



Spotlight on the

CAROL FARBER HONORS PROGRAM

at Nassau Community College

Fall 2018 - Issue 1

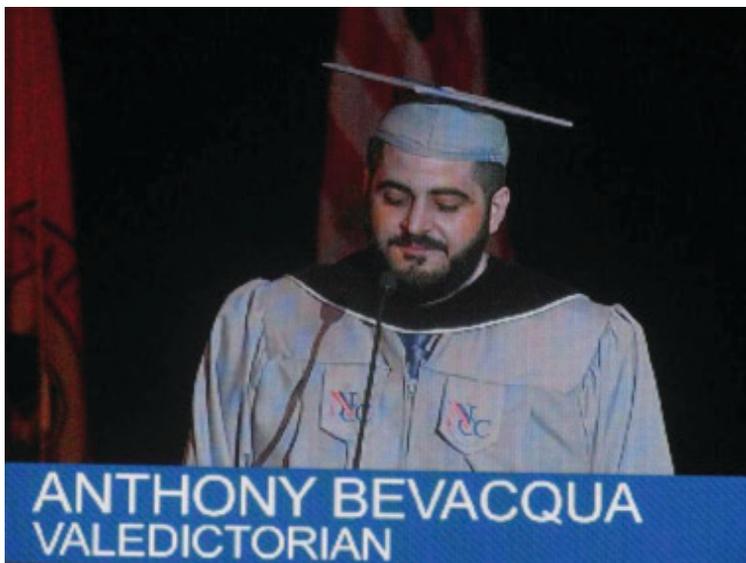
Anthony Bevacqua Named Valedictorian

My name is Anthony Bevacqua. I spent the majority of my life on my own since I was 16 years old. I've been homeless, I've been fighting tooth and nail to survive, I had a 9th grade education while traveling the world. I remember a time in my life when I felt so lost and unfulfilled that I was unable to imagine a future for myself. Life can feel meaningless at times AND it's very easy to find oneself in the depths of chaos and despair. I can tell you about being filled with pain and sorrow that rocked me to my very core, but what good would that do? We have all experienced varying degrees of disappointment, right? Instead, I'd rather tell you about how I managed pick myself up and gradually better myself and my circumstances to the point where I am standing in front of you today.

I want to share a story from my travels that profoundly impacted my view on human potential. I spent a sizeable chunk of my 20s teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand. The president of the school was a Buddhist Monk who took a special interest in me. We would meet once a week to practice my Thai and his English. During the first two years living in Thailand I had a tough time learning to effectively express myself. Eventually, I could speak freely and communicate without fearing being misunderstood. Towards the end of my stay in Thailand I felt like there was nothing more that the Monk could teach me. I became arrogant and self-absorbed. Our last meeting was something that will resonate with me forever.

I spent the first hour of our lesson just talking and talking without making any mistakes, until I was out of breath. He remained quiet with a straight face until I was winded. He offered me a drink and told me to relax. From his orange robes he pulled out two tea cups and sat them on the table. He poured himself a cup of tea.... moved a cup in front of me and began pouring. I requested a half cup but it seemed as if he didn't hear me. He continued to pour the tea into my cup while looking me directly in the eyes. I told him to stop as the tea started to brim over the top of the cup and spilled over onto the table. I sat there confused as he continued to empty the entire kettle of tea onto the table while it flowed into my lap and onto the floor. He sat the kettle down and simply stated..... "It appears that your cup is already full.....How can you expect to learn anything with a full cup?"

What I took this conversation to mean is that measurable successes can be very seductive. Especially when we are young. It's easy to look at education and learning as something to simply get through and be done with. I went from having no confidence and an empty cup to having way too much confidence and having a full cup. The irony in this lesson was not lost on me..... I completed my GED and returned to the United States with a half cup. I've completed my associates degree, maintained a 4.0 GPA and became a leader in this educational community with a half cup. I began to realize that there are no limits to my full potential as long as I live my life.... with a half filled cup.



NCC opened the doors to all of us regardless of our backgrounds. This institution and its faculty have helped mold us into who we are today. The professors at Nassau go above and beyond for their students. I'm sure that all of us have professors that we would like to thank. I would like to personally thank Dr. Andy Schopp who taught me to temper my rhetoric and more importantly to view my past as a treasure trove of gifts rather than a burden. I would like to thank Dr. David Goodman who teased out of me the type of leader that I have always aspired to be and helped me map out my plans for the future.

For the graduates that are pursuing a career in nursing, remember that you are on the frontier of modern medicine and there is always more that can be done when it comes to saving lives.

Graduates in communications and business majors, remember to balance your compassion with your financial success.

People in STEM majors, I hope we are the ones to master Artificial intelligence and are humble enough to use it for the betterment of the human race.

Welcome to the Honors Program Newsletter!

Honors Program

ncc.edu/programsandcourses/honorsprogram/

Contact us!

HonorsProgram@ncc.edu

Prof. Richard Cohen

Richard.Cohen@ncc.edu

Prof. Liz Hynes-Musnisky

Elizabeth.Hynes-Musnisky@ncc.edu

Anthony Bevacqua Named Valedictorian continued

In closing....My advice to everyone today is to figure out who you are. Make goals for yourself. Have an aim that is virtuous, meaningful and true.

Remember that life can be defined by misery, grief and sadness because these are unavoidable facets of Being. My determination is built from a foundation of knowing how bad life can get when you don't know who you are and where you want to go BUT..... The secret to life that I discovered is not to avoid the things that terrify us but to face them..... head on. This way we can pursue a path that is so meaningful that it justifies the struggles that we have faced in the past and will give us the strength to prevail.... regardless of the obstacles that await us in the future.

Finally, I would like to my leave you with my personal philosophy on the power of love. "Love is having the capacity to do the work necessary to give others a better experience of themselves. Love others as you love yourself and together we can make the world a better place than we found it."

Congratulations class of 2018!

Therese Russell named Northeast Regional Honors Council Student of the Year



At the 2018 Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC), Therese Russell was named the Student of the Year for two-year institutions. In naming Therese the recipient of the award, Kathryn MacDonald, Vice President of the NRHC had the following to say:

"This honors student is active in her program and has served in a multitude of ways in her Honors Student Organization. She serves as on her college's board of trustees, helping to oversee a 1.1 million dollar budget. She has traveled around the United States, participating in speech and debate tournaments. Of course, she has multiple wins in State Championships. She has founded a theatre group that donates local proceeds to local charities. Her participation in college and community events has solidified her dedication to serving the community.

This student aspires to gain admission to the ILR School at Cornell University. In her recommendation letter, her Honors coordinator praises her positive attitude, academic talent, and willingness to serve the community. As he put it in his letter, "She is one of those rare students that educators dream of encountering during their careers. She exemplifies the best of our college."

With that being said, please join me in congratulating our 2018 Student of the Year Award winner at a two year institution, Therese Russell from the Honors Program at Nassau Community College."



County Legislator Joshua Lafazan Speaks on Campus

Joshua Lafazan, an alumni of the Carol Farber Honors Program, gave a talk to dozens of faculty, staff, and students on February 13th. Since graduating from NCC, Josh has earned a Bachelor's degree from Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations and a Master of Education Degree from Harvard University.

"I was thrilled to head back to my alma mater- a place which made such a substantial impact on my life- to speak to students about how Nassau Community College laid the foundation for both my academic journey, and my early career in politics. I hope to inspire more youth across the island to seek entry into the political arena!"

Honors Club Goes to the Northeast Regional Honors Council

The Northeast Regional Honors Council held their yearly conference in Providence, Rhode Island from April 12th to 15th and the Honors Program was there in full force. Prof. Cohen and six students joined hundreds of students from dozens of universities to listen to presentations centered on the theme: "The Renaissance of a 'Lively Experiment': Seeing Anew". During the conference, Catherine Escobar presented a poster detailing her research into using UAVs to assess beaver structures and their impact on the hydrogeomorphology in the Great Swamp of upstate New York.

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



Susan Naftol Joins the Honors Program

Susan Naftol was hired as the new secretary for the Honors Program. She comes to us from a varied background of buying in the fashion industry to support roles in the medical and public school systems. She is very happy

to now be working in the Honors Program at Nassau Community College where she has gotten to put all of her skills into practice by carrying out her duties in the Honors Office itself and by helping to decorate both the office and student study space. One of the things she likes the best is when the students stop by to study and say "hello". She looks forward to helping all of the students achieve their goals here at Nassau Community College!



Honors & Awards Night

At the conclusion of every academic year, the Honors Program hosts Honors and Awards Night. This year families, friends and faculty gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of over 50 graduating Honors students and scholarship award winners. Honors students receive Certificates of Achievement and medallions which are worn at Nassau Community College's graduation ceremony. For the first time, the Honors Club Executive Board raised money and presented their own scholarship to **Muhammad Mughal** based upon his application essay and amazing scholarship.

Honors Colloquium

In her essay, "One Hand Over the Other or Rebellious by Design," **Maria Galatro** (last one on the right) explored the topic of sinistrality, or left-handedness, and the cultural and religious prejudices toward it. In particular, the essay discussed the discriminatory practices of hand correction that left-handed children endured between the 15th and 20th centuries. Her essay also entertains the possibility that "lefties" may be hard wired to resist conformity and may be naturally rebellious.

In her paper "A Universal Theory", **Zainab Vasi** (first one on the left) discussed the concept of "superstring theory" and its implications with regards to interactions among human beings and our environment. Superstring theory basically

states that all matter can be boiled down to tiny vibrating strings, and it therefore has the capacity to possibly unite all the laws of physics under one roof. She extrapolated on the significance of this theory by discussing the possibility of our physical makeup being affected by our behavior towards one another, thus uniting different types of energy into one concept.

Joseph Jennings's (middle) visual argument essay was written assignment for his Honors Composition (ENG 108) course. He chose Marc Chagall's White Crucifixion as his subject. Joseph said, "It's a really fascinating painting which immediately grips your emotions, abounding with symbolism and feeling."



Also presenting their written works were **Anthony Bevacqua** (second from the right) and **Alexander Kontos** (second from the left).



Duane Esposito Named Recipient of Excellence in Honors Teaching Award

Each year, Honors students select one faculty member to receive the "Excellence in Teaching Award" which is presented at **Honors & Awards Night**. This year's recipient was **Prof. Duane Esposito** of the English department who was presented the award by last year's winner, **Dr. Steven Richman**, Professor Emeritus of the Psychology department. Students had the following to say about why Prof. Esposito deserved the award:

Prof. Esposito is a wonderful educator. I've had the pleasure of being in his class for 2 semesters in a row in order to continue my experience of very thorough text and societal analysis. He encourages my peers and I to constantly think about the world around us. He refuses to allow us to ignore today's issues and beauties because if we did, we'd miss out on truly living or truly making a difference. This mind set forced me to reevaluate my own thoughts, decisions, and character. I believe that he's given all of us the

tools to finally be capable of confronting very important elements (that we normally would've buried) in each of our lives, which essentially allows us to live our best lives. Whether he wins or not, he should know how grateful all of us are to him.

Professor Esposito goes beyond his way for his students and is a well-rounded professor. He was both guiding and understanding. It was obvious just how much the student comments, and the award, meant to Prof. Esposito. At the end of his acceptance speech, Prof. Esposito gave us all words to live by, "When someone presents you with an award say, "Thank You" and then get back to work". Congratulations Prof. Esposito, thank you for all that you do for our students.

Alumni Update – Sam Nadjari

The Honors Program at NCC thoroughly prepared me for success at the University of Virginia. While it offers so many great opportunities such as scholarships, exclusive activities, and trips, the program's greatest asset is its people. The group shatters the "13th grade" community college stigma. When I first met my fellow members of the honors community, I was amazed at their level of ambition, intelligence, and strong-mindedness. I developed lasting relationships with both the honors students and professors. We gathered in the Honors Lounge on a daily basis to help each other with schoolwork, hang out and take a break from class, or apply to four-year institutions together.

Our club leaders (and computer wizzes), RJ Cordes, Sarah Murphy, and Tom Maltese, introduced my friend Ryan Rogers and I to computer programming in the Honors Lounge. I am so thankful to those caring individuals who coached us and turned us into capable computer programmers. Their passion ignited an interest in the field in each of us: Ryan is now a Computer Science and Business Administration major at the University of Southern California, while I am a Computer and Electrical Engineering major at UVA.

The honors program professors are second to none. During the second semester of my freshman year, I enrolled in Dr. Emanuel Boussios' Honors Sociology course. His teaching style is the most effective of any professor I have had in my time at community college and at the University of Virginia. Professor Boussios was not a lecturer, but a discussion leader. He created a harmonious classroom environment in which every student felt comfortable sharing his or her views, no matter how controversial the topic. Each class, he brought about an interesting conversation by asking thought-provoking questions about current events, society, policy, culture, and a variety of other topics. This class enhanced my perspective and changed my outlook on just about everything. I have kept in touch with Professor Boussios over the past year and a half, and he has continued to express his interest in me and his care for my development as a person.

I wouldn't trade my experience in the Carol Farber Honors Program for the world.



SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence

The SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence is the highest award a student can win in the SUNY system. As stated by SUNY, "The Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence honors State University of New York students who have best demonstrated and been recognized for their integration of academic excellence with other aspects of their lives, which may include leadership, campus involvement, athletics, career achievement, community service or creative and performing arts." This year six Honors Students were name recipients of the award including **Annabelle May, Remonda Missha, Sandra Riano, Therese Russell, Jonathan Salazar, and Julia Stackpole.**

Scholarship Award Winners

Due to their hard work, dedication, and scholarship, Honors students were awarded numerous scholarships this year:

Hailey Cornelius was awarded a **full tuition** scholarship for the next two years at **LIU-Post**. Hailey said she can't thank the Honors Program and Nassau Community College enough for setting her up for greatness.

Breanna Sullivan was awarded a **full tuition** scholarship for the next two years at **Hofstra University** where she plans to study Neuroscience. Breanna commented on how big of a difference the Honors Program and Nassau Community College made in her life.

Shafika Burke was awarded the \$5000 **Barnes and Noble Biology 101** scholarship.

Jane Jeong was chosen as a 2018 **Ernest J. Frederick, Jr. Memorial Scholarship** recipient for her excellence in the classroom, her excellence in interpersonal communications and Public Speaking skills, and her positive spirit in the face of adversity. She exemplifies the best in our NCC students who despite personal setbacks and hardships, has the heart of an overcomer and the iron will to succeed.

Lauren Tyson was chosen as a 2018 **Ernest J. Frederick, Jr. Memorial Scholarship** recipient for her excellence in the classroom, her personal story of triumph, and her exemplary humanitarian work with poor children in South Africa. She exhibits the spirit of world conscientiousness, in sacrificing to help the less fortunate, by turning her convictions into actions and making the difference in the lives of others.

John Cerverizzo, Therese Russell, Jonathan Salazaar, Nastassja Sarandrea, and Randeep Singh were awarded the **Honors Program Scholarship** for their academic excellence and contributions to the Program and Honors Club.

Muhammad Mughal was awarded the **Honors Club Scholarship**.

Maria Galatro was presented the **Award for Exemplary Academic Achievement**

Tiffany Paler was accepted to the **Pratt Institute** and was awarded \$12,000 per year in scholarships.

Scenes from Graduation

