

connections

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

WINTER/SPRING 2019 VOL. XLIV NO. 1

New Programs on Tap for 2019

 **100%** Online Courses
(excluding clinical)

 **Faculty with Real World Experience**

 **500,000**
Nurses Expected to Retire by 2022

 **1.1 MILLION**
New Nurses Needed by 2023

 **2018-2019**
Best Bachelor's Health Care
— BestColleges.com

 **#1 Online College**
— Best College Reviews

RN to BSN to Graduate “Nurse of the Future”

In response to market demand for BSN-educated nurses, the College has launched an online Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. The American Nurses Association (ANA) estimates 500,000 nurses are expected to retire by 2022. The U.S. Bureau of Labor predicts 1.1 million new nurses will be needed by 2023.

This program joins a portfolio of popular online health care-focused degree programs including a CAHIIM-accredited B.S. in Health Information Management and a B.S. in Health Care Administration.

Program Director Linda Perfetto, PhD, RN, FAADN, CNE, CNOR commented, “The RN-BSN curriculum was built to provide a contemporary, seamless pathway to the baccalaureate for RNs with an associate degree. Though the program has been designed in alignment with the Connecticut Community College Nursing Program (CT-CCNP) curriculum, it is open to any RN who has earned an

associate degree or diploma in nursing from any nationally accredited program in the United States.” Perfetto continued, “In addition to offering coursework that builds upon prior education, we focused on approaches that meet the busy lifestyles of today’s working nurses that may reduce the time and cost of obtaining a BSN; to this end the online medium is ideal.”

The 120-credit program’s core nursing discipline courses have been developed to meet the Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Practice (CCNE, 2008) using the Massachusetts Nurse of the Future Core Competencies (MA DHE, 2010, 2016) as a curricular framework. Online courses combined with a clinical practice component, will provide students with the opportunity to apply newly acquired knowledge and skills.

President Ed Klonoski said, “Offering career-relevant degree programs that increase an employee’s marketplace value and help employers address skills gaps is Charter Oak’s focus. Data shows a need to increase the number of baccalaureate



Linda Perfetto PhD, RN, FAADN, CNE, CNOR

(BSN) prepared nurses in Connecticut 25% by 2020.” (The Connecticut Center for Nursing Workforce, 2016)

For more information about the program, visit www.CharterOak.edu/RN-to-BSN.

Graduate Certificates Offered

Three online Graduate Certificate programs are now available for those interested in pursuing graduate-level studies. They include certificates in Leadership, Nonprofit Leadership and Organizational Development. Each certificate program includes four 3-credit courses.

Shirley Adams, Provost, said of the certificates, “Certificates often serve as a way to advance careers by enhancing a current degree and skills set. The certificates offer graduate-level studies with their equivalent academic rigor, plus the credit earned can be used toward our master’s degree program.”

For more information, visit www.CharterOak.edu/graduate-certificates.

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THE PRESIDENT'S TAKE



A Look Forward

I write these messages twice a year, and they are mostly focused on current developments. But with the College enjoying its 45th Anniversary year, I thought I might take a longer viewpoint.

When Charter Oak was imagined back in 1973, its founders had no idea that web-based distance learning would

be invented and even less idea that the College would become instructional. Our creators did imagine an institution that served an adult audience and one that could connect their learning – from whatever the source – to a college transcript. But our founders had one even more critical idea: they directed us to learn from our students. And learn we did.

Over the years since our founding, we launched video-based courses and then morphed those into web-based courses. We never thought this would be more than a marginal activity. But when our students kept registering for online courses and demanding more, we found a way to meet that demand. Across 20 years we went from no courses to about 400. When students began arriving with fewer transfer credits, they asked for specific degree programs. They no longer just wanted to finish an Individualized General Studies degree, they wanted a degree in Business or Psychology or Criminal Justice and more recently health care degrees. So we converted our most popular concentrations into majors. At every graduation we heard alums ask for a Master's program, and although it took us many years to get the approvals, in 2015 we got our first Master's degree approved and dramatically extended the original mission of the College. We now have two more Master's approved and currently under design. Along the way, we became a technology center for higher education with the creation and 20 year life cycle of the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium.

And the changes continue today. We are one of a very small handful of schools offering scholarship support for Portfolios and Testing (PLA). The resources come from our Foundation, and they

are pleased that for the price of a three credit course they can support 16 PLA credits. The Foundation also created a program called the Student Crisis Fund that allows us to provide resources in real time to solve a student's financial crisis. We have covered the emergency needs of laptops, cancer treatments, and internet access to help students get over the finish line. Over the past 45 years, the Foundation has increased its endowment from \$0 to over two million dollars, and they give over \$90,000 per year in scholarship support to our students.

When Charter Oak was created, we were imagined in the space between the Community Colleges and the Connecticut State Universities. Our pricing was placed between them as well. We have always served Community College students, but typically not until after they have left the Community College for some period of time. We now offer recent community college graduates the opportunity to finish their Bachelor's at Charter Oak at the community college tuition rate. To be eligible, they have to enroll within six months of finishing their Associate degree at a Connecticut Community College. This program is called the Community College Tuition Match and it is proving to be a big success. We are encouraging students to finish one degree and then move to the next without delay and without moving away from their home base. They can keep their current living arrangement and their job and work though the next 60 credits, often using their federal financial aid to pay for their tuition. It's another creative program from Charter Oak that makes college more affordable.

Finally, Charter Oak has lots of articulation agreements with other schools, but we are now working to create articulations between our programs and employers. So keep your eyes on us as we build more bridges between our degree programs and the industries they serve.

That is the January 2019 update. Keep your suggestions and feedback coming to eklonoski@charteroak.edu.

Ed Klonoski, President



Shirley Adams, Provost

"New Programs on Tap for 2019" continued from pg. 1

New Workforce Certificates

Our Victim Advocacy Certificate is designed for students who are already working in the criminal justice field, social work, or looking to enter into victim advocacy work. This certificate is 15 credits, 9 of which must be taken at Charter Oak.

The Health Information Fundamentals for Health Professionals certificate is designed

for students who are employed in an administrative staff position within health care, primarily in a Health Information Management (HIM) department, who are looking to gain a better understanding of HIM and want to advance in their career. This certificate is 12 credits, all of which must be taken at Charter Oak. 🌱

Alumni Association Greeting!

John Thomas, Alumni Association President

First and foremost, I hope everyone had a fantastic holiday season and your New Year is off to a great start. Now that the winter solstice has passed and the days are getting longer, we have real reason to celebrate. Spring is only 65 days away!

We have other things to celebrate, too.

Here is what's happening/happened as we enter 2019:

- **Hartford Wolf Pack Winter Social & Fundraiser (January 26)**
- **Charter Oak's 45th Anniversary Celebration (March 30)**
- **Alumni Association Community Impact Project (May, exact date TBD)**

With regard to the Wolf Pack event, \$5 of every ticket sold benefitted the COSC Alumni Association Master of Science Degree Scholarship. It was a great night of family fun.

Charter Oak is turning back time and celebrating 70's style with a disco dance party March 30, 2019, and as a planning committee member, I look forward to shining the disco ball spot light on our amazing graduates and their

accomplishments. Save-the-date and start thinking of how you will participate.

Community Service projects are being planned by our new ad hoc community relations committee. Details will be sent via email and posted on our social media networks.

In 2018, major collaborative opportunities presented themselves. We joined talent, time, and resources with the Student Association and Foundation Board leadership to host two career enhancing workshop series: 1) Career Development and 2) SBA Smart Business. These were well-received and, more importantly, added value to the COSC student and alumni experience.

Now for 2019, the Alumni Board is embarking on a new mission with the goal of making a legacy impact! We've kicked off a series of strategic thinking meetings intended to help us focus our energy and achieve that goal. The first meeting's agenda focused on our vision statement as well as what an alumni association-spearheaded career development center should look like. We



John Thomas, Alumni Association President

have a lot more thinking, planning, and working to do.

My grandmother used to say, "Many hands make light work". I don't know if that's exactly true, but I know we cannot do it without you. More stakeholders at the table means an association that works better for us all. If you are interested in joining us, being a part of this endeavor, and making an impact on YOUR alma mater, please connect with me directly at john.c.thomas6@gmail.com or Carol Hall at alumni@charteroak.edu or 860.515.3889.

Warmest regards and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2019. 🌱

Alumni Association Round Up



Alumni and student leadership along with College staff and faculty gathered at the end-of-year holiday gathering.

Collaboration was the theme in 2018 as the COSC Alumni Association, Student Association, and Foundation Board of Directors joined resources to provide informative and complimentary workshops for students, alums, and friends of the College.

Joyce Petrella and her Calculus of Talent team presented a three-part Workshop Series, emphasizing career and personal development, along with practical networking tips and career enhancing tools for our hard-working adult students.

Also, the Small Business Administration, Smart Business Series, spearheaded by

Foundation Board member, Julio Casiano, was offered in the fall. Expert guest speakers presented on best practices for successful small business ownership, financial opportunities available for business owners, as well how-to and how-not-to plan, prepare, and lead as a business owner.

Collaboration continued as the Alumni and Students hosted the 2018 Holiday Happy Hour, a time to gather, relax, and enjoy an affordable evening in downtown New Britain, December 3, 2018. Five Churches Brewing offered a unique experience with wood-fired pizza, plate-sized baked pretzels, and samplings of craft-brewed beer. Charter Oak's alums took pride and pleasure in bringing home baked goods to share. New friendships and connections for life-time and association board members were the result of time well spent. 🌱



Connections recently caught up with Leena Sampemane, '93

Leena Sampemane is a woman ahead of her time who attended the College ahead of its time. She began her education in India, but due to her husband's employment opportunities and visa status, she was unable to complete her undergraduate degree conventionally. Upon arriving in Connecticut, she was referred to Charter Oak State College and is very grateful of the guidance from her advisor at the time. Leena received the needed and appreciated advice for the fastest path to degree completion. She combined the college credits she had earned in India, community college credits from Florida with CLEP testing, and classes at Southern Connecticut State University, to complete her degree. She graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in General Studies with a Concentration in Business. She attributes her non-traditional career path to her non-traditional degree and the guidance from the College.

After getting their green cards, Leena and her husband moved to Columbia, S.C. where she enrolled in a Master's program but decided to put that on hold when she landed her first job with SCT (Systems and Computer Technology) as a programmer. Given its small size, she benefitted from the full cycle experience of software development from gathering customer requirements, to design and development and implementation. Soon she joined AT&T GIS (aka NCR) as an application

developer to build and implement solutions for their PC manufacturing business. In 1995 wanting to see the west coast, they moved to California and she joined Oracle Corporation.

While her AT&T experience was crucial to her nailing the Oracle interview, Leena credits Charter Oak for ensuring that she met the pre-requisite (a degree) for the position at Oracle. She joined as an application engineer in the Order Management product group and within four years became its main Architect. She greatly enjoyed interacting with customers, and switched to a product management role in 2003 and became a product management director in 2007. She spent 17 years at Oracle, in five different roles designing and delivering enterprise applications. In 2012, she joined Intuit as the lead architect for their monetization platform and more recently switched to the central architecture role where she drives various cross-company initiatives that ensure Intuit's technology investments are aligned with its business strategy.

**"If it wasn't for Charter Oak,
it would have taken me a lot
longer to get the degree and
to just get a foot in the door."**

Leena originally was looking for a career in commercial art but got interested in programming through her husband. She found that not only did she like programming, she was also pretty good at it. She soon discovered her sweet spot – the intersection of technology and business. Leena declares "if it wasn't for Charter Oak, it would have taken me a lot longer to get the degree and to just get a foot in the door." She happened to be in the right places at the right times as technology advanced with her degree in hand and was able to accelerate her career in a then more male dominated field.

Leena has presented at the Grace Hopper Conference for Women in Technology and various other industry forums. Her career, work, and willingness have made her a role model and mentor to girls and women in technology. She volunteers for code.org, an organization dedicated to expanding computer literacy across the world and encourages everyone to check it out. She loves reading to children, playing scrabble with seniors, volunteering at her local food bank, and still enjoys art. She ponders where her future will lead but is certain it would have been much different if not for her Charter Oak State College degree!

Leena was happy to share her Charter Oak story and proclaimed that the freedom and flexibility made an unconventional path to degree completion possible as Charter Oak State College was indeed ahead of its time. She is also proud to be able to give back financial support to the Charter Oak Foundation's Annual Appeal in hopes that she can help others realize their degree completion dream and accelerate their professional journey as well. 🌱

connections

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Issued semi-annually for alumni and friends
of Charter Oak State College.

 **CharterOak™**
STATE COLLEGE
Degrees Without Boundaries

*Charter Oak State College complies with all applicable
federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination
and affirmative action.*

Helen Diecidue, Editor

**State of Connecticut
Ned Lamont, Governor**

**Board of Regents
Mark E. Ojakian, President**

**Charter Oak State College
Ed Klonoski, President**

alumni spotlight

1979

Robert Gandt, B.A. in General Studies with a Concentration in History, recently published his sixteenth book, *Angels in the Sky: How a Band of Volunteer Airmen Saved the New State of Israel* (W.W. Norton). Gandt is a former naval officer, airline captain, novelist, and screenwriter. His previous books include *The Twilight Warriors* (Random House), which won the Admiral Morison Prize for Literature, and *Bogeys and Bandits* (Viking) which he adapted for the CBS series *Pensacola: Wings of Gold*.

1982

Karen Youngdahl, B.S. in General Studies with a Concentration in Business, offers a huge thanks for her career to Charter Oak College (or Connecticut Board for State Academic Awards as it was known when she enrolled). She also offers thanks to a past colleague who saw her struggling to keep up with her classes while working full time in IT at a Connecticut insurance company and directed her to Charter Oak. She completed her degree quickly and spent 20 years as a technical representative employed by Hewlett-Packard.

1991

Fred R. Miclon, Jr., B.S. in General Studies with a concentration in Business, Colonel, US Air Force, recently retired following 41 years of military service including four years of active duty in the Marine Corps and just over 37 years in the Connecticut Air National Guard. Prior to his most recent position as Director of Staff for the

Connecticut Air National Guard, he served as Vice Commander for the 103rd Airlift Wing located in East Granby, CT. Col. Miclon deployed to Southwest Asia three times and was the 387th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron Commander during the initial phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. His military decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, and the Meritorious Service Medal. In addition to his Bachelor's Degree in Management from Charter Oak State College, he is a 2002 graduate of the USAF Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

1993

Marcia Anderson-Esson, B.S. in General Studies with a Concentration in Health Studies was appointed District Chairperson for Hunger with Georgia Lions District 18L. Marcia is also our first-ever Alumni Ambassador who currently serves on both the Alumni Association and Foundation Boards.

2013

Sue Balla, B.S. in General Studies with a Concentration in Sociology, works in home care nursing specializing in end of life nursing. Certified in Alzheimer's Caregiving, she is now earning a certificate in Home Care Nursing in order to work with nursing agencies. She is an appointed member of the Commission on Aging for the Brookfield Museum and Historical Society in Brookfield, CT. She enjoys her free time with church ministry and choir activities.

2014

Shlomo Boukai, B.A. in General Studies with a Concentration in Political Science.

Shlomo earned a Master of Public Administration in 2018 from CUNY Baruch College. Shlomo now works full time for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York City.

2015

Kelly Anelli, B.S. in General Studies with a Concentration in Child Studies, earned her Master's Degree in October of 2017 in Human Services and Non-Profit Management from Post University. She is currently a Doctoral Candidate at Concordia University with a conferral date of May 2021 in the field of Higher Education. She hopes to become a college professor. She currently serves as the Director of Member Organization Services at The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the core lead for education and training at the Children's Center on Family Violence.

2016

Daniel Oliva, B.S. in General Studies with a Concentration in Individualized Studies. Daniel graduated from Charter Oak in 2016 at the age of 62 with a mix of classes and DSST exams. Completing his Bachelor's Degree allowed him to renew his career. He is currently working full time for a major health care provider and participates in the Connecticut Society for Respiratory Care board of directors.

Bennet Sacks B.S. in General Studies with a Concentration in Liberal Studies. He is currently employed in the financial industry, at investment firm David Lerner Associates.

Ryan Schwab B.S. in General Studies with a Concentration in Organizational Leadership. Ryan recently graduated from Norwich University with a Master of Science in Leadership and has since been promoted to Managing Director, Digital Advisor Solutions Risk and Controls at Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. 🌱



**STAY
CONNECTED!**

We always like to hear from our alumni about promotions, graduate degrees, awards, marriages, births, and other significant successes in your life. Email updates to share to chall@charteroak.edu.

Foundation Hosts First Annual Employer Appreciation Breakfast

The Charter Oak State College Foundation's First Annual Employer Appreciation Celebration was held November 30, 2018 at River: A Waterfront Restaurant & Bar in Wethersfield, Connecticut. Gold sponsor, Fiduciary Investment Advisors, along with COSC Foundation Board members, provided the opportunity for students and graduates of Charter Oak, to "bring their boss to breakfast," for a celebration of higher education, mentoring, and graduate success.

The breakfast program provided time to socialize and an opportunity to hear from proponents of Charter Oak State College and higher education, from both the employer and student perspective.

Debbi Wright, System Director of Health Information Management at Hartford HealthCare, kicked off the morning by describing her personal journey to degree completion and her role in mentoring students. Debbi lauded the work of Charter Oak and our students' effort and success at Hartford HealthCare.

Next, Carlo Esidore, Alumnus and Charter Oak State College instructor, awed the audience as he described how Charter Oak changed his life. Earning his Associates in 1979, starting a family, and working full time kept him from completing college further for 25 years. He decided to complete his Bachelor's degree through Charter Oak State College where he excelled, gained confidence, and learned of options that expanded his career path. He then earned a teaching certificate and became a Charter Oak State College instructor. An active alum, he has also served on the Alumni Association Board.

The morning program concluded with the Charter Oak State College Foundation bestowing the 2018 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year award to Hartford HealthCare. The nomination by current student and scholarship recipient, Kwame Asamoah, asserted the value of his employment and the environment of support as the reason behind his nomination. What stood out for the winning employer is the personal commitment felt by



The 2018 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year - Hartford HealthCare! From left to right, Shelly Johnson; Kwame Asamoah, COSC Student and Scholarship Recipient; Debbi Wright, RHIA, System Director of Health Information Management; and Guest Speaker, missing from the picture, supervisor, Celia Rodriguez.

the employee. To quote the nomination, "my employer brought the hope that I never had, by encouraging me to continue my education. Not only does my employer care for its patients, but also its employees and their families."

Cecilia Kozlowski, Chair of the Foundation Development committee explained that the formation of the Golden Acorn Employer of the Year award began by acknowledging the growth of our students and the impact they have on the workplace. "The employment, mentoring, and encouragement the employers and bosses give our graduates helps transform their lives, from students to employees, supervisors, managers, and more!" A comparison to the phrase from Chaucer "mighty oaks from little acorns grow" to the mission behind COSC, "enhancing the workforce one graduate at a time."

Each of the 21 employers represented at the breakfast were winners to their perspective employee; the encouragement, support, and guidance as well as leadership was evident in all the nominations. The Foundation acknowledged and appreciated the following employers:



Attending the breakfast were members of the Charter Oak State College Foundation Board of Directors shown here with COSC President Ed Klonoski. Top left, Dave Calibey, Daniel Purushotham, President Ed Klonoski, Martin Geitz, Julio Casiano, and Joe Waxman; seated, Neal Cunningham, Joyce Petrella, Cecilia Kozlowski, Rebeka Scalia, and Glenn Davis.



Dave Ross, Northeast Wealth Solutions; Dave Calibey, Big Thunk; Andrea Osborn, Clinical Specialist, Biomedical Inc. and Employer of the Year Nominee; Edmund Amante, COSC Scholarship Recipient; and Maureen Zavodjancik, Cigna Corp.

2018 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year

Hartford HealthCare: Celia Rodriguez, Shelly Johnson, Zachary Tillotson, and Debbi Wright

Appreciation Recipients included:

Adrienne Cochran, *YWCA Hartford*
Andrea Osborn, *Biomedical Inc.*
Andrea Williams, *GoHealth*
Cynthia Pirro, *Easter Seals CT*
Debbi Moser, *The Hartford*
Eric Zematis, *Charter Oak State College*
Linda Guzzo, *Capital Community College*
Louis Marino, *GoHealth*
Marcy Kaplan, *Klingberg*
Mark Dunn, *Masonicare*
Patrice Bernier, *Day Kimball Hospital*
Richard Gordon, *ADESTA Group*
Ruth Krems, *Capital Community College*
Sean Doherty, *YWCA Wallingford*
Stan Sobey, *Oak Hill*
Wendy Strollo, *Department of Veterans Affairs*



Stan Sobey, Vice President, Public Policy & External Affairs and Employer of the Year Nominee, with Tricia Nolan, Oak Hill Behavior Specialist and Charter Oak Alum.



Julio Casiano, COSC Foundation Board; Debbi Moser, The Hartford, Nominee for Employer of the Year; along with Carlo Esidore, COSC Alum, Adjunct Faculty, and Guest Speaker; and COSC President Ed Klonoski.

Proceeds from the Employer Appreciation breakfast will benefit the Student Crisis Fund. To learn more about partnering with the College, please contact **Lori Gagne-Pendleton**, lpendleton@charteroak.edu, or to contribute to the Foundation, contact **Carol Hall**, chall@charteroak.edu. 🌱

happenings

The Alumni Association awarded its new Graduate Degree Scholarship to two alums. Each will receive \$1,000 to begin pursuing a master's degree with Charter Oak.

Health Information Management Program Director, Cindy Edgerton, reports that the annual HIM assessment report submitted to CAHIIM, the accrediting body, has been accepted with no issues or requests.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness here at the College reports very positive enrollment numbers with an increased pace of registering students, a 76% increase in the number of registered students, and 11% increase in total enrollment. We see our earlier and longer registration periods, new processes, and expanded offering of work-relevant majors are helping our students get the college degrees they want.

The Women In Transition (WIT) Program has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

A new Bachelor of Science in Nursing online degree is now open to interested candidates. The first class is forming with courses starting in August, Fall Term 1. This new 120-credit Nursing major addresses the gap between associate and bachelor's nursing degrees. The online courses combine with clinical practice and are open to any licensed RN. Program information can be found at www.CharterOak.edu/RN-to-BSN.

Academic Advisor Dr. Ann Marie Gagnon retired in June. Many alumni will have experienced first-hand her dedication to education and her tough love encouraging students across the finish line. She will continue as an instructor in the graduate program.

Welcome new Faculty members! Three new faculty members have joined the College. Michelle D. Meace, M.S., B.S., teaches ECE 351, Advanced Leadership in Early Childhood Education. Jeanine Pocoski, M.S., B.S., teaches ECE 210, Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education. Melissa-Sue John, Ph.D., M.A., B.A., teaches PSY 101, Introduction to Psychology.

Welcome to new Staff members. Stephanie Colacicco has joined the Office of Academic Services. She brings with her more than eight years of experience in higher education in the areas of student enrollment, advising, advocacy, retention, and degree auditing. Steve Hurlburt is our new Controller whose background in both corporate and non-profit work will greatly benefit the college.



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CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE
CELEBRATING 45 YEARS

SAT MARCH 30 FARMINGTON, CT

Join the Celebration Planning Committee by
contacting Carol Hall, Executive Director,
COSC Foundation
chall@charteroak.edu or 860.515.3889