

# connections

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER/FALL 2014 VOL. XXXIX NO. 2



## Charter Oak Holds 2014 Commencement Ceremony on June 1 – Theme was “The Right Stuff”

With blue skies overhead, and a United States Senator in their midst, five hundred and twenty seven members of the Class of 2014 received degrees during Charter Oak State College’s commencement ceremony held on Sunday, June 1, in Welte Auditorium at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT. One hundred and seventy three graduates were in attendance representing fourteen states, as well as graduates from Cameroon and Great Britain. A live webcast of the ceremony was hosted on CharterOak.edu for graduates unable to attend in person.

Charter Oak President, Ed Klonoski addressed the graduates. The commencement speaker was U.S. Senator Christopher Murphy, and the student speaker was Omar Rosario.

In his remarks, President Klonoski congratulated the graduates on their achievement. “Most of you have arrived at this moment along a non-traditional path, often after a number of false starts, and over far more than the usual number of years. Your personal commitment to achieving your degree despite considerable personal challenges continually amazes us. To use a phrase from



Connecticut Senator Christopher Murphy addresses the graduates.

novelist Tom Wolfe, you have all shown ‘the right stuff.’”

He also added “There is a larger context to your achievement. Over the past several years, as you worked to complete your degree, a national debate emerged about the value of a college degree. This debate includes questions about the cost of a degree, the income potential of particular degrees, and even the proper role of financial aid. But despite the distraction that these questions might have caused, you persevered. You kept taking steps forward toward your goal,” he said.

U.S. Senator Christopher Murphy spoke of perception versus reality and urged graduates to create their own reality not what others think is possible for them. He said “my message to you is simple, think positively, dream big, and do your families and your college proud.”

Shirley Adams, Provost of Charter Oak State College shared some interesting

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# THE PRESIDENT'S TAKE



## Charter Oak Is Leading the Way!

As you know, Charter Oak is part of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities system of 17 institutions. For the first time in our history, we have been asked to lead a key initiative for the entire system.

Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy has been the driving force for this initiative called *Go Back to Get Ahead*. The Governor is a strong supporter of workforce

improvements and, as a result, proposed \$20 million for this program; \$2 million for administration and the remainder to fund the financial incentives. The program pays for up to three free 3-credit courses plus standard fees for qualifying prospects to complete an unfinished college degree. To receive the incentive, students must matriculate and carry a minimum of 6 credits per semester. Students receive the first incentive in their first semester, the second in the next semester, and the third in their final semester (to drive completion).

The Connecticut State Colleges & Universities system gave the project to Charter Oak State College to manage, and we began our work while the General Assembly was still debating the budget. In May, the legislature passed a budget that included \$6 million for *Go Back to Get Ahead*, and the program launched on June 2 – just 120 days after the Governor first announced it.

The program accepts returning students from any regionally accredited institution and offers the incentive to return to one of the 17 colleges in the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities system (4 state universities, 12 community colleges, and 1 online college). So *Go Back to Get Ahead* is the key enrollment growth strategy for our system.

## How We Organized *Go Back to Get Ahead*

A small, dedicated *Go Back to Get Ahead* enrollment staff was hired by COSC to advise the returning students and support the business office processes. Our Provost, Shirley Adams, is the project manager with other COSC staff taking lead roles in marketing the initiative, purchasing and setting up a CRM to manage the project, training the staffs at the 17 colleges to manage the referral funnel and use the CRM, and training staff on the reimbursement process.

## Telling Students about *Go Back To Get Ahead*: Act While Supplies Last!

Working with the information technology, institutional research, and other staff at each of the 17 colleges, an unduplicated list of potential students was developed (over 80,000) to invite to return to college. A personalized letter signed by both the Governor and the President of the Board of Regents (BOR) was sent during the month of June to this list of potential returnees. This mailing was augmented by a statewide media campaign comprised of radio spots, social media, Internet advertising, and a public relations campaign featuring the Governor, President of the BOR, and other college presidents. The marketing and PR campaigns drive the potential students

to a URL ([GoBackToGetAhead.com](http://GoBackToGetAhead.com)) or phone number so they can begin the process of returning.

The campaign is designed to encourage students to take action soon. Students must matriculate by September 30, 2016. The program will end June 30, 2018. However, once the funding is depleted, no additional students will be admitted. This is the retail nature of the incentive. It is literally, "buy one get one while supplies last." The early results are spectacular because this "act now" message is really working hard. For COSC, it is remarkable to see adult degree completers acting quickly – this never happens to us in our normal recruitment conversations.

## The Response from Students Has Been Huge

Let's look at the program data as of this writing. Our current count for inquiries is 5,378 and we have referred 2,907 students to the various 17 institutions. We are converting 54% of our inquiries to referrals and 98.2% of all people who start the form complete it. A source code on the letters we mailed shows 25% of the inquiries are from those letters. That means that 75% of the inquiries are from students who heard about the offer from other sources – word of mouth, Internet and radio advertising, and school referrals.

**"So far Charter Oak is averaging 26% of the referrals, which seems reasonable given our degree completion specialty. That number may increase slightly over time, but students are choosing from all 17 of the system institutions. Charter Oak provides a low cost, online, and completion-friendly solution for students who are very close to attaining either their Associate or Bachelor's - in my opinion, this is part of the special sauce that makes this program work."**

## Successful Ingredients - What We've Learned So Far

To summarize, the *Go Back to Get Ahead* program is succeeding because the program included the following elements:

- Gubernatorial support (Governor Malloy continues his press stops for the program).
- A strong lead organization to manage the project planning and deployment.
- Retail marketing incentive (buy one, get one free).
- Targeted direct mailings and statewide media marketing.
- A centralized CRM system for managing enrollments, communication, and reporting.
- An institution that specializes in degree completion (low residency requirements, liberal credit transfer policies, and adult student focus).

This is a very exciting time for COSC and I look forward to updating you as things progress.

**Ed Klonoski, President**

*Editor's note: A version of this article was previously published on the WCET blog.*

# Summer Greetings from Your Alumni Association!

## We hope you are getting in some time for fun and relaxation.

The Alumni Association continues to have some fun *and* be hard at work planning activities around the country and ways the Association can help recruit more students to Charter Oak State College. The Board recently elected a new slate of officers to serve for the next year. Each of these officers has been on the Board for several years and has served in many capacities and volunteered for countless events.

## The new officers for the Alumni Association Board are:

**President:** *Christopher May, class of 2011, Windsor, CT*

**Vice President:** *S. Lamont McEvitt, class of 2012, Farmington, CT*

**Secretary:** *Lisa Wildman, class of 2010, Oxford, CT*

**Treasurers:** *Marcia Anderson-Esson, class of 1993, Windsor, CT* and *Cecilia Kozlowski, class of 2011, Windsor, CT*

As noted in *The President's Take* this month, COSC has been making news recently with the *Go Back to Get Ahead* program in CT. Around the country we continue to expand as well, with a number of successful events in Florida, Texas, and Ohio. In Florida, we participated in the Florida Health Information Management Association

(HIMA) event and visited three Aetna offices and several police departments. In Texas, COSC was represented at that state's HIMA event and visited three Aetna offices, a military office, and met with a recent COSC graduate. Earlier this spring, COSC took part in the Ohio HIMA event and visited another Aetna office.

As you can see, the college is very busy these days meeting prospective students who can benefit from COSC's workforce relevant degree programs, flexible online format, and affordability. If you know of a company who you think could benefit from a visit or a webinar, please let us know. We are especially interested in health care and public safety fields, so if you are in either of those fields and interested in talking with us about how you might be able to help with recruiting efforts at your workplace, please contact Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations at [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu) or 860-515-3863.



**Please welcome  
Kim Hollfelder,  
the newest member  
of the Alumni  
Association Board:**

Kim started  
her career with

HelmsBriscoe in May, 2012, after working for several Marriott properties within the Connecticut area. She has a wealth of

experience in contract negotiations, and understands the sales process, especially how hotels position their rates according to the markets and trends.

Kim has always loved working with people, and has a natural affinity for making others feel welcome. Working within the hospitality industry enabled her to express that natural talent, and find her niche. That's also evident in the many volunteer activities that Kim does for COSC. Like so many COSC graduates, Kim graduated from COSC (class of 2010), with a BS in Individualized Studies, balancing both work and family life, to achieve her goal of gaining her college degree.

As always, if you have an interest in serving on the Board, please contact Alumni Association Board President, Chris May at [jhchris280@yahoo.com](mailto:jhchris280@yahoo.com). Please send us your ideas and your updates – we always like hearing about the accomplishments of our impressive alumni! And don't forget – YOU are our best ambassadors for the College! 🌱

*"Charter Oak holds 2014 commencement" continued from pg. 1*

facts about the Class of 2014, including that 65% were women; graduates ranged in age from 17 to 70+ with the average age being 39; graduates hailed from 41 states and 9 countries; 40% earned honors; 427 graduated with a Bachelor's degree, 85 graduated with an Associate's degree; several students had perfect 4.0 grade point averages; a mother and son graduated together; and many graduates are already attending graduate school in areas such as business, law, medicine, and health care administration.

Student speaker, Omar Rosario, of Windham, Connecticut, said of his academic accomplishment, "Getting a degree from COSC has allowed me to be more marketable. It wasn't until I missed out on a few job opportunities due to not having a Bachelor's degree that I decided to make it happen at all cost," said Rosario.

Awards for Outstanding Academic Performance were presented to Roberta J. Pratt, Anna Rita Tornello, and Nina Lucia Smith. 🌱

**Congratulations to the Class of 2014!**

## connections

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 CharterOak<sup>SM</sup>  
STATE COLLEGE

Degrees Without Boundaries

*Helen Diecidue, Editor*

State of Connecticut  
*Dannel P. Malloy, Governor*

Board of Regents  
*Dr. Gregory W. Gray, President*

Charter Oak State College  
*Ed Klonoski, President*



Chief Gregory Sneed, Class of '09

Born and raised in the Housing Projects of New Britain CT, I enrolled in college right out of New Britain High School with delusions of using college as a gateway into the NFL. During my sophomore year in college, I sustained a knee injury thus quickly ending my college football career and road to the NFL. Shortly thereafter, I abandoned college for many years and began a career in law enforcement. Some might say I went from catching footballs to catching bad guys. Once I embraced this new direction, I began to forge a new path – a path towards furthering my education.

I realized early on that going to school part-time was going to be a long journey and that I would need to have an obtainable mile marker to help keep me motivated. I enrolled in Tunxis Community College with the purpose of being able to have something tangible and meaningful to mark my half way journey; an Associate's degree.

For years, I was a full-time cop working the midnight shift and part-time student during the day. After being promoted to Lieutenant and being reassigned to the day shift, I attended classes in the evening hours. After years of hard work and sacrifice, it was time to enroll in my last class.

As I signed up for that golden ticket, that tangible mile marker; I learned there weren't enough students enrolled and that I would have to take the class the following semester and postpone my graduation date. By chance, a counselor suggested taking the class online. Online? Really? I was hesitant because I might be drawn to spending extra time at the dojo or watching football or a myriad of other distractions if I weren't in a classroom. However, I quickly rationalized that I didn't want to take any time off from school and lose my momentum; so I decided "online class, here I come!" completing my Associate's degree in Criminal Justice in 2006.

After taking the accelerated online class at Tunxis, it literally changed my focus and gave me the confidence that I did have the discipline needed to be successful at Charter Oak State College in an online environment. After a few weeks in class and a little research, I called COSC and enrolled in the Bachelor's degree program.

My college experience at COSC was rewarding and successful. It enabled me to further my career with the Middletown, CT Police Department and became the catalyst for eventually becoming the Chief of Police at Central Connecticut State University, circling back to my roots of New Britain.

A few months after earning my Bachelor's degree in Public Safety Administration from COSC, I was appointed to the Role of Acting Deputy Chief (making me the first African American in the city of Middletown history to achieve the rank of Deputy Chief); a role I held from 2009 until 2011.

I was subsequently selected to attend the FBI-National Academy. Coupled with my degrees, this opportunity afforded me Upper Level

Management Training, experience, and networking needed to move further up the rank in Middletown or be more marketable in the job market beyond Middletown.

In 2010, Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) advertised they were looking to create a new position of Deputy Chief / Associate Director of Public Safety. The minimum requirement for the position was a Bachelor's degree and Upper Level Management Training. In 2011, I became Eastern Connecticut State University's first Deputy Chief of Police.

In 2013, Central Connecticut State University advertised they were looking to fill their Chief of Police position; minimum requirement for the job was a Bachelor's degree and Upper Level Management Training. In 2014, I was sworn in as the Chief of Police at Central Connecticut State University and as such becoming their first African American Chief of Police.

Prior to attending COSC, I believed that with online schooling I would be isolated from my classmates and I would not build any meaningful long-term networking opportunities; boy was I wrong. I have one classmate with whom I am in regular contact. He recently called me to ask for advice on a curriculum he was putting together on Casino Security. The Charter Oak Alumni Association Socials have exposed me not only to a network of other Chiefs of Police, but law enforcement officers of all ranks along with those of other majors. I have learned that the opportunity to build bridges and make meaningful connections is dependent on the individual and not restricted by distance or online classes.

Without my degree from Charter Oak, I would not have accomplished

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## Alumni Spring Social: A Perfect Night!

The Alumni Association Spring Social Event took place on Friday, April 25 as 50 Charter Oak Alumni, their spouses, and staff members gathered at the Gelston House restaurant in East Haddam, CT, for another lively evening of dinner and theatre. Guests were treated to a perfect sunset along the Connecticut River as they dined in the restaurant known for its panoramic views and enjoyed conversation that flowed easily among alums, staff, spouses, and friends. After dinner,

everyone walked next door to the historic Goodspeed Opera House to see a revival of *Damn Yankees*, which was remade to be a version that delighted Red Sox fans, Yankees fans, and theatre enthusiasts alike.

All of the Charter Oak Alumni agreed they were sorry to see the evening end and couldn't wait for next year's Spring Social. The photos say it all! And if you weren't able to join us, we hope you will come on out and

meet your fellow alums at the next social event.

We will soon begin planning for next year's Spring Social, so please contact Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations and Corporate Recruitment at [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu) if you have suggestions for the Spring Social Event or other activities you would like to see the Alumni Association consider. 🌱



Helen Sneed, Gregory Sneed (2009), Marc Montminy (2004), Susan Montminy



Rebecca Wareing (2007) and Lisa Wilson (2013)



Carol Alter (1989), COSC Academic Dean Emily Lewis, and David Alter



Bob Upson (1993), COSC Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations Nancy Taylor, Christine Penney, and Mark Penney (2011)

# alumni spotlight

## 1984

Celebrating over 40 years in the real estate business, *John Richard Shaw* graduated 30 years ago from Charter Oak with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He is the owner of John Richard Shaw, Real Estate LLC in Madawaska, ME located in the northern most part of Maine on the Canadian border. He established the real estate agency in 1973. Previous to graduating from Charter Oak, he attended UMO and Boston University. Shaw, 77 years old, attended his 60th Caribou High School reunion last year.

## 2003

*Sheri DuBois* of La Junta, Colorado, is currently enrolled in a doctorate program beginning year two of three.

## 2005

*Steve Foerster*, (BS, '05), is now studying for a PhD in Leadership through the University of the Cumberland. He expects to complete it in 2016, and urges fellow alumni to take advantage of the many opportunities for advanced study made possible by a degree from Charter Oak State College.

## 2007

*Rebecca Wareing* was appointed by Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy to serve on the Board of Trustees for the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs. Rebecca Wareing is a Search Consultant and Operations Manager with Management Search, Inc. in her professional life, and she is excited to

bring her perspective on mid-sized manufacturing companies and their hiring issues to address veterans' unemployment in the state.

## 2008

*Ruth Garby Torres*, (BS, '08), was recently appointed to the Harvard University Native American Program Leadership Council as well as to the Advisory Board of the Alliance of Colonial Era Tribes, an intertribal league of sovereign American Indian Nations. Having served on the National Congress of American Indians Federal Acknowledgment Task Force for more than ten years, Torres brings her expertise to these recent appointments. Her chapter about the Schaghticoke experience with the federal acknowledgement process was published last spring in the edited volume, *Recognition, Sovereignty Struggles, and Indigenous Rights in the United States* <http://uncpress.unc.edu/books/10144.html> You can read her recent op ed piece, "Six things you did not know about the federal acknowledgment of Indian tribes" at <http://ctmirror.org/op-ed-six-things-you-did-not-know-about-the-federal-acknowledgment-of-indian-tribes/>

## 2011

*Mark Penney* was honored as the July Veteran of the Month by Connecticut State Senator Kevin Witkos. Master Sgt. Penney, who is currently a patrol sergeant with the Canton Police Department, is a decorated veteran who served with the military for 28

years. During his service he was one of the first Distant Learning Instructors for the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy. He received his Bachelor's in Public Safety Administration from Charter Oak in 2011 and his Master's in Criminal Justice from Central Connecticut State University in June 2014. In August 2014, he will begin his pursuit of a law degree from Quinnipiac Law School. Mark says, "I can say with utmost certainty, I owe my educational success to Charter Oak State College."

## 2013

Protectors of Animals, Inc. (POA), East Hartford, CT recently named *John Thomas* as the organization's first Executive Director. John will be responsible for the overall administration and management of POA, including programs, business operations, strategic planning, and fundraising. POA is a non-profit, no kill animal shelter and rescue run entirely by dedicated volunteers and will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2015. John completed his Individualized Studies concentration at Charter Oak in 2013. ✨

# Go Back to Get Ahead

## Statewide Initiative Launches!

### Calling CT residents who left college without finishing degrees!

In late February, Charter Oak State College staff kicked off a system-wide initiative to boost enrollments at all 17 Connecticut State Colleges & Universities. Called *Go Back to Get Ahead*, the program is backed by state funding and Connecticut's Governor Dannel Malloy, and encourages Connecticut residents to return to college to complete unfinished college degrees.

With a financial incentive of up to three FREE 3-credit courses for prospects who enroll at one of the state's 4 universities, 12 community colleges, or the online college, COSC, interest has already been very high.

A dedicated website, [www.GoBackToGetAhead.com](http://www.GoBackToGetAhead.com) was built to accommodate inquiries, a complete marketing plan was developed to drive enrollment, *Go Back to Get Ahead* counselors were hired, and a Customer Relationship Management system was put into place to track the program enrollments.

The program launched June 2 with a targeted mailing to nearly 80,000 Connecticut residents who left our system of colleges and did not complete their degree anywhere else. Also on June 2, a state-wide radio campaign began running on 11 radio stations during drive times utilizing 3 rotating radio commercials. Dr. Gregory Gray, Board of Regents President, also hit the road conducting

interviews at radio stations across the state promoting the program details and urgency. The program will run until funding is depleted.

Other marketing tactics include online advertising directing prospects to the *Go Back to Get Ahead* website, social media including Twitter and Facebook, as well as a brochure and follow-up postcard mailings. Public relations activities continue to spread the word including some appearances by Governor Malloy at community colleges around the state.

To date, there over 6,000 inquiries in the pipeline. Of course, as the college in the system that is already dedicated to adult students, our COSC admissions staff is especially busy helping interested adults apply, enroll, and register for courses. The program hopes to increase enrollment across the system by 1,200 to 1,800 students. 🌱



## STAY CONNECTED THROUGH connections

We'd like to hear from you about promotions, graduate degrees, awards, marriages, births, and other significant successes in your life. We'll publish your news in the next edition of *Connections*. Please use the form below, or drop us a note. Send to: Alumni News, Charter Oak State College, 55 Paul J. Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053-2150 – or email [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu).

Your name and address \_\_\_\_\_

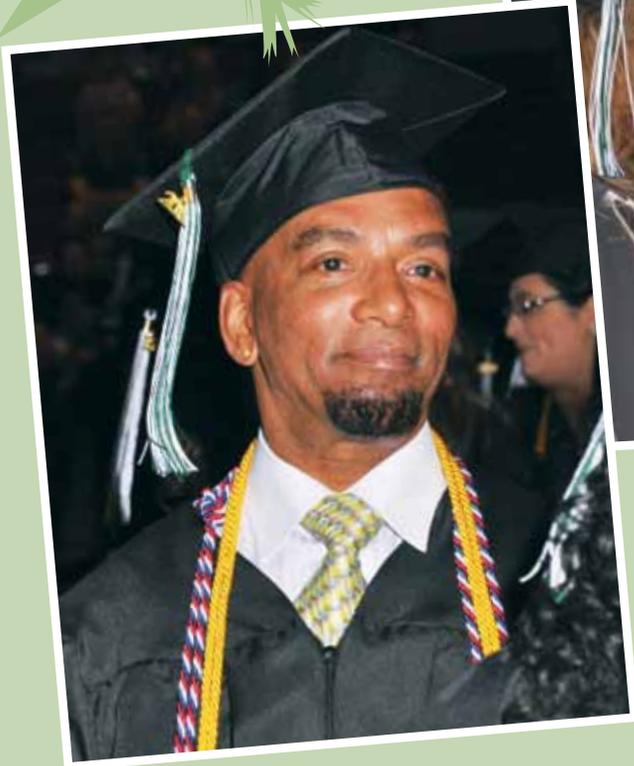
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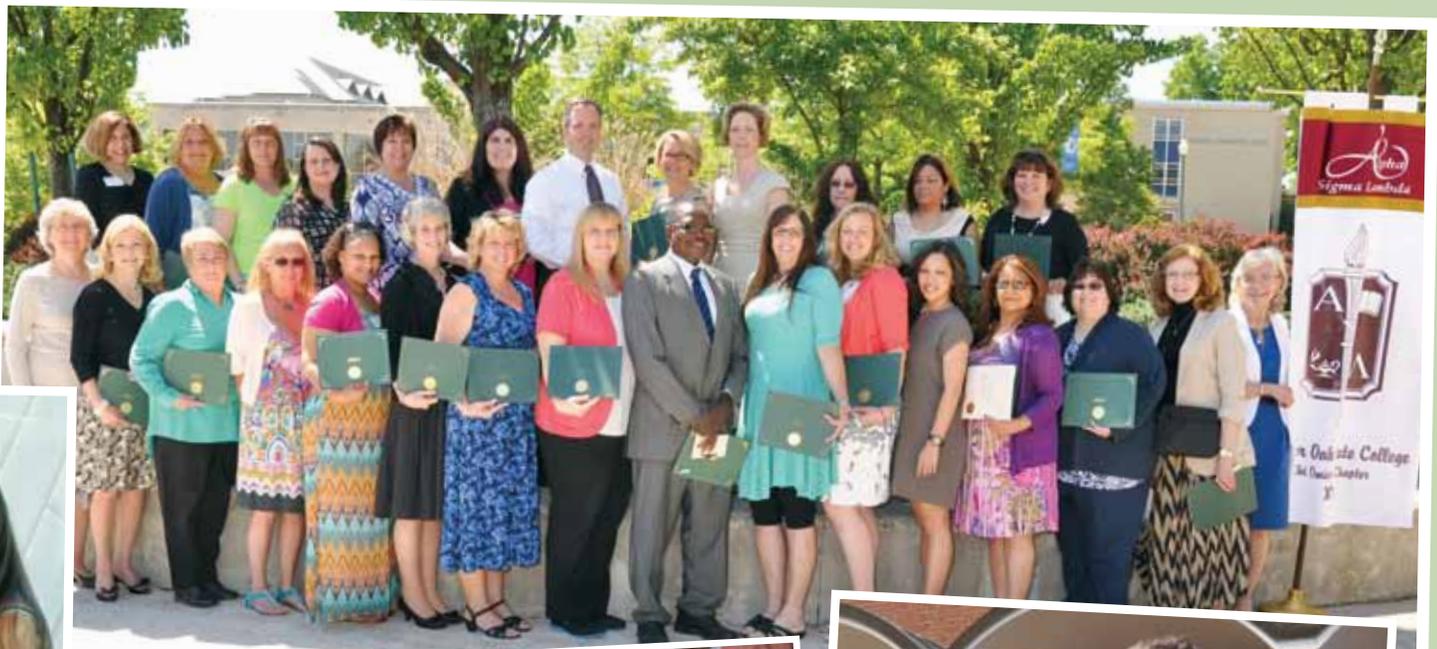
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# COMMENCEMENT

## Congratulations





# 2014 Graduates



## Sergeant Mark Penney Chosen as D'Amato Award Recipient



Mark Penney accepts the D'Amato Award from Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations during 2014 Commencement brunch.

Congratulations to Sergeant Mark Penney, the 2014 recipient of the D'Amato Award. The D'Amato Graduate Studies Award recognizes a Connecticut Charter Oak State College graduate who is continuing his or her education. The criteria for the award includes academic promise, motivation, and contributions to community life.

For the past thirty years, Sergeant Penney, a 2011 graduate, has been involved in some aspect of law enforcement, both in the military and civilian life. Currently he serves as a Police Sergeant in the Canton, CT Police department. He recently retired

from the Connecticut Air National Guard, after more than 28 years of active and reserve service.

Mark Penney's story is much like that of many of COSC's students. After high school he realized that attending college was, in his words, "a luxury his family couldn't afford." But when he left active duty and settled into a police department, he realized that many of his fellow officers had college degrees.

Finding COSC allowed Mark to do what he longed to do – complete his Bachelor's degree in a format that allowed for the flexibility he needed with his busy schedule. But he didn't stop with his Bachelor's. As he said, "I knew that COSC had provided me with the skills and confidence I thought I would need to be successful if I decided to continue with my education."



Ed Klonoski and Mark Penney

In June 2014, Sergeant Penney received his Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Central Connecticut State University, and in August 2014, he will begin his pursuit of a law degree from Quinnipiac Law School. Mark says, "I can say with utmost certainty, I owe my educational success to Charter Oak State College."

Clearly Mark Penney exemplifies the spirit of this award and we wish him well in his future studies. 🌱

## Welcome Mother/Son Alum Team!



Jeffrey and Annette with President Klonoski

A special congratulations to mother and son team Annette and Jeffrey Amato for their accomplishment of graduating together this year! Welcome to the Charter Oak alumni family! 🌱

## Doris G. Cassidy Awards Granted at 2014 Commencement

The Doris G. Cassidy Award is given to those graduates of Charter Oak State College who have achieved excellence in innovative learning and who exemplify the essence of the Charter Oak mission. With this award, the College recognizes individuals who avail themselves fully of a broad range of learning options, earning credits both inside and outside the traditional classroom setting. Options include distance learning, testing, portfolio assessment, contract learning, military service schooling, and other non-collegiate sponsored instruction which has been evaluated for credit, as well as classroom instruction.

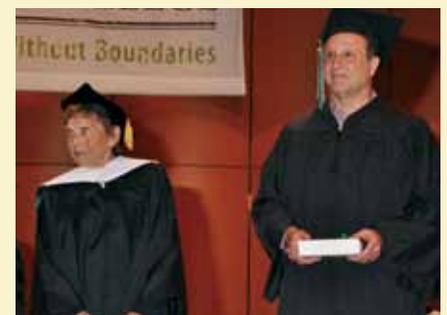
The Cassidy Award was created in 1998 in the name of Doris Cassidy, a founding member of Charter Oak State College, in recognition of her longstanding commitment to

higher education. She currently serves as Assistant Director of Academic Programs at the College as an academic counselor.

*2014 Doris G. Cassidy Award recipients included:*

Hannah George, Kremmling, CO; David M. Fennell, Oakdale, CT; Hannah Mulivor, Cleveland, OH; Michael Paul Rightmire, Karlsruhe, Germany; Robert Rosenberg, West Haven, CT

**Congratulations to all!**



Doris Cassidy recognizes Robert Rosenberg with the Cassidy Award.

the things I have to date. I would not have had the opportunities to lead the organizations I have led. I would not have been able to advance my career. I would not have had the opportunities to become the first African American Deputy Chief in Middletown and ECSU or the first African American Chief at Central Connecticut State University. It is fair to say that my degree at COSC has provided me with a tool to help open doors, advance, and enhance my career and life.

When asked if campus policing differs from municipality policing, I find it really doesn't. In both environments we employ the principles and concepts of Community Policing. It is important whether in municipalities or on a college campus for a police agency to work with the community they serve. Immersing my agency in the community, understanding the community needs, and trying to find ways together to address those needs and concerns is the foundation of Community Policing and the hallmark of a successful agency.

It is my intent to go back to school and earn, at a minimum, my Master's degree. I am happily married to my best friend. I have two daughters and a son and when I'm not earning college degrees I have plenty of hobbies; I hold six black belts, I golf, play the saxophone, and am an amateur photographer. 🌱

*(NOTE: If you are interested in sharing your success story with your fellow alumni, please contact Nancy Taylor – Charter Oak's Assistant Director of Alumni Relations – and let her know. She can be reached via email: [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu), or by telephone: 860-515-3863.*

## WIT and CT WAGE Program Updates



Charter Oak Coordinator of Special Programs, Delores Bell (far left) and Special Programs Clerical Assistant, Janice Silva (far right) with Class of 2014 WIT and CT Wage graduates.

Special Programs at Charter Oak State College, which consist of the Women in Transition (WIT) and CT WAGE program, celebrated the graduation of 18 students (9 students respectively per program) at the June 1, 2014 COSC graduation ceremony. The WIT program which was established in 1999 to support low-income single mother and the CT WAGE program which was established in 2007 to support low-income single fathers or married individuals, has been successful in supporting the students reach their educational goals of completing their degrees – Associate or Bachelor's degree and often both. Through the determination and hard work of the student and the support services provided by the program, which include: laptop; Internet; books; academic, career, and personal counseling; and personal and professional development workshops, the students have been able to fulfill what has been a dream for many.

"It was great to see the pride and joy on each student's face, as well as the delight in the faces of their children and families at graduation. The confidence that these students have obtained is priceless and I have no doubt of the future accomplishments and successes these students will achieve," states the COSC Coordinator of Special Programs, Delores Bell. Congratulations to all the program graduates for a job well done!

The WIT program was also a recent recipient of a \$25,000 grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. The support from the foundation contributes to the programs sustainability and makes it possible to assist other single mothers reach degree completion. 🌱

# Charter Oak State College Foundation Hosts Spring Fundraiser



The Charter Oak State College Foundation hosted a Spring Fundraising Dinner

on the evening of May 20th at Central Connecticut State University. The fundraiser themed, **The Power of Women ... believing is achieving**, was in support of the Women in Transition (WIT) program at COSC.

The fundraiser featured Teresa Younger, Executive Director of Connecticut General Assembly's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW ) and currently President and CEO of The Ms. Foundation for Women as keynote speaker. Dr. Merle Harris, President Emerita of COSC

and Founder of the WIT program, presented the honoree of the evening, Dr. Carol Virostek, National Chair of AAUW's College/University Relations Committee. Dr. Virostek was unable to be in attendance for the event; therefore, her daughter, Leslie Virostek, accepted the award on her behalf. Dr. Virostek was honored for her many years of commitment to women, education, and the WIT program.

The WIT program was established in 1999 to break the cycle of poverty by helping underserved and low-income mothers earn a college degree. The program enriches the lives of participants and, in turn, the lives of their children, and it assists them in

becoming active participants in their communities. Since its inception, this program has consistently succeeded in strengthening the ability of single mothers to support themselves and their families. Over the past 14 years, the program has supported more than 170 women and continues to have a 72% retention/graduation rate. This unique initiative provides laptop computers, Internet access, textbooks, scholarships, and academic, career, and personal counseling – all of which help to break down the barriers to postsecondary education for disadvantaged and underserved mothers. 🌱



Leslie Virostek accepts award from President Ed Klonoski on behalf of her mother, Dr. Carol Virostek



The evening's attendees, Delores Bell, Matt Fleury, Latasha Easterling, Teresa Younger, President Klonoski



Delores Bell, Program Coordinator, COSC WIT Program, gathers with current students, President Klonoski and Special Programs Assistant, Janice Silva. (L to R – SuAntoinette Harris, Latasha Easterling, Ed Klonoski, Delores Bell, Lourdes Burgos, Janice Silva)



L to R – Matt Fleury, Board Member, CT Board of Regents for Higher Education and President and CEO of The Connecticut Science Center, Rebeka Scalia, Board President, Charter Oak State College Foundation with husband Dr. Frank Scalia



Teresa Younger, President and CEO of the Ms. Foundation for Women and former Executive Director of the CT Permanent Commission on the Status of Women stands with student Latasha Easterling and Angela Chapman, Director of Institutional Advancement, COSC Foundation. (L to R – Easterling, Younger, Chapman)



Joyce Petrella, Charter Oak Foundation Board Member with Ed Klonoski, President, COSC



Dr. Merle Harris, President Emerita, COSC, Board Member, CT Board of Regents for Higher Education, and founder of the WIT Program

## Thank you to the current and past supporters of the Women in Transition program (WIT) that benefits underserved and underemployed single Connecticut mothers in their quest for degree completion:

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*A special thank you to The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for generously providing a total of \$453,000 to support the Women in Transition Program.*

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\*A special thank you for your loyalty in giving to the Charter Oak State College Foundation annually for the past 5 fiscal years. Thank you for recognizing the consistent need and choosing to make a difference.

# Foundation Distributes \$22,500 in Grants and Scholarship Awards



Fifty Charter Oak students benefited from \$22,500 in grants and scholarship awards that were presented during a 12-month period from 2013 through 2014. Twelve of these Charter Oak Students received a technology grant to financially assist them in the purchase of a prescribed list of technology supporting online learning. Scholarships and grants were awarded by the Charter Oak State College Foundation whose Board of Directors include 12 dedicated volunteers representing both working and retired professionals. Non-voting Board members include a Charter Oak student, a Charter Oak alumnus, a Charter Oak faculty member, and the College's president. The Board

manages the Foundation's affairs and business determining the manner in which funds – both principal and income – are expended based on established policies.

To be eligible for a scholarship distribution, a Charter Oak student must be matriculated and in good standing, must have completed a minimum of one semester following initial matriculation, and must demonstrate financial need. A minimum Grade Point Average is also a guideline for scholarship eligibility.

The Charter Oak State College Foundation provides scholarships and other financial support to remove the financial barriers that often prevent the adult learner from pursuing and completing higher education. We look to the Charter Oak State College Alumni and our friends to help us to make the dream of higher education a reality and the hope of a better future possible. Your contributions will have a lifetime effect on the students and their families.

## Legacy Giving – You can Influence the Future

The Charter Oak State College Foundation can help you establish a legacy gift to provide for students for generations to come. You are invited to demonstrate a commitment to education by leaving a charitable, tax-deductible bequest to the Charter Oak State College Foundation. Individuals from all walks of life are discovering that one of the most effective ways to make a difference and touch the future is to leave a legacy.

Please contact the Foundation by calling Angela Chapman at 860-515-3889 to discuss your bequest, or please consider conveniently making a donation online at [www.charteroak.edu/foundation/give.cfm](http://www.charteroak.edu/foundation/give.cfm).

***We need your help and no matter what the size, each gift directly impacts our students.***

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