



Spotlight on the

CAROL FARBER HONORS PROGRAM

at Nassau Community College

Fall 2019 | Issue 1

Jane Jeong Named Valedictorian



Good evening President Keen, Vice President Collins, Deans, Faculty, Families, and of course, Fellow Graduates!

I am humbled and grateful to the Valedictorian Committee for having selected me to stand here today. There are 3,212 talented graduates, with 3,212 messages to share, and I'm deeply moved they believed I had one to share too. What is the message I can share with you as we move on to the next chapter of our lives? After much thought, I've come to believe my message can come from a story of failure.

Back in 2015, I graduated high-school, a young girl eager to follow her dreams of becoming an advocate for others. Above all, my immigrant parents sacrificed to give me and my sister a better chance than theirs, and this gave me the utmost gratitude for being able to do so.

So, I left New York City, my only home for 18 years, for Bucknell, a private liberal-arts college in rural Pennsylvania. The first in my family to go to college, able to do so with a Dean's Scholarship, I was overjoyed. But, by the end of my first week, this cloud I'd floated on fell, weighed down by a collection of heavy, invisible moments that forced me to face a jarring reality. My enthusiasm had blinded me to how others saw me. My new peers didn't come from families where dads drove taxis to pay for tuition, they saw me and saw someone who didn't belong.

I was questioned about my plan to work in the law. Questioned about math problems neither of us could solve. Involuntarily, I began to collect these moments. Other moments, like when I'd go to Walmart and find myself averting my eyes from too-long stares and whispers. Others, when I'd pretend not to see children point their fingers at me and tug at their mom's skirts. I didn't understand. Why was I being treated this way? These moments grew heavier, and then, one night, I woke up to banging on my door, a voice calling, "Effing chink", laughter, and the sound of footsteps running away. In that moment, I felt shame. And I am ashamed to tell you this...that I not only blamed myself, but my parents. I felt anger I hadn't been given an equal chance, for having this life that brought me such pain.

Years from this moment, I can look back and thank it for helping me grow, and this is why I share it with you. But, to my parents, I'm sorry. There's no such thing as a fair life or fair society. We can only choose to do our best in the face of obstacles and make the decisions to overcome them, and you always did this for me.

But, at the time, I made a difficult decision to return home, feeling I had failed. I had been home just two months when my family and I were involved in a serious car accident. In the moments of the crash, when I thought it was the end, I had a valuable revelation. If I survived, the past couldn't weigh down my future any longer. During the months of recovery, I knew my life would have no meaning if I lived ignoring the injustices I had seen and the more painful ones others felt.

It was through following this belief that I found myself at Nassau, two years ago, searching for the best education possible, a second chance at making a difference.

Within my first class, Public Speaking funnily enough- (thank you Professor Frederick), I found I was surrounded by peers with stories of their own. Those from foreign countries, struggling and succeeding without their families. Those who are mothers and students AKA superwomen, and those who are full-time students and full-time employees. Pursuing your education despite the obstacles that stood in your way, Class of 2019, I have been inspired, humbled, and motivated by you.

Welcome to the Honors Program Newsletter!

Honors Program

Contact us!

HonorsProgram@ncc.edu

Dr. Richard Cohen

Richard.Cohen@ncc.edu

Dr. Liz Hynes-Musnisky

Liz.Hynes@ncc.edu

ncc.edu/Honors

Jane Jeong Named Valedictorian continued

To all my professors who change our lives with dedication and care- the world needs more of you. Dr. Richard Cohen, your selfless dedication to everyone passing through the Carol Farber Honors Program is life-changing- I'm grateful to have been one of them. Professor Darren Petronella of Study Abroad, thank you for advocating tirelessly for someone you barely knew to make her dreams of studying international human rights come true. Working in Argentina with girls living in dismal conditions, too young for such a burden, I came home with an understanding that we must do better.

We have been born into a country where education is a right and higher education is a possibility. Graduating from one of the top community colleges in our nation, of a nation that stands as one of the world's greatest powers today, whether it be in communication, business,

nursing, or any other majors- our voices, our decisions, and our actions have an impact far greater than within our own lives. We have the power to change the world.

Class of 2019, we have come a long way. I would like to ask you to close your eyes. Please take a moment and think of one person you couldn't be here without. Please open your eyes now.

As we move forward, on our separate paths from NCC, making our dreams a reality, I hope we remember those who helped us and our responsibility to do better for them. Thank you for having me as your valedictorian and I am proud to say that we are the Class of 2019! Congratulations to us!!!

Honors Club Goes to the Northeast Regional Honors Council

The Northeast Regional Honors Council held their yearly conference in Baltimore, Maryland from April 12th to 15th and the Honors Program was there in full force. Prof. Cohen and six students joined hundreds of students from dozens of universities to listen to presentations centered on the theme: "Generating Power: Impact. Influence. Endurance".

During the conference **Jane Jeong** participated in a roundtable discussion concerning the power of voter registration, **Crystal Huang** participated in a roundtable discussion concerning the power of enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. while **Lauren Tyson** presented a particularly powerful personal reflection paper on the power of surviving sexual abuse.

For the majority of the students on the trip, it was their first experience at an academic conference and the experience left them excited to attend more in the future.



Honors Colloquium

Each spring the Honors Program hosts the Honors Colloquium, a forum for students to present their research in an academic setting. This year the presentations ran the gamut from the hard sciences (Huma Babar's discussion of Bioprinting) to the disrupting influence of new technology (Miriam Sterrett's accounting of the impact that the Printing Press had on society), to the dissection of various works of art and literature. There is no better example of what our students are capable of achieving than the Colloquium.



HONORS & AWARDS NIGHT



At the conclusion of every academic year, the Honors Program hosts Honors and Awards Night. This year families, friends and faculty gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of over 90 graduating Honors students and scholarship award winners. Honors students receive special stoles which are worn at Nassau Community College's graduation ceremony. It was a truly special evening enjoyed by all who attended.



Joel Vessels Named Recipient of Excellence in Honors Teaching Award

Each year, Honors students select one faculty member to receive the "Excellence in Teaching Award" which is presented at **Honors & Awards Night**. This year's recipient was Prof. Joel Vessels of the History department who was chosen as the winner of the award. Students had the following to say about why Prof. Vessels deserved the award:

"Prof. Vessels enhances the college experience through humorous personality and he pushes his students to strive and grow."

"Prof. Vessels pushes his students to do their best, both in the classroom and out. He constantly makes himself available to his students for extra help on assignments, and he is willing to work with students that want to pursue research outside of the classroom."

"He keeps things interesting in class and is passionate about what he teaches."

"Professor Vessels is a professor who cares about his students succeeding during and after college."

"History is a subject that I've always struggled with and I thought I was going to be completely lost in Honors history; however, because of Professor Vessels I am actually able to not only understand the material, but excel in the class. Professor Vessels was able to help even the worst history student (myself) comprehend the course and is incredibly deserving of this award."



"Best learning experience I have had at NCC. Professor Vessels cares about the success of his students and want students to actually learn something about history, other than years and dates. He teaches valuable life skills in class."

"Professor Vessels is AMAZING. He has the best teaching skills that I have ever seen in a professor. I truly believe he deserves this award. He is one of the best professors I've had."

"He cares about his students more than any other professor I've had."

We thank Prof. Vessels for being an amazing professor and role model for our students!



SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence

The SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence is the highest award a student can win in the SUNY system. As stated by SUNY, "The Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence honors State University of New York students who have best demonstrated and been recognized for their integration of academic excellence with other aspects of their lives, which may include leadership, campus involvement, athletics, career achievement, community service or creative and performing arts." Congratulations to the six Honors Students who were recipients of the award: **Lauren Arceri, Andy Diaz, Rocco Distefano, Jane Jeong, Lauren Taglienti, and Lauren Tyson.**

Pictured from left to right: Rocco Distefano, Lauren Taglienti, Lauren Tyson, Jane Jeong, and Andy Diaz.

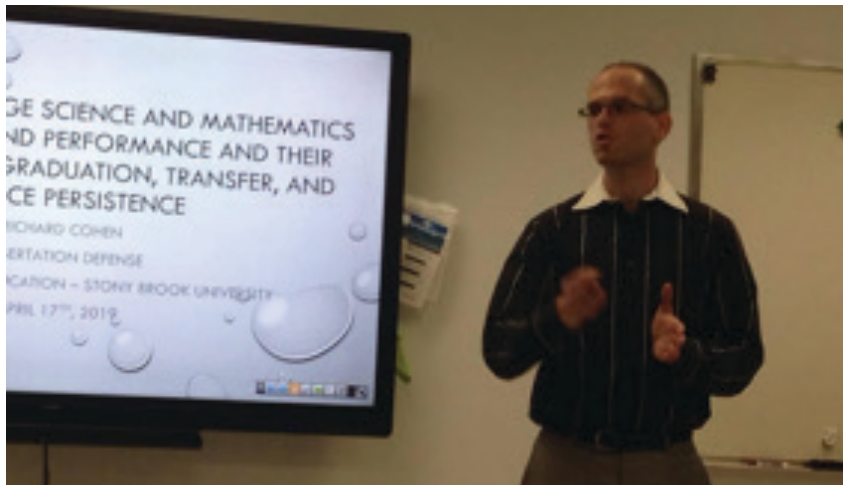


Dr. Cohen and Dr. Hynes-Musnisky Successfully Defend Their Dissertations

Prof. Cohen and Prof. Hynes-Musnisky are now Dr. Cohen and Dr. Hynes-Musnisky after successfully defending their dissertations in April and May respectively. Dr. Cohen's and Dr. Hynes-Musnisky's scholarship are a shining example to all Honors students as to what you can achieve through determination and perseverance.

Abstract of Dr. Cohen's Thesis

Student persistence and academic outcomes in STEM were examined for over 1,500 community college students in New York State. Three years of transcript data were collected for each of three cohorts who matriculated between 2011 and 2014. Data included coursework, grades, demographics, degree change patterns, and graduation/transfer status. In the first of three distinct yet related studies, descriptive statistics indicated that students who enrolled in science and mathematics coursework were more likely to graduate or transfer and completed more of their credits successfully than those who did not. Students who did not graduate or transfer earned lower GPAs and course completion rates. Binary logistic models revealed that for non-STEM majors, the rate of science/mathematics course completion, enrollment, and remediation coursework were significant predictors of graduation and transfer. In the second study, 32% of students received grades of D, F, or W in introductory chemistry with 49% changing their majors and 80% of those degree changers switching to non-STEM fields. Binary logistic regression models indicated that chemistry enrollment was a significant predictor of degree change to non-STEM disciplines. In the third study, students who first enrolled in developmental mathematics experienced a higher likelihood of STEM attrition, lower credit production rates, weaker science performance, and lower graduation/transfer rates. Students who qualified for advanced mathematics as their entry level course outperformed students who initially enrolled in lower level mathematics.



These results indicated that chemistry course-taking and performance were notable factors affecting student persistence in STEM disciplines, outcomes were largely independent of student background variables, and remediation coursework did not prepare most students for the mathematics required for STEM degrees. Community college policy makers may improve student outcomes by providing supports for science and mathematics coursework. STEM majors may benefit from reconceptualized developmental curricula focused on essential skills for success in advanced mathematics and science, as well as clarity on transferable coursework and structured pathways to reach the milestones required for STEM degrees and careers. Finally, a universal methodology for calculating transfer rates should be developed and combined with graduation rates in order to create a better assessment of the effectiveness of community colleges.



Abstract of Dr. Hynes-Musnisky's Thesis

The popularity of tattoos has waxed and waned over the years but since the Tattoo Renaissance of the 1950s (Thompson, 2015), wearing tattoos has become more acceptable. Still, some stereotypes about those who wear tattoos remain. This narrative analysis study sought to explain the reasons why women over 40 chose to adorn their bodies with tattoos. Six women were interviewed about their tattoo journeys; each explained what she had thought about as she considered getting tattooed, the story told by her tattoo(s) and how she recalled the experience of getting tattooed. Their recollections aligned with Rosenblatt's (1994) transactional theory of writing that suggests an author writes with a potential audience in mind; the women in this study chose images that were

likely to be understood by those who viewed them. They also chose images that would reflect their "sedimented identities" (Rowell and Pahl, 2007). The research findings indicated that the women chose to get tattooed as a way of symbolizing important familial relationships.

Scholarship Award Winners

Ernest J. Frederick Memorial Scholarship Winners

Prof. Christopher Frederick established the Ernest J. Frederick Memorial Scholarship in his father's memory to recognize students who exemplify the ideals that he lived by. Prof. Frederick had the following words to say about this year's recipients:



Kacie Rumm

As attested by her wonderfully written essay -- since Kacie first set foot on campus this past September, her life has improved dramatically. She made dozens of friends, mainly through the Honors Program, her GPA skyrocketed to a 4.0 and she made the Dean's List; these are things she never thought she could achieve after the devastating loss of her father in her senior year in High School. It would have been easy for Kacie to withdraw, keep to herself, and give up in the face of adversity-- but she didn't. She rose up and has absolutely thrived at NCC!

Most importantly, however, she learned the significance of keeping an open mind. In Kacie's own words, "There is so much more to this campus than people say there is. In my short time here, I have met so many intelligent, hard-working, passionate individuals; our paths never would have crossed if I kept to myself."

Kacie is the epitome of what would make any father proud. She's hard-working, intelligent, and has the heart of a champion. Congratulations for making us all proud by winning one of this year's Ernest J. Frederick, Jr. Memorial Scholarships.



Edith O'Neill

Edith is a reliable, hard-working individual whose work speaks for itself. She is a member of NCC's Phi Theta Kappa (Honor) Society chapter and it's Honors Program, and has worked as a Student Ambassador for Academic Advisement.

Although she was a National Honor Society student in high school, she had to wait six years until she was financially-able to attend college. In the meantime, she worked, took care of her family, and kept her mind active through reading, writing, and drawing. It is also worth noting that, at the age of sixteen, she earned the Silver Level Presidential Volunteer Service Award due to her completion of more than two-hundred hours of community service.

For over three years now, her collegiate career at NCC has served as an endless source of inspiration. She is always motivated to be the best version of myself -- beyond her academic accomplishments -- thanks to the exceptional individuals she has encountered at NCC. She shares the ambition of fellow students who desire to cultivate a successful future, and the tenacity of professors dedicated to maintaining an inviting atmosphere, conducive to learning.

Congratulations for inspiring us all with your perseverance and hard work-- and winning one of this year's Ernest J. Frederick, Jr. Memorial Scholarships.



Jake Dougherty

Jake brings his loyalty and dedication to the NCC campus, as an active member of many student organizations. When not in class, he spends much of his time at our school's Radio Station, 90.3 WHPC. Joining this radio station came from pursuing his passion of communications. Working in WHPC allowed Jake to grow outside of the classroom and as a young professional in the communication field.

In addition he also serves as the Vice President of the Phi Theta Kappa Club, a Greek Honors Society for students who excel academically. Among his duties are helping to organize volunteer events, charity events, and the induction ceremony for incoming members. One of his favorite volunteer events was going to Harlem in New York City to tutor children in Math and English.

Jake has also been a coach for children with Autism-- and coached basketball, soccer, hockey, and baseball, as well as help develop basic physical and occupational skills with the kids. In addition, he works a minimum of 6 hours a week at Dinkelmeyer Elementary School as a custodian.

Congratulations for inspiring us all with your tireless hard work on and off-campus-- and winning one of this year's Ernest J. Frederick, Jr. Memorial Scholarships.

Honors Program Scholarships

Chanelle Farquharson, Juliana Groder, Jane Jeong, Anne-Sophie Lalanne, Rachel Leoutsakos, Jeff Purirojejananon, and Jonathan Thomas were awarded Honors Program scholarships based upon their academic accomplishments at Nassau Community College, contributions to the Carol Farber Honors Program, displayed leadership, and personal journeys.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SPRING 2019 GRADUATES!

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Anjali Aranakkal</i> | <i>Reina Eustache*</i> | <i>Jane Jeong</i> | <i>Samantha Migliore</i> | <i>Jonathan Ramos</i> | <i>Delmy Valle</i> |
| <i>Alyson Armstrong</i> | <i>Gabrielle Eversgerd</i> | <i>Sunil John</i> | <i>Katja Minerva</i> | <i>Fernandez</i> | <i>Johanna Villa-Mejia</i> |
| <i>Jayne Avila Leon</i> | <i>Chanelle Farquharson*</i> | <i>Kayla Judge*</i> | <i>Niara Moore</i> | <i>Bridget Rao</i> | <i>Lynette Wilson</i> |
| <i>Sandra Banegas</i> | <i>Peter Figueroa</i> | <i>Eden Kataev</i> | <i>Anastazia Moran</i> | <i>Austin Richardson</i> | <i>Brett Wilson</i> |
| <i>Sara Bautista*</i> | <i>Ryan Fox</i> | <i>Karl Kuhnle</i> | <i>Tiara Murphy</i> | <i>Dennis Romero</i> | <i>Ryan Wimbiscus</i> |
| <i>Katarina Birkmaier</i> | <i>Megan Gavia</i> | <i>Anne-Sophie Lalanne</i> | <i>Bridget Murphy</i> | <i>Landsey Roy*</i> | <i>Anita Wittner</i> |
| <i>Joshua Brophy*</i> | <i>Anthony Ginez</i> | <i>Daniel Lau</i> | <i>Nicholas Nagy*</i> | <i>Kacie Rumm</i> | <i>Joseph Wolf</i> |
| <i>Cesar Cabreja</i> | <i>Keyana Graves</i> | <i>Aretha Lee</i> | <i>Joshua Ollivier</i> | <i>Karen Sanchez</i> | |
| <i>Wilber Claudio*</i> | <i>Juliana Groder</i> | <i>Janie Lennon</i> | <i>Maria Sophia Pacheco</i> | <i>Hernan Sanchez-Garcia</i> | <i>* Denotes</i> |
| <i>Tatiana Clover</i> | <i>Christopher Guevara</i> | <i>Joseph Livecchi</i> | <i>Michael Pacura</i> | <i>Danielle Scarangella</i> | <i>Distinguished Honors</i> |
| <i>Cole Conlon</i> | <i>Akbar Hasan</i> | <i>Sabrina Magrini</i> | <i>Jahzyah Parache</i> | <i>Paula Segarra</i> | <i>Graduates</i> |
| <i>Bridget Cunningham</i> | <i>Crystal Huang</i> | <i>Asol Mani</i> | <i>Katherine Parente</i> | <i>Michael Spellman</i> | |
| <i>Teresa Devivo</i> | <i>Kimberly Huber</i> | <i>Gregory Marchese</i> | <i>Nautica Perez</i> | <i>Julia Stackpole</i> | |
| <i>Andy Diaz</i> | <i>Ashley Huber</i> | <i>Thomas McGovern</i> | <i>Roberto Picariello</i> | <i>Lauren Taglienti*</i> | |
| <i>Rocco Distefano</i> | <i>Nicholas Huckstadt</i> | <i>Donte McLaughlin</i> | <i>Jeff Purirojejananon*</i> | <i>Jacqueline Teleki</i> | |
| <i>Jake Dougherty</i> | <i>Ashlyn Jaglall</i> | <i>Davon McLennon</i> | <i>Rebecca Ramdhan</i> | <i>Lauren Alison Tyson</i> | |





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