



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



*Pictured Above: Dr. C sharing his Military Experience with students.*

As I write this column for our December newsletter, it is the evening before Veteran's Day. It is a day where we should all remember those who are actively serving or who have served our country to defend the freedom we all enjoy. I got my start at teaching while serving in the U.S. Navy. Since I had a bachelor's degree, I was asked to teach about 12 students in a psychology course aboard the U.S.S. Inchon, my ship. It was a fun experience, and I had been bitten by the bug. The bug of wanting to help others to earn a good education.

In those days, we did not have an assurance argument, syllabi, lesson plans with course objectives and the like, let alone any form of assessment except, perhaps, the final student grade. There are many improvements in teaching since those early days of my career. Our Assurance Argument for the HLC spells out in great detail perhaps the most important element of Blue Ridge: teaching and learning and assessment of that teaching and learning. It is the reason for our being as an institution, and so it is critical that we be able to show that our education program is based on quality and our students learn as a result of that education.

I recently had the pleasure of hosting faculty and staff at a luncheon where we discussed our efforts in putting together an excellent argument. It struck me then, as it does quite often, we have an outstanding faculty and staff. The level of discussion and the depth of questions and answers convince me that our staff is preparing well for the upcoming visit.

So, please enjoy reading this new edition of our Accreditation Newsletter. Those of you who have been at the college for some time will surely agree that this publication is informative and high quality. We all need to thank those dedicated staff and faculty who have assisted in the publication.

- Dr. Checkovich



# THE HIGHER LEARNING CONNECTION

DECEMBER 2019



***"The best view comes after the hardest climb."***

- Author Unknown

**BlueRidge**  
COMMUNITY AND  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE



## *'Twas the day before The Visit...*

'Twas the day before "the visit," and all through the halls,  
No one was nervous, no one crawling the walls.  
Our Mission Statement was written with care,  
In hopes it reflected all the good that we share.

The faculty was calm, not a moment of dread  
While Accreditation questions danced in their head.  
Security in uniform and chefs in their hats,  
Were all ready for inspection and prepared with the stats.

When out in the parking lot, there arose so much noise  
We stopped all our work while retaining our poise.  
When who to our wondering eyes did appear,  
But Dr. C, doing a final review – oh dear!

And he whistled, and shouted, and called out by name:  
"Now, Finance! now, Admissions! now Workforce and all!  
On, Student Services! on, Allied Health! On PS&UT – meet in the hall!  
Are your assessments all finished? Assurances reviewed?  
Criteria established? Arguments through?"

He wrinkled his mouth and raised up his chin,  
He tapped his fingers as we thickened our skin.  
A clump of papers he held tight in his hand  
Was it student surveys? Or strategic plans?

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
Checking our filings; then turned with a jerk,  
And pointing a finger at each employee,  
And giving a nod, he smiled broadly with glee;

He sprang to his car, to his team made a call,  
We all strained to hear, as we leaned into the hall  
And we heard him exclaim, as he drove out of sight—  
"Blue Ridge is ready, we're doing things right!"

# UNDERSTANDING THE CORE COMPONENTS OF CRITERION 3

Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support. The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered. Examples of how BRCTC meets Criterion 3:

## 3.A. Programs are appropriate to higher education.

PROGRAM  
REVIEWS

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. Differentiates learning goals for each degree and certificate programs.
3. Quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations.

STANDARD SYLLABUS  
TEMPLATE

## 3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

PUBLISHED  
MISSION AND  
PHILOSOPHY

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. Articulates the learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. General education is grounded in a philosophy developed by the institution, imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students, and develops specific skills and attitudes
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge.

USE OF  
CERTIFICATIONS

DIVERSITY  
BUILT INTO  
CLASSES

## 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

89 FT FACULTY  
119 ADJUNCTS  
90 STAFF  
35 STUDENT  
WORKERS

1. Sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

QUALIFIED  
FACULTY  
DETERMINATION  
STANDARD  
FORM

REGULAR  
OFFICE  
HOURS

TRAINING FOR  
EMPLOYEES

SERVICES  
FOR  
THE DEAF

## 3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. Provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. Provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. Provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. Provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning.
5. Provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

DEGREE  
WORKS

POLE PARK,  
LABS, AND  
COMPUTERS

ENGL III

## 3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

THE  
OUTLET

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. Demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

ARTICULATION  
AGREEMENTS



# GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSES EXPLAINED

## General Education Mission

General education at Blue Ridge Community and Technical College aims to fully-develop individual potential by preparing students with college-level communication skills, knowledge and awareness of society, and fundamental thinking and reasoning skills that support career readiness and lifelong learning.

## General Education Philosophy

A general education at Blue Ridge Community and Technical College prepares an individual to be adaptable, have a far-reaching vision, and to be able to understand a diversity of information, perspectives, and opinions.

The mission and the philosophy direct the curriculum of the general education classes by measuring whether a student has learned general skills. The course objectives say the professors will teach three kinds of skills. Each general education course has to cover one of the three skills from the general education mission.

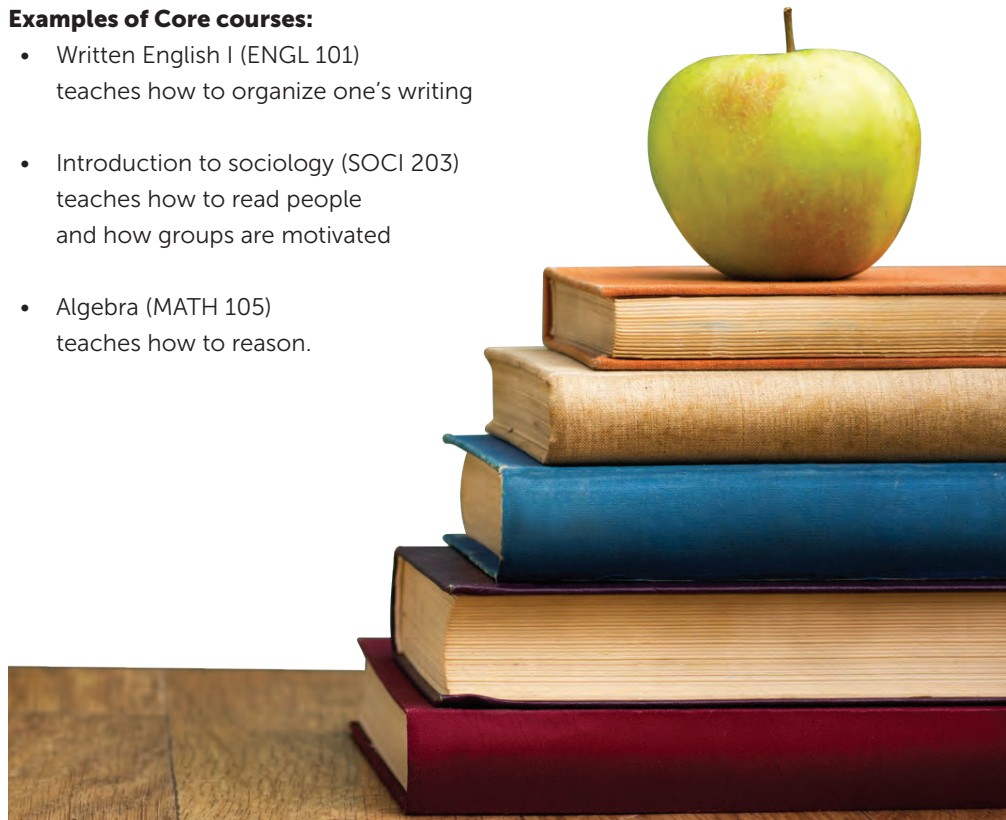
## The general education goals support the three institutional goals:

1. The student will develop college-level communication skills.
2. The student will develop general knowledge about and awareness of society.
3. The student will develop fundamental thinking and reasoning skills necessary for academic study and career success.

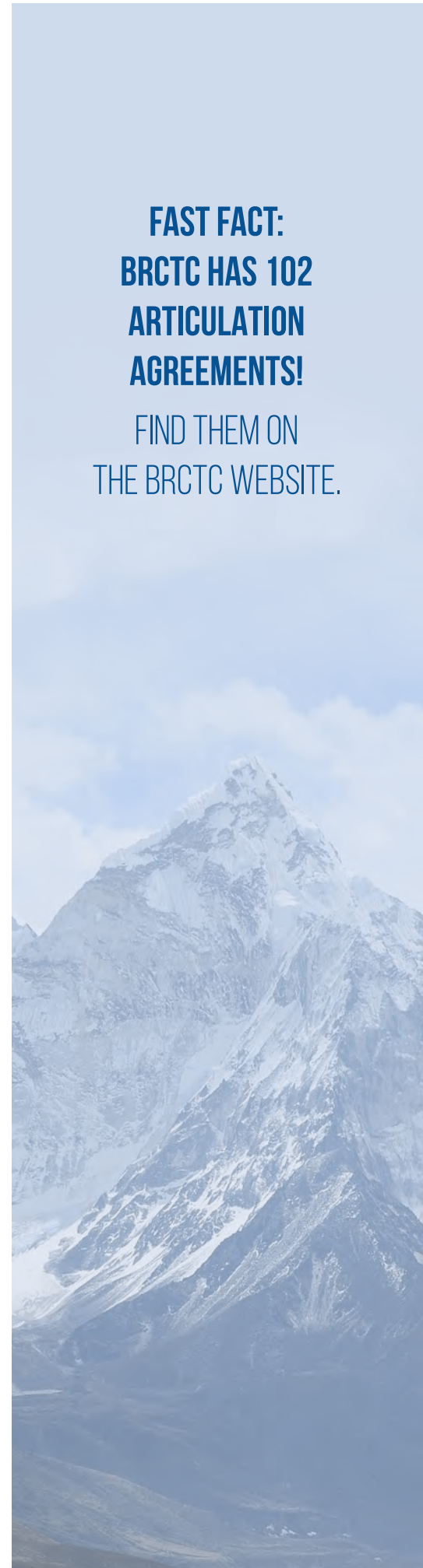
Through the general education core courses that are required as a foundation in the early part of each degree pathway, students gain “life-changing education.” Taking general courses helps them to act in pursuing their financial and career goals. With a general education, a student has the foundation to choose a career path. Skills gained range from applying communication skills, to knowing how to read people, to reasoning and problem-solving using scientific and quantitative skills. These foundational skills are used in subsequent coursework in which students write, read, and reason. That is why these essential skills are taught before students study within courses that count towards the specific requirements for a degree. Whatever direction or redirection a student follows, he or she is positioned for success after completion of the general education core courses.

## Examples of Core courses:

- Written English I (ENGL 101)  
teaches how to organize one’s writing
- Introduction to sociology (SOC 203)  
teaches how to read people  
and how groups are motivated
- Algebra (MATH 105)  
teaches how to reason.



**FAST FACT:**  
**BRCTC HAS 102**  
**ARTICULATION**  
**AGREEMENTS!**  
  
FIND THEM ON  
THE BRCTC WEBSITE.



## A CLOSER LOOK AT HANDS-ON LEARNING

**Students at BRCTC contribute to scholarship, creative work and discovery of knowledge both in and out of the classroom and are granted many opportunities to experience hands-on learning.**

Nursing students spend many hours working on hands-on activities for children and making display boards on topics such as proper hand washing techniques, tick bites, staying active and dental hygiene. These activities are used at health fairs and STEAM Night. Instructor Christin Weiss states, "During the event students engaged with all members of a family in active partnerships that promoted health, safety and well-being, and self-care management. By the learners creating educational stations, they fulfilled QSEN competency I. Patient Centered Care-Recognizes the patient as source of control and partner in providing compassionate and coordinated care based on respect for patient preference, values, and needs."

When you step foot into the culinary classroom, the smell of chocolate fills the room. In the corner there is a display of chocolate and sugar work that has been created by the students. Culinary students spend many hours creating chocolate Eiffel Towers and sculptures of chocolate waiters. Chef Steve Weiss said, "When creating edible sugar or chocolate presentations our students have the opportunity to be creative with mediums that they will be in contact with throughout their food service careers. Applying fundamental techniques learned in class and crafting something magnificent will allow our students to stand out."



*Culinary Academy Grand Buffet 2019*

Take a walk to the third floor biology classroom and you will see several student crafted cell models. Dr. George Perry states, "When building the 3-dimensional cell models, students are required to do research on the structure and function of the various cellular organelles. They then use creativity and teamwork to construct a model of the cell out of durable, non-perishable materials. The models are to be of scale so students need to figure out the various sizes of the organelles and how and where they are found in the cell. Research is also completed on the functions of the various cell components."

Our agribusiness students gain hands-on experience with crop production by helping to grow a various array of produce in the greenhouse, which is then used at the Bruin Café. Program Manager/Assistant Professor of Agribusiness, Tiffany Hine said, "Students who work in the greenhouse have the opportunity to work with nature. Our students have discovered what works and sometimes what does not work. Agriculture is a science; however, mastering it is an art. When a crop does not grow or mature the way it is expected, students have to figure out if the problem is the soil, water, nutrients, light, temperature or defective seeds. Critical thinking is the cornerstone of a good agriculturalist. Working in the greenhouse allows students to be creative and discover new ideas and techniques to solve problems. These skills go forward with the students in all aspects of their lives."

Our students are able to walk away utilizing skills they have learned in the classroom and applying them to their everyday lives, transfer programs and the workforce. Students at Blue Ridge are able to become well versed thanks to the faculty and staff who support them on their journey of becoming life-long learners.

## INTERNSHIPS

BRCTC students participate in internships at many local, regional and national organizations. Internships may be paid or unpaid, full time or part time, and short term or several years long.

Internships provide many benefits. The student will experience hands-on learning, can enjoy an opportunity to work in a real-life environment, can determine likes and dislikes of the career field, and can build career readiness skills. Many companies use internships as a long-term interview. Students are pleasantly surprised to learn that they may earn a higher salary in their first job thanks to the internship. Students may even earn a job offer at the conclusion of the internship. For example, companies such as ACEInfo and the Jefferson County Commission have hired BRCTC students as technology interns, then offered students full time jobs after graduation. **BRCTC students have gained experience at over 80 companies including, but not limited to:**

ACEInfo  
KMG Computers  
US Fish and Wildlife  
Jefferson County Commission  
Jefferson and Berkeley County Schools  
Technimark  
GDC IT Solution  
WVU Medicine  
Pleasants Company  
Aflac  
A-1 Computers  
Acosta Sales & Marketing (Food Lion)  
Berkeley Co Schools  
Blue Ridge CTC  
Boys & Girls Club of Eastern Panhandle  
**AND MORE!**

"The internship experience at the US Fish and Wildlife was a great experience for me. I learned many skills through hands-on experience, and it was very insightful. It allowed me to actually do tasks that were described in the textbooks; I could learn better by actually doing the work, rather than only reading about it. It also helped me know what I want to do - and what I do not want to do- in a job. I was able to build Ethernet and fiber cables, set up a computer lab and test it, and troubleshoot issues."

**– Annalee Corcoran, Cyber student**



## STUDENT SERVICES

At BRCTC, we value diversity and strive to offer services and supports to promote inclusivity and access to all. BRCTC offers a variety of services to meet the various and diverse needs of our student population. Following is a list of services provided at BRCTC:

- Interpreting services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Support, such as tutoring, for English Language Learners
- Diversity Week: a week of events and activities dedicated to celebrating diversity on our campuses
- Various clubs and committees for students and faculty/staff:
  - Sexuality and Gender Alliance
  - Student Veterans Association
  - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
  - Cultural Events Committee
- Disability Support Services
- Veteran's Support Services
- Career Services:
  - Multiple events and workshops to help all students with job placement
- eLearning to assist all individuals with online learning support
- Free tutoring offered to all students for any class requested



Pictured Above: Cheri Feathers of Many Tears Robison, Resource Fair 2019, SAGA Club, Career Fair 2019, Annual Veterans Breakfast 2019

## SUPPORT SERVICES

"Our students come from many different backgrounds. Some students decide later in life to pursue a college education. This summer I had the opportunity of working with a student who I met in an Adult Education course. She quit school in the 8th grade, and at the age of 55; realized the importance of education to her success.

This student remained in contact with me every step of the way as she pursued her GED by calling and emailing me with the dates of her tests. She visited the College to learn what her options would be once she earned her GED.

With only two days before the start of fall classes, she passed her GED! That same day, with the help of the Enrollment Management Team, she was admitted to BRCTC and registered for the last orientation before classes started. Acknowledging her weaknesses, she signed up for math tutoring before the start of class. As the semester progresses she remains proactive and takes advantage of every opportunity to seek out instructors for extra help when needed. As a result, her midterm GPA was a 3.33.

She continues to take advantage of opportunities for additional trainings in her pursuit of success. If not for the services provided at BRCTC and the ability of the staff to work together for the success of our students, this student may not have felt so encouraged to pursue her dream after years of setbacks. **I'm proud to say I'm part of a college community that works so hard to set up our students for their personal success."**

-Lisha Burks

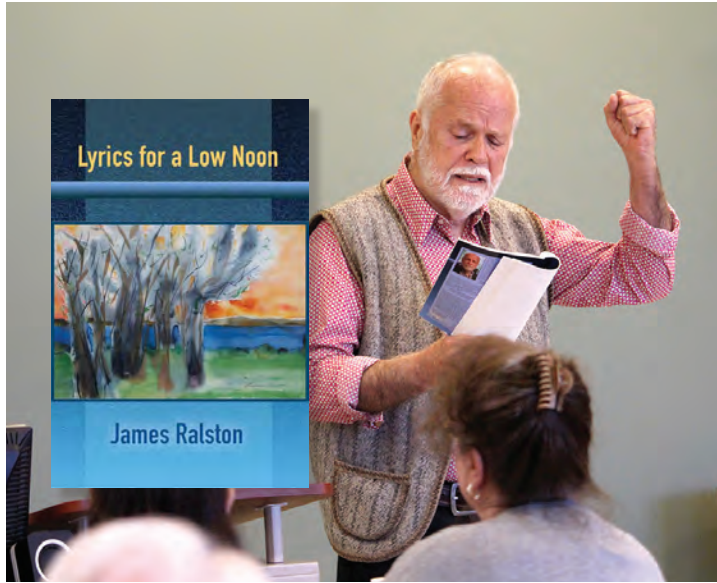


Lisha Burks, Merry and Bright 2019



## FACULTY CONTRIBUTIONS

Faculty who have contributed to scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge are noted in the assurance argument. Recently, BRCTC has had three published faculty:



### Jim Ralston

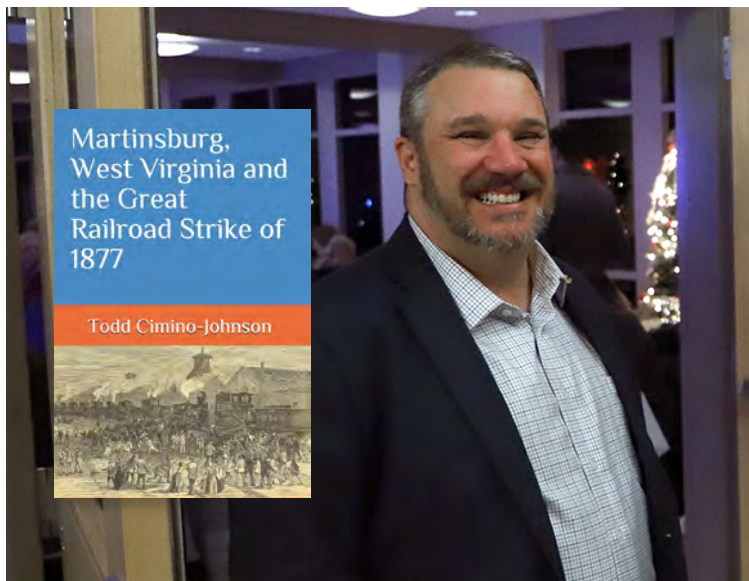
On April 26th, Jim Ralston, Assistant Professor of English, presented a selection of readings from his book of poems, *Lyrics for a Low Noon*, recently published by Blue Light Press. A mix of staff, faculty, and students filled HQ classroom 1101 to enjoy his impactful and emotional poetry. Between readings, Ralston engaged the audience with heartfelt, humorous, and intelligent reflections. He shared insight to his writing process and personal sentiments on love and the fulfillment and difficulty we find in our relationships.

To enjoy *Lyrics for a Low Noon*, you may purchase your own copy on Amazon.com. For more information, contact Ralston at: [jralston@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:jralston@blueridgectc.edu).

### Bruce Kowiatek

Adjunct Chemistry instructor Dr. Bruce Kowiatek has been acknowledged in a recent research paper in the Taylor & Francis Online journal, *Transcription*. The paper, entitled "Rooted tRNAomes and Evolution of the Genetic Code," authored by Daewoo Pak, Nan Du, Yunsoo Kim, Yanni Sun, and Zachary F. Burton, appears in the February 6, 2018 edition, and can be accessed via the link <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21541264.2018.1429837>.

Kowiatek, who joined BRCTC as an adjunct in January 2017, has been collaborating with Burton, the paper's corresponding author, since August of 2017. He contacted Burton initially concerning Burton's theoretical model for the evolution of transfer RNA (tRNA) and, when asked by Burton for suggestions, offered some that Burton considered to be helpful, leading to the acknowledgment in the current paper.



### Todd Cimino-Johnson

Todd Cimino-Johnson, Business Program Coordinator, has recently published a book, *Martinsburg, West Virginia and the Great Railroad Strike of 1877*.

Cimino-Johnson shared, "The book is a result of my master's in history thesis. I wanted to share information about the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, which started here in Martinsburg. When studying the strike, I noticed that Martinsburg is barely mentioned. I thought it was important to make the public aware of how Martinsburg set the stage for that pivotal event.

*Martinsburg, West Virginia and the Great Railroad Strike of 1877* can be purchased on Amazon.com. For more information, contact Cimino-Johnson at [tciminoj@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:tciminoj@blueridgectc.edu).



## **ADJUNCTS BRING EXPERIENCE TO THE CLASSROOM**

Adjunct faculty now make up the majority of instructors in higher education institutions nationwide. Adjunct professors are professors who are not on the tenure track and are exempt from some of the responsibilities of fully employed university instructors. For example, adjuncts do not serve as advisors, have regular office hours, and are not required to serve on committees.

BRCTC adjuncts are an important part of the faculty. Adjuncts are often either working in the field full-time or are retired. These instructors bring real-life examples to the classroom. They can discuss current issues in the workplace, describe their work environment, and address topics not covered in textbooks.



*Ronald Cooke*

**Ronald Cooke**, an Electrical Distribution Engineering Technology (EDET) adjunct, brings his experience from the real world into the classroom. Cooke worked as a lineman with Dominion and Potomac Edison. Once he retired, he was looking for something to fill his time. He began teaching with Blue Ridge in 2006 at the inception of the EDET program. Cooke stated that he meets the BRCTC mission by bringing his lifelong knowledge from the workforce to the classroom. In doing this, he is able to teach students about safety, accountability, and success using real examples. He can describe the workplace and safety issues for all weather conditions and environments.

and criminal investigations including interviews, warrants, reporting and other law enforcement activities concerning other agents, uniformed Federal Wildlife Officers, and other FWS employees as requested. The digital forensics does entail some cyber investigations techniques in addition to traditional forensics. For the ten years prior, Ball worked in almost all facets of IT including networking, cyber security, telecommunications, server/workstation administration, programming, databases, and others. Ball brings all of this expertise to the BRCTC classroom. Rather than being limited to a textbook, Ball can construct fictitious evidence and scenarios for the students. His years of experience creates an interesting classroom. Ball earned a Bachelors of Computer Science degree from Fairmont State College and a Masters in Information Security from James Madison University. He holds the Certified Ethical Hacker, Certified Forensic Computer Examiner, Certified Computer Examiner, AccessData Certified Examiner, Cellebrite Certified Operator, and Certified Blacklight Examiner certifications. He attended the Seized Computer Evidence Recovery Specialist (SCERS) training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia.

**Robert Ball**, a cyber adjunct instructor, works for the Office of Law Enforcement Professional Responsibility Unit (OLE PRU). His office is at the US Fish and Wildlife Training Center in Shepherdstown. Ball is a Criminal Investigator (Special Agent) and handles digital forensics as well as internal



*Robert Ball*



**Christina McMaster** graduated with her AAS in Cyber Security May 2012 - as part of the first graduating class for the Cyber degree at BRCTC.

McMaster is currently a Cyber Defense Infrastructure Support Specialist with Maveris, working on a contract supporting the VA Cybersecurity Operations Center (CSOC). Her previous positions include Network Engineer (supporting the VA) and Data Center Technician (private sector).

McMaster has come full circle --she also is an adjunct instructor in the BRCTC Cyber Security and Computer Network Engineering Technologies. She stated: "I use my experiences to bridge the gap between learning concepts in the classroom and how that knowledge is applied in the field. Applying purpose to the knowledge enforces relevancy beyond the classroom, which fosters better understanding and encourages mastery motivation. Additionally, these examples prepare students to enter the field by providing an idea of what they can expect, as well as what will be expected of them."



# HLC INTERNAL COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**The HLC Internal Communications Committee serves as ambassadors to the college. If you have any questions you can reach out to members of this committee for assistance!**

Amber Butcher

Amanda Burnell

Alexis Dixon

Apryl McDonough

Christopher Cobian

Diana Crouse

Elizabeth Brautigan

Janet Branch

Jennifer Barrett Smith

Jessica Leake

Kathryn Moore

Lisha Burks

Sara Gordon

Kevin Cappello

Vickie Wiles

## Committee Advisors

Laura Busey

Dr. Ann Shipway

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HLC PROCESS?

**For more information,  
please email:  
[accreditation@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:accreditation@blueridgectc.edu)**

## CLUBS ON CAMPUS

At Blue Ridge Community and Technical College we are home to thirteen clubs. Clubs provide students an outlet to get involved and feel connected to the institution in a way other than through academics. All clubs are governed by the newly reinstated Student Government Association. The clubs meet with the SGA board monthly to discuss upcoming events and ideas. The intended purpose of the monthly meeting is to allow SGA to be an extra support for the clubs. Every student that enrolls in the College is instantly a member of SGA. All BRCTC students have a voice on campus and are encouraged to attend the Town Hall meetings, which are held on the third Wednesday of every month. At this meeting students are given the opportunity to voice concerns or bring ideas to the SGA board.

By being involved in a club, students have opportunities to learn life skills, network, learn about the importance of teamwork and impact the community at large. Some clubs even allow students to participate in competitions. Phi Beta Lambda has taken several BRCTC students to the Spring Leadership Conference and Competition.

Space Club also competes in a payload competition. The club members spend the year working together to create the best payload that they can, and at the end of the spring semester the team travels to Wallops Island, located near Chincoteague, Virginia to launch the payload into space to complete a mission with NASA.



*Education Club 2019*

It's important as faculty and staff that we are encouraging our students to find something on campus that they can belong to so that they can be life-long learners both in and out of the classroom! Students who are involved are more likely to return to campus and graduate.

### Current list of clubs and Advisors:

- **Blue Ridge Drama Club:** Dr. Kathy Cox ([kcox@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:kcox@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Education Club:** Joshua Rider ([jrider@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:jrider@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** Randy Spies ([rspies@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:rspies@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) – Future Business Leaders of America:** Todd Cimino-Johnson ([tciminoj@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:tciminoj@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society:** Lisha Burks ([lburks@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:lburks@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Rotaract:** Tiffany Hine ([thine@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:thine@blueridgectc.edu))
- **S.A.G.A. (Sexuality and Gender Alliance):** Todd Cimino-Johnson ([tciminoj@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:tciminoj@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Space Club:** David Teets and Advisor Gerry Willis ([dteets@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:dteets@blueridgectc.edu) or [gwillis@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:gwillis@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Sports and Recreation Club:** Steve Wolfe and Kent LeMaster ([swolfe@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:swolfe@blueridgectc.edu) or [klemaste@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:klemaste@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Student Government Association (SGA):** Siona Escoto ([sescoto@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:sescoto@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Student Nurses Association (SNA):** Katie Colvin ([kcolvin@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:kcolvin@blueridgectc.edu))
- **Student Veterans Association (SVA):** Britney Norris ([bnorris@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:bnorris@blueridgectc.edu))
- **STEM Club:** Steve Shank and Janet Branch ([sshank@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:sshank@blueridgectc.edu) or [jbranch@blueridgectc.edu](mailto:jbranch@blueridgectc.edu))

**For more information, please contact club advisors directly.**

# UNDERSTANDING THE CORE COMPONENTS OF CRITERION 4

## Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement.

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### Examples of how BRCTC meets Criterion 4:

#### **4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.**

1. Maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. Evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. Has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. Maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. Maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. Evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

ANNUAL  
ASSESSMENT  
PLAN

BOARD OF  
GOVERNORS  
DEGREE

Q&A  
COMMITTEE

PTA  
ACCREDITED BY  
CAPTE

ALUMNI  
SURVEY

STRATEGIC  
PLAN

ASSESSMENT  
COMMITTEE  
PRESENTS  
TRAINING

PROGRAM  
ASSESSMENT

#### **4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.**

1. Clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. Assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. Uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. Processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

ONE-ON-ONE  
COUNSELING

1ST GENERATION  
IDENTIFICATION  
STICKERS

BANNER

PHONE  
-A-  
THONS

MONITOR  
ATTENDANCE

#### **4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.**

1. Defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. Collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. Uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. Processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice.





## STUDENT RETENTION AND GRADUATION

BRCTC has a current full-time student retention rate of 64% and a part-time student retention rate of 39%. The current graduation rate is 34%. Many College departments are working tirelessly to improve these numbers.

Enrollment Management hosts multiple Phone-A-Thons each semester. Advisors call a list of students who are not registered at these events in an effort to increase enrollment and identify problems, which may be keeping a student from enrolling. Student Services hosts a wide variety of student engagement activities in an effort to make students feel welcome on BRCTC campuses, thus increasing the likelihood of retention. Student Services also places each student whose GPA is below a 2.0 with a Probation Counselor who works one-on-one with each student to provide the necessary support for the student to be successful.

BRCTC seeks to make scheduling classes convenient for students by offering advising at convenient times including evenings and Saturdays. Walk-in hours are also promoted. In addition, staff set up tables and computers in areas of high traffic to encourage students to register between classes.

The College has also started utilizing innovative technologies including texting and online chat through the website in order to give students multiple communication avenues. Aside from the many different activities and support services BRCTC hosts, steps are taken to monitor student attendance and performance. Faculty are required to report student attendance multiple times throughout the semester. Students who are marked not attending in any of their classes will not be eligible to receive their Financial Aid reimbursement checks. Faculty are also encouraged to use the Early Alert reporting system through Bridge to alert Student Services when a student is falling behind, struggling, or not attending their courses. Student Services will then reach out to the student to offer support and services as needed.

Finally, BRCTC strives to offer classes at convenient times so students can work and attend class. For example, classes are offered on line, in the evenings, and on Saturdays. Together, these efforts will help increase retention and graduation efforts.



## GEAC/ASSESSMENT COLLABORATION

In 2018-2019 academic year, the Assessment Committee partnered with the General Education Advisory Committee with an explicit and formal process that dovetailed with the annual goals from the previous year, establishing a General Education - Assessment Committees Joint Work on Alignment Flowchart. The flow of assessment of alignment involved subject matter experts and content area specialists from each of the three schools, Workforce Development, Allied Health, and Professional Studies and University Transfer. The measurement of alignment relies on a simple "Yes-No Checklist" and committee expertise.

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students on the level of courses aligning assignments with course objectives up to the level of programs aligning student success on assignments with program level. In the past six years, the improvement of the general education core, specifically and independently from program level assessment, has gone forward incrementally and smoothly with expectation of collecting course-level quantified assessment data for all general education core courses by 2023.



## TRAINING FOR STAFF AND FACULTY

In an effort to promote continuous learning, HR has committed to offering yearly professional development for faculty and staff. The intent is to provide specialized training based on individual job responsibilities. This year, deans and directors will partake in a 3-4 partial-day workshop geared to identifying their roles in the strategic plan. This workshop is expected to begin during the spring semester.

Mid-level managers participated in a "Front-line Leadership" training on November 5th. The leadership training guided participants through self-reflection, communication, and mentoring/coaching exercises. Faculty received an invitation to partake in the APL workshop, scheduled for May 2020, to provide practical instructional methods for classroom management.

Lastly, a staff training is being planned. Staff completed a survey of desired topics. Based on the survey results, HR will determine an appropriate professional development opportunity.



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS DEGREE

BRCTC offers a Board of Governors Degree to help students with experience and prior learning earn a college degree. This program is beneficial in that students spend less time earning a degree, and the program saves them money.

Many employees on campus, including Enrollment Management staff, advisors and program coordinators, are trained to identify students who would benefit from this degree. These students are directed to the Office of Prior and Experiential Learning.

Dr. Apryl McDonough then works directly with the student. Her goal is to determine the best outcome for the student to earn a degree.

Dr. McDonough helps the student demonstrate their past experience and knowledge in order to get appropriate college credit. The student provides documentation of knowledge via certifications, exams, life experience and training, and demonstration of ability. The process can be completed online.



## ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Program coordinators complete an internal program assessment plan annually. Each July, program coordinators submit their Annual Program Assessment Report, which includes both the prior year's Program Action Plan for improvement and the upcoming year's Program Assessment Plan. The Program Assessment Report identifies specific program outcomes that are measured throughout the year. Program coordinators select the outcomes to measure, identify the strategies to employ, and define the standards to be met. Standards must be both explicit and measurable. Action plans include the data collected from the assessment plan and are used to improve student learning through the identification of strategies that target areas where goals are not being met. Program coordinators and faculty work together to improve outcomes listed on the action plan.

The Program Assessment Report provides the most direct measures of learning outcomes for academic programs. At the beginning of the term, program coordinators identify the program outcomes they wish to measure during the year, align the outcomes with institutional goals, formulate action-oriented assessment strategies, and define standards for achievement that are explicit and measurable. Data are collected throughout the year and used to determine how to improve student learning for each outcome. Direct measures of student learning can be found in the Program Assessment Report, such as activities embedded in program required courses, student portfolios, field experience artifacts, summative exams, and projects from capstone courses. Education - Assessment Committees Joint Work on Alignment Flowchart. The flow of assessment of alignment involved subject matter experts and content area specialists from each of the three schools, Workforce Development, Allied Health, and Professional Studies and University Transfer. The measurement of alignment relies on a simple "Yes-No Checklist" and committee expertise.

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students on the level of courses aligning assignments with course objectives up to the level of programs aligning student success on assignments with program level. In the past six years, the improvement of the general education core, specifically and independently from program level assessment, has gone forward incrementally and smoothly with expectation of collecting course-level quantified assessment data for all general education core courses by 2023.



## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT: MEDIA PROGRAM

Programs are assessed annually. The following briefly describes how Janet Branch, Program Coordinator, assessed the Media program. First, she selected four courses within the Digital Media Specialist Degree Program: Intro to Photoshop, Field Experience, Site Designer, and Media Practicum. Within those courses she applied at least three of the relative general education outcomes. She chose to assess the following: The student will develop college level communication skills; 3.1 The student will develop fundamental thinking and reasoning skills necessary for academic study and career success; 4.1 The student will develop skills required to be successful in their future career.

Professor Branch then selected an assignment from each course that met the gen ed outcome. For Intro to Photoshop, she used the learning goal: Graduates of Digital Media Specialist will develop college level communication skills of writing, reading for information, and critical thinking which are necessary to be successful in the work place.



The assessment standard was that students enrolled in Intro to Photoshop are required to complete a capstone project encompassing and exhibiting capability of the student to manipulate features of Adobe Photoshop to create and design documents or publications as assigned by the instructor. The students will be evaluated on a 100-point scale with each student expected to score at 80 points or higher. It is expected that 75% of the students who complete the course will achieve a final course grade of 80% or better on the assigned capstone projects. No student may graduate with an A.A.S. Digital Media Specialist degree without successfully completing MDIA 102. The course is not eligible for substitution. The result was that of the students who attempted and submitted their project, 77% met with Mastery and three students who attempted the capstone assignment scored below the 80% scale.

If the course standard had not been met, Branch would have revisited several factors. For example, if the project expectations were clearly stated or if a rubric was provided to outline the assignment grading criteria. The improvement plan addressed changes she would make going forward to meet the standard, such as providing an improved rubric or spending more class time allowing for discussion regarding the project.