

40th Anniversary Celebrating Excellence in Education

In celebration of Herkimer County Community College's 40th anniversary, and in honor of the many people who made the College what it is today, the Connections alumni magazine staff solicited feedback from current faculty and staff, as well as emeritus faculty, to learn what they enjoyed most about HCCC, significant changes they've witnessed over the years, and their fondest memories of HCCC. As space limitations kept us from including all responses in the inaugural issue of Connections, we share them with you here.

Laura J. Webster '71, Associate Professor, Emeritus, Science

"I was an adult student at HCCC in 1968 (part-time, evening) and from 1969-1971 (full-time). During my student years, the College was in the factory building in Ilion. All the classrooms, labs and library were on the second floor. Even though the physical plant was primitive compared to the College today, the faculty and staff were top-notch. I truly believe the quality of my education at HCCC was superior to that at any of the colleges I attended later. I was very pleased and proud to join the science faculty at HCCC in 1973 as a colleague. I was very proud of HCCC in the beginning years because the whole staff was student and academically oriented."

Ramona Gassmann '92, Technical Assistant, Child Care Center

"HCCC has been very good to me and my family through the years. I was a very proud student and was honored with "Who's Who in American Colleges." I have been employed at the HCCC Child Care Center for the last several years as a preschool teacher, and both of my daughters are graduates of the preschool. My husband, Bob, is employed at the College as an Assistant Professor of Radio-TV and has served in his profession for many years. My entire family has grown with HCCC and we look forward to many more positive experiences that HCCC has to offer."

Helen Pannes, Professor Emeritus, Travel & Tourism

"I enjoyed the combination of classroom teaching and real life experiences on the various field trips and travel abroad. These experiences brought so much enthusiasm for future learning.

"I am continually grateful to HCCC for providing a workplace that allowed me to accomplish so much, and enjoy each day of teaching."

John H. Thayer, Assistant to the Dean of Students/Director of Counseling Services Emeritus

“I was the fourth employee hired by the College. There was no campus, and we had quarters in the Herkimer County Office Building. I escorted Michelle Bacon, who was our first full-time student, through the first registration process, September 21, 1967. I recall driving a U-Haul truck from Cobleskill Agricultural & Technical College with a load of surplus student desks, accompanied by President McLaughlin’s oldest son.”

Lorraine B. Martin, Professor Emeritus, English

“The first student to complete an online degree was an exciting and memorable moment for HCCC and me because I was the first English professor to teach the required English I course online, allowing HCCC to offer its first complete online degrees. It was exciting to teach online students in Japan, Germany, Alaska, Hawaii and so on.

Shirley Samuels, Professor Emeritus, English

“From the beginning, I was one of the ‘Big Ten’ – the first faculty members at HCCC. I taught for 18 years and was the first to retire. My early classes were full of exciting, gifted students. Over the years, I noticed students read less, but know a great deal because of technology.”

John Casey, Associate Professor Emeritus, Business

“What I enjoyed most about teaching at HCCC was the relative common sense and effort made by most students. There was good balance and quality among the faculty, making the work enjoyable.”

Robert E. Campo, Dean of Students Emeritus

“I enjoyed the challenge of starting up a college in an old factory building in Ilion. The early students were pioneers. The college has recruited many outstanding students over the years. More recently, the student population has become more diverse.”

Robert K. Pring, Professor Emeritus, English/Philosophy

“Our students were friendly, cooperative and bright people. From the first day I taught until the last, it was an honor and a joy to work with them.”

Irving Mason, Associate Professor Emeritus, Business

“I taught evenings from 1967-1975 and was the College’s first evening instructor, before joining the faculty full-time days. I enjoyed the challenge of motivating my students to excel beyond the norm, both in business and in their daily lives.”

Anne Greco, Professor Emeritus, English

“The best part of teaching for me was establishing a good rapport with my students. Their enthusiasm and strong classroom participation helped me learn the importance of nontraditional thinking.”

Daniel F. Fitzgerald, Jr., Professor Emeritus, Business

“When I arrived at HCCC in 1972, we had a new program in data processing. The computer was a donated Mohawk Data Sciences (MDS) 2405, with card input, two nine track tape drives for external storage and a 300 line per minute printer. The only language available on this hardware was Mohawk Data Language (MDL), a subset of ANS Cobol.

“For the first year we used the computer facilities at Special Metals Company in New Hartford. I would drop trays of cards off for processing each evening and bring them back to the College in the morning. From these humble beginnings grew the present day Technology Center with its computer labs, offices, DEC computer systems, etc.!”

Thomas Stock '83, Director of Facilities Operations

“My years as a student at HCCC taught me “how” to learn. I enjoyed using the gym, pool and other facilities. My favorite professor was Tom Barthel.”

Jason Palkovic '05, Technical Assistant, Fitness Center

“I think it says something when you have all these people from different generations who attended Herkimer, and so many come back to work here. It is a special place.

"My favorite professor was Anita Trimboli. She really does a good job preparing students for the real world."

Laura Sharrow '04, Technical Assistant, Radio-TV Broadcasting

"As a student in Radio-TV Broadcasting, I enjoyed editing video. I love how all the professors help each other out. It made it easier for me as a student, and enjoyable now as a co-worker in the department. There is a lot more equipment for student use now, and the digital upgrade in the TV studio is outstanding!"

Aaron Alford '93, Financial Aid Assistant

"A significant change I've noticed since my graduation from HCCC is the development of HCCC's Internet Academy. I enjoyed the small classes on-campus, and my favorite professor was John Gazak."

Shannon Farrell, Administrative Assistant

"The new facilities at HCCC are great! The campus seems so much larger than when I attended almost 20 years ago. My favorite memory is of my first accounting class, where I sat next to a girl who looked as terrified as I was. We struck up a conversation and remain best friends today.

"My favorite professor was, by far, Dr. Anne Greco. Even after so many years I can clearly recall being in her classes – she was great!"

Nadine Dooley '88, Secretary to the Dean of Institutional Advancement

"HCCC gave me the confidence and knowledge to go out into the world. I definitely did not have this confidence right out of high school. As a newly hired College employee, I think the academic programs and facilities have only improved with time."

Suzanne Paddock '90, Career Counselor

"When I graduated from high school, I wasn't sure what I wanted to study. Attending Herkimer allowed me to plan my educational path without taking on huge student loans. As a lifelong resident of the Mohawk Valley, and now an

employee of HCCC, I feel I have come full circle and am part of something that enriches my community.

“With all the changes on campus, it’s great to see that the College has the vision to not just renovate, but to expand to meet the changing educational needs of students preparing to enter the workforce.”