

PROGRESSIONS

The Magazine for Alumni and Friends of Prince George's Community College

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PRINCE GEORGE'S
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



SUMMER 2024

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**EMPOWERING PEOPLE
AND BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES**





TABLE OF CONTENTS

02 A Message from the President

04 A Growing Campus

06 65 Faces of PGCC

08 Presidential Line Up

10 Section 1: Alumni Spotlights

18 Section 2: Faculty Spotlights

30 Section 3: Student Spotlights

40 Section 4: Staff Spotlights

56 Section 5: Board Members

**“AS WE TOAST
TO 65 YEARS OF
ACHIEVEMENT,
LET US ALSO
LOOK FORWARD
TO THE NEXT
CHAPTER OF
OUR STORY.”**





A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since 1958, Prince George's Community College has been a beacon of opportunity and a hub of empowerment. As the College celebrates its 65th anniversary, we reflect on the profound impact it has had in shaping lives, fostering dreams, and strengthening the very fabric of our communities.

Six and a half decades ago, the College embarked on a courageous mission to provide accessible, affordable, and high-quality education to all who sought it. Over the years, it has evolved into a transformative force, touching countless lives and leaving an indelible mark on the region.

At the heart of PGCC's mission lies a commitment to inclusivity and diversity. Regardless of background, age, or circumstance, the doors of the College have always been open wide, welcoming all who dare to dream and aspire for a brighter future. PGCC has provided a haven for those seeking a second chance, a stepping stone for those pursuing higher education, and a launchpad for those entering the workforce.

Through dynamic and innovative learning experiences, partnerships with local businesses, and community outreach initiatives, the College has become a catalyst for positive change. PGCC empowers individuals to realize their full potential, equips them with the skills and knowledge needed to achieve economic prosperity, and inspires them to give back to their communities.

As we celebrate this important milestone, Progressions Magazine pays tribute to the faculty, staff, students, and alumni who have contributed to the rich tapestry of PGCC's profound history. Their dedication, passion, and resilience have been the driving force behind the College's tremendous progress.

Looking ahead, the future is bright with promise. With each passing year, PGCC continues to evolve, adapt, and innovate, striving toward our legacy of empowering people and building strong communities. As we toast to 65 years of achievement, let us also look forward to the next chapter of our story, confident in the knowledge that the best is yet to come.

DR. FALECIA D. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A Growing Campus

An Interview with **Don Pruett**,
director of Planning, Design
and Construction

Don Pruett could not be more energized about what is happening around him on the main Largo campus of Prince George's Community College. Marlboro Hall, scheduled to open in 2025, is currently under construction and commences what he calls the "campus reimagining," kicking off an ambitious 20-year vision for the College.



“We are currently working on the 10-year Master Plan to be completed this year,” Pruet said. This plan outlines additional campus enhancements, including renovations to Bladen Hall and Chesapeake Hall, prioritizing the arts and sciences, and making new additions that challenge the status quo.

The changes to the campus footprint are part of a vision shaping the trajectory of the community college experience nationwide, taking the concept of a community college and evolving it into an institution that supports the community in new, innovative ways, including the call to provide advanced degrees.

“The vision is you can come here for your two-year degree, and also earn a four-year degree if that is your choice,” he explains. This shift demands changes to the built environment to support growth—that’s where Pruet and his team step in.

“The campus needs to look like a true college environment,” Pruet said. That means adding housing to accommodate students with the opportunity to live on campus, facility enhancements that nurture greater student engagement—such as a new student center—and other innovative changes to the campus footprint that move the College beyond the traditional “community college mode.”

Additional enhancements include a greater focus on workforce development and designing a leading-edge technology center. These are all part of a progressive three-campus model that will integrate two more locations—Laurel College Center and Westphalia Training Center—into the College’s main Largo campus. The College is also focused on expanding accessibility for its student population, offering new academic and career pathways, and solidifying its place as a premier center for dynamic teaching and learning.

Beneath Pruet’s soft-spoken demeanor lies an ambitious, driven charge to spearhead this bold effort alongside his colleagues and the leadership of Prince George’s Community College. ■

**“WE ARE LOOKING TO
MAKE A MARK FOR
THE 21ST CENTURY
ACADEMIC CORE.”**



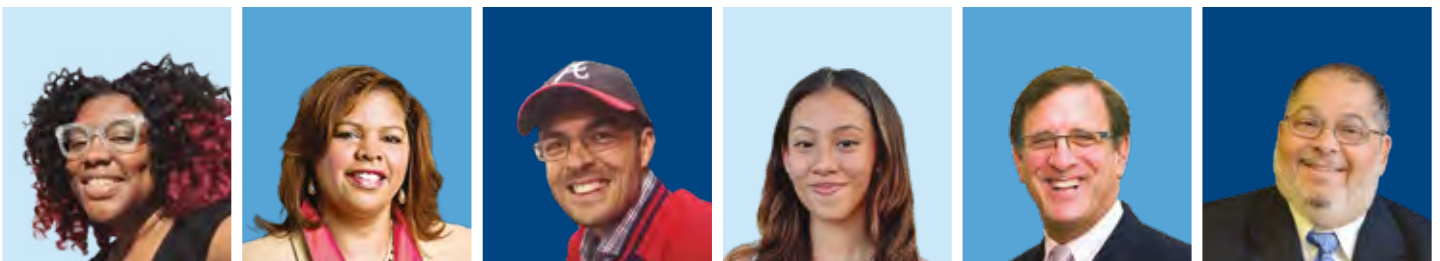


65 FACES of PGCC

Every year for the past 65 years, PGCC has left a meaningful impact on the lives of our students, thanks to the many people who are passionate about growing and supporting their learning experiences.

From our alumni to our dedicated faculty and staff, our College's identity is intertwined with our Core Commitments: **Students First | Achievement | Continuous Improvement | Empathy | Equity | Integrity**

FOR THIS MILESTONE YEAR, WE RECOGNIZE 65 ANCHORS WHO EMBODY OUR RICH DIVERSITY.







Archival photo of the Largo campus, dated 1968.

A LEGACY OF COMMITMENT:

EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES

Founded in 1958, PGCC was the first educational institution to integrate in Prince George's County and began offering classes at Suitland High School in Forestville, MD, with a total count of 185 students.

Today, PGCC serves nearly 25,000 students annually, providing high-quality education and training for the progressive and career-oriented residents of Prince George's County. From new high school graduates and career seekers to more seasoned professionals and senior citizens looking to enhance their skill sets, PGCC is comprised of students who represent a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and dreams.

It takes many people coming together to make these dreams possible—from College presidents, faculty, and staff to alumni and our promising students.

PRESIDENTIAL LINEUP

SIX DECADES OF LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE



1958-1964

Robert T. Novak
Founding president, served in WWII, earned PhD from Columbia University



1965

Lewis C. Popham
Named College's interim acting president



1965-1967

A. Martin Eldersveld
Spearheaded College relocation from Suitland HS to Largo



1967-1971

Watson F. Pindell
Formal dedication of Largo campus during his tenure



1971-1972

L. James Harvey
Author, businessman, and former partner at a DC-based international consulting firm



1972-1999

Robert I. Bickford
College celebrates 25th anniversary



1999-2007

Dr. Ronald A. Williams
College received 40 National Science Foundation awards, more than any other community college



2007-2020

Dr. Charlene M. Duke
Inaugurated as College's first female president



DR. FALECIA D. WILLIAMS

2020-PRESENT

A proven transformational leader, Dr. Williams values learning as much as leading and understands the power of inspiring others to create their own positive outcomes.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

**“I FOUND MY PASSION
AND MY PATH AT PGCC”**

TROY WEAVER

SENIOR ADVISOR
WASHINGTON WIZARDS

Troy Weaver, a distinguished alumnus of Prince George's Community College, played basketball for the College and graduated in 1991.

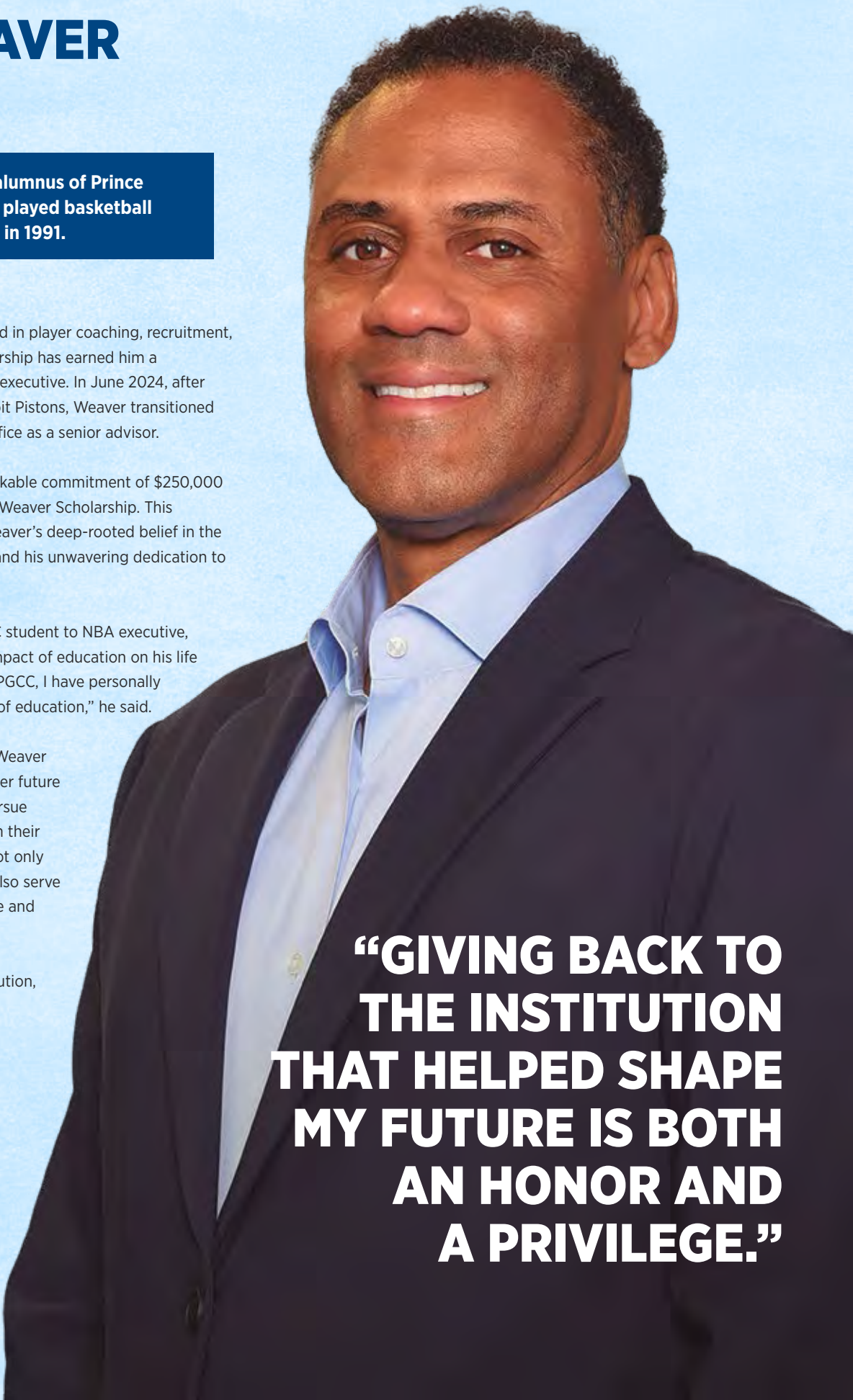
Weaver's comprehensive background in player coaching, recruitment, development, and operational leadership has earned him a distinguished career as a basketball executive. In June 2024, after four productive years with the Detroit Pistons, Weaver transitioned to the Washington Wizards' front office as a senior advisor.

Weaver recently announced a remarkable commitment of \$250,000 over five years to establish the Troy Weaver Scholarship. This generous contribution embodies Weaver's deep-rooted belief in the transformative power of education and his unwavering dedication to giving back to his alma mater.

Reflecting on his journey from PGCC student to NBA executive, Weaver emphasizes the profound impact of education on his life and career. "As a proud alumnus of PGCC, I have personally witnessed the life-changing impact of education," he said.

With the establishment of the Troy Weaver Scholarship, Weaver aims to empower future generations of PGCC students to pursue their academic aspirations and reach their full potential. This scholarship will not only provide vital financial support, but also serve as a catalyst for academic excellence and personal growth.

Through Weaver's generous contribution, PGCC students will have access to expanded opportunities, resources, and support systems to successfully navigate their educational journeys. As the Troy Weaver Scholarship takes root at PGCC, it will undoubtedly inspire and uplift countless aspiring scholars, leaving a lasting legacy of hope, opportunity and empowerment in its wake.

A portrait of Troy Weaver, a middle-aged Black man with short, dark hair, smiling warmly. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a light blue collared shirt. The background is a soft, light blue gradient.

**“GIVING BACK TO
THE INSTITUTION
THAT HELPED SHAPE
MY FUTURE IS BOTH
AN HONOR AND
A PRIVILEGE.”**

CATHERINE ELLONG

GRADUATE

PGCC

Catherine Ellong traded her graduation gown for a hospital gown after going into active labor at Prince George's Community College's 2023 Commencement ceremony before receiving her degree.

Ellong's advisor, Dr. Stephanie Pair, PGCC's Women of Wisdom program manager, called emergency services to rush Ellong to Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, MD. Ellong gave birth to a healthy baby girl named Harmony Hayden.

Four months later, PGCC leaders came together to recreate a graduation ceremony for Ellong by bestowing her with an official diploma and taking pictures with her family.

Ellong entered PGCC through the dual enrollment program as a junior while attending High Point High School in Beltsville, MD. She was born and raised in Prince George's County by her African parents, who emigrated to the United States as teenagers.

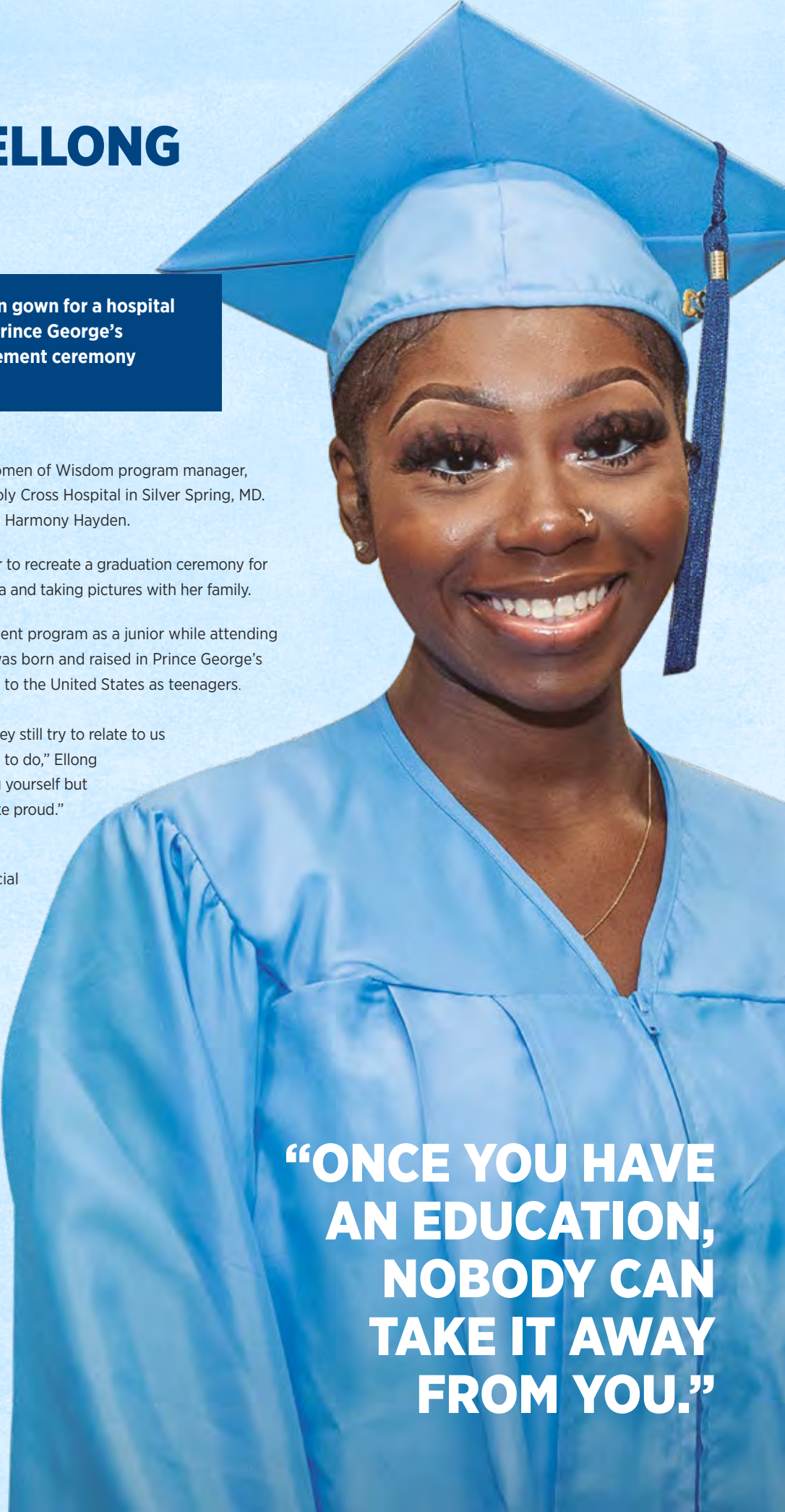
"Each generation has their own struggle, but they still try to relate to us and give us insight on what to expect and what to do," Ellong said. "At the end of the day, you're representing yourself but you have your family, too, that you want to make proud."

Ellong's family—including her mother, father, brother, and partner—were present at the special ceremony to celebrate her accomplishment, as well as baby Harmony.

Ellong said being a PGCC student gave her space to explore, develop, and thrive with additional life skills support from the College. She credits the Women of Wisdom program as being paramount in her journey. "The one thing about community college is that it's a community," she explains.

Ellong plans to transfer to the University of Maryland to study health information management and enter the medical field. After spending time at PGCC, she feels ready to maintain her academic rigor and build a legacy for her daughter.

"The whole way through, it's been nothing but support, love, and motivation to keep going and do what I need to do to be successful," Ellong said.



**“ONCE YOU HAVE
AN EDUCATION,
NOBODY CAN
TAKE IT AWAY
FROM YOU.”**



**“THE ONE THING ABOUT
COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS
THAT IT’S A COMMUNITY.”**

ALUMNI AT HOME

We are proud to spotlight these distinguished faculty and staff members—who are also Prince George’s Community College graduates.



DR. MOHAMMED ALI

TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT CHAIR

“I tell my students that there will be many challenges in life, but you have to be able to bounce back.”

“I chose Prince George’s Community College because of its proximity and I did not have to worry about some of the restrictions four-year institutions had. Also, smaller classrooms where I could easily access faculty members [and] see them in the office. I was not just a number—I was a person when I came here.”

BARBARA MCCREARY

TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND LOGISTICS PROGRAM DIRECTOR

“I am going to leave this college with a legacy, knowing I’ve created new programs.”

“My grandmother retired from here. She started working for the College in 1958 when it was at Suitland High School, so I came here and got a job in the library as a student worker.”





ARNITA SHELTON

CAMPUS NURSE

“I do a lot of talking and encouraging.”

“I graduated in 1976, and I still work here. I’ve been a nurse for over 40 years here—I like the students and the staff.”

CANDICE FLOYD

CIRCULATION AND MEDIA TECHNICIAN

“My super power is making students believe in themselves.”

“I grew up here, that’s the easiest way to say it. I came here as a student; I started working in the library part-time. I walked in and never left.”



CLARENCE BRYANT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

“I am a proud PGCC alum.”

“I came to Prince George’s Community College after leaving the service. I worked and went to school full-time—this was the best option to restart my academic career.”

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

CULINARY STARS SHARE RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

KIM AKERS THOMAS

EXECUTIVE CHEF AND OWNER

HAYWARD'S PRIVATE CHEF & CATERING

“The College’s 65-year milestone is both impressive and empowering.”

After coming back to the Washington, D.C., area to be closer to family, Kim Akers Thomas enrolled in the Culinary Arts Program at Prince George’s Community College to study cooking, which she loves to do. Dedicated to honing her culinary craft, she worked in food service and hospitality for more than 15 years after graduation, including at some of the region’s leading hotels and entertainment brands. She also worked with celebrity chef Carla Hall.

An entrepreneur at heart, Akers Thomas eventually launched her own business. In addition to catering large-scale events, she provides consulting services for clients in the food service industry.

Despite her very busy schedule, Akers Thomas always finds time to volunteer with nonprofit organizations, such as the D.C. Central Kitchen and Martha’s Table. She believes in the importance of giving back and supporting the community.

Reflecting on her time at PGCC, Akers Thomas shares that she has enjoyed seeing the growth of the College, especially the Culinary Arts Center, where she has attended and even hosted events. She feels a strong sense of belonging here—as the College has grown and evolved, she too has grown and expanded her business.



SARAH EPPLEY

ASSISTANT SOUS CHEF, YAHENTAMITSI DINING HALL
MBA STUDENT, ROBERT H. SMITH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

"My favorite memory at PGCC was making fancy desserts in Chef Lampione's pastry class. I do lots of hands-on practice—and took home plenty of treats!"

A self-described foodie, Sarah Eppley started working in commercial kitchens in 2015. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, she was laid off from her job at a private club and decided to enroll in formal culinary training at Prince George's Community College to be prepared for when the industry started hiring again.

While pursuing her associate degree in culinary arts, she interned with the University of Maryland's catering services and was subsequently hired for a full-time position after completing her degree program at PGCC.

Today, Eppley is one of 10 assistant sous chefs in the University of Maryland's Yahentamitsi Dining Hall, which opened in August 2022. She is an integral part of the culinary staff and oversees up to four cooks of a larger team that prepares 12,000 meals every week for students, faculty, and visitors. She credits her coursework at PGCC for "filling in gaps" in her culinary arts knowledge and the hospitality industry as a whole.



"Thanks to PGCC, I learned about the different opportunities available in hospitality. I gained confidence."

ROYAL SEVERE

CEO
ROYAL'S ROCK N RECIPES

Royal Severe attended Prince George's Community College from fall 2020 to spring 2023 and earned her degree in Culinary Arts.

"I learned many culinary and baking techniques, business, management skills, and also learned about the importance of hospitality during my time at PGCC," she explained. Severe credits Chef Hudson, Chef E. Lampione, Chef Wiggins, and Professor Cliff with helping her to achieve her goals. "Many times, they gave me wise instructions and insight on the food industry and encouraged me to keep going. I am truly so thankful for them."

In 2023, she launched her own business, Royal's Rock N Recipes, a bakery that accommodates allergies. Her bakery offers cookies, customized cakes, and cupcakes, allowing people with food allergies to enjoy special treats. "I am able to spread my love to the allergen-friendly community, and they are able to indulge in sweets worry-free."

The concept was born out of her own struggles as a child with food allergies, which often made her feel isolated and disappointed as she was often unable to fully share in celebrations. "I saw having food allergies as a pain and struggle ... but as I began creating treats that were allergen-friendly, I realized there were more people out there like me, and it turned into the benefit of others as well."

Severe's time at PGCC provided her with support and confidence. "I thank God for this journey that I'm on. I thank the Holy Spirit for leading me and guiding me to Prince George's Community College with chefs that actually cared about my food allergies and helped me on my career journey."



"I learned the importance of serving others and teamwork. And how making each moment memorable and special is valuable."

FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS

DEDICATED TO ENHANCING THE STUDENT
LEARNING EXPERIENCE

LONGEST-SERVING FACULTY



As we mark this special 65th anniversary milestone, **we recognize that our longevity and success would not be possible without the dedicated service of our faculty. These individuals represent timeless commitment to the College, and we thank them for the impact they have made on the lives of our students.**

GREGORY PRIOLEAU

36 YEARS - Technology, Engineering, and Construction

VINCENT CIPRIANI

36 YEARS - Lifelong Learning

THOMAS WYSOCKI

36 YEARS - Natural Sciences

DERRICK RISON

36 YEARS - Mathematics

DARLENE SWANSON

36 YEARS - Lifelong Learning

GARY SHIFFLET

36 YEARS - English

LYNDA POLLARD

32 YEARS - Education

WILLIAM LLOYD

32 YEARS - Technology, Engineering, and Construction

CARL KARLSSON

31 YEARS - Business and Entrepreneurship

JOAN MACDONNELL

29 YEARS - English

STEPHANIE DASHIELL

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

ACADEMIC COORDINATOR OF DEVELOPMENTAL ENGLISH

THE POWER OF A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Stephanie Dashiell decided early on in her teaching career that travel was going to be a big part of her approach to inspire her students.

“It has always been my passion to bring opportunities to the students of Prince George’s County in order to close the equity gap,” Dashiell said. “I saw students in surrounding counties and states who had access to a plethora of opportunities not afforded to students in this county. So I stepped up, and I’m doing my part to bring opportunities to our students that they may have never had access to.”

When people typically think of study abroad, they may think these opportunities exist only at four-year universities. Since joining Prince George’s Community College, Dashiell has made it her mission to expose more students to the learning that comes from travel. Over the last few years, she has organized trips to Italy and France, and is ready to take a new contingent of students to Costa Rica for a summer trip called Environment and Culture in Costa Rica. Partnering with Education First, Dashiell will expose participants

to this Central American country which boasts an epic landscape home to nearly 5 percent of the world’s biodiversity, opening up education about our world’s endangered ecosystems.

These study abroad trips are open to students, faculty, and community members because “collaboration is magic,” Dashiell said. Students may take a trip as a course or simply for an educational excursion, but without the formal coursework. Students can also participate in fundraising and apply for scholarships to help fund the trip.

There are so many reasons to study abroad, notes Dashiell. Travel encourages global citizenship and helps develop critical skills. Students from her previous trips have found the experiences life-changing.

“When I became an educator, I wanted to use whatever power and influence I had to level the playing field and give our students the same opportunities students all over the country get.”



**“OUR STUDENTS
DESERVE
THE SAME
OPPORTUNITIES
AS EVERYONE
ELSE.”**

NICHOLAS ROBINSON

PROFESSOR OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE TECHNOLOGY

INNOVATION AND PURPOSE

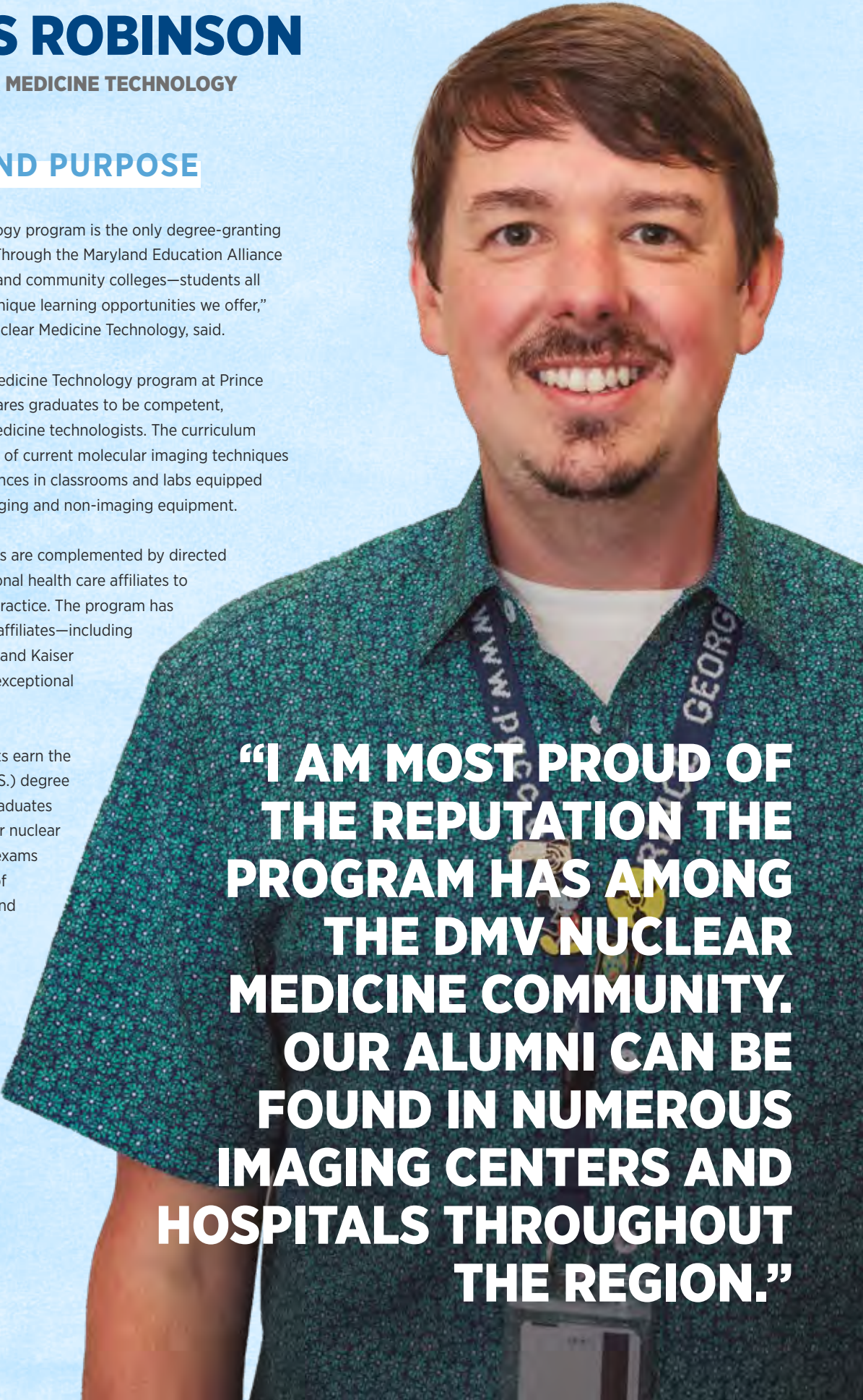
“PGCC’s Nuclear Medicine Technology program is the only degree-granting program in the state of Maryland. Through the Maryland Education Alliance—a consortium among eight Maryland community colleges—students all over the state have access to the unique learning opportunities we offer,” Nicholas Robinson, professor of Nuclear Medicine Technology, said.

Robinson notes that the Nuclear Medicine Technology program at Prince George’s Community College prepares graduates to be competent, professional, and caring nuclear medicine technologists. The curriculum integrates the theory and concepts of current molecular imaging techniques through hands-on learning experiences in classrooms and labs equipped with modern nuclear medicine imaging and non-imaging equipment.

Didactic and laboratory experiences are complemented by directed clinical practice in a variety of regional health care affiliates to prepare students for professional practice. The program has partnered with prestigious clinical affiliates—including Children’s National, Inova, Medstar and Kaiser Permanente—to provide students exceptional learning experiences.

Upon program completion, students earn the Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree in nuclear medicine technology. Graduates of the program are eligible to sit for nuclear medicine technology certification exams offered by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) and the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB).

Robinson looks forward to seeing interest in the NMT program continue expanding in the coming year.

A portrait of Nicholas Robinson, a man with short brown hair and a goatee, smiling. He is wearing a green patterned polo shirt and a blue lanyard with a yellow badge. The background is a light blue gradient.

“I AM MOST PROUD OF THE REPUTATION THE PROGRAM HAS AMONG THE DMV NUCLEAR MEDICINE COMMUNITY. OUR ALUMNI CAN BE FOUND IN NUMEROUS IMAGING CENTERS AND HOSPITALS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.”

ARTHUR TOOLE

DIRECTOR, VETERANS SERVICES

SALUTING THE HEROES AMONG US

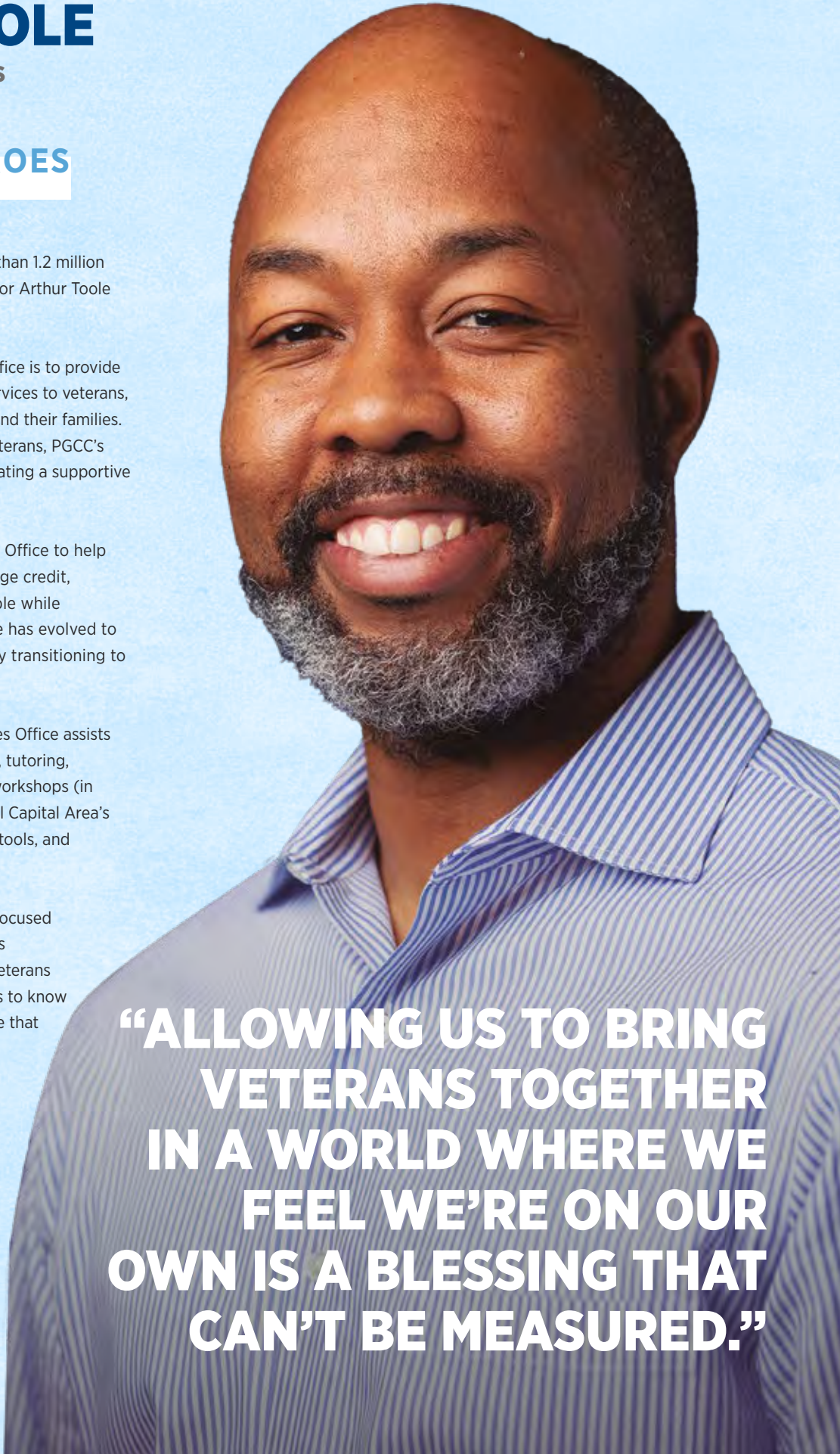
The National Capital Area is home to more than 1.2 million veterans, including Veterans Services Director Arthur Toole and his wife.

The mission of PGCC's Veterans Services Office is to provide comprehensive educational and support services to veterans, active duty, and reserve military members and their families. With 75 percent of its staff comprised of veterans, PGCC's Veterans Services Office is dedicated to creating a supportive community for them.

The College launched its Veterans Services Office to help veterans turn military experience into college credit, maximize their benefits and feel comfortable while attending the College. Over time, the office has evolved to aid veterans and their families in holistically transitioning to their desired lifestyles.

Under Toole's direction the Veterans Services Office assists veterans with filing for educational benefits, tutoring, academic and career counseling, financial workshops (in partnership with United Way of the National Capital Area's Financial Empowerment Centers), wellness tools, and additional support.

Looking ahead, Toole and his team remain focused on cultivating relationships and partnerships to grow and expand opportunities for the veterans in their community. "The goal is for veterans to know they're not forgotten and can lead a lifestyle that is a representation of their sacrifices," Toole said. For him, this mission is personal.

A portrait of Arthur Toole, a Black man with a grey beard and mustache, smiling warmly. He is wearing a blue and white striped collared shirt. The background is a light blue gradient.

**“ALLOWING US TO BRING
VETERANS TOGETHER
IN A WORLD WHERE WE
FEEL WE’RE ON OUR
OWN IS A BLESSING THAT
CAN’T BE MEASURED.”**

BETZOM (DONNA) SAMU

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, HEALTH SCIENCES

TEACHING STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

Donna Samu always had a passion for training and coaching. When she decided to forge her career in the direction of integrated health and wellness, it “lit a fire” in her, as she describes. She is very proud to be part of a team at the College that developed a credit program called Health Promotion, which took two years to secure approval from the Higher Education Commission.

“Health Promotion is teaching people how to be advocates for their own health,” she said. “This discipline is a new push forward and utilizes coaching models to work with people where they are.” Samu looks forward to growing the discipline within and beyond the College, engaging the broader community through events such as fairs to

generate interest and excitement. Samu is continuously inspired by the College’s culture, which fosters and embraces new ideas, knowledge, and innovation for community engagement initiatives, especially under President Williams’ leadership.

Health challenges in Samu’s family and her understanding of the toxic role of stress ignited her passion. Ultimately, through curriculum and outreach, her goal is to “support more people to find purpose and balance.” Samu considers it a privilege—and her true calling—to help others.



**“IT’S SO
IMPORTANT
TO LIVE YOUR
PURPOSE.”**

PAMELA MARCUS

PROFESSOR, NURSING

A CULTURE OF CARE

A psychiatric mental health nurse, Pam Marcus has spent 26 years teaching at Prince George's Community College. Today, she teaches full time and has her own clinical practice. "I am a nurse, but there was a seed in me that wanted to teach," she recalls. Once she began teaching, she realized this would be a critical and meaningful part of her career trajectory.

Marcus takes extreme pride in the nursing program she has helped build at PGCC. In order to create a "discipline of good care," the program combines rigorous clinical coursework with teaching of critical thinking, focusing on the importance of developing a true understanding of the patient. "Nurses need to listen," she explains. She also tries to teach the importance of self-care and the need to balance that with professionalism in a way that preserves the care nurses

provide and nurtures the person who provides the care. The program metrics are impressive with respect to the number of graduates who pass their boards and land jobs as nurse practitioners and, even, professors. "We turn out some awesome nurses," she remarks.

Additionally, Marcus is particularly excited about the community outreach components of the curriculum that she helped pioneer. She plans to take a group of students to a health fair in Washington, D.C., where they will distribute information about suicide prevention, substance use disorder, homelessness, and food insecurity. Marcus stresses the importance of community connections, saying, "People need to see us out in the community, and we need to teach people that they should not be afraid to talk about these things."



“STUDENTS LEARN FROM THE COMMUNITY AS THE COMMUNITY LEARNS FROM THE STUDENTS.”

JEFFREY POTTER

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND DIGITAL
SERVICES LIBRARIAN

SERVE WITH PASSION


Six years ago, Jeffrey Potter arrived at Prince George's Community College to participate in innovative learning.

"I love working with faculty to advance learning opportunities for students and help them conduct research, understanding what it means to be a student in the 21st century," he said.

The best part of his job is working at the reference desk, where he greets and assists students and other visitors at the library. "Witnessing those sparks of creativity and learning, where it all comes together is the best part of my day."

Potter is particularly excited to be part of PGCC during this special time in the College's history. He expresses the enthusiasm of the faculty and alumni and shares how the campus has come alive with the energy of this 65th anniversary milestone.

On campus, he sees positive impacts from the College's growth everywhere around him. Participating in the educational, sports, and student experiences has been fulfilling and fosters a sense of pride. "When they celebrate 100 years, I can say I was part of it at 65," he said.

A portrait of Jeffrey Potter, a young man with short brown hair and black-rimmed glasses, wearing a red, blue, and white plaid shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a light blue gradient.

**“WHAT I HOPE TO
SEE IN THE FUTURE
IS A LIBRARY THAT
IS STILL SERVING
THE COMMUNITY,
CREATING LIFELONG
LEARNERS.”**

WYNONNA (DENISE) WARE-JACKSON

ASSOCIATE DEAN, HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND HOSPITALITY

PEOPLE, PURPOSE, PASSION

"I am well-connected to the three Ps," Denise Ware-Jackson said. For Ware-Jackson, the three words 'people, purpose, passion' are part of her daily mantra, and she integrates them into her teachings every day at Prince George's Community College.

A graduate of Largo High School, Ware-Jackson grew up right behind the College. And although she was always passionate about pursuing her own education, she did not necessarily see herself working in teaching. She pursued a career in hospitality for 25 years, serving in sales, workforce development and training roles. But that changed when her general manager, who served on the board of the College, told her about an open position that would be perfect for her. "Initially, I did not think education was for me," she said.

It took a little convincing, but she decided to give it a try. "I had a gift of serving others," she said. She slowly realized that her background in training prepared her for teaching. As it turned out, it was life-changing

She is eager to share how she connects with her students. "I tell them, 'You are in control of your own destiny.'" For her, it is priceless when a student says, "You believed in me, so I believed in myself."

Ware-Jackson is dedicated to being part of PGCC's culture of service as she marks her 12th year at the College. "I am a product of the county and [I provide] service to the county."

Today, as associate dean of Health, Wellness, and Hospitality, she is also a visionary and catalyst—working to build partnerships for the continued success of the College. "It takes business, education and government all coming together to make a difference," she said.



**"I AM HONORED
TO BE PART OF
THIS JOURNEY."**

JOHN MACK

DIRECTOR, PARAMEDIC PROGRAM

FORGING LIFELONG BONDS

John Mack, a Prince George's County native, attended PGCC to earn his paramedic's license while working for the Prince George's County Fire & Emergency Medical Services Department. When a back injury sidelined him from active duty, he began teaching at the College part time. "I enjoyed teaching while at the fire department, so it seemed like a natural transition," he said.

He lights up when discussing students at PGCC and their training. "Usually, one of my students helps when you call 911 in the county," he explains. "I am most proud of them."

He describes the special bond he shares with his students: "At graduation, they come find us, they want to take pictures with us," speaking of his paramedic instructor team. "Long after graduation," he continues, "I still get phone calls, wedding invites. Some of my students are doctors and nurses."

Mack is inspired to celebrate the College's milestone. "Not a lot of things last 65 years," he said. "We have amazing faculty, amazing students. We are an institute of the County." Envisioning the future, he wants to see the College continue its expansion and become even more visible to the community. "At PGCC, you get the same license and training, in half the time, at half the cost," he said.

As to what has kept him at PGCC for 14 years, he responds, "My students have kept me here. They tell me, 'You can't leave until we leave.'"

He speaks confidently of the College's positive influence on student success. "There is an immediate 25% pay increase when you get your paramedics license," he explains. He recalls benefiting from that himself as a PGCC graduate: "When I got my license, it made it possible for me to start my family."



“EDUCATION IS A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVES.”

GREGORY PRIOLEAU

PROFESSOR OF TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND CONSTRUCTION

BUILT TO TEACH

“When asked what has kept him teaching at Prince George’s Community College for almost four decades, Gregory Prioleau said the students motivate him to continue.”

Prioleau was in the midst of a rewarding career in project management in the construction industry when his boss, who served on the College’s board, asked him to come and help teach. He liked it so much he continued to do so, well after retiring from the industry. “When I see my students working at some of the same companies I dealt with when I was working in project management, that always makes me feel good,” he said.

He reflects on the College’s milestone and its contributions to the growth of Prince George’s County. “The county is now a force,” he said. He points to the College’s role: “Prince George’s Community College took a front row in training the workforce for the success of the construction and hospitality industries. You need good people to carry out your plans.”

Over the years, his time with students has brought immense joy. “I get just as much as I try to give,” he said. “I have received many blessings.”

“You like to see that what you do benefits people.”

GARY SHEFFLET

PROFESSOR, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

CHANGING LIVES WITH WORDS

Gary Shefflet has seen a lot of change since he started teaching in 1978 as an adjunct in the English Department at Prince George’s Community College.

Over the years, he has enjoyed teaching writing to students pursuing studies in a variety of disciplines. He has personally witnessed the transition from “blackboard to remote” and, in today’s digital age, he focuses as much on research and other communications skills as the technical aspects of writing.

“Students are eager to hear about real-world experiences,” he said. In addition to short and long-form writing, he devotes part of his curriculum to teaching resume writing, interview skills, and what he calls the “whole package” of communications. Students feel

empowered to pursue jobs, write business letters, and use their learned skills across a variety of communications vehicles.

He enjoys teaching students of different backgrounds and interests, including students for whom English is a second language. He recalls a particularly moving experience working with a student who had a limited English background. By the end of the semester, she said to him, “Now I feel comfortable to write my sister a letter.”

Shefflet has enjoyed seeing his students taking what they have learned to whatever discipline they choose. He feels that students are incredibly appreciative of the assistance, and he has a profound appreciation for his students.

“I enjoy preparing my students for different roles in society.”

CARL (RIK) KARLSSON

PROFESSOR, BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

DOWN TO BUSINESS

Rik Karlsson has seen a lot of change throughout his 30 years of teaching at Prince George's Community College. One constant source of inspiration for him has been his students, many of whom have worked either full or part-time while enrolled in his classes. Karlsson draws inspiration from his students' real-world experiences, who often point out to him "how it really is" in the workforce with their own perspectives.

Witnessing these perspectives has helped Karlsson become a better teacher. He is grateful for his students' help in transitioning from military service in the Navy to civilian life. "Selfishly, I learned a lot," he explains. "It helped me tune in my teaching."

Though modest about his contributions to the College, he speaks proudly of the curriculum he helped design focused on leadership. Around his eighth or ninth year at PGCC, the College's Business and Entrepreneurship department chair sought to develop a leadership course. Karlsson took the lead by consulting an advisory group of executives and crafting comprehensive recommendations. The resulting course, Leadership Development, is now part of the general education program, covering universal leadership principles and attracting students from diverse disciplines.

Karlsson points to several alumni commencement speakers who took the course. He is eager to share stories of students excited about their studies and work.

Karlsson is humbled by the success of his students, as well as what he calls the "privilege" of teaching individuals who are "incredibly capable and skilled" but need degrees to advance.



**“IT HAS BEEN A
PRIVILEGE TO
HAVE THESE
STUDENTS HERE.”**



03

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

“STUDENTS FIRST” IS ONE OF PGCC’S CORE COMMITMENTS

At PGCC, our core mission is to empower students through learning. Explore their academic pursuits and personal journeys shared in their own words.

DANIEL SALAMI

COMPUTER ENGINEERING

I was born in the bustling city of Lagos, Nigeria. My community places immense value on education and personal growth—principles that I have always held dear. That's why I decided to pursue my degree in computer engineering at Prince George's Community College, which provides top-notch education at an affordable cost and is conveniently situated near my home.

Throughout my academic journey, I have availed myself of several support services, including academic advising, tutoring, and career counseling to ensure my success both inside and outside the classroom. PGCC has been instrumental in enriching my educational experience by offering diverse courses taught by experienced faculty and providing opportunities for hands-on learning through internships and community engagement projects.

Participating in the ASA and Veterans Club has been one of the most meaningful experiences I have had on campus, enabling me to connect with like-minded peers and make a positive impact in our community. My ultimate goal is to leverage the skills and knowledge I have gained at PGCC to secure a good job in my field of passion and make a meaningful contribution to society.

Whether it's through volunteering, mentoring, or simply offering a helping hand, I believe that we can create positive change and foster a sense of belonging and connection in our world. After graduation, I plan to transfer to a four-year institution to continue my education in computer engineering.

**"TO ME, SERVICE MEANS
GIVING BACK TO MY
COMMUNITY AND
SUPPORTING OTHERS
IN ACHIEVING
THEIR GOALS."**



SADÉ N. DAVIS

HEALTH SCIENCES

"I COULDN'T BE MORE PGCC PROUD!"

I'm a first-generation college student, sixth-generation Washingtonian, and I've lived in Prince George's County since 2014.

I chose Prince George's Community College because it was open and available to me. At the time of the pandemic, when so many institutions were turning students away, PGCC was ready to tackle the virtual transition and helped me begin my post-secondary education with open arms.

At the College, I have utilized the Wellness Center. I give kudos to Dr. Bryant for guiding me through the toughest season of my life when I lost my grandmother. Also, I have benefited from advising—my transfer advisor, Ms. Nicole Stubbs, has been an amazing resource during my time here.

PGCC has immensely enriched my educational experience by offering top-tier courses and pathway programs that allow me to stay on track and finish my degree program on time. My professors also played a huge part; they are compassionate, talented subject matter experts and have supported me inside and outside the classroom.

I have done so many amazing things on this campus, from the "follow the leader" dance at the New Student Convocation to introducing President Joe Biden during his campus visit. But my favorite and most meaningful experience was having the honor of serving the students of PGCC.

They have given me the space to serve them as chief of staff while on the SGA, and the women of PGCC have entrusted me to hear their hearts and offer peer-to-peer mentorship as the lead ambassador of the Women of Wisdom program. The student body has also allowed me to do what had never been done before—be their voice for two consecutive terms as the student trustee on the Board of Trustees.

My most cherished moment will always be making history as the first community college student serving as the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) student commissioner. My future goals are to complete my graduate degree programs (master's and a Ph.D.) and to pursue a career in public health.

After graduation, I plan to continue my education at a four-year university, launch my non-profit, and keep serving the Prince George's County community.



CELINE ANONG

COMPUTER SCIENCE AND CYBERSECURITY

I was born and raised in Cameroon, where I spent the first seven years of my life. My family emigrated to America in 2011. Our journey to the United States marked the beginning of a new chapter in our lives filled with opportunities and challenges.

When we moved to the U.S., I entered the third grade, and my exposure to technology increased significantly. Despite my diverse interests, my father recognized my potential and encouraged me to explore the tech field. As a result, I enrolled in a career and technical education program during my junior year at Laurel High School. After graduating from high school in 2021, I chose to attend the University of Maryland, College Park. In hindsight, I wasn't prepared for the college atmosphere at a large university. I found myself falling behind and struggling to catch up.

After completing my freshman year, I decided to transfer to Prince George's Community College, where I have been studying since the fall of 2022. I started as a dual enrollment student so that the College could become a familiar and comfortable place. The support system is exceptional, and I feel truly heard and seen by the faculty, professors, and my peers.

At PGCC, I have taken full advantage of the various support services available to students. I have utilized the computer labs, tutoring, and writing centers. Furthermore, I have greatly benefited from the Faculty Mentorship Program and Women of Wisdom mentoring programs. PGCC's commitment to providing comprehensive support services has been pivotal to my success and development as a student.

My active involvement in student organizations is a significant part of my enrichment at PGCC. I currently serve as the president of the Women in Cybersecurity Club, where I foster a supportive community for women and engage in meaningful discussions and activities related to cybersecurity.

My future career aspirations are focused on becoming a cybersecurity analyst. A primary goal of mine is to inspire other girls and bridge the gap in this male-dominated field.

Upon completing my academic journey at PGCC, I plan to transfer to the University of Maryland, Baltimore County to pursue my bachelor's in information systems.



"I AM GRATEFUL FOR WHAT I CONSIDER
A SECOND CHANCE AT MY ACADEMIC
PURSUITS. I AM MORE CONFIDENT IN
MY ABILITIES TO SUCCEED AND ASPIRE
TO EARN MY PH.D."



MYOUNNA BLACKMOND

HEALTH SCIENCES

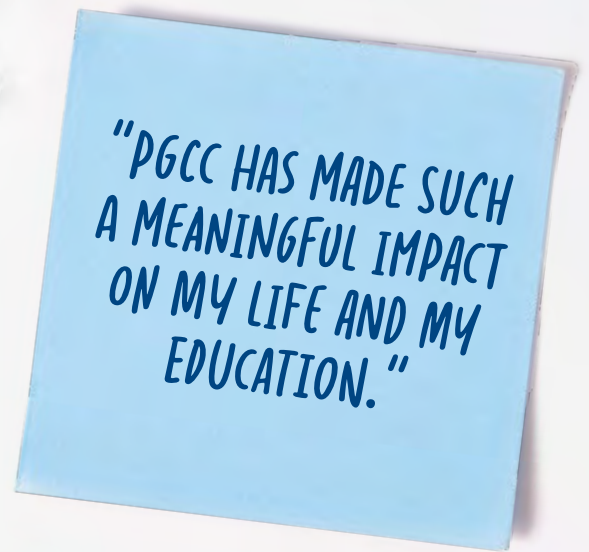
After a two-year school break, I chose PGCC to resume my education, believing it to be the perfect place for me. The convenient location near my home and the sense of community at University Town Center made it an obvious choice. Securing a work-study job there was an added bonus, and I'm very happy with my decision.

I've relied on the tutoring centers for my interpersonal communication, anatomy, and physiology classes, which have been incredibly helpful. The computer labs have also been a daily resource for me while on campus. Additionally, I'm proud to be a member of both TRiO and Women of Wisdom, which have provided me with valuable support and community during my time here.

My favorite and most meaningful campus experience was traveling to New Orleans with the Diverse Male Student Initiative and Women of Wisdom groups. During the trip, we had the opportunity to visit a sugar slave plantation and learn about its history. We also went on several college tours, which were insightful and inspiring. The trip not only provided me with valuable knowledge and experiences, but also allowed me to bond with my peers and mentors. It was a memorable experience that enriched my college journey.

For my future, I aspire to earn my bachelor's degree in public health science from the University of Maryland. Following this, I aim to pursue a master's degree in nursing and become a nurse practitioner. Ultimately, my goal is to establish my own medical spa, merging my interests in healthcare and beauty.





DAISY LOPEZ

BIOLOGY

I'm a second-year student at Prince George's Community College. I am the vice president of the Student Governance Association and run a book club known as "Yes, Girls Read." I am also a part of the Southern Management Leadership Program (SMLP) for entrepreneurship.

I'm studying biology at PGCC and will pursue a bachelor's in neuroscience at the University of Maryland. My goal is to become a neurologist and conduct traumatic brain injury research.

I chose PGCC as my learning institution because of the variety of resources and support offered. During my junior year of high school, my father suffered an aortic aneurysm, leading to his inability to work. It was a huge change in terms of my educational support. Thankfully, I was awarded a full ride to PGCC through a STEM Fair project during my senior year of high school. It was a blessing that began my journey to academic success.

PGCC offers a variety of support services such as tutoring and resume building, which I've utilized to become a strong applicant and student. In addition, Women of Wisdom is another support service that has helped me navigate college during stressful times. They offer a variety of support—including mentoring and tutoring—and exposure to opportunities that benefit my career path. My biology classes, including Anatomy and Physiology, along with Cellular and Molecular Biology, have helped me gain knowledge about my interests and expand my curiosity about what I want to do in the future with my career.

My favorite and most meaningful experience on campus has been STEM Week, an entire week dedicated to learning from professionals about different STEM fields and internships. In November 2023, PGCC sponsored a non-profit clinic that offered multiple medical, vision, and dental services for free to the members of our community, where I volunteered for up to 30 hours. Volunteering was a beautiful way for me to get to know the health needs and disparities that our community faces. As a pre-med student, it made an impact on the type of doctor I'd like to become.

Upon graduation, I will transfer to a four-year university in August! My plans consist of bringing all my knowledge and skills from PGCC and strengthening them as I pursue my bachelor's degree. Someday, I hope to give back to PGCC for every student pursuing a higher education.



BERYL MBANWI

COMPUTER SCIENCE

"THROUGH MY MILITARY EXPERIENCE, I'VE DEVELOPED RESILIENCE, LEADERSHIP SKILLS, AND A STRONG SENSE OF CAMARADERIE, WHICH HAVE SHAPED ME INTO THE PERSON I AM TODAY."

My background encompasses a blend of military service and academic pursuit. Enlisting in the United States Army in March 2022 has instilled in me discipline, leadership skills, and a commitment to service. With a secret clearance and proficiency in both English and French, I've undergone rigorous training and acquired certifications in various fields, including logistics, combat training, and web foundations.

Choosing Prince George's Community College as my learning institution was a strategic decision aligned with my educational and career goals. Pursuing an associate degree in computer science at PGCC provides me with a solid foundation in a field that aligns with my interests and future aspirations.

Throughout my time at PGCC, I've made use of support services such as the Veteran Services and Student Engagement and Leadership (SEAL) offices. These experiences have enriched my educational journey by allowing me to engage with the community, develop leadership skills, and contribute to campus life.

One of my most meaningful on-campus experiences has been volunteering with the Student Government Association and Campus Activities Board, where I've had the opportunity to help organize events, promote campus engagement, and make a positive impact on the student body.

Looking ahead, my goals include completing my associate's degree in computer science and leveraging my military experience and academic background to pursue a career in the tech industry. Post-graduation, I will be transferring to Stevenson University. I also aim to secure a position that allows me to apply my skills and knowledge while continuing to grow professionally.

My service in the United States Army holds deep personal significance to me. It represents a commitment to duty, honor, and service to my country.



AMERGIT “NICKY” ANGOMAS

PSYCHOLOGY

I chose Prince George’s Community College because it was near my home. When I saw the online catalog, I knew they had what I was looking for and the resources I needed. I am studying psychology, and I am in love with it. I am very passionate about helping kids and people struggling with their mental health.

To secure scholarships and become a better student, I have used PGCC’s financial aid and support services and the PGCC Cares Owl Market. PGCC has enriched my educational experience so much because I have learned a lot from my classes and the staff. It has been very helpful. For example, I always learned something I didn’t know at the events held on campus.

My favorite campus experience was when we had the carnival event—there was a lot of good food, fun games, and it felt very significant. In addition, the staff always makes us feel very welcome.

I am proud to receive my first PGCC certificate for the National Society of Leadership and Success for being an excellent student and successfully completing my training. My goal is to maintain a 4.0 GPA, graduate with my associate’s degree, and eventually earn my bachelor’s degree.



**“I CAME TO THE U.S. FOR A CHANGE
AND I AM BEING THE CHANGE.”**



VIANEY PEREA MORALES

TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND LOGISTICS

I chose Prince George's Community College because of financial assistance opportunities. My goal is to complete the behind-the-wheel training, go to the MVA, and pass my pre-trip inspection and driving tests. After getting my CDL license, I would like to find my dream job in the trucking industry.

"AS AN IMMIGRANT, THINGS WERE NOT EASY: A NEW CULTURE, A NEW LANGUAGE, AND A COMPLETELY NEW WORLD—BUT I NEVER GAVE UP. I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 2005 AND NOW, I'M A PGCC STUDENT."



DIANA SORTO

PSYCHOLOGY

I chose Prince George's Community College because of its ability to help students save on their tuition while still having many benefits that support my education.

PGCC has positively impacted my educational experience with the professors who help create a positive environment and motivate me to learn.

I am part of the Women of Wisdom community and feel very supported by them. Among my favorite memories is getting to know my classmates, whom I am now able to call my friends!

My goals are to transfer to a four-year university and become a licensed therapist.

"I AM 19 YEARS OLD AND A FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT."



MAYNARD FOWLER

GENERAL STUDIES

I chose Prince George's Community College for the savings, flexibility and academic preparation. PGCC helped me secure financial aid and job opportunities. My most meaningful experiences were the university field trips that allowed us to explore four-year institutions' academic programs and see if we'd like to transfer to them upon graduation.

"AFTER I GET MY BACHELOR'S DEGREE, I'M THINKING OF BECOMING A FILM PRODUCER."



JAVON ALLEN

GENERAL STUDIES

I went to Prince George's Community College in 2004. I had an amazing experience, so when I decided to get more training after COVID-19, I chose a place where I knew that the staff members were amazing, and the courses were convenient and accommodating!

At PGCC, I've used counselors and advisors to help guide my path. My most memorable moments are when I've seen my growth and had great teachers rooting and celebrating my successes.

Within two months of completing my studies, I had a job offer with an amazing company. I would love to contribute the skills I've learned and apply them to my future.

"MY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE WAS AMAZING. IT HAS SET THE STANDARD FOR WHAT TO EXPECT FROM ANY INSTITUTION."

STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

COMMITTED TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE
THROUGH OUR PEOPLE

ALEXSANDRIA BENNETT, M.L.S.

EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATE, OFFICE OF CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS
AND REGULATION


Alexsandria Bennett is a Prince George's Community College alumna, employee, and participant in the College's Emerging Leaders program, which trains employees for future leadership roles.

After graduating from PGCC, she went on to earn her bachelor's and master's degrees. As she reflected on the College's Core Commitments to empower students, cultivate empathy, ensure equity and uphold integrity, she decided she had to return to the College to shape her career. "PGCC is a rare commodity—the workplace and student experience is like no other," she said.

Bennett is deeply proud and dedicated to the work her role supports in overseeing credit and continuing education programs and course offerings within the College, which also includes developing and improving curriculum and programs. Bennett enjoys the collaborative work environment alongside talented and supportive colleagues, and is also inspired by the College's commitment to student success. "I fell in love with how the College strived to serve its students and community."

Bennett shared a time when a student came into her office because they were lost. She printed out a campus map for the student to take, but noticed that the student looked quite nervous, so she took the time to walk the student to the appropriate building. They shared an open conversation along the way, where Bennett spoke of her own experiences feeling anxious, assuring the student they were not alone. "Having empathy was always a core value of my own, and it is one of the College's Core Commitments," she said.

Reflecting on the College's past and future, Bennett said, "The College is entering a new era of operational excellence and transforming the educational landscape through its Core Commitments. Ultimately, I hope for the next 65 years, the College will continue to be dynamic, collaborative, inclusive, and community-engaged."

A portrait of Alexandria Bennett, a Black woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blue or black top with white polka dots. The background is a light blue gradient.

**“OVER THE
NEXT 65 YEARS,
TOGETHER, WE
CAN DARE TO BE
EXTRAORDINARY.”**

THOMAS MAYS

DIRECTOR, DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

When describing his role in Disability Support Services, Thomas Mays refers to himself as the “spoke” in a wheel, connecting his students to financial aid, tutoring, and other support services to ensure they receive a holistic educational experience.

“My role is to provide equal access to students with disabilities,” Mays explains. He strategizes with students to determine their eligibility, facilitates accommodations for them with professors and more. “I enjoy watching students with disabilities grow and develop as they leave the ‘cocoon’ of special education to have a sustainable life and goals.”

Accessibility has been his passion for the past 27 years at the College. After completing his studies in psychology at San Diego State University, Mays returned to the East Coast to pursue graduate studies at the University of Maryland. It was there that he realized working with people with disabilities might be in his future. “Psychology was my first love,” he explains, but he took an American Sign Language elective and thought, “How can I mesh my love of psychology with this?”

Today, he is proud to be the constant for students at the College. “Our kids take longer to graduate—sometimes, five or six, or even ten years,” he said. He is proud to see them through their journey. When asked to share a particularly proud moment, he found it difficult to choose just one from the many joyous moments he has witnessed. However, he shared one story that still brings tears to his eyes.

Mays once worked with a young man with a learning disability who aspired to become a firefighter. The student needed to improve his science studies, so Mays worked with him on the best course of action to reach his goal. He encouraged him to volunteer first, and part of his journey included studies at the Maryland Fire Institute. The student worked hard, and eventually, he graduated as a firefighter. “Sometimes an indirect route is the best route for a student,” Mays explains. A few years later, the young firefighter came back to thank Mays, telling him, “I will never forget you. You believed in me.”

The story does not end there. Mays continues, “One day in the community, I passed a scene of a fire nearby, and I saw that young man working at the scene. I still get choked up about that moment.”

A portrait of Thomas Mays, a man with short dark hair, glasses, and a mustache, smiling warmly. He is wearing a brown polo shirt. The background is a light blue gradient.

**“WE DELIVER
ON THE
PROMISE OF
EDUCATION.”**

CHANTAL DONES

DIVERSE MALE STUDENT INITIATIVES AND WOMEN OF WISDOM PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Chantal Dones cherishes her role as a mentor, helping to manage the Diverse Male Student Initiative (DMSI) and Women of Wisdom (W.O.W.) programs at Prince George’s Community College. This type of support is something she did not have when she was a student. “I looked to my peers for guidance. We all wished we had a good mentor,” Dones said.

After graduating with her bachelor’s degree in political science from Frostburg State University, she worked for several organizations—including Disney—but felt something was missing. Perhaps, she thought, there would be something for her in education.

Dones applied to several institutions and was quickly hired at Prince George’s Community College. She has loved it ever since.

“These programs really work,” she said of the DMSI and WOW initiatives. “They help students realize success. They find different character traits in themselves they did not even know they had.”

Dones encourages students to become more socially engaged, join clubs, and get involved in talking to other people. She works with students on improving their social and communication skills, as well as supports their academic pursuits.

“What I love most is the impact I am having on my students,” Dones shares. “I can listen, give advice, and it changes their lives.” She recounts an experience with a student who was struggling to find his way. Feeling lost and confused, he kept changing his major and switching classes. Dones worked with the student to help him find his path. He later graduated from PGCC and transferred to the University of Maryland to complete his studies. “Students are often doing it alone,” she said. “They just need guidance.”

Life often presents students with problems and challenges and Dones seeks to be a beacon of light and hope for them. “You are struggling now, but the next season could be your season,” she said.

**“THE WORD
‘CAN’T’
IS NOT
UTTERED
IN OUR
PROGRAMS.”**



KENNETH FORD

**PROGRAM COORDINATOR, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
ASSISTANT COACH, OWLS MEN'S BASKETBALL**

On most days, Kenneth Ford has his hands full with two demanding roles at Prince George's Community College. As a student engagement coordinator and assistant men's basketball coach, he is often seen darting across campus from the gym to his office and back, getting in his own workout.

What is most impressive about Ford is his dedication to both roles. "I would do it for free," he shares. "I don't look at the time commitment—I look at the impact."

Ford is a PGCC alum and former member of the Owls men's basketball team. He graduated in 2018 and received a scholarship from Alliance University (formerly Nyack College) in New York to attend and play basketball. After completing his bachelor's degree in psychology, he decided to return to his roots and came back to PGCC to start his career.

In his current roles, he most enjoys interactions with students. "Students come into my office just to stop by and say hi before their next class," he said. "It makes me feel good."

Reflecting on the College's 65-year milestone, he looks forward to witnessing the campus footprint's continued growth: "I would love to see dorms on campus to expand student life and enhance the great student engagement that we already have," he said. Ford hopes for on-campus housing options that will expand opportunities for prospective students, particularly those who live far from the College, to attend PGCC and benefit from everything it offers.



**“THE COLLEGE HOLDS
A SPECIAL PLACE IN
MY HEART. I HAD TO
COME BACK [AND]
GIVE BACK TO THE
NEXT GENERATION.”**

ALICIA JACKSON-WARREN, M. ED.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNSHIPS


Alicia Jackson-Warren is dedicated to providing the most beneficial employer opportunities and experiences for her students so they may “understand their value and their worth,” she said.

At Prince George’s Community College, Jackson-Warren advocates for paid experiences that offer students meaningful learning and mentorship opportunities for professional growth, as well as compensation for their contributions.

An employee of the College since 2006, Jackson-Warren was pursuing graduate studies at George Mason University and needed an internship, so she sought to join PGCC as an adjunct professor. She began teaching Spanish, which satisfied her internship requirement. The College was already near and dear to her heart; her husband had enrolled in classes and her stepson is a current student. “It’s a family affair,” she said with a smile.

Jackson-Warren eventually landed her current role in the Office of Career Development and Internships, and feels she has found her calling. “I enjoy working with students, to help connect them with opportunities,” she states. “It increases their sense of pride and self-value and allows them to dream.”

With her own family as an example of PGCC’s lasting impact, she enjoys seeing other families benefit from the College’s resources across multiple generations.



**“WE LEAN
HEAVILY INTO
LIFELONG
LEARNING. PGCC
WILL DO THAT
FOR YOU.”**

JO ANN TODARO

ATHLETICS DIRECTOR


Athletics Director Jo Ann Todaro has led an illustrious 40-year career at PGCC.

Prince George's Community College's Athletics Director Jo Ann Todaro has enjoyed watching the College expand and evolve over four decades, growing into what she endearingly describes as a "Warm, welcoming place to be." And she has personally enjoyed every single moment.

The Athletics Department has certainly changed during her tenure. When she first started, she mentions, "anyone could play." The College's athletic programs have grown to foster rigorous recruiting for multiple varsity sports for men and women, as well as intramurals for both.

PGCC's Athletics Department has a history of excellence that includes national championship and producing 130 All-Americans throughout its history. The College is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association Region 20 and the department has won 55 Region 20 titles. The College is also a member of the Maryland Junior College Athletic Conference, which is comprised of all the junior colleges that sponsor athletics in Maryland. PGCC has won 21 Maryland JUCO titles to date.

Todaro is immensely proud of all her student-athletes. Watching them compete, grow, and flourish academically to walk across the stage at graduation is something that has never lost its magic. She knows the College will continue to embrace a co-curricular experience, which will make it an even greater place to be in the coming years. She looks forward to the College nurturing greater student engagement, which will foster a larger fan base and generate more support for the athletic program and its student-athletes.

A portrait of Jo Ann Todaro, the Athletics Director at PGCC. She is a woman with short, light brown hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a black top and large hoop earrings. The background is a light blue gradient.

**“I ENJOY WORKING WITH
OUR STUDENTS ... I AM SO
THANKFUL TO BE PART
OF THEIR LIVES.”**

BRITT HOWARD

POLICE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

For two decades, Britt Howard has worked to keep the campus community at Prince George's Community College safe. Howard has a very unique skill set with a bachelor's degree in security and law enforcement technology from Bowie State University.

"I'm a civilian administrator," he explains. Howard is highly versed in utilizing information technology and law enforcement to manage statistical data, reduce response times, and improve overall public safety.

When asked what he is most proud of, Howard points to the Owl SAFE app he was instrumental in bringing to campus.

Now in its third year, the app's wide range of functionality has been a game changer for campus security.

Howard most enjoys interacting with the diverse college community and appreciates the multifaceted nature of his job. "Every day is a little different," Howard notes as he describes his role, from meeting students daily to working on critical cases with other agencies—or even simply helping someone on campus get to where they need to go. He is proud to be working at PGCC, as the College is an integral part of supporting the educational goals of the community.



“I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A FAN OF PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY AND I LOVE WHAT PGCC IS DOING FOR THE COUNTY. I’M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT 65 YEARS!”

BARBARA SMITH

POLICE LIEUTENANT

The Department of Public Safety supports the College's mission by providing a safe environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through a proactive community policing philosophy, the enforcement of state and local laws, and the rules and regulations of the College.

Lieutenant Barbara Smith is passionate about this responsibility. Transitioning from street patrol policing to community policing brought her to PGCC, and creating a safe atmosphere and environment is what drives her. As the first female lieutenant on campus, she is dedicated to ensuring campus safety and keeping the greater community safe.

Lieutenant Smith was recently named an "End Violence Against Women International Game Changer" for her leadership in the fight to eradicate gender-based violence. With over 15 years in law enforcement, she is well known for her commitment to being a voice for the silenced and an advocate for the disempowered.

Lieutenant Smith's community service does not end with law enforcement. In February 2024, she took a group of students to a local nursing home to visit senior citizens for Valentine's Day. "I enjoy being active with all age groups," she states. "To see smiles on faces ... that is our way of giving back."



**“I AM THANKFUL.
I ENJOY MAKING
A DIFFERENCE.”**

CATHY CAMP

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT,
STUDENT AFFAIRS

Cathy Camp has worked in Student Affairs at PGCC for 15 years, and she wouldn't change a thing. She enjoys supporting and working with students in ways outside the classroom. "I would not want to work anywhere else," she said.

One thing is certain: she's a very busy woman. Camp oversees many of the College's scholarship programs and was instrumental in launching the Prince George's County Promise Scholarship at PGCC, which helps students complete their education by covering costs beyond the federal, state and private aid they receive.

Camp is also very involved in the Diverse Male Student Initiatives program. She recalls stuffing envelopes for invitations to the program's launch event. "I'm so proud to have done everything I can do to help the College," she said.

Perhaps her proudest accomplishment is the work she does in celebrating the College's graduates each year. This is her third year overseeing the commencement ceremony. "If I had a small part in a student's success, that is the payoff."

A portrait of Cathy Camp, a woman with short, light brown hair, wearing glasses, a brown jacket, and a patterned scarf. She is smiling and looking directly at the camera. Her hands are clasped in front of her.

**“IT’S ALWAYS A
GOOD DAY WHEN
I CONNECT WITH
A STUDENT.”**

DR. ANTOINE DEAS

ACADEMIC AND TRANSFER ADVISOR

Dr. Antoine Deas decided fairly early in his career that the community college landscape was the best fit for him.

Dr. Deas found his purpose at Prince George's Community College after gaining experience serving in roles at other community colleges and four-year institutions. "I have grown and thrived here," he said with pride. "PGCC is home."

Dr. Deas tells his students that degrees don't have start and end dates. He shares, "Life happens and everyone has different experiences. I tell my students, 'Your story is your story, your journey is your journey.'"

Dr. Deas is proud of the College expanding its size and stature, growing in reputation and prestige from being viewed as a "second-thought school," as he describes, to a "first-choice school."

Reflecting on the College's 65-year milestone, he believes that PGCC has excelled in providing students the greatest level of resources and opportunities. He points to how the College has leveraged technology to benefit students and prioritized flexibility to accommodate student needs inside and outside the classroom.

From his own lens, he is proud of the journey he's witnessed and nurtured for so many students from enrollment to graduation. Working with students of different ages, backgrounds, and skill sets—whether they are looking for credentials, a career change, or moving on to a four-year institution—simply helping them realize their personal and academic goals has been very fulfilling.

A portrait of Dr. Antoine Deas, a Black man with a full beard and mustache, wearing a grey polo shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a light blue gradient.

**“I AM MOST PROUD
OF HELPING
STUDENTS GO FROM
‘I CAN’T’ TO ‘I DID.’”**

ANDREA WILLEY

INTERNSHIPS AND EMPLOYER RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Andrea Willey describes the students she works with at Prince George’s Community College as “a gold mine.” After retiring from the Anne Arundel County Public School System, she found her way to the College through her current role in the Office of Career Development and Internships. “My entire career has been about opportunities for people,” she shares, reflecting on her journey over the years.

In her current role, she ensures employers are providing those beneficial opportunities to students. She is proud to be working with some of the region’s top organizations, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the CIA, and Motorola.

Willey is energized to share that employers are seeing the benefits of recruiting community college students. “They are driven. They are in school because they want to be here. They really see the value in their education,” she emphasizes. “Our partners are saying, ‘We want community college students.’” For instance, NIH recently launched its Community College Summer Enrichment Program (CCSEP), which is specifically earmarked for community college students interested in exploring research and health care careers. One of the NIH Institutes and Centers (IC) in the NIH Intramural Research Program offers full-time research positions. Additionally, research groups are located on all NIH campuses, including the main campus in Bethesda, MD.

“Our students want these opportunities. They are interested in careers. They are interested in providing for their families,” Willey explains.

She looks forward to bringing more partners into the fold and providing even more opportunities for students at the College.



**“THE LOCAL
COMMUNITY—AND
EMPLOYERS—KNOW
OUR STUDENTS
SHOW UP.”**

RACHEL POLETO

REGISTRAR

Rachel Poleto travels a short distance to her job as registrar at Prince George's Community College—just ten minutes from door to door. She had her eye on a role at the College for a while, but not just because of the short commute. As a Prince George's County resident, she was aware of the quality and breadth of resources the College offers. "It was astounding to me," she recalls, discussing the College's student commitment and its programmatic offerings, from dual enrollment and continuing education to professional development and personal enrichment.

Now that she has been at the College for several years, Poleto has first-hand knowledge of it serving as the "center for community," as she describes. She witnessed how the College pivoted in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic with a thoughtful, student-centered approach. "Our students were still able to learn," she said. "We diversified how we are delivering services."

Reflecting on the past and looking towards the future, Poleto would like to see the College continue to modernize and grow relationships within and outside of Maryland. She states, "I love how mission-driven we are. We walk the talk."

Her time at the College has motivated her to provide greater service to students, but she also feels inspired to further her own learning. She enrolled in classes to earn a certificate in Computer Programming and Database Systems. Poleto has enrolled in classes to earn a certificate in computer programming and database systems. "I am proud to be a staff member, and also proud to be a graduate myself," she concludes.

**"PRINCE
GEORGE'S
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE IS
TRULY A HUB
FOR OUR
COMMUNITY."**



DR. KYLE TURMAN

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, TRANSFER SERVICES

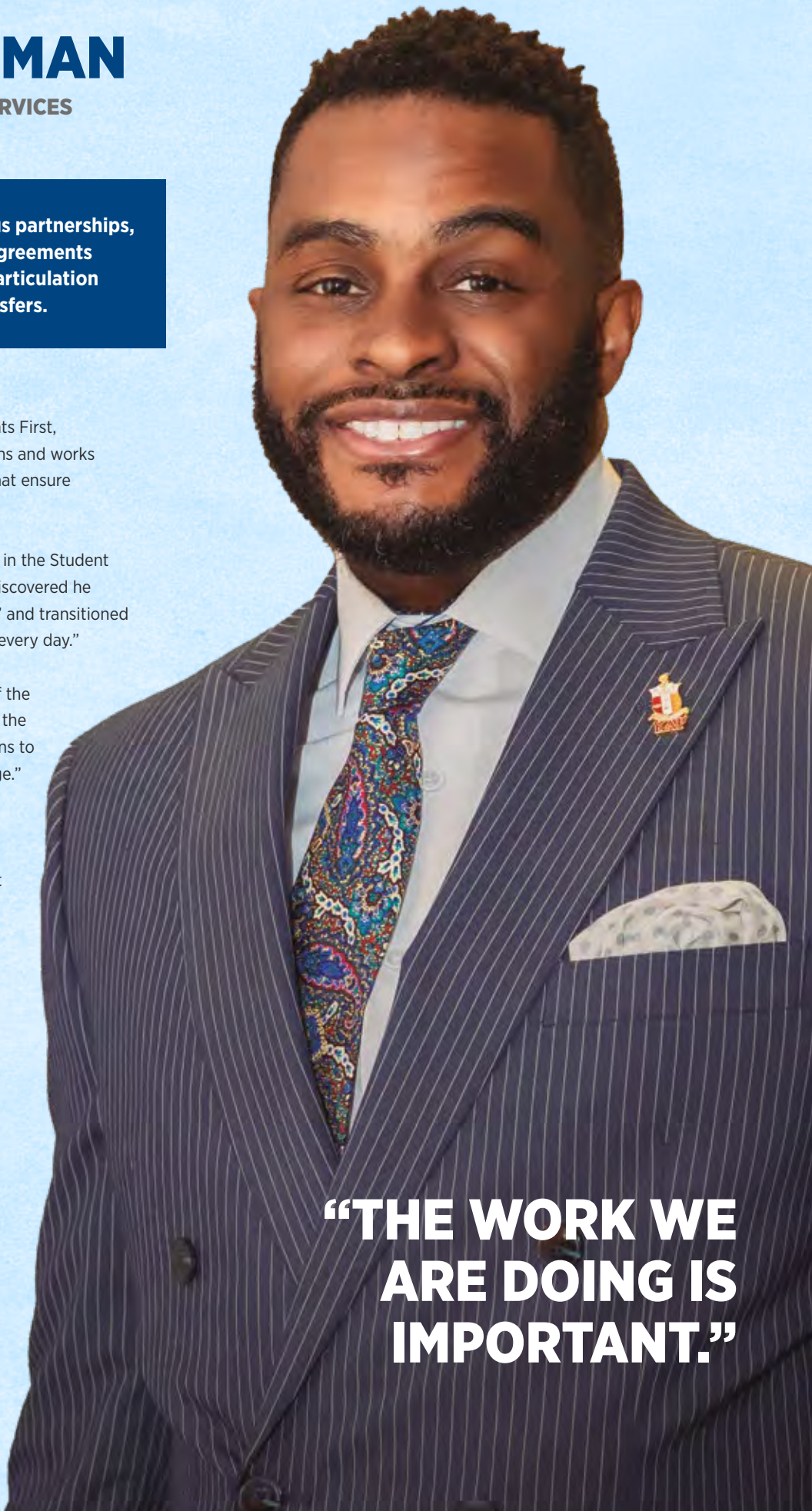
In his role overseeing transfer and campus partnerships, Dr. Kyle Turman is tasked with creating agreements that benefit students and staff, securing articulation agreements, and facilitating student transfers.

Led by the College's Core Commitment of Students First, Dr. Turman plans student transfer advising sessions and works with four-year institutions to identify programs that ensure seamless transitions for all students.

Dr. Turman came to PGCC a decade ago, working in the Student Support Services and Student Engagement. He discovered he wanted a "heavier lift in advising and curriculum," and transitioned to his current role, where he "finds excitement in every day."

For Dr. Turman, witnessing the uplifting impact of the College and its immersion in the community over the years is impressive. He enjoys making contributions to this impact and calls his office "an agent of change."

In the coming years, as Prince George's County and the state of Maryland continue to grow, he sees the need for expanded legislation to support the transfer process and encourage greater transparency. He looks forward expanding his team to align with this growth. "Any means we can serve the community is something I'd like to see," Dr. Turman remarks.



**“THE WORK WE
ARE DOING IS
IMPORTANT.”**

LAURA MILLER

**PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION
SERVICE LEARNING DIRECTOR**

Laura Miller enjoys her multifaceted roles at Prince George's Community College. She has been with the College for about eight years after initially coming to PGCC for a part-time adjunct role in teaching communications. Now full-time, she combines her time spent in the classroom with community engagement as the director of Service Learning.

Miller relishes the opportunity to learn from her students and her colleagues to ultimately make the College a better place to learn and work. She is very energized about the 65th anniversary and the ongoing events to celebrate and commemorate this milestone.

"It's amazing and inspiring to recognize where we are and work towards where we want to be," Miller said, reflecting on this milestone year.

Miller hopes the College will have a greater international presence in the future. She is excited about the expansions planned for a larger, more elevated campus footprint. She is also proud of smaller but equally important initiatives exploring different ways to bring the College and community together. For example, she is working with a small team on a community garden project to create an outdoor learning space for everyone to gather. From an intimate garden to the whole world, there is so much possibility.



**"I SEE OUR STUDENTS
COMPETING ON THE
GLOBAL STAGE."**

RONALD WEIST

ADMINISTRATOR, CUSTOMER
RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

When he's not in the stands cheering for his favorite MLB team, Ronald Weist is busy using technology to solve challenges.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Administrator Ronald Weist has spent over 25 years in enrollment development for higher education. His experience includes working at higher-ed institutions, public and private schools and ensuring student success on small and large campuses alike. When he took a short break to work for a technology start up, he felt something was missing. "I loved the pace and innovation, but ultimately came back," Weist said. "I wanted to leverage my skills again to make a meaningful impact."

Today, as a CRM administrator for PGCC, he is tasked with developing engagement strategies and tools to support the admissions process. "I love my job; I love the work," he said. "It's challenging; I am paid to solve problems. I get to work with a great team of innovators and leaders and leverage my skills."

He was able to launch and implement Navigate 360, a new CRM system for the College, calling it "a game changer that has taken community colleges by storm." Based on a decade's worth of research to improve recruitment, student success, and the student experience, Navigate 360 is the leading CRM platform for higher education. It enables faculty and staff to communicate with students, view their information, run reports, and conduct outreach.

Weist is pleased with the success of this implementation and all it has done to strengthen the College and its community. He concludes by saying, "I am inspired for the reason we are here."



**“HERE AT PGCC,
WE REALLY LIVE
AND EMBODY
OUR MISSION
STATEMENT.”**

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A CATALYST FOR POSITIVE CHANGE**

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**“AS WE LOOK
FORWARD TO THE
FUTURE, LET US NOT
FORGET HOW FAR
WE’VE COME.”**

