



**HOWARD**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**DARIA J. WILLIS, PH.D.**

**PRESIDENT'S**

# UPDATE

## #DRAGONCOUNTRY

*"Sometimes your next step isn't what you had in mind, so say yes anyway."*

— Gayle King

### ANNOUNCING THE 2025 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS

**Dragon Country!** It's hard to believe that May has flown by and that we are now one week away from our commencement ceremony! Maryland Army National Guard Adjutant General Janeen L. Birkhead will salute our graduates as the keynote speaker for the college's 54th commencement exercises.

Maryland's governor appointed Birkhead to lead the state's military. She is the second African American and the second woman to be appointed to this role. Before her promotion to Adjutant General, Birkhead served as Commander of the Maryland Air National Guard, where she was responsible for the combat readiness of 4,600 soldiers and 1,500 combat platforms. She maintained 45 installations statewide and oversaw an annual budget of \$182 million. Learn more about Adjutant General Birkhead in [HCC's Newsroom](#).

I am excited to introduce this year's student speaker, Paulette McCrawford! Paulette is a proud graduate of HCC's Nursing program and serves as the Student Representative for the Student Nursing Association. Like many of our students, Paulette is a student parent, balancing coursework and clinicals while being a wife and mother to two daughters. Please join me in congratulating Paulette on this recognition! Read her [bio](#).

Thank you to **Tiffany Goins, Heidi Kirkman, Adam Leatherman, Lindsay Wiley, and Meghan Young** for serving on the speaker selection committee.

I look forward to seeing you at the **UMBC Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena on Friday, May 23, at 10 a.m.** for this year's ceremony. Thank you to the faculty, staff, and volunteers for making this a day to remember for our graduates and their families, with a special thanks to the employees of the college who are remaining on campus to continue serving students.

Thanks to **Dragon Media**, a [live stream](#) of the ceremony will be available for those unable to attend in person. See you on Friday!



### LEADERSHIP UPDATES

#### Senior Leadership Team Update

Senior Leadership Team meeting minutes are available on the [portal](#).

#### Board of Trustees Meeting Notice

The Howard Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. on May 21, 2025, in The Rouse Company Foundation Student Services Hall, room 400.

Board Materials for the work session are [posted on the web](#) as part of the library archives.

## HCC CONNECTIONS, DEPARTURES & TRANSITIONS

### Please welcome to Dragon Country!

- Yambasu Brewah  
*Accounting Manager (05/19)*

### Congratulations on your retirement:

- Ty Stone  
*Executive Vice President for  
Finance and Administration  
(06/30)*

### Leaving the college:

- Kevin Schmidt  
*Video Production Engineer  
(05/30)*
- Laura Smith  
*Director, Dental Hygiene Program  
(06/16)*
- Robert Amador  
*Assistant Professor,  
Entrepreneurship and Business  
(06/06)*
- India Wise  
*Executive Assistant (06/06)*
- Malena Schmidt  
*Teaching and Learning Program  
Manager (06/30)*

## YOU'RE INVITED TO SPRING CONVOCATION!

Spring Convocation will be held on Monday, May 19, 2025. Please join us as we celebrate our new employees, faculty promotions, outstanding employee awards, Innovation Fair winners, milestone years of service, and honor our retirees, among other festivities. Offices will be closed during this time so that faculty and staff can enjoy this year-end celebration.

You can watch convocation in the Smith Theatre or stream it using the Vimeo [link](#). Breakfast will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Ecker Café on the Quad.

## SPRING INNOVATION FAIR

Be sure to attend and vote at this year's annual Innovation Fair! Join us on Monday, May 19, 2025, at 8:45 a.m. Come and witness firsthand all the great work your colleagues have been doing and the innovative ideas they will present!

Check out this year's participants and past winners on the [Innovation Fair portal site!](#) The winner will be announced at the end of convocation.

If you have any questions, please contact **Shatina Chen** in the learning outcomes assessment office at [HChen@howardcc.edu](mailto:HChen@howardcc.edu) or extension 4899.

## PAYING IT FORWARD FOR NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

In recognition of National Nurses Week, HCC's Student Nursing Association and Men in Nursing Education led a collection drive of knit and crochet hats to donate to area neonatal intensive care units to keep newborns warm as they receive necessary, life-saving care. The drive also collected coloring books, blankets and other donations to support area shelters. Congratulations to our nursing students for a successful drive!



**SUSTAINABILITY @ HCC**

*Did you know that May 16 is Bike to Work Day?*

*This day is part of the National Bike Month activities coordinated every May by the League of American Bicyclists.*

*By swapping a trip to work, running an errand, or visiting loved ones with a trip by bicycle, you'll reduce the amount of emissions released into the air and enjoy some health benefits too!*

*Didn't bike to work today? No worries! There is still plenty of time this month!*

**DAY OF LEARNING 2025!**

Our 2025 Day of Learning will begin at 9 a.m. with a kick-off and a keynote speaker. There will be four tracks of presentations: three 45-minute sessions and one 30-minute session. This should give everyone more time to be fully engaged in the sessions.

There will be lunch and a fun group picture with our new T-shirts. Everyone will have the chance to sign up for their selected sessions and receive professional development credit. This will be a great day to come together as a campus community, meet new faces, learn from one another, and grow as individuals and colleagues. Our goal is that everyone come away from this Day of Learning with a stronger dedication to our students, each other and ourselves.

As the saying goes, "You can't pour from an empty cup." We hope that everyone comes away from this year's event with full cups as we start a new semester. Please consider designing and offering a session. The college will offer professional development credit to presenters who lead a session: [Day of Learning 2025 Presenter Intake Form](#).

If you have any input on sessions you would like to see offered, or questions regarding the 2025 Day of Learning, please contact **Jessica Grim** at [jgrim@howardcc.edu](mailto:jgrim@howardcc.edu)



**Save the Date**  
**August 18, 2025**

**2025 ADJUNCT FAIR RESULTS IN STRONG TURNOUT**

On Thursday, May 1, HCC hosted an in-person adjunct recruitment fair. Over 115 people attended to learn about potential adjunct job opportunities at HCC, more than double the number of attendees from last year. We hope this will help with staffing and talent recruitment.

Many thanks to **Laura Yoo**, Division Chair of the Foundational Learning Division, who led and coordinated the effort beyond her division to include all academic divisions, WCCE, Middle College, and more. Additional thanks to those who represented their departments and divisions: **Karen Bridges, Darrien Coleman, Katie Edwards, Jen Garner, Margaret Garroway, Raymond Harrod, Greta Holtackers Cannon, Fred Lang, Nic Learned, Joel Offenberg, Mark Tacyn, Ahn Truong, Rosemary Williams, and Fidele Youssaka.**

We also extend our gratitude to **Grace Anastasiadis, Maria Del Mar Civera Molla, Pam Eidsness, Kia McLeod, Sumeeta Raj,** and to deans **Christianne Aranguren, Jeremy Bomberg, and Sylvia Lee** for their support and sponsorship of the event.

## CELEBRATING THE 2024-25 NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION COHORT: REFLECTION, RECOGNITION, AND A LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE

On Friday, May 2, the Faculty Development and Learning Innovation division proudly celebrated the achievements of the 2024–2025 New Faculty Orientation cohort. This gathering marked the culmination of a year-long professional learning journey that supported new, full-time faculty transitioning to teaching at HCC. Rooted in inclusive pedagogy, student success, and institutional culture, the program fosters collaboration, innovation, and a deepened commitment to teaching excellence.

These educators engaged in monthly cohort meetings, interactive workshops, peer classroom observations, and guided reflections throughout the year. Core topics included evidence-based teaching strategies, Universal Design for Learning, assessment and feedback, equity-minded instruction, and student engagement.

The celebration included reflections on teaching philosophy and growth, a showcase of innovative and inclusive teaching practices, discussions on the application of learning, and conversations about future goals for teaching and learning. The insights shared and the community formed will continue to shape each faculty member's teaching journey.

Thank you to **Maureen Martin**, designer and facilitator, for this year's program.

Congratulations to our 2024–25 New Faculty Cohort: **RJ Amador, Marjeta Cedilnik, Stefan Cular, Patricia Herdoiza Hernández, Carolyn Hsiao, Bob King, Anna Lee, Caitlin Lucado, Shobha Madhavan, Jessica Mondoneda, Alexa Paulay-Simmons, Victoria Pitt, Helen Rose, Anindita Saha, Allison Shultz, Lana Thomas, Rika van Huizen, and Fidele Youssaka.**



## HCC RANKS 1<sup>ST</sup> IN MID-ATLANTIC AND 21<sup>ST</sup> NATIONWIDE IN AMATYC 2025 STUDENT LEAGUE MATH COMPETITION

The final results are in: HCC scored 1st place in the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC) 2025 Student League Math Competition, and 21<sup>st</sup> nationwide!

HCC students Gabriel Eikenberg, Benjamin Fichter, Ellena Gilber, Shahla Hanif, and Muhammad Monib achieved the highest scores of all HCC students. The scores were then submitted as a team score. This is an outstanding achievement!

Congratulations to the students and **Sunhee Kim**, whose guidance and coordination have been instrumental in their success!

## THE CAFÉ ON THE QUAD NEEDS YOUR FEEDBACK!

The Ecker Café on the Quad is seeking feedback and asking members of the college community to share their thoughts.

Whether you eat at the Café regularly or not at all, your input is valuable. This short survey will take just a few minutes and will help the college better meet the needs and preferences of our campus community.

Click the [survey link](#) or scan the QR code to provide your feedback.



## HCC FORWARD UPDATE

This week marks a significant milestone in the HCC Forward Initiative: the finalization of our task force rosters. We want to thank our task force chairs and co-chairs for their dedication and insight in leading the next phase of the work. Three task forces will be newly formed and kicking off a new charge, including:

The WCCE Program Alignment Task Force will be working on developing strategies that connect Workforce, Career, and Community Education (WCCE) non-credit programs with credit-bearing academic pathways at HCC, and will be led by Darren Gibson as the task force chair.

The WCCE Student Integration Task Force, led by the task force chair **Jim Rzepkowski**, will guide the alignment of WCCE student services, enrollment, and support processes with HCC's credit-bearing student experience.

**Zakia Reaves Johnson** and **Candace dePass** will co-chair the Retention & Completion Task Force and lead the development of a comprehensive, institution-wide retention strategy focused on persistence, progression, and completion.

Two task forces will be reorganized around a new charge for their work, including:

The Accelerated Pathways Task Force, led by Jon Iuzzini, will be responsible for expanding, refining, and institutionalizing HCC's 7-week course model. This group will coordinate faculty development, alignment with student support, modality strategy, and advising enhancements to strengthen accelerated learning options and ensure sustainable program growth.

The Strategic Scheduling Task Force will be co-chaired by **Kismet Flagg-Webster** and **Jon Iuzzini**. This task force will focus on the development and implementation of a year-long scheduling model at HCC. This group will be responsible for designing course sequencing strategies, aligning program pathways, improving course predictability, and building operational readiness for institutional rollout.

With this momentum, we'll prepare for task force kickoffs beginning next month, where task forces will align around refreshed charges, responsibilities, and their next steps. These kickoffs will translate strategy into further action, and we couldn't be more excited.