

TRI-C CELEBRATES
more than **3,000**
Student Success Stories

AT SPRING COMMENCEMENT

Degrees and certificates awarded represent the achievement of dreams.

Cuyahoga Community College celebrated the academic achievements of 3,124 petitioning graduates at its commencement ceremony on May 18. The second-largest class in Tri-C history, this total reflects the College's unwavering dedication to student success.

"Through their commitment and hard work, these graduates are poised to take on meaningful careers in our region or continue their education at other universities," said Alex Johnson, president of Cuyahoga Community College. "Their bright futures reflect our community's continued investment in affordable higher education."

The student speaker at commencement, Doraja Lake, was chosen by classmates to share her story at the ceremony. Lake, who earned an Associate of Arts degree, said the inner strength gained at the College "changed the script" of her life. Lake intends to transfer to The Ohio State University in the fall to pursue a career in bariatric medicine. She is the first in her family to earn a college degree.

Read Lake's and other graduates' success stories from the Class of 2017 on the following pages or visit www.tri-c.edu/commencement/graduatestories.html.

A TRI-C STORY

Made for the Movies

Chris Leszkowicz earns degree and lands job on film being shot in Cleveland

Chris Leszkowicz looked at his life three years ago and saw a guy clocking long shifts as a restaurant kitchen manager. Despite the title on his nametag, the job fell short of his dreams.

So he turned to Cuyahoga Community College and started work on his Hollywood ending.

The aspiring cinematographer graduated in May with an Associate of Applied Business in Media Arts and Filmmaking. He immediately put his degree to use after landing a job on the set of *White Boy Rick*, a crime drama starring Matthew McConaughey.

The 23-year-old spent this past spring on the crew shooting scenes around Cleveland. "I still can't believe I was part of something like that," he said.

The Brecksville resident decided in 2014 to follow his love of movies and focus on a career in the film industry. Leszkowicz enrolled at Tri-C and began taking classes in cinematography at Metropolitan Campus.

He quickly found a home in the Student Production Office, where he received hands-on training working behind the camera.

Leszkowicz said his experience working on *White Boy Rick* made him realize how much he learned at the College. He said the training helped him build the skills demanded by studios shooting in Northeast Ohio.

"If it wasn't for this program, I would have been lost on that set," he said.



Chris Leszkowicz

The new graduate now becomes part of the workforce needed to support the region's fast-growing film industry. Tri-C has been developing training programs in cooperation with the Greater Cleveland Film Commission.

Leszkowicz said he hopes to be hired to work on another local film set this summer. He's also involved in several freelance projects.

"I'm excited about the future," Leszkowicz said. "Tri-C put me in a position to succeed."

"The professors here go out of their way to help you. They do whatever they can as far as connecting you with job opportunities or transferring to a four-year school."

JATHIKAA PUSHPARAJAH said Tri-C provided her the structure and encouragement needed to graduate with an Associate of Applied Science in Criminal Justice. The 24-year-old from Cleveland Heights said she found focus at the College.

