

Annual Report 2019-2020





Norwalk Community College aspires to create a culture

The vision of the Norwalk Community

of inclusion and excellence through intellectual

College Foundation is to expand access

inquiry, open dialogue, multicultural awareness, and

to affordable, quality higher education,

lifelong learning. By embracing the diverse needs of

support the development of a productive

our students, faculty, staff, and community, the college

workforce, and contribute to the knowl-

strives to provide an environment in which individuals

edge and well-being of our community.

are empowered to achieve their highest potential.

From Norwalk Community College

Supporting students has always been a driving force in the work we do at Norwalk Community College, but it has never been more evident than in this past year. As the world was dealt an unprecedented pandemic, we needed to provide a higher level of support to rise to the occasion.

In the spring, we closed our campus and immediately transitioned to online learning. Students were faced with a new set of obstacles on their road to success. Some were already masters of the required technology, but others needed to get up to speed quickly. And still others didn't even have computers.

Pre-pandemic, many of our students were already self-supporting and trying to balance school and a job (or two!) to make ends meet. In addition, some faced food insecurity, lacked transportation, even lacked adequate housing. Add to that the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis with the immediate shift to remote learning, and the need for unique student support becomes obvious.

We are grateful to the NCC Foundation, which quickly jumped in and raised funds to purchase laptops for those who needed them, as well as grocery gift cards for students greatly effected by the pandemic.

Student services departments worked diligently and creatively to connect with students. Academic counselors communicated via phone, email, or virtual meetings to help students register for classes. The Tutoring Center provided virtual academic support. Counseling services offered virtual group sessions and other programs to help students through these trying times. The Career Development and Experiential Learning Center worked remotely with students to help them obtain employment, with a focus on essential businesses.

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities implemented a new grading policy during the pandemic and thus NCC was able to give students the option to convert to Pass/Fail grading so as not to disrupt their GPA.

This pandemic-related support further supplements the great work we have done to help empower students along their journey to completing a degree or certificate, or transferring to a four-year college or university.

Early in the fall, NCC launched myPATH, an exciting new initiative that provides unique support to students as they navigate their own journey. The PATH acronym stands for **Plan Ahead, Access Resources, Think Critically, and Head Out Confidently**. The initiative is made possible by a grant from the Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. A ribbon-cutting ceremony in October officially opened the newly renovated West Campus B-Wing, which displays colorful wall graphics representing the steps of the myPATH initiative.

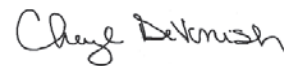
This year saw other examples of support, including an easier way to apply for financial aid with individual assistance for students. NCC also increased the number of work experience programs built into the curriculum, and boosted ongoing support for Veterans, students with disabilities, and those who need academic and mental health counseling.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight and commend our incredible students and graduates who stepped into heroic roles, working in local stores and in healthcare facilities during the pandemic. One hundred percent of our 2019 Respiratory Care Program graduates were hired upon graduation and were already working in the healthcare industry. They put their education to immediate use, caring for COVID-19 patients in area hospitals. We are so very proud of them.

I am confident that Norwalk Community College will continue the tradition of excellence and bring high-quality education throughout these challenging times and into the future.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Cheryl C. De Vonish, J.D.
Norwalk Community College
Chief Executive Officer



Cheryl C. De Vonish, J.D., NCC Chief Executive Officer

In Partnership with the NCC Foundation

One of the best parts of my job used to be talking with students in the hallways of NCC or at the Foundation's office on the NCC campus. This March, I found myself meeting students in a very different setting—in the parking lot of Norwalk's Fire Department. It was the early days of the pandemic, NCC's campus had closed, and the area served as a convenient meeting point to safely distribute donated laptops to students. Cut off from campus resources like the library, computer labs, and food pantry, many students were struggling. Despite the challenges, students were determined to continue with their coursework. One student who received a laptop that day asked me, "How can I thank you?" I replied, "The best thanks you can give to me and all the donors who believe in you, is to stay on track at school and graduate."

COVID-19 has indisputably added another great challenge to our students, who prior to the pandemic, already faced a number of barriers to overcome on their path to graduation. Yet the mission of the NCC Foundation is clearer than ever. We are here to support student success at Norwalk Community College.

To that end, our support for NCC during 2019-2020 included \$3.4 million invested in scholarships, academic supports and innovative programs. We are honored to have awarded NCC scholars more than \$1.8 million in scholarships—both to students earning their associate degrees, and high-achieving transfer students on the path to earning their bachelor's degrees. Another \$1 million was invested in academic excellence through programmatic support in areas such as the Allied Health Department within the Center for Science, Health and Wellness, College Advancement grants to faculty and staff, innovation, and entrepreneurship in our Makerspace, and more.

The Foundation's programs grew this past year, as we scaled our coaching and mentoring services to provide more students with individualized support. We piloted a new corporate mentoring program with 16 professional women from Bridgewater Associates and nine high-achieving NCC women. Over a series of six in-person and Zoom meetings, the Bridgewater Scholars shared professional and personal

experiences and developed an impressive bond. We look forward to developing a second Bridgewater Scholars cohort focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion by targeting employees and students of color. We also partnered in a leadership team with Bank of America and other funders to develop an innovated accelerated certificate program to retrain displaced COVID-19 workers in healthcare as Certified Nurse Aides (CNA). Developed in just a few short months over the summer, we proudly partnered with Bank of America and Social Venture Partners to sponsor the first CNA class, with a goal of replicating the program across other Connecticut community colleges.

We are proud of the Foundation's responsiveness in a time of crisis. The Foundation-supported Makerspace made more than 700 face shields to donate to local healthcare providers. With our emergency fundraising in March 2020, we were able to provide 215 laptops to students to help them complete their spring semester, 340 grocery store gift cards, and emergency financial aid for rent and other essential bills.

The disruption caused by COVID-19 didn't slow us down. We proudly continue to serve students and the College during this difficult time. Whether we are providing coaching and mentoring programs or re-stocking the shelves of the food pantry, the purpose for the Foundation staff and our Board of Directors remains clear—to ensure that a high-quality college education is affordable and accessible to our community.

Thank you for your belief in us and our mission. We are proud to be your partners and will continue to do the work that needs be done.

With sincere gratitude,



Carrie L. Bernier, J.D.
Executive Director, Norwalk Community College Foundation



Vincent A. Murphy
President, Board of Directors, Norwalk Community College Foundation



Vincent A. Murphy, NCC Foundation Board of Directors President



Carrie L. Bernier, J.D., NCC Foundation Executive Director

NCC's Healthcare Heroes

This year we would like to express our gratitude to all the essential workers whose tireless efforts kept us safe. While the world shut down, NCC students and graduates were among those who bravely kept working in our local stores and hospitals to keep our community strong.

Ever since the coronavirus pandemic spread to Connecticut, NCC graduates have demonstrated the extraordinary value of their education.

Many of the healthcare workers who were courageously caring for COVID-19 patients are graduates of the NCC Nursing, Allied Health, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Certified Nurse Aide and Respiratory Care programs.

When the pandemic first spread to our region, many of our recent graduates had been working in the medical field for just months. Yet, they were thrust into an unimaginable work environment, facing life-and-death situations every day.

NCC Respiratory Care Program Coordinator Maria Grayson notes that NCC grads were working on the front lines at Stamford, Norwalk, and Greenwich Hospitals; St. Vincent's Hospital in Bridgeport, Burke Rehabilitation Hospital in New York, St. Raphael's Hospital in New Haven, White Plains Hospital, New York Presbyterian Hospital/ Columbia University Medical Center, and other



NCC Nursing Program graduate and Foundation transfer scholarship recipient Dana Chamale (pictured on left with her colleague Natalia on right). Dana earned her bachelor's degree from Fairfield University and now works as a nurse, helping COVID-19 patients in Fairfield County.



NCC Alumni suited up to work on the front lines.

facilities. While Connecticut succeeded in "flattening the curve" since early March, the pandemic remains a threat, and NCC grads are still serving as essential workers in COVID-19 units.

Professor Grayson herself was working weekend shifts during the pandemic. "It really was like a war zone," she said. "You were just so busy, non-stop the entire shift." To protect herself, she wore double gowns, double masks, goggles, and gloves. When she got home, she took the precautions of leaving her shoes outside, removing her clothing in the basement and washing them in hot water. "I showered immediately," she added.

"When we signed up to be healthcare providers, we signed up for anything that came our way," said Michelle Brown, an alumna who is working as a respiratory therapist in New York City. "But . . . we had no idea what we were up against, and we were not prepared." Michelle said she was deeply disturbed by the suffering of COVID-19 patients, but was committed to keeping an upbeat attitude for the sake of patients "who needed us the most."

All of the NCC grads interviewed said they were touched by the outpouring of gratitude and concern they had received from the public. It lifted their spirits to know that NCC and 16

other member institutions of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system had collectively donated personal protective equipment (PPE), with a total of 184,400 gloves, 11,345 masks, 1,885 gowns, and 15 ventilators to Connecticut hospitals.

Nursing graduate Cynthia Ibarra works at St. Raphael's Hospital in New Haven in a unit designated to treat COVID-positive patients. "Thankfully we had sufficient PPE," she said. "I had a few relatives that tested positive, including one who was intubated at a local hospital. I saw first-hand professionally and personally what this virus can do."

At the hospital where Nursing alumna Choralee Paurice works, there weren't enough N-95 face masks, hairnets, or shoe covers. Workers were re-using disposable isolation gowns and some had to use the same face mask for three weeks. "I protected myself by using the correct PPE, taking extra precautions, washing my hands a lot more, removing my hospital uniform at work and changing into clean clothes to enter my home and doing the same with my shoes," Choralee said. "Some of us stayed away from our families. We continued to boost up our immune systems and drank a lot of tea."

"The most challenging part of working among COVID patients was to see so many deaths and have to deal with the fear of getting infected," said Respiratory Therapy graduate Diana Ramirez, who works at White Plains Hospital. "I am a mother of three and I pray every day for my children to be safe. I love my profession, but I can't wait for all of this to be over finally."

Daniela Ochoa finished her Respiratory Therapy degree in 2019, so working during a pandemic was trial by fire for her. "I was not expecting this, nobody was. This was an extraordinary situation, but extraordinary people were handling it," she said. "In the beginning, when we started admitting infected patients,



it was shocking, I was scared. The patients deteriorated in a matter of hours."

Daniela works at Stamford Hospital. As the patient count continued to steadily rise, she was impressed by the way teams of health care providers at the hospital mobilized and developed response plans. Infection control specialists, nurses, cleaning people, radiologists, and respiratory therapists were working side by side. "We were educated on how to protect ourselves, and we developed plans of care. Together we have been working as a team and trying to overcome this situation for the best possible outcomes for our patients," she said.

"My NCC education has prepared me to be one of the best respiratory care practitioners who cares about people and what we can do to help them to the best of our expertise."

— NCC Alumna Michelle Brown

NCC Gives Back

Realizing that many health workers lacked adequate personal protective equipment, NCC's Hospital Simulation Unit, a high-tech teaching facility funded by the NCC Foundation, loaned three ventilators and donated 15,000 medical gloves, 919 masks, and 130 gowns, to area hospitals.

NCC student Lillie Dehaemer (shown above), a fabricator intern in the NCC Makerspace, worked with Makerspace coordinator Vladimir Mariano to manufacture protective face shields for donation to front line workers using the College's 3D printer. "Given that we have the time, the equipment and materials here, we thought it would be really nice to give back to the community," Lillie said.

The Makerspace facility helps prepare students for future careers by giving them hands on experience with high-tech fabrication tools including 3D printers, laser cutters, and CNC milling machines.

Fabricators are Makerspace assistants who receive special training in the equipment and are available to guide and assist other students with the use of makerspace tools and equipment.



919 masks, 15,000 gloves, 130 gowns



PPE donated by the NCC Foundation-funded Hospital Simulation Unit

3 Ventilators loaned to area hospitals





Removing Obstacles to Student Success

Barriers on the Path to Graduation

This year, NCC launched a major initiative to identify barriers to student success and develop new strategies to overcome them. The goal is to help more students become informed, feel connected, and make it to the graduation finish line. Through student surveys and thoughtful discussions with faculty and student service staff, NCC took a deep dive into identifying student needs and concerns.

Financial Obstacles

The financial obstacles for NCC students are staggering. The Student Identity Survey found that 75% needed to borrow money from family or friends to help pay **bills or expenses** in the past year; 30% withdrew from a class to work more hours to cover bills, and 18% were unable to pay their rent or mortgage.

The **cost of tuition** also can stand as a barrier for students. Although NCC tuition is a modest \$4,500 a year, for many students that amount is still out of reach. Moreover, students grapple with paying for expensive textbooks (nursing textbooks can cost more than \$600 each) and additional studio and lab fees for art and science courses.

Many students are self-supporting and experience **food insecurity**. They often must choose between buying food or putting gas in their car.

Some students **lack a computer**. It is difficult for them to complete assignments when their computer access is dependent upon the College's computer labs being open.

Nearly a quarter of NCC students live with family or friends because they cannot afford rent, or they live in temporary **housing** or a shelter. The most vulnerable are homeless, and spend the semester couch surfing at a friend's home or even living out of their car. Many lack **transportation** as well.

Barriers Beyond Money

Students who are the first in their family to attend college are at a disadvantage because they have **no role models** to help them navigate the system. Many are non-native speakers or undocumented students who are more comfortable staying under the radar than speaking up and asking for help.

Other students test poorly on the placement test in math or English, and **need help getting up to speed** on college-level work.

Biology Professor Jonathan McMenamin-Balano, Ph.D. observes that many students are **academically unprepared** and lack the planning, time-management, and organizational skills needed to succeed in college.

"We cannot put them in a time machine to tell them to learn these skills before they show up at our doors—but every student who does walk through them should know what they are in for," he said. He urges students to "review what they think they did and didn't understand" and "ask for help before they really need it."

Empowering Students on Their NCC Journey

myPATH

In the fall of 2019, NCC launched a grounding framework that helps students begin their journey at NCC, and grow, persist, graduate, and achieve their goals. The initiative is called "myPATH" because NCC provides students with the resources necessary to support their own unique path to realize their dreams and aspirations. Students are encouraged to become the "owners of their own vision and agents for their own success." The PATH acronym stands for:

(P) **PLAN AHEAD** for their academic, career, and financial success. Students connect with advisors, explore major and career

interests, evaluate transfer opportunities, and learn about financial options.

(A) **ACCESS RESOURCES** to strengthen their academic and leadership skills. Students learn with their peers, join student clubs, connect to campus services, and are expected to be active in their education.

(T) **THINK CRITICALLY** about their community at NCC and beyond. NCC asks students to reflect on their experiences, connect with people from different backgrounds, build their support network, consider the sources of their information, and never be afraid to ask questions.

(H) **HEAD OUT CONFIDENTLY** on their path to success. As they work toward their goals, students commit to their own success, create their future, inspire others to make a difference, and stay connected.

The initiative is supported by a five-year grant from the Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It is under the direction of a dedicated Title V Coordinator at NCC.

Distinctive myPATH signage brings visual cohesion to the offices on West Main Street (the first floor B-wing of the West Campus building) by bringing services to life on the walls for students and campus community members.

Beyond West Main Street, myPATH lays out a grounding framework for students' journeys at NCC by setting out a plan of action for students to follow as they pursue their educational and career goals.



Supporting Student Success

NCC provides comprehensive academic advising to students from orientation through graduation. The College's **Panther Advising Workshops (PAW)** for incoming students helps them register and become familiar with college resources even before their first day of class. The PAW pilot program was developed in 2017 as part of a larger strategy to improve the enrollment process. It was designed to help new students be informed and connected, with the goal of improving first-year retention rates.

During Summer 2019, workshops were attended by more than 300 students. All first-time students are required to attend a two-hour PAW session. Students are given a brief presentation on acclimating to NCC during the first semester, meet with an academic advisor, register for courses, learn how use NCC's student portal, and sign up for the New Student Orientation. Special PAW sessions are held for English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

New students also learn the lay of the land by attending a mandatory three-hour **New Student Orientation**. They meet NCC CEO Cheryl De Vonish, deans and faculty, and learn about the College's services and resources. They also participate in activities to get to know other students.

The NCC Foundation-sponsored **Summer Bridge Intensive Math Program** is for incoming first-year NCC students who have placed into remedial math courses for their first semester at NCC. During the two-week program, students receive intensive math instruction in the summer so they can register for credit-bearing math classes in the fall. This saves students time and money when working toward their NCC degree (credits earned in remedial classes do not count towards graduation).

Program data show that students who completed the Summer Bridge Program, on average, earn more credits in their first year than comparison groups, have a higher-grade point average, and graduate from NCC at nearly double the rate of their peers.

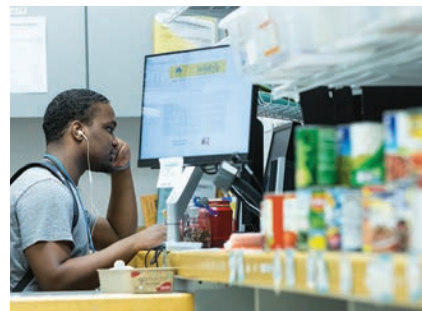
Additionally, there are workshops on time management and organizational skills, as well as opportunities for students to learn about their options for majors and courses of study, which gives them a head start in planning for their academic and career paths. The program also introduces participants to student resources on campus such as the Tutoring Center and student retention specialists. For the 2019 summer



2019 Summer Bridge students gather to celebrate the end of their program.

program, 69% of the 42 students finishing the program had immediate savings in time and money through increasing their placement to either four-credit remedial math course or to a college-level math course.

Because no student should experience food insecurity, the College offers the free and confidential **Food Pantry @ NCC**. Students are not required to prove financial need with a valid student ID. They can enter and choose from canned goods, household items like toothpaste and shampoo, and fresh fruit and vegetables. NCC even holds occasional cooking sessions where students can learn to make tasty, nutritious meals using only items from the Pantry.



Student volunteers help distribute food and manage the Food Pantry @ NCC.

Tuition assistance is available in the form of scholarships, grants, and federal funding. In the 2019-2020 academic year, the NCC Foundation invested more than \$1.5 million in scholarships to incoming, current, and graduating transfer students. More than 40% of students receive federal aid. Surprisingly, many students don't take advantage of scholarship assistance because they have difficulty writing an application essay, or are undocumented and don't realize they are eligible.

This year, the NCC Foundation and the College have made a great effort to urge more students to apply for scholarships and fill out the FAFSA form (the Free Application for Federal

Student Aid). The Foundation retooled its daunting essay requirement to essay questions in the application, and NCC offered multiple one-on-one sessions to help students fill out the FAFSA form, which can be confusing. NCC publicized these sessions in flyers and posters in both English and Spanish and informed students of the advantages of filing early. On FAFSA Donut Day, every student who completed a FAFSA form received a donut as an additional, extra-sweet incentive.



Staff and volunteers gave out donuts to students who completed a FAFSA application.

Many NCC students lack cars. They rely on friends or public transportation to get to and from school. NCC offers all students a **UPASS Bus and Train Pass** that provides free, unlimited bus or rail transport on CTtransit and other bus systems statewide, and Amtrak trains between New Haven and Springfield, Massachusetts. The pass is paid for by the College through the Student Fees Fund.

The **Career Development and Experiential Learning Center** provides comprehensive programs, activities, services, and experiential learning opportunities for students, alumni, and community members to prepare for employment by developing resume writing, interviewing skills, job-search strategies, and a deeper understanding of the fit between their competencies and the world of work.



Kiran Somaya, Director of the Career Development and Experiential Learning Center (left), works with a student.

The Center has a particularly robust website featuring a step-by-step "Career Readiness Process" for students to follow, and links to many resources that can be easily accessed virtually such as the "Focus 2 Career" assessment tool, the "Career Connections" online job board, and "What Can I Do With This Major?" online informational tool. The Center even provides donated professional attire for job interviews through its popular annual "Professional Attire Pop-Up" event.

Life happens. Realizing that most students live within tight budgets, the NCC Foundation offers an **Emergency Fund** to help with unexpected costs for essential needs such as housing, books, car repairs, or family emergencies.

NCC offers **affordable child care** in its Child Development Laboratory School. The NCC Foundation offers childcare scholarships to help defray the costs for students. The award-winning facility provides a venue for Early Childhood Education students to observe and practice methods taught in the classroom. It also provides quality



Students in the CDLS enjoy story time.

daycare for children ages six months to five years, with an infant care center in the works. The Lab School is open to children of students, faculty, and members of the public.

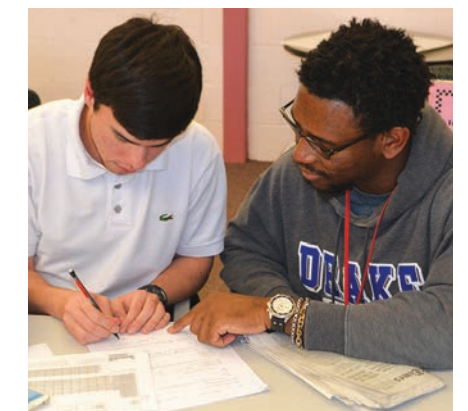
NCC has expanded the number of **work experience programs** embedded into the curriculum. Nursing and Allied Health students do rotations at area hospitals and long-term care and rehab facilities. Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management students learn how a real restaurant is run at NCC's Café, with lunch service offering creative and delicious meals prepared by students. Open to the public, until the pandemic forced its closure, the program is designed to give students experience with all phases of running a restaurant or foodservice operation, from prepping and preparing lunch-eon entrées to serving as waiters and managers. Veterinary Technology students get experience working at area animal hospitals and veterinary practices. Engineering students participate in aerospace programs sponsored by NASA.

Many NCC students are introduced to **college resources while still in high school**. The Admissions Office does outreach campus tours for students from 10 area high schools. High school students can take courses for college credit at NCC through the High School Partnership program. In addition, every May, NCC hosts NCC Live!, an annual event where high school students are invited to "go to college for the day." Students attend their choice of mini classes taught by NCC faculty in a wide variety of topics including nursing, film and TV production, early childhood education, and veterinary

care. While petting a puppy or shooting a video, they get a real sense of NCC's offerings. More than 200 high school students attended in the last academic year.

The mental health and academic performance of students are intertwined. That is why NCC offers **mental health counseling and programs** throughout the year to help students cope with the stressors they face most—academic pressure, finances, relationships, abuse, and personal problems. NCC has two mental health counselors on staff—a full-time holistic counselor, and a counselor from Family and Children's Agency, who provides short-term counseling sessions for students facing challenges in their lives. The College offers referrals to outside agencies when appropriate. Additionally, the NCC Foundation provided more than 1,100 hours in mentoring and student coaching this year.

The **NCC Tutoring Services Center** provides students with a comfortable facility (and online support through videoconferencing) where they can receive extra help with classwork and writing assignments. Students are encouraged to think logically and work through problems, so that their understanding of the subject material is strengthened. NCC tutors are internationally certified through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA).



In the NCC Tutoring Services Center, students provide assistance to others with their classwork.

Additionally, NCC provides services for military veterans to help them access free government services and benefits, an ESL center that is the largest of the state's community colleges, and an AccessAbilities counselor who works with students with disabilities to provide accessibility accommodations that suit their particular needs.

Keeping Students on Track During COVID-19

In March, life as we know it changed. As the COVID-19 virus spread, NCC joined schools across the nation in closing its campus and transitioning from classroom to online learning. All faculty and staff began working remotely, and students were suddenly faced with the prospect of completing their semester in a new way.

Although the campus closed, learning continued, and the commitment to helping students overcome obstacles to success was reaffirmed. While some faculty and students were already experienced in online coursework, others had to quickly learn to master the technology.

“The pandemic made already difficult situations more difficult. Several of my students simply could not continue with school because they had to go to work, and their work schedules were no longer negotiable to meet their school schedules,” said Humanities Professor Susan Seidell. “Many students and many faculty . . . had to master online learning overnight. It was extremely stressful trying to negotiate the technology piece along with trying to teach in a foreign, i.e. virtual, environment.”

Recognizing that closing the campus meant many students were left without computer access, the NCC Foundation swiftly responded by announcing a **COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund** to purchase laptops and grocery store gift cards for students in need. The laptops were distributed by NCC Foundation Executive Director Carrie Bernier at the Norwalk Fire Department. The Foundation also distributed Walmart gift cards to help students and their families who became unemployed or underemployed by the pandemic.



NCC Foundation Executive Director Carrie Bernier (right) distributes donated laptops to students.

215
Students Received
Donated
Laptops



Grocery
Gift Cards
Distributed
to Students



340

One student, Jaquiline, was able to finish her semester thanks to the Emergency Fund. “I was having trouble because I was sharing a computer, but since I got the computer from the Foundation, it has been a life-saver,” she said. “Thank you so much for helping!”

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities implemented a new policy during the pandemic: community college students would have the option to convert any of the grades they earned in their Spring 2020 semester courses to **Pass/Fail grading** so that the courses would not affect their GPA.

All **Student Services departments found ways to connect with students**, whether it was by phone call, video conference meetings, or social media posts. A wide variety of weekly or on-demand live chats took place, including “Virtual Tutoring,” “Ask a Career Counselor” sessions, mental health virtual “Group Sessions,” and “Admissions Chats.”

The Academic Counseling Center continued to provide one-on-one counseling to students, and helped them choose courses and register for summer and fall courses. Counselors personally called students, communicated via emails, or met with them virtually, whichever was most convenient for the student.

“Our students are a source of inspiration in these trying times. Many of them are working on the front lines, caring for family members with the virus, some have even had the virus themselves,” said Catherine Miller, Director of the Academic Counseling Center. “Many have picked up the slack in their household working on the front lines to pay the bills.”

The Career Development and Experiential Learning Center assisted in constructing a student **Needs Assessment Survey**. The Center’s staff connected with respondents via phone calls to schedule appointments for help with the job search, resume and cover letter writing, interview tips and techniques, and exploring their major (using the Focus 2 Career assessment tool).

Social media and email campaigns were used to alert students and alumni that the Career Center staff were continuing to work remotely and were available to help. Within the first few weeks of the school closure, an email was sent to all Needs Assessment respondents with 10 live links directing them to resources and information to aid in job search and employment, with a specific focus on companies considered essential businesses and who were continuing to hire.

Just as healthcare workers have been medical heroes during the COVID-19 crisis, NCC faculty and staff have been heroes during the transition to online learning. Early Childhood Professor Margaret Dana Conway made herself available to students day and night, sometimes answering “50 emails a day.” Humanities Professor Cathy Milton, Ph.D. made phone calls to students and helped them get tutors. Philosophy Professor Ed Grippe, Ph.D. allowed students who lacked laptops to submit their assignments via Blackboard (a feature of the student portal).

“To provide support for students, I spent five hours every weekday at my computer in order to be available to answer questions in real time. I also adjusted some writing assignments to make them more student-friendly.”

— NCC History Professor Steve Berizzi





College Events + Achievements

The academic year 2019-2020 was filled with student achievements, respected speakers, and cultural enrichment on campus. Here are some of the highlights.



Journalist Scott Pelley meets with students in the Film & TV Production program after his presentation on October 17.

60 Minutes' Scott Pelley Visits NCC

Scott Pelley, the most awarded correspondent in the history of the television show *60 Minutes* and former anchor and managing editor of the CBS Evening News, visited NCC in October to talk about his storied career and sign copies of his new memoir, *Truth Worth Telling*. The event was sponsored by the NCC Foundation.

Some journalists are so accomplished at covering the news that they become newsworthy themselves. Pelley is one of them. At NCC, he discussed his work as a reporter and photographer for more than 45 years, covering war stories and interviewing everyone from presidents and politicians to celebrities and newsmakers.

After his presentation, Mr. Pelley toured NCC's film and television studio, and met with students in the program. He shared with them helpful advice and words of encouragement for pursuing a career in the industry.

The NCC Foundation has approved funding to upgrade the technology in the current film and television studio and expects the state-of-the-art media studio to be completed in late 2020.

PTK Receives Five-Star Status

NCC's Alpha Iota Nu Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the international honor society for two-year colleges, has attained Five-Star Chapter status, PTK's highest level of achievement.

NCC was honored at PTK Catalyst, an event celebrating chapter excellence and student leadership among more than 1,300 chapters in 11 nations. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the April event was held virtually.

The mission of NCC's honor society is to provide opportunities for high-achieving students to become scholars and leaders and engage in community service.

NCC's NASA Connections

This year, two NCC engineering students were selected to participate in educational initiatives supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to inspire interest in careers in science, aerospace technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Ben Ebel participated in an undergraduate research experience at the University of Bridgeport (UB), under the supervision of Dr. Miad Faezipour, Director of UB's Digital/Biomedical Embedded Systems and Technology Lab. The project's goal was to utilize novel signal processing techniques and analyze electrocardiogram data to develop methods for identifying various types of arrhythmia and the onset of sudden cardiac arrest.



NCC student Ben Ebel

NCC student Philip Senat spent a week at a robotics workshop at NASA's Stennis Space Center in Mississippi, where he worked on a project related to the Mars exploration rovers.

He was selected after completing a five-week online course offered by the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars (NCAS) program. NCAS's mission is to give community

college students an authentic NASA experience, and encourage them to finish a two-year degree or transfer to a four-year college university to pursue a NASA-related field or career.

Networking and Career Advice for NCC Scholars at Neuberger Berman

Two NCC Foundation scholarship recipients, Jerisy Esquivel and Gordon Hanssen, joined finance professionals in New York City for a daylong workshop entitled, "Classroom to Boardroom, Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders Today" at Neuberger Berman. It was a unique opportunity to gain practical advice and insights from finance professionals, as well as to learn strategies for building a resume and career path. Both students reported that they learned critical networking skills and strategies.

Jerisy is from Stamford and is majoring in Hospitality Management. "This was one of the best workshops that I have been to," she said. "It was a great benefit to meet so many people in the business, finance, and economic fields." She said the advice she heard on how to work your way up in the industry was inspiring.

Gordon, who is from Greenwich and a General Studies major, described the experience as "the highlight of my winter break," saying the workshop "enhanced my financial literacy and gave me all the tools I need to develop a successful career once I finish my education."



Shown from left to right: NCC Hospitality Management student Jerisy Esquivel, Neuberger Berman Chief Operating Officer Kenneth Rende, and NCC General Studies major Gordon Hanssen

Be A Better You!

Alumnus Andre Aiken, a fitness expert and graduate of NCC's Exercise Science program, celebrated the publication of his first book, an e-book titled *Square One: A Beginner's Guide to Being A Better You Than Yesterday*. NCC recognized his achievement with a poster signing in February.

The self-help e-book is designed to motivate people to get started on new paths or projects, whether they are beginning a new gym routine, diet, career path, or lifestyle.

Andre is a fitness trainer, physical therapy aid, and group exercise instructor. After graduating from NCC in 2016, he earned a bachelor's degree in exercise science and nutrition from Southern Connecticut State University. He is also an adjunct instructor at NCC and small business owner. At the 2020 NCC commencement ceremony, he received the NCC Distinguished Alumni Award, telling graduates in his speech to embrace the obstacles they may have faced on their path to graduating, because ultimately it will mold them into better individuals.



NCC alumnus Andre Aiken

myPATH Ribbon-Cutting

In October, CEO Cheryl De Vonish and Title V staff wielded an oversized pair of scissors to cut a red ribbon, announcing the launch of myPath, a grounding framework that helps students begin their journey at NCC and grow, persist, graduate, and achieve their goals. Attendees took a tour of the West Campus Main Street wing, where colorful wall signage illustrated the initiative's steps and phases.



NCC CEO Cheryl De Vonish cuts the ribbon to officially open West Campus' Main Street featuring the myPATH wall graphics, with Suzanne Lyons, Title V Coordinator (right).



NCC Theater and Choir students recorded vocals on their cell phones and combined them into a video virtual concert.

COVID-19 Can't Stop the Music

In March, NCC theater and choral students were in the final stages of rehearsing for the spring musical, "Mamma Mia," when the COVID-19 virus caused NCC to close its campus.

The students were disheartened, but not defeated. They found a way to keep singing together, without being together, by creating a virtual concert of the song "Raise Me Up."

"Twenty-seven students recorded vocals into their cell phones. Then they filmed themselves singing at their individual homes," said Theater Professor Christine Mangone, Ph.D. "We combined the vocals and videos so that we could perform together once again."

The inspiring virtual concert delighted students, faculty, staff, and NCC Foundation supporters, and was posted online at <https://youtu.be/DlCAyu7ePdY>.

Mount Holyoke Bound

A chance drop-in to an NCC info session on women's colleges has yielded NCC student Ren Citak an educational windfall. After learning about scholarship programs from Smith and Mount Holyoke colleges, Ren decided to apply to Mount Holyoke in South Hadley, Massachusetts. She was accepted and awarded a two-year Frances Perkins Scholarship worth \$110,000.

NCC has enjoyed a high acceptance rate to Mount Holyoke and Smith. Over the past seven years, NCC graduates have attended these prestigious institutions with more \$1 million in scholarship awards, notes English Professor Susan Gephardt-Burns.

"According to Ren, if she didn't attend our NCC information session in early November, she wouldn't have even applied to Mount Holyoke or known about the awesome Frances Perkins Program for non-traditional college female students," Gebhardt-Burns said.

Career Expo

Job-seeking students must often move mountains to meet employers face to face. In February, NCC brought employers directly to them at the annual Career Expo sponsored by the Center for Career Development and Experiential Learning.

More than 50 employers, recruiting for all work sectors, participated—the largest turnout ever. Students and alumni met recruiters from Amazon, Ernst & Young, Waveny LifeCare, and many more companies and organizations.

Prior to the event, the Career Center helped students put their best foot forward by offering workshops and information sessions on resume writing, interview preparation, and dressing for success.



Kelly DelMazio of NCC's Career Center (shown right) assists during the annual Career Expo.

Women and Advertising

"NCC Talks" is the College's annual series of lectures and discussions by distinguished leaders from the arts and sciences, entertainment, and popular culture. Last winter, the series featured Jean Kilbourne, Ph.D. discussing her TEDtalk "The Naked Truth: Advertising's Image of Women."

Dr. Kilbourne is an activist, speaker, and writer who has done pioneering research on the effects of advertising on our culture, particularly on women and children.

In the late 1960s, she began her exploration of the connection between advertising and several public health issues, including violence against women, eating disorders, and addiction. She also launched a movement to promote media literacy as a way to prevent these problems. A radical and original idea at the time, this approach is now mainstream and an integral part of most prevention programs.



Shown from left to right: NCC Professor Susan Seidell, activist and author Jean Kilbourne, Ph.D., and NCC Foundation Executive Director Carrie Bernier

NCC Hosts Norwalk Film Festival

The inaugural Norwalk Film Festival premiered last September, with NCC in a starring role.

This one-day event featured screenings of more than 50 films including documentaries and films created by local filmmakers and NCC students. All showings were open to the public.

NCC was one of several venues in Norwalk chosen to host the films. Thirty films were shown at NCC throughout the day in the David L. Levinson, Ph.D. Performing Arts Community Theater (formerly known as the PepsiCo Theater) and in the College's Gen Re Forum.

NCC also hosted an afternoon Industry Panel Q&A with filmmakers and industry professionals. The film festival culminated in a Standing Ovation Award event held at NCC in the evening.



Shown from left to right: CT State Senator Will Haskell, CT Congressman Jim Himes, NCC CEO Cheryl De Vonish, and NCC Foundation Executive Director Carrie Bernier

Himes Visits NCC Twice

Connecticut Congressman Jim Himes and State Senator Will Haskell visited NCC's campus on the first day of classes to meet with NCC Foundation Executive Director Carrie Bernier and CEO Cheryl De Vonish to discuss workforce development, as well as priorities for the College and Foundation.

Congressman Himes later returned to NCC in October to speak about his anti-gun advocacy work. According to CNN, there were 45 school shootings in the first 46 weeks of 2019. That's nearly an average of one shooting per week in U.S. colleges, high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools. Congressman Himes discussed gun violence prevention and the importance of political participation by college students.

During a lengthy Q&A session, he urged students to contact their legislators "and let their voices be heard in Washington."

Virtual Commencement

On the morning of June 18, students participated in a "drive-by" graduation on campus to receive their diplomas. The East Campus entrance was decorated with balloons, and from blocks away one could hear the brigade of horns honking and see cars driving by filled with smiling students and families. Students celebrated in front of the school (six feet apart, of course).

Later that day, NCC held a Commencement ceremony online with recorded messages from CEO Cheryl De Vonish, J.D., Dean of Student Affairs Kellie Byrd Danso, Ed.D., CSU President Mark Ojakian, and more. CEO De Vonish conferred the degrees by reading the names of all 2020 graduates.

NCC Shares a Common Read

Every year, NCC selects a novel or non-fiction work for students in all Freshman Seminar classes to read and discuss.

The Common Read program culminates in a celebration of topics and themes related to the book.

This year's Common Read choice was *Born a Crime*, a best-selling novel by comedian and late-night television host Trevor Noah about his childhood growing up in South Africa.

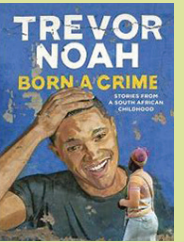
NCC's Common Read Celebration, which took place over two days in November, featured events and discourse exploring apartheid, social injustice, multicultural awareness, South African culture, and the challenges of life under apartheid.

Events included "Walk in My Shoes," an interactive cultural competency training session presented by NCC's CEO Cheryl De Vonish. The training was designed to help students develop attitudes, behaviors, and practices that will enable them to work effectively with students from different cultural backgrounds.

The Honors Program presented "A Discussion of Perspective," a panel featuring a Yale professor and community members of South African descent discussing Noah's apartheid experiences from their own personal and professional perspectives.

A South African Cultural Fair was hosted by the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion and featured an open African drumming session.

Other events included a Theater Improv session, a trivia competition, and a screening of the 2008 film *Skin* about a light-skinned girl living in 1950's South Africa with her white parents.



During the South African cultural fair, attendees participated in an African drumming session.



2019-2020 Foundation Leadership

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From left to right: Vincent A. Murphy, Carrie L. Bernier, Susan G. Weinberger, Joan Barksdale, Jennifer Crowell, Ann S. Mandel, Jon Gold, Vasso Gyftopoulos, Theodore J. Nussbaum, Carlton T. Goodnow, Laura Erickson, Cheryl C. De Vonish, Amy Richman, Erin M. Catapano, Warren Peña, George A. Reilly, Julie M. Johnson, Jacqueline G. Labatt-Simon, Tanisha Tyson, Gordon Hanssen

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 NCC Faculty Representative



NCCF Staff pictured from left: Trevor Stonefield, Communications Manager; Catherine Lucia, Director of Scholarships and Programs; Laurie Orem, Director of Development; Carrie L. Bernier, Executive Director; Gillian Hornby, Director of Finance; Aura Pineda, Office and Events Manager

Financial Report

Norwalk Community College Foundation Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (Ended 6/30/20)

The Norwalk Community College Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1965. We distributed \$3.4 million in fiscal year 2019-2020 for scholarships, stipends, programmatic support, and college advancement initiatives.

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 2,482,256
Investments	27,709,441
Other Assets	154,584

Total Assets \$ 30,346,281

Liabilities

Grants Payable	\$ 1,288,333
Other Liabilities	165,741
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,454,074

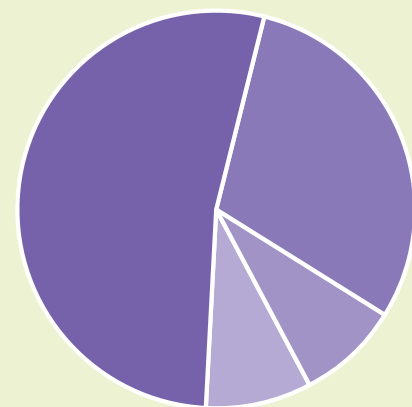
Net Assets

Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	\$ 1,767,961
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	27,124,246
Total Net Assets	\$ 28,892,207

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$ 30,346,281

The Foundation's financial statements were audited by Marks Paneth LLP. The complete audited financial statements are available on our website (ncc-foundation.org); highlights are shown below.

\$3.4 Million in Support for Norwalk Community College in 2019-2020

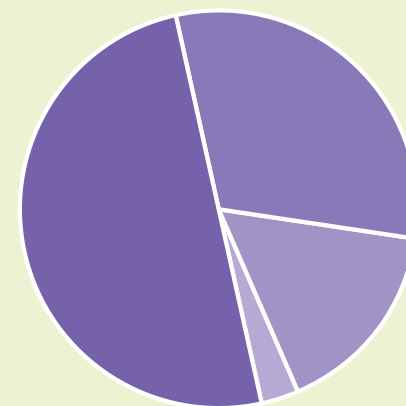


Investment Policy and Asset Mix

Our investment policy states: The primary emphasis of the investment policy is to safeguard and preserve the purchasing power of principal of the NCCF Endowment and to provide a payout to be approved annually by the Finance Committee and the Board. Additionally, a real rate of return on the portfolio is desired. These investment objectives must be achieved within acceptable risk parameters.

The endowment investment return was 3.9% for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the five year average annual investment return was 5.5%.

Endowment Asset Allocation



Norwalk Community College Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (Ended 6/30/20)

Funding Sources

Norwalk Community College received funding through six major sources: the General Fund, tuition and fees, auxiliary services, the Educational Extension Fund, and private and federal funds.

The General Fund appropriations are authorized by the State of Connecticut Legislature. Tuition and fees are established by the Board of Regents for Higher Education.

Auxiliary services and the Educational Extension Fund are self-supporting. The revenue from auxiliary services is primarily generated by Child Development Laboratory School fees and bookstore commissions. The Educational Extension Fund revenue is composed of non-credit program fees and summer and winter session fees.

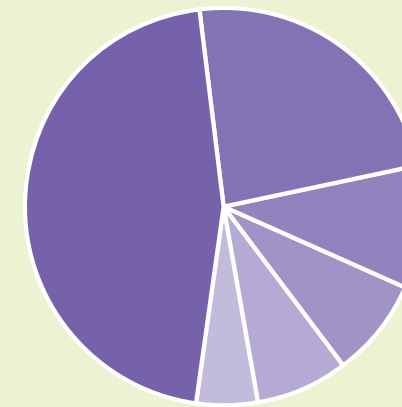
Private and federal funds consist mainly of grants and student financial aid. The Norwalk Community College Foundation actively seeks private grant funding for scholarships, student success initiatives, faculty development, and program support.

Tuition

The Board of Regents sets tuition and fees at reasonable levels to promote access to education. In the 2019-2020 academic year, Connecticut residents paid \$599 for a three-credit course, and full-time Connecticut students paid \$2,238 for 12 credits or more. Annual tuition was approximately \$4,546. Tuition was waived for qualified veterans and seniors aged 62 and older.

Operations Budget

NCC's funding sources provided a \$56.1million operating budget for July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. Spending categories are shown below.



Scholarship Recipient Highlights



Claudia Moses
2019-20 Charles Royce Merit Scholar
Major: Computer Science

High school graduates enrolling at NCC have the opportunity to apply to two scholarships created especially for them—the Bigelow Foundation/Briggs Scholarship and the Charles Royce Merit Scholarship. Claudia Moses was awarded the latter for the 2019-20 academic year. A resident of Stamford, Claudia says the decision to enroll at NCC was an easy one. “I can get a great education here and it won’t leave me in debt,” she explains. Her goal is to major in computer science and computer security, and eventually transfer to a four-year college to complete a bachelor’s degree in cyber security. “The scholarship from the NCC Foundation has helped a lot,” Claudia says. “I’m very grateful because I can focus on my studies right now, and on saving towards the next step, which will be completing my bachelor’s.”

Claudia’s interest in computer science began in high school when she joined a club called, “Girls Who Code.” The group invited a college student speaker to talk about her experience pursuing a major in the tech field.

“She talked about her college classes and why she chose her major,” Claudia recalls. “I thought it was really cool. I looked more into it on my own and I eventually decided, I want to do this. This is something I want to go for.”

Claudia wasted no time her first semester at NCC taking advantage of opportunities available to her. “I used all the resources on campus. I went to the tutoring center regularly, and I went to math recitations to ensure I did well in my math classes.” Claudia also joined study groups that provided camaraderie and support. “When we had to buckle down on a project, we would always text each other and help each other out,” she recalls. Additionally, Claudia found a part-time job on campus working in the admissions office.

Like all students, Claudia had to face the challenge of continuing her studies when NCC’s campus closed in the spring because of COVID-19. “The transition was very sudden,” Claudia says, and she tried to adapt and continue using online resources and the material her professors provided to stay on track.

Outside of school and work, Claudia has a creative and entrepreneurial side. Using original drawings she sketches, she sells printed t-shirts on her own Etsy store, *Arrowhead Artworks*.

“The scholarship from the Foundation has helped a lot. I’m very grateful because I can focus on my studies right now, and on saving towards the next step, which will be completing my bachelor’s.”

— Claudia Moses



Ronald Telemarque
NCC Graduate and 2014-15 Transfer Scholar
Major: Computer Science

“I wouldn’t be where I am today without the experience I had at NCC,” Ronald Telemarque says of his incredible trajectory. From losing his home and business following an earthquake in Haiti to attending Norwalk Community College, graduating from Columbia University and launching a career in the U.S., Ronald has always persevered through adverse circumstances with kindness, generosity, and resolute resilience.

Arriving in Stamford with limited English following the natural disaster in his home country, Ronald immediately began working a day shift at Fairway Market and a night shift at Walmart to support himself. Working all day and night quickly took a toll. Realizing he needed to improve his English and pursue a better future, he found Norwalk Community College.

At NCC, Ronald was able to launch his path forward. “When Ronald came to NCC, he saw an opportunity and seized it with drive and enthusiasm,” recalls Diane Donavon, Director of the NCC Tutoring Center. She first met Ronald when he visited the Center, and recognized he was a gifted student. It wasn’t long before Ronald quit his jobs outside of NCC, and started working part-time in the Tutoring Center,

helping other students with math. “As a tutor at NCC, he was always willing and eager to help other students. And always, always with a smile! Ronald excelled in academics, participated in student activities, received many honors, and always remained humble. He was a friend to everyone in the Tutoring Center, and showed that he cared about them,” Diane says.

With the help of his new part-time job at NCC and a scholarship from the NCC Foundation, Ronald was able to focus on his studies, as well as pursue student activities, such as becoming president of the PTK honors society. He graduated from NCC with a 3.86 GPA and a degree in Computer Science. He also received an NCC Foundation transfer scholarship to help him complete his bachelor’s at Columbia University, where he graduated in 2017 with a degree in Mathematics.

Now working as a data analyst with a career focus on data science, Ronald says he still draws on the education he received at NCC. “The skills I learned while studying at NCC, combined with my math skills, are the ones that I’m using in my career and in the job I’m doing now,” he says. Ronald says outside of work, he wants to be an “outstanding citizen,” and find ways to empower minority individuals, both academically and financially. Reflecting on his own path to higher education, a degree from an Ivy League school and a professional career in the U.S., Ronald says, “It all started at NCC.”

“The skills I learned while studying at NCC, combined with my math skills, are the ones that I’m using in my career and in the job I’m doing now. It all started at NCC.”

— Ronald Telemarque



Malik Lauture
2019-20 Academic Year Scholar
Major: Nursing

In addition to being an Academic Year Scholar, Malik participated in two NCC Foundation programs, Summer Bridge Math and Coaching.

Below is a personal essay Malik shared with us that expresses his journey to NCC. Through poetry and reflection, he describes the path he has travelled to become a successful student and embark on a career in nursing.

Where I’m From

I am from rats and roaches
 From houses stacked liked bricks
 I am from broken English, sa kap fet,
 and patois
 (Ma bule in the distance
 From one brother to the next)
 I am from the empty home
 When supervision was a burden
 My twin and I are old enough to watch
 the house
 But not enough to enroll in kindergarten
 From what happens at home stays at home
 I am from beatings for me to remember
 Out with the bad habits and in with the good
 I am from rhetorical you-don’t-know-
 where-it-is’
 From would-you-have-asked-if’s
 Especially when food was the inquiry
 I am from toxic twins
 Vitriolic words and generous fists
 The foundation of apathy and disdain
 I am from kingdoms on school buses
 Where suspension usurped my throne
 I am from the grizzly sin of sloth
 from mom’s acceptance of c’s
 To below a 3.0 just will not do
 I am from I cannot do it
 To I can only get better
 From disorganization is my flaw
 To accepting what is within my control

My mother works day and night to support three children by herself. When she comes home, she sleeps with the little time she has. Growing up, I wanted to support her, but felt helpless. Without any structure or parental supervision, I found homework to be a struggle and I did not understand its significance. By my senior year of high school, the realization sank in that my academic skills were remedial.

I knew I did not want to be destitute, that I wanted to help people, and that I wanted to make my mother proud. I wanted to show her that her sacrifices were not in vain. I expressed these desires to my uncle, who is an advanced practice registered nurse. He told me, “To help others, you must first help yourself.”

NCC gave me that opportunity, a second chance. The Summer Bridge Intensive math Program showed me the significance of homework and how to study. But I was still doubtful of my own academic potential.

Two years ago, I was awarded my first ever scholarship and gained acceptance into the nursing program. This made me feel as though I could rival the likes of Elon Musk. The scholarship aided me by paying for classes and materials, allowing me to cut back on hours at work, and concentrate more on my academics. It also served as a nod of affirmation to my personal and academic development. I am a nursing student, a volunteer educator in the Brien McMahon Medical Academy Experience at NCC, a part of the nursing club, and I work as a personal care attendant, aiding someone who suffered a brain injury with physical therapy, activities of daily living, and communicating.

The NCC Foundation bolstered the transition from my past life as a defective student who nearly succumbed to life circumstances, to setting an example of growth to others like me, and becoming an advanced practice registered nurse like my uncle. I am making my mother proud.

“The scholarship . . . allowed me to cut back on hours at work and concentrate more on my academics. It also served as a nod of affirmation to my personal and academic development.”

— Malik Lauture

Scholarships
\$1.8
Million



“It would be impossible for me to be where I am now without your big hearts. You can’t give any bigger gift to anyone than the gift of education. Thank you very much.”

— Binod D.

“Your donations make a difference. Thank you for choosing to support and encourage the education of NCC students. Without your scholarship, I would have acquired more student loan debt, but with this, I am on a strong path to finishing with almost no debt.”

— Shannon A.

Volunteer Mentor
and Success
Coach Hours

1,140

71%
of Full-Year
Recipients
Work

61% 
Increase in scholarship
spending in last 5 years

“You have allowed me to focus on the most important feature of school, which is learning. Your generosity has motivated me to push myself even further and harder.”

— Olexandr K.

“Being a full-time student and babysitting just to pay for my books and schooling is very stressful. This scholarship will help me pay for everything, and I am extremely grateful.”

— Madison G.

Students Awarded Scholarships

465 

Scholarship + Program Funds

We are grateful to our donors for establishing and supporting the following endowment and temporarily restricted funds.

Scholarship Funds

Access to Education Scholarship
Albert L. Hadley Scholarship
America 911 Scholarship
Ann Chernow Art Scholarship
Ann P. Rogers Scholarship
Anne Ireland Memorial Scholarship
Anonymous Scholarship
Benson Meth Scholarship
Beverly Miller Orthwein Scholarship
Bigelow Foundation/Briggs Scholarship
Calvin Loss Scholarship
Carl Mirbach Memorial Scholarship
Carle C. Conway Scholarship
Carolyn and Gerry McGrath Scholarship
Charles J. Trantanella, Jr. Memorial Scholarship
Charles M. and Jessica B. Shaeffer Scholarship
Charles Royce Merit Scholarship
Charlotte Chen Scholarship
Claire L. Helsing Scholarship
Crane Scholarship
Croaning/Van Dyke Scholarship for Child Development Lab Students
Cross Business Scholarship
Darlene Ryan Goodwin Scholarship
Debbie Klaff Katz Scholarship
Donald and Virginia Miller Scholarship
Doris Bucky Scholarship
Dr. Harry L. Trambert Memorial Scholarship
Dr. John K. Fisher Scholarship
Dr. Lia Mondo Scholarship
Dr. Mary W. Brackett Scholarship
Dream Transfer Scholarship
Dugan Family Scholarship
Eileen Heckart Scholarship
Elizabeth Raymond Ambler Trust Scholarship
Entrepreneurship Scholarship
Fernandez Family Scholarship
Frank C. Lee Memorial Scholarship
Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Vocational Scholarship
GE Capital Scholarship
General Nursing Scholarship

General Scholarships/Golden Promise
Geneva Walsh Scholarship
George C. Turner Memorial Scholarship
Goodnow Scholarship
GOPIO-CT Scholarship
Hammant Memorial Art Scholarship
Harlan and Lois Anderson Family Foundation Scholarship
Harry H. Hefferan, Jr. and Catherine Hefferan Scholarship
Helen C. Whitten Scholarship
Hiranandani Scholarship
Hobart P. and Alice B. Pardee Scholarship
Ilene and Irving G. Calish, Sr. Scholarship
James Bissell Memorial Scholarship
James E. Deaver Memorial Scholarship
James R. McCormack Memorial Scholarship
Jamie Earle Memorial Scholarship
Jane Corbo Scholarship
Jean Svalgard Memorial Women's Scholarship
Joan and Ed Barksdale Scholarship
John and Patricia Rayner Scholarship
John A. Ball Scholarship
John and Catherine Vigilante Scholarship
John and Charlotte Suhler Scholarship
John E. Schmeltzer Memorial Scholarship
John Fiske Boorum Memorial Scholarship
John H. Heher Memorial Scholarship
Joseph I. Shulman Memorial Scholarship
Joseph Karpowich Memorial Scholarship
Josephine Lindenmayer Gierer Scholarship
Jules Lang Scholarship
Karen L. Veitch Memorial Scholarship
Katherine Hall Browne Memorial Scholarship
Katy and Professor John Dolhun Scholarship
Kenton Clarke Scholarship
Lawrence Cavanagh and Eleanor Riemer Dream Transfer Scholarship
Le Bal d'Ecole Scholarship
LEAP Transfer Scholarship
Leon and Fanny Hirsch Scholarship
Leonhardt Scholarship
Lewis R. Mintz Scholarship
Lifetime Learners Institute Scholarship
Mandel Family Scholarship
Marcia Jane Le Moulton Memorial Scholarship
Margaret Jane McAuliffe Scholarship
Marion and Justin Glickson Transfer Scholarship

Mark Hattenbach Memorial Scholarship
Mary Bauer Nursing Scholarship
Matthew LoRusso Scholarship
Maurice Godin Law Scholarship
Max R. and George J. Lepofsky Scholarship
McLean-Kearney Family Scholarship
Michael G. Weyer Scholarship
Michael Wilens and Carolyn Longacre Scholarship
Mickey and Brooke Callanen Scholarship
Molly Scholarship
Morrise Wagner Transfer Scholarship
Nancy Doyle Scholarship
Near and Far Aid Scholarship
Nicholas Trivisonno Scholarship
O'Hara Family Scholarship
Olivia Vlahos Scholarship
Panwy Foundation, Inc. Service Learning Scholarship
Pauline A. Toner Nursing Scholarship
President David Levinson LEAP Transfer Scholarship
Raindancer Foundation Scholarship
Richard and Barbara Whitcomb Foundation Scholarship
Richard T. Hansen Memorial Scholarship
RN to BSN Transfer Scholarship
Robert and Jeannie Kay Armstrong Scholarship
Robert Garland Memorial Scholarship
Rose S. Becker Memorial Scholarship
S.E. Daley Scholarship
Sachiko S. Liebergesell Scholarship
Stacy M. Israel Scholarship
Sylvia Schudy Scholarship
The 460 Foundation Scholarship
The Harrington Family Scholarship
The Jan Malone Scholarship
Thomas G. Norko Scholarship
Toni Anne Laufer Scholarship
UBS Scholarship
Virginia and Malcolm Crawford Scholarship
Wetmore Family Scholarship
William M. Mommaerts Memorial Scholarship
William Pitt Scholarship
Women in Management Scholarship
Workplace Internship Scholarship
Zimmel Family Scholarship

Program Funds

2.8-3.4 Scholarship Coaching
Archeology
Art Department Equipment
Art Department Gallery
AV Equipment
Biology Department
Blanche Kent Archaeology
Building One Community
Career Connections
Career Services
Charlotte Cowie Human Services Memorial Conway
COVID-19 Emergency
Center for Science, Health and Wellness
Culinary Arts Projects
Dr. William H. Schwab Chair in Technology
Early Childhood Education
Entrepreneurship
English as a Second Language
Everett Baker Library Development
Frank and Anne Cary for Student Success
Grove Ely Single Parent Emergency
IT Equipment
Japanese Studies
Library
Harlan and Lois Anderson Family Foundation Technology and Innovation
Lumina String Quartet Residency
Nursing/Allied Health
Nursing Emergency
Path 2.0
Physical Therapy
REAL (Reaching Excellent Academic Levels)
SoNo Collection Retail Certificate
Student Emergency
Student Success
Summer Bridge Math Intensive
The Food Pantry @NCC
Theodore J. Nussbaum Mentoring
Veterinary Technology

Coaching Makes a Difference for Students

The NCC Foundation is proud to award scholarships to hundreds of NCC students every year. Money alone, however, is not the only determining factor in student success. The student-to-advisor ratio in Connecticut's community colleges has been estimated at 900:1. For 65% of our students, neither parent completed a bachelor's degree, and nearly 45% of students are the first in their family to attend college. For these students, there is no one at home to advise them as they make consequential decisions such as choosing their major, which classes to take, or the best steps to pursue a potential career.

The NCC Foundation has addressed this by establishing coaching programs for scholarship students where a master's degree level success coach delivers individualized guidance in the areas of academic advising, study skills, and career planning. For personal issues, success coaches are able to provide referrals to integrated services on campus. Coached students are graduating from NCC at higher rates than non-coached students, which has prompted the Foundation to continue to expand coaching services for scholarship students. Students who have received coaching regularly affirm the value it brings to their educational experience in feedback surveys.

“Coaching has been extremely helpful. I was going through a hard time in my personal life, and if it wasn't for my coach, I would have dropped two classes. Our personal and mental health really impacts our performance in school. I think highly about this program and my coach.”

— NCC Foundation Scholarship Recipient



Pracyla Titus
NCC Student Retention Specialist and Success Coach

Pracyla Titus, a Student Retention Specialist in NCC's Student Success Center, served as a coach in one of the first Foundation coaching programs. She has seen the full reality of the student experience. Students struggle with academic challenges, course loads, and sometimes need to tackle academic remedial programs.

Yet, that is only the beginning. “More often it's outside stuff that trickles down into their academic experience and really interrupts their ability to succeed for the semester,” Pracyla says. “It can be anything from having to work 60 hours a week, to mental health issues, or anxiety and depression. I see our students not understanding their purpose in life and trying to figure out what choices to make. They have to make decisions about their majors or career plans, and they feel pressure when they do not understand how to make those decisions.”

Pracyla sees her role not as the decision maker in these cases, but as a steady source of support. “I'm a tugboat tugging along with you,” is how she describes her approach. “I try to remain consistent with students, let them feel that I am here. Consistency over time builds trust. It's really about empowering students to advocate for themselves.”

Even for high-achieving scholarship students, this is critical when crises emerge for students, and they risk putting their education on hold. “Money alone does not keep students in school, because whatever is going on in their life, if they feel like they can't see their way out of it, those issues will impact their academic performance,” Pracyla says. When students

express concerns about dropping out of school, “I stay with them,” Pracyla says. “I'm never going to say, that's a terrible idea. I want to hear, what are the pros and cons of this decision? I'm here to support you. I can't make a student stay, but I can have the conversation with them, and help them see what the benefits of completing their degree are.”

Joshua Cam
NCC Graduate, Class of 2019

Joshua Cam participated in the NCC Foundation's coaching program and successfully graduated from NCC last year. He transferred to Southern Connecticut University to pursue a bachelor's degree, and cites the value of the coaching program.

“Coaching definitely made a difference when I was at NCC. I was relieved to have someone to speak to, especially towards my business endeavors as well as academics. Because it's like, where else could I find that? Maybe there are mentors off campus, but I was a full-time student, on campus the entire day. I appreciated having the chance to discuss how I was doing with academics or my career.”

Coaching and academic advising are proven strategies to provide students with the support they need to stay in school and graduate from NCC. By investing in students through a coaching program, the Foundation's goal is to offer more students the individualized support they need to be successful in their studies and future careers.



NCC Foundation Builds Community Partnerships

Collaborating with organizations whose missions and work aligns with the NCC Foundation's core focus on student success has enabled our programs at the college to grow and thrive. The grants awarded by the businesses and community foundations below are vital to the work we do. We are grateful for their commitment to supporting students at NCC.

\$60,000 from **Tudor Foundation** to support the operations of the NCC Foundation. By granting unrestricted dollars, Tudor Foundation affirmed the NCC Foundation's stewardship to direct the funds to the areas of greatest need. Their gift directly impacted NCC students and paved a path for greater success for our scholarship coaching and academic support programs such as the Summer Bridge Intensive Math Program. With so many unexpected changes this year, flexible funding from the Tudor Foundation proved more critical than ever.

\$55,000 from **Fairfield County's Community Foundation (FCCF)** to support our responsive COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund, Summer Bridge Intensive Math Program, and the Coaching Program. FCCF is a longtime, dedicated supporter of the NCC Foundation. Its funding has allowed us to pilot and grow exemplary programs like the remedial Summer Bridge Intensive Math Program, and allows its continued commitment to community college students in Fairfield County affirms the lasting impact of higher education, and the vital role of NCC and its Foundation. FCCF's COVID-19 Resiliency Fund also provided valuable assistance in the spring to NCC's students who were disproportionately hit by the impact of the pandemic with job loss, caregiving responsibilities, and technology challenges associated with online learning and the closure of NCC's computer lab.

\$50,000 from the **Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation** to support scholarships. The DeLuca Foundation's mission to provide youth and adults the tools to achieve independence and self-sufficiency is exemplified by its longstanding support for the NCC Foundation, with funds dedicated to student scholarships. One recipient of a DeLuca Foundation Scholarship this year told us, “I don't know how I would've been able to continue paying for school without this. This scholarship is a life saver for me, and I am

more than grateful to have received it, thank you so much. I'm going to keep studying hard to become a respiratory therapist.”

\$50,000 from **Brookfield Properties** to run the SoNo Collection Retail Certificate Program. A multi-year commitment with an emphasis on recruitment in the South Norwalk community, this program trains entry-level sales and service associates in learning valuable skills related to front-line work in retail.

\$30,000 from **Everett Bulkley Trust** to support the operations of the NCC Foundation. This year marked 30 years of consecutive support from the Everett Bulkley Trust. We are honored to celebrate this incredible milestone. Over the years countless lives have been transformed thanks to the Everett Bulkley Trust's enduring commitment to students at NCC.

\$20,000 from **Pitney Bowes** for the Summer Bridge Intensive Math Program. Pitney Bowes and the Pitney Bowes Foundation have supported NCC's education and workforce training initiatives for more than three decades.

\$20,000 from **First Niagara Bank Foundation** for the Reaching Excellent Academic Levels (REAL) Program. The REAL Program increases student engagement, retention, and graduation rates for underrepresented students that are transitioning from high school to college. With its focus on mentorship, First Niagara has supported REAL since the program began in 2015.

\$15,000 from **Wells Fargo** for the Foundation's COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund. When NCC's campus closed in March, vulnerable students were cut off from vital services such as the computer lab, food pantry, counselors, coaches, advisors, and tutors. Aid provided through the NCC Foundation's Student Emergency Fund kept students connected to NCC and continuing their studies while the campus remained closed and classes moved online. Wells Fargo quickly stepped in during this unprecedented time to offer its support.

\$10,000 from **First County Bank Foundation** for the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. A true neighbor to the college in every sense (there is a branch down the road from our campus), this is the 15th consecutive year First County Bank Foundation has

awarded money to the ESL program. Thanks to its commitment over the years, NCC has been able to build a special learning lab, as well as provide dedicated instruction and resources that made the NCC ESL Center a launching pad for student success. Every year, ESL students are able to transition to college credit courses, and after graduating, some students have gone on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees.

\$9,000 from **Near & Far Aid** for NCC student scholarships. Near & Far Aid works to eliminate poverty in Fairfield County by funding programs that seek to achieve lasting change.

\$5,500 from **New Canaan Community Foundation** to support the Summer Bridge Intensive Math Program and provide student scholarships through the Sapienza Block Grant.

\$5,000 from **People's United Community Foundation** to support the Summer Bridge Intensive Math Program. People's United is a long-time supporter of the Foundation, and has contributed to Summer Bridge since 2016.

In-Kind Spotlight

In addition to financial support, organizations offered in-kind gifts to support students. **Pitney Bowes** employees ran a special workshop for students, and in the spring semester, its IT Depot Team in Shelton sprang to action, readying 100 used and reimaged laptops and power cords for donation to help students in need of a computer to complete their spring semester online. **GE Foundation**, another long time supporter, rallied with 50 computers within days of our announcement that we were starting a laptop fund for students in response to the closure of the computer lab at NCC.



NCC's Dean of Student Affairs Kellie Byrd Danso, Ed.D. (right) distributes donated laptops to students.

2019-2020: A Year of Giving

Every Gift Makes an Impact on Student Success

The work of the NCC Foundation would not be possible without you, our generous and loyal supporters. Your contributions impacted the lives of hundreds of students, and we are grateful for your commitment to NCC.

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Bridgewater Scholars Share the Secret of Success

The women of Bridgewater Associates want to share their success with high-achieving NCC women interested in business. In an innovative pilot program designed to build professional skills in a group mentoring setting, **Bridgewater Scholars** successfully completed a spring program designed to provide role models and skill building for women at NCC. The five-part workshop series focused on the fields of business, finance, and related programs of study with 16 women from Bridgewater Associates. With workshops targeting key business skills identified as areas of need by NCC women and coaches, small groups of women met at NCC, at Bridgewater, and via Zoom (beginning in March) with a hands-on experiential program designed to build networking skills, interviewing skills, and culminate in the delivery of a personal "elevator speech" designed to build self-confidence and advocacy.

One memorabilia workshop featured participants in a Zoom call making "small talk" before an interview. Another featured tough questions asked in an interview. Role-playing with humor, wit, and vulnerability were mainstays. A highlight was a role-play of challenging job interview scenarios, where each NCC student had to quickly articulate eloquent answers to best position themselves before the interviewer. Throughout the role-play, they were being observed by the rest of the group, who subsequently provided constructive criticism. In feedback, the NCC students recounted that this experience allowed them to gain personal confidence and improve their professional communication skills.

At the conclusion of the workshop series, one of the nine NCC scholar participants said they had achieved their most valued objectives. "We all have reached the main goal of the mentorship program: to improve business confidence and



Bridgewater Associates employees and NCC students first gathered at both the NCC and Bridgewater Associates campuses (above), and later continued their meetings on Zoom (below).

develop networking skills," Tatsiana Petushok said. "Each workshop gave us unique information about the business environment and guidelines for professional and casual communication at networking events."

The NCC Foundation is proud to offer to our students unique advising models such as the Bridgewater Scholars Program that provide the guidance and support that are essential factors for student success.

The Foundation is grateful to Julie Johnson, NCC Foundation's Board Director, for Rick Woolworth, founder and President of Telemachus, and especially the Bridgewater women for volunteering their time and experience to support our NCC students. We hope to use this model to bring to other corporate groups to support NCC students who could use the benefit of a professional and life "coach" to guide them through their professional development.

If you are interested in bringing a mentorship program to your company, please reach out to the NCC Foundation at nccfoundation@norwalk.edu.



Andersons Leave a Legacy at NCC with a \$1.5 Million Gift

Former Board of Director Harlan Anderson left a philanthropic legacy throughout Fairfield County and beyond. Anderson was a strong believer in education and his generous support for Norwalk Community College programs and students demonstrated this commitment. His life was forever changed as a result of his own education, and he was dedicated to providing that opportunity to others.

Following Harlan Anderson's death in January 2019 and Lois Anderson's death in May 2017, their daughter, Sue Anderson, reached out to the NCC Foundation to discuss a major gift in the areas that were most important to her parents. Focusing on technology, the nursing program at NCC, and reducing obstacles to student success, the generous \$1.5 million dollar gift to the NCC Foundation was invested in major programs that were close to Harlan and Lois Anderson's hearts.

The award was designated as follows:

\$1,000,000 dedicated to Technology and Innovation. The Foundation plans to improve educational opportunities for students in technology, computer science, and digital enterprises by expanding the current Makerspace to create "Innovation Hubs" to promote digital fabrication and media skills, as well as enhance student collaboration. The Makerspace will be renamed **The Harlan E. and Lois J. Anderson Center for Technology and Innovation**.

\$250,000 dedicated to a new Infant Care Center at NCC in The Child Development Lab School (CDLS). The current facilities at the CDLS will be expanded to add an infant care center to accommodate infants in a licensed learning environment. The expanded facility will be named **The Harlan E. and Lois J. Anderson Infant Care Center**.

\$250,000 to upgrade the Center for Science, Health and Wellness Simulation Laboratory.



Harlan and Lois Anderson in 2007 in the Everett I. L. Baker Library at NCC

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Late Charles Trantanella, Jr.'s Legacy Honored with Renewal of Named Scholarship

Professor Charles J. Trantanella, Jr. served for 21 years as chairman of the Accounting Program at NCC. He was a teacher and mentor to many students who went on to pursue their studies and eventually become certified public accountants. While it has been a number of years since his father's passing, to this day Charlie Trantanella, Professor Trantanella's son, continues to receive messages from NCC students. Charlie says, "I still hear from my dad's former students who tell me how much they enjoyed his classes, and how he inspired them to pursue opportunities in business."

For years, Charlie and his wife Valerie talked about how one day they might add to the scholarship fund that had been set up in Professor Trantanella's name, so that his father's legacy could continue to help NCC students with their education.

"This year finally became that 'one day,'" Charlie explains. "We are so happy to support NCC through the Charles J. Trantanella, Jr. Memorial Scholarship, and to the newest recipient of the scholarship, Luis Quesada. Congratulations Luis on an outstanding academic career at NCC, and we wish you the best as you continue your education!"

Luis graduated cum laude from NCC in spring of 2020, and is now pursuing a bachelor's degree in accounting at UConn School of Business. Professor Trantanella's scholarship will continue to be awarded annually to the Accounting graduate of NCC with the highest GPA who plans to continue their studies towards a bachelor's degree.

"My father loved Norwalk Community College," Charlie says.

"He loved teaching, he loved his students, and he so believed in the educational mission of the school."



Charlie Trantanella (left), then a college student himself, with his father, Professor Charles Trantanella, Jr. (right), in the fall of 1985



Professor Trantanella in the early 1980s in front of his car, with the license plate reading "Prof T"

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The Legacy Society

Leaving a Lasting Impact on Student Success

The Legacy Society has been established to honor and recognize those who have made a commitment to the Foundation through their estate plan. Participation is through a variety of vehicles, including bequests in wills or designation of the NCC Foundation as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, retirement fund, or charitable trust. Our Legacy Society members' vision and generosity exemplify a dedication to student success.

If you have already included the NCC Foundation in your estate plans, we sincerely thank you. Please consider notifying us so that we can acknowledge your generosity as a Legacy Society Member (if desired, your anonymity will be preserved).

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Legacy Donor Spotlight: Isabel Cristina Graca

For Isabel Cristina Graca, the decision to become a legacy donor to NCC Foundation grew out of her own American story. "Education is the first step," she explains. "You need that first, and everything else comes after."

Originally from Brazil, Isabel studied law in her home country and worked there for a number of years before deciding to emigrate to the U.S. After she settled in Norwalk, she eventually felt compelled to continue her education.

"I always say, life can be very tough sometimes, but people can never take away your education," Isabel explains.

Starting in NCC's ESL department, she moved on to college-level courses, and in 2010, completed a legal assistant associate degree. "I was so, so proud on graduation day," Isabel says. "This was my dream, and I had achieved my goal. It's not easy you know, doing a degree in a second language, but I had done it."

Recently, when she began to consider her legacy, Isabel immediately recalled her time at NCC. She decided that through a named scholarship, she would enable future generations to follow in her footsteps. "Getting a college education in America is not easy," Isabel says, citing the high cost and debt that students face as obstacles to enrolling. "But I really want students to be able to choose the major that is right for them, so they can pursue a career path and a rewarding life."

In Memoriam: Lea Mintz

In April this year, the NCC community lost a tireless advocate of the college, Lenore “Lea” Mintz. A Lifetime Director of the NCC Foundation, Lea steered the growth of the college for more than 60 years, and was a dedicated and passionate voice on the NCC Foundation Board of Directors. She has forever left her mark on higher education in Fairfield County, and our community will miss her dearly.

In 1965, Lea became a founding member of the Friends of Norwalk Community College, which later became the Norwalk Community College Foundation. She always liked to joke that NCC was her “fourth child,” and she was involved in the development of the College since its inception in 1961. Always passionate to share her beloved college with everyone in her community, Lea created NCC@Meadow Ridge when she moved to the senior living community Meadow Ridge. The unofficial annex is an educational program with a series of courses taught by NCC faculty for residents. The program was extremely successful, and a major source of pride for Lea.

Lea was dedicated to the mission of the NCC Foundation to promote affordable and accessible college education for all members of the community. She endowed two scholarships at Norwalk Community College—one in honor of her late husband, the Lewis R. Mintz Scholarship Fund, and one for high-achieving female business majors, the Women in Management Scholarship Fund. Lea was a member of the NCC Foundation Legacy Society, and was an outspoken advocate of the importance of the NCC Foundation.

In a profile for the 2018 annual report, Lea reflected on her legacy at NCC. “I am proud to have played a role in bringing this wonderful community college resource to the greater Norwalk community,” she said. For ambitious men and women who face challenges on their path to success and productivity, NCC helps to further the goal of achieving higher education. I am grateful to the NCC Foundation for advancing innovative and high-quality opportunities for students.”



“Lea served tirelessly on behalf of the College and dedicated herself to the mission of the NCC Foundation. Lea’s brilliance will continue to light the world even though she is no longer among the living. We will continue to carry out her legacy at NCC.”

— Dr. Susan G. Weinberger, NCC Foundation Board Vice President and long-time friend of Lea Mintz

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Photography:

Madeline Barillo: pp. 2, 14 (lower right), 15 (middle left), 17 (bottom)

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Trevor Stonefield: pp. 3, 6, 8 (top), 13 (top), 15 (top; bottom right), 17 (top), 21, 24 (bottom), 31

Cynthia Zaref: p. 32

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