Energy & Optimism as Students Return to In-Person Classes

Blue skies, green grass, a soft-serve ice cream sundae bar, not to mention excited faculty and staff, welcomed students as they returned to in-person classes this fall.

After a very long 18-months of fully remote learning, exuberance to be together on GCC’s beautiful campus was palpable. “It feels awesome. Remote learning was okay. But I like interacting with people,” fourth semester Computer Science major Roshan Lamichhane declared.

Katie McNeill, on her very first day of studying criminal justice at GCC shared, “Everyone, so far, has been really helpful and nice. My class [today] was extremely intriguing. It’s so nice to be in-person!”

For Mechanical Engineering student Elijah Shersnow, it is his 5th semester at GCC but the first time in-person. “It’s a good thing

A New Chapter at the GCC Foundation

New Executive Director of Institutional Advancement Alexis Page is as passionate as she is qualified to partner with the community to power GCC’s mission to provide a high-quality education to all who seek the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive and to effect positive change in their lives, communities, and the world.

After working side-by-side with retiring Foundation Director Regina Curtis since mid-July, Alexis took the reins on September 1. Alexis came to GCC equipped with a 23-year career in philanthropy, a Master’s degree in mission-driven organizational management, and a creative high-energy approach to fundraising and community building. “I have been so impressed by the collective dedication and passion demonstrated by the GCC community. To me, GCC really walks the talk. We provide life-changing opportunities to
From the President

Inclusiveness is at the Heart of GCC

I am honored to serve this year as interim president for Greenfield Community College. At the heart of GCC, is the value of inclusion. “You belong here!” is a beautiful message that I see on signs all over the College and it is indeed a genuine one. As a newcomer, I am grateful for the warm welcome I have received. A top priority for me is to do my best to continue that same sense of openness, warmth, and belonging every day in the GCC community.

The inclusive spirit of the College could not continue without your support. Thank you! You help GCC continue to serve as a vital anchor to our region and its economy. Together we nurture and educate students who go on to provide the skilled workforce that our region needs during these extraordinary times.

Your support helps GCC provide financial aid to students and services that secure their success, whether starting college directly from high school or entering college after many years away from an academic setting. Donor funding enhances such programs as Peer Tutoring, the student Wellness Center, and the Food Pantry so that traditional students, single parents, veterans, disabled students, unemployed adults, or folks simply wanting a change or enrichment in their lives get the support they need to succeed academically.

I look forward to collaborating with you as we strengthen our region by providing greater opportunity for high-quality college education for all who seek it in Franklin County, the Pioneer Valley, and beyond.

With every good wish,

Rick

Dr. Richard R. Hopper

Recent Events

GCC’s Chief Learning Officer Mary Ellen Fydenkevez (second from left) and friends were among the many teams who helped raise $46,413 on May 24 at the Foundation’s annual “Striving and Driving” golf tournament to support student scholarships.

Dahna Virgilio ’88 and David Knavel enjoy some Northfield Drive-In magic before watching Here Today with Billy Crystal and Tiffany Haddish. It was an all-around fun night with GCC alums, family and friends on June 18.

Rain or shine, GCC staff, faculty, and alums march in the annual kick-off parade, this year on September 9. Alumni Rep. to the GCC Trustees Judith Roberts ’94 and new Foundation Executive Director Alexis Page help spread the word about the College.
YOUR GIFTS AT WORK THIS YEAR

$438,352
in gifts to College programs funded vital initiatives such as:

Emergency grants to students for necessities like childcare, heat, groceries, and rent so they could stay in school during the pandemic

Health Sciences programs which open doors for much-needed medical professionals in our regional workforce.

$281,060
in scholarships made it possible for

248
students to pursue their educations and chart their futures.

$285,182
in gifts to the Annual Fund went towards the College’s ongoing operations and highest priorities. These gifts help GCC remain focused on the continuing improvement of our program delivery and student success initiatives.

$401,360
in new donations for our endowment fund are an investment in future generations of GCC students and the long-term financial health of the College.
Samira Haddad ’16 just passed the Indiana bar exam and was sworn in October 1 to become a full-fledged public defense attorney in Marion County, Indiana. A recipient of several donor-funded scholarships during her time at GCC, Samira says, “I’m not sure I would be becoming a public defender if I hadn’t gone to GCC.”

Studying at GCC gave Samira the opportunity to get to know people from diverse backgrounds, many of whom had overcome huge obstacles before returning to school to better their lives. Without my experience studying at GCC, Samira says, “I don’t think I’d have such a good understanding of the challenges people face and the ways in which they can overcome those challenges.” Samira is grateful for her chance to learn alongside students from all walks of life, such as veterans, single parents, and those returning to college in their 30’s and 40’s.

At GCC, Samira learned how much she loved sociology and went on to major in the field at Smith College where she obtained her bachelor’s degree. Unencumbered by burdensome student loan debt, thanks in part to scholarships she received while at GCC, Samira was able to go directly to law school at Indiana University Maurer School of Law after graduating from Smith. Upon successful completion of law school, she began a graduate legal internship at the Marion County Public Defender Agency this summer while she also studied for the bar exam.

Samira’s desire to be a lawyer stems from her passion to make sure people get the justice they deserve, regardless of social status and wealth. As a public defender, she wants to prevent wrongful convictions and to represent people in court who cannot afford their own lawyers.

Samira encourages people to keep investing in GCC students like herself, “I think that investing in education is one of the most important things we can do as a society, in particular investing in a community college. When you donate to GCC, you’re helping many students who don’t have extra money to go to college. You’re making an investment in people who really want to get an education.” Your gifts help students like Samira go on to careers devoted to making our society more just and equitable.
During a time when our local region is facing significant workforce shortages, GCC is reaffirming our commitment to workforce development and training. Taking the baton from past president Yves Salomon-Fernández, interim president Rick Hopper continues to power innovation through the College’s workforce education program—and hopes that these efforts will help revitalize our local economy.

What is Workforce Development? “For folks who don’t want degrees or it’s just not the right time in their life, Workforce Development can provide students of all ages with short, relevant training to make them vital employees,” explains Kristin Cole, director of Workforce Training Programs at GCC.

Through collaboration with many regional organizations, GCC offers training in a range of skills to prepare students for such relatively high-wage earning jobs such as digital manufacturing. “Today’s manufacturing is not what it was twenty years ago. It’s clean, high tech and fun,” a video embedded in GCC’s website points out. Other training courses are in areas as crucial to our region’s well-being such as CNA certification (Certified Nursing Assistant); classes in widely-used software such as Microsoft Word and Excel; and a new pilot program with the FRCOG (Franklin Regional Council of Governments) for the course “Fundamentals of Municipal Accounting” to train future town employees.

Signifying that this is a major priority area for the College, GCC recently aligned Workforce Development under the overall leadership of Dean of Social Sciences and Professional Studies, Chet Jordan. The goal is that non-credit and workforce-training students will feel as much a part of the College as students who are pursuing academic degrees. About Chet, Kristin says, “He really understands that workforce or non-credit learners are just starting or re-starting their educational journeys. They rely on programs like this to access critical training and advance their careers. He’s really committed to helping them all on their pathways.”

GCC Equips Our Regional Workforce with Your Support

Director of Workforce Training Programs since April 2020, Kristin Cole has learned that “community colleges can be nimble, responsive and hyper local to focus on training for jobs available right now in our community.”
Motivated by the high-quality of her nephew’s GCC education, this surgeon became a passionate donor, campaigner and board member advantage this student support network was, compared to going to a larger college where he might have been in an auditorium with 200 other students acting more in competition with each other rather than supporting each other.

Mario transferred to UMass Amherst from GCC and finished his engineering degree in 2019. His GCC experience gave him a financial as well as an academic advantage. He’s now working as a mechanical engineer in the area.

My husband, Edward Lichocki, and I became donors to GCC because we were so grateful for what the College did for our nephew. We wanted to provide the same opportunity to other students and started a scholarship for other engineering students.

It was honored and humbled when I was asked to be on the GCC Foundation Board of Directors. I’ve learned a lot and I hope I can continue to provide some insight and value with my experience.

I agreed to be a campaigner and to reach out to ask for donations during the spring GCC annual fund drive because the College really changes lives. Right now my son, a junior in high school, is taking a business class at GCC, earning college credit and seeing if this field is what he wants to pursue. GCC is a place where people are allowed to dream and to realize that they can make some of those dreams come true.

Dr. Rambissoon and her nephew Mario ’17 at a GCC Alum Association “Parade of Lights” event in December, 2019.

My husband Edward Lichocki and I became donors to GCC because we were so grateful for what the College did for our nephew. We wanted to provide the same opportunity to other students.

I was grateful for what the College did for my nephew.
Your generous gifts help support GCC’s mission to provide a high-quality education to all who seek the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive and effect positive change in their lives, communities, and the world. Few things impact GCC’s ability to remain responsive to the needs of our students more than your generous support.

- Donate online at gcc.mass.edu/give
- Send a check in the enclosed envelope to: GCC Foundation
  One College Drive • Greenfield • MA 01301

Learn more: gcc.mass.edu/foundation
Contact us at:
foundation@gcc.mass.edu
413-775-1600

Ways to Give

Join the Alumni Association!
Membership is FREE!

All are invited—whether you got a degree or just took a class at GCC.

The College is proud of its more than 30,000 alumni. We encourage you to celebrate your time as a GCC student and stay connected as an alum. Enjoy the many benefits of joining the GCC Alumni Association: networking opportunities, invitations to live and virtual alumni engagement and College events, access to GCC’s Career Services, and use of the GCC Fitness Center and Library. We welcome your involvement at any level!

Join now at gcc.mass.edu/alumni
Follow us on Facebook @ facebook.com/GreenfieldCCAlums
GCC gave Camillo a Second Chance and He Ran with It

Now an MBA from the prestigious UMass Isenberg School of Management and a Senior Program Officer at entrepreneurship nonprofit VentureWell, Camillo enrolled at GCC in 2007 at age 25 not at all sure about his future. He remembers, “I came to GCC as a student who had failed out of UMass 7 years earlier. GCC gave me everything that I needed to refocus. I did really well academically and finished my 2-year degree but then UMass didn’t want me. Two of my GCC professors wrote me amazing letters of support and they convinced UMass to take me back. I went on to get a bachelor’s degree in finance and operations and eventually my MBA as well.”

Camillo is a Grinspoon Entrepreneurial Initiative 2021 nominee and founder of Beeso (makers of the “Beeso Box,” formerly BizzyBox). He wants to “help kids realize how capable they are.” When his daughter Raisa was seven, she came home with a Scholastic book order that totaled $64. “I said alright, I’ll make you a deal. If you can earn half the money, I’ll give you the other half.” Raisa’s whole face fell. How was she going to earn $32 in less than 10 days?

A UMass MBA student at the time, Camillo replied, “Let’s talk about your capabilities and your resources” and Beeso was born. Raisa realized she was able to make greeting cards to sell. When you purchase a “Beeso Box,” you get an online course for kids developed from all the consulting lessons Camillo gave Raisa and you get enough materials to make cards.

Camillo is giving back to kids what he got from GCC—empowerment to build and invest in their futures.