

connections

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

WINTER/SPRING 2015 VOL. XL NO. 1



Foundation says Thank You

When April Shines enrolled in Charter Oak State College's *Women in Transition* program, she was a single mom who had overcome a major illness and was living in temporary housing. When she spoke to donors, however, she spoke from a place of financial stability, independence, and strength. And she expressed her gratitude by saying "This program has changed my life and the life of my children . . . I thank you so much Charter Oak State College Foundation donors for making this possible for me. Without your generosity and your caring I would not be able to see any of this happen."

It was an evening of thanks – both given and received. Just two weeks shy of the Thanksgiving holiday, Charter Oak State College Foundation

donors were invited to the college for a first ever wine and cheese reception simply to be told thank you. Angela Chapman, Director of Institutional Advancement/Assistant to the President, said "Hosting a donor appreciation event extends our gratitude to those who have invested their time and resources in the Charter Oak State College Foundation. Gifts from generous alumni and friends of Charter Oak State College have been vital to the success of many students."

Rebeka Scalia, President of the Charter Oak State College Foundation, kicked off the evening with a heartfelt thank you to the donors for their generous support of the Charter Oak State College Foundation.

continued on pg. 2



New Cyber Security Major Launched

More majors on tap

Charter Oak State College continues to expand its degree offerings including the recently launched Cyber Security major. The major can be fully completed utilizing the College's online courses.

The College is proud to offer another workforce-relevant major to those wishing to be part of the rapidly expanding field of cyber security, a field in which the Bureau of Labor expects jobs to grow 37% by 2022. The Bachelor of Science degree in Cyber Security prepares students for success in IT Security, Cyber Security, Information Assurance, and Information Systems Security. The new major is targeted to candidates with an aptitude for information technology and a background with computers. The major requires a minimum of 36 credits.

In addition, the college received accreditation for two new majors: Psychology and Business Administration, previously both

continued on pg. 7

in this issue

1 Foundation Says Thank You

2 The President's Take
Charter Oak continues to advance with new majors and increased enrollment

4 Alumni Profile
Meet Brian Christison

7 Spring Fundraiser
Tuesday, March 31st

8 Save the Date
Alumni Spring Social set for Friday, May 1st

THE PRESIDENT'S TAKE



Let me begin this message by wishing you all a healthy and productive New Year. On the subject of New Year's resolutions, for our current students, it is never too soon to begin planning to attend your graduation. This year we assemble on May 31st to celebrate all those who graduate during the 2014-15 academic year. For those who still have a way to go, imagining walking across

that stage to the cheers of your family is a great motivator. For me, getting to shake your hand is the highlight of my year. So use the visual of yourself walking across our stage when the going gets tough. And for all our alums and supporters, we would love to see you at graduation as well. I tell everyone that it is the happiest day of the year, and we love spreading that joy around.

We may need to find a larger facility for graduation, as the current crop of Charter Oak students is the largest ever. In my last *Connections* message I talked at length about the *Go Back To Get Ahead* program (GBTGA). We were in the throes of the launch excitement, and I was bullish about its success. Well, the program did what it was supposed to do – increase enrollments throughout the CSCU system. To date we have enrolled over 1,000 new students system wide, and Charter Oak saw its Fall enrollments grow by 30%. We continue to see GBTGA students signing up, and we fully expect that this program will be responsible for over 1.5% of the total system enrollment for this academic year.

Also on the good news front, we had our new Health Information Management major approved by our accreditor, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and we expect that we will finish the last step of the program accreditation phase with the American Health Information

Association (AHIMA) this spring. We are very excited about moving this signature program into the finished category. Student interest has been very encouraging, and we have been visiting all the local health care providers. They are lined up to hire our graduates, which is exactly what we hoped would be their response.

Our newest major in Cyber Security has launched and our marketing efforts have been helped by all the news stories about security breaches. This new program is precisely the workforce necessary curriculum that we are striving to provide. It is our working assumption that our adult students are enrolling at Charter Oak not just to finish a degree, but to finish a degree that matters. Our job is to provide majors and concentrations that can assist our grads at improving their earning capabilities. Charter Oak is a workforce college, and

our mission is to provide adults with the credentials necessary to advance their careers. Our newest offerings in Cyber Security and Health Information Management meet this need, and we are working on more.

But like any 21st century organization, we cannot make the progress we need to make without input from our student clients. We seek this through course evaluations and a variety of student surveys (raise your hand if you feel over surveyed). I know, everyone is overusing surveys, but these instruments are an important way for us to measure the success of our procedures, policies, and service. But I want to offer you another option for offering us feedback. My New Year's resolution is to read and respond to every suggestion you send in. Tell us what we can do better; offer suggestions for new degree programs; in short, let me know what you think. I look forward to hearing from you.

Ed Klonoski, President

“Charter Oak is a workforce college, and our mission is to provide adults with the credentials necessary to advance their careers.”

“Foundation says Thank You” continued from pg. 1

“I have worked with the Foundation for the past 18 years and, during that time, have watched our endowment grow from approximately \$25,000 to \$1.8 million as of last quarter. It took a few years for our endowment funds to generate enough earnings so that we could begin awarding scholarships. I remember how proud we were to actually award that first scholarship just a few years ago. And since that day,

we have not slowed down, and we are continually looking for creative ways to support our students.”

At the “Thank You” event, donors heard via webcam from three grateful students who were the recipients of Foundation support.

In addition to Shines, student Raquel Czikowsky, a working mother, thanked donors for the support she received

from being awarded the Technology grant. Czikowsky shared how she and her school-aged daughter were sharing one computer for their studies which made it very difficult to complete her college course work. She said she often could only access their one computer late at night after her daughter had finished her schoolwork. The technology grant provided the funds she needed to purchase an

continued on pg. 3

Greetings From Your Alumni Association! Happy 2015!

2014 was a very exciting year for Charter Oak State College. In CT, the Legislature funded a new program called *Go Back to Get Ahead*, which helped adults return to college to finish their degrees at any one of 17 CT state institutions. Charter Oak was chosen to administer this groundbreaking program and also received the majority of the referrals from interested students. To date, Charter Oak has enrolled more than 250 students from this program.

The college continued expanding its “degrees without boundaries” by conducting recruiting activities

in Florida, Texas, Ohio, California, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York. Charter Oak Alumni were extremely helpful in all of these locations, and as always, we enjoyed meeting all of you and appreciated all of your assistance. Charter Oak’s Admissions team is looking forward to meeting even more alumni across the country in 2015. One goal for 2015 is to start a Florida Chapter of the Alumni Association. If you have any interest in helping do that, or would like to learn more, please contact Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations (nataylor@charteroak.edu).

The Alumni Association Board has new officers for 2015. The Board wishes to thank Lisa Wildman who served as President and now is taking over the role of Secretary. Christopher May was elected as President, Lamont McEvitt, Vice President, and co-treasurers are Marcia Anderson Esson who is continuing in that role, and Cecilia Kozlowski.

We wish you a successful and happy 2015. If you have any news to share or are interested in getting more involved in the Alumni Association, please contact Nancy Taylor at nataylor@charteroak.edu. 🌱

The Board would like to welcome a new member of the Alumni Association Board, Trinene Davis.

Trinene Davis from Connecticut is the Founder and CEO of “Treasures by Trinene” – a motivational mentoring and outreach outlet for girls and young women. She earned a dual Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology at Charter Oak State College and earned her Associate

Degree in Communications from Manchester Community College.

Trinene is a motivational speaker, the author of two children’s books, entrepreneur, community advocate, and a proud mother who has actively worked as a mentor for children and adolescents for more than 25 years.

In 2015, Trinene will be hosting her new TV show in Connecticut which

will emphasize the issues that teens and young girls face, such as self-esteem, family relationships, peer pressure, panel discussions, diversity, and other topics. 🌱



“Foundation says Thank You” continued from pg. 2

additional computer. Czikowsky said, “It is now easier for both of us to get our homework done. Thank you to all the donors for this opportunity to receive grants such as the Technology grant. It’s very helpful as I am paying for college on my own.”

Chapman said that she and the Charter Oak State College Foundation Board work hard all year to be able to offer students financial assistance, and that for some students scholarships can often be the difference between completing or leaving a degree program. In 2014, the Foundation awarded over \$38,000 in Grants and Scholarships to Charter Oak students. The Foundation launched a new Foundation Scholarship program that included awards supporting diversity

and Health Care and Early Childhood scholarships. The Foundation sponsored a fundraising event in support of the College’s *Women in Transition* program in April and increased the number of technology grants to students.

In addition to donors, Scalia thanked the Charter Oak State College Foundation Board of Directors for continuing to lead by example and give so generously of their time, treasure, and talent.

Chapman said, “The many lives that have been changed through the generosity of our donors are priceless and a donor appreciation event was one way to demonstrate our sincerest appreciation.” 🌱

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

CharterOakSM STATE COLLEGE Degrees Without Boundaries

Helen Diecidue, Editor

State of Connecticut
Dannel P. Malloy, Governor

Board of Regents
Dr. Gregory W. Gray, President

Charter Oak State College
Ed Klonoski, President



Connections recently caught up with Brian Christison, Class of '12, Public Safety Administration. A San Diego resident, Christison is employed as a Paramedic with Rural/Metro Ambulance, the ambulance contractor for the city, where he specializes in a breakthrough program that focuses on helping chronic callers to 9-1-1.

You work in community paramedicine. What is that?

Paramedics were built in the 1970's for 1970's problems. What paramedics are facing now is different. Community Paramedicine is a new innovative idea to handle the medical needs ... of the current era.

What do you focus on in your job?

What we have in an urban system like San Diego is unmet underlying social needs that bring about frequent 9-1-1 use. This is a national problem. Communities are dealing with folks who call 9-1-1, 200 to 300 times per year.

That's a shocking number.

Yes. Folks are calling 9-1-1 because they have failed every other social safety net. They don't have the capacity, capability, or means to access the solutions they truly need. They often have substance addictions or psychiatric conditions.

What does your program do?

About 8 years ago we started the Resource Access Program (RAP). The biggest driver of RAP is a software

platform that catalogs the 9-1-1 calls (around 110,000 per year) and also has algorithms to categorize and quantify a patient's condition and how much they are costing the city. This is helpful for when we are working with the court system as well as other partner agencies.

We see who is coming out of that "watch list" and we are able to intervene immediately. This platform is unique to us and there aren't very many other systems that have sophisticated data analysis. Five years ago we were stuck looking through paper reports.

"Folks are calling 9-1-1 because they have failed every other social safety net."

Who was key to getting this program launched?

The data platform was developed by my colleague. She came up with this idea and wrote the first line of code called "Street Sense". Our biggest cheerleader is our medical director. He will make the most complex, far-out idea sound like something we can get done tomorrow.

What degrees or certifications do you need?

We are going to go through the first community paramedic training program in California. I am a licensed paramedic in CA. I'll soon have our community paramedic certification. And I am finishing my Master's at University of Southern California in Public Administration.

What did you do when you had spare time?

I used to have my pilot's license which I got at 15 years old!

What's a typical day like for you?

An average day is a mix of being on the streets responding to requests on scene with a client, and also making appointments with clients, doing home checks making sure the elderly are safe

and sound. It is a mix of reactive and proactive field contacts.

The other half is in the computer system and analyzing the charts to see who our next project is. And we collaborate with our partners – social service, health care, and law enforcement. We are on the verge of integrating the police department's homeless outreach team into our data system.

My team of five is also our standby Ebola response unit. We are all on call if and when an Ebola patient shows up in the city of San Diego.

Your wife is enrolled at Charter Oak. Did you persuade her to enroll?

She certainly saw the value in Charter Oak and the quality of instruction that I was getting. She is enrolled in the Health Studies program. She was also a paramedic and we went to paramedic school together. Right now she is finishing up a Physician Assistant program at Stanford. I'm pretty proud of her.

How do you manage stress?

One of the strengths that my marriage provided me was a place to come home and de-stress – especially since my wife was in the same work. That team environment between the two of us provided both of us with a chance to come home, complain about the day, and leave it behind. Our two cats, Dave and Kyooki (Japanese for craziness) provide comic relief.

Any public safety tips for your fellow alums as we head into 2015?

Get a flu shot. Vaccinate your kids. Eat well.

Brian can be reached at: 619-252-6860 or bchristison@sandiego.gov

NOTE: If you are interested in sharing your success story with your fellow alumni, please contact Nancy Taylor, Charter Oak's Assistant Director of Alumni Relations at nataylor@charteroak.edu or 860-515-3863. ✎

alumni spotlight

1999

Trinene Davis will be hosting her new TV show, Trendy Teens Talk Show, in Connecticut in 2015 which is geared to inspire and motivate her viewers by emphasizing issues that teens and young girls face, such as self-esteem, family relationships, peer pressure, diversity, and other topics. She is the author of the children's book, *My Sunny Day* (available on amazon.com) and the soon to be released *The Butterfly in Me*.



2001

Cecelia A. Peppers-Johnson, 2001 WIT Graduate recently relocated to Plano, Texas from Hartford, CT. She continues to work for the U.S. Department of Housing Urban Development (HUD) in Fort Worth, Texas (26 years of service)

as a Senior Community Planning and Development (CPD) Representative. She is also a retired SGT in the U.S. Army.

2005

Sensei Frank Shekosky, master instructor at Cromwell Martial Arts and former student of the founder of Modern Arnis, has been accepted into the Modern Arnis Hall of Fame. The requirements for induction include a minimum of 20 accredited years studying Modern Arnis while sharing the highest standards of teaching, training, and service to the arts. Shekosky is a certified master instructor and has been a certified personal fitness trainer with The National Academy of Sports Medicine. Shekosky established the martial arts center in Cromwell, CT in 1993 where he offers classes for men, women, and children in kenpo karate, modern arnis, and weapons.

2009

Gregory Sneed was recently nominated and selected as one of the award recipients of the 2nd annual 100 Men of Color during a Black Tie Gala, held on October 3, 2014 at The Bushnell Theatre, Hartford, CT. The 100 Men of Color Black Tie Gala recognizes the contributions of men in business, education, entrepreneurship, and service that have made an impact in the lives of the people throughout their communities. The goal is to provide financial support for programs that support the advancement of young men of color. A portion of the proceeds this year will be awarded to The W.E.B. DuBois Academy, Springfield, MA, The Urban League of Southern Connecticut, Stamford, and The Greater Hartford Pro-Youth Basketball Program, Hartford.

2012

Tara Keating has a new job. She recently joined the Connecticut State Department of Education's Office of Student Support and Organizational Effectiveness.

2013

Lisa Wilson, Human Resources Assistant at Deringer-Ney Inc. is continuing her education this Spring. She was accepted into the MBA graduate program at Albertus Magnus in CT and will be starting in February 2015.

STAY CONNECTED THROUGH **connections**

We'd like to hear from you about promotions, graduate degrees, awards, marriages, births, and other significant successes in your life. We'll publish your news in the next edition of *Connections*. Please use the form below, or drop us a note. Send to: Alumni News, Charter Oak State College, 55 Paul J. Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053-2150 – or email nataylor@charteroak.edu.

Your name and address _____

Email address _____ Class of _____

My news _____



Thank You!

Dear Friend of Charter Oak State College,

Adult students must work to support their children, but without a degree, many cannot secure jobs that pay enough to raise their standard of living. Charter Oak State College has provided diverse and alternative opportunities to a college degree that address the unique needs of the adult student since 1973. **Every year adult students look to the Charter Oak State College Foundation to help support them financially in their degree completion to gain the skills and credentials needed to start new careers or advance in their current careers.**

“Today, with the cost of living increases, it is impossible to provide a comfortable life for your children without working multiple jobs. However, working multiple jobs takes away from quality time with your children. Hopefully one day with the help from scholarships like this one, I can complete my education, pursue my career goals, and be able to work one job.”

- Fikre Kirkwood, 2013 Scholarship Recipient

The Charter Oak State College Foundation has recently funded a number of important initiatives that are designed to help break down the barriers to degree completion for the adult student. The Foundation’s President Discretionary Fund is one of these initiatives helping students facing one-time emergencies so they can continue in school to earn their college degree.

With the graduation season fast approaching, I hope that you will consider a gift to the Charter Oak State College Foundation. Every gift, no matter the size, helps us sustain our commitment to support the unique education envisioned by Charter Oak State College in 1973. In today’s challenging economic times, our students are more reliant than ever on the generous support of our alumni and friends. If this is your first donation to the Charter Oak State College Foundation, please remember that a gift of just \$50 from 14 alumni can offset the cost of a course for a student. If you give annually, please consider increasing your donation by 10 percent.

Please take a moment to remember the Charter Oak State College adult students and families that need your help. Please go online at www.CharterOak.edu/foundation/give.cfm to make your charitable tax-deductible gift.

Thank you for supporting the Charter Oak State College Foundation.

With gratitude for your support,

 

Rebeka Scalia, President

Ed Klonoski, Executive Director

"New Major Launched" continued from pg. 1

were concentrations. Therefore the College, in addition to its extremely popular general studies major which allows for a variety of concentrations and the ability to design one's own concentration, will offer five majors in high-demand fields: Business Administration, Cyber Security, Health Information Management, Health Care Administration, and Psychology. Charter Oak State College Provost, Dr. Shirley Adams, says "We are continually striving to add carefully considered majors that will help adults advance professionally and meet workforce needs. We are currently working to convert several more concentrations of study to majors and are looking at workforce data to see what new majors we want to develop." Both the Business and Psychology majors will begin accepting students this summer.

Alumni groups around the country have been assisting Admissions at enrollment/informational events to help promote the College and its online flexibility for working adults.

Please contact Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations and Corporate Recruitment at nataylor@charteroak.edu if you are interested in hosting an event at your place of employment. 🌱



The Power of Women
BELIEVING IS ACHIEVING

Save the Date!

The Charter Oak State College Foundation
Spring Fundraiser
to support the
Women in Transition Program

Tuesday, March 31, 2015
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
The Governor's Residence

Wine & Hors d'oeuvres
Honoree & Keynote Speaker
Marlene M. Ibsen
CEO and President of Travelers Foundation

Sponsorships are now available &
must be purchased in advance from Angela Chapman at
achapman@charteroak.edu or 860-515-3889

We are very pleased and thankful to announce recently received grants to The Women in Transition Program:

- The Aurora Women and Girls Foundation - \$10,000
- The Leipold Family Foundation - \$15,000
- The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving - \$25,000
- The Women and Girls' Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation - \$3,600

Charter Oak State College Foundation receives its largest-ever single Endowment Fund contribution

The Charter Oak State College family extends a heartfelt thank you to Doris Cassiday, a founding member of Charter Oak State College, for graciously donating \$20,000 to the Charter Oak State College Foundation Shea Endowment Fund. The Shea Endowment fund honors Dr. Bernard Shea, Charter Oak's first President, and furthers the College's mission to engage students and the community in lifelong learning.

Ms. Cassiday's longstanding dedication and support of Charter Oak State College

is second to none. When the College was established by the legislature in 1973, Ms. Cassiday served as the first Chair for the Board for State Academic Awards. When the Charter Oak State College Foundation was created, she served as our first Foundation President. Perhaps most remarkably, Ms. Cassiday has served as Assistant Director of Academic Programs at the College as an academic counselor for 30 years. Her generous donation represents the largest single donation to the Endowment Fund by an individual.



Alumni Spring Social Set for Friday May 1, 2015

Calling all Charter Oak Alumni! We are planning another fun evening of dinner and theatre at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. For those of you who have been to this event in the past four years you know the quality of the shows and the fun that is had by all at the dinner. For those who have never experienced this event, now is the year to join your fellow alumni and make new friends.

The show we will be seeing is a classic – **Guys and Dolls**.

Guaranteed to be a fun time for all!

We expect tickets to go quickly for this special event, so please contact Nancy Taylor ASAP at nataylor@charteroak.edu to reserve your seats now. Tickets are being subsidized by the Alumni Association to keep them at the low price of \$75/pp which includes both the dinner and show. A great deal and a fun time!

Here's a little blurb about the show:

Guys and Dolls has music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, is based on the book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows. This classic American musical comedy puts a hardboiled gambler in the arms of a Times Square Save-a-Soul mission worker. It swings with songs like "Luck Be A Lady" and "Sit Down You're Rockin' The Boat" and will be directed by Don Stephenson, who directed the recent Avery Fisher Hall Concert of Titanic and has appeared on Broadway in multiple productions.