

THE ADVISOR

News from the Hagerstown Community College Advancement Office

Spring 2026

PRESIDENT'S REFLECTION



Greetings, friends of HCC!

As what felt to be an exceptionally long winter gives way to spring, we are looking forward to many exciting new directions at the College. This winter, the College finalized its new 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. While always focused on student success, our new plan provides direction and sets priorities for us going forward. We immediately pivoted and began working on a new strategic plan for the HCC Foundation. Meetings are underway, and we look forward to sharing a final product soon.

Inside this edition of The Advisor, you will get to catch up on all the events happening on campus this spring. Some events like the Flower and Garden Show, are

ever successful and continuing to grow. You can read about other new events like the Administration of Justice Showcase, and some new and exciting Alumni trips. One of them does not require sailing! We also highlight new programs and our super stars within College Advancement.

I hope you enjoy reading about our plans and successes. Thank you for all you do to help the HCC Foundation and our College. I am very grateful for your support!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Klauber".

Dr. Jim Klauber



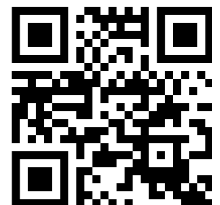
"Each year, more than \$1 million is awarded in student scholarships. This remarkable level of support makes a meaningful difference in the lives of hundreds of students and would not be possible without the extraordinary generosity of our community."

*- Dustin Watson, HCC Foundation President,
in his welcome message at the 2026 Tribute Dinner*

IN THIS ISSUE:

Annual Tribute, Flower & Garden Show, Staff Spotlight, New Program Spotlight, and more!

Ready to make a difference in our students' lives? Donate towards your preferred scholarship fund today at hagerstowncc.edu/giving.



What do you want to see in our newsletters? Email us at collegeadvancement@hagerstowncc.edu to let us know!

26th Annual HCC Foundation Tribute Honors the HCC Nursing Program, Hosted by Wells and Karen Ridenour



Friends and family traveled from near and far to celebrate Wells and Karen Ridenour and their support of the HCC nursing program.

The Athletic, Recreation, and Community Center (ARCC) was filled with warmth and celebration on April 10 as the HCC Foundation hosted its 26th Annual Tribute, honoring the College's nursing program. "The ARCC becomes an enchanted setting," attendee Karen Spessard noted, as the gymnasium was transformed by twinkling lights and elegantly decorated tables.

Hosted by longtime HCC supporters Wells and Karen Ridenour, the event brought together donors, alumni, healthcare professionals, employees, students, and community leaders to celebrate the impact of HCC's nursing program and its vital role in strengthening the region's healthcare workforce.

Guests were welcomed by Master of Ceremonies Paul Frey, president and CEO of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, and enjoyed live music from a string quartet of the Maryland Symphony Orchestra.

Remarks were also shared by Dr. Jim Klauber, HCC president, and Dustin Watson, president of the HCC Foundation, who spoke to the strength of the nursing program and the importance of continued support for student success.

A highlight of the event was a moving

video that explored both the history and present-day impact of the program. Featuring interviews with former faculty, alumni, current leadership, and students, the video illustrated the program's enduring commitment to excellence and compassionate care.

"On behalf of the nursing division, we really appreciated the recognition that we received at the Tribute dinner this year," said Karen Hammond, nursing program director. "Being seen and acknowledged by the college and other community professionals meant so much to both the nursing faculty and our nursing students. Our focus continues to be educating and supporting our students as they progress through a very rigorous program and transition into professional nurses."



Each year, the ARCC is transformed into an elegant setting to honor the individuals and programs that shape HCC.

Since 1971, HCC has played an important role in preparing nurses for healthcare systems across the region. Over the years, more than 2,300 nurses have trained through HCC, with the program growing from an initial class of 36 students to serving more than 150 students today across both RN and LPN pathways.

The Tribute also recognized the contributions of Wells and Karen Ridenour, long-



Andrew A. Serafini, appointed as a member of the HCC Board of Trustees beginning July 1, 2026, attends the 2026 Tribute.

time supporters of HCC whose generosity includes an endowed scholarship and the naming of the College's nursing lab. "We were very honored to host the event," said Karen. "It was a very enjoyable evening, and we saw so many friends. We want to do everything we can to help students get an education and move toward the careers they aim for." Wells added, "I thought it was an excellent program. We met a lot of people and really enjoyed it."

Attendees also participated in a raffle for a private plane ride and lunch with Dr. Klauber, along with a commemorative set of coins celebrating the 250th anniversary of America. The raffle winners were Commissioner John Barr and Gerald Cohen.

Over the past 25 years, the annual Tribute has raised more than \$2.2 million to endow student scholarships, removing barriers and creating opportunities for generations of students.



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE VIDEO
HONORING HCC'S NURSING PROGRAM!**

TINYURL.COM/452HH2UN



30 Years in Bloom: HCC Alumni Association Flower and Garden Show

Hagerstown Community College welcomed thousands of visitors to the ARCC for the 30th Annual Alumni Flower and Garden Show, held on March 14 and 15. A long-time community favorite, the show brought together gardening enthusiasts, local businesses, and families from across the region to celebrate the start of spring.

With more than 160 vendors in attendance, guests explored a wide variety of plants, garden décor, handmade goods, and local products. Educational seminars and demonstrations ran throughout the weekend, offering practical tips and inspiration for gardeners of all experience levels.

For many, the show is more than an event. It's a tradition.



HCC welcomes thousands of visitors to the ARCC each year for the HCC Alumni Flower and Garden Show.

"I've been volunteering at the Flower and Garden Show at some level from its inception," said Brenda Hassinger, Foundation Board member, Alumni Association Board member, and longtime volunteer. "The show is a family tradition, annual homecoming, and a special event for the community. It's not unusual to have two or three generations of college graduates in one family, and I enjoy hearing their stories."

That sense of connection continues to define the event year after year.

"Each show is unique," Hassinger added, "but it is the mutual excitement shared by the volunteers and the attendees that I enjoy each year."

Proceeds from the event support the HCC Alumni Association, helping to strengthen

alumni engagement and student success initiatives. As the show celebrates three decades of growth, it remains an exciting way for the community to welcome spring each year.



Alumni Board Members Jim and Brenda Hassinger have been volunteering at the HCC Alumni Flower and Garden Show since its inception in 1996.



HCC Alumni Board Member Cynthia Hebb and retired HCC faculty member Dixie Myers work in the Alumni booth at the HCC Alumni Flower and Garden Show.

TAKE A TRIP WITH HCC!

Join the HCC Alumni for three nights at the Greenbrier Resort!

OCTOBER 16-19, 2026

Included: Round-trip Transportation | Daily Breakfast | Pool Free Tours | Nightly Movies | Taxes and Fees | Free Internet

Also available: Casino | Discounted Golf | And More!
Starting at \$837 per person

Call for information: 240-643-6735



SET SAIL WITH HCC!

Join the HCC Alumni & Friends for a summer cruise through the Mediterranean aboard Royal Caribbean's Explorer of the Seas!

JUNE 19-29, 2027

Barcelona, Spain | Provence, France | Corsica, France
Rome, Italy | Amalfi Coast, Italy | Sicily, Italy | Ravenna, Italy | Venice, Italy

Call for information: 240-643-6735



Staff Spotlight: Lisa Stewart Retires After 34 Years of Service



For Lisa Stewart, Hagerstown Community College has never just been a workplace. It has been a constant presence throughout her life.

Long before she became HCC's alumni coordinator, she was a child accompanying her mother to evening classes. In January 1967, shortly after the Rob-inwood campus opened, Stewart remembers doing homework and playing with her Barbies in the Brish Library. Those early visits sparked a connection that would come full circle years later, when Stewart returned to campus as a student, and eventually, as an employee.

After earning her associate degree at Hagerstown Junior College and continuing her education at Shepherd University, Stewart found her way back to HCC while considering her next steps. When a part-time alumni coordinator position opened, she applied and discovered a role that would grow into a 34-year career dedicated to building relationships and strengthening the College's alumni community.

"I was afraid I wouldn't be able to keep up with her!" recalled Lieba Cohen, former Director of Institutional Advancement, who hired Stewart. "She is truly the Energizer Bunny and hasn't stopped since the day she was hired."

Over the decades, Stewart played a central role in shaping and expanding the College's alumni engagement efforts. From revitalizing the Alumni Association to helping establish traditions

that continue to bring the community together, her work has left a lasting imprint on HCC.

"Lisa helped resurrect the Alumni Association, and under her guidance and leadership it has soared to new heights," Cohen said. "As its logo suggests, the alumni are ever seeking new horizons."

Throughout her career, Stewart helped grow programs and initiatives that have become cornerstones of the College's advancement efforts. She played a key role in developing the Alumni Scholarship Fund through the HCC Foundation, organizing events and fundraisers, and supporting initiatives that have raised significant funds to benefit students. The Alumni Association also built the Alumni Amphitheater and launched alumni trips and experiences that brought people together while supporting scholarships. Longstanding events like the Flower and Garden Show, which has raised nearly one million dollars for the College, and the annual golf tournament continue to reflect the strength of the alumni community she helped build.

What has meant the most to Stewart, however, are the relationships she has built along the way.

"The relationships and connections I have been so fortunate to build with the people of the Alumni Association and the friends of the HJC/HCC community have been one of the greatest honors of my life," she said.

Those relationships, along with her genuine enthusiasm for the College, have defined her approach to alumni engagement.

"Lisa's 34 years of service as Alumni Coordinator have had a lasting and meaningful impact on HCC and our alumni community," said Dr. Ashley Whaley, Director of College Advancement. "Her genuine enthusiasm and passion for HCC are evident in every interaction,

and she has a remarkable ability to make alumni feel valued, remembered, and connected to their alma mater. Through her dedication, she has built lasting relationships across generations of graduates and helped foster a strong, engaged alumni network that continues to support both students and the College."

As Stewart reflects on her time at HCC, she points not only to the College's growth, but to the sense of pride and purpose that has accompanied it. Over the years, she has experienced HCC from many perspectives, as a child, student, returning learner, donor, employee, and now soon-to-be retiree, deepening her connection to the College at every stage.

"I have watched this campus expand, strengthen its mission, and touch countless lives, including my own," she said. "It has been incredibly special to see HJC/HCC become what it is today."

She also expressed deep gratitude for the colleagues and campus community who shaped her journey, describing her time at HCC as both a privilege and a gift.

Now, as she prepares for retirement in June, Stewart looks forward to having the time to truly enjoy life at her own pace, including traveling, spending more time with her family and pets, and finally tackling projects around her home. She is also excited to return to simple pleasures like reading, gardening, and spending time at the beach, as well as finding new ways to give back through volunteer work.

"HCC has been a constant in my life—it has been a truly rewarding journey, and I feel deeply privileged to have been part of this community for so many years," she said. "I will carry the memories, friendships, and the spirit of HCC with me always, and I will forever be proud to have been part of this extraordinary experience."

Q&A with Foundation Board Member: John Latimer

Q: Who or what motivated you to get involved with the HCC Foundation Board?

A: My father, Jack Latimer, served on the Foundation Board for many years. He passed away in 2020 and shortly after, Foundation Board member David Abeles asked me to consider joining the board. My dad had a passion for Hagerstown Community College, and I am honored for the opportunity to serve the College foundation in a similar way.

Q: Can you share an experience that stands out as proof of the Foundation's impact?

A: I am especially impressed with the college's impact in healthcare. I recently interacted with two nursing

students at Meritus and my experience was exceptional.

Q: What has been the most meaningful part of your service on the Foundation Board?

A: I have truly enjoyed being on the Foundation Board as we assumed responsibility for apprenticeship programs through the Barr Construction Institute at the College. Trades education is critically important to our community and I am proud of the leadership role HCC is taking.

Q: What excites you most about HCC's future?

A: During the College's 75th Anniversary Campaign, my wife, Cassandra, and I established a scholarship at the

College. We are very excited to support HCC and look forward to making an impact in student lives in the future.



John A. Latimer IV, CIC, CRM
President at Blue Ridge Risk Partners
HCC Foundation Board Member

New Club Spotlight: HCC Launches HOSA Chapter

A new student organization is already making waves in HCC's Health Sciences programs. HCC launched its HOSA (Future Health Professionals) chapter in fall 2025, led by co-advisors Jeff Telemeco, director of Health Sciences, and Michelle McDaniel, Medical Imaging Program coordinator, and supported by 40 enthusiastic founding members.

In its inaugural year, HOSA has brought

together an ambitious group of aspiring healthcare professionals to create meaningful opportunities beyond the classroom. Students have explored healthcare careers through tours of the Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine and Meritus Hospital, visited the National Museum of Health and Medicine, and hosted campus events like a retro movie night. They have also led service initiatives on campus, including distributing health education materials, organizing a collection drive for gently used medical equipment, and partnering with the Environmental Sciences Club for an Earth Day event honoring a wounded veteran.

HOSA member Wareesha Asif earned first place in medical terminology at local qualifiers and advanced to the next round of HOSA's competitive events. Through her involvement, she has connected with peers who share similar

goals and gained valuable exposure to healthcare careers, including meeting professionals in the field and completing a shadowing experience in trauma and acute surgery at Meritus. "HOSA helped me look at all these options and careers I could have in the future in medicine, and it really solidified my plans to go into surgery," she said.

The chapter's early success has been especially meaningful for its advisors. "Serving as the HOSA advisor for Hagerstown Community College during its inaugural year has been an incredibly rewarding experience," said Telemeco. "I'm excited to see how we continue to grow, serve, and lead in the years ahead."



Members of HCC's newest club, HOSA (Future Health Professionals), visited the National Museum of Health and Medicine on a recent field trip.



HCC's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Chapter Earns National Recognition



HCC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa brought home numerous prestigious awards and recognitions at the 2026 PTK Catalyst Conference.

The Phi Theta Kappa Catalyst Conference in Baltimore brought together thousands of students from across the country and around the world to celebrate scholarship, leadership, and service. Students came together to cheer on their peers, network with other chapters, and celebrate their accomplishments. Attendees were also surprised by a keynote address from Wes Moore, Maryland Governor.

“Catalyst was the perfect opportunity for all of our chapter’s hard work to be recognized at a national level,” said Syrene Guarin, the HCC PTK chapter’s officer of Service and Fellowship. “It also fostered connections with other members of different chapters in the US!”

Hagerstown Community College’s Phi Theta Kappa Pi Theta Chapter was recognized in several significant ways.

The chapter was named a Top 100 Chapter internationally, placing it among the top-performing chapters out of approximately 1,300 worldwide. This recognition reflects the chapter’s continued focus on academ-

ic achievement, leadership development, and community engagement.

HCC students also earned top individual honors. Charlie Burgos received the prestigious Guistwhite Scholarship, supporting his continued studies at the baccalaureate level, while Dania Asif was recognized as a Distinguished Member—one of the highest honors awarded at Catalyst.

At the regional level, the chapter and its advisors were also recognized during the Middle States Regional Conference. The advising team, Dawn Schoenenberger, Jess Baker, Kristin Johnson, Dr. Stacy Reikowsky, and Alicia Drumgoole, received the Horizon Award, which honors advisors who have made significant contributions within their first four years of service.

The chapter’s academic and service initiatives earned multiple accolades. Their Honors in Action project, “Stories in Motion: Alternative Therapies,” received both a Theme Award and the overall Honors in Action Award. Their College Project, “Voices in Motion: Creating Community,” was also

recognized for its collaboration with college leadership and its impact on campus engagement.

Additional individual honors were awarded to chapter advisors and student leaders. Kristin Johnson received the Paragon Award for New Advisors, and Jess Baker was named a Distinguished Advisor. Students Charlie Burgos, Dania Asif, and Faith Ngwa were inducted into the Chapter Officer Hall of Honor in recognition of their leadership and contributions.

The chapter was also named a 2026 Middle States Region Legend, an honor recognizing chapters that demonstrate excellence in service, leadership, and community impact.

During the conference, Chapter President Faith Ngwa and advisor Kristin Johnson were invited to meet Governor Moore at a special PTK event.

The Pi Theta Chapter’s recognition at Catalyst highlights the strong leadership and impact of HCC students on both the regional and national stage.

HCC Receives TEDCO Grant to Support Regional Entrepreneurs

Hagerstown Community College recently received a TEDCO Entrepreneur-in-Residence grant as part of TEDCO's new Western Maryland EIR pilot program, designed to bring experienced entrepreneurs directly into local innovation ecosystems in Washington, Allegany, and Garrett counties.

HCC was selected alongside Allegany Economic & Community Development and Garrett College, with Laurie Brewer named as the entrepreneur-in-residence based at HCC. Through the David W. Fletcher Incubator + Labs and Culinary Incubator, this investment will expand mentorship, training, and hands-on guidance for startup founders and small business owners across the region.

This grant reflects HCC's continued commitment to innovation, workforce development, and regional economic growth. Through one-on-one coaching, think tank sessions, and practical workshops, the program will help entrepreneurs strengthen their ideas, build connections, and access additional resources through TEDCO's broader statewide network. By embedding this expertise within HCC's incubator system, the college is helping create new opportunities for local businesses to grow, generate jobs, and contribute to the vitality of Western Maryland's economy.



Western Maryland awardees of TEDCO's Entrepreneur-in-Residence grant gather to celebrate the program's launch, including HCC Business Incubator Director Maureen Kolb.



Laurie Brewer, HCC's Entrepreneur-in-Residence, a position granted by TEDCO, mentors an incubator member.

Student Spotlight: Annie Magno

Annie once doubted she was cut out for her dream career. At HCC, she rebuilt her confidence and walked the stage as a nursing graduate.



Annie felt drawn to the healthcare field from an early age. Her grandmother and aunt were both nurses, and she grew up admiring the way they cared for their patients.

While studying at Salisbury University, she discovered a passion for hospice care, but self-doubt and academic struggles led her to step away from college. "I thought I wasn't smart enough," she admitted.

Even then, she continued gravitating toward healthcare, working in care settings while raising her family. When her aunt entered hospice, the experience deepened her sense of purpose. As she watched heart-breaking coverage of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, Annie felt a renewed calling to return to nursing. "I believe everyone deserves dignity and compassion at the end of life," she said.

Annie credits her friends Steve and Kyle for encouraging her to enroll at HCC. "When I would say, 'if I pass nursing school,' they would correct me and say, 'when you pass nursing school,'" she said. Their belief helped her regain confidence.

Annie completed her prerequisites, was accepted into HCC's nursing program, and found strong support among her classmates. Donor-funded scholarships through the HCC Foundation also played a critical role when financial aid fell short. "It's because of these extremely generous donors that I am finally able to achieve my goal of becoming an RN," she said.

In January, Annie graduated, passed the NCLEX, and became a registered nurse. She now works at Meritus Health on a renal, oncology, and palliative care unit, supporting patients through serious illness and end-of-life care.

For Annie, HCC has been more than a place to earn a degree. It has been where she rediscovered her confidence, honored her family's legacy, and stepped into the career she once doubted she could have.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 16, 2026

79th HCC Commencement Ceremony

July 24, 2026

US Air Force Airmen of Note

May 29, 2026

US Navy Commodores Jazz Ensemble

August 15, 2026

US Army 29th Infantry Division Band

June 12, 2026

HCC Alumni & Friends Picnic

August 28, 2026

US Army Field Band-Pop Ensemble

June 17, 2026

President's Circle Dinner
Invite Only

September 11, 2026

33rd Annual Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament

Questions? Email collegeadvancement@hagerstowncc.edu or Call 240-500-2348