Franklin County Alums Gather
First annual meeting a good time for all

JOIN THE GCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
- Find old friends from your GCC days.
- Connect with GCC alumni in your new hometown.
- Network to enhance your career.
- Sign up for AlumNet, a social networking site for GCC alumni.
www.gcc.mass.edu/alumni
CHECK IT OUT!

It's Easy to be GREEN
As part of our urgent effort to help sustain the health of the planet, Greenfield Community College has been going green in terms of increasingly popular course offerings on sustainable and renewable energy and in helping to diminish the use of paper in favor of using email.

To this end, we are asking readers of The Catalyst to give us their opinion on how they would prefer to receive the newsletter—either in print by mail, or as an email.

It is worth noting that through email The Catalyst will be able to offer much more up-to-the-date information and useful links to readers.

Please let us know your preference by sending an email to Andrea Carlin at carlinan@gcc.mass.edu or writing to her: GCC Foundation and Alumni Association, 270 Main Street, Greenfield, Mass. 01301.

One Family, Three GCC Success Stories

It has been decades since Susan and Tom McCarthy and Andrew Thurlow were GCC students, and they work in different fields, but everyday they use what they learned in GCC classrooms in their professional work. Susan has been the Director of the Alcohol and Drug Awareness Project at Mount Holyoke College since 1989. Tom created and is the Director of the Universal Access Program for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Andrew is a partner in Thurlow Small Architecture and a tenured Associate Professor at the Roger Williams University School of Architecture, Art + Historic Preservation. Susan, Tom, and Andrew share more than a GCC education—Susan and Tom met at GCC and have been married since 1980 and Andrew is Susan’s son from her first marriage.

continued inside
Imagine GCC!

Can you believe that John Lennon would have turned 75 this year? Imagine that! Can you also imagine a college with a strong commitment to academic excellence opening its doors not just to the privileged few but to all who seek a better life? Imagine a college in which the lives of its students change for the better every day, and then families grow stronger and so do the community that serves.

Imagine GCC. Now, you may say I’m a dreamer, but because of people like you, I’m not the only one. The truth is that we are not alone in our perceptions about this community’s college. GCC has just completed its Ten Year Accreditation site visit in which a team of peers from around New England spent three days assessing GCC with regards to the NEASC accreditation standards. Here are the 10 strengths cited in assessing GCC with regards to the community’s college.

• They found a college whose faculty, staff and administration are very well connected to students and responsive to their needs.
• They said GCC students demonstrate great pride and appreciation in their education and a college that students say they love.
• They were pleased to discover a college that deployed creativity in mainstreaming a safe, secure teaching and learning environment during ongoing renovations and the construction of its new $13.5 million cow building.
• They recognized a college where data gathered at the institutional level is indicative of strong curricula and programs.
• They reported that GCC is a college whose faculty and staff show a high level of collegiality and community.
• They continued our understanding of GCC as a college that benefits strong internal as well as external community support.
• They applauded the involvement of a Foundation that is successful in raising funds for scholarships for students and resources for the faculty and staff.

What Led Susan, Tom, and Andrew to GCC?

Susan grew up wanting to be a nurse, did well in high school, and was accepted at college but didn’t have the confidence to go. When Andrew was a toddler and Susan was pregnant with their daughter, Jennifer, her marriage ended. Struggling to support her children, Susan was overcome by friends that she needed a college education to be able for her children. She started taking one class a semester at GCC, often bringing her children to class. Supportive professors and advisors encouraged her dreams to become a Registered Nurse. In 1978, Susan received an Associate of Science in Nursing with honors from GCC and then earned her R.N. license. Tom was more focused on his social life than his studies in high school. After graduating, Tom worked as a machinist until he was 27. Deciding he wanted a change, Tom enrolled in GCC’s Art program based on his interest in photography. In addition to photography, he was exposed to painting, drawing and the liberal arts. Tom received an Associates of Science in Art in 1979. When he was a teenager, Andrew knew he wanted to be an architect. As Frontier Regional High School, he took every art class he could and even designed a house of his own. For college, Andrew wanted to attend a professional 5-year Bachelor of Architecture program. Tom and Susan were supportive but couldn’t afford to send him to such a school. Tom encouraged Andrew to study art at GCC and then transfer to an architectural program. Andrew was dubious, not able to imagine that a community college could have a “real” art program. That perspective went out the window on Andrew’s first day of class at GCC. He received an Associate of Science in Art degree in 1980.

Life Lessons Learned at GCC:

• The way I practice my profession as an advanced practice nurse and therapist is guided by the way I was taught to think when a student in the Nursing program at GCC. My life’s work has been about change and possibility. Life can be more than one ever imagined for oneself. That’s what I learned through true and caring mentors at GCC, and that’s what I hope to help my students experience. I am taught that I did not have to make the journey alone, that none of us really do. The great gift of GCC is the opportunity to become the person one was meant to and to help others do the same.”

Tom: “At GCC, people saw in me things I didn’t see in myself. I didn’t have a cousin for moving beyond production work, never had the concept of work in a world of abstract ideas. My professors and counselors at GCC encouraged me and gave me self-confidence to move in ways I never dreamed of. My GCC background gave me a sound education, especially the ability to think. GCC taught me to trust what other people saw in me. In the Universal Access Program, I use my role as exposing people to things they didn’t think they could do, to open possibilities in their lives that they could never have imagined. That’s what GCC did for me, and that’s what I do in my work now.”

Andrew: “When I was a young child going to college with my mother, I remember being fascinated by the building, with moving from an interior to an exterior and back again through the courtyards, and especially with the sharply inked, darkened lecture hall with big projectors/kids. Now, they do. The great gift of GCC is the opportunity to become the person one was meant to be and to help others do the same.”

—Susan McCarthy

Breaking Ground for the New Greenhouse

Thanks to a $393,400 grant from the US Department of Energy earmarked by Congressman Olver, and a supporting gift from Sherry and Don Rice, the college will construct a super-energy efficient 1,000 square foot greenhouse that will include the infrastructure for photosynthetic, solar thermal and geothermal systems, eventually resulting in a zero-net energy building.

Education and Work Beyond GCC:

Susan: Education: A.S. Nursing ’78, Greenfield Community College M.Ed. in Counseling Psychology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1994. Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor. Work: Registered Nurse at Baystate Franklin Medical Center East Sprites and Carbon Detoxification Center, Coordinator of Recovery Recovery Center at Baystate Franklin Medical Center. Alcohol and Drug Specialist at Greenfield Community College, Director of Alcohol and Drug Awareness Project at Mount Holyoke College.

Tom: Education: A.S. ’79, Greenfield Community College Bachelor of Art, Amherst College, 1981 Masters in Landscape Architecture, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1984 Work: Private Practice Landscape Architect, include consulting to Massachusetts State Parks, Director of Universal Access Program, Massachusetts State Parks

Andrew: Education: A.S. ’92, Greenfield Community College Bachelor of Architecture, Syracuse University, 1994 Masters of Science in Advanced Architectural Design, Columbia University School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, 1998 Work: Former in Thistle Small Architecture, Associate Professor at Roger Williams University School of Architecture, Am & Historic Preservation, previously at Vermont, Scott Brown and Associates and Ballinger Architects, Assistant Professor at University of Tennessee College of Architecture + Design.