

TRI-C®

# TIMES



## COOKING UP CAREERS


Students gain hands-on experience running their own restaurant

# INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE



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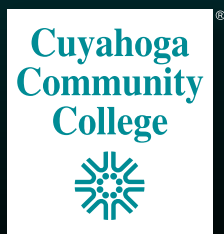


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# PRESIDENT'S Message

## TO OUR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

As Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) approaches its 60th anniversary, it is poised to continue doing what it has always done best: grow and change with the times.

Throughout 2023, *Tri-C Times* will highlight alumni from different eras to give a glimpse into how the College has evolved throughout the years. In this issue, you'll meet Loren Arnoff — a member of the first graduating class and, by virtue of alphabetical order, the first graduate in Tri-C history.

His memories of the College's early days include a series of obstacles and a certain amount of trial and error, but a sense of unshakable camaraderie among faculty, staff, students and administrators endured through it all and brought us to where we are today.

In fact, that spirit of ingenuity that helped build "the community's college" from the ground up all those years ago remains alive and well.

Last fall, I spent my first 100 days as Tri-C president meeting with leaders across Northeast Ohio as well as staff, faculty and students here at the College. These open and honest discussions uncovered the need for a post-pandemic refresh of our strategies, structures and systems.

My inauguration ceremony in early April was preceded by more than a week's worth of activities designed to celebrate the past, present and future of this incredible institution. As I formally assume my presidential duties, I welcome this opportunity to share some of the work currently underway to revitalize and improve the student experience at Tri-C.



**ONE EXCITING PROJECT IS FOCUSED ON STREAMLINING THE COLLEGE'S ENROLLMENT PROCESS. OTHERS ARE BASED ON PROPOSALS CREATED BY OUR OWN FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS, MOST OF WHICH ADDRESS A NEED FOR MORE PERSONALIZED ATTENTION THROUGHOUT THE STUDENT JOURNEY.**

Of course, community partners and donors are instrumental in helping the College bring ideas like these to fruition. We are endlessly grateful for the support we continue to receive and for the opportunities that support affords us to expand and improve our services.

We may have started with little more than hand-me-down desks and a dream, but just look at how far we've come — and how far we can continue to go — 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, Cuyahoga Community College

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**HONORING 'BIG BEN'**

Tri-C recently retired the No. 4 jersey of NBA Hall of Famer Ben Wallace, who played for the College during the 1992-1993 and 1993-1994 seasons. Wallace was a four-time NBA All-Star (2003-2006), four-time NBA Defensive Player of the Year (2002, 2003, 2005, 2006) and won the 2004 NBA title with the Detroit Pistons during his 16 seasons in the league. He was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2021.



**TRI-C WELCOMES INDIA PIERCE LEE**

India Pierce Lee joined Tri-C as executive vice president and chief strategy officer on March 6, expanding the College's role as the leading public higher education institution driving social and economic mobility in Northeast Ohio. Pierce Lee comes to Tri-C from the Cleveland Foundation, where she was a senior vice president.

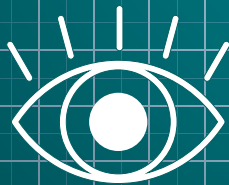
**RING 2023**

**A PERFORMANCE TO REMEMBER**

The sounds of one of Europe's oldest orchestras filled the Metro Campus auditorium when the Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine performed as part of the Tri-C Classical Piano Series. Ukrainian-American conductor and Cleveland native Theodore Kuchar led the orchestra in front of a capacity crowd on the eve of the one-year anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion into Ukraine.



# BRIGHT IDEAS



## TRI-C FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS HELP DRIVE INNOVATION FOR THE COLLEGE'S FUTURE

When Michael Baston became president of Cuyahoga Community College last summer, his first order of business was simple: Listen.

He spent his first 100 days in office meeting with government, industry, business and education leaders across Northeast Ohio, and he lent his ear to the College's staff, faculty and students. What is Tri-C? What should it be? How can we improve the institution to better meet the needs of students, industry and Northeast Ohio?

Three themes emerged from Baston's first 100 days of listening, learning and engagement, and they are central to his vision for the College: build a culture of clarity, redesign the student experience and strengthen the institution's value proposition.

These three themes are being used as a springboard from which to spur ideas and innovation across the College, informing decisions and shaping Tri-C's strategic planning process.

In January, the entire Tri-C community was asked how it would put these themes into action during Ideas Festivals held at five College locations. It was an opportunity to brainstorm, discuss and recommend the best ideas for putting Baston's themes into action and for moving Tri-C forward.

Faculty, staff and students at each location were broken up into small, diverse groups, each tasked with producing an actionable proposal focusing on one theme. After these groups finished their work, they came together to present their ideas.

STORY BY **Jarrod Zickefoose**  
PHOTOS BY **Noelle Bye, John Hausman,  
Christine Hickey and Tamara London**



Involving the entire College community was critical, as it brought multiple perspectives to the table and gave everyone at Tri-C a stake in the conversation.

“I have lots of ideas — we all do, as leaders — about what we should do,” said Westshore Campus President Scott Latiolais. “But folks on our campuses know through their experience and intuition what needs to be done.”

“I can pontificate all day long about what I think needs to happen, or I can ask the really capable folks around me. Nine times out of 10, they will get us to the place we need to be as an institution.”

Participants welcomed the opportunity. Groups took to the task seriously, with energy and engagement.

“At one point, the volume was so high folks were having trouble hearing each other. That’s always a positive sign. The only negative feedback I got was about the food,” Latiolais joked.

“People were hesitant at first, but then they started opening up,” said Metropolitan Campus President Denise McCory. “There was a lot of energy. People were laughing and engaged.”

**“I HAVE LOTS OF IDEAS — WE ALL DO, AS LEADERS — ABOUT WHAT WE SHOULD DO. BUT FOLKS ON OUR CAMPUSES KNOW THROUGH THEIR EXPERIENCE AND INTUITION WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.”**

— Scott Latiolais, Westshore Campus President



**“PEOPLE WERE HESITANT AT FIRST, BUT THEN THEY STARTED OPENING UP.”**

— Denise McCory, Metropolitan Campus President





In the weeks that followed, participants voted for the top three proposals from their campus or location. College leadership then voted on the top seven. Lastly, the seven finalists presented their ideas, which were put to a Collegewide vote to determine the festival's top three proposals (see Page 10).

A striking feature of the proposals was the way similar ideas surfaced independently. For example, personal attention to students was a common theme. One proposal involved improvements to the “onboarding” process for students, including an admissions concierge and friendlier payment dates. Another, titled From Welcome Mat to Graduation Cap, envisioned a concierge who would assist a student throughout their entire Tri-C journey.

“We had so many shared perspectives,” said Western Campus President Lisa Williams. “We could have a process in place that we thought was good, but when you get to the perspective of the end user, it made you realize that maybe that’s not the outcome we were looking for.”

Tri-C’s quick move to online instruction in 2020 during the pandemic lockdown offered ideas that could improve the College during the “now normal.” One proposal, The Stomp Community, involved a collection of real-time chat groups with experts available to quickly and accurately answer student questions. Another advocated simplifying how students interact with virtual courses by offering a uniform online experience.

“We can make this the new Tri-C experience,” Williams said.



**“WE COULD HAVE A PROCESS IN PLACE THAT WE THOUGHT WAS GOOD, BUT WHEN YOU GET TO THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE END USER, IT MADE YOU REALIZE THAT MAYBE THAT’S NOT THE OUTCOME WE WERE LOOKING FOR.”** — Lisa Williams, Western Campus President



Improving the Tri-C app was another idea that surfaced repeatedly. Adding GPS to assist with campus navigation was a specific improvement more than one group recommended.

“People are united,” said Eastern Campus President Todd Kitchen. “They are in sync around this idea of providing an extraordinary experience for students.”

Even ideas that did not become finalists were useful, according to the campus presidents. Many spoke of implementing concepts from the Ideas Festival at their campuses, perhaps as a beta test for Collegewide implementation. More than that, the open exchange of ideas proved empowering and fruitful.

“The Ideas Festival was a great example of what happens when we take a moment to bring the College together and ask, ‘How can we meet the needs of the students we are serving today and will serve in the future?’” Kitchen said. “Now it’s our responsibility to follow through.”

**“THEY ARE IN SYNC AROUND THIS IDEA OF PROVIDING AN EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS.”**

— Todd Kitchen, Eastern Campus President



# THE WINNING IDEAS

## THREE PROPOSALS WERE SELECTED AS IDEAS FESTIVAL WINNERS IN A COLLEGEWIDE VOTE:

1

### From Welcome Mat to Graduation Cap

This proposal will help students navigate Tri-C by creating a “virtual backpack,” forming a Collegewide admissions team and implementing a personalized concierge model.

2

### Tri-C Journey Map

This proposal will clarify the student journey and increase retention by presenting a clear pathway from application to degree in a straightforward, linear flowchart or infographic.

3

### Online Campus

This proposal will give remote students a cohesive virtual home and increase Tri-C’s brand recognition by creating a system that’s accessible from anywhere in the world.





# WHAT'S NEXT?

A sponsor will be assigned to each winning proposal this spring to organize the teams that will recommend how to implement each proposal in coordination with other priorities and initiatives and the College's overarching strategic direction. Work to launch each idea is expected to begin in the fall.

The process yielded many outstanding ideas. While the College is starting with the top three, Tri-C will also explore other proposals that can be easily implemented and result in significant improvements for students.



# Continuous Improvement

## USING A JAPANESE PRINCIPLE KNOWN AS **KAIZEN**, TRI-C IS IMPROVING ITS STUDENT ENROLLMENT PROCESS

One thing Tri-C President Michael Baston heard during his first 100 days was that the College's enrollment process was too complicated.

To address this, a group of Corporate College® professionals trained in Lean Six Sigma (LSS) engaged a cross-functional team of College leaders in a Kaizen event designed to evaluate and improve Tri-C's recruitment and enrollment processes.

Kaizen is a Japanese term that means "continuous improvement" or "change for the better." LSS practitioners commonly hold Kaizen events to map out existing processes and brainstorm ways to simplify and improve them.

During the intensive four-day event at Corporate College East in December, a Collegewide team examined the current enrollment process and discussed how it could be streamlined to better serve students. Participants studied everything from outreach and marketing to placement testing to new student orientation.

"We were able to create process maps and use LSS strategies to come up with creative solutions to decrease the number of steps it takes for a student to enroll," said Heidi Nicholas, executive director of Enrollment Management and Operations.

**"WE WERE ABLE TO CREATE PROCESS MAPS AND USE LSS STRATEGIES TO COME UP WITH CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO DECREASE THE NUMBER OF STEPS IT TAKES FOR A STUDENT TO ENROLL."**

— Heidi Nicholas, Executive Director,  
Enrollment Management and Operations



STORY BY **Noelle Bye**  
PHOTOS BY **Cody York**



Recommendations included implementing a centralized recruitment structure, offering financial planning for all students and clarifying the names of service areas. The team projects it will reduce the number of enrollment steps by 68%.

Short-term plans involve developing comprehensive outreach strategies for credit and noncredit programs and automating financial payment holds for eligible students. In the long term, the team plans to organize a task force to enhance registration and payment options and implement standard 12-week sessions and rolling-start courses.

“The improvements we’ve recommended will lead to reduced cycle time, increased retention, fewer manual processes and greater clarity for students,” said Angela Johnson, vice president of Access and Completion.

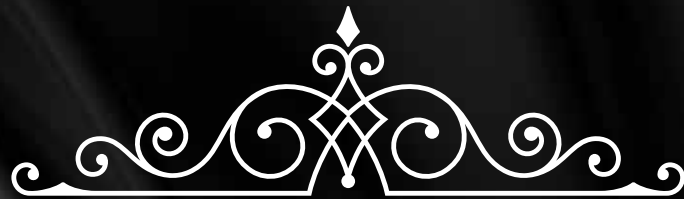
The team hopes to decrease customer wait times, increase response times and provide cost savings to the College by Sept. 1, with major improvements in place in time for Fall 2024 registration.

**“THE IMPROVEMENTS WE’VE RECOMMENDED WILL LEAD TO REDUCED CYCLE TIME, INCREASED RETENTION, FEWER MANUAL PROCESSES AND GREATER CLARITY FOR STUDENTS.”**

— Angela Johnson, Vice President, Access and Completion



# COOKING UP CAREERS AT



# ALERE

AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE



**TRI-C STUDENTS GAIN  
HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE RUNNING  
THEIR OWN RESTAURANT**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY Noelle Bye and Tamara London



The sounds of chopping knives and shouted orders fill the bustling kitchen. As customers flow into the dining room, staff members emerge with ambitious and diverse fare like Tex-Mex egg rolls, blackened salmon and molten chocolate lava cake.

And Tri-C students are behind the entire operation.

Tucked into a corner of the College's Jerry Sue Thornton Center on East 22nd Street, Alere (Latin for "to nourish") gives Hospitality Management students a taste of life in the restaurant business.

"It's something that speaks to me," said Devaughn Maxwell, 26, who is working at Alere this semester. "It's a hands-on experience, and I'm really good at working with my hands. It's the best way for me to learn things and retain information."

Featuring cuisine from across the globe, the weekly menu is created and prepared by Tri-C culinary students under the supervision of faculty advisors and instructors.

Chef Katherine George, a lecturer in Tri-C's Hospitality Management Center of Excellence, currently heads up the kitchen. She is one of the many faculty members who bring classical culinary education and decades of industry experience to the College.

"Since Alere is student-staffed, the process involves communicating with incoming students to see what experience they've had in commercial kitchens," she said. "We then work together to put dishes on the menu that will make their experience challenging but not overwhelming. The idea is to have them step outside their comfort zone, learn new things and feel a little bit of heat in the kitchen — while still serving great food."

While some students are rookies, others are restaurant veterans. Maxwell and former Alere staffer Siriphan "Kiwi" Wongpeng fall into the latter category. Maxwell has been cooking for 23 years — going back to the green cupcakes he concocted at age 3. Wongpeng, 36, has run Lakewood's Thai Thai with her family for seven years. During her time at Alere in Spring 2021, she picked up culinary and management skills that she can apply to her own business.



**“THE IDEA IS TO HAVE THEM STEP OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE, LEARN NEW THINGS AND FEEL A LITTLE BIT OF HEAT IN THE KITCHEN — WHILE STILL SERVING GREAT FOOD.”**

— Chef Katherine George, Lecturer, Hospitality Management



“I got real-life experience at Alere, and it will help me make a smoother transition from school to the food industry,” she said.

Each week, a different student is responsible for putting together a three-course chef de cuisine special that includes an appetizer, entrée and dessert. The student also acts as chef, taking responsibility for all aspects of their dishes and running the kitchen.

“My favorite memory at Alere was when my chef de cuisine special featuring Thai food sold out,” Wongpeng said. “I was proud to present food from my background.”

Before working at Alere, students typically go through eight to 10 courses in restaurant and dining room operations, with at least three focused on cooking and baking. They spend eight weeks in the kitchen and eight weeks in the dining room, working each position as they move through the semester.

Alex Richardson, 20, spent the first eight weeks of Fall 2022 in the “back of the house” — restaurant lingo for “in the kitchen” — where he prepped and cooked food. His second eight weeks were spent in the “front of the house,” hosting and serving food.

“Alere has helped me a lot because of the staff,” Richardson said. “You get the job done well at the end of the day. Teamwork makes the dream work.”

The students who fare best in Alere’s fast-paced setting are adaptable and communicate effectively, George said.

“The camaraderie among students develops almost immediately. They enjoy each other’s company, so they start to lift each other up.”

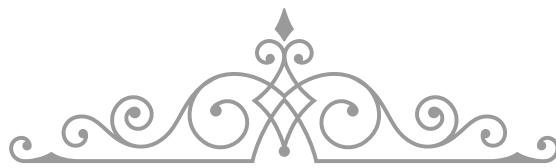
Alere is the latest incarnation of a student-run restaurant at Tri-C. It replaced the former Bistro 87, located on the Metropolitan Campus, in 2018.

“When the Alex B. Johnson Campus Center was designed, there was no space to house Bistro 87,” George said. “We operated out of the Hospitality Management Center on Public Square until space was identified at the Jerry Sue Thornton Center; then we worked with architects to renovate and create what is now Alere.”

**“MY FAVORITE MEMORY AT ALERE WAS WHEN MY CHEF DE CUISINE SPECIAL FEATURING THAI FOOD SOLD OUT.”**

— Siriphan Wongpeng, Former Alere Staffer





The restaurant serves about 100-120 customers each week. Alere also caters private lunches at the restaurant and select gatherings at the College's Jerry Sue Thornton Center and Hospitality Management Center.

After an unprecedented interruption to the hospitality industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, Alere is giving prospective restaurateurs and chefs vital experiences they can apply to the dining rooms of the future.

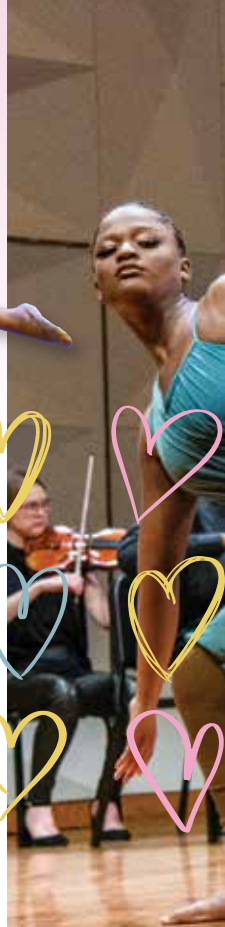
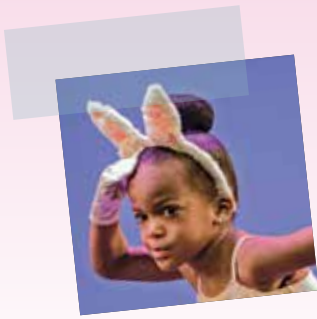
"Hospitality establishment owners and managers are facing so many challenges in the 'new, now' normal," George said. "When employers are searching for new, well-rounded employees to give them insight into how to navigate these challenges, our students can be those employees."

The good news is that, though the restaurant industry may be changing, it isn't going anywhere.

"You'll always make money because everybody needs to eat," Maxwell said. "That's my motto. Everyone needs to eat, so you'll always have a profit."

**Alere is open Thursdays and Fridays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Spring 2023 semester.**  
Call 216-987-4080 for reservations or carryout orders. Visit [tri-c.edu/alere](http://tri-c.edu/alere) for more information.





# FOR THE LOVE OF THE ARTS

**THROUGH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE CLEVELAND FOUNDATION, TRI-C'S CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY GIVES KIDS ACCESS TO QUALITY ARTS PROGRAMS IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS**

STORY BY **Anthony Moujaes**  
PHOTOS BY **Jeff Forman**

Students smile, brimming with joy as they prepare to showcase their hard work and commitment. Music plays as dancers practice their routines and singers warm up their voices.

It's a familiar scene at Tri-C's Creative Arts Academy, a pre-college preparatory program for Cleveland children ages 3-18 that provides dance, media arts, music and summer camp programming.

The Cleveland Foundation's Arts Mastery program supports community arts programs, including the Creative Arts

**"THE SUCCESS OF TRI-C'S CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY HAS BEEN NOTHING SHORT OF PHENOMENAL, AND WE ARE THRILLED TO SUPPORT THEM THROUGH OUR EVER-GROWING INVESTMENTS IN ARTS MASTERY PROGRAMMING."**

— Lillian Kuri, Cleveland Foundation  
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Academy, in 20 neighborhoods throughout the city. The Foundation partners with Tri-C and other organizations to deliver year-round, mastery-level arts programs that help youth develop qualities needed in adulthood.

"The success of Tri-C's Creative Arts Academy has been nothing short of phenomenal, and we are thrilled to support them through our ever-growing investments in Arts Mastery programming," said Lillian Kuri, Cleveland Foundation executive vice president and chief operating officer.





Since 2019, the Foundation has contributed \$2.6 million to Tri-C’s vocal and dance mastery programs, including a 2022 gift of \$1.2 million to the Creative Arts Academy — its largest-ever contribution to the College.

That gift will help the academy serve up to 1,600 students at multiple Cleveland Public Library branches, the Broadway School of Music and the Arts in Slavic Village, and select city recreational centers and community sites by 2024.

“Exposing students to a varied repertoire, ranging from works by Black and Brown composers and choreographers to Western European, familiarizes students with a variety of cultures and helps them gain pride in their own heritage,” said Paul Cox, Tri-C’s dean of Creative Arts. “Music and dance education help students grow into citizens who are both aware and respectful of people from different cultures.”

Tri-C’s Creative Arts Academy offers a vibrant arts curriculum that creates a clear pathway to college. Students develop discipline, self-confidence and teamwork while healing and strengthening the community in profound ways.

“A community that sings together stays together,” said Cox. “Thanks to generous support from the Cleveland Foundation, we are reaching more youth by connecting with them where they live.”

The Cleveland Foundation has contributed more than \$11 million to Tri-C programs since 1995.

**“THANKS TO GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE CLEVELAND FOUNDATION, WE ARE REACHING MORE YOUTH BY CONNECTING WITH THEM WHERE THEY LIVE.”**

— Paul Cox, Dean, Creative Arts



# INTERIOR MOTIVES

**NANCY KRAIG HELPS TRI-C'S INTERIOR DESIGN PROGRAM  
CREATE A VIBRANT NEW IMAGE**

STORY BY Beth Cieslik

PHOTOS BY Noelle Bye and McKinley Wiley





Interior designers use creativity and problem-solving skills to blend form and function, helping clients create spaces that fit their unique needs. From color to lighting and materials to furniture, each aspect is carefully considered for maximum benefit.

Assistant professor Nancy Kraig applied this same approach when she took over as manager of Tri-C's Interior Design program in 2019.

The Eastern Campus-based program had been around for several decades and needed revitalization. Kraig spearheaded a branding refresh, worked with the Integrated Communications department to create modern and exciting marketing collateral and reinstated the Interior Design Club — all of which led to increased enrollment, higher graduation rates and greater visibility within the industry.

But none of this would have been possible without the distinctive mix of positivity, compassion and experience she brings to the classroom and the College.

Kraig landed her first design job — an internship with Sherwin-Williams' Color Marketing and Design Studio — after applying for a store-based position with the company as an undergrad.

“That experience got me interested in the use of color and color trends,” she said. “I lean more toward the creative side of the field over the technical and construction aspects.”

Kraig worked at Sherwin-Williams and then as an art teacher before joining Tri-C in 2012 as an adjunct professor. She completed a master's degree in interior architecture in 2021 and became tenure-track faculty in fall 2022.

Like most of her students, she has had to balance college with family obligations, work and other responsibilities.

“I have a firsthand understanding of its influence on their success,” she said. “I take time to learn about each student's future plans, past experiences and current situation so I can help them reach their goals.”

## TRI-C FACULTY PROFILE

Students of all ages, backgrounds and ethnicities bring diverse perspectives and experiences to Kraig’s classroom, and she encourages them to express their individuality. After all, creativity and “outside-the-box” thinking are central to the design profession.

“I believe in letting them open their imaginations, research problems and create without set patterns and constrictions,” she said.

Kraig uses real-world examples and experiences in her lectures, developing hands-on projects and assignments that require students to perform research and find solutions to actual issues rather than just memorizing facts.

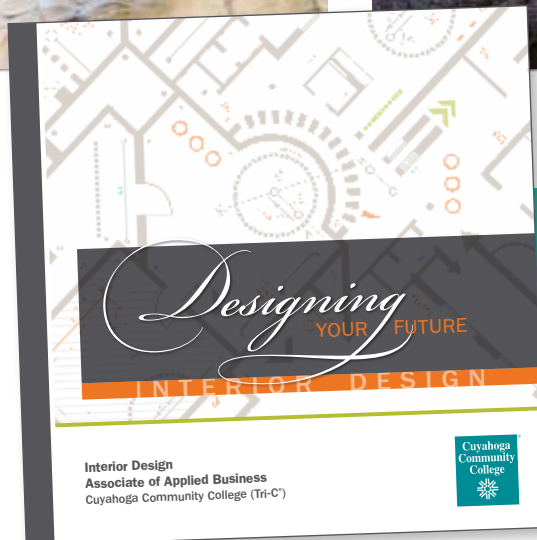
“My teaching style could be summarized as progressivism in its true form,” she said. “Students need to be able to

adapt to change and to address and solve problems as they come. Providing opportunities for higher-level thinking actually teaches them how to learn.”

Whether their dream is to become a residential or commercial designer, an art consultant, a kitchen and bath designer or a sales rep, every student has access to in-depth courses featuring the latest industry tools and standards.

**“I BELIEVE IN LETTING THEM OPEN THEIR IMAGINATIONS, RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND CREATE WITHOUT SET PATTERNS AND CONSTRICTIONS.”**

— Nancy Kraig, Program Manager, Interior Design



View the program brochure, student work and more at [tri-c.edu/interiordesign](http://tri-c.edu/interiordesign).



While interior design has become much more technology- and research-based over the past decade or so, it's also become more human-based — with considerations for mental and physical well-being, inclusion, health and safety.

“Modern designers need to look beyond the aesthetics to consider sustainability and healthy materials in their concepts,” Kraig said. “They must be able to specify products that make a space usable for everyone.”

Tri-C's Interior Design program leads to an Associate of Applied Business degree. Students explore art and design history, space planning, lighting and more as well as professional business practices and cutting-edge drafting technology.

Outreach activities allow them to practice their skills while establishing industry connections. Recent projects include designing door signs for a local nursing home, decorating a child's bedroom with the alumni-run nonprofit Color Your Corner and creating a tablescape for a Providence House fundraiser at Ohio Design Centre.

For some, the program is an affordable building block to a four-year degree. For others, it's a direct link to career opportunities within the local design community.

Many graduates start their own studios right here in Northeast Ohio — IZI interiors, New York Textiles & Interiors and grey designs are a few examples. Others find employment with national chains like Crate & Barrel and Abercrombie & Fitch or local businesses like Surface Materials and Chestnut Hill Home.

Kraig remains active in the industry as a member of the Interior Design Educators Council and local chapters of the International Interior Design Association and American Society of Interior Designers. She also participated in the Color Marketing Group 2020+ World Color Forecast.

But she derives the greatest satisfaction from helping her students develop new skills in a field they're passionate about. Many are career changers pursuing something they've always wanted to do but were afraid to try.

“I see students during the introduction course at the beginning of their journey, and then I get to share in their field experiences at the end,” she said. “They amaze me with their growth.”

**“MODERN DESIGNERS NEED TO LOOK BEYOND THE AESTHETICS TO CONSIDER SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTHY MATERIALS IN THEIR CONCEPTS.”**

— Nancy Kraig



# NEW SCHOOL

STORY BY Erik Cassano  
PHOTOS BY Margie Kirkendall







Public two-year education came to Ohio on Sept. 23, 1963, when the first students arrived for class at Cuyahoga Community College.

Tri-C is now the largest community college in the state, with four sprawling campuses throughout Cuyahoga County, educating more than 41,000 credit and noncredit students each year. Six decades ago, it was a much different story.

That first day, just over 3,000 students — including a young man named Loren Arnoff — filed into the old Brownell School building at the corner of East 14th Street and Sumner Avenue, a block east of where Progressive Field now stands.

The building, which once served as an elementary school and junior high for the children of Cleveland's fabled Millionaire's Row, had been closed for years. When the state gave approval to open Tri-C in 1962, a hurried effort began to renovate the property.

"It was challenging, yet fun, to attend a school that had never been open before," Arnoff said. "We were the guinea pigs, so to speak, but we had a lot of great faculty and staff to get us started."

Arnoff, now 78 and living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a member of Tri-C's first graduating class. His career took him away from the Cleveland area, but he stays connected to his first college alma mater.

Tri-C, he said, gave him a sense of direction that helped shape his life.

**"IT WAS CHALLENGING, YET FUN, TO ATTEND A SCHOOL THAT HAD NEVER BEEN OPEN BEFORE."**

— Loren Arnoff, Tri-C's first graduate

# NEW OPPORTUNITIES

**LOREN ARNOFF, THE FIRST GRADUATE IN TRI-C HISTORY, REFLECTS ON THE COLLEGE'S EARLY YEARS WITH GRATITUDE AND PRIDE**

### STUDENT LIFE

A school in its first year of existence is similar to a puzzle straight out of the box. Each person is a loose piece, and the task is to figure out how each one fits.

That’s especially true for student clubs and organizations. From the first day, Tri-C’s student life organizations needed interested and motivated members — and Arnoff was among those to answer the call.

“It was very easy to bring students into organizations on campus,” he said. “It was a team effort right from the start because everyone was new and all the organizations were starting from scratch.”

Over the course of his two years at Tri-C, Arnoff participated in student government, helped coordinate dances and made event announcements during lunch breaks in the cafeteria.

“There were a lot of students who were active in clubs and organizations and just helping the campus function in general,” he said. “The students were active and engaged, and I really think that helped Tri-C get off the ground. To have a great college, you need students who care.”

Arnoff said faculty and staff also played a big role in building Tri-C in those early years.

The Cleveland area didn’t have enough established college faculty available to staff an entirely new school, so Tri-C turned to area high schools for instructors.

“Several top faculty members and administrators from my alma mater, Cleveland Heights High School, came to Tri-C and began working on their Ph.D. degrees while I was there,” Arnoff said. “In one sense, they were learning along with the students they were teaching.”

But as with the nascent student organizations, the College’s early faculty were resourceful and found ways to make it all work.

“Everyone worked to turn the old Brownell School into a college,” he said. “It didn’t feel different from any other classroom once we got used to it. We had desks, chairs, chalkboards, and we assembled for class just like at any other school.”

Arnoff graduated in 1965 with an associate degree in business administration, attending the College’s first-ever commencement ceremony at the Cleveland Institute of Music. A total of 84 students received degrees that day.

“Because I was at the top of the alphabetical list, I am the first graduate in Tri-C history,” Arnoff said. “The following day, *The Plain Dealer* ran a photo of me with our commencement speaker, Dr. Leland Medsker, director of UC Berkeley’s Center for Research and Development in Higher Education.”

**“BECAUSE I WAS AT THE TOP OF THE ALPHABETICAL LIST, I AM THE FIRST GRADUATE IN TRI-C HISTORY.”**

— Loren Arnoff





## AFTER TRI-C

Arnoff continued his studies at Kent State University, graduating with a BBA in 1967. He was drafted into the Army shortly thereafter, serving two years before entering the corporate world and settling in Tulsa in 1981. But the years and distance haven't dimmed his interest in Tri-C.

"I live more than 1,000 miles away, but part of me will always be connected to Tri-C," he said. "I went there all those years ago unsure of what I wanted to do with my life, and Tri-C helped give me a sense of direction. It's done that for countless students over the years."

Arnoff stays in touch with Tri-C's alumni relations team, visiting Cleveland periodically to see what's new at the College. He hoped to attend the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the Class of 1965 in summer 2022, but COVID-19 nixed those plans.

"It was frustrating to not be there, because I'm still such an enthusiastic supporter and so proud of what we accomplished," he said. "Being the first community college in Ohio, and still the largest, I really feel like we set the bar."

"We were truly blessed with great people who helped get the College off the ground, and Tri-C still is blessed with great people. I'll always be proud to be part of the Tri-C community."

**"I LIVE MORE THAN 1,000 MILES AWAY,  
BUT PART OF ME WILL ALWAYS  
BE CONNECTED TO TRI-C."**

— Loren Arnoff

THE ADVENTURES OF  
**STEADFAST & STALWART**



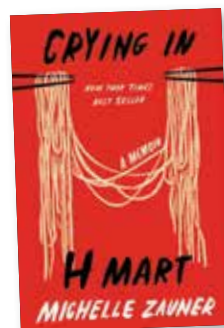
COMIC STRIP BY Eric Wheeler

**THE INAUGURATION OF TRI-C PRESIDENT MICHAEL A. BASTON IS MORE THAN A ONE-DAY EVENT — IT'S A WEEKLONG CELEBRATION. THE COLLEGE PLANNED A SERIES OF EVENTS TO ENGAGE AND EDUCATE STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF AND THE CLEVELAND COMMUNITY.**

**THE NEXT 60 YEARS**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 11 | 1-2 P.M.**

Lunch and conversation hosted by student government leaders and campus presidents. Students and alumni share how Tri-C has touched their lives, what alumni involvement means to them and how they will use their Tri-C experience to contribute to the community.

**Locations:** Eastern, Metropolitan, Western and Westshore campuses



**ENVISION YOUR FUTURE THROUGH THE EYES OF TRI-C ALUMNI**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 11 | 2-3 P.M.**

A panel of alumni from careers featured in this year's Common Reading book, *Crying in H Mart*, share their stories and engage in a moderated discussion with Q&A.

**Location:** Eastern Campus Auditorium

## **WRAAA GROCERY GIVEAWAY: COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENT**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12 | 10 A.M. – 1 P.M.**

Tri-C is partnering with the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA) and others to serve as the distribution site for the WRAAA's Great Grocery Giveaway, distributing boxes of groceries and personal care items to Cuyahoga County residents age 60 and older.

**Location:** Western Campus Theatre



## **A CELEBRATION OF TRI-C FACULTY: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12 | 4-6 P.M.**

Members of the Joint Faculty Senate Council and American Association of University Professors celebrate the past, present and future of Tri-C faculty and Dr. Baston. Music and entertainment provided by 4ToGo featuring special guest Toni Pickens.

**Location:** Eastern Campus Mandel Center Lobby

## **CELEBRATING LEGACY ~ BUILDING MOMENTUM: A DISCUSSION WITH TRI-C'S PAST PRESIDENTS**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 13 | 6-7 P.M.**

Tri-C and the Cleveland Public Library host a panel of past Tri-C presidents moderated by Michael A. Baston. Topics include the founding of the institution and its mission and contributions to the community.

**Location:** Cleveland Public Library Louis Stokes Wing



## **TERMINAL TOWER LIGHTING THURSDAY, APRIL 13**

Cleveland's iconic Terminal Tower lights up in teal on the eve of Dr. Baston's inauguration.

## **THE INAUGURATION OF MICHAEL A. BASTON AS TRI-C'S FIFTH PRESIDENT**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 14 | 11 A.M.**

**Location:** Metropolitan Campus Auditorium



## **THE BASTON BASH: AN INAUGURATION CELEBRATION**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 14 | 7-10 P.M.**

Dinner stations, cocktails and entertainment featuring Walter Barnes & Friends. Barnes, a native Clevelander, is a nationally acclaimed bassist for Babyface, Toni Braxton and others. Hosted by the Cuyahoga Community College Foundation.

Visit the inauguration microsite at  
[tri-c.edu/inauguration](https://tri-c.edu/inauguration)  
for pre- and post-inauguration information.

ONE

LAST

THING



## THE CASE FOR COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

**SET TO LAUNCH THIS FALL, TRI-C'S NEW POST-DEGREE CERTIFICATE IN CYBERSECURITY GIVES STUDENTS FLEXIBILITY THROUGH AN APPROACH BASED ON SUBJECT MASTERY RATHER THAN A SET NUMBER OF INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS**



BY **Charles Dull, Ph.D.**

Within higher education, there has been a growing trend in recent years to consider an alternative to the traditional approach of a defined set of hours spent in a classroom.

Competency-based education (CBE) is an innovative method that will allow students in Tri-C's Cybersecurity post-degree professional certificate program to move through the curriculum at their own pace, advancing through courses as they master each new skill and competency.

In other words, learning is constant — and time is flexible.

Cybersecurity is among the most in-demand professions, with 29% growth expected through 2026. The post-degree cybersecurity program is ideal for those wanting to further their IT career, bolster their knowledge or move into a new career.

Students can learn anytime and anywhere, receiving individualized faculty support to complete each course in 16 weeks or less.

CBE offers balance among work, family and academics. Additionally, students can master specific competencies faster if they already have prior learning or work experience — potentially saving money by completing the program sooner. Because CBE is competency-based, students are prepared to enter the workforce with the knowledge and skills needed for career success.

In the end, the CBE method is tailored to meet different learning abilities and different student needs, leading to more efficient student outcomes.

This is Tri-C's first foray into CBE, with certificates in program design and data analysis slated to launch from the College's IT Center of Excellence in the near future.

44<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNUAL

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**JUNE 22-24**  
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**2023** *Performers*

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- Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue
- Angélique Kidjo
- Richard Bona Presents ASANTE Trio  
*Featuring Osmany Paredes (Piano)  
and Ílario Bell (Drums)*
- Dominick Farinacci and Triad
- Samara Joy
- Christian McBride
- Dan Wilson: 7 Decades of Wonder:  
The Genius of Stevie
- Braxton Cook
- Norman Brown
- Gerald Albright
- Steve Smith and Vital Information:  
*Steve Smith (Drums), Manuel Valera  
(Keys), Janek Gwizdala (Bass)*

Get tickets and passes at [tri-cjazzfest.com](https://tri-cjazzfest.com)



Fran and Jules Belkin



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