

community Access

SUMMER 2020

Quarterly Newsletter of
Alamance Community College

ACC Responds to COVID-19

Through socially-distanced spacing in classrooms that deliberately limits attendance, through issuing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), by staggering class schedules, by restricting visitor access to campus, and by installing safety shields in high-contact-high-traffic areas, Alamance Community College enjoyed a successful summer semester and is continuing to plan for an August 17 start to the fall semester.

In all this summer, 316 students were served in classrooms in 24 sections.

Since March, the College has encouraged employees to telecommute as much as possible and almost all meetings have been held through conference calls and Zoom meetings.

“The health and safety of our students, staff and faculty has guided our decisions and actions since the pandemic took a foothold,” said College President Dr. Algie Gatewood. “We have remained open to serve our students. We’ve just had to adjust business operations to ensure public safety.”

The biggest change has been moving most classroom instruction to online. That will continue in the fall semester, with the College setting a 40-40-20 instructional model: 40 percent entirely online, 40 percent a hybrid of online and classroom, and 20 percent entirely classroom-oriented.

In such high-tech, high-touch areas as Nursing, Dental Assist-



The College has designated two dozen stations around campus where students, faculty and staff can sanitize hands and pick up masks and gloves.

ing, Mechatronics, Welding, Automotive, Machining and Medical Assisting, there is no substitute for the classroom and lab experience.

North Carolina considers community colleges “essential businesses” because of their workforce training mission, recognizing that those institutions are on the front lines of training and graduating first-responders and health care professionals in these challenging times.

Biotechnology Center of Excellence to Begin Rising Next Year



Architectural renderings of the Biotechnology Center of Excellence slated to begin construction next April. (Courtesy of Clark Nexsen Architects)

College leadership continues to review and fine-tune the architectural concept for the \$14.8 million construction of the Biotechnology Center of Excellence that will overlook Interstate 40-85.

Construction is slated to begin in April 2021 and be completed in May 2022—in time for fall semester that year.

The freestanding, three-story, 30,000 square-foot structure is a mix of labs and classroom space serving the Biotechnology, Medical Laboratory Technology, Histotechnology and Agricultural-Biotechnology programs.

Additionally, the center is also designed to include space for start-up and early stage biopharma companies from UNC, Duke, UNCG, NC A&T, NC State, NC Central and Wake Forest. These institutions can collaborate with ACC on internships and research projects that align with our mission and goals.

Elements of light and glass will accentuate the building's highly visible location, while also providing indoor/outdoor learning spaces that align with

See **BCOE** on page 2

ACC Enrollment Jumps in 2019-2020

Alamance Community College posted an enrollment increase for 2019-2020, which includes summer 2019, fall 2019 and spring 2020, and as such is among a minority of North Carolina community colleges to experience such growth for the academic year.

The rise in FTE enrollment is an estimated 7.33% over the same period last year, according to the NC Community College System Office. This places ACC's increase at 12th highest among all 58 North Carolina community colleges, outpacing Piedmont Community College (6.23%), Guilford Technical Community College (5.63%), and Durham Tech (5.0%).

The numbers are based on budget FTE (Full-Time Equivalency) for the purposes of full-time enrolled students. FTE is the figure used by the State of North Carolina to determine the amount of funding each higher educational institution receives. The higher the FTE equates to more financial stability in its budget.

Enrollment in summer term 2020, which began May 18, showed promising signs as well, despite a continuance of nearly all classes being conducted completely online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

ACC administrators says that a number of factors may be attributed to this enrollment increase:

- The College has seen an increase in university transfer and non-degree-seeking students, suggesting that an increase in university students enrolling in ACC online classes at greater numbers than in the past.
- The College has recently added several programs to its curriculum offerings to address the needs of local business and industry.
- The Histotechnology program was launched in fall 2018 in response to the Life Sciences/Diagnostic sector's need for qualified histotechnologists.
- The Agricultural Biotechnology program was added to supplement both the College's longstanding Biotechnology and Horticulture Technology programs.

Said Dr. Scott Queen, Executive Vice President: "We are growing. We continue to add relevant programs and state-of-the-art facilities."

Queen said that unemployment is drastically on the rise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As with any economic downturn, many individuals turn to the community college to prepare themselves for a new career.

"Although we are exercising extreme caution, we continue to develop innovative ways, through creative scheduling and distance learning, to serve our students," added Queen. "We exist to serve the citizens of Alamance County and we will continue to do everything possible to provide the needed training for our community."

Duke Energy Awards Grant to ACC for Adult Apprenticeships

The College has received \$179,000 in grant monies to create new apprenticeships focused solely on adult learners in industrial technology fields.

The Duke Energy/Piedmont Natural Gas Community College Apprenticeship Program awarded the grant.

Adults for Industrial Development (AID) is ACC's new program that will develop apprenticeships to create a skills pipeline for Alamance County manufacturers. AID will initially develop apprenticeships for adults enrolled in one of two of ACC's Industrial Technologies programs: Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration; and Industrial Systems Technology.

Adults for Industrial Development (AID) was initiated because Alamance County manufacturers are struggling to find qualified job applicants to replace skilled workers who are retiring or moving elsewhere. In a series of listening sessions hosted by ACC, industry partners suggested that developing apprenticeship programs could help provide workers with the right skills. The AID program would help industry identify new employees and train incumbent workers for new and better positions.

Successful AID completers would earn the Industrial Systems Mechanical Certificate or the CNC Machining Certificate. Other credentials to be offered include OSHA-10 and National Institute for Metalworking Skills Credentials.

Among the companies planning to participate are:

- AKG, a longtime ACC partner and member of the successful Career Accelerator Program (CAP), currently offers youth apprenticeships in Mechatronics Engineering Technology. It has expressed a need for adult welding apprentices. The company will actively work with ACC to create a welding certificate that fits AKG's needs.
- Beckton Dickinson (BD), a local medical technology company, is working with ACC to develop a customized certificate in Industrial Systems. BD employees would take classes at ACC and receive on-the-job training at BD. ACC has been providing customized education to BD for two years. BD is currently receiving Customized Training Funds from the state to cover the cost of their training needs.

The College has set a goal for the Adults for Industrial Development program to grow to 40 individuals over a four-year span.

BCOE from page 1

the needs of students, faculty, and industry partners.

The College's Biotechnology Center of Excellence leverages a particular area of expertise and, for ACC, that is biotechnology and related life sciences programs. The College has the longest running two-year biotechnology program in the nation and one of the state's oldest Medical Laboratory Technology programs.

Both programs are critical to local and regional bioscience industries. The College lies at the epicenter of the busiest bioscience corridors on the east coast. Additionally, Burlington is the #1 Small Metropolitan Area in the nation for health diagnostics and testing. Further, biosciences job growth is expected to grow exponentially over the next decade.

ACC Honors 867 Graduates with Virtual Commencement Ceremony



Attorney Roy Dawson, a 2009 ACC graduate, delivered the commencement keynote address during the College's virtual ceremony.

Alamance Community College conducted a virtual commencement ceremony on June 26, providing graduates of Curriculum and GED/Adult High School programs the opportunity to celebrate with family in the comfort of their own homes.

The College conferred degrees, diplomas and certificates on 867 graduates, a total that represents 711 Curriculum, 111 GED/HiSet, and 45 Adult High School.

Messages from ACC President Algje Gatewood and others were pre-recorded and shown via streaming on the college website. The virtual ceremony replaced the traditional on-site event originally scheduled on the Elon University campus. The College chose to hold a virtual ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Graduates were invited to post videos of themselves watching as their names scrolled across the screen, turning their tassels in unison at Dr. Gatewood's invitation, and celebrating their achievement.

Roy Dawson, an attorney practicing in Morehead City, NC, delivered the commencement address. A high school dropout, Dawson enrolled at ACC where he earned his Adult High School diploma, and an Associate in Arts degree as part of the College's C-STEP program. At UNC Chapel Hill, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and was accepted into the UNC School of Law where he realized his dream of becoming an attorney. Dawson now practices criminal, family and personal injury law in Morehead City.

Among Mr. Dawson's remarks to graduates, he said: "I was not the smartest student. But I worked hard. I dedicated myself to fulfilling a dream. It is important to remember, as you go out into an ever-changing world...that you should not place limitations on yourself. Remember to set goals, and when you reach a goal, set a new one. These habits and skills honed at Alamance Community College will serve you for a lifetime."

The virtual commencement ceremony can currently be viewed from the ACC website homepage: www.alamancecc.edu

Retiring ACC Trustee Dusenberry Named Emeritus

The Alamance Community College Board of Trustees bestowed the title of Trustee Emeritus on Dr. Reid Dusenberry upon his retirement from the Board on June 30 after 20 years of service to the college and community.

Dusenberry is only the fourth trustee to receive this distinction, following Wallace Gee, Russell Wilson and Dr. Richard "Dick" Fisher. The honorary title of Trustee Emeritus is bestowed upon outgoing members who have met certain criteria at the discretion of the Board.

During his two decades of service to ACC, Dusenberry provided leadership as Board of Trustees chairman, and served on numerous board committees. His leadership as chair of the Building and Grounds Committee for 17 terms came at a crucial time of growth for the College. Those years saw ACC use bond funds for the construction of four new buildings on the main Carrington-Scott campus: Allied Health/Powell Building, Gee Administration/Library Building, Literacy Building, and the Advanced Applied Technology Center (AATC).

Dr. Dusenberry's final years of leadership on Building and Grounds have overseen the current pre-construction plans for the Biotechnology Center of Excellence and Public Safety Training Center, to name just two upcoming projects financed through the voter-approved \$39 million capital bond referendum.

Long before Dusenberry was nominated to the Board of Trustees, he taught dental assisting at the College and served on that program's advisory board. He also made his mark on the ACC Foundation.

Indeed, Dusenberry has a record of 30 years of continuous giving to the ACC Foundation, and is a member of its Titan Society of donors. He was instrumental in creating the Margaret Hooper Scholarship for Dental Assisting students, currently valued at more than \$70,000.

Dusenberry served on the Foundation Board of Directors from 1994-2001, including a stint as chairman, and has served as Trustee Liaison to the Foundation since 2013.

"I'm happy now upon my retirement to sit back and watch Alamance Community College continue to grow," he said.



Dr. Reid Dusenberry

ACC Welcomes Back Students in Some Key Programs



Nursing students kept distance between desks in their classrooms.

The College opened its summer 2020 term in mid-May with the first on-campus students since mid-March when the coronavirus pandemic closed the school and placed most classes online.

The College welcomed approximately 32 students in Medical Assisting, 64 in Nurse Aide, and 36 in first-year Nursing classes. Classes were conducted as normal except for the wearing of face-masks and observing social distancing between desks.

“The most significant challenge is to maintain the

six-foot distancing between students,” said Cindy Thompson, instructor in Medical Assisting. “When it’s time for students to practice tasks on one another, which is how they learn, we will amp up our sanitizing. We have separated the class into two groups who will be here on different days. This means fewer students in our lab area. The students really like this idea.”

Nurse Aide had 40 returning spring semester students who needed 30 hours of simulated clinical experience because the nursing homes

where this is normally done are closed to visitors. In addition, the program had 24 summer students beginning their first year of training.

“Healthcare workers just do what we have to do to safely get the job done,” said Rhonda Pierce, Nurse Aide Department Head. “The students didn’t seem too concerned about wearing masks or the challenge of finishing their 30 hours. They were just glad to be back.”

Approximately 36 first-year

Nursing students began their classes the evening of May 21 in order to keep distant from students in Medical Assisting and Nurse Aide who were in the same building during daytime hours.

The College evaluated how those students would move through their respective spaces, how best to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and sanitizing protocols, and how continued online instruction can be leveraged where appropriate.

The week of May 25 saw Dental Assisting students on campus, including those requiring licensure or certification training under Continuing Education.



Dental Assisting students observed sanitation protocols in the lab.

Culinary Arts Students Adapt to ‘New Normal’ of Instruction

Culinary Arts students this summer completed their requirements in learning classical cuisine. Due to the coronavirus pandemic that kept students off campus since mid-March, however, culinary students were not allowed in the department’s large teaching kitchen. The only option was for the prospective chefs to learn from the intimacy of their own kitchens.

Students, practicing social distancing protocol, came to cam-



Culinary Arts Chef Brian Bailey shows student Nessa Mitchem a technique during a visit to pick up boxed ingredients.

pus on a staggered schedule where they picked up boxed ingredients and a recipe, prepared the assigned meal at home, and submitted photos for instructors’ critiques.

Department Head Brian Bailey said the idea was to replicate as closely as possible what these students would have done this summer: Prepare a classical menu of soup, appetizer, salad, entrée, and dessert. One casualty of the situation is that the students could not serve their meals to the public using restaurant etiquette as is tradition at ACC the first half of the summer.

“What we are doing is unique to our situation. There are very few schools in the state, let alone the country, trying to pull this off from what I’ve been able to determine,” said Chef Bailey.

Still, there were drawbacks. For one, not all home kitchens are created equally as second year student Nessa Mitchem testified.

“I have a pretty small kitchen at home, so it’s been somewhat of a challenge,” she said. “At ACC, we have the larger stoves and cutting boards. We’re used to chefs giving us a demo and showing us how to cut chicken properly, for example, when we need some help. But at home it’s forced us to think more critically. We can always consult with chefs on email or text but doing it at home makes us rely more on the knowledge and skill levels we’ve learned at school.”

“We’re just trying to make this new normal that’s been thrown at us work,” said Bailey. “And so far, it’s worked really well.”

ACC Adds 24 More Nurses to Healthcare Field Amidst Coronavirus Battle

ACC held an unorthodox, but celebratory pinning ceremony for its 2020 class of Associate Degree Nursing graduates in late May as those newly-christened healthcare providers now venture into new careers amidst the widespread coronavirus pandemic crisis. Nursing pins are universally recognized as the symbol of successful completion of the program.

The College presented nursing pins to 24 graduates in an outdoor ceremony amidst the sounds of cheers and car horns that celebrated the students' achievements. Family and friends—nearly all donning protective masks and keeping social distancing protocols—watched the event in the parking lot of ACC's Allied

Health/Powell Building where these students have studied for the past two years.

Nursing faculty, social distanced on the sidewalk facing the graduates and families, made public comments that addressed the current COVID-19 situation. The message to graduates: You are needed right now.

Most of the graduating class already have jobs lined up in the healthcare profession and will begin upon completion of the state licensing exam. In March, the students were forced to curtail on-site clinical rotations with live patients due to the pandemic. Instead, 'virtual' clinicals were initiated to provide an experience replicating what they missed at local hospitals.



Alma Thompson, Nursing Department Head, addressed the graduates from the campus parking lot.



Pinned nursing graduates together recited the Florence Nightingale Pledge from their vehicles.



ACC Qualifies as NC Apprenticeship Sponsor

Alamance Community College is now an official apprenticeship sponsor through the auspices of ApprenticeshipNC, the state agency that oversees apprenticeships statewide. The College is also registered with the U.S. Department of Labor through ApprenticeshipNC.

"A lot of companies shy away from the additional work required, although they would profit from an apprenticeship program. ACC decided to become a sponsor and relieve the companies from some of that paperwork," said Bettina Akukwe, the College's Apprenticeship Implementer.

In the future, ACC plans to offer summer pre-apprenticeship programs where students can learn basic skills in a trade. During this pre-apprenticeship, companies have the option to observe the development of students and hire them into the apprenticeship program.

The College becomes an apprenticeship sponsor on the heels of already enjoying a successful partnership with the Career Accelerator Program (CAP) since 2016. CAP is a four-year apprenticeship in Machining, Mechatronics or Industrial Systems in cooperation with ten local companies.

Whereas CAP apprentices are hired right out of high school, the College's goal was to create a program for adults that have a need to retrain or upskill.

The first company to participate is Nature's Select, which will choose current employees to enter the apprenticeship program and earn the Turfgrass Management Certificate from the College's Horticulture Technology program.

The College plans to expand the sponsorship to different areas, such as welding, heating and air, and automotive.

College Honors Its 2019-20 Employee, Award Recipients



*Faculty Member
of the Year*
SHERRI SINGER

Sherri Singer has worked at ACC for 20 years and has served as Department Head of Social/Behavioral Sciences since 2001. As advisor to the History Club, she coordinated several unique events on campus: a regional high school History Day competition and exhibit; a World War I Centennial event that brought more than a thousand middle school students to campus; and a Women's Suffrage exhibit and activities. Sherri also contributes to quality instruction at ACC by managing the College's Adjunct Institute.



*Adjunct Faculty
Member of the Year*
HOUSTON MOORE

A 2008 graduate of ACC's Animal Care and Management, Houston Moore has worked for more than ten years as an adjunct instructor in the animal handling class. He works part-time as the lab manager, taking care of the animals on weekends and holidays. He has been praised for patiently showing students how to handle animals without fear.



*Workforce
Development
Instructor of the Year*
JERRY WILLIAMS

A lieutenant with the Alamance County Sheriff's Department, Jerry Williams earned his associate's degree in Criminal Justice at ACC. He has taught for more than ten years in the College's Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) program. Williams is specialized in teaching Firearms and Subject Control.



*Staff Member
of the Year*
**DAVID MERCER
BUFTER**

Mercer Butfer, Academic Technology Specialist in Distance Learning, has worked at the College since 2015. Butfer has helped numerous instructors create or revise their distance learning courses in effective ways. He has helped staff and administration communicate with students through video series, and presented at the NC Community College System conference.

ACC to Deliver 'Virtual' Medical Bridge Camp to Young Males

ACC is offering the fourth annual *Medical Bridge: Minority Males in Medicine* camp as a virtual experience for eight weeks this summer.

The goal of the camp is to get more minority boys on track to medical careers as dentists, doctors, or other health professionals. In the past, Medical Bridge sponsored a three-week summer camp on the ACC campus consisting of hands-on science activities and field trips to medical centers and laboratories.

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, the College redesigned all Medical Bridge activities to fit a virtual camp format with online activities, including experiments, subject instruction, and personal development.

The camp addresses the misleading "belief gap"—that minority boys who look like them cannot be medical professionals. One camp component, Personal Pathways to Professions, gives men of color who became successful professionals an opportunity to talk to the campers.

Guest speakers this summer include Dr. Damon Tweedy of Duke University, author of "Black Men in White Coats."

Although the Personal Pathways to Professions segment is targeted at minority males, it is open to all male middle and high school students in Alamance County.

Medical Bridge is a partnership with Alamance Burlington School System and UNC-Chapel Hill Medical School. In 2019, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund awarded a \$168,000 grant to support the program.



Young male students had an opportunity for hands-on lab activities during the 2019 Medical Bridge summer camp.

ON THE FRONT LINES:

ACC Nursing Alumna Stresses ‘It’s What We Do’

Meet Angela Robbins of Burlington, an alumna of Alamance Community College,



ACC alumna Angela Robbins, an ER nurse at Alamance Regional Medical Center. (Photo submitted)

and a nurse working the front lines of the current coronavirus pandemic crisis.

A graduate of ACC’s Medical Assisting program, Robbins worked in that field for three years before returning to the College to pursue a career in nursing. She graduated with her Associate Degree in Nursing in 2016.

Robbins began her nursing career in the ER at Alamance Regional Medical Center. Within the past four years, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing through Western Carolina University, became a board-certified emergency nurse, and is now part of the leadership team in the ER as a charge nurse.

In August 2019 Robbins added educator to her re-

sume when she was hired as a clinical instructor for Alamance Community College. But less than a year later, she and her fellow nurses are faced with an unprecedented health crisis that calls upon their dedication and skills.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has been a difficult time for nurses,” said Robbins. “Not only are we worried about our patients, we now have to worry about contracting this very dangerous virus and taking it home to our families. This concern has grown even more due to the lack of enough PPE [personal protective equipment] and having to adapt to new standards.”

Robbins herself faced the danger all those in the health-care profession may encour-

ter. In March, she was exposed to a patient who tested positive for the coronavirus.

“I had started showing similar symptoms to what the patient presented and my PCP [primary care physician] made the decision to test me. I was quarantined for seven days, until my test results came back. Thankfully I tested negative for COVID,” she said.

Robbins said she understands how nurses are now being hailed as heroes but, she said, the majority of those in her profession would say that they are just doing their job.

“It’s what we do, and what we have always done,” she said.

ACC Graduate Conducts COVID Screenings for 200 Employees

Emily O’Dell, a 2016 ACC graduate, is an alumna making her mark on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic in Alamance County. As Human Resources Manager at Elevate Textiles in Burlington, she is assuring the employees are safe to work their shifts. And she credits the College with the skills she needed to become an advocate for the 200 workers for whom she is responsible.

Emily was working as an accounting clerk at a law firm, but she wanted advancement and additional knowledge. She enrolled at ACC and completed two accounting credentials in 2016.

Last December, Emily was hired as Human Resources Manager at Elevate Textiles in Burlington. The textile industry was brand new to her, and she was faced with learning a totally new system, produc-

tion standards and an employee base of roughly 200 people.

Elevate Textiles—Burlington Finishing Plant manufactures medical “barrier” fabrics for operating theaters such as surgeons’ gowns and scrubs. When the coronavirus pandemic reached crisis status in March, the Burlington plant ramped up production of the medical fabric. For Emily, only on the job as HR Manager for three months, the need to keep the doors open during the pandemic was crucial.

“Safety being our top priority meant we needed to implement a temperature screening process for all employees on all three shifts ASAP,” she said. “We immediately ordered Tyvek suits, gloves, N95 masks and face shields, and adopted screening questions based on CDC guidelines. I came up with

a schedule based on our employee roster.”

In conjunction with the management team, Emily set up an entrance pathway for all employees to receive screening upon arrival on their shifts. They made protective masks from

the company’s fabric and distributed one to each employee. They also made their own hand sanitizer solution. Emily contacts the Alamance County Health Department every other day to make sure the company is aligned with proper guidelines and



Emily O’Dell, a 2016 ACC graduate, conducts employee screenings for the coronavirus at Elevate Textiles. (Photo submitted)

expectations.

“This has been quite the challenge to take on in such a short tenure with people I never knew prior to December, but COVID-19 has truly brought our employees together and created a semblance of unity,” she said.



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ACC Celebrates 2020 Graduates with Campus Drive-Through

A few weeks prior to the virtual commencement ceremony, ACC welcomed its 2020 graduates to a campus drive-through where the students picked up caps and gowns, received celebratory yard signs, were given diploma covers, and had professional photos taken.

About 300 of the College's nearly 900 graduates drove their vehicles in a steady stream around the back of the main campus for several hours, cheered on by college faculty and staff who brandished congratulatory signs and offered encouragement. College employees who are members of the commencement planning committee stayed busy all day delivering accoutrements to the students in their cars.

