

DIAGNOSIS: CAREER CHANGE



STORY BY John Horton
PHOTO BY Tamara London



BOARD STUDENT SCHOLAR **CHRIS CULLEN** ENROLLED AT TRI-C TO BEGIN JOURNEY TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

A few years of accounting work at Sherwin-Williams positioned Chris Cullen for a comfortable career with the Fortune 500 company, his future as bright as the paint giant's boldest colors.

"I had everything you could ask for," Cullen said. "I was in a great job with a great company, with plenty of opportunity and mentors. I was set."

But he wasn't fulfilled. Cullen had always envisioned himself in a job helping people. He wanted to be a doctor, a healer ... somebody who made a difference. "In the hustle and bustle of life, I lost sight of that," he said.

So he turned to Cuyahoga Community College to reinvent himself. Cullen — who is serving as Tri-C's Board Student Scholar this academic year — is midway through his studies in biology and chemistry to earn an Associate of Science degree from the College.

The 32-year-old from Westlake intends to transfer to either Baldwin Wallace University or Cleveland State University in 2019 as the next step toward medical school. Ultimately, he wants to work as an emergency room doctor or surgeon.

code blue and administered lifesaving chest compressions to a patient in intensive care.

Cullen balances shifts at Southwest with a science-heavy class schedule at Tri-C's Westshore Campus, where he has been involved with student government, *The Voice* newspaper and numerous events. He is also part of the College's Honors Program.

"I want to grow myself completely," Cullen said. "If there's an opportunity available, I plan to take advantage of it."

That eagerness led to Cullen's selection as Tri-C's Board Student Scholar for 2018-2019. The leadership position serves as a bridge between the entire student body and the College's Board of Trustees.

Cullen views the responsibility as a way to develop critical thinking and build higher-level skills. In a way, he said, that describes his whole time at the College.

"Tri-C has helped me focus on becoming the person I always wanted to be," Cullen said. "It was a big life decision to change careers, and I know I made the right choice because of what I've learned here."

"I WANT A JOB WHERE A GOOD DAY MAKES A HUGE IMPACT AND SAVES LIVES."

He experienced that feeling soon after starting as a nurse aide at Southwest General Health Center in Middleburg Heights. Cullen responded to a