

# ST. CHARLES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT – MAY 2021



## Virtual Commencement Ceremony Honors Graduates in May

Graduates, families, friends, faculty and staff gathered online to celebrate the SCC's 2021 Commencement Exercises on May 15.

In her welcome address Barbara Kavalier, Ph.D., SCC president, congratulated the graduates on their hard work and dedication.

"You will leave this commencement to begin a new chapter in your life," said Dr. Kavalier. "This next chapter will bring new opportunities, new roles and new expectations. You will become the next generation of leaders who will shape our country's future. We are so proud of all that you have accomplished."

Jennylee Cracchiola was chosen as the student speaker for the ceremony. She received her associate of arts degree with highest honors.

"Today we celebrate something unique," Cracchiola said in the virtual ceremony. "This is a time in our lives we have worked hard for. Even a pandemic and personal struggles couldn't stop us."

Cracchiola spoke of her own personal journey

to graduation and how it's helped shape her into the person she is today.

"My life didn't move in the direction I had planned or expected," she explained. "I am a widow with two children. I work 11 hours a day and navigate home life, grief counseling and college classes. I put my education on pause for a long time, but my determination to reach my goals kept me moving forward."

Stephanie Unger knows how difficult the journey can be to a degree. Like Cracchiola, she refused to give up.

"I've been working toward my degree in database management for the last six years," Unger said. "I've raised my son as a single mother, changed jobs, navigated through the pandemic, and am now achieving an educational goal I've had for more than 16 years."

Charlene Bartolsie has been working as a Licensed Practical Nurse for the last 26 years, and she always dreamed of becoming a Registered Nurse. This year, her dream finally came true.

"Life happened, and I got busy," Bartolsie explained. "If it hadn't been for my employers giving me the gift of paying for my education, I would still just be an LPN. I am so lucky and blessed to have so many great people standing with me to achieve this goal."

As a biology faculty member, Dr. Nicole Pinaire is constantly amazed at what her students can accomplish in the face of hardship and adversity.

"You are the graduates who showed up and you saw your goals through," Pinaire said in the virtual commencement ceremony. "You showed up. During a really, really hard time, when it would have been easy to quit – and no one would have blamed you – you continued to show up. When things completely turned upside down in your academic careers, you stuck it out."

Also at the ceremony, Seth Peimann, National HealthCare Corporation administrator, was named the 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award winner by the SCC Foundation.

# Annual Student Awards Announced for 2020-2021

Each year, St. Charles Community College celebrates student achievement at the annual Student Awards Banquet. Due to safety precautions related to the coronavirus, SCC moved the celebration to the virtual space.

The event honors outstanding students in the classroom and in leadership roles on campus. Faculty and staff are encouraged to nominate individuals they have witnessed accomplishing extraordinary things around campus.

On May 6, more than 50 students were honored at the virtual event – including Abigail James. She received the President’s Rising Star Award and Scholarship, one of the highest honors a student can receive at SCC.

“I feel so honored by this recognition,” said James. “I was so excited when I found out.”

James came to SCC because it was an affordable, local option.

“I received my high school equivalency at 17,” she said, “and I knew I needed to go to college somewhere close to home. I had heard such great things about SCC. The campus seemed so welcoming, and it felt like a natural place to start my college career.”

James graduated with AAS and AFA degrees this semester. She plans to transfer to Webster University and pursue a bachelor’s degree in psychological sciences.



“I have so many amazing memories at SCC,” she said. “I loved all the Phi Theta Kappa and Student Government events, like the summer movie nights and the Halloween events. I’m going to miss it!”

James also received the Phi Theta Kappa 5-Star Membership Award at the Student Awards Ceremony.

## Art Professor Helps To Cultivate Budding Student Artists



Brian Smith started teaching part time at St. Charles Community College when the doors to the main campus first opened in 1992. In 1998, he started teaching full time.

“Over the years I’ve taught visual art, painting, drawing, 2D design, color theory and art history,” Smith explained.

While a lot has changed over the years, his passion has never wavered.

“I believe in the importance of teaching art to individuals who wish to pursue a career in it,” he said, “and I believe in the essential function that art and design play in our society as a whole.”

When you’ve been at it as long as Smith has, you learn what works and what doesn’t when it comes to connecting with students.

“To be successful requires so many different things,” he admitted, “like a dance where all the moves must come together at the right moment for

it to work well. I believe effective communication is probably the most important aspect of developing a successful teaching environment, and I see it as a constant challenge. Patience, humility, humor, trying new methods and taking students seriously helps in the classroom as well.”

Not only a professor, Smith also oversees the SCC Art Gallery in the Fine Arts Building.

“I always enjoy the annual student art exhibits,” he said. “Not only do I curate them, but the receptions are a time of celebration. I revel in the growth and accomplishments of our art students.”

When he’s not engaging with students on campus, he’s a working artist. He admits it takes a lot of dedication to do both.

“I spend as much as I can in my own art studio in Soular,” Smith added. “The paintings I create are abstract, which I would describe as large,

colorful, bold, textural and dynamic. The imagery has a strong reference to the landscape.”

His work has been displayed locally and as far away as Florida. He’s exhibited in commercial and non-profit galleries, as well as colleges and universities across the country. One of his proudest accomplishments was being accepted into an artist residency program on the East Coast.

“It was at the Vermont Studio Center, and it was such a rewarding experience,” Smith explained.

“Artist residency programs give visual artists (and writers) the opportunity to live and work outside of their usual environments, providing time to reflect, meet new people and produce new work. During my session, there were about 45 artists and 20 writers from different parts of the U.S. and abroad.”

Smith’s work can be seen at the Duane Reed Gallery in St. Louis as well as the Dabbert Gallery in Sarasota, Florida.



## Stellar Student Softball Player Looks to Computer-Aided Drafting for Future

It's been a great season for Moscow Mills native Maggie Dooley on the SCC Softball Team. She has a .396 batting average and 24 stolen bases.

"She is constantly looking for ways to get better and isn't shy about asking questions," said Sam Huffstickler, SCC softball coach. "Her athleticism is unbelievable - she is one of the fastest girls on the team and can play just about anywhere."

Her work on the field is only matched by her work in the classroom.

"Maggie is an amazing student in the classroom," explained Huffstickler. "I know she works just as hard in the classroom as she does at practice."

She is definitely a team leader; the girls look up to her and her work ethic, and she leads by example."

The sophomore is studying Computer-Aided Drafting, or CAD.

"I have always had an interest in designing houses," Dooley said. "CAD is something that would benefit me in that area in the future."

"We talk about her future a lot and where she might want to go after graduating this year," Huffstickler said. "She likes CAD but isn't sure if she wants to continue or do something more along the lines of interior design. Wherever she ends up, I know she won't allow herself to be anything but successful."



Dooley is grateful for the time she got to spend with her teammates and friends while at SCC.

"Some memories that I will cherish the most are the relationships I have made, playing on the softball field and hanging out with athletes in the College Center," Dooley reflected. "At the beginning of my freshman year I was able to meet a lot of international athletes, and that is really special to me."

Dooley graduated in May 2021 and plans to attend Hannibal LaGrange University to continue her softball career.

## SCC Nursing Program Receives Continued Accreditation

St. Charles Community College is proud to announce the SCC Associate Degree Nursing Program has been granted continuing accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

"The ACEN commended the flexibility, courage and resiliency demonstrated by the nursing program faculty and leaders," said Barbara Kavalier, Ph.D., SCC president, "as well as SCC's institutional colleagues during the global pandemic."

According to Amy Koehler, SCC vice president for workforce and community education and provost of the SCC-Dardenne Creek Campus, the accreditation process determines if nursing programs are meeting specific state and national standards.

"The fact that our faculty was able to undergo the rigorous accreditation process during the



pandemic and do such an amazing job is a true testament to our program's strength," Koehler said. "The nursing team did an amazing job and truly showcased SCC's outstanding nursing program and exceptional faculty."

The process is quite rigorous and requires several steps, Koehler added. It includes writing an extensive self-review and self-study report, indicating how the program is meeting the ACEN standards and criteria. Then, ACEN peer-evaluators schedule a site visit to see the program firsthand.

"Due to the pandemic, our faculty needed to create a way for the site visit to be done remotely, while effectively demonstrating all aspects of how we are meeting and exceeding the criteria," said Koehler.

Working with the SCC Online and E-Learning

Department, the Nursing Department created an interactive, self-guided tour of the SCC-Dardenne Creek Campus to showcase its resources. In March 2021, the ACEN Board of Commissioners approved SCC's accreditation.

"The accreditation process keeps nursing curriculum up to date on current trends and current advances in both nursing and in healthcare," Koehler explained. "Accreditation advances the nursing profession and enhances the overall care provided by nurses. I am truly proud of the SCC nursing program and the fact that they received continuing accreditation status."

The next scheduled accreditation evaluation visit is set for fall 2028.

## Faculty/Staff Update

**Kim Mercurio**, multimedia and web design chair, invited graphic artist Lisa Kastner to speak to her CPM 120 and 170 students this semester. Her career spans more than 20 years and includes developing designer balloon art for Betallic.

**Dr. Joe Baumann**, assistant professor of English, had several stories and poems published toward the end of the semester in publications such as *The Hunger*, *The Quiver Review*, *Thrice*, *Delmarva Review*, *Plainsong* and the *Southern Florida Poetry Journal*.

**Dr. Monica-Hall Woods**, **Dr. Mara Vorachek-Warren** and **Dr. Nicole Pinaire** participated in the InnovATE BIO National Biotechnology Education Center Strategic Planning Retreat in May, brainstorming ideas for incorporating projects into existing SCC courses to allow students to gain research experience.

**Paul Roesler**, political science professor, moderated a virtual panel discussion about COVID-19 for students, faculty and the community. He was joined by **Steve Randall**, **Dr. Nicole Pinaire**, **Lisa Randall**, **Amy Koehler** and Sara Evers, assistant director of the St. Charles County Department of Public Health.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Young People's Theatre**  
Tuck Everlasting  
June 12-13  
Virtual

**SCC Jazz Camp**  
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
June 13-17  
FAB

**Young People's Theatre**  
Tuck Everlasting  
June 19-20  
Virtual

**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
5:30 p.m.  
June 28



On April 1, 1986, voters approved the formation of the St. Charles Community College district. Thirty-five years later, SCC is proud to continue serving students and the community.

