Affording Education is Hard. You make it easier.

On May 1, the GCC Foundation held its annual Scholarship Awards Ceremony, honoring the dedication of our students and the generosity of our donors. 127 scholarships were awarded, totaling more than $190,000. Another $100,000 in scholarships will be provided in the fall.

Scholarship funds are supported by donations, large and small, from community members like you. Each student who applies has a unique story, but their obstacles are often the same: affording tuition; balancing work, school and family needs; and finding practical support to change their lives. Through scholarships, you are there for them with the resources they need.

Hailee Galandak-Cochran

Hailee graduated from high school with a commitment to learning, but without the ability to afford college. She pursued her interests in volunteerism, sustainable food systems and community development, eventually founding Friends for Change, a trauma-informed after-school youth club, in her home community of Bellows Falls, VT, when the Boys and Girls Club closed their doors. She also found her way to GCC.

“Last year I received two scholarships that made it possible for me to succeed as a full-time student. The GCC community is so affirming. It makes you want to get out of bed and come to campus even on cold mornings. You know you are going to feel warm when you get here. Being acknowledged and receiving support at the Scholarship Awards Ceremony was like super sweet icing on the cake.”

This scholarship support has allowed Hailee to attend GCC full time while leading Friends for Change and pursuing other volunteer projects. She is a 4.0 student who has consistently made the President’s List and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. Her Environmental Science major is a strong foundation for a future career combining ecosystem science and community development.

Aimee Furaha Salmon

Aimee arrived at GCC in 2017 as a working mom and an immigrant from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She involved herself deeply in the life of the campus, from teaching Zumba classes on campus, to passionately advocating for support for immigrant students, to serving as the student representative to the GCC Foundation Board. A recipient of multiple scholarship awards, Aimee will earn her Associate in Health Science degree this spring, and she has been accepted to Mount Holyoke as a Frances Perkins Scholar.

“I’m so happy to be attending Mount Holyoke, but it will be hard to leave GCC. I’ve received so much support here, especially as an immigrant and a mother. It is such a student-focused environment. I don’t know how many other schools are really like this. I’m grateful for all the support I have received.”

Looking ahead, Aimee hopes to combine her interests in psychology, fitness and business to support her plan to open a fitness studio that is accessible to people living with disabilities. In the long-term, she intends to return to the Democratic Republic of Congo to open a nonprofit organization that will provide mental health services for people of color.

Give Online
www.gcc.mass.edu/give

When you donate to the GCC Foundation, you support students like Hailee and Aimee to transform their passions into gifts that serve the world. Thank you!
From the President

GCC President
Yves Salomon-Fernández, Ph.D.

GCC is the place where the present meets the future!

This is an exciting time to be in higher education. GCC’s young students have a strong sense of the world in which they want to live—and they want to shape the future. Many are forging their own paths, taking non-linear pathways to degrees while exploring the world, their communities and different jobs. Our experienced, adult students are figuring out their place in a changing world of work. GCC is the place where the present meets the future!

With the insights and varied lived experiences of our diverse student body pointing the way, GCC is beginning to imagine what transdisciplinary learning in the mid-21st century and in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution looks like. Building on GCC’s excellence, we are aiming to foster an even more inclusive campus where all students can achieve at equitably high levels.

This spring I have the privilege of being installed as the College’s 10th president. Inauguration is an important ceremonial start to our new chapter of renewed energy and inspiration. I’m glad to be here with you to celebrate turning a new page of the GCC story.

In this spirit, the GCC Foundation established the Salomon-Fernández Inauguration Scholarship Fund. Our college allows so many students to discover their unique gifts and fulfill their potential beyond campus. You’ll find some of their stories in this issue of The Catalyst. I hope they will inspire you to extend the opportunity to pursue education to even more students by donating to the inauguration scholarship fund at www.gcc.mass.edu/give. Thank you.

I am excited for us to come together, harness our strengths, and build on our legacy of excellence to imagine a future that is even brighter!

Yves Salomon-Fernández, Ph.D.
President, Greenfield Community College

Donor Voices: Nancy Fournier

“I come from a GCC family. My husband taught at GCC in the 1980’s, my father-in-law and mother-in-law both were involved with GCC, and my son attended GCC. My husband and I both care very deeply for what the College offers our community, and we’ve made the Foundation a priority in our annual charitable giving.

While completing two years of college at GCC, I received pivotal guidance from Al Rainford, who was then teaching accounting and taxation. Because of his help and direction, I went on to get my CPA license and become a shareholder at Melanson Heath, a regional accounting firm. Now that I am successful in my career, I love giving back to GCC. I can help students achieve their goals and hope that one day they will be in a position to give back to GCC like I do.

I am very proud of my six years as Treasurer of the GCC Foundation and using my skills as a CPA to support their financial operations and reporting. One of my favorite things has been attending the Scholarship Awards ceremony. The donors and sponsors speak about the achievements, goals and futures of the GCC students. I really see the impact of the money we raise for scholarships and college programs. I love this school and will always be involved in supporting the GCC Foundation.”

Nancy Fournier, CPA, recently stepped down after 6 years as a Board Member and Treasurer of the GCC Foundation. We thank her for her dedicated service!
Finding Her Focus: GCC Alum Martha Phelps '85

Sometimes high school doesn’t go according to plan. Thanks to you, GCC is here. With the right support and time to grow, students like Martha become unstoppable GCC Alums.

In 1983, Martha Phelps was graduating from a local boarding school, but she didn’t have the focus or the funds for a four-year college right away. Instead, Martha chose GCC as a way to gain that focus and prepare for her eventual future at a four-year school.

“It was the right choice,” she says, “and Rob Yacubian [GCC’s Transfer Coordinator] was absolutely essential in helping me develop my path. He’s an amazing person who understood what I needed to do to make the right decisions.”

Martha says GCC was the bridge she needed between high school and a four-year college. In 1985, she transferred to Smith College. “I was far more prepared than I would’ve been, and I couldn’t have done it at all without GCC and Rob.”

Martha earned a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Smith (1987), and after an initial career in book publishing, then earned a J.D. from Boston College Law School and moved to Seattle to work as legal counsel to the Books team at Amazon.

Today, Martha practices in the Technology Transactions group at Davis Wright Tremaine LLP in Seattle, where she lives with her family. “I love working with consumer-facing businesses and helping innovative companies develop new products and revenue streams,” she says.

The confidence Martha found at GCC helped her speed to the top of her field and make that confidence a family legacy; her daughter Anne now attends Smith College as well.

Martha understands the value of giving back. Her donations to the GCC Foundation, along with yours, make sure that other students have a place to find their focus and succeed. And one of the best outcomes of Martha’s time at GCC? She is still in touch with her advisor and friend, Rob Yacubian.

SAGE Education Center: Your Support Helps Grow a Greener Community

Did you know that some of the greenest conversations in Franklin County are happening here at GCC? At the SAGE (Sustainable Agriculture and Green Energy) Education Center, the study of Farm and Food Systems meets the study of Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency.

SAGE students study green building and landscape design; sustainable agriculture, permaculture and food systems; and energy efficiency and renewable energy. They intern with farms, business owners and nonprofits for hands-on learning experiences.

Through Workforce Development, SAGE also provides professional development to entrepreneurs, seasoned farmers, energy innovators and anyone who wants to become a more active participant in food and energy decision-making in our region.

Sustainability is not just a set of classes taught at GCC. It’s how the College strives to live on the campus and how our buildings and landscapes perform and grow. SAGE students participate in on-campus permaculture projects like water catchment, composting, soil conservation and growing food in the greenhouse and the outdoor garden.

Key components of SAGE—like our near zero net energy greenhouse, the permaculture garden, the Outdoor Learning Laboratory and scholarships for SAGE students—have all been made possible through donor generosity. It is you and our wider community who keep us innovating for a truly sustainable future for all. Thank you!

Your gift to the GCC Foundation can help support GCC programs like SAGE that offer unique learning experiences and benefit our local community and economy.

Make a Gift, Make a Difference » www.gcc.mass.edu/give
The GCC Foundation’s 2019 Annual Campaign has an exciting goal of raising $1 million by June 30. Your campaign gift will help provide access to an affordable education. Please donate today, and be a catalyst for change. Thank you!

Ways to Give
- Donate online at www.gcc.mass.edu/give
- Send a check to the GCC Foundation
  270 Main Street, Greenfield, MA 01301
- Contact us at 413-775-1600

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Did you attend GCC? Membership is free!
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