Award Winning GCC Alums

Hunter Kirschner ’17 Receives Business Journal Trendsetters Award

GCC alum Hunter Kirschner was honored this past spring in Keene with the Business Journal of Greater Keene Brattleboro & Peterborough Trendsetters Award. He was one of eleven up and coming young professionals who were honored at the event, also attended by GCC Dean of Students Anna Berry and Wellness Center Counselor, Kathleen Keough.

Hunter, a transgender adult, is currently a program support assistant for LGBTQ students at Keene State College where he is also pursuing his bachelor’s degree in women’s and gender studies.

While at GCC, Hunter was a very active member of the college community - he held a work study position in the Advising and Wellness Centers, worked as a Peer Tutor and as an Orientation Leader. He also co-facilitated the Elm Street Think Tank, a group of community members and residents of the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office who meet weekly at the House of Corrections to work on collaborative

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Jocelyn Dennett ’12, ’15 Earned Top Military Excellence Award

Seaman Recruit Jocelyn Dennett, Division 091, graduated as the top Sailor from Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois and earned the Military Excellence Award in March of this year.

Jocelyn, of Greenfield, joined the Navy to pursue a career in Navy security forces and selected the rating of Master at Arms. Prior to enlisting in January, she attended UMASS Amherst, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in building and construction technology. She transferred to the University after obtaining two Associates Degrees at Greenfield Community College – in Liberal Arts in 2012 and in Engineering in 2015, leaving with a 3.82 GPA. She also worked as a construction inspector for the town of Greenfield until leaving for boot camp.

Referring to her time at GCC, Jocelyn said, “My greatest influences at GCC were Ted Johnson and Amy Ehmann in the Engineering Department, and Bill Nordstrom in Chemistry. They were amazing teachers and motivators. I still plan to have a career in the STEM field when I have finished my time in the service.”

Linda Desjardins, GCC’s Director of Financial Aid, met Jocelyn when they were classmates at GCC (learning is a lifelong adventure, Linda will assure you.) “I was in two French classes with Jocelyn,” she said, “and she was not only impressive academically but she was kind and generous toward her fellow classmates. Her quiet intelligence elevated the classroom experience and she often took the time to help guide fellow students through the more difficult topics.” She added that Jocelyn exemplifies and embodies everything for which GCC’s Principles of Education stand.

The Navy Club of the United States Military Excellence Award (MEA) is the top award presented to the No. 1 recruit of his or her graduating training group. The MEA is awarded to the recruit who best exemplifies the qualities of enthusiasm, devotion to duty, military bearing, and

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“How am I doing?” Remember the Mayor of New York, Ed Koch, asking that question? “How are we doing?” That is what GCC asks. Assessing performance is critical to our commitment to betterment. Improving what we do and how we do it is an ongoing process. We are always working to improve teaching, learning and students success. Our means are our ends in the making. If we are not about learning and getting better we are in decline, no longer living up to the mandates of our mission:

Our mission is to teach, in a small, supportive and intimate learning environment, the knowledge and skills necessary for our students to reach their highest potential. Our doors are open to all who seek to learn. In striving to fulfill this mission we also seek to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to reach our highest potential as a college. At GCC, we are passionate about teaching and learning together!

I am pleased to report on some of the recent data that illuminate our successes and point to a growing concern:

➢ GCC has the highest Community College graduation rate in the state.
➢ GCC has the highest Community College retention rate in the state.
➢ GCC has the highest acceptance rate of all MA CCs at UMASS Amherst.
➢ The first year GPA of GCC students at UMASS is higher than that of other MA Community Colleges.
➢ GCC continues to transfer more women to Smith than any Community College in the nation.
➢ 83% of the 100 graduates of our manufacturing program are employed.
➢ 73% of all graduates in our professional programs, like nursing, paramedic, fire science or early child education, are employed within a year of graduation.

And here the growing concern:

➢ For the first time in GCC’s history, approximately 70% of our students now attend part-time. Almost 30% of GCC students indicate that “lack of finances” would make them withdraw from classes or the college compared to 5% for “academic readiness.”

Why the concern? After all, most of us know what it is like to work our way through college. In fact, data suggest that working 20 hours a week while enrolled full-time elevates success rates and getting a paid internship while enrolled full time in college is a win for students/win for employers/and a win for the college. However, data are clear that attending college part-time decreases a student’s probability of graduation. Why are more students now attending part-time? Money! The cost of attending full-time is increasingly beyond their reach. This does not mean that part-time students don't get good grades, graduate or succeed in life. What GCC and community colleges across the nation are finding is that attending full-time increases the probability of success, no matter how it is defined. Had I won that Powerball or if I were in charge of the Commonwealth’s resources, I would work to increase our student’s ability to attend full-time and mandate 20 hours of work at GCC or in the community.

GCC’s success are this community’s successes. Lives really do change for the better every day at GCC, families do then grow stronger and our community then becomes a stronger and more sustainable one. Not one of those outcomes listed above would happen without your support, not one!”
Students at GCC celebrated Halloween on campus this year with fun noontime activities. Pictured l-r are 1) Jeffrey Laverdiere at the GCC Veterans Center, 2) GCC Dance Program students performing Michael Jackson’s Thriller routine and 3) front l-r, Hazel Goleman (holding Augustus Cheney, son of GCC Science Department Laboratory Safety Officer Natalie Feliciano), Rose Dumaine and Cassi Rice joined by, back l-r, Jake Dragon and Tony Guyer as Star Wars’ character Kylo Ren.
Hunter Kirschner (continued)

projects for people who are incarcerated. He came to Think Tank through a sociology class offered at the jail through GCC, Crime and Punishment: A Sociological Overview that was taught using the Inside-Out model, which brings college students and incarcerated people together to learn from inside a jail or prison.

Hunter was also selected to receive GCC’s Nelson Mandela Book Award because of his endless energy for supporting GCC students of all backgrounds. He pushed the campus to begin the process of implementing a chosen name policy, something which is now coming to fruition— not just at GCC, but at community colleges statewide. In thinking about Nelson Mandela, the review committee also saw connections to his work off-campus with and on behalf of prisoners at the Franklin County House of Corrections.

Hunter told the Business Journal he believes that real change will occur as it relates to a more inclusive society only when we change individual relationships. “We can’t understand each other if we can’t even talk to each other,” he says.

GCC Alumni Working in STEM Fields Hold Panel Discussion at GCC

Four GCC alumni returned to the campus to share their experience as GCC students, their continued education, and the STEM field in which they currently work. The event, held in the Nahman-Watson Library, was coordinated by GCC STEM Special Programs Coordinator, Alysha Putnam, M.S., who works to support and develop STEM initiatives at GCC by developing marketing and outreach materials, collaborating actively with STEM colleagues and working directly with students in advising, academic coaching and cohort building.

Pictured, left to right, with Putnam, far right, are:

Cecily Santiago — GCC ’14, Current PhD candidate - University of Minnesota College of Science & Engineering School of Mathematics

Erik Risinger — GCC ’13, Software engineer/Research Fellow - UMASS Amherst College of Information and Computer Sciences

Elizabeth (Libby) Daniele — Early Entrant Student ’11, Lab Technician - UMASS Amherst School of Veterinary & Animal Sciences

Jenn Albertine — GCC ’00, Plant Ecophysiologist, Professor - Mount Holyoke College.

2017 GCC Day at Mike’s Maze

Another great year for GCC Day at Mike’s Maze at Warner Farm in Sunderland! The weather was beautiful as all celebrated GCC and the 40th Anniversary of the NASA Voyager missions.

Make the most out of your associate’s degree!

Greenfield Community College and Elms College have collaborated to create bachelor’s degree completion programs that offer students the best of both colleges. The end result is an affordable bachelor’s degree from Elms, with all classes offered on the GCC main campus.

- BS in Early Care and Education
- BS in Social Work
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BS)

Contact Elms GCC Coordinator, Tom Spiro, spirot@elms.edu, (413) 335-0961
In September, members of the extended GCC community traveled to Fenway Park in Boston with President Bob Pura and Student Senate President Andrew Dagarin (both pictured top left on the field for pre-game ceremony) to join the other 14 MA community colleges in celebration of the community college mission. The Red Sox played the then-soon-to-be World Series Champion Houston Astros – an exciting moment on the road to their historic win!
2017 Green River Festival

Alumni, staff and faculty took volunteer shifts to staff the GCC table and greet festival attendees at the Green River Festival in July.

From the beginning of this academic year in July, the GCC Foundation has marked the loss of several people who were instrumental to the growth and development of Greenfield Community College since the doors were opened in 1962. It is with sadness and deepest appreciation that we acknowledge their planned giving work to ensure a legacy for the future by leaving the following bequests in support of students at GCC:

- Howard Ahlskog - $75,000 for the Sally J. Ahlskog Nursing Scholarship Fund
- Skip Hammond - $166,336 for the Skip Hammond Scholarship Fund
- Katherine “Kitty” Waitkus - $10,000 for the Ethel “Risky” Case Scholarship Fund
- Betty Turner Thompson - $10,000 for the Lewis O. Turner Scholarship Fund

The goal isn’t to live forever.
The goal is to create something that will.

Chuck Palahniuk, American Novelist & Journalist

Jim Olsen, center, presented Green River Festival artwork created by Gail Kabaker to GCC President Bob Pura and former Franklin County Chamber Executive Director Ann Hamilton in appreciation of their many years of support for the festival.

Planned Giving

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Office of the GCC Foundation and Alumni Affairs

Behind the scenes…

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Please contact us at 413-775-1600 for information about Foundation events in the community, the annual campaign, planned giving opportunities and the alumni association. Send a message to riffinburgN@gcc.mass.edu if you are not on our email list.

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Selected Shorts

In October, GCC supporters Mike & Joan ’95 Haley offered a welcome respite from screens, texts and world news. The couple presented An Evening of Short Stories, a wide sampling of one-act plays, to benefit the Conway Firemen’s Auxiliary Scholarship Fund and the Daniel J. Haley Scholarship Fund at GCC, in honor of their grand-nephew, who was killed by a drunk driver just before graduating from UMass in 2012. This scholarship will be awarded to qualifying students attending GCC who intend to go on to UMass Amherst and major in any of the Schools of Engineering.

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Please support GCC students: www.gcc.mass.edu/give

GCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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 @ www.gcc.mass.edu/alumni

Greenfield Community College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. For disability accommodation, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services (413) 775-1812.
Senior Symposia Board Celebrates

Former and current members of the GCC Senior Symposia Board of Directors and friends celebrate the completion of the Spring 17 semester program, as well as the “retirement” of long-time board member, Margo Culley. The Senior Symposia program at Greenfield Community College is a collaborative effort between the Office of Workforce Development/Community Education and area senior citizens to provide a way for area seniors to continue their education in a format that best suits their unique needs, interests, and resources. For more information call (413)-775-1611.

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