

The Commencement Issue

The Ceremony will take place...

On Thursday, May 17, at 2 p.m. at Proctors, in downtown Schenectady. Approximately 540 students will earn degrees and certificates. Following the Ceremony there will be a delightful reception held on campus in the Van Curler Room.

The Keynote Address will be delivered by...

Professor Rocco Verrigni, the longest standing faculty member at the College, serving for more than 36 years in the School of Hotel, Culinary Arts and Tourism. Thousands of appreciative guests of the Casola Dining Room have enjoyed his culinary expertise as instructor of the Classical Cuisine course for the popular gourmet dining spot. In addition, Professor Verrigni developed "Italian Food and Culture," a studyabroad course for Culinary Arts students, as well as "SCCC-SlowFood," a student club dedicated to the principles of SlowFood America.



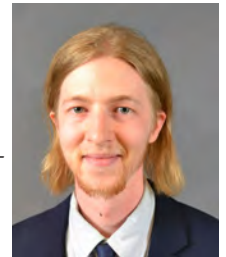
Graduates should...

Pick up their cap and gown in the College Store this week. Attend rehearsal on Monday, May 14, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Proctors. Your name card will be issued.

Arrive at 1 p.m. at Proctors on the day of Commencement and line up outside of the back entrance (the entrance closest to the parking garage).

The Student Speaker is...

Matthew Helms, President of the Student Government Association, who will earn his associate's degree in Teacher Education. He plans to transfer in the fall to the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse to pursue his bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies with a concentration in Environment, Communication and Society. "As we gather to celebrate our hard work and determination, we are reminded once more that change is just over the horizon. Let us face this notion of change together before we move on to the next step, whatever that may be for each of us."



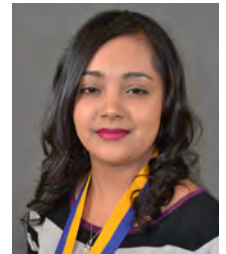
Excelling in the Classroom and Community

Jessica Diskin and Gishana Kuldip will both be wearing an extra accessory at Commencement next week - the medallions they earned as recipients of the 2018 Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence. They were among the 249 students from colleges across the state to be honored recently by SUNY Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson.

Jessica Diskin is a Culinary Arts degree major and member of the College's American Culinary Federation junior chapter. Jessica is the Lead Line Cook at the award-winning Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Mass., and at Seeds Market Café in Pittsfield, Mass. Jessica has contributed her talents to the College's Hot Food Culinary Competition Team. Her expertise in savory cooking drove the team to a silver medal in December 2017. A Dean's List student, Jessica's volunteerism is to be admired. She was selected from a large pool of candidates to participate in the 2017 Kentucky Derby as a Culinary Arts Intern. She quickly rose to Culinary Team Leader at the Finish Line Luxury Suites as a culinary expediter and was invited to return to the 2018 Derby.



Gishana Kuldip, a Liberal Arts degree major with a Psychology Concentration, has excelled in academics, cultivated friendships, and delved into volunteerism since she immigrated to the U.S. from Guyana in 2014. Gishana's primary language is Guyanese Creole, and when she and her family moved to the U.S., she had to begin speaking fluently in English and adapt to a new culture and way of life. Gishana took all of this as a challenge and excelled. A member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, she maintains a 3.96 grade point average. She is President of the Student Volunteer Organization and has volunteered her time with the City Mission, Fostering Future, Girl's Inc., and the Guyanese community.



The Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence was created in 1997 to recognize students who have best demonstrated, and have been recognized for, the integration of academic excellence with accomplishments in the areas of leadership, athletics, community service, creative and performing arts, campus involvement, or career achievement.



Persevering in the Face of Adversity

Any wrestler knows that the more you break your opponent down and the closer he gets to the mat, the easier it becomes to pin him.

This tenet in the sport he loved through his formative years, the one that got him through tussles in his neighborhood as a “little, skinny guy” in Bogota, N.J., has been with Brian Johansen since fifth grade when he started on his school’s wrestling team, long before he faced his greatest opponent – a traumatic brain injury

He was skiing in the Swiss Alps during the summer of 1980, before his senior year in high school. When conditions quickly changed and he lost visibility, Brian estimates that he descended nearly 10 stories, leaving him in a coma for two weeks with organ failure, a high fever, global amnesia, and paralyzed. He slowly regained his strength, but has lived with the lasting effects of a brain injury ever since, including memory loss and difficulty retaining information.

Working through his learning challenges, Brian earned a bachelor’s degree in his 20s. “I was injured in high school and they never told me what I wouldn’t be able to do, so I wanted to try and rebuild the old me so that I could have the life that he was going to have.” After years of working as a bookkeeper and running a Christmas tree farm, Brian decided to return to school in January 2015 for his associate’s degree in Accounting.

He has utilized ADA Transition Services, the Math Lab, Accounting Lab, and Tutor Services for support each semester and has perfected his own system of writing on index cards and reviewing them to retain the information.

He didn’t attend his first graduation from Jersey City State College, but plans to be there this time because he feels as though he has made much more progress toward recovery and that this ceremony will be, for him, a better measure toward that end.

“I can’t say exactly what keeps me positive,” he said. “In the brain injury community we’re persistent. We grab onto something and don’t let go of it very easily. I had that when I was a wrestler. I’m never going to allow anyone to pin me.”

Making Her Mark on the Air

Evania Osepa has always loved performing. She’s been playing the flute and tenor saxophone for years, plays now with Geek Musica Chamber Ensemble and was even in a salsa band. But she wanted to know everything that was going on behind the scenes during those performances.

So, she began studying in the Music Audio Technology program at the College after being enrolled in Performing Arts: Music. “I really like live sound,” she said. “I have a real fascination with it. I’m a big concertgoer and wanted to learn about the work involved in putting together the show.”

Through the program at the College, she’s now a certified user in Pro Tools, the digital audio workstation for sound production. Every step of the way, her professors have passed on their expertise with Pro Tools and sound engineering for all of the projects she’s worked on. Now, they’re giving her their feedback by tuning in every Sunday to 97.7 FM - WEXT.

Evania is the newest addition to the team at the popular local radio station affiliated with WMHT, the Capital Region’s PBS station. It was pure trial by fire. She had been working as an intern at the station this semester, a connection forged through Assistant Professor Sten Isachsen, editing programs with interviews from local and touring musicians and the “My Exit” hourlong series with listeners picking their favorite tunes.

When the station manager asked her to fill in for a D.J. one Sunday afternoon, it was just Evania, “the red dot (signaling she was on the air) and the giant microphone.” The station liked what it heard and offered her a position last month as a full-time Radio Host and Program Director. In addition to being on air from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, she’ll be editing shows, reaching out to artists for interviews, and setting up sound for live shows.

“The faculty here have been listening to me on the air and the shows I’ve edited and they’ve given me their feedback as a listener and as my professor,” she said. “Everyone here and at WEXT has been super supportive and encouraging.”



Finding the Perfect Combination

The Belgian style saisons appeal most to James Hanley because “you can get creative with grain bill (ingredients).”

To this end, while brewing at home, he has worked with barley and wheat recipes, with yeast strains original to Belgium that are produced in yeast labs throughout the United States. But he also researched the real deal over Spring Break, while on a solo mission to Belgium and Ireland for market research.

What he found out by visiting historic breweries and sampling saisons and beers in both countries reinforced his enthusiasm for brewing, something that started as a hobby and a friendly competition between James and his father.

“I helped my dad bottle a hard cider he had made at home,” James said. “I tasted it and said, ‘I can do better.’” Many light pilsners, lagers, IPAs and stouts later, James decided to make a career change from working as an energy engineer at a local company to becoming a brewer full time.

This leap into brewing, an industry that continues to expand in New York State and across the country, grew not only from a passion for creating delicious varieties of beers, but also from his fundamental need to create. “It’s about being able to make something,” James said. “In high school I always took shop classes, technology, even music. With brewing, to be hands-on and create something, to see the product and see people use it, that’s what’s driving me.”

Next week, when he earns his degree in Craft Beer Brewing, he will be among the first group of students to graduate from that discipline’s new degree and certificate programs that began in Fall 2016. The ink will just be dry on his diploma when he packs up this summer and heads to Culpeper, Va., for a position that he’s already lined up in the industry. He’ll become the new Brewmaster at Old House Vineyards in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains when the vineyard opens a new brewery.

Until then, James plans to continue to have his father, brothers, and friends who are in town sample his different beers and give their feedback. “It’s a lot like baking. You follow a recipe and you’re allowed to play around, but there’s a lot of science behind it, how fermentation will play out and what your end result is going to be.”



Sharing a Love of Science

Every Saturday, after a week full of classes and CSTEP programs, Nieem Crockett is back on campus. “I really want to help other minorities, especially young men, feel included and represented in the STEM field.”

So, he meets with middle school students from Schenectady to get them interested in the sciences with activities and discussions through Rise High, an organization in the Electric City developed by GE executives to expose youngsters to a wide variety of STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) concepts. Nieem is a mentor to kids from Oneida and Central Park Middle Schools, leading them through science experiments and telling them about the classes he’s taking at the College while they go on field trips to other colleges or meet with professionals in STEM fields.

He feels drawn to this age group and in trying to spark their interest in the sciences because it was around their age that he first gravitated toward science. “During elementary school, I didn’t really like science or math, but during middle school and in high school, my teachers really got me into it.” Biology captured him the most because “it has the answers to everything.”

Since enrolling as a Science major with a Biology concentration, Nieem has been involved with CSTEP (Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program), an initiative to increase the number of students from under-represented groups pursuing professional licensure and careers in mathematics, science, technology, and health-related fields.

Through CSTEP, he recently shadowed medical students at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse during the “Try On A White Coat” program, hearing invaluable advice from the med students and from doctors. “They let me know what I should do during my undergrad years to better myself when applying to medical school.”

He will be the first in his family to graduate from college and this fall Nieem will be pursuing his bachelor’s degree in Biology at the University at Albany. After that, it’s off to medical school to follow his dream of practicing family medicine. “Your family doctor is the first person you go to see when something is wrong. Being able to help people is something that I really want to do.”



Dr. Steady Moono, President, congratulates Sokhna Dieng, Hotel and Restaurant Management major, as she receives the Women's Fund of the Capital Region Scholarship during last year's Honors Convocation Ceremony, with Dick Kotlow, Chair of the Board of Directors for the SCCC Foundation, and Reverend Bill Levering, Vice Chair of the College's Board of Trustees.

Honors Convocation Will Recognize Students with Scholarships and Awards

Students will be receiving scholarships and awards during the College's 47th Honors Convocation on Thursday, May 17, at 9:30 a.m. in the Taylor Auditorium, as friends, family, faculty, and staff members applaud their myriad achievements.

Generous donors and friends of the College will be recognizing 159 students with these special accolades during this meaningful and important ceremony hosted by the SCCC Foundation. Several new scholarships will be presented this year.

"For students just beginning their education and for those returning to continue on their chosen paths, maintaining a high level of achievement and personal excellence represents the kind of dedication, diligence, and determination that exemplify the culture of the College," said Dr. Steady Moono, SUNY SCCC President. "Thanks to the support and generosity of our invaluable scholarship donors and community partners, SUNY SCCC is able to recognize and help students realize their dreams and aspirations."



Congratulations to the Class of 2018!



Helping Others Through Psychology

Just like it's a good idea to have an annual visit to your doctor for a checkup to size up your cholesterol, blood pressure, and have some blood work done, Sloane Zardez thinks an annual visit to a psychologist is just as healthy.

"I think it would be very beneficial for people to check in with a psychologist once a year," she said. "It's something that I've always considered very important."

This month, Sloane will be among those graduating with a degree in Liberal Arts with a Psychology concentration, one of the newest concentrations at the College. Over the last two years, she has come to appreciate the depth of discussion that takes place in her psych classes.

"Since it's a soft science, there is room for debate and we get more into that," she said. "We are able to express our opinions freely." Her latest project involved writing a research paper on medical aid in dying for her Lifespan Development class, exploring another side to psychology she hadn't yet delved into. "I was surprised by how few states allow medical aid in dying and have regulations to allow people to apply for it."

Through classes like this one and Abnormal Psych, Sloane has decided that clinical psychology is the avenue she would like to pursue. She likes the idea of helping people through therapy because as she explains, "I've been in therapy and I know how helpful it can be." She began seeing a psychologist in middle school when she was diagnosed with clinical depression. And when she developed an eating disorder during high school, it was through seeing a therapist and by consulting a nutritionist that she got better. She would like to have the same impact on her own patients one day.

This fall, Sloane, who is a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society with a 3.97 GPA, will be pursuing her bachelor's degree in Psychology at SUNY Oneonta. She plans to then earn her master's and Ph.D. to establish her own practice. "I like the idea of taking my degree and doing something useful with it. Helping people function in the everyday world would be really nice."