

There's  
a place  
for you.



**Triton College**

**For Immediate Release: December 18, 2025**

## **Triton College Graduates First Class From New Barber Program**



*Triton College graduated its first Barber Certificate cohort. Donita Mitchell (middle), stands with graduates. Left to right: Jaime Lugo, Kiara Reid, Andrew Martinez, Ibraheem Azam, Angel Mendoza and Donnie Valdez.*

**RIVER GROVE, III.** — Triton College is proud to announce the graduation of its first cohort from the newly launched Cosmetology and Barber Program. With certificates in hand, these inaugural graduates are prepared to enter a rapidly growing industry and build careers dedicated to helping others look and feel their best.

“I’m very proud of them and their efforts,” said Donita Mitchell, Cosmetology and Barber Chairperson. “Through this program, they were able to develop or sharpen their skill set, build business acumen and really find their footing. Some of them are already working in shops, and I can’t wait to see how far they go. For these graduates, the sky is the limit.”

For graduate Jaime Lugo of Berwyn, completing the program marks an important step toward taking his craft to the next level. Lugo, a self-taught barber who has been practicing for years, is now eligible to take the Illinois Licensed Barber Examination and earn his credentials, opening the door to greater career opportunities.

“Right now, I’m just happy to see what’s ahead,” he said. “I came [to Triton] to be able to sharpen my craft and understand more about the industry. Having done that, I feel like I’ve raised the bar for myself, and now I can continue doing what I enjoy.”

Licensure will allow graduates like Lugo to operate their own businesses or work in high-end establishments that require certification. Lugo aims to one day have his own shop, but for now, he plans to work at a business in Riverside and begin building his clientele.

Lugo added that the profession allows him to work creatively and make a positive impact on clients’ self-confidence.

“I love showing guys the end result,” he said. “That guy will look at himself in the mirror and walk out of the shop a little taller. The camaraderie and trust built in the barbershop—that’s irreplaceable.”

Students in Triton’s Cosmetology and Barber Program train in a newly constructed learning facility modeled closely after state-of-the-art salons and barbershops. Graduate Ibraheem Azam said the hands-on environment helped build his confidence and prepare him for working with real clients.

“Training in this space really puts you in that frame of mind to succeed and develop your skills,” he said. “With a new chapter before me, there’s a little bit of uncertainty there, but I’m excited for what’s next.”

The program’s curriculum includes haircutting, styling, coloring techniques, skincare, esthetics, shaving, chemical services and sanitation. Barber faculty also instruct students in business acumen, communication and client relations.

Beginning next semester, Triton’s [Cosmetology and Barber](#) program will offer evening classes on an accelerated eight-week schedule, providing a fast-paced and engaging experience ideal for those balancing professional and family responsibilities.

Spring registration is open now. Enroll now at [Triton.edu](https://triton.edu) to secure your spot before classes start Jan. 20.

###

#### **Media Contacts:**

Melissa Ramirez Cooper | [melissacooper@triton.edu](mailto:melissacooper@triton.edu) | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3496

Hunter Oberst | [hunteroberst@triton.edu](mailto:hunteroberst@triton.edu) | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3820

#### **ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE:**

Triton College is a public institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Recently recognized by the Aspen Institute as one of the Top 200 community colleges in the nation,

Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs that prepare students to pursue meaningful careers, transfer to four-year universities, and thrive in a global economy. Guided by our mission—*Valuing the individual, educating and serving the community*—Triton serves nearly 12,000 students annually on its 110-acre campus in River Grove, Illinois. Our dedicated faculty and staff provide high-quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities that empower students and strengthens the communities we serve. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of The Illinois Community College Board. Illinois is home to 45 colleges in 39 community college districts. Learn more at [triton.edu](https://triton.edu).