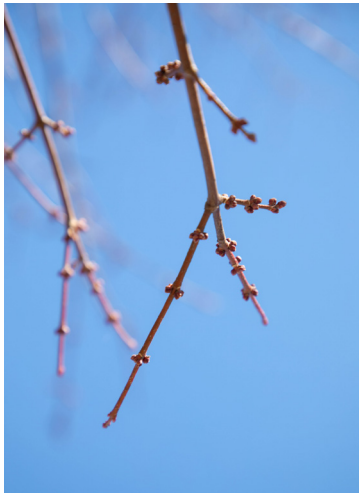


# THE ADVISOR

*News from the Hagerstown Community College Advancement Office*

Spring 2021

## Reflections on the New Normal by Dr. Klauber



Despite Punxsutawney Phil's prediction for another six weeks of winter, spring is almost upon us! It is a time for hope and renewal. I feel the same way about life at Hagerstown Community College (HCC) these days. Yes, we have endured a year like no other. Yet, we are emerging a better institution going forward. We have learned many lessons in how to help students succeed under the most dire circumstances, and we can implement those for years to come. We realize the importance of getting students back on campus for a traditional class. Conversely, we have learned that students enjoy meeting with their advisor or student services assistant virtually. We experimented with online content instead of textbooks. Students loved the significantly cheaper price of purchasing access to online content versus buying a textbook. They found no problems with using a virtual book instead of a real one.

HCC employees are considered Priority 1B by Governor Hogan for COVID-19 vaccine administration. I am happy to report that as of this writing, many employees have gotten their vaccinations. We are ready to begin working back to a new normal for this fall. It is my sincere hope that we can have as much as 30 percent of our classes meeting in a traditional face-to-face format in the fall.

Thank you for your continued support of our College and its students. As we recognize our 75th Anniversary later this year, we have much to celebrate and look forward to in the years ahead!

## Students Helping Students



On November 20 and 21, students from Hagerstown Community College's Student Government Association (SGA) and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter held a food drive to help their fellow students who are food insecure. Food insecurity – or the lack of regular access to nutritious foods – has grown during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the faculty, staff, and student body have worked hard to ensure that no student at HCC goes hungry. In addition to operating a food pantry for students, HCC also provided financial assistance, via the Federal CARES Act funding initiative, to students whose food insecurity and other issues arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pre-Thanksgiving food drive organized by students at HCC augmented these ongoing efforts to address food insecurity in the College community. The food drive effort provided 36 students with two bags of non-perishable groceries, a bag of apples, bread, juice, and \$25 gift card to Martins. Nearly 1,000 items were donated by the College's faculty, staff, students, and volunteers, including a generous \$1,000 donation by the Alumni Association.

HCC students remain especially vulnerable to food insecurity since many rely on the campus's food pantry and dining services for food during the regular semester. While the College campus is open, many students are learning from home and not coming to campus on a regular basis. Initiatives like the PTK/SGA food drive help reach these students who might otherwise go hungry.

For students like Ashley Gallo, "the food pantry has been very helpful to me because it allows me to grab things on the go if I am in a rush or if I need a couple of things like toiletries or food for my house. I always

know the food pantry is there and available for me for whatever my needs are."

Community members who are interested in helping students can make a donation of non-perishable food to the Food Pantry on campus or a monetary donation to the Student Emergency Assistance Fund.



## Then and Now



A lot has changed on campus since Dr. Melinda May arrived in 1968 as a freshman. The hill where the Behavioral Science and Humanities (BSH) Building sits once hosted students catching the sun while socializing between classes. Faculty – or even President Kepler – would frequently join the students for casual conversation or a bit of lunch. While the landscape of HCC has changed, Dr. May has built her teaching philosophy around the spirit of engagement and recognition she first felt as a college freshman all those years ago. A respected educator, Dr. May credits much of her success to HCC. After leaving HCC with her associate degree in education, Dr. May went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees at Shepherd University, and finally a doctorate from the University of Maryland. But Dr. May is quick to point out that “ironically, the best educational experience I had” was at HCC.

From her early days as a teacher in Washington County Public Schools, to her current tenure as Associate Professor of English and Humanities at HCC, Dr. May has honed a holistic teaching methodology that goes beyond grammar and composition to help empower her students to succeed in life. The representation of students who go on to four-year schools vs. those who go from HCC to work is fairly balanced, but Dr. May strives to prepare her students for whatever future awaits them. Dr. May's goal is to make sure the work students take on in her class is connected to the challenges that they face in the real world. That work isn't always easy – particularly in light of the current need to teach in a virtual environment.

Prior to spring 2020, Dr. May had never taught an online class. “I felt like online classes were inferior,” Dr. May says. But, after HCC went remote in March of last year, she found herself enjoying the experience.

Interacting with her students in an online environment gave her new insights into the value of online classes to reach and engage students. “It's nice to be able to see everyone's reactions simultaneously” when teaching virtually. Those nuances that might have otherwise been missed in a classroom setting help Dr. May stay engaged and in tune with her students.

With the spring semester underway, Dr. May is welcoming new students to her English and speech classes. When asked which subject she enjoys teaching the most, Dr. May doesn't hesitate: “Speech! It's more dynamic than composition.” Dr. May adds that she likes to give her students the opportunity to bring their passion into the classroom. “When I let them pick a topic for one of their presentations that they are passionate about, it always shows.” The same could be said for Dr. May – her passion for her students, their success, and the College shines through.



## A Gem for Generations:



Countdown to the 75th anniversary of Hagerstown Community College (2021-2022)! Here's a little “gem” for you: do you know how many nurses have graduated from HCC's nursing program? Email us at [collegeadvancement@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:collegeadvancement@hagerstowncc.edu) with your best guess and we will announce the winner in our next issue!





## Stranded Credits/Take2!

When HCC rolled out its Take2! program last fall, the College anticipated seeing increased enrollment from four-year students looking for a better value at two-year schools. After all, with the COVID-19 pandemic shifting most colleges to online learning, it seemed reasonable to assume that some undergraduates might decide to sit out a year at higher priced institutions. Instead, the Take2! program rollout helped identify a little-known phenomenon that can keep students from being able to transfer from one institution to another. The phenomenon, known as “stranded credits” occurs when students have unpaid balances at an institution where they have earned credits.

Few students seem aware that outstanding balances on their account – even relatively small amounts – can impact their academic mobility. Most institutions will not issue official transcripts to students who have outstanding balances on their account – meaning that if a student needs a transfer evaluation, proof of course completion, or proof of credentials, they need to have a zero balance on file. Students with outstanding balances may find their credits “stranded” at an institution.

Kevin Crawford, Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management at HCC, explains why stranded credits hurt some students who might otherwise find a good fit at HCC. Crawford shares the story of a student who had taken classes at Shippensburg University before she applied for HCC’s Take2! Program. At first glance, she met all the required criteria – she had earned at least 24 credits at a four-year school, had completed a FAFSA and met income eligibility, and



had the ability to finish her associate degree in under three semesters. Unfortunately, she also had an outstanding balance at Shippensburg – meaning she could not acquire her official transcript for credit evaluation at HCC.

“I’d like to help her,” says Crawford “but there is not much we can do unless she can provide an official transcript.”

For students already at HCC, the College is taking a proactive approach to “un-strand” credits. The Office of Financial Aid has been working with the Office of College Advancement to find innovative solutions for current graduation candidates who have outstanding balances. One initiative, supported by Ellucian Technology Systems, provides a \$20,000 grant for student stipends.

The stipends helped 14 eligible students pay off their outstanding balances with HCC.

Initiatives like the one supported by Ellucian are instrumental in meeting the challenges faced by current students. Susanna Henderson, Director of Grants Development at HCC, sums it up thusly: “Working with flexible funders who truly support innovation and are willing to fund burgeoning policy issues is exciting. The Ellucian PATH grant understood what HCC was trying to achieve – deliver much needed yet rarely available, end-of-college financial scholarships to students to set them up for success in their next endeavor. When HCC students succeed, the whole community benefits.”

## Holiday Celebration... in a Box

As the calendar year drew to a close, the office of College Advancement packed its annual holiday party for volunteers into a virtual format, accompanied by a curated box of goodies. The boxes, which contained a winter-themed fleece throw, a ceramic mug, candies, a candle holder, and assorted crafts and games, were distributed to 42 volunteers. Volunteers then joined Advancement staff for a virtual celebration on Zoom that featured holiday music, holiday movie trivia bingo, and a virtual scavenger hunt. Volunteer services have mostly been absent from campus during the pandemic, but with a COVID-19 vaccine on the horizon, the College is hoping to have volunteers back sometime in the new year. Until then, the virtual celebration provided an opportunity for staff and volunteers to exchange holiday well wishes and renew old bonds.





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The Registered Nursing Program at Hagerstown Community College has been ranked number two in the state of Maryland for 2021, by RegisteredNursing.org.

If you want to learn more about HCC's Nursing Program and its ranking in the state, you can view more information at [www.hagerstowncc.edu/news/hccs-registered-nursing-program-ranked-second-state-0](http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/news/hccs-registered-nursing-program-ranked-second-state-0)

Interested in how you can support a nursing student? There are numerous ways to support students and staff. Visit the HCC Foundation's "Ways to Give" webpage at [www.hagerstowncc.edu/advancement/ways-give](http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/advancement/ways-give) for more information.

To contact the HCC Office of College Advancement: call 240-500-2348, or email [collegeadvancement@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:collegeadvancement@hagerstowncc.edu)