

Cuyahoga
Community
College



THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Michael A. Baston, J.D., Ed.D.

P R E S I D E N T



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends, Students and Colleagues,

The most important thing a new leader can do is listen to those they will be leading and collaborating with. And for the first 100 days of my tenure, that is exactly what I did.

Since taking office as the fifth president of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) on July 1, I have been privileged to meet many community leaders and stakeholders individually and at functions, conferences and listening sessions. I have also been thrilled to meet so many of the faculty, staff and students who embody the mission and values of our great institution.

I have learned so much these past few months. I have learned how deep Tri-C's roots run in Northeast Ohio — its importance to the region's economy, culture and future. I have met countless people whose lives have been forever changed by Tri-C.

I have seen the passion of our faculty and staff. I have seen their drive to serve our communities, provide opportunities for our students and truly make Tri-C the place where futures begin.

I have seen the determination of our students to succeed — in many cases, against daunting obstacles.

Now, the question is: What I should do with everything I have learned?

The content in this report will begin to answer that question. Here, you will find an outline of my listening journey over the course of my first 100 days in office, the themes that emerged and how we will use these insights to move forward.

As an institution, Tri-C excels in many areas. I am determined to continue building on those areas of strength, but there is always room for improvement. We will work tirelessly to “build our muscle” in these areas as well.

I deeply appreciate the valuable input and guidance I have received from the Board of Trustees, those within Tri-C and those in the community. I look forward to collaborating with all of you as we work together to lift Tri-C and Northeast Ohio to even greater heights.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "MABA" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

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

BUILDING MOMENTUM

A Post-Pandemic Refresh of Strategies, Structures and Systems

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To be a transformational organization, we must have absolute clarity about who we are, where we are and how we will evolve to benefit our students and the community. This requires us to courageously assess the effectiveness of current operations and initiatives, address what's not working and have the flexibility to quickly adapt our plans as changes occur in the world around us.

As we move forward in the post-pandemic “now normal,” our work will be guided by three fundamental principles.



EVERYTHING WE DO WILL BE:

Values centered

Consciously committed to diversity, integrity, academic excellence, the achievement of individual and institutional goals and inclusive prosperity. We will dedicate ourselves to building trust, respect and confidence among our colleagues, students and community.

Student focused

All decisions will be evaluated through a “student-first” lens, considering the potential impact on student equity, the student experience and student success and to ensure opportunity for all.

Purpose driven

As the community's college, Tri-C will be a catalyst for change in Northeast Ohio. We will create more vibrant communities by moving people from economic fragility to economic mobility through education and training for in-demand, well-paying jobs. We will drive economic growth by partnering with business and industry to design programs that will develop the skilled workforce needed to fuel current businesses and attract new ones.

100 Days of Listening, Learning and Engagement



THEMES

Three themes that emerged during my first 100 days of listening, learning and engagement will create a springboard for new ideas and innovation and inform our strategic planning process.

Build a Culture of Clarity



Like other multi-campus community college systems, Tri-C offers flagship programs at each of its locations. Classes in these programs are available virtually and at other campuses to provide equitable access and respond to hyperlocal demand or interest. Non-degree or noncredit programs and credentials are offered through our workforce and Corporate College® divisions. The College's six Centers of Excellence focus on areas of job demand and future growth.

To provide greater clarity around career pathways and ensure a more consistent educational experience and better student outcomes, Tri-C will transition to a centralized one-college model that will provide a more coherent approach to programs of study.

This will include clarifying how non-degree credentials and programs align with degree programs to form stepping-stones to career or degree attainment; embedding career readiness experiences, organized around key milestones, in all courses; and clearly articulating the real-world skills students will acquire in each course and program, helping them select courses and ultimately convey their skills to potential employers.

“Our structure needs to properly emphasize the equality of our noncredit and credit programs and help foster smooth transitions between the two.”

JULY 1



Took office as **fifth president** of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®).

Joined **Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC)**.



JULY 12

Attended a breakfast with **religious leaders from the community**.



Participated in President's Panel during **Leader's Dialogue** at Florida State College at Jacksonville.



JULY 20

Interviewed for *Crain's Cleveland Business* article: “New Cuyahoga Community College president **Michael Baston** talks plans for the future.”



JULY 27

Appeared in front-page *Plain Dealer* article: “Cuyahoga Community College president used ‘secret shopper’ reconnaissance to confirm Cleveland was a good fit.”

JULY 27

Engaged 150 Tri-C leaders in discussion around the **post-pandemic “now normal”** and **regional workforce needs** at the annual President's Renewal.



JULY 28

College hosted **Medical Imaging Career Fair** to connect employers with health career students and graduates.

JULY 29

Met with former Cleveland Mayor **Frank G. Jackson**.

JULY 31

Featured in *Cleveland Magazine/Community Leader* article: “**Get to Know Tri-C's new president.**”





THEMES (Cont.)

Redesign the Student Experience



We must continuously examine our processes to ensure ease of access to community members who seek to change or enhance their lives. Using the student journey and corresponding needs as a framework, we are working with Corporate College professionals trained in Lean Six Sigma to evaluate and enhance the student experience.

We will focus on simplifying recruitment and enrollment processes, as well as our organizational hierarchies and naming conventions, to make it easier for students to find the help they need and for faculty and staff to more effectively direct those seeking assistance.

Students will be able to enter any “door,” whether physical or virtual, easily enroll in classes and find the services or resources they need to succeed.

“Faculty, staff and peers can and should serve as mentors for students to celebrate their successes, support them through any struggles and guide them through Tri-C processes.”

AUGUST 1

Appeared in *Smart Business* article: “New President Michael Baston wants Tri-C to hold the ladder of opportunity.”



Attended opening of Via Sana, the first phase of a \$60 million mixed-use development by The MetroHealth System. The affordable housing complex features a Tri-C Access Center that will offer job training, financial and digital literacy training and access to Tri-C classes.

AUGUST 2-5

Attended American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Annual Board of Directors Retreat.

AUGUST 8

Appeared on WKYC’s *We The People* to discuss inclusion and education with senior reporter and commentator Leon Bibb.



AUGUST 11

Invited by Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona to participate in a panel discussion on value-added work and career pathways at Raise the B.A.R.: Bold + Action + Results in College Excellence and Equity, a U.S. Dept. of Education summit.

Appeared in *Community College Daily* article: “ED Summit emphasizes completion with equity, mobility.”

Interviewed on ideastream’s *The Sound of Ideas*.

AUGUST 12

Joined Community College Humanities Association (CCHA).



AUGUST 15

Featured on *The Landscape*, a podcast by *Crain’s Cleveland Business*.



AUGUST 17

College received a Best in Class award for board diversity – along with Hall of Fame honors in the category – from the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP). This designation recognizes Tri-C for achieving Best in Class for three consecutive years.



“It’s critical that our special populations — first-generation students, under-represented students, veterans — know what dedicated resources are available to them.”

AUGUST 18

Shared insights on regional workforce strategies with 200+ business and community leaders in a discussion with **Cleveland State University President, Laura Bloomberg**, at **Team NEO’s Misaligned Opportunities** event.



Attended **Taste of Black Cleveland**.

AUGUST 23

Attended **GCP Middle Market CEO Forum** at Vitamix headquarters.

AUGUST 23

Joined **Unify Jobs Board of Directors**.

Spoke about post-pandemic “now normal” and regional workforce needs, along with **finding opportunity in times of crisis**, during Convocation address to 500 faculty and staff.



AUGUST 24-25

Visited all four Tri-C campuses to meet and greet students and kick off **Fall 2022 semester**.

AUGUST 25

Attended **Team NEO’s Quarterly Investor Meeting** at EY-Nottingham Spirk Innovation Hub.

AUGUST 26

Attended Cuyahoga Community College **Foundation board welcome reception**.

AUGUST 27

Attended **Hope Heals: The 2022 MetroHealth Gala**.

AUGUST 29

Met with Anthony Richardson, president of **The George Gund Foundation**.



AUGUST 30

Met with Erika B. Rudin-Luria, president of the **Jewish Federation of Cleveland**, and Dan Zelman, board chair.

AUGUST 31

Attended **GCP New Business Leaders in Greater Cleveland** dinner.





“ We need to energize employees to spread the good word about Tri-C to our community.”

SEPTEMBER 1

Met with key Tri-C donor **Howard Lewis**, founder and chairman emeritus of Family Heritage Life Insurance Company of America.

SEPTEMBER 6

Met with **Pernel Jones Jr.**, Cuyahoga County Council president.



Met with **Cathy Belk**, president and CEO of **Deaconess Foundation**, and two foundation trustees.



SEPTEMBER 7

Toured **KeyBank Public Safety Training Center** at Tri-C's Western Campus.

SEPTEMBER 9

Welcomed 57 attendees at **Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses** kickoff event.



SEPTEMBER 12

Met with **Ronn Richard**, president and CEO of the **Cleveland Foundation**.

College once again honored as **Great College to Work For®** by ModernThink LLC — one of only 22 two-year institutions selected nationwide. Tri-C was also one of only 12 institutions to receive Honor Roll status.



SEPTEMBER 13

Met with key Tri-C donor **Albert Ratner**, co-chair emeritus of Forest City Enterprises and Partner, RMS Investment Corp.

Met with **Timothy L. Tramble Sr.**, president and CEO of **St. Luke's Foundation**.

College was recognized as one of Northeast Ohio's top places to work, winning its **16th NorthCoast 99 award**. Tri-C also received an Award of Excellence as the highest scorer among companies with 500 or more employees.

SEPTEMBER 14

Initiated student-led creation of a video birthday card for employees with Student Production Office.



SEPTEMBER 14-29

Connected with **500+ students, faculty, staff and community members** during listening sessions at all four Tri-C campuses and the **Jerry Sue Thornton Center**.

THEMES (Cont.)

Strengthen the Value Proposition



While maintaining strong awareness of Tri-C as an affordable and accessible option, we must move the needle to improve perceptions of the quality of our academic offerings. Though community college stigma is not unique to Tri-C, we must intensify our efforts to address it as an institution and in concert with our community college peers.

However, greater awareness of these value drivers and the breadth of our programs will have little impact unless we address the growing skepticism — recently exacerbated by the strong job market — surrounding the ROI of higher education.

We will demonstrate that Tri-C is an educational partner that not only contributes to lifelong prosperity but also prepares people to prosper now by providing new knowledge or skills that allow them to more quickly achieve their ambitions. We will do this, in part, through a new marketing campaign that will launch in spring 2023.

Additionally, we will empower and equip students, faculty and staff to become more effective brand ambassadors so that they can amplify these messages and emphasize Tri-C's role as an economic engine and force for change in Northeast Ohio.

“ You can't be what you can't see. We need to expose youth in the region to different opportunities and raise the understanding and reputation of various occupations.”

SEPTEMBER 16

Met with Blaine Griffin, **Cleveland City Council** president.

College hosted **MetroHealth Job Fair** for St. Vincent Charity employees affected by service changes.

Hosted **Tri-C Family Day** at Progressive Field for 980 alumni, faculty and staff.



SEPTEMBER 19

Named **Radiah Blanton** executive director of **Strategic Initiatives**, **Renee Richard** interim president of **Corporate College®** and **Dee Weber** vice president of **Human Resources** and chief human resources officer.

SEPTEMBER 20

Met with **Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation** Chair **Stephen Hoffman** and President and CEO **Jehuda Reinharz**.

SEPTEMBER 21

Met with **Janice Tubbs**, economic development project manager with the **city of Garfield Heights**.

Launched **design competition** among Visual Communication and Design students for College's 2022 holiday card.

College receives **10th consecutive Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award** from *INSIGHT Into Diversity Magazine*.

Attended **Cleveland Metropolitan School District** CEO **Eric Gordon's State of the Schools Address**.

SEPTEMBER 27

Appointed **Shana Marbury** executive vice president of **Workforce, Community and Economic Development** and **William Gary** senior advisor on national workforce issues.

SEPTEMBER 28

Joined **Playhouse Square** Board of Directors.



Engaged with **120 Tri-C leaders** at Collegewide Cabinet.

Opened **Tri-C Foundation** board meeting.

SEPTEMBER 29

Toured Tri-C's **Transportation Innovation Center** with **Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine**.



Met with **John P. Murphy Foundation** President **Nancy McCann**; Executive Vice President **Richard Clark**; and several trustees/staff.

SEPTEMBER 30

Addressed **Tri-C Deans Council** at annual retreat.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Ideas Festivals: January 2023



The three themes resulting from my first 100 days of listening, learning and engagement will be used as a springboard from which to spur ideas and innovation across the College. Students, faculty and staff will have the opportunity to brainstorm, discuss and recommend their best ideas for advancing or addressing the three themes at Ideas Festivals to be held at each campus and the Jerry Sue Thornton Center during Campus Days from Jan. 11-12, 2023.

These ideas will inform a strategic planning process that will provide a roadmap for how we will move forward and fulfill the mission of Tri-C.

OCTOBER 5

Attended luncheon for community leaders hosted by Umberto Fedeli, president and CEO of **The Fedeli Group**.

OCTOBER 6

Received two motor coaches from Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) as part of a partnership expansion with Tri-C. The coaches will give commercial driver's license (CDL) trainees hands-on experience operating real-world vehicles.



OCTOBER 6

Attended Hispanic Heritage Month celebration and grand opening of **Metropolitan Campus Student Center for Multicultural Engagement**.



Published first **Smart Business** column: "Defining the 'now' normal."

OCTOBER 7

Welcomed 250 attendees to **Ohio Association of Two-Year Colleges Annual Conference** at Tri-C's Eastern Campus.

Attended inauguration of **Cleveland State University President, Laura Bloomberg**.



Attended **Project Love's Values-in-Action** luncheon.



OCTOBER 8

Reached 100th day leading Tri-C.



“ We need to recognize that student success means different things to different people. Each milestone can be celebrated. ”



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