



Triton College

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A newsletter from your community college.

Summer 2024



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Celebrating Milestones



President Mary-Rita Moore

As we wrapped up a momentous academic year, I am filled with gratitude for what we have accomplished together. This year marked a trifecta of milestones for Triton College – our 60-year anniversary, attainment of a 10-year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission and the joyous celebration of our students' achievements at commencement.

Our anniversary was a time of celebration of the transformative impact Triton College has had across our community. We remain a cornerstone of higher education in the region and our commitment to providing affordable, high-quality education remains unwavering.

Our institution has been granted a 10-year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission, and we have graduated our first Dual Degree Program cohort comprised of four students from Ridgewood High School. These students earned an associate degree while receiving their high school

diplomas. These are just a couple of significant accomplishments that reaffirm our dedication to academic excellence, continuous improvement and student success. They are testaments to the dedication of our faculty, staff and students who make Triton a dynamic learning community.

Commencement always serves as a poignant reminder of the determination and achievements of our students. Seeing graduates walk across stage, adorned with their caps and gowns, fills me with immense pride and hope for the future.

As we celebrate these milestones, let us also look ahead with optimism and determination. Let's continue to build upon our successes, expand access to education and empower our students to reach their full potential.

Thanks to every member of the Triton College community for your dedication and commitment to excellence. Our journey may have reached significant milestones, but the best is yet to come.

Honoring the Academic Achievements of Students

The Triton College Board of Trustees recognized Scholars Program students Mia De Leon, Adrian Lamb, Jordy Pinero, Rafael Rojas and Ana Zulkowski for their extraordinary academic achievements and successful completion of an Associate in Arts or an Associate in Science degree. At its May meeting, the board welcomed the students with a round of applause led by Chairman Mark R. Stephens.

Triton College's Scholars Program is a two-year program for academically talented in-district students who plan on transferring to four-year higher education institutions.

To honor the accomplishments of its graduating class of 2024, Triton held its 58th Commencement Ceremony on May 18. The college held a Nurse Pinning Ceremony on May 16 and a Workplace Equity Initiative (WEI) Completion Ceremony on May 20. A total of 1,100 Triton students graduated in May and, combined with graduates from August and December, the total number of program graduates reached 1,700. Impressive numbers!

President of the Triton College Student Association (TCSA), Journey Manuel of River Forest, Illinois, delivered a student reflection during commencement. Manuel earned an Associate

in Science degree and will be transferring to Governors State University to pursue a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in nursing.

"Triton College helped me grow in my leadership skills, as a person, and how to treat everyone with kindness," she said. Manuel added that her parents are immigrants from the Philippines, and she's proud to be a first-generation graduate."

At the Nurse Pinning Ceremony, 12 graduates received their nurse pin to signify their entry into the nursing profession and their commitment to providing quality care to patients.

Nurse graduate Whitney Castle of Norridge, Illinois, said the nurse pin "means I've accomplished something I always wanted to do. It shows that career change and growth do not have a time or age limit."

Triton honored 117 students who completed the WEI Program. Sponsored by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), WEI "is a transformative grant program aimed at expediting the entry and success of African-American students in post-secondary education and training programs," said Ronnetta Phillips, MHRD, completion and transition specialist (CTS).



Journey Manuel, President of the Triton College Student Association.



Whitney Castle, Nursing Program graduate.

Maximizing on Growth of the U.S. Hospitality Industry



Student Tanya Flores and Chef Amela Musanovic cook up great food and smiles.

As the largest industry in the world, hospitality is witnessing one of the largest growths in the need for skilled workers.

According to Chef Denise Smith-Gaborit, chair of Triton College's Hospitality Industry Administration (HIA) Program, "there are jobs galore" – everything from hotel management and culinary arts to menu writing and bartending.

The hospitality industry is the second major employer in the United States, with its workforce continuing to expand. For Chef Smith-Gaborit, this surge in job opportunities is "very good news" for

students with a passion for hospitality and culinary arts, and a willingness to embrace change.

"As hospitality businesses are welcoming new technologies, enhancing health and safety protocols, and re-envisioning guest services and experiences, Triton offers every degree, certification and license demanded in the hospitality industry today," said Chef Smith-Gaborit. This includes restaurant management, hotel management, culinary arts, and baking and pastry degrees and certificates.

Unlike other culinary schools, Triton has invested in "state-of-the-art classrooms and lab facilities"

to prepare students for meeting the growing requirements of the industry, she said, adding that Triton's kitchens and bakeries mirror what is available in the industry now. The college is also modifying its academic offerings and scheduling to better accommodate student needs.

"Our program offers flexible scheduling, job assistance and hands-on training. We are making it easier for the student to succeed and ensure they are well prepared for their careers. Triton offers core programming and, from there, students can branch out according to their interests," said Chef Smith-Gaborit. Triton welcomes students who are new to the industry, as well as students who are looking to maximize their work portfolios and/or advance in their careers.

"As the oldest culinary school in the west suburbs of Chicago, Triton College has been producing quality, skilled people to work all over the world since 1972," said Chef Smith-Gaborit who, in her culinary career, cooked for U.S. presidents, musicians and actors during her tenure in Chicago's elite hoteling industry.

Triton College fosters relationships with some of Chicago's most prestigious hotels and restaurants, making it possible for students to successfully launch their careers.

"After earning a degree and/or certification from Triton College, anyone can walk out the door and find a job in hospitality," said Chef Smith-Gaborit.

Enroll today! Learn more about Triton's Hospitality Industry Administration Program at triton.edu.

Celebrating Excellence: Triton Honors Outstanding Faculty



Marina Demos and Antigone Sharris

Antigone Sharris, full-time faculty and chair of Engineering Technology, and Marina Demos, adjunct psychology instructor, received the Outstanding Faculty of the Year Award and Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award, respectively. Sharris and Demos were acknowledged in a special award presentation during the Triton College Board of Trustees' April meeting.

"This award feels very humbling," said Sharris. "The most rewarding part about my job is the students. It is so gratifying to hear when a student earned a degree and found a job. I want them to find success." Sharris is also contact advisor for the Chi Zeta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa and leads youth programs in STEM. She earned a Master of Science in industrial operations and management from the Illinois Institute of Technology and a Bachelor of Science in occupational and practical arts education from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

"I feel beyond grateful," said Demos. "Our Triton students make teaching such a pleasure." Demos has taught at Triton since 2001 and earned a Master of Science in clinical psychology from Concordia University Chicago.

Kailee Harper is the New Student Trustee



Kailee Harper

Kailee Harper of Brookfield is the Triton College student trustee for the 2024-2025 school year. As a member of the board, Harper must attend Triton College's monthly board meetings and be a liaison between the board and the college's student population.

"I really want to better the students and make them happy," said Harper. "Their opinions matter."

Triton Graduates its First Dual Degree Program Cohort



From left to right – Stephanie Bustos, Patricia Basisty, President Moore, Amelia Oldak and Tetyana Semehen.

Four students from Ridgewood High School graduated this past May not only with their high school diplomas, but also earned associate degrees, thanks to Triton College's Dual Degree Program. With support, the graduates successfully balanced the demands of both high school and college coursework. Triton's program is a collaboration between in-district high schools and the college, enabling students to earn an associate degree while completing their high school education. The Ridgewood graduates represent Triton College's first program cohort, with two students earning an Associate in Science degree and two earning an Associate in Arts degree while receiving their high school diploma. All four students are continuing their education, transferring to four-year universities as juniors. This achievement highlights the benefits of Triton College's Dual Degree Program, providing students with a significant cost savings and advanced educational opportunities.

Unearthing Memories



The campus community came together to unearth a time capsule buried on campus for 30 years. After a successful excavation, more than 100 unique artifacts were recovered. A selection of artifacts is now on display at the Triton College Library.

**LOOKING FOR AN
OUT OF THIS WORLD
VACATION SPOT?**



Take a cosmic trip to the universe this summer at Triton College's Cernan Earth and Space Center. Visit triton.edu/Cernan for a list of feature shows and cosmic light experiences, along with other fun activities for the whole family. Stop by Cernan's Star Store for an assortment of unique gifts.

Six Alums Inducted into Triton's Wall of Fame



From left to right – Timothy McKinney, Andre J. Harvey, Carrie Jo Little, Michael McGrone, Sr., Michael Rogers and Richard Skelnik.

Recognized for their outstanding accomplishments professionally and contributions to the communities they serve, six individuals who graduated and/or attended Triton College were inducted into the college's 2024 Alumni Wall of Fame. Honorees were Andre J. Harvey '94; Carrie Jo Little 1985-1995; Michael McGrone, Sr. '93; Timothy McKinney '97; Michael Rogers '95; and Richard Skelnik '72. Hosted by the Triton College Alumni Association, the honorees were celebrated in a special induction ceremony this past spring.



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Triton College is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action institution.

Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (hlcommission.org), an institutional accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation to accredit degree-granting colleges and universities.



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Luke Casson; Glover Johnson; Elizabeth Potter;
Richard B. Regan; Kailee Harper, Student Trustee
PRESIDENT Mary-Rita Moore

Inquiries regarding compliance with state and federal non-discrimination regulations may be directed to:

Triton College reaffirms its commitment to affirmative action and equal employment for all qualified persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, age, or any other basis which is protected by law except where such characteristics are bonafide occupational requirements.

EMPLOYEES
Joe Klinger
AVP, Human Resources
Title IX Coordinator
Triton College
2000 Fifth Ave.
River Grove, IL 60171
(708) 456-0300, Ext. 3743
joeklinger@triton.edu

STUDENTS
Julia Willis
Dean of Students
Deputy Title IX Coordinator
Triton College
2000 Fifth Ave.
River Grove, IL 60171
(708) 456-0300, Ext. 3865
juliawillis@triton.edu

SECTION 504
Dominique Dial
Director, Center for Access
and Accommodative Services
Triton College
2000 Fifth Ave.
River Grove, IL 60171
(708) 456-0300, Ext. 3854
dominiquedial@triton.edu



Triton College 60-Year Anniversary Celebration Scholarship

Fully Funded by Donations Received through Private Donors and the Triton College Foundation's Employees of Triton College Giving Program

In recognition of the 60th anniversary of Triton College, 1964-2024, the Triton College Foundation Board of Directors has recently approved the launch of a new scholarship made possible with contributions received through private donors and the Foundation's Employees of Triton College Giving Program.

The new scholarship, known as The Triton College 60-Year Anniversary Celebration Scholarship, will be awarded during the 2024-2025 academic year to 60 in-district students in the amount of \$500 per award that can be used for tuition, fees and books only.

Requirements and Criteria for Selection

- Student (full- or part-time) must be enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours.
- Student must have demonstrated need for financial assistance.
- Student must have completed at least one semester at Triton.
- Student must be an in-district resident.
- Student must submit an online application via the Triton College AcademicWorks platform along with an essay (500 words or less) discussing their financial need and how a degree from Triton College will impact their family and life.

The Triton College AcademicWorks platform is located at triton.academicworks.com.

For additional information, please call the Triton College Foundation at (708) 456-0300, Ext. 3758, or send an email to tcfoundation@triton.edu.



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