New York Colleges Celebrate Academic Success

*The Commencement Edition: Congratulating the Class of 2017*

Throughout May, June and July, students enrolled in Association of Proprietary Colleges member institutions celebrate at graduation ceremonies, while reflecting on their many accomplishments throughout their educational careers.

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Making a Mark on History

The history of proprietary colleges in New York is rooted in tradition and providing a quality education, which dates back to the middle 1800s. Six of our 12 members were founded more than 100 years ago. Bryant & Stratton College, founded in 1854, and Jamestown Business College (1886) are still operating successfully. Many other proprietary institutions were established in the first half of the 20th century; The College of Westchester was founded in 1915, Plaza College (1916), Berkeley College (1931), Monroe College (1935) and LIM College (1939). The Image is courtesy of Plaza College. Plaza College, one of APC’s earliest members, held their 100th Commencement on Sun., June 25 at the Kupferberg Center for the Arts, Flushing. 2,013 attendees were present, including 290 graduates.

Berkeley College Graduates Represent Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

Berkeley College celebrated the largest graduating class to date during the 2017 Commencement ceremony at Prudential Center in Newark, NJ, on Fri., May 5. More than 2,900 students have been awarded certificate, associate and bachelor’s degrees. The Commencement ceremony also included the first class of those receiving Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Management degrees. The graduating class included 175 military and veteran students and 200 international students, representing 42 countries.

The Berkeley College Class of 2017 comprises graduates who exemplify the “new” traditional student, as so many have overcome adversity after their families migrated to America. The average age of a Berkeley College graduate in 2017 is 28.5 years. Just over 31 percent of the graduates entered Berkeley as first-time, full-time students; and, more than 81 percent identify as a minority.

Among these graduates was Jason De La Cruz, this year’s recipient of the Robert Maher Award, an honor given to a graduate who has met high standards of academic excellence while overcoming personal, professional or financial obstacles. A resident of the Bronx, De La Cruz was 11 years old when he immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic with his family. He maintained a grade-point average of 3.7 while also having to look after his grandfather’s well-being and adjusting to his new home country.

“Being able to take classes during the afternoon and

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night helped me manage my time effectively, as did having the support of the Berkeley College staff,” said De La Cruz. “I’ve learned that even when facing your biggest challenges and hardships, there will always be a path toward success.”

Despite his loaded schedule, De La Cruz maintained a grade-point average of 3.7 while pursuing his Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in General Business. He also served as a peer tutor for the Berkeley College Center for Academic Success while interning at New York-based Special Materials Company (SMC). He is the first in his family to graduate with a college degree.

One of De La Cruz’s most memorable moments at Berkeley College came when he helped a distraught student improve her grades in a math course, ultimately helping that student graduate. “I learned from my grandmother that it is better to give than to receive,” said De La Cruz. “So when I saw that student struggling, I started thinking of my grandmother. Seeing her always ready to give back without waiting for anything in return taught me how the more I help others in need, the more I can prosper.”

Dallas Reed, PhD, Vice President, Student Development and Campus Life; Jason De La Cruz, Robert Maher Award recipient; and Michael J. Smith, President of Berkeley College, pose before the 2017 Commencement ceremony.

New York’s proprietary sector of higher education is regulated by the state Board of Regents to ensure academic integrity, placing it on par with other higher educational sectors in the state. In the 2015-16 academic year, APC member colleges conferred 8,019 associate, bachelor, master, doctorate and certificate degrees. Of those 856 were masters and doctoral degrees.
Island Drafting & Technical Institute Celebrates its 60th Commencement Ceremony

More than 250 graduates, guests and staff gathered on Thursday, May 11 to celebrate Island Drafting & Technical Institute’s Class of 2017.

This year’s commencement marked Island Drafting & Technical Institute’s (IDTI) 60th anniversary. Born out of a need for local employees who could draft technical blueprints and work with architects and engineers for Republic Aviation, IDTI was established by Joseph P. Di Liberto to serve Nassau and Suffolk counties.

Over the years, the institute has expanded and now offers classes beyond drafting, reflecting a broader focus on the technical needs of all industries on Long Island. In 1997, IDTI became an accredited college and authorized to offer associate degree programs. The college ranked 12th in the Forbes 2017 edition of Top 30 Two-Year Trade Schools: Colleges that Fight the Nation’s Skills Gap.

Island Drafting & Technical Institute President James G. Di Liberto presents Stephen Love with his diploma at the Institute’s commencement ceremony held on Thursday, May 11 at Helen Butler Hall, Amityville. Stephen received an associate degree in Architectural Drafting and Design.

SVA Commencement Takes Radio City Music Hall by Storm

A sea of students in red gowns, as well as guests, celebrated academic achievement at the School of Visual Arts’ 42nd commencement ceremony, held on Tuesday, May 9 at Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan. Some 1,170 undergraduate and graduate students became the Class of 2017.

Lauren Eve Cantor represented this year’s Master’s Degree candidates. Graduating with a Master of Fine Arts in Design, Cantor shared with classmates how

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her bachelor’s degree from Columbia University in astrophysics influenced her thought process.

At Columbia, she attended exclusive science classes where she was the only woman in the room. “One thing I loved about science is that there is always a right answer,” said Cantor. Her intellectual ability for finding answers proved useful on Wall Street, where she worked in corporate finance for twenty years. However, Cantor still felt as though she needed more. She enrolled at SVA, seeking answers. “One of my professors at SVA told me with art, there never is a right answer. There’s always room for improvement and interpretation. Change is a constant in the life of an artist.

At first, this drove me crazy. But now I realize that this is our greatest skill.”

Her thesis project, Quarkey, a web program and mobile app encouraging young girls to engage in the study and practice of science, is leading her toward a future of becoming a science evangelist for girls.

“As artists, we have the power to make people listen,” said Cantor. “We have the power to make people feel. Our mission as designers and artists is to inform people on issues in an impactful way.
We can promote conversation, and through our art leave a door open since we and our audience don't always have the answers.”

Addressing the students, Gloria Steinem implored them to realize their power as visual artists, namely, in their ability to appeal to sensations, even instincts, shared by all humans. “To be universally understandable is to have the potential of bringing diverse people together, undivided by different languages or degree of education,” she said.
Q: What is your favorite class to teach and why?

I am the Coordinator of the Honors Program. In this capacity, I get to teach a curriculum that is unique and designed for students who have a desire to look beyond their major area of study. I must admit, it is hard to choose one course! But I would choose our Honors Program capstone course—HN450: Honors Program Research Study.

This course prepares our Honors students for graduate study. It is a requirement for Honors baccalaureate candidates. Most of them do want to study further. The course teaches students about graduate level research—the difference between secondary and primary research and how the two methods are connected. It ignites in them a passion for study and research. And their transformation over 15 weeks is impressive. They write meaningful, significant research proposals. And when they graduate and apply to graduate school, they write me to thank me for the skills learned in HN450. It is so gratifying.

Q: Tell me about the Honors Program?

The Honors Program is a unique experience for students. It combines an advanced curriculum with social and interpersonal activities to develop the whole person. Honors students possess a thirst for knowledge, and the Honors Program provides them with courses that are just for them.

These courses explore history, the arts, science, technology, politics, sociology, math, and more to make our students well-rounded in their learning. But the Honors Program also strives to instill a sense of community through volunteerism and service. Students participate in community service activities, joint projects with other Honors Programs, and more.

The students also have the opportunity to showcase their work at regional and national Honors conferences. Our Honors Program is a member of both the National Collegiate Honors Council and the Northeast Regional Honors Council. These organizations advance student learning and achievement, which echoes the mission of our Honors Program.

Q: How have the rapid advances in technology, including social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat, influenced the classroom?

My Honors students have studied this! Three students, attended the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Seattle, Washington in October 2016, have found that social media is a distraction! However, they have also concluded it is a way of life for Generation Y. Therefore, as Coordinator, I have embraced it. I regularly update the Monroe College Honors Program Facebook Page, and we have started our own Instagram page (@monroecollegehonors). As a professor, I use Blackboard (our e-learning system) regularly, and I connect to my students personally by allowing them to contact me through WhatsApp.

I believe instructors must embrace technology and students will then use it meaningfully. The distractions will lead to learning.

Q: When you are not at Monroe, where can you be found?

I am usually at home with my four-year-old daughter, Victoria—although she is quite familiar with coming with me on community service ventures and social activities that take place outside of “business hours.”

As a coordinator, there is no such thing. I live for my students—seeing them in evenings, weekends, and on overnight travel. But when it’s just my time, I’m home with my daughter and husband, Damian.

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Q: Which three people (famous or otherwise) would you most likely invite to be a guest speaker in your classroom?

Steven Johnson would be a top pick—his writings about the usefulness of technology are so poignant.

Sir Ken Robinson—my students LOVE his TED Talks.

Hillary Clinton—she performs very well under pressure!

Q: Two truths and a lie.

I love country music. I was a lifeguard when I was in high school and college. I have travelled to Europe. (I’ll admit...I’m not a good liar. I’ve never been to Europe. But it’s on my Bucket List. I’d love to visit England, Italy, and Germany).

Q: A book found on your nightstand.

I just finished reading The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins. It was a real page-turner. I can’t wait to see the movie. Now I’m onto to Telling Lies by Paul Ekman. Don’t read too much into that. It’s just for fun, although nonverbal language continually fascinates me.

Kathryn M. MacDonald Monroe College Profession and Honors Program Coordinator is pictured with Hilary De Silvia of the Honors Program. De Silvia participated in Monroe College’s 84th annual commencement on Tuesday, June 6.

This year, the college conferred 460 master’s degrees; 1,169 bachelor’s degrees; and 1,130 associate degrees this year, as well as awarded 43 professional certificates.

Monroe College Confers Degrees on 2,800 Students Representing 68 Countries at 84th Annual Commencement

Monroe College, a national leader in educating urban and international students, held its 84th Annual Commencement on Tuesday, June 6 at the Theater at Madison Square Garden.

Two separate ceremonies were held to accommodate the families and friends of the 2,800 students receiving associate, bachelor’s or master’s degrees and professional certificates.

New York City Council Member Annabel Palma and New York State Assemblymember Michael Blake gave commencement addresses.

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The College of Westchester Celebrates its 101st Commencement

Three hundred and fifty-five graduates shared their excitement and the importance of their academic accomplishments with fellow classmates, family and friends as they took part in The College of Westchester’s 101st commencement ceremony.

The commencement was held at the Westchester County Center in White Plains.

Alejandra Rojas addresses her peers at The College of Westchester’s 101st Commencement Ceremony, which was held on Thursday, June 1 at the Westchester County Center, White Plains. Rojas received her associate degree in Applied Science.
Meet Brian Settles, The College of Westchester Class of 2017 Bachelor’s in Business Administration

“When I came for an interview at The College of Westchester (CW), the small, comfortable setting suited me. And it was the way the staff, the way the professors, interacted with students that sold me on CW. They were more than just informative advisors; they knew each student by name and showed extreme care about what was going on with each student, professionally and personally.”
President of Hudson’s Bay and Lord & Taylor, Liz Rodbell, Gives Keynote Address at LIM College’s 78th Commencement

More than 500 students were presented with master’s, bachelor’s and associate degrees on May 25 at Carnegie Hall in Manhattan. The Class of 2017 is the largest in the college’s history.

This year’s commencement included the first group of graduates from LIM College’s online Master of Professional Studies (MPS) degree programs, as well as the first graduates of the MPS program in Global Fashion Supply Chain Management.

Liz Rodbell, president of Hudson’s Bay and Lord & Taylor, advised the graduates, “More than anything, always seek to evolve. It will be the key to your success in the world of fashion, where change is the only constant. There will be times when your career growth and evolution are going to be uncomfortable. It will rarely be in a straight line, and often, it is not in the direction you expect. Learn to embrace it.”

Ms. Rodbell received an honorary Doctor of Commercial Science degree at the ceremony and was presented with LIM College’s Distinguished Achievement Award.

LIM College is focused exclusively on the study of business and fashion. The following figures are a testament to the exceptional education LIM College provides:

- Of LIM College’s Class of 2016, 91.5 percent were employed within six months of graduation.
- According to the U.S. Department of Education’s College Scorecard, the median salary of LIM College graduates 10 years after entering college is 41 percent higher than the national average.
- During the 2015-16 academic year, 854 employers actively sought LIM College students for internship, employment and volunteer opportunities.
- In the 2015-16 academic year, LIM College students completed 1,062 internships with fashion and related companies – including Chanel, Christian Louboutin, Elle magazine, Saks Fifth Avenue, and NBC Universal.
- LIM College alumni have gone on to excel at top companies including: Saks Fifth Avenue, Barneys New York, Chanel, Macy’s, and Neiman Marcus.
More Than 1,000 Students Participate in Bryant & Stratton College Commencement Ceremonies at Campuses Across New York

This year marked the 160th graduation season for Bryant & Stratton College. More than 1,000 students participated in commencement ceremonies across the state, in Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Western New York.

The Class of 2017 included Bryant & Stratton College’s inaugural class of Occupational Therapy Assistants, with the Syracuse and Rochester campuses conferring 37 Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) associate degrees.

The program, accredited in 2016 by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), will serve a great need in upstate New York.

The inaugural class of students began their academic coursework in May 2015. Now that they have graduated, students will be qualified to take the national certification exam, making them eligible for licensure to practice in New York and all other states.

OTAs help patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living and working. Considered one of the fastest growing careers, OTAs are ranked as the top healthcare support job in 2016 by U.S. News & World Report. What’s more, demand for OTAs is expected to grow by 40 percent over the next decade, due in large part to an aging population.

Did You Know?

APC member colleges employ more than 6,000 New Yorkers

APC member colleges provide students with more that $92 million in grants, scholarships and institutional aid
Meet Katelyn Camp, Elmira Business Institute Class of 2017

Katelyn Camp, a single mother of three, knew she wanted a career in the medical field; what she didn’t know was how to make it happen.

“I knew going in that if I was going to go to college, I needed to be all in,” said Camp. “I didn’t want the traditional breaks that many colleges have. I couldn’t afford them. Elmira Business Institute (EBI) fit my schedule and allowed me to attend college three semesters per year so I could graduate sooner.”

Camp obtained her degree within 16 months. Graduating sooner enables graduates to move ahead with the careers with lower student loan debt.

Meet Sally Gall, Elmira Business Institute Class of 2017

Sally Gall discovered Elmira Business Institute (EBI) while researching colleges for her daughter, Katilyn Gall (Class of 2016). Both liked EBI because of its small class sizes and individual attention.

As her daughter worked toward her associate degree in Medical Assisting, Sally was inspired. She enrolled in the Medical Billing and Coding program at EBI and graduated July 20th.

“My course work and externship have been intense, however I knew it was going to be worth it in the end,” said Gall. “I kept a positive attitude and am grateful to EBI for guiding me through this process.”

(From left) Katilyn Gall (Class of 2016) and her mother Sally Gall (Class of 2017) credit Elmira Business Institute’s Externship program, included during the final semester, for providing them with an opportunity to gain practical experience in their field of study, making them immediately marketable.
Jamestown Business College’s 131st Commencement Ceremony

Jamestown Business College (JBC) celebrated its 131st annual commencement ceremony at the First Lutheran Church in Jamestown on Saturday, June 3. One hundred and two students graduated – 15 earned bachelor’s degrees, and 87 received associate degrees. Business Administration/Marketing and Management graduate, Morgan Ayers, has taken what she learned at JBC to the real world, having recently purchased M’Organic Market in Allegany. The market primarily sells organic, vegan and gluten-free foods.

She receives her products from local farmers, so all of the goods are community based.

Ayers was inspired to open her own business because of her passion for organic food and educating the community on the benefits of knowing where your food comes from.

“I love that I can give back to my community through my business and I really enjoy the personal attention I’m able to give to my customers.”

A trio of Jamestown Business College graduates pose for a celebratory photo.

Morgan Ayers (Class of 2017) pictured behind the counter at M’Organic Market in Allegany. Ayers purchased M’Organic in March of this year. The natural food store offers local residents the opportunity to shop for organic, vegan and gluten free foods.

Did You Know?

New York’s degree granting proprietary colleges have higher on-time associate graduation rates than other sectors of higher education.

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Source: NYS Education Department, 2015 Data
We’re proud to represent 12 degree granting colleges

Berkeley College - Est. 1931
Bryant & Stratton College - Est. 1854
The College of Westchester - Est. 1915
Elmira Business Institute - Est. 1858
Five Towns College - Est. 1972
Island Drafting & Technical Institute - Est. 1957
Jamestown Business College - Est. 1886
LIM College - Est. 1939
Monroe College - Est. 1933
Plaza College - Est. 1916
School of Visual Arts - Est. 1947
The Swedish Institute - Est. 1916
The Association of Proprietary Colleges (APC) represents 12 fully accredited, degree granting colleges operating on 25 college campuses in New York State offering associate, bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral programs.

Our colleges are located across the state from Buffalo to Long Island, Jamestown to Rochester, Syracuse to Albany and the entire NYC metropolitan area.

There are more than 40,000 students enrolled in proprietary colleges throughout New York State and APC member colleges serve more than 35,000 of these students.