her grandfather were regular visitors to the Holden Arboretum.

"I grew up feeding geese and squirrels, and my appreciation for and comfort in the outdoors have only grown stronger with time," she said.

After spending most of her adult years in Cleveland neighborhoods known more for their food and art scenes than their natural attributes, Coin-Sweeney relocated to Chardon with her husband in 2016. Her parents, who she considers her best friends, live just across the street.

A shared passion for environmental advocacy has created a special bond between Coin-Sweeney and her father. As co-chairs of the Climate Reality Project's Northeast Ohio Chapter, they work together to spread information about climate change and how to combat it through individual and combined actions.

"I GREW UP FEEDING GEESE AND SQUIRRELS, AND MY APPRECIATION FOR AND COMFORT IN THE OUTDOORS HAVE ONLY GROWN STRONGER WITH TIME."

— Casey Coin-Sweeney, Professor, English



STORY BY **Beth Cieslik**
PHOTOS BY **Noelle Bye**

TRI-C FACULTY PROFILE

"I recently presented at a conference in Hawaii about the connection between climate change education and higher education," she said. "Later, my dad presented at a decarbonization summit here in Cleveland to bolster support for climate action plans around Northeast Ohio."

That connection between climate change education and higher ed is top of mind for Coin-Sweeney, who is currently preparing a dissertation on the topic as a Cleveland State University graduate student.

The idea is to help students develop critical thinking and research skills by addressing issues that are relevant to their lives and that they can personally invest in to make a real difference — and climate change certainly fits the bill.

But Coin-Sweeney teaches English. Isn't it up to science professors to educate students about the environment?

"To ensure a healthy future, we need a cross-disciplinary approach," she said. "Community colleges need to lead the way by creating stronger critical thinkers and leaders in every discipline."

Sustainability serves as a thematic foundation for Coin-Sweeney's Composition II course. Students read and present on texts like Mary Robinson's *Climate Justice* as they master writing basics to prepare for progressively longer and more complex papers.

Coin-Sweeney strives to be more of a facilitator than a lecturer; as a result, her students spend the majority of class time completing no- or low-stakes tasks, such as piecing together their thesis or outline in advance of more substantive assignments.

"Sure, there are times when I find myself talking a lot," she said. "But I prefer to let them experience challenges firsthand and step in only when they need support."

An avid reader and former poet ("It's still in there, but I rarely have time to let it out," she said), Coin-Sweeney is as passionate about the written word as she is about the environment. Another thing she values is lifelong learning.

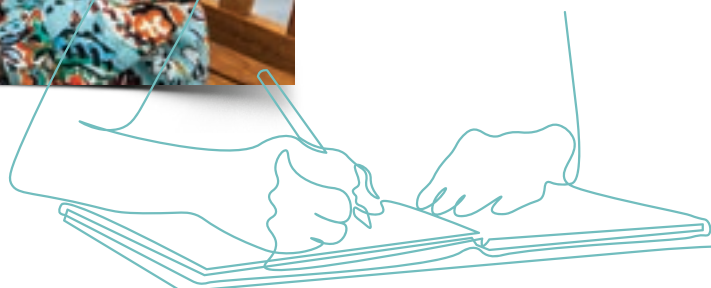
She started her own academic journey as a College Credit Plus student at Lakeland Community College, attending Kent State and Ohio State before earning a bachelor's in psychology at Cleveland State. Five years later, she returned to school to pursue a master's in English at Chicago's DePaul University.

Next up is a Ph.D. in urban education, which she plans to complete in 2024. Cleveland State recently granted her a Graduate Student Research Award that provides partial funding for two conferences — one being the June 2023 Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL) Conference at the University of Cambridge.



"COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEED TO LEAD THE WAY BY CREATING STRONGER CRITICAL THINKERS AND LEADERS IN EVERY DISCIPLINE."

— Casey Coin-Sweeney





Not only did Coin-Sweeney travel to the United Kingdom to attend the prestigious event, she and her dissertation chair, Wendy Green, Ph.D., were selected to present their research to academics, activists and policymakers from around the world.

Their paper, “Fostering Perspective Transformation and Lifelong Learning Through Interdisciplinary Education Approaches That Intertwine Environmental and Sustainability Concepts in Higher Education,” examines how American colleges and universities can help mitigate the effects of climate change by implementing related topics into their curricula.

“I know that faculty are often overburdened and reluctant to add more to their cognitive load,” Coin-Sweeney said. “So once I finish this Ph.D., my focus will be to piece together a database of materials and potential assignments by discipline that I can share.”

As chair of the Eastern Campus Green Team and the Collegewide Sustainability Committee, Coin-Sweeney is proud of Tri-C for continuing to develop new programs and try fresh approaches throughout the pandemic.

One unique offering was an interactive virtual summit hosted via En-ROADS, a global climate simulation platform designed by the MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative.

“Students and community members came together to act as various stakeholders tasked with reducing global carbon emissions,” she said. “It gave them a better understanding of the changes necessary to mitigate climate change.”

Ongoing efforts include guest speakers, Earth Week activities and Metamorphosis Cleveland, an annual contest Coin-Sweeney co-created with David November, the College’s sustainability manager, in 2019.

“It explores the connections between climate, justice, equity and sustainability,” she said. “Students can submit anything from poetry to photography, dance performances or academic papers — any medium they choose to convey their perspective on these issues.”

Now that more students, faculty and staff are back on campus, Coin-Sweeney is optimistic that the high level of engagement in these efforts will continue. Future plans include campus-based student groups and, of course, a more robust cross-disciplinary approach to climate change.

“WE HAVE A FAIRLY FRESH COMMITTEE WITH SOME WONDERFUL NEW MEMBERS. I HOPE MY EXCITEMENT IS CONTAGIOUS.”

— Casey Coin-Sweeney



Skills to Succeed

LIFTS PEOPLE TOWARD GREATER OPPORTUNITY

FOUNDATION'S LARGEST CAMPAIGN TRANSFORMS TALENT, BUILDS WORKFORCE

The Cuyahoga Community College Foundation has a vision: a future where every person is trained for a job and earns what they need for their family, regardless of where they live.

This vision inspired the Skills to Succeed campaign. Started in 2019, the initiative works with donors to tap the region's overlooked talent and prepare people for the workforce.

STORY BY **Noelle Bye**

Statistics show the need to educate and train workers for available careers in well-paying industries:

- Over 30% of Clevelanders live in poverty.
- Food insecurity affects 40% of community college students.
- Northeast Ohio retains less than 47% of its college graduates.

"The Skills to Succeed campaign was created to prepare students for jobs that will change their lives and impact the futures of their families," said Megan O'Bryan, president of the Tri-C Foundation and vice president of Resource Development. "Since then, so much has changed for our region and for our students. The pandemic widened the employment and earnings gap, and economic challenges forced many students to prioritize work and caregiving over their education."



Tri-C identified funding priorities to strengthen and expand accessible, affordable education. The campaign — the largest in the Foundation’s history — has already made significant strides, surpassing its \$50 million goal.

“While we are thrilled to have reached our goal, we know there is still work to be done to ensure that every student is prepared for the jobs of the future,” O’Bryan said. “Tri-C continues to see a need for scholarships, cutting-edge technology in high-demand fields and holistic student support systems to promote equity in our community. Thanks to our generous supporters, Tri-C remains an environment where all students prosper.”

“WHILE WE ARE THRILLED TO HAVE REACHED OUR GOAL, WE KNOW THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE TO ENSURE THAT EVERY STUDENT IS PREPARED FOR THE JOBS OF THE FUTURE.”

— Megan O’Bryan, President, Tri-C Foundation



To bring this vision to life, Tri-C collaborated with community partners to identify four funding priorities: access, support, train and employ. Between 2019 to date, the funds raised through Skills to Succeed have made an incredible impact across these four pillars:

Access

- Tri-C served more than 76,000 students through its K-12 programs.
- Of these, 70% continued their education.

Investments in this pillar expand exposure to the College by bringing training and programs to areas where potential students live and work. This increases access to inclusive educational opportunities that close the equity gap and drive economic progress. These programs are free to participants, thanks to gifts from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation, the Cleveland Foundation, PNC Foundation and Bank of America. In addition, a Mount Sinai Health Foundation grant and federally funded partnership with The MetroHealth System offer training for community health workers.

Support

- The Foundation has awarded \$16 million in scholarship funds to students.
- Donors have created 31 new endowed scholarship funds.
- The Student Emergency Fund has received more than \$1 million.

This pillar provides increased tuition scholarships and other financial resources that help more residents earn certificates, degrees and credentials and fill high-demand job openings in the region.

Investments from Char and Chuck Fowler, Medical Mutual and Ann and Lou Frangos have helped create food pantries at Tri-C’s Metropolitan, Western and Westshore campuses. In addition, donors such as the PNC Foundation and others have helped the College bolster wraparound support for students including scholarships, emergency relief and basic needs support.



Train

- Tri-C has awarded 42,000 workforce credentials since 2019.
- Donors to the campaign have contributed \$9 million for training innovations.

Training a new generation of skilled workers is a high priority in the effort to close Northeast Ohio's talent gap. This pillar seeks to train community members for the region's many unfilled, well-paying jobs. A historic \$2 million grant from KeyBank helps Tri-C focus on students who are underrepresented in the workforce.

"Tri-C's mission is more urgent than ever, and our incredible donors are an essential part of how the College and the community advance through the Skills to Succeed campaign," O'Bryan said.

Donations to the Skills to Succeed campaign impact the community's future, with 90% of the funds put to immediate use and the remainder going toward long-term strategies.

"Without these generous donors, the immense impact of the campaign to date would not have been possible," O'Bryan said. "The pillars of student access, support, training and employment opportunities remain critical to the mission of Tri-C and the continued success of our students."



Employ

- Tri-C students have benefited from 59,000 experiential learning opportunities.
- Pilot program interns unanimously agreed that they learned valuable workplace skills.

Saint Luke's Foundation and the Reinberger Foundation have helped Tri-C connect with more than 50 new employers to expedite micro-internship programs. In addition, the Demetriou Family Learn and Earn program ensures students master in-demand skills while earning a living wage, and the *Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses* fellowship program connects students with local small-business owners.

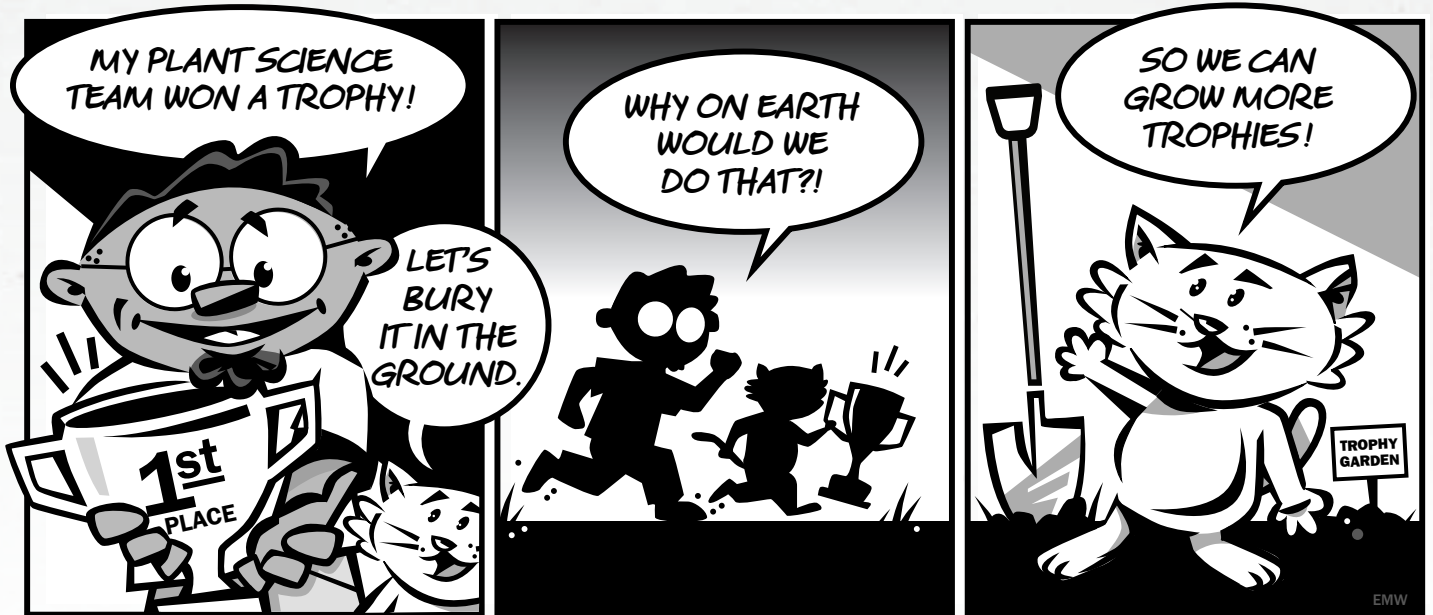
"TRI-C'S MISSION IS MORE URGENT THAN EVER, AND OUR INCREDIBLE DONORS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HOW THE COLLEGE AND THE COMMUNITY ADVANCE THROUGH THE SKILLS TO SUCCEED CAMPAIGN."

— Megan O'Bryan, President, Tri-C Foundation

Learn more about this critical effort, its immediate impact on our students and how to contribute to student success at tri-c.edu/skills-to-succeed.



THE ADVENTURES OF STEADFAST & STALWART



COMIC STRIP BY Eric Wheeler

SEEDS OF SUCCESS

STORY BY
Anthony Moujaes

Tri-C's Plant Science and Landscape Technology program took first place at the National Collegiate Landscape Competition (NCLC) March 15-18 at Mississippi State University in Starkville.

State Rep. Sean Brennan of Parma presented more than two dozen letters to students, faculty and staff in April, honoring the team's accomplishments and commending the 18 students who competed at NCLC.

Keith Rush scored top individual honors among the competition's 529 students. He is the fourth Tri-C student to take top honors since 2014.

Susie Stoepfel also had an outstanding performance, placing fifth overall and first among females. She had four top-six finishes.

Tri-C won five event championships during the competition: Haley Spiteri for computer-aided landscape design; Destiny Griffiths for interior plant identification; Andrew Yormick for small engine repair; Ahna Kerr for turf and weed identification; and Rush for irrigation design. The College placed in the top five in 14 other events.

Tri-C became just the third community college to win it all at NCLC, joining Milwaukee Area Technical College (1981) and Chattahoochee Technical College (2010, 2008 and 1995).

Assistant professor Jim Funai has guided the College's Plant Science program to become the best two-year program in the nation, routinely placing alongside or above four-year universities in national competitions such as NCLC.



ONE LAST THING



APPROACHING TRI-C'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE HIGHER EDUCATION CAME TO OHIO WITH TRI-C'S OPENING IN SEPTEMBER 1963, AND PUBLIC SUPPORT HAS BEEN KEY TO THE COLLEGE'S GROWTH.

This fall, Tri-C celebrates six decades of high-quality, affordable education — much of it possible through the consistent public support that began during the College's conception and early years. Northeast Ohio business and civic leaders championed the creation of Ohio's first community college, and the effort to open the doors on that first day required diligent planning and work — and answering an important question.

How do you start a college? Tri-C's first president answered that decades ago: "With a student," Charles Chapman said.

Before there were four campuses, two Corporate College® sites and a teal Triceratops named Stomp, Tri-C was little more than the Brownell Junior High School in downtown Cleveland. But on September 23, 1963, more than 3,000 would-be students descended upon that 19th-century building. It was the largest first-day enrollment of a two-year college in the nation's history.

Now one of the largest colleges in the state, Tri-C serves more than 41,000 credit and noncredit students each year.

The first levy in 1963 was critical to financing the College prior to any state funding, but it also showed immediate public support and faith in the institution. It was the first of three tax levies during those early years to support Tri-C's rapid growth and indicated the community's vote of confidence.

In the decades since, subsequent levies have provided the College with the funding to build state-of-the-art learning environments across the county, modernize its technology and keep tuition the lowest in Ohio.

Earlier this year, Tri-C kicked off its Diamond Jubilee by giving back to students. The celebration launched with the seventh annual Tri-C Day giving campaign and collaborations with two of Northeast Ohio's food and drink legends. The College partnered with Melt Bar and Grilled and Sibling Revelry Brewing to raise money for student scholarships.

Look for more opportunities to celebrate this milestone anniversary in the fall, including a special 60th-anniversary issue of *Tri-C Times*.

STORY BY [Anthony Moujaes](#)





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