

TRI-C®

TIMES

SEEING IS LEARNING

Dozens of community members receive no-cost vision screenings



THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Michael A. Baston, J.D., Ed.D.

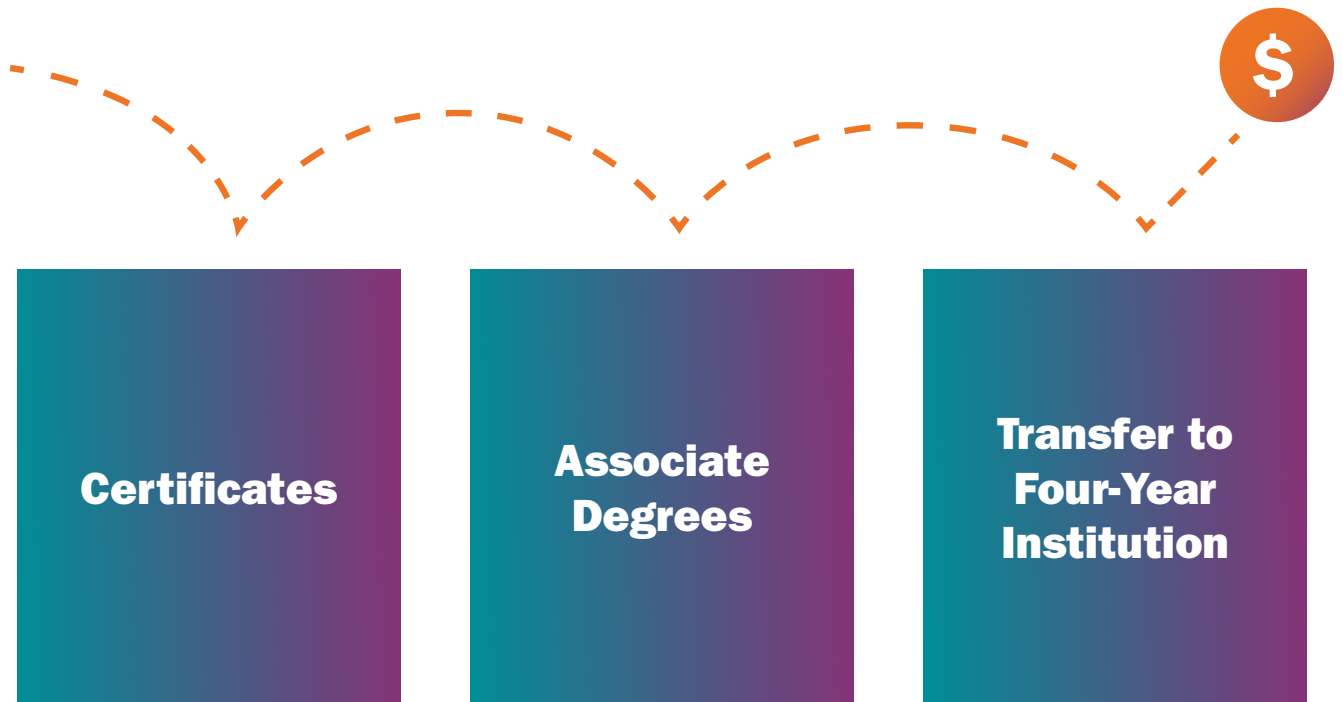
P R E S I D E N T

IN THIS ISSUE P6:
BUILDING MOMENTUM

P14:
IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL
NEW TALENT FOR TRANSPORTATION

P26:
THE MAGIC WORDS
A NEW LIFE THROUGH ENGLISH

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PRESIDENT'S Message

TO OUR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

Since taking office as the fifth president of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) on July 1, I've learned so much — not just about the College, but about Northeast Ohio and the people who call it home.

I've been privileged to discover just how much Tri-C means to the region, from its economic significance to its impact on local culture. Just about everyone I've met has a personal connection to the College.

Saturday, Oct. 8, was my 100th day as president. I spent those first 100 days intently listening, eagerly learning and actively connecting with stakeholders across Northeast Ohio.

I've enjoyed meaningful engagement with residents, community leaders, faculty, staff and students who were unafraid to share their candid observations and hopes for Tri-C's future.

Themes emerging from these conversations will provide a foundation as we formulate a plan to meet the challenges of the “now normal” and redefine the role of higher education in a post-pandemic world.

In this issue of *Tri-C Times*, you'll read about people and programs that embody this forward-thinking attitude.

The Presidential Scholarship Luncheon raises thousands of dollars each year to support Tri-C students pursuing degrees and certificates. The College's Transportation Innovation Center is expanding to provide more comprehensive training for in-demand jobs in the region. And the Mandel Center's new podcast, *More Human*, shares diverse perspectives on what society is today and could be in the future.



YOU'LL ALSO GET A FIRST LOOK AT MY 100-DAY REPORT, WHICH LAYS OUT FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES THAT WILL GUIDE US AS WE RESHAPE THE TRI-C MISSION TO BETTER MEET CURRENT NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

I deeply appreciate the valuable input and guidance I continue to receive from our faculty, staff and students; the Board of Trustees and other community leaders; and from everyday Clevelanders who have eagerly shared their Tri-C stories with me.

I look forward to continuing this journey together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MABA". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael A. Baston, J.D., Ed.D.
President

IN THIS ISSUE:

26

19



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24



TABLE of CONTENTS

President's Message 3
 Upfront..... 5
 President Baston's First 100 Days..... 6
 Patricia Heaton Headlines Presidential
 Scholarship Luncheon12
 Transportation Innovation Center
 Prepares for Long Haul14
 Humanities Center Launches
 New Podcast.....19
 New Leadership at Eastern,
 Westshore Campuses.....21
 Alumnus Profile: Anass El Bekkari.....24
 Faculty Profile: Sara Clark26
 Steadfast and Stalwart.....29
 One Last Thing.....30



FA

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TRI-C COMMEMORATES ALEX JOHNSON'S LEGACY

In recognition of Tri-C President Emeritus Alex Johnson's achievements, service and impact during his tenure (2013-2022), the College renamed a building on its Metropolitan Campus in his honor. The Alex B. Johnson Campus Center was dedicated during a Nov. 1 ceremony. Johnson was instrumental in the building's renovation, which transformed the Metro Campus entrance into a welcoming space for students and visitors when it opened in early 2019.

COLLEGE RECEIVES 10TH STRAIGHT HEED AWARD

Tri-C received a 2022 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. This is Tri-C's 10th consecutive year receiving the award, which recognizes U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.



LL 2022



MARBURY JOINS TRI-C TO LEAD WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Shana Marbury joined Tri-C as executive vice president of Workforce, Community and Economic Development on Nov. 1, succeeding William H. Gary, who moved into the new role of senior advisor on national workforce issues. Marbury comes to Tri-C from the Greater Cleveland Partnership, where she served as general counsel and senior vice president of talent.

THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Michael A. Baston, J.D., Ed.D.
P R E S I D E N T



BUILDING MOMENTUM A Post-Pandemic Refresh of Strategies, Structures and Systems

One of the most important things a new leader can do is listen to those they will be collaborating with and leading. And for the first 100 days of his tenure, that is exactly what Cuyahoga Community College President Michael A. Baston did.

Between July 1 and Oct. 8, Baston met community leaders and stakeholders individually and at functions, conferences and listening sessions. He also met many members of the Tri-C family — faculty, staff and students — who embody the College’s mission and values.

He learned how deep Tri-C’s roots run in Northeast Ohio — its importance to the region’s economy and future and the countless people whose lives have been forever changed by the College.

In the following pages, you’ll learn how Baston and the rest of Tri-C’s leadership team will use what they’ve learned in the past months. The themes and fundamental principles that emerged during Baston’s first 100 days in office will form a springboard for creating new ideas and a foundation for shaping the College’s strategic planning process.

As we move forward in the post-pandemic “now normal,” our work will be guided by three fundamental principles.

Everything we do will be:

Values centered

Consciously committed to diversity, integrity, academic excellence, the achievement of individual and institutional goals and inclusive prosperity. We will dedicate ourselves to building trust, respect and confidence among our colleagues, students and community.

Student focused

All decisions will be evaluated through a “student-first” lens, considering the potential impact on student equity, the student experience and student success and to ensure opportunity for all.

Purpose driven

As the community’s college, Tri-C will be a catalyst for change in Northeast Ohio. We will create more vibrant communities by moving people from economic fragility to economic mobility through education and training for in-demand, well-paying jobs. We will drive economic growth by partnering with business and industry to design programs that will develop the skilled workforce needed to fuel current businesses and attract new ones.

100 Days of Listening, Learning and Engagement



THEMES

Three themes that emerged during Baston's first 100 days of listening, learning and engagement will create a springboard for new ideas and innovation and inform our strategic planning process.

Build a Culture of Clarity

Like other multi-campus community college systems, Tri-C offers flagship programs at each of its locations. Classes in these programs are available virtually and at other campuses to provide equitable access and respond to hyperlocal demand or interest. Non-degree or noncredit programs and credentials are offered through our workforce and Corporate College® divisions. The College's six Centers of Excellence focus on areas of job demand and future growth.

To provide greater clarity around career pathways and ensure a more consistent educational experience and better student outcomes, Tri-C will transition to a centralized one-college model that will provide a more coherent approach to programs of study.

This will include clarifying how non-degree credentials and programs align with degree programs to form steppingstones to career or degree attainment; embedding career readiness experiences, organized around key milestones, in all courses; and clearly articulating the real-world skills students will acquire in each course and program, helping them select courses and ultimately convey their skills to potential employers.

“OUR STRUCTURE NEEDS TO PROPERLY EMPHASIZE THE EQUALITY OF OUR NONCREDIT AND CREDIT PROGRAMS AND HELP FOSTER SMOOTH TRANSITIONS BETWEEN THE TWO.”

JULY 1



Took office as **fifth president** of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®).

Joined **Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC)**.



JULY 12

Attended a breakfast with **religious leaders from the community**.



Participated in President's Panel during **Leader's Dialogue** at Florida State College at Jacksonville.



JULY 20

Interviewed for *Crain's Cleveland Business* article: “New Cuyahoga Community College president **Michael Baston** talks plans for the future.”



JULY 27

Appeared in front-page *Plain Dealer* article: “Cuyahoga Community College president used ‘**secret shopper**’ reconnaissance to confirm Cleveland was a good fit.”

JULY 27

Engaged 150 Tri-C leaders in discussion around the **post-pandemic “now normal” and regional workforce needs** at the annual President's Renewal.



JULY 28

College hosted **Medical Imaging Career Fair** to connect employers with health career students and graduates.

JULY 29

Met with former Cleveland Mayor **Frank G. Jackson**.

JULY 31

Featured in *Cleveland Magazine/Community Leader* article: “**Get to Know Tri-C's New President.**”





THEMES

Redesign the Student Experience



We must continuously examine our processes to ensure ease of access to community members who seek to change or enhance their lives. Using the student journey and corresponding needs as a framework, we are working with Corporate College professionals trained in Lean Six Sigma to evaluate and enhance the student experience.

We will focus on simplifying recruitment and enrollment processes, as well as our organizational hierarchies and naming conventions, to make it easier for students to find the help they need and for faculty and staff to more effectively direct those seeking assistance.

Students will be able to enter any “door,” whether physical or virtual, easily enroll in classes and find the services or resources they need to succeed.

“FACULTY, STAFF AND PEERS CAN AND SHOULD SERVE AS MENTORS FOR STUDENTS TO CELEBRATE THEIR SUCCESSES, SUPPORT THEM THROUGH ANY STRUGGLES AND GUIDE THEM THROUGH TRI-C PROCESSES.”

AUGUST 1

Appeared in *Smart Business* article: “New President Michael Baston wants Tri-C to hold the ladder of opportunity.”



Attended opening of Via Sana, the first phase of a \$60 million mixed-use development by The MetroHealth System. The affordable housing complex features a Tri-C Access Center that will offer job training, financial and digital literacy training and access to Tri-C classes.

AUGUST 2-5

Attended American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Annual Board of Directors Retreat.

AUGUST 8

Appeared on WKYC's *We The People* to discuss inclusion and education with senior reporter and commentator Leon Bibb.



AUGUST 11

Invited by Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona to participate in a panel discussion on value-added work and career pathways at Raise the B.A.R.: Bold + Action + Results in College Excellence and Equity, a U.S. Dept. of Education summit.

Appeared in *Community College Daily* article: “ED Summit emphasizes completion with equity, mobility.”

Interviewed on ideastream's *The Sound of Ideas*.

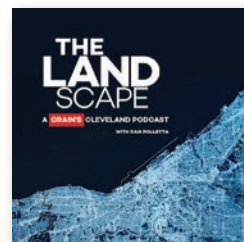
AUGUST 12

Joined Community College Humanities Association (CCHA).



AUGUST 15

Featured on *The Landscape*, a podcast by *Crain's Cleveland Business*.



AUGUST 17

College received a **Best in Class** award for board diversity – along with Hall of Fame honors in the category – from the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP). This designation recognizes Tri-C for achieving Best in Class for three consecutive years.



“IT’S CRITICAL THAT OUR SPECIAL POPULATIONS — FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS, UNDER-REPRESENTED STUDENTS, VETERANS — KNOW WHAT DEDICATED RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM.”

SEPTEMBER 1

Met with key Tri-C donor **Howard Lewis**, founder and chairman emeritus of Family Heritage Life Insurance Company of America.

SEPTEMBER 6

Met with **Pernel Jones Jr.**, Cuyahoga County Council president.

DEACONESS FOUNDATION

Met with **Cathy Belk**, president and CEO of Deaconess Foundation, and two foundation trustees.



SEPTEMBER 7

Toured **KeyBank Public Safety Training Center** at Tri-C's Western Campus.

SEPTEMBER 9

Welcomed 57 attendees at **Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses** kickoff event.



SEPTEMBER 12

Met with **Ronn Richard**, president and CEO of the **Cleveland Foundation**.

College once again honored as **Great College to Work For®** by ModernThink LLC — one of only 22 two-year institutions selected nationwide. Tri-C was also one of only 12 institutions to receive Honor Roll status.



SEPTEMBER 13

Met with key Tri-C donor **Albert Ratner**, co-chair emeritus of Forest City Enterprises and partner, RMS Investment Corp.

Met with **Timothy L. Tramble Sr.**, president and CEO of **St. Luke's Foundation**.

College was recognized as one of Northeast Ohio's top places to work, winning its **16th NorthCoast 99 award**. Tri-C also received an Award of Excellence as the highest scorer among companies with 500 or more employees.

SEPTEMBER 14

Initiated student-led creation of a video birthday card for employees with Student Production Office.



SEPTEMBER 14-29

Connected with **500+ students, faculty, staff and community members** during listening sessions at all four Tri-C campuses and the **Jerry Sue Thornton Center**.

THEMES

Strengthen the Value Proposition

While maintaining strong awareness of Tri-C as an affordable and accessible option, we must move the needle to improve perceptions of the quality of our academic offerings. Though community college stigma is not unique to Tri-C, we must intensify our efforts to address it as an institution and in concert with our community college peers.

However, greater awareness of these value drivers and the breadth of our programs will have little impact unless we address the growing skepticism — recently exacerbated by the strong job market — surrounding the ROI of higher education.

We will demonstrate that Tri-C is an educational partner that not only contributes to lifelong prosperity but also prepares people to prosper now by providing new knowledge or skills that allow them to more quickly achieve their ambitions. We will do this, in part, through a new marketing campaign that will launch in spring 2023.

Additionally, we will empower and equip students, faculty and staff to become more effective brand ambassadors so that they can amplify these messages and emphasize Tri-C’s role as an economic engine and force for change in Northeast Ohio.

“YOU CAN’T BE WHAT YOU CAN’T SEE. WE NEED TO EXPOSE YOUTH IN THE REGION TO DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES AND RAISE THE UNDERSTANDING AND REPUTATION OF VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS.”

SEPTEMBER 16

Met with Blaine Griffin, **Cleveland City Council** president.

College hosted **MetroHealth Job Fair** for St. Vincent Charity employees affected by service changes.

Hosted **Tri-C Family Day** at Progressive Field for 980 alumni, faculty and staff.



SEPTEMBER 19

Named Radiah Blanton executive director of **Strategic Initiatives**, Renee Richard interim president of **Corporate College®** and Dee Weber vice president of **Human Resources** and chief human resources officer.

SEPTEMBER 20

Met with **Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation** Chair Stephen Hoffman and President and CEO Jehuda Reinharz.

SEPTEMBER 21

Met with Janice Tubbs, economic development project manager with the **city of Garfield Heights**.

Launched **design competition** among Visual Communication and Design students for College’s 2022 holiday card.

College received **10th consecutive Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award** from *INSIGHT Into Diversity Magazine*.

Attended Cleveland Metropolitan School District CEO Eric Gordon’s **State of the Schools Address**.

SEPTEMBER 27

Appointed Shana Marbury executive vice president of **Workforce, Community and Economic Development** and William Gary senior advisor on national workforce issues.

SEPTEMBER 28

Joined **Playhouse Square** Board of Directors.



Engaged with **120 Tri-C leaders** at Collegewide Cabinet.

Opened **Tri-C Foundation** board meeting.

SEPTEMBER 29

Toured Tri-C’s Transportation Innovation Center with **Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine**.



Met with **John P. Murphy Foundation** president, Nancy McCann; executive vice president, Richard Clark; and several trustees/staff.

SEPTEMBER 30

Addressed **Tri-C Deans Council** at annual retreat.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Ideas Festivals: January 2023



The three themes resulting from Baston's first 100 days of listening, learning and engagement will be used as a springboard from which to spur ideas and innovation across the College. Students, faculty and staff will have the opportunity to brainstorm, discuss and recommend their best ideas for advancing or addressing the three themes at Ideas Festivals to be held at each campus and the Jerry Sue Thornton Center during Campus Days Jan. 11-12, 2023.

These ideas will inform a strategic planning process that will provide a roadmap for how we will move forward and fulfill the Tri-C mission.

OCTOBER 5

Attended luncheon for community leaders hosted by Umberto Fedeli, president and CEO of The Fedeli Group.

OCTOBER 6

Received two motor coaches from Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) as part of a partnership expansion with Tri-C. The coaches will give commercial driver's license (CDL) trainees hands-on experience operating real-world vehicles.



OCTOBER 6

Attended Hispanic Heritage Month celebration and grand opening of Metropolitan Campus Student Center for Multicultural Engagement.



Published first *Smart Business* column: "Defining the 'now' normal."

OCTOBER 7

Welcomed 250 attendees to Ohio Association of Two-Year Colleges Annual Conference at Tri-C's Eastern Campus.

Attended inauguration of Cleveland State University President, Laura Bloomberg.



Attended Project Love's Values-in-Action luncheon.



OCTOBER 8

Reached 100th day leading Tri-C.



"WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT STUDENT SUCCESS MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. EACH MILESTONE CAN BE CELEBRATED."



STORY BY Anthony Moujaes
PHOTOS BY Cody York

BAY VILLAGE NATIVE PATRICIA HEATON HEADLINED THE CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION'S 2022 PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON TO BENEFIT STUDENTS

Emmy-winning actor and producer Patricia Heaton shared stories of growing up in Ohio, motherhood and the individuals who inspired her as she helped the **Cuyahoga Community College Foundation** raise scholarship funds for students during its **Presidential Scholarship Luncheon**.

Heaton, a Bay Village native, served as keynote speaker at the Oct. 20 event presented by PNC. More than 750 supporters attended the luncheon, which raised \$850,000 in critical funds for Tri-C students.

Since its inception in 1992, the Presidential Scholarship Luncheon has raised \$23 million to help students with financial need pursue higher education and achieve their academic and career goals.

“The funds raised by this event allow us to help grow the next generation of skilled workers who are essential to the success of our local economy,” said Patrick Pastore, PNC regional president for Cleveland and chairperson of the Tri-C Foundation. “We are grateful for our supporters who invest in Tri-C students and provide access to transformative education opportunities.”

“THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS, THE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON ENSURES THAT STUDENTS CAN RECEIVE CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT TO ENROLL IN PROGRAMS THAT LEAD TO LIFE-CHANGING CAREERS.”

— Megan O’Bryan, President, Tri-C Foundation



Heaton adds to the list of distinguished speakers to headline the event, joining U.S. Presidents George W. Bush (2014) and Bill Clinton (2013) and entertainers Oprah Winfrey (2002) and Harry Belafonte (1996).

A three-time Emmy Award winner, Heaton is best known for her roles on *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *The Middle*. She won two Emmy Awards for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series and was nominated seven times for her role as Debra Barone on *Everybody Loves Raymond*. She received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2012.

"About half of Tri-C students are seeking a workforce credential, but their financial aid options are limited," said Megan O'Bryan, Tri-C Foundation president. "Thanks to our generous supporters, the Presidential

Scholarship Luncheon ensures that students can receive critical scholarship support to enroll in programs that lead to life-changing careers."

Christi Paul, anchor of WKYC's *What's New*, moderated the discussion with Heaton. Paul recently returned home to Northeast Ohio after 20 years at CNN.

Event co-chair sponsors included AT&T, A Taste of Excellence, The Brewer-Garrett Company, Cleveland Clinic, Consolidated Solutions, Steve and Dana Demetriou, The Lerner Foundation, Thompson Hine LLP, Medical Mutual, Pepsi Beverages Company, WKYC Channel 3 and the Westfield Foundation.



IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

TRI-C'S TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION CENTER IS EXPANDING ITS PARTNERSHIPS AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO HELP ADDRESS A CRITICAL NATIONWIDE NEED FOR TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS PROFESSIONALS

STORY BY [Erik Cassano](#)

PHOTOS BY [Chris Bacarella](#), [Janet Macoska](#)





If you look up from this page, everything you see probably has one thing in common.

At one point, it sat in the back of a truck. In fact, it likely sat in the back of multiple trucks to get to where it is now.

The food in your pantry, the furniture in your living room, the materials your house is built from. The desk in your office and everything in it. The seeds that became the grass under your feet. The concrete and asphalt that form the sidewalks and roads you travel.

With that knowledge, it's easy to see why a national shortage of 80,000 truck drivers isn't a small problem. From freight haulers to retail companies, delivery services to construction firms, businesses that rely on trucking face a constant battle to find and retain qualified drivers.

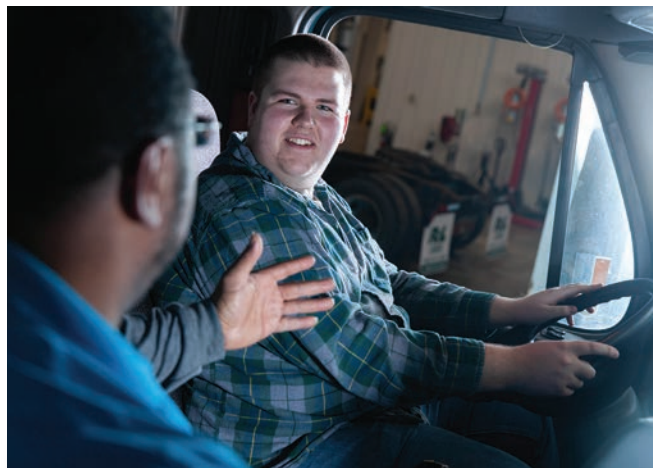
According to the American Trucking Association, the shortage could surpass 160,000 by 2030. That's one of the reasons Cuyahoga Community College has invested in its transportation and logistics programs at the Transportation Innovation Center (TIC) in Euclid.

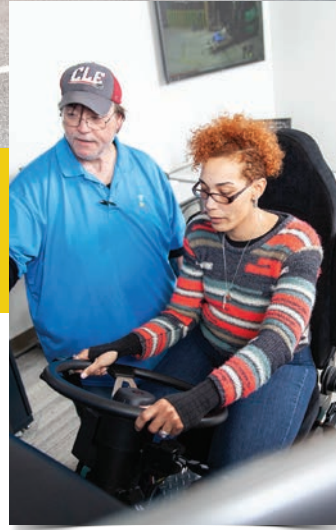
“IT’S AN ONGOING CHALLENGE TO RECRUIT PEOPLE TO THE INDUSTRY.”

— Ian Wilson, Director, Transportation Innovation Center

As one of Northeast Ohio's largest trainers of transportation professionals, the TIC is tasked with recruiting new workers to the industry and providing the training necessary to staff companies of varying needs and sizes. Businesses don't grow without qualified transportation professionals, and those businesses rely on Tri-C to find and develop talent.

“It's an ongoing challenge to recruit people to the industry,” said Ian Wilson, the center's director. “We go into high schools to try and recruit young people, and we also search for students who might be a bit older and looking to change careers. There's a demand for all ages and skill levels, and we try to address it all.”





EXPANDING THE REACH

More than 100 students train at the TIC each year. You can usually find some of them on the large concrete practice pad alongside the building or out on the road, perfecting turns, backing up and performing other maneuvers they'll need to master so they can operate a big rig.

They come from many different walks of life, but they were all drawn to trucking for the freedom, the flexibility and the opportunity to earn a starting salary of up to \$60,000 per year.

"I was in the Army about 20 years ago, and I missed being out in the world and seeing different things," said Kenneth Starks, 42, of Cleveland Heights. "I was drawn to trucking because of the money, but also the chance to go across the country and see it."

"The money is good, the benefits are good, and I like the idea of being my own boss," said Ronnell Inge, 34, of Cleveland. "I'm aiming to get my own truck at some point."

Students come to Tri-C's TIC because of its reputation. Programs are taught by instructors who have spent decades in the transportation field, and no prior experience is required to begin classes.

"The program has great people and a great reputation in the community," Inge said. "I'm trying to make this more of a passion than a job. You have to find your passion in life and do it well."

To help more students pursue their passions, the TIC has steadily expanded its training offerings beyond tractor-trailer operation.

"We want to train anyone who is looking for a career in transportation and logistics," Wilson said. "There's so much need and so many opportunities out there. We really want to open those doors for our students."

Trucks move more than just goods — they also move people. Bus companies are in the same position as cargo haulers, with a deficit of qualified operators. The TIC trains and tests drivers for private operators like Cleveland-based Barons Bus, and the center has a longstanding partnership with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) as well.

"I WAS DRAWN TO TRUCKING BECAUSE OF THE MONEY, BUT ALSO THE CHANCE TO GO ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND SEE IT."

— Kenneth Starks, TIC student

EXPANDING THE REACH (Cont.)

In October, that partnership received a major boost when RTA donated a pair of motor coaches to the TIC, greatly increasing the center's training capacity for passenger vehicles. Only one bus had been available for training up to that point.

"We've been doing RTA training for about six years, and it's a mutually beneficial relationship," Wilson said. "RTA adds to our enrollment, and we support their recruitment."

Wilson notes that the TIC wants to act as a job hub for RTA, both in training and CDL testing.

"The fact that we offer on-site CDL testing is a big advantage for us. We can train on-site, but in the case of RTA, we might bring recruits in for their classwork, they'll train at RTA's facility, and then they'll come back and test here. There's built-in flexibility."



"THE FACT THAT WE OFFER ON-SITE CDL TESTING IS A BIG ADVANTAGE FOR US. WE CAN TRAIN ON-SITE, BUT IN THE CASE OF RTA, WE MIGHT BRING RECRUITS IN FOR THEIR CLASSWORK, THEY'LL TRAIN AT RTA'S FACILITY, AND THEN THEY'LL COME BACK AND TEST HERE. THERE'S BUILT-IN FLEXIBILITY?"

— Ian Wilson





BEYOND THE DRIVER'S SEAT

The TIC's reach extends out from behind the wheel. Though the need for drivers is substantial throughout the transportation industry, there is also a need for qualified professionals to support those on the road.

Behind the TIC's offices, a pair of large indoor spaces house a warehouse training area and space for a planned diesel tech program.



The warehouse space, which serves the center's Warehouse and Logistics program, simulates the activity in a large wholesale or retail warehouse, including a package conveyor and stock aisles of varying sizes, down which students maneuver a variety of forklifts to place and retrieve packages.

"Each warehouse poses its own set of challenges, so we've created an environment for our students to train in both tight spaces and larger spaces, with different gas and electric powered lifts," Wilson said.

Once launched, the diesel tech program will allow Tri-C to train the mechanics who repair and maintain trucks and buses.

"If you need drivers, you also need qualified diesel techs," Wilson said. "You can have the greatest drivers in the world, but they're not going anywhere if the trucks aren't in working order."

Whether it's outside on the pad, on the road, in the classroom or at any of the other teaching areas within the TIC, one thing remains certain: This is a place where students come to turn their dreams into a career.

"Trucking has become my passion," said Raquel Williams, 41, of Shaker Heights. "The students and instructors at Tri-C have been very supportive in helping me reach my goal of being out on the road. I feel like the material is the same at just about any truck driving school, but the instructors here make all the difference."

Williams said she feels especially motivated to take her Tri-C education and succeed as one of the relatively few female truckers on the road.

"The trucking industry doesn't just need more female drivers, it needs more female owners — and I want to be one of them," she said. "That's why I came to Tri-C, and that's the type of education and motivation I'm getting here."



DEEPER, RICHER

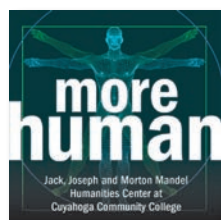


On the Nov. 17 episode of *More Human*, Tri-C President Michael Baston discussed his career, the importance of the humanities in higher education and the urgency of making connections between the humanities and other disciplines.

AND MORE HUMAN

**A PODCAST FROM TRI-C'S
JACK, JOSEPH AND MORTON
MANDEL HUMANITIES CENTER
CHALLENGES LISTENERS TO
ENGAGE IN THE HUMANITIES
AND EXAMINE THEIR LIVES**

STORY BY **Anthony Moujaes**
PHOTOS BY **Noelle Bye**



“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Centuries later, the words of ancient Greek philosopher Socrates still inspire humankind to wrestle with difficult questions and critique everything around them.

What is the relationship between race and art? How can literature help people see the human experience from different viewpoints? What does studying English have to do with getting a job?

Those questions form the heart of the conversation on *More Human*, a new podcast hosted by Matthew Jordan, Ph.D., dean of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Humanities Center at Cuyahoga Community College. The podcast launched in April as a vehicle for sharing dialogue taking place at the Mandel Center and throughout the region.



"We hope that each conversation piques listeners' interest in going deeper within that topic and integrating it into their lives in a robust way," Jordan said.

Biweekly episodes dive into conversations with students, faculty, higher education administrators, authors and poets to explore their views on the humanities. Each episode explores how engaging with literature, philosophy, history and art enables listeners to live deeper, richer, fuller and more human lives.

Jordan is an avid podcast listener who enjoys their simplicity and accessibility. People can tune in on their own time, whether they're traveling, exercising or doing chores around the house.

Every episode of *More Human* starts with identifying a guest — often someone doing something interesting in the humanities, a lecturer visiting Cleveland or the College, or a Mandel Scholar. From there, Jordan creates an outline of the show and shares it with the guest. Aside from a brief introduction, most of the conversation is entirely organic.

That's the easy piece.

"The most challenging part is usually finding a time that works for everybody's schedule," Jordan said. Episodes are recorded in a full-service podcast studio, PodPopuli, located inside The Arcade downtown. Their staff handle the technology side, including editing, allowing Jordan to focus on the content of the conversation.

"WE HOPE THAT EACH CONVERSATION PIQUES LISTENERS' INTEREST IN GOING DEEPER WITHIN THAT TOPIC AND INTEGRATING IT INTO THEIR LIVES IN A ROBUST WAY."

— Matt Jordan, Dean, Mandel Humanities Center

"People who work in the humanities are often asked to justify the relevance of the work they do," Jordan said. "One of the main ideas we hope to illustrate is the importance of the perennial questions of the humanities: What does it mean to live well as a human? What is the nature of justice? What does it mean to be a good person? Those are always important and relevant questions, and we seek to demonstrate their importance by connecting them to things happening in the world today."

Episodes have touched upon a range of topics: race and race relations, locally sourced food, disinformation, religion and baseball. Jordan characterizes the dialogue as "whetting the appetite" for listeners to continue exploring a topic that resonates with them.

"We aspire to be a resource for people as they dig into these topics," Jordan said. "I ask every guest to recommend resources for anyone who wants to go deeper. It's not intended as a long-form conversation."

Jordan has been pleasantly surprised at how many moments in the series — which has 27 episodes so far — have struck a chord with listeners.

Among Jordan's personal favorites are episodes featuring Tri-C professor Gayle Williamson on transformative texts, Frederick Douglass historian Nathan Richardson, and interviews with Finnish-Canadian theologian Jason Lepojärvi and classicist Anika Prather.

"The podcast has been an amazing opportunity to talk with interesting people about interesting subjects," Jordan said. "I feel spoiled that it's part of my job to have these conversations with thoughtful people, hear their perspectives and dig a little bit into these really big questions."

MORE HUMAN IS AVAILABLE ON APPLE PODCASTS, SPOTIFY AND OTHER PLATFORMS.

LEADING WITH EXPERIENCE



Todd Kitchen, Ed.D., Eastern Campus President

Cuyahoga Community College's two newest campus presidents, Todd Kitchen, Ed.D., and Scott Latiolais, Ed.D., may oversee campuses on opposite sides of Greater Cleveland, but they have much in common.

Both are first-generation college graduates. Both brought nearly 20 years of higher education experience with them. Both recognize Tri-C's rich diversity. And both wanted to be part of the College's future.

Kitchen joined Tri-C in December 2021 following 10 years as vice president of student services at NorthWest Arkansas Community College.

"It's no secret Tri-C has a national reputation and brand," Kitchen said. "So having an opportunity to come to Cleveland — a large, diverse metropolitan area — was very attractive. This is a great place to roll up my sleeves and help make a difference."

WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, TRI-C WELCOMED A PAIR OF STUDENT-FOCUSED PRESIDENTS WHO ARE DRAWING FROM THEIR EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE TO LEAD THE EASTERN AND WESTSHORE CAMPUSES.



Scott Latiolais, Ed.D., Westshore Campus President



STORY BY **Anthony Moujaes**

PHOTOS BY **Tamara London, McKinley Wiley**

THE GREAT EQUALIZER

Kitchen hails from Moberly, Missouri, where he pursued a degree at Moberly Junior College. After completing his second year, he set his education aside and enlisted in the U.S. Army — but academics were never far from his mind.

“There was something that really piqued my interest about the educational process during my early military time,” Kitchen said.

As a soldier from 1989 to 1998, Kitchen was stationed at Fort Riley in Kansas and Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. During overseas deployments to Germany and the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, he witnessed educational infrastructure that differed greatly from that in the United States.

It motivated him to encourage others to take advantage of America’s educational opportunities.

“I think one of the greatest opportunities that we have is education — K-12 and higher education,” Kitchen said. “It truly is the great equalizer. I think it’s one of the most readily available tools that we have to help people better themselves and their families.”



Kitchen later earned a bachelor’s degree from Friends University in Kansas. After leaving the military, he served in a variety of roles at Wentworth Military Academy and College in Lexington, Missouri. That experience sparked his interest in higher education.

“Watching how people’s lives were being transformed, watching what higher education did by way of giving people the tools to be successful to advance their lives, invigorated me,” he said.



SERVING THE GREATER GOOD

A recipient of leadership awards in both his military and civilian careers, Kitchen draws on his faculty, administrative and military experience to shape his servant-leadership style, which prioritizes the greater good. He has served on nonprofit boards and been actively involved with church communities for nearly three decades.

These credentials earned Kitchen a place in the 2022-2023 Aspen Institute Rising Presidents Fellowship program, which prepares community college presidents to help their institutions achieve higher and more equitable levels of student success. He is one of 31 participants in the cohort.

“I take a leadership approach that I call ‘in the trenches with the troops,’” Kitchen said. “I like to be where they are to expand what they’re experiencing, to understand what they’re understanding so that I can position myself to support and advocate for them and their work.”

“WATCHING HOW PEOPLE’S LIVES WERE BEING TRANSFORMED, WATCHING WHAT HIGHER EDUCATION DID BY WAY OF GIVING PEOPLE THE TOOLS TO BE SUCCESSFUL TO ADVANCE THEIR LIVES, INVIGORATED ME.”

— Todd Kitchen, Eastern Campus President



PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL

Latiolais became Westshore Campus president in August. He came to Tri-C from Clover Park Technical College in Seattle, where he was vice president of student success from 2017 to 2022.

He was drawn to the diversity of the College and the city of Cleveland and welcomed the opportunity to be closer to his husband's family near Cincinnati. He also appreciated Tri-C's modern facilities.

"I have seen a lot of colleges, and among the two-year colleges, Tri-C has some of the best facilities," he said. "Our leadership has valued how important a beautiful and productive environment is for student success."

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN LOUISIANA

A self-described Cajun, Latiolais' roots run deep in southern Louisiana. His hometown of Breaux Bridge, a suburb of Lafayette, has about 8,000 residents.

Although he's worked in higher education for his entire career, that path once seemed improbable.



"I don't come from a privileged family, and neither of my parents went to college," Latiolais said. "I grew up in a poor area of Louisiana where I wasn't encouraged to go to college, because there wasn't a college-going culture there."

He bucked the trend. Latiolais earned a bachelor's degree from nearby Louisiana State University and a master's degree from the University of Tennessee before becoming a residential director at New York University.

COAST TO COAST TO CLEVELAND

Latiolais flip-flopped between New York City and Seattle in roles with The Art Institute of Seattle, Manhattan School of Music and the University of Washington before landing the first of his three community college roles: dean of student success at Renton Technical College.



"I really got hooked on community college environments and students," he said.

Next, in his first experience as a higher education executive, Latiolais led a division of 13 departments, faculty and staff as vice president of student success at Clover Park Technical College.

"My role at Clover Park was an opportunity to learn what I needed to take on the next level of responsibility," he said. "Leaders can struggle when they haven't risen through the ranks to learn what their folks do. It's harder to tinker with systems and manage people without that."

In reflecting on his previous roles, Latiolais recognizes that serving students and campuses in different parts of the country has better equipped him to support the student journey.

"Students are in college because they have dreams, and they hope college is an experience and pathway to improving their lives," he said. "It's our job to help them realize those dreams."

"OUR LEADERSHIP HAS VALUED HOW IMPORTANT A BEAUTIFUL AND PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT IS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS."

— Scott Latiolais, Westshore Campus President

GLOBAL CONNECTION

STORY BY Erik Cassano

PHOTOS BY Victoria Stanbridge

ANASS EL BEKKARI'S PATH HAS TAKEN HIM FROM MOROCCO TO TRI-C TO A FELLOWSHIP WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Education is a path to expanding your world — and few have proven that fact quite like information technology graduate Anass El Bekkari.



The 31-year-old Clevelander's story began in his birthplace of Morocco. A chance encounter at a cousin's wedding, relocation to the United States, several degrees from Tri-C and a Foreign Affairs Information Technology Fellowship later, El Bekkari's end goal of becoming a foreign information management specialist with the U.S. Department of State is now within reach.

"My fellowship started this fall, and it's a tremendous opportunity," he said. "You have a great chance of obtaining employment as a foreign information management specialist with the State Department at the end. Tri-C helped lay the foundation for my fellowship in a lot of different ways."

But first, he had to get to Northeast Ohio.

MOVING TO AMERICA

El Bekkari has always been passionate about information technology. Before taking his first IT class in his hometown of Tétouan, he was already fixing computers and other equipment for people he knew.

"It was kind of a side hustle of mine, because I love the work and it's a very in-demand field," El Bekkari said. "IT impacts just about every field you can think of, so all kinds of companies need IT professionals. Even sectors like retail and agriculture have sophisticated technology components now."

But there was a limit to how much IT education he could pursue in Morocco, so he started looking at colleges outside the country. In 2013, an opportunity to move to the United States arose, and he jumped at it.

"I met my host family in Chagrin Falls through a cousin," he said. "I was the designated driver taking them to the airport after my cousin's wedding. We communicated online for a few years before they offered to sponsor me to study in the U.S."

El Bekkari obtained a student visa and moved half a world away to pursue his dream of becoming an IT professional. A number of hurdles still stood in his way, though. The most immediate was that although he was fluent in French and Arabic — two of Morocco's most commonly spoken languages — he knew very little English.

That's what brought him to Tri-C, where he attended English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at the Eastern Campus.

"I found out Tri-C had a great ESL program, so in January 2014, I began classes at Tri-C," El Bekkari said. "The fact

that just eight years ago I could barely speak English, and now I communicate very well with it on a daily basis, shows how great the program is.”

He said his ESL instructors did much more than just teach him English.

“They showed me how to operate in a new culture,” he said. “Reading, writing, communication, etiquette, things like that. My ESL instructors have had as much of an impact on my success as any of my IT professors.”

As his English vocabulary expanded, El Bekkari began taking IT classes at Tri-C, where he was able to combine the knowledge he gained working side jobs in Morocco with classroom and real-world experiences.

“My IT professors brought the real world into the classroom in a lot of ways,” he said. “They have so much experience working in the field, and they know exactly what we’ll encounter out there. For example, we’d shut the network off in the classroom, and we’d have to figure out what went wrong and how to fix it. There was a lot of fun, hands-on instruction like that.”

El Bekkari earned associate degrees in networking hardware and software in 2017 and an associate degree in cybersecurity in 2020. He then moved on to Franklin University, where he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in information systems in 2021. This fall, alongside the State Department fellowship, he began studying for a master’s in cybersecurity at Franklin. He hopes to graduate in 2024.



He also works for the Tri-C Information Technology Services (ITS) department as a systems administrator, a job he has held since May 2022.

“I was originally an ITS intern for about five months last spring and summer before securing the full-time job,” he said. “I secured the job due to my experience, educational background and the people I worked with as an intern who were great references on my application. I’ve gained tremendous experience working for ITS.”

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT FELLOWSHIP

Much as with the opportunity to move to the United States, El Bekkari found the State Department Foreign Affairs Information Technology Fellowship by chance.

He was browsing online when he found the application, which stated the fellowship was open to U.S. citizens only. He wasn’t a citizen at the time, but when he became one in 2021, he immediately applied — once again looking to his Tri-C instructors for help.

“There were a lot of things involved,” he said. “The process included an essay, test and interview, and my ESL instructors from Tri-C helped me prep for the essay. I looked to them because they were the first teachers I interacted with when I arrived in America, and I’ve had a special bond with them ever since.

Earlier this year, El Bekkari was one of 15 students nationwide to be selected for the 2022-2023 fellowship. He’ll receive up to \$75,000 in funding toward his master’s degree, along with two summer internships over the next two years.

“The first year, your internship is at the State Department offices in Washington, D.C.,” he said. “The second year, you get an internship at an embassy or consulate abroad. After that, I’m hoping to possibly work full time for them. I believe that being trilingual and my background in IT will increase my chances of securing a position as a foreign information management specialist.”

For now, El Bekkari will continue to take advantage of new opportunities as he encounters them.

“I am so grateful for these opportunities,” he said. “I have put in a lot of hard work to maximize them, but I have also gotten a lot of help from many amazing people along the way, many of them from Tri-C. I would not be where I am right now if not for Tri-C. I am 100% sure of that.”

“MY IT PROFESSORS BROUGHT THE REAL WORLD INTO THE CLASSROOM IN A LOT OF WAYS. THEY HAVE SO MUCH EXPERIENCE WORKING IN THE FIELD, AND THEY KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE’LL ENCOUNTER OUT THERE.”

— Anass El Bekkari, Tri-C alumnus

THE Magic Words

SARA CLARK DOESN'T JUST TEACH ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE. SHE HELPS IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES OPEN THE DOOR TO A NEW LIFE.

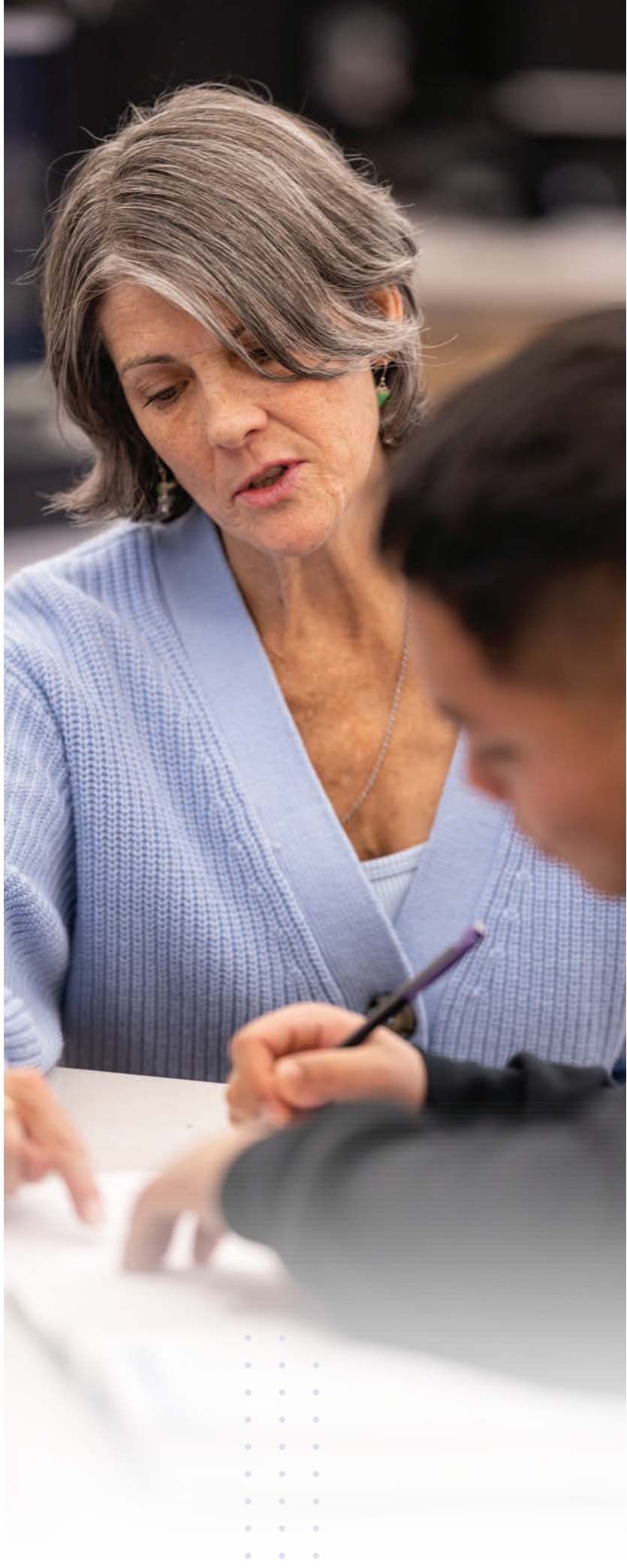
In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. As reports of bombs dropping on neighborhoods and atrocities being committed against civilians shocked the world, an exodus began from the Eastern European country.

Some of those leaving landed in Northeast Ohio, many of them in the area surrounding Cuyahoga Community College's Western Campus in Parma — a city that lays claim to one of the state's largest Ukrainian populations.

This point was brought home in April when Sara Clark, assistant professor of English as a Second Language (ESL), opened her email and read the following message from student Nadiia Yendrys:

STORY BY [Jarrod Zickefoose](#)

PHOTOS BY [Tamara London](#)



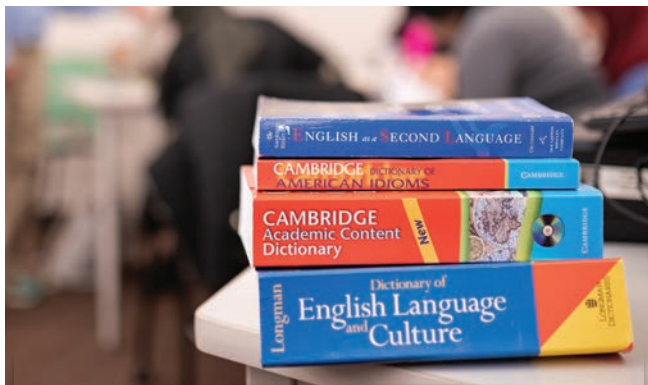
“SOME OF YOU ASKED HOW TRI-C CAN HELP UKRAINIANS AND UKRAINIAN REFUGEES COMING TO THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, I HAVE ONE IDEA. THIS WILL BE ESPECIALLY USEFUL AND VALUABLE FOR OUR COMMUNITY. MORE THAN 300 NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING REFUGEES HAVE ARRIVED IN CLEVELAND IN RECENT DAYS. SOME OF THEM ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING ENGLISH. A BASIC LEVEL OF ENGLISH CAN HELP THEM FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE AND FIND A JOB. IS IT REALISTIC TO PROVIDE THEM WITH BASIC ENGLISH COURSES AT TRI-C? THEY CANNOT PAY NOW AND CANNOT RECEIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. IN ADDITION, THEY CAN ONLY COME IN THE EVENING.”

— Nadia Yendrys, Tri-C Student



For Clark, who coordinates the Western Campus ESL program, this was more than an academic calling. It was a moral duty.

Having left everything they knew behind, these immigrants were embarking on a new and frightening chapter. Much would be required of them — not the least of which was learning to speak the language of their new land.



Clark followed through on Yendrys’ email. With assistance from Student Affairs, Counseling, the Aspire program and more, she helped organize an informational meeting for Ukrainians in early August. She invited a group of Tri-C students and shared flyers with a handful of local community groups and churches. She expected about 25 people.

Nearly 300 showed up. The session lasted nearly three hours, and more than 150 people registered for placement testing that night.

“There’s a real sense of urgency in this population to do everything they can to stay here,” Clark said. “They wanted to learn English, and they wanted to start that day.”

It’s hard to overstate the importance of speaking the native tongue until you don’t. Think about it — even expressing that you would like to learn English is difficult if you don’t speak the language. Imagine trying to get a job, enroll in a course or fill out a government form.

Most of the Ukrainian refugees who attended the session have temporary protected status, which does not offer a path to citizenship. If they want U.S. citizenship, they have two years to find a way. They aren’t eligible for FAFSA assistance, and few have jobs.

By partnering with Aspire — which provides reading, writing and math skills to adults 16 and older — Clark could help direct students to free ESL classes while giving them a way into credit coursework and degree pathways.

But more importantly, she and Tri-C’s ESL program are helping give people a foothold in their new home. Ukrainian refugees and other ESL students are not like high schoolers taking French to fulfill a foreign language requirement.

“THERE’S A REAL SENSE OF URGENCY IN THIS POPULATION TO DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO STAY HERE.”

— Sara Clark, Assistant Professor,
English as a Second Language

TRI-C FACULTY PROFILE

“For these students, English isn’t going to be a foreign language — it’s going to be the language of their life,” Clark said. “Tri-C is the best place in the United States to do this job. There’s no other place that has such a committed program for teaching ESL students who want to continue on and earn degrees.”

The broader ESL program at Tri-C serves a diverse student body, ranging in age from late teens to 60 and older. In addition to teaching English, the program serves as a support network for participants.



“We don’t just help them get their coursework done,” Clark said. “They need help with everything — you know, ‘Help me find a dentist,’ things like that.”

Clark began teaching English in 1999 as an adjunct at Tri-C. A year later, a formative experience on her path to teaching ESL came to pass.

“I had always wanted to teach in the Arctic, so I just started looking for jobs. I developed a relationship with the educational director in this reserve with 2,000 people, a small town. There was no way to get there except to fly in. And so my whole family — three kids, two dogs and a husband — went up there, and I got a job teaching English.”

The residents of Sandy Lake First Nations in Northern Ontario speak Oji-Cree. Clark taught ESL to high school students there, borrowing a lot from disciplines like speech therapy.

“ESL students have to train their mouths and their vocal apparatuses,” she said. “For example, most languages don’t have an R like the American R. When you make an R in English, your tongue doesn’t touch anything in your mouth. In other languages, your tongue touches your teeth and you flip it or roll it.”

Clark sometimes uses Dr. Seuss books for this purpose.

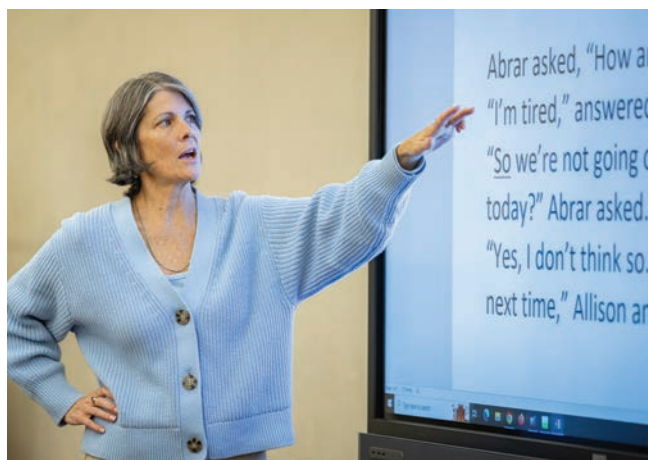
“I consider myself an organic teacher. We teach the language through popular culture. We tend to be very hands-on and interactive in our classes. There’s very little lecturing going on.”

Starting out as a singer and actress, Clark studied theater at Northwestern University and sang jazz in Chicago clubs. She also traveled around Europe as part of a small a cappella group. Today she sings only at her Fairview Park home, accompanied by her ukulele — but music still comes in handy. Earworms can help students memorize grammar, for example.

“When you learn a language as your first language, you just learn the grammar,” Clark said. “You don’t have to be taught the way it works.”

Learning English as a second language, however, is more than just training mouth muscles and mastering verb conjugation. For immigrants and refugees coming to the United States, proficient English is the key to unlocking a new life.

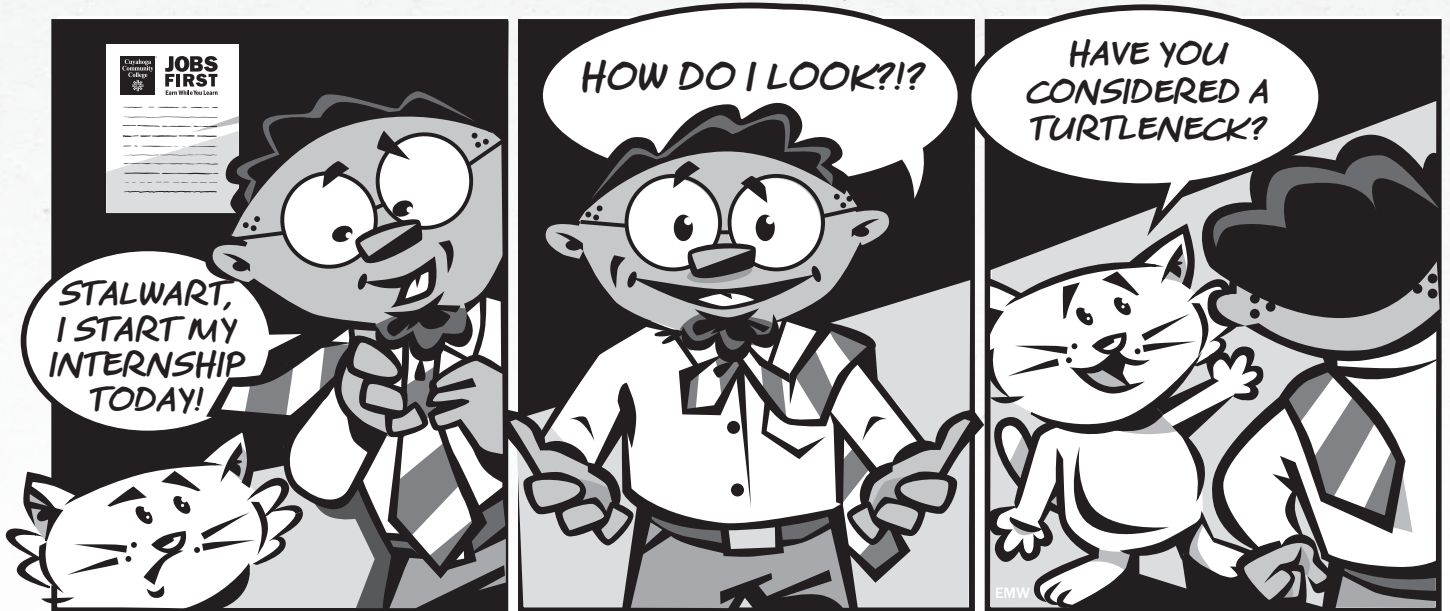
“There’s something more than a grade at stake for these students,” Clark said. “They can actually be a more whole human being — a full part of the community.”



“THERE’S SOMETHING MORE THAN A GRADE AT STAKE FOR THESE STUDENTS.”

— Sara Clark

THE ADVENTURES OF STEADFAST & STALWART



A PATH TO PROSPERITY

Building a path is the first step in any journey.

Cuyahoga Community College faculty and staff encourage students to begin shaping their careers through experiential learning opportunities.

On-the-job learning helps students apply their technical and social skills in the field, recognize their strengths, expand their network connections and gain a competitive edge in the job market. For employers, it's a way to bring in fresh perspectives, create a pipeline for new talent and offer mentorship opportunities.

Real-world experience offers insight into a career path, and internships, job shadowing and earn-and-learn opportunities — such as Tri-C's Jobs First program — are key milestones along the journey.



COMIC STRIP BY
Eric Wheeler
STORY BY
Anthony Moujaes

ONE LAST THING



SEEING IS LEARNING

TRI-C PARTNERED WITH ESSILOR VISION FOUNDATION TO HOST A ONE-DAY EVENT THAT PROVIDED NO-COST VISION SCREENINGS FROM AREA EYE DOCTORS FOR DOZENS OF COMMUNITY RESIDENTS. MOLLY DRENEN, MANAGER OF TRI-C'S OPHTHALMIC DISPENSING PROGRAM, DETAILS THE IMPORTANCE AND SUCCESS OF THE CHANGING LIFE THROUGH LENSES EVENT.



BY **Molly Drenen**

More than 10 million children and 90 million adults in the United States are at high risk for vision loss, and many more cannot afford eyeglasses. Poor vision is an obstacle to academic success, especially for children, as 80% of what we learn is processed visually.

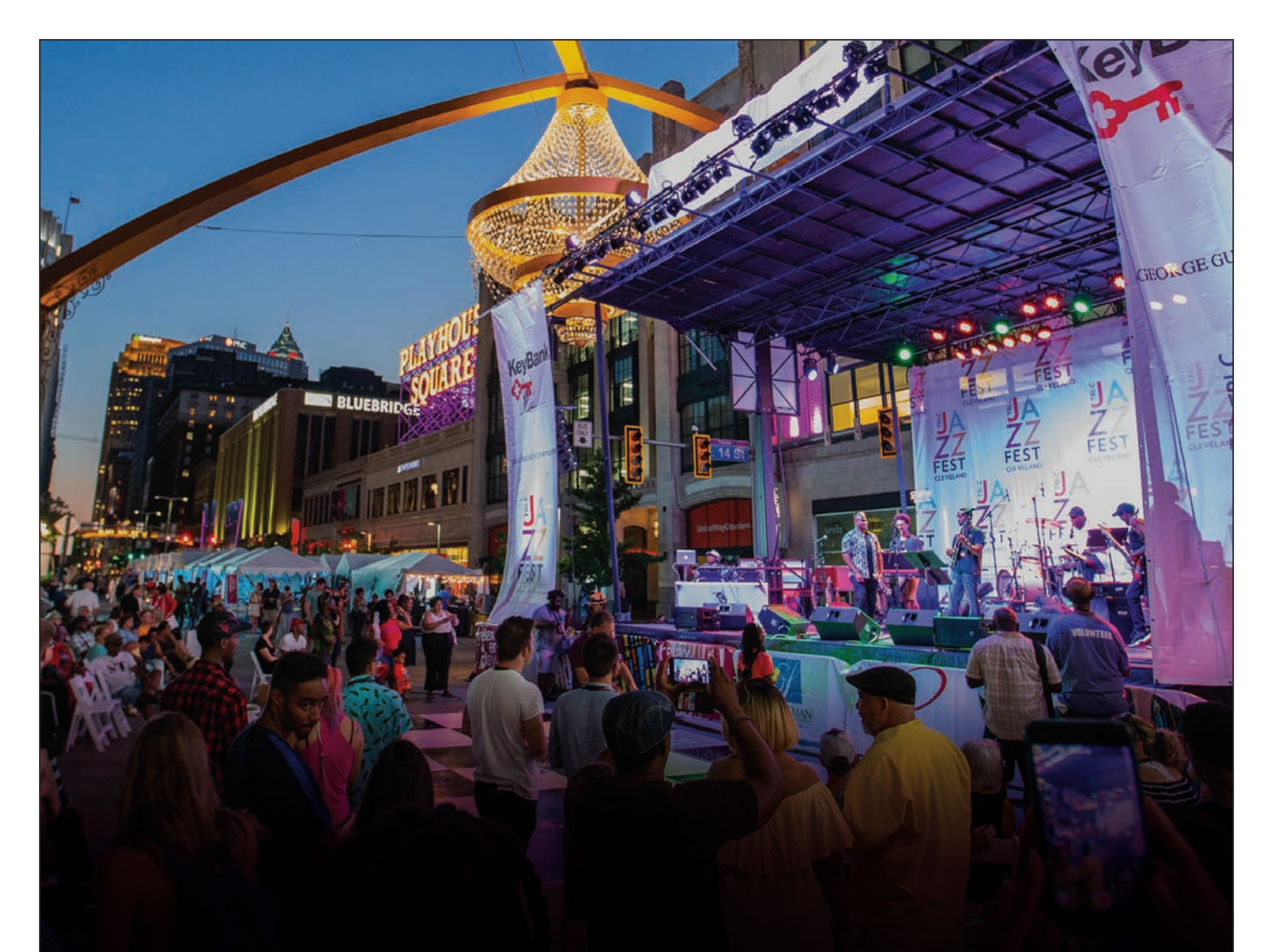
As the community's college, Tri-C has long been committed to addressing the needs of the Greater Cleveland region, including the needs of students and residents of the surrounding area. Cuyahoga Community College has helped more than 400 patients see clearly while giving Optical Technology students real-world experience. Tri-C's Metropolitan Campus Optical Dispensary is a student-run clinic. During their second and third semesters, Optical Technology students gain experience managing an optical store. As part of their coursework, students design, fabricate and dispense no-cost eyeglasses to those in need.

Tri-C took this commitment a step further this fall by partnering with the Essilor Vision Foundation on a Changing Life through Lenses® event. On Oct. 11, the College provided free vision screenings and glasses to 73 community members. The estimated savings to these patients is more than \$15,000. More than 30 volunteers supported the cause.

Thanks are due to Dr. Chelsea Des Rosiers, Dr. John Novak and Dr. Josie Kosunick for free vision screenings; the Essilor Foundation and Essilor team for materials; Darcy Downie of Prevent Blindness Ohio for supporting Tri-C's Optical Technology program; and Tri-C alumni, students, faculty and staff for volunteering their time.

At Tri-C, we can — and do — change lives.





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