“Start today!”
Doug Bialecki ’79 appreciates Professor Art Hannan for inspiration

He recounts seeing Art running all the time and one day telling him that he wanted to start running every day in the future. Art was quick to reply - "start today!" Doug eventually did just that, and has been a committed every-day runner for more than 34 years.

"It wasn't just the running," Bialecki said. "When I think about committing to something, I often think of Art pointing his finger at me and saying 'start today.' Remembering him telling me that has benefited me immensely."

Like so many who have walked through GCC’s doors, Doug was a first-generation student and first in his family to attend college (his younger brother, Dave, also attended GCC and is an accountant in Orange). While attending Frontier Regional High School, Doug had selected Sport/Broadcast Journalism in a career planning assignment and had hoped to go to college in Boston to achieve that goal. But, like so many, he found the price tag of a private college beyond his reach and enrolled closer to home as a Business major at the very-affordable Greenfield Community College.

"In my third semester at GCC, I took a TV production class with Bob Tracey and I thought who am I kidding?" he said. "I knew this is what I wanted to do." He completed his Business Degree in 1979, with additional media courses.

Doug did make it to Boston, transferring to Emerson College as a Mass Communications major, thanks to outstanding guidance from GCC Transfer Advisor Rob Yacubian. He noted that Rob handled a lot of his ups and downs and was instrumental in his success.

"Rob is one of the finest human beings I have ever met. He was great, one of my favorite people of all time," he declared.

Doug Bialecki (r) with daughter Sarah (l)

(continued on page 4)
From the President: Integration at GCC

For too long, the debate about the purpose of an education has been binary. On the one hand many argue that the purpose and meaning of a college degree should be vocational. They speak of the need for a trained workforce for economic purposes, with the learning outcomes and curriculum focused on the skills necessary for success in a specific field or industry. Others talk about our democracy’s dependence on an educated electorate with learning objectives that are liberal arts based.

GCC faculty have long understood the need for both and are passionately committed to the comprehensive mission of GCC. We believe that the skills needed for an educated workforce and the knowledge needed for an educated electorate should be increasingly integrated and overlap.

In April 2016, Greenfield Community College (GCC) conducted a survey to learn more about the skills, knowledge areas, and college learning experiences that local employers value in their recent hires. The College wanted to gain a better understanding of how its curriculum and learning outcomes are aligned with student and employer need. The survey, modeled after a national study conducted by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAACU), was sent to Pioneer Valley employers on the Franklin County, Northampton, and Amherst Chamber of Commerce member lists. It presented 17 distinct skill and knowledge areas and asked respondents to indicate how important it is that the new college graduates they employ exhibit proficiency in each. More than 125 businesses, municipalities, non-profit organizations and schools weighed in, sharing with GCC information about the college learning outcomes they value the most.

Topping the list of desired proficiencies are oral communication, ethical judgement, teamwork, the ability to apply knowledge to real life situations, and critical thinking and reasoning skills. Employers, both large and small, report placing high value on these learning outcomes when hiring recent college graduates. The findings from GCC’s local survey were very similar to those obtained through the AAACU’s larger, national survey and support the position that skills developed through a broad, Liberal Arts education are essential for success in the workplace.

Faculty and staff are hard at work insuring that those integrated outcomes are embedded in the core of the GCC experience. As a result, lives will change for the better, families and communities will then grow stronger and so too our Democracy.

Thank you for all that you do to help us do all that we can to live up to our fullest potential as a college.

Milestones

Members of the GCC family, who touched and changed the lives of many students during their years at the college, are named here in recognition and appreciation of their service.

Recently retired…

- Judith Greene-Corvee, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment & Professional Development
- Robert LaPalme, Coordinator-Fitness Center

Provost Steps Down, Davey Takes the Helm

After six years of services on the GCC Foundation Board of Directors, the last two as President, Robyn Provost stepped down at the end of the two terms allowable in the by-laws. Robyn was an extraordinary leader, a committed champion of GCC students and a phenomenal fundraiser for the College. We are pleased to report that she will continue to stay engaged, having accepted an appointment to the Finance Committee.

Board Vice President Michael Davey was elected at the 2016 Annual Meeting to assume the role as President. Michael has been a tremendous asset to the Foundation and we look forward to his leadership and guidance.

Attorney General

Visits GCC

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey was keynote speaker at the 2016 Henry Steele Commager Lecture.

Office of the GCC Foundation and Alumni Affairs

Behind the scenes…

Regina Curtis ’86
Executive Director of Resource Development & GCC Foundation curator@gcc.mass.edu

Andrea Curtis ’80
Accounting & Database Coordinator acabrin@gcc.mass.edu

Nance Rifanburg
Staff Assistant njfanburg@gcc.mass.edu

Please contact us at 413-775-1602 for information about Foundation events in the community, the annual campaign, planned giving opportunities and the alumni association. Send a message to rifanburgN@gcc.mass.edu if you are not on our email list.

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Michael Davey

Vice President
Leigh Rae

Secretary
Maura Goldman

Treasurer
Nancy Fournier ’85

Directors
Mitch Anthony
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Katherine Cole
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Sharon Meyers ’78
Michael Smith

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Faculty Representative
Mary Phillips ’92

Honorary Directors
Rob Cohn ’71
Bill Freeman
Lorna Peterson
Robert Magor Yacoubian

Join the Alumni Association:
Membership is FREE.
Did you attend GCC? We value your connection to the college. As a member of the Alumni Association, you can participate in many ways and we welcome your involvement at all levels.
Join now at www.gcc.mass.edu/alumni
GCC Day at Mike's Maze

In October, we celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service with GCC alumni and supporters at the amazing Mike's Maze. Special thanks to Mike’s Maze for their wonderful support of GCC and to the Massachusetts Forest Fire Control Service for bringing one of our national icons, Smokey Bear, to join the fun!

GCC celebrated at “Community College Day at Fenway”

September brought an evening of celebration with the 15 Massachusetts community colleges at Fenway Park in Boston, attended by students, faculty, and staff from across the system. GCC President Bob Pura and outstanding GCC student Cassandra Santos had the honor of representing our college on the field at the pregame ceremony at Fenway!

Scholarships and financial aid help many area residents overcome financial barriers to getting into Greenfield Community College, but life can get in the way. What if a GCC student’s car breaks down leaving them unable to get to classes unless they pay for the needed repair? Or, if a course’s textbooks cost $300 more than a student has so he decides to postpone taking that course until he can save more money? Or, if mid-semester a student needs to leave a dangerous living situation and doesn’t have the full deposit for a safer place to live?

In the past, there weren’t many places a student could find help, but now GCC students have somewhere to turn. This fall, Franklin County residents Janet Rogers and Bev LaBelle gave the GCC Foundation a $5,000 donation to start the Rogers-LaBelle Student Emergency Fund. They chose to make this personal gift in addition to the support the College currently receives from the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation, begun by Janet's grandmother, for the GCC’s Women’s Resource Center to help non-traditional aged women students. The new Student Emergency Fund is available to help any student at GCC in an emergency situation that could prevent them from staying in college. Janet and Bev decided to start the new Fund after learning from GCC Foundation Executive Director Regina Curtis that there was no source of emergency support for students who didn’t fit the criteria for the Women’s Center funds.

“College staff have told me stories of students coming to them distraught, saying they needed to drop out or postpone their studies because of an emergency situation that has arisen,” said Regina. This Fund helps students who are already at GCC, who already have done the hard financial and emotional work to get themselves into college.

Janet added, “We have such a gem in GCC. The area is still feeling the recession and GCC is the first and closest hope for many Franklin County residents to help themselves move toward their goals. I am following in my grandmother Mary Stuart Rogers’ footsteps. She believed in education, in helping those who helped themselves. We hope that alumni who were helped by GCC and the larger community who know its impact will be interested in this Fund, as a way to directly help students. Emergencies happen and, when we all pull together, we can make a difference.”

Janet and Bev started the new Student Emergency Fund to help all students at GCC, and now many others are helping grow it. When Janet spoke with them, financial institution to transfer the funds to the GCC Foundation, the financial advisor was so moved by Janet’s explanation of the new Fund that she contacted the GCC Foundation and invited them to apply for a $1,000 charitable gift for the Fund. Then, the GCC Foundation ran a raffle to benefit the Fund and when Regina asked a woman if she’d like to buy a ticket, she was told, “No, I don’t want to buy a raffle ticket, but I want to help.” That woman donated $1,000 to the Fund, noting that this aligns with her philanthropic preference that individuals directly benefit from her gift.

If you would like to help or get more information about the Rogers-LaBelle Student Emergency Fund, contact Regina Curtis at the GCC Foundation at curtisr@gcc.mass.edu or call 413-775-1600.

The Gift of Kindness:
The New GCC Student Emergency Fund

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Christopher Doyle ‘98 named GCC 2016 Distinguished Alumnus

The 2016 Greenfield Community College (GCC) Distinguished Alumni Award was presented November 10 at the Greenfield Community College Annual Meeting at the GCC Main Campus Cohn Family Dining Commons. The award was presented to Christopher Doyle ’98.

Chris graduated with his Associate’s Degree from GCC, and his High School Diploma from Pioneer Valley Regional School on the same weekend in 1998, following two years of successful dual enrollment. He then transferred to complete his Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Science from Suffolk (NY) University, with further studies in Germany.

Chris has presented for the Association of National Advertisers in New York City on how to build a World Class Data Science Team. He is currently ranked the 7th most influential data scientist in the world by Klout.com.

He has worked around the world as an economist, a senior actuary and now serves as the Director of Pricing and Market Analysis at Aspen Dental in Syracuse, NY. Chris has volunteered for Head Start (which he attended in Turners Falls MA), the United Way and local soup kitchens. Currently, his philanthropic work focuses on initiatives to promote STEM learning with children. He lives with his family in Syracuse, New York.

Start Today (continued)

That success began right out of college in 1981, with his first job offer to work behind the scenes at the start-up Cable News Network (CNN) for the generous sum of $3.50 an hour. He accepted and was given a reporting date. However, several days later he received a call from Alpena, Michigan with an opportunity to work on a television-on-air sports broadcaster.

“I had applied for a job in Macon, Georgia, but the news director there wanted a woman to do both news and weather,” he said. “The news director in Alpena later called him saying he knew of any available sportscasters. He sent my tape up there and the rest is history.”

That experience of producing, writing and editing sportscasts honed the skills that would define the trajectory of his career moving forward.

After the Alpena station was taken over by a larger company that brought in its own crew, Doug returned home to Massachusetts in 1983. After a stint working at the Westfield Evening News in 1987, which led to a position as Sports/News Reporter/Copy Editor position with the Vero Beach (FL) Press Journal in 1988 and then Editor-in-Chief for the Florida-based, national Correctional Building News in 1995. Not only was Doug’s career launched in Florida, he also met his wife there during that time.

A decade later, following a few more writer/editor/producer positions, he began his current position as a Technical Writer and Project Editor for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, GA in 2009, where he focuses on training manuals, online training programs, standard operating procedures and external communications for public health preparedness. He very much likes this work, saying that the CDC is “a solid organization” and that he’s “never had a bad day at work here.”

But if you ask Doug to describe his life for the past 30 years, it isn’t job skills or places of employment that you’ll hear about. Rather, it is his family and his many years as a high school football, baseball and lacrosse official, and watching his daughter play high school lacrosse.

In addition, he holds a Third-degree Black Belt in Taekwondo, completed the 1986 Boston Marathon, and is a published author – his e-book, Miracle Impossible, about an “inoperable” brain tumor, is available on Amazon.

Doug lives in Atlanta with his wife, Sarah, a student at Young Harris College (on a lacrosse scholarship!) who is studying psychology. Their older daughter, Sabrina, 22, is married with one child and currently training as a dental assistant. Their younger daughter, Claire, 19, attends Georgia College.

And what does Art Hannan, the person who started it all, think about this? Bulecki’s former professor said, “What completes this story is the impact that the Doug—students like Doug who abound at GCC—have had on me (and other faculty and staff). It’s this symbiotic relationship that underlies the “magic” that makes GCC a place where change and learning travel in both directions.

GCC 5k Turkey Run 2016

President Bob Pura welcomed the first runners back at the Turkey Run in November. The event, with Presenting Sponsor Freedom Credit Union, raised over $7,000 for GCC students! For more information, visit www.gcc.mass.edu/turkeyrun

Professional Musician Piper Pichette ’13 Gives Back to GCC

Piper Pichette attended GCC from 2011 to 2013 as a Liberal Arts Music Major. She then transferred to Berklee College of Music in Boston, from which she graduated in 2015, magna cum laude, with a Professional Music Degree.

Based out of the Greenfield area, Piper now plays professionally and is open for hire for public or private events. In addition, she teaches Sharp weekly at Elm City Music in Keene, NH.

Piper believes that her success at Berklee would not have been possible without the strong foundation and self-discipline that GCC helped her build, both financially and educationally.

“I feel that I had proved myself through my grades and my skills in GCC’s ensembles and it helped me advance through Berklee’s audition process. And, if GCC hadn’t had there, I’d be under much more debt!”

Recently, Piper reached out to the GCC Foundation to say that she’d like to give back by becoming a regular donor to the College through the annual fund, with the goal of having her donation increase over time as her income grows.

GCC Foundation 2016 Annual Meeting

We enjoyed an evening of celebration in November, with the opportunity to thank supporters and hear NASA Astronaut Cady Coleman as keynote speaker! Cady was very generous with the time and respectful attention she gave to the GCC students in attendance.

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