

connections

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

WINTER/SPRING 2020 VOL. XLV NO. 1

Foundation Hosts 2nd Annual Employer Appreciation Breakfast

The Charter Oak State College Foundation held its annual Employer Appreciation Breakfast November 8, 2019 at the scenic TPC River Highlands Club House in Cromwell, CT. The event recognizes the economic and personal importance of employment opportunities that arise for the College's graduates. Carol Hall, the Foundation's Executive Director said, "We do this to acknowledge and thank employers who recognize the talents that are brought to their organizations by graduates of the College."

The event highlighted the awarding of the prestigious 2019 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year Award. This year's recipient was Middlesex Health, Middletown, Connecticut. Suzanne D'Amato, Operations Manager, Health Information Services, of Middlesex Health was nominated by current Charter Oak student Kelly Carlson. "Suzanne," Kelly

explained, "not only oversees multiple functional units, she is a great mentor and is admired for the manner in which she juggles daily tasks and keeps staff informed."

The event featured a variety of speakers including Charter Oak Alum, Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Department of Housing Commissioner, recently appointed by Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont. Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno shared her Charter Oak success story thanking Charter Oak State College President Ed Klonoski for "providing her with an academic advisor and the opportunity for her to gather her credits and life experience into the quickest path to degree completion." She explained that as a single mother who moved to the United States from Ecuador, she found herself working in a factory, though she held a college degree from her native country.

Mosquera-Bruno earned her bachelor's degree from Charter Oak and went on to receive her Master's degree in Urban Studies from Southern Connecticut State University. She completed the Achieving Excellency in Community Development 18-month fellowship program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and she was named one of the 50 most influential Latinos in Connecticut. She shared a brief look into her journey and a great deal of inspiration for the



Inaugural Golden Acorn Employer of the Year, Debbi Wright, Hartford HealthCare handing off the reigns to Suzanne D'Amato, Middlesex Health on Nov. 9, 2019.

graduates and employers in the room.

Nitza Rivera, Aetna VP of Talent Management, was a guest speaker who remarked on the 20 year partnership between Aetna and Charter Oak State College. Nitza thanked Charter Oak for the partnership and noted that over 600 employees have earned degrees from the College, expressing the importance of educational benefits that encourage continued employment at the company.

Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director, Corporate Outreach, Charter Oak State College, said, "the employers in the room understood the value of an educated workforce and know that the return on investment for tuition reimbursement and other educational enhancement programs is enormous. It is, without a doubt, one of the best ways to reduce turnover and increase productivity."

Other leaders within the following

continued on pg. 2



Neal Cunningham, COSC Foundation Board Member and Scholarship Committee Chair (far right) with some of the 2019 scholarship recipients and President, Ed Klonoski (center).

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THE PRESIDENT'S TAKE



Ever Evolving Model for Adult Learners

Nearly half of the American higher education population consists of working adults – over age 24, attending college part time, and balancing family, work, and school. Most of these learners are seeking knowledge and skills that will enhance their professional lives. They see higher education as an adjunct to their professional development. For many of these students, their employers are also offering them developmental

opportunities that the employer sees as a necessary adjunct to those same professional lives. In my experience, adult learners require a college model that is steadily evolving. Since adult students approach their education as an extension of their work life, college should blend itself with workplace learning rather than stand apart from it.

Traditionally, higher education is viewed as a time of life when learners – usually late adolescents – spend most of their waking time gaining knowledge and skills. Learning is their primary occupation and the assumption in this model is that that gain happens through full time immersion in both the classrooms and the living quarters of a college.

For adult learners, the underlying assumptions are different. First, working adults don't have the luxury of devoting themselves full time to learning. They have families and jobs that require the bulk of their time and treasure. They also don't need the socialization that is supplied by living at a college. But most importantly, they already know things, and many of those things are the equivalent of college level learning. It is this last idea that I want to explore.

Here at Charter Oak State College our students are all working adults. Our average age at graduation is 39. Our adult students arrive here with about 70 transfer credits. That is the first difference from traditional age students. Our students are not rookies. They have college level credits, and they want those credits validated.

Second, approximately 50% of our bachelor's students graduate with credits on their transcript from learning that occurred outside of a traditional college. Such credit is called Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and includes testing, portfolios, military training, corporate training, professional certifications, and credits from organizations that are not necessarily accredited. The important fact is that adult students bring all sorts of college level learning with them as they enter our institution, and, if they are to be well served, it is our job to evaluate it and offer credit as appropriate.

It is time for adult serving colleges to go to the next level. Instead of evaluating such learning on a case by case basis, higher ed should be working directly with major employers to ensure that corporate training efforts coordinate with college degree offerings so that students can increase the benefit from both. In other words, for working adults the new higher education model should be a collaboration with industry not a separate, stand-alone effort.

Imagine the possibilities. Graduate education is often focused on skills that students are currently employing at work. Using the PLA model, schools can evaluate actual workplace learning/training and combine that with coursework to produce the relevant credential faster and more economically. Likewise, employers could ask colleges to bring parts of their curriculum into their workplace in order to supplement the skills development they are planning for their workforce. Finally, colleges could request that employers supplement collegiate coursework with actual workplace training, projects, and personnel.

Colleges are not doing adult learners justice when we artificially segregate learning into workplace and higher education buckets. Every learning experience costs both the learner and the sponsoring origination money and time. Many of these efforts overlap. Organizations often consider each training effort as a single purpose activity (a degree step or a workplace improvement) while the learner tries to organize them as an integrated effort toward career progression. We can do better.

At Charter Oak, we have employers sending their workers to our school for continuing education. One major hospital system is sending and paying for Associates-prepared RNs to complete their BSN. In this case, the employer sees this skills development as good for the hospital and the employee. This is wonderful and I want to see more serious conversations between higher education and employers about how to grow the workplace skills of employees using the resources of BOTH organizations. As the adult learner model continuously adjusts to fit the needs of all stakeholders, we will better serve the needs of students, employers, and colleges alike.

Ed Klonoski, President

A version of this article was previously published in Higher Learning Advocates' January 2020 online edition of Insights & Outlooks.



Nitzia Rivera, VP Aetna (CVS Health), guest speaker (left) with Carol Hall, COSC Foundation Executive Director.

"Employer Appreciation Breakfast" continued from pg. 1

organizations were also recognized at this year's breakfast: CREC Soundbridge, Community Health Network of Connecticut, Precious Gifts Preschool, State of Connecticut, Highville Charter School, Hispanic Health Council, Department of Corrections, Educational Playcare, MassMutual, Triple Helix Corporation, Capital Community College, Community Renewal Team, Middlesex Health, and Burns Latino Studies Academy. Gold Sponsors, Liberty Bank, blumshapiro,

Scalia & Associates, and Sheffy, Mazzaccaro DePaolo & Denigris, made it possible for Charter Oak's community of learners to bring their boss to the complimentary breakfast. Hall said, "The Foundation appreciates and thanks employers who recognize the importance of higher education, and our community sponsors who helped to create this opportunity to honor many of them." 🌱

SAVE-THE-DATE: The 2020 Employer Appreciation Breakfast will be Nov. 13, 2020 at the TPC River Highlands Club House.

Alumni Association Greeting! The Roaring Twenties are upon us!

Happy New Year! Can you believe the calendar odometer says 2020? Where does the time go? I hope you will stick with me as I take a moment to celebrate 2019 and to share what we have on track for the coming year.

2019 Highlights

Acorns in Action is our volunteer action group representing COSC in the community. It is open to all current students and alumni who want to share their time and energy with special causes while representing COSC in the community. Over 40 volunteers participated in our inaugural volunteer efforts! Check out the stories – and photos – covered in this newsletter. We thank the folks who were part of these initial projects and hope that you will join us on subsequent projects. And, if you have ideas for other outreach efforts, please send them our way.

The Master's Degree Scholarship Program is two years strong and has already awarded three scholarships! Supporting our alumni with their higher education pursuits is central to who we

are and a major focus of our fundraising efforts. The capacity to provide these scholarships is core to our legacy efforts, to ensure that we can do this annually, we are working to create an endowment of \$25,000. There are many ways to support our fundraising. Please consider purchasing an official t-shirt, COSC mug, squirrel, or flowers at Graduation. You can also buy tickets to upcoming events or socials.

The new Meyers & Associates Insurance Program offers a variety of attractively priced insurance products to our alumni, students, faculty and staff, as well as spouses, domestic partners, parents, children, and siblings. From Pet, Travel, and Special Event Insurance to Auto, Homeowners, Life, and Long-term care – there is a lot to consider and compare. The Alumni Association benefits from each member sign up.

2020 Preview

Hartford Yard Goats Summer Social: Monday, June 29 – Heineken Party Deck, Yard Goats Baseball, Hartford, CT.

Acorns in Action will be out in force in 2020. New ways to collaborate and serve are being planned by the community relations committee. Details will be sent via email and posted on our social media networks. Join us!

New Board Members: The COSC Alumni Association welcomes our newest board members, Belinda McClain and Trebawan Soomaroo. The Alumni Association has big, bold plans for 2020 and beyond. To realize these goals we need creative, energetic folks around the table, and we are always actively recruiting for new members.

Your Ideas. We want to hear from you because we exist for you. Anything related to your career or educational efforts (including ideas for social events) please reach out.

Have a great 2020!

Become part of and make an impact on YOUR alma-mater, you can connect with me directly John Thomas, President, Alumni Association, at john.c.thomas6@gmail.com or Carol Hall at alumni@charteroak.edu or 860.515.3889. 🌱



Baseball Meet & Greet a Home Run!

The College Alumni and Student Associations joined forces once again to bring our Charter Oak community together for a summer meet and greet. Over 100 alumni, students, board members, faculty, staff, and friends of Charter Oak came out (between rain storms) for an evening of baseball and barbeque on Thursday, August 22, 2019 at the Yard Goats Stadium in Hartford, CT. It was a fun evening and one of our very own was on hand to throw out the "first-pitch." 🌱





Charter Oak State College, Alumni, Students, and Staff Volunteer Network in Action... Acorns in Action

Friendship Center, New Britain – Sandwich Day of Caring

The Charter Oak “Sandwich Crew” made 200 sandwiches in less than an hour thanks to Director of Financial Aid, Ralph Brasure’s assembly line skills and leadership. Other volunteers delivered the sandwiches while still others went over to The Friendship Center (located in New Britain) to serve the food and chop vegetables for the soup that was served alongside the sandwiches.

One Charter Oak staff member, Ady, remembers, “my daughters and I played and miserably lost a round of Uno with a group of temporary residents who call the shelter home for now.” She continued “We were so thankful to everyone who made this opportunity for giving in our community possible.”

The Friendship Center Community Kitchen, located at 241 Arch Street in New Britain, provides lunch 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., Monday through Friday to anyone in need; and three meals per day, seven days per week, to shelter residents and former



residents. Staff and volunteers ensure that guests are served in a welcoming, friendly atmosphere. 🌱

Emergency shelter and community kitchen are funded primarily by individual donors, area congregations, civic organizations, special events, and government foundations.

Women’s Empowerment Center, Hartford – Book Drive and Friends-Giving Pie Donations



Foodshare Turkey Drive



(Left) Tracy Allen, COSC Foundation Board Member; Yolanda Pacheco, Alum and COSC Bursar; Carol Hall, COSC Development Associate Director; with Anh Pham, COSC Student.

Charter Oak State College, alumni, students, staff, and friends came together as a network of volunteers – because nobody in Connecticut should be hungry. As a college of second chances, allowing our students to come back to school after obstacles – Charter Oak graduates know the importance of giving back and

helping out. Twenty-four Acorns in Action volunteers, over a two-day period, helped Foodshare collect over 200 of the 15,059 turkeys needed for Thanksgiving and raised over \$5,000 at the Big Y in West Hartford!

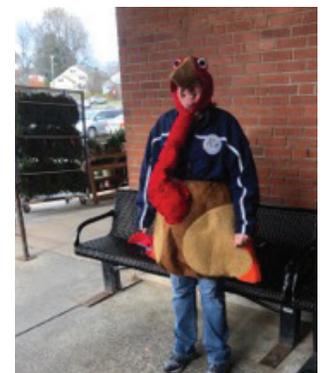
Many Thanks to our Acorns in Action Volunteers:

Daniel Mathieu, Rene Mathieu, Mary Jane Lund, Melanie Cecarelli, Belinda McClain, Anh Pham, Devon Dabbs, Laura Post, Kenyetta Warren, Tracy Allen, Cecilia Kozlowski, Noreen H.

Wilson, Randy Wilson, Kim, Allyse and Reece Hollfelder, Kaylie Hall, Tanisha Gilbert, and Amy Jimmo.

Plus, COSC Staff Volunteers:

Yolanda Pacheco, Ashley Zennis, Kaylah Davis, Crystal Glasscock-Stephens, and Brandee Stefano. 🌱



alumni spotlight

1993

Kimberly Beauregard is President and CEO of InterCommunity Health Care, which was recently named a 2019 Top Workplace by The Hartford Courant for the ninth year in a row. *"I'm proud to lead an organization with employees who bring such a wealth of talent, energy, and expertise to the table,"* stated Kimberly. *"The staff and administration go above and beyond every day to meet the needs of the people we serve in the Greater Hartford community."* InterCommunity is one of only seven employers to earn this honor since the competition's inception in 2011.

1994

Seila Mosquera-Bruno was appointed by CT Governor Ned Lamont as the Department of Housing Commissioner. Prior to her appointment, Seila was the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mutual Housing Association of South-Central Connecticut, Inc., dba NeighborWorks® New Horizons. Seila was the alumni presenter at the 2019 Employer Appreciation Breakfast.

1998

Mayor Nancy R. Rossi, the 12th mayor of West Haven, CT, won reelection in 2019, taking approximately 60 percent of the vote. As such, she serves as the executive office for West Haven and works jointly with all city departments.

2005

Matt Fleury was named Nonprofit Executive of the Year by the Hartford Business Journal for his role as President

and CEO of the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford, CT, leading the center's ambitious educational agenda to serve children, families, schools, and educators. CT Governor Ned Lamont re-appointed Matt Fleury to serve a second term as chair of the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR). Matt has served as BOR chair since 2016 and has been a member of the board since 2011.

2007

Danbury, CT Police Chief Patrick Ridenhour was recently honored by the Police Commissioners Association of Connecticut at their Distinguished Chiefs Dinner on September 25, 2019. He was recognized for education, excellence, and experience within the job. It wasn't the first honor Chief Ridenhour received as Danbury's police chief. In 2018, the Chief was honored by the state's NAACP chapter for being one of the most influential African American leaders in Connecticut. He also received the Community Policing Award from the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers.

2010

CSM Arthur L. Fredericks, retired from law enforcement two years ago and is now working full time for the military. Arthur was very active teaching at Tunxis Community College, Farmington, CT for a few years but is now focused on his single job as a Physical Security Officer for the CT National Guard.

2014

Lalaine San Diego, wrote a poetry book titled "Charming Ugly People" Volume 1 of the #hashtagconfessionsofanemotionalqueen series; and Volume 2 titled "am I Loving in Vain?" released January 2020. She completed her Bachelor of Science, with a concentration in Paralegal Studies, as part of the Women in Transition (WIT) program. She then acquired her CSDE 085 School Business Administrator certification and was employed as the District Finance Administrator for the Ashford, CT School District, alongside the Superintendent of Schools.

Kaitlin Ruskay After graduating with her bachelor's degree, Kaitlin became the Chief Sonographer and Company Administrator at Diagnostic Radiology Associates. Recently, Kaitlin was accepted into Charter Oak State College's Graduate program in Health Care Administration.

2016

Karen Nell was appointed head coach of the women's lacrosse program and first-ever head coach of the inaugural field hockey program, which will begin competing in the fall of 2020, at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, CT. Prior to that, Nell was with New Fairfield Public Schools, where she spent 12 seasons as the head coach of the field hockey program and the last seven seasons as the head coach of the girl's lacrosse team.

2017

Myckhia Reed After graduating from Charter Oak State College with her bachelor's degree Concentration in Child Studies, Myckhia earned her ECE Alternate Route to Certification from the college and obtained a certified preschool teacher position at Barnard Environment Studies Magnet School in New Haven. 🌱



**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 alumni@charteroak.edu.

Will you help us Bridge the Gap?

Many adult students have the desire, the drive, and the discipline but may be lacking the financial means to complete their degree. This is where the Foundation work begins and why your gift helps bridge the gap and change lives.

Bridging Gaps

The More You Learn, the More You Earn

It is well known that the more you learn the more you earn, and here at Charter Oak State College it is very true as our graduates make strides in degree completion and career advancement.

Today, we are asking you, our Charter Oak Community, to help bridge the gap for those in need of higher education credentials, and help change lives!

Changing Lives

Empowering Women through WIT

The Foundation's Women in Transition Program empowers women by providing the financial means for them to obtain a degree at Charter Oak State College, thereby improving their economic status and their lives.

Our Students Respond

With Gratitude and Hard Work

...deeply grateful ...This award money will help me to maintain a strong academic standing and keep my student loan debt lower!

- Ian

Thank you again for your generous contribution ... I hope one day I will be able to help other students achieve their goals just as you have helped me.

- Anh

... I vow I will do everything I can to ensure I am representing and acknowledging this award through every path I take in the future.

- Jeanette



2019 WIT and CT-WAGE Graduates with President Klonoski (far right) and Wanda Warshauer (far left).

Watch Our Video
youtu.be/8VRUz75FHIM

Donate Online
bit.ly/COSCBridgetheGap

Join a Donor Circle

Be recognized in *Connections*, the Summer/Fall Newsletter, based on your total donations from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

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Contributions to the Charter Oak State College Annual Appeal are applied to the unrestricted fund and are tax deductible.

Charter Oak State College Foundation | Bridge the Gap! | 2019-2020 Annual Appeal

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My gift will be matched by My Company | My Spouse's Company | Company Name _____

Please make checks payable to COSC Foundation Annual Appeal

Charter Oak State College Foundation, a 501(c)(3) | 55 Paul J. Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053 p: (860) 515-3889

Meet Our Newest Foundation Board Members!



Tracy V. Allen, *Impact Strategist, Fundraiser, Speaker, Author, Educator, and Owner, TVA Consulting, LLC*

Tracy works with nonprofits and businesses to attract funding, increase capacity, deliver exemplary programs/services, and create a positive impact in the communities and clients they serve. She volunteers for the SCORE Greater Hartford Chapter as a Co-Chair, Education, and Inclusion & Diversity Coordinator, Fundraising Team Member, as well as the organization's representative on the Small Nonprofit Community Partners.



Vanessa Rossitto, *CPA, blumshapiro*

A partner and industry leader of blumshapiro's Government Services Group and recently recognized as one of the Distinguished Service Awardees for the Inaugural Connecticut Society of CPAs (CTCPA) Women's Awards. Vanessa is the partner sponsor of blumshapiro's Diversity & Inclusion committee and a member of the Women Who Lead Social Network.



Steven Taylor, *VP Relationship Manager, Berkshire Bank*

Steven serves as a financial quarterback for high value clients and works collaboratively with other internal leaders to ensure alignment and the proper prioritization to achieve short and long-term business development goals for his clients. Taylor is a 2015 Hartford Business Journal 40 under Forty honoree, and 2015 100 Men of Color honoree as well as a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. and a Free & Accepted Mason. He coaches youth football and basketball in Windsor where he resides with his wife and two children. 🌱

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connections

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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

Charter Oak Alumni Insurance Program

Did you know the Charter Oak State College Alumni Association now sponsors an Alumni Insurance Program as a service to our graduates? The program offers a variety of attractively-priced insurance products, most of which are available to alumni, students, faculty and staff, as well as spouses, parents, children, and siblings.



LIFE INSURANCE



ADVISORY SERVICES



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For more information visit COSC.MeyerAndAssoc.com or contact our program administrator (Meyer and Associates) at 800-635-7801.

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**A WOMEN IN
TRANSITION
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