Dear Friends,

October 2, 2015 was a momentous day at Westchester Community College, as SUNY and county officials, along with the entire campus community, gathered for the inauguration of the college’s third president, Dr. Belinda S. Miles. Since taking office in January 2015, Dr. Miles has engaged all areas of the college, and the institution has embarked on ambitious goals to improve student success. The WCC Foundation has already provided seed funding for a variety of initiatives, including a High School Transitions Program, participation in the Achieving the Dream Network, adjunct faculty training, completion coaches in Liberal Arts, and expanded scholarship opportunities. Without the guidance and involvement of our wonderful supporters, this would not be possible. Thank you for your ongoing engagement and commitment to all we do!

Best wishes for 2016,
Eve Larner, Executive Director
High School Transitions: Are You College Ready?

With thanks to funding from an anonymous donor, the college is actively working with an initial set of partner high schools to revise 12th grade curricula so students meet requirements to enter college-level classes at WCC. The effort also involves a comprehensive program to orient students to college. On September 25th, 2015, students from the three participating high schools and their teachers were invited to Westchester Community College for a special kick-off event, the Pathways to College Readiness: High School Transitions Program. Over 200 12th-grade students arrived on campus with their teachers for a welcome, an introduction to the program, some words from current students, and a “treasure hunt” to get them acquainted with the campus. Students also attended “mini-classes” taught by WCC faculty, in order to get a taste of what it will be like to be in a college classroom. The event also included a lunch, and some “ice breaker” activities arranged by current WCC students. These activities are designed to get the students excited about pursuing a college degree, and about WCC. It was a pleasure to have these young students on campus.

This event was run by the WCC High School Transitions Team, lead by Jessica Seessel, Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities, and Tim McGee, Interim Assistant Dean of Learning Success Initiatives.

Scholarships Make All the Difference

The annual Scholarship Recognition Ceremony was held on Thursday, October 15th. This year, we tried a new format: donors and college representatives were seated with scholarship recipients at 60 tables in the gym for a total audience of about 500!

The program featured alumnus Dwayne Kelly ’06, who was also the 2006 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation undergraduate scholarship winner (and 2010 Jack Kent Cooke graduate scholarship winner). Dwayne’s speech focused on the word “opportunity,” and what it meant to him as a (then) undocumented student, and how students may avail themselves of the many opportunities offered by the college. Student speaker and Kathryn Davis Global Community Scholar, Kimani Muthra (right) has said, “Today we thrive as Westchester Community College students and from here our possibilities are endless,” followed with a heartwarming speech to our donors, expressing thanks on behalf of all the scholarship recipients.

Pace University now offers Westchester Community College graduates who transfer to the Pleasantville campus a new scholarship! Kyle Kristiansen graduated from Westchester Community College on May 21, 2015 and will be one of the first WCC students to benefit from the new $25,000 annual scholarship. This scholarship is available to full-time students who have earned their Associates Degree and maintained at least a 3.2 grade point average. The scholarship, the first of its kind for Pace, is unusual because it is available to an unlimited number of students and is targeted to graduates of one community college. Most scholarships limit the number of recipients. This scholarship is a big help to our WCC graduates!

We recently received news from Vaughn’s president, Dr. Sharon DeVivo, that Vaughn College will be earmarking a full tuition, 2-year scholarship for a WCC graduate who transfers to Vaughn to complete a bachelor’s degree.
In addition, Manhattanville College has increased their earmarked scholarship support to three (3) half-tuition scholarships to WCC graduates who graduate with a minimum 3.5 GPA. The scholarship is now available to both Fall and Spring transfer students.

Congratulations December Graduates!

The College has established a new tradition: a December Completion Celebration for the more than 500 students who petitioned to graduate at the end of the fall term. These students work just as hard as the graduates we recognize each May, but oftentimes their lives take them to a new four-year college or a new job, so they miss the chance to relish their success with their families at commencement. This was an opportunity to let our students know how proud we are of their accomplishments.

The reception following the formal remarks was exceptional—everyone was all smiles! And the desserts prepared by our Culinary Arts students were exquisite. Graduates and their families also had access to representatives with information about alumni benefits, transfer scholarships, and other resources. Many great comments were heard about our college from our soon-to-be alumni and their families.

WCC Alumni Success

When Elizabeth (Libby) Deierlein (pictured left) walked across the stage to receive her diploma in Early Childhood Education at the 2015 graduation ceremony, she was not the first member of her family to make that journey. She had actually been preceded by more than a few other Deierleins, all of whom graduated from WCC and still reside in the local community. Libby’s mom, Patricia Weir Deierlein, graduated in 1970 with a degree in Accounting; her father, Charles M. Deierlein, studied Civil Engineering technology and graduated in 1976. Libby’s brother Chris graduated in 1998 from the Paramedic/EMT Program. Other Deierlein family members who started their studies at WCC include: Virginia, Angela, Jane, Chevon, Kevin F. (’79), Brian L. (’75), Edward C. (’63) Mary E. (’63), Joanne B. (’69) and Joan C. (’00).

Charles Deierlein, a staunch supporter and advocate for the college, couldn’t be more proud. His daughter Libby is the first Deierlein to be acknowledged by our new President, Dr. Belinda S. Miles. This is a family legacy to be proud of!
**WCC Foundation Welcomes**

New Board member **Yvonne Pollack**, is the founder of the New Castle Art Center. She is also a former president of the Katonah Museum of Art and served as education director for 15 years. Yvonne also serves on the education committee at the Jacob Burns Film Center. In her long history as an educator, Yvonne has developed a traveling museum for elementary schools, conducted teacher training workshops, served on the advisory council of the Chappaqua Schools and chaired cultural enrichment for the Chappaqua PTA. Yvonne joined the WCC Foundation in November of 2015.

**John Nonna** has been named the Chair of the Westchester Community College Board of Trustees, and thereby is also an ex-officio member of the WCC Foundation Board of Directors. Nonna was appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2013. He is a former member of the Westchester County Board of Legislators and is also a practicing lawyer and managing partner of the New York office of Patton Boggs. He has balanced a successful law practice with public service, including various roles in Pleasantville, New York, including mayor.

Parica Mason (pronounced like “Erica”) is the Foundation’s new front office Administrative Assistant. Parica graduated from New England College in New Hampshire where she also spent several years working in the Office of Student Development, and where she served as a Resident Advisor. Parica is excited to bring her skills back into higher education. Parica will be active with Foundation Board administrative support functions, so she will be answering the phones, scheduling meetings, and greeting guests in Hartford Hall. Welcome, Parica!

**A Legacy of Devotion**

We recently received word that a treasured WCC volunteer had passed away. **Phyllis Taffet** was a true champion for WCC. In her true spirit for giving, Phyllis Taffet has left a bequest to the WCC Foundation. This is completely in line with her caring and giving nature and we are honored with this rememberance!

Over the years, Phyllis was an extraordinary volunteer. As one of WCC’s first volunteers, she gave her heart and soul to the College. Not only in the traditional sense of fundraising and “envelope stuffing,” but she was a conversation partner to several students and brought them into her world, mentoring them and sharing information about life in the United States. Recently, when she wasn’t feeling well, as soon as she heard our voices on the phone, she would perk up and sound like her old self. She was revitalized by the College and seeing her friends. She will be missed.

For more information on planned giving please go to [http://www.sunywcc.edu/about/foundation/plan-your-gift/](http://www.sunywcc.edu/about/foundation/plan-your-gift/)
Lindsay Peckham, Class of 2016

Lindsay, a 2016 recipient of a Nancy Jo Abeles Scholarship, was honored for her achievements and passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) at the “Women in Tech Awards Luncheon” on October 1, at Tappan Hill Mansion in Tarrytown. The luncheon was sponsored by the Westchester County Association.

Originally from the Boston area, Lindsay attended a community college in Massachusetts for one semester. Shortly thereafter, she began her career in the business world and while there Lindsay found ways to incorporate her technical skills into her job. “I became the Jill of All Trades at every position I held,” she said. “I got fast-tracked in the corporate world and climbed the ladder. I thought a lot about going back to school.”

Encouraged by her sister, Jessica, Lindsay moved to Pelham, New York. Peckham enrolled at Westchester Community College and embraced the atmosphere from the outset. She plans to finish WCC with a degree in cyber security.

Lindsay’s full story

Kezia Soares Da Cruz, Class of 2016

Scholarship student, Kezia Soares Da Cruz spoke eloquently and passionately at the WCC Foundation Board of Directors annual meeting on November 10, 2015. She represented other scholarship recipients in communicating to the board and other attendees the importance of scholarships, and how they change lives.

Kezia stated, “Undeniably, this reward has given me much more than a certain amount of money to pay my tuition. Having a scholarship represents to me hope and support. Certainly, it marks my history deeply and it will be unforgettable, which gives inspiration to also help others when the opportunity comes. That is why I believe every scholarship is like a seed that is planted into a fertile soil, and when [the] time comes it will be a strong and productive tree.” For Kezia’s full speech

The Core of Giving

The Culinary club has established a new holiday tradition of baking and selling pies for Thanksgiving! Foundation Board member Barbara Abeles donated the apples used for the pies, which came from her own orchard. The Culinary Club raised money for future activities, and the pies were delicious! Thank you, Barbara!
Virginia Marx Children’s Center

The Virginia Marx Children’s Center at Westchester Community College marked its 30th year of programming this past December with the initiation of a new program called Parent Coffee Workshops for currently enrolled families! These workshops will take place on Wednesday’s from 11:30am-12:30pm with additional special evening events. Topics will include family meal planning & nutrition, mindful parenting, setting effective limits with children, and others. Located on the main campus in Valhalla, the VMCC is recognized for quality programming. The Center is integrated with the college’s Early Childhood Education Department. The Virginia Marx Children's Center enrolls the children of WCC students, faculty & staff, as well as community members.

Special discounted rates are available for WCC faculty, staff and students. For more information about the Virginia Marx Children’s Center please call 914 606-6644 or go to Virginia Marx Children’s Center

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Dates to Remember

**Native Plant Center**
Go Native U Spring Classes begin
**February 3, 2016.**
The Native Plant Center Conference
**Monday, March 14, 2016 8:30 am – 3:00 pm,**
in the Davis Auditorium of Gateway
**Saturday, April 30, 2016,**
10:00 am–1:00 pm for the 17th Annual Native Plant Sale.

For more information on the NPC Events
Native Plant Center Events

**Alumni Events**
Financial Education Day
**Saturday March 19, 2016**
Class of 1966 Reunion
**Thursday May 19, 2016**

**Humanities Institute Spring Event**
Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016 1:00-3:00
Gateway - Davis Auditorium
The Wind Is Spirit: The Life, Love and Legacy of Audre Lorde
A conversation with Dr. Gloria Joseph
Emeritus Professor, Hampshire College
Event co-sponsored by the Joseph and Sophia Endowed Chair for Global Literature

For more information on Humanities Institute Events please contact
heather.ostman@sunywcc.edu

Please don’t forget to check your mail this February for your Celebrity Salon Series invitation

Thank you for always making a difference . . . .

“*There are students who are alone in this journey, since there is nobody to remind them that they are capable, valuable and they are in the right path. Despite of all the difficulties on the way, having a scholarship represents to me hope and support. It is a reminder that I am capable and that there is somebody who believes in my potential.***

Kezia Soares,
2015-16 recipient of a Ruth & Jerome Siegel Scholarship