



2025

Year-End Summary & Alumni News







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OPENING LETTER

A Message from Foundation Board President Stephen Zogby and Executive Director Deanna Ferro-Aurience

At the MVCC Foundation, our mission has always been centered on one goal: ensuring that every student has the opportunity to pursue their education without the heavy weight of financial barriers.

Each year, we work diligently to expand the resources available to our students — providing scholarships, program support, and emergency aid that help them persist, succeed, and thrive.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, the Foundation's endowment has grown to more than \$12.1 million, strengthening our ability to support students not only today, but for generations to come. In the 2024–2025 fiscal year alone, the MVCC Foundation raised an impressive \$1.59 million. These resources directly contribute to reducing the financial burden on students and empower them to focus on what matters most — their education and future success.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors, alumni, and friends. Your belief in MVCC and commitment to our students continue to drive our work forward. Every gift you make — large or small — helps open doors, create opportunities, and change lives.

Perhaps the most meaningful measure of our collective success comes directly from our students. Their heartfelt thank-you notes tell powerful stories of dreams supported, paths made possible, and lives transformed. These messages stand as proof of the profound impact your generosity has on our community.

Thank you for all you do to make MVCC a place where students can learn, grow, and build a brighter future.



Stephen Zogby
President, MVCC Foundation
Board of Directors



Deanna Ferro-Aurience
Executive Director, MVCC Foundation

STUDENTS SAY THANKS

"Thank you very much for your generosity and investment in my future. I am committed to making the most of this opportunity and hope to one day give back to my community, just as you have done for me."


"Your generous support will go a long way in helping cover my fees this year. It will truly lighten my load and allow me to focus more fully on my studies."

"Thank you for your contribution, as a 26-year-old returning to college to grow themselves, it can be challenging financially. I appreciate the help and support."

"You have no idea how much this scholarship means to me and how much it will help. I hope one day I will be able to return the favor."

"It has been a lifelong dream to finish my education, and I greatly appreciate your help in bringing this dream to fruition."

"Thank you for your generous support through the MVCC Foundation Textbook Scholarship. This award will greatly help me cover the cost of my textbooks and allow me to focus more on my studies."



2025 Alumni of Merit Award Winner: Jim A. Engler, Jr. '84

Now at the helm of Engler Electric — a family-run business for over a century — Jim A. Engler, Jr., is the third-generation owner to guide the company forward. His journey began at MVCC, where he earned his Electrical Engineering Technology degree in 1984. But for Engler, MVCC was far more than a steppingstone to a career.

“Beyond the textbooks and lectures was a community that believed in potential — even before I fully believed in my own,” Engler says. “The faculty and staff didn’t just teach; they mentored, encouraged, and challenged me. My fellow students inspired me, each with their own stories and struggles. And somewhere between those late-night study sessions and early morning classes, I discovered who I was and who I wanted to become.”

Under his leadership, Engler Electric has built a strong reputation for its commercial and industrial electrical contracting work, including significant projects at local institutions like Utica University, Colgate, and MVCC. Engler also serves as President of the Finger Lakes Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), representing 52 member contractors and serving as a management partner to IBEW Local 43.

He played a pivotal role in establishing a partnership between MVCC, IBEW Local 43, and NECA that created a formal education pathway for IBEW Local 43 members. Historically, upon completion of the NECA/IBEW Local 43’s five-year earn-and-learn training program, apprentices became recognized journey workers but did not earn portable college credits. Through this collaboration, apprentices now receive both a journey worker card and an MVCC AOS degree at no cost — a SUNY-recognized credential that opens doors to the future.

Through his professional leadership and community involvement, Engler exemplifies a commitment to excellence, innovation, and service.

“MVCC gave me more than an education — it gave me a foundation. It taught me resilience, the power of perseverance, and the importance of giving back.”

Engler’s impact has been recognized nationally. He was honored as a Fellow of the Academy of Electrical Contracting, NECA’s highest national distinction, becoming only the second Fellow from the Finger Lakes Chapter in the past 80 years. His contributions extend to the broader community, including involvement with the Utica Rotary Club and Community Foundation.



2025 Distinguished Alumni Award Winner

Monalisa Fermin-Fennell '99

has dedicated her life to public service and community advocacy. Her commitment began at age 13 when she became a youth leader with the 280 Dreamers and Police Athletic League in New York City, promoting girls in sports and leading community fundraising efforts.

Fermin-Fennell began her academic journey at MVCC, earning an associate degree in Liberal Arts & Sciences: General Studies. As a student, she served on the Latino Club's executive cabinet and helped build connections between the Utica Academy of Science Charter School and MVCC. After earning a bachelor's degree in Sociology from SUNY Institute of Technology, she started her career in New York City, rising to Facility Director at LifeSpire.

Since returning to Utica in 2010, Fermin-Fennell has deepened her commitment to community advocacy through organizations such as Bridging the G.A.P., United Way, MVHS Patient & Family Advisory Committee, Utica Civilian Public Safety Advisory Board, Mohawk Valley Latino Association, and UCP. She now works as Quality Improvement Manager with ICAN. She was recognized with a New York State Senate Commendation Award, presented by Senator Joseph Griffo in 2023.



2025 Young Alumni Award Winner

Taryn Rackmyer '18, '19

who holds degrees in Public Policy and Accounting from MVCC, has built a distinguished career in public policy and advocacy. Currently Director of Education Policy at the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, Rackmyer previously worked as a Government Relations Specialist for SUNY and a lead fiscal analyst for the New York State Senate Majority Leader.

An advocate for women's empowerment, Rackmyer is Vice President of the YWCA of the Greater Capital Region Board of Directors. After the overturn of Roe v. Wade, she was selected as one of 11 advisors to YWCA USA's Reproductive Justice Task Force and served as a delegate to the United Nations' 2024 Commission on the Status of Women.

At MVCC, Rackmyer was an active student leader, serving as a peer tutor, Phi Theta Kappa member, Student Government Treasurer, and SUNY Student Assembly Coordinator of Campus Engagement. She received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence in 2019. She went on to earn a master's degree in Public Policy & Management from the University at Albany.

Rackmyer also served as SUNY's inaugural Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellow, advancing work on affordability, access, racial and social justice, mental health, and food insecurity across all 64 campuses.



Memphis Brannum '20 Computer Aided Drafting

Engineer, Andela Products

After years focused on raising her family, Memphis Brannum decided to return to college to prepare for a new career. She enrolled in the Computer Aided Drafting program at MVCC, where she took advantage of the range of resources and support services available to help students succeed at every stage of life.

Through extensive hands-on learning and guidance from knowledgeable, supportive faculty, Brannum gained the technical skills and real-world experience for a rewarding career at Andela Products in Richfield Springs, N.Y., which designs and manufactures innovative glass-recycling equipment and systems. In her role, Brannum helps communities and industries transform waste glass into valuable resources, contributing to a more sustainable future.

"The education and hands-on experience I received at MVCC helped me gain confidence, learn technical skills, and have the critical thinking mindset I use every day in my work," she says. "MVCC didn't just prepare me for a job — it prepared me for a future in a growing and sustainable industry."

Austin Cornacchia '17 Civil Engineering Technology

Senior Engineer, City of Utica

Before graduating from MVCC's Civil Engineering Technology program, Austin Cornacchia had already launched his career with the City of Utica as an inspector on construction projects.

"Working under engineers at the city showed me that education is definitely the key to success," he says. "The coursework provided by the faculty, along with their great contacts throughout the community, gave me a great education and helped me get a job before I even graduated."

Cornacchia went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering Technology from SUNY Polytechnic Institute. That credential helped him advance from inspector to junior engineer and now senior engineer, managing multiple projects and mentoring junior team members.

"The teachers at MVCC are always willing to go above and beyond to help you succeed," he says. "Without them, I wouldn't be where I am today."





Brian Jweid '12

Business Management

Director, Civil Service Administration for Oneida County

After beginning college as a student-athlete focused more on sports than academics, Brian Jweid eventually faced a series of setbacks that led him to leave school altogether. When he was ready to return, he found a fresh start at MVCC.

“When I realized I needed my degree, MVCC was there with open arms,” says Jweid, now Director of Civil Service Administration for Oneida County.

After graduating from MVCC, Jweid transferred to SUNY Polytechnic Institute, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. He explored several career paths before taking a civil service exam that opened the door to a position with Oneida County as a personnel technician. In 2018, he was promoted to his current role, which allows him to give back by supporting students, the public, and anyone interested in public service.

“MVCC wasn’t just a chapter in my life,” Jweid says. “It was a launchpad that helped me get back on track to where I am today.”



Mya Kyaw '18

Liberal Arts & Sciences: Mathematics and Science

Academic Advisor, SUNY Polytechnic Institute

As a first-generation college student, Mya Kyaw initially began navigating her experience without much guidance. “But from my very first placement test to starting classes, everyone at MVCC was very welcoming and supportive,” she says.

Kyaw thrived at MVCC, excelling in her studies while actively involved on campus. She worked as a student assistant and peer tutor in the Learning Commons, served as President of MVCC’s Lambda Beta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, and was a member of CSTEP.

After graduating, Kyaw transferred to Binghamton University, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in Biological Sciences. She is now on track to complete her master’s degree in Public Health at Boston University School of Public Health.

“I couldn’t be prouder of how my journey started at MVCC,” she says. “It gave me the foundation to lead, to belong, succeed, and grow.”



Julius Blackshear, Jr. '15 Computer Aided Drafting

Drafter/Designer, National Grid;
Owner, Visionary Vending

While attending MVCC from 2012 to 2015, Julius Blackshear, Jr. embraced every opportunity to learn and grow. While earning his AOS degree in Computer Aided Drafting, he also took courses in Civil Engineering Technology — a combination he says was instrumental in launching his career. Those programs prepared him for his first role as an engineer trainee with the Department of Transportation and paved the way for his current position as a drafter/designer at National Grid. “Those two curriculums helped me get where I am now with my career,” he says. “Being at MVCC was a blessing because it was affordable, allowed me to stay home, save money, work, and get a good education.”

In addition to his technical studies, Blackshear took several business courses, gaining skills that proved unexpectedly valuable when he launched his own business during the pandemic — Visionary Vending, which has been operating for five years with machines located in Utica and Syracuse. “I’m thankful that MVCC has helped me get to this point in my career and my business.”



Julius Blackshear, Jr. was honored with MVCC’s 2024 Young Alumni Award, which recognizes a nominee who graduated within the last 10 years, has emerged as an early leader in their career and community, and demonstrates a commitment to MVCC’s values.



Mackenzi VanSlyke Dishman '13

Photography

**Senior Visual Communications Manager,
C&D Advertising Agency**

As a Photography student at MVCC, Mackenzi VanSlyke Dishman dove headfirst into hands-on learning opportunities — from immersive art experiences to two internships with the College's Marketing and Communications Department.

After graduating from MVCC, Dishman transferred to Cazenovia College, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Fine Arts, Advertising Design, and Visual Communications. She began her career at C&D Advertising in 2017, starting as an intern and advancing to her role of Senior Visual Communications Manager.

Dishman looks back on her time at MVCC with gratitude, especially the unique experiences that helped shape her skills. Those real-world opportunities, combined with a supportive community of faculty and peers, helped her build the foundation for a successful career in visual communications.

"My favorite things about MVCC were being around all my fellow photography peers and growing my toolbox of design skills — all these experiences have helped me grow."



Bruna Rosic '17

Early Childhood Education

Long-Term Care Social Worker, Sitrin Health Care Center

Bruna Rosic's journey to becoming a mental health counselor began at MVCC in 2017, shortly after she moved to the U.S. from Croatia. She enrolled in Early Childhood Education with plans to become a teacher. But a special education internship proved transformative. Witnessing how mental health challenges shaped children's behavior sparked a deep interest in psychology and inspired her to shift her academic focus.

With encouragement from her advisors, Rosic began taking psychology courses at MVCC, helping her gain clarity about her future. The transition set her on a new trajectory, supported by a campus community that helped her build confidence, strengthen her writing, and discover her passion for helping others.

After graduating from MVCC, Rosic earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and is now in her third year of a master's program in Mental Health Counseling. She currently works as a long-term care social worker at Sitrin Health Care Center, helping individuals with a wide range of mental health needs.

"I'm grateful for MVCC because it has led me to choose a career I am dedicated to today," she says.

Thanks to the remarkable generosity of our donors, the MVCC Foundation raised over **\$1.59 million** last fiscal year. This vital support has allowed the Foundation to:

Provide student support in the amount of **\$63,596** to College-Community-Connection (C3) through food pantry, bus passes, meal plans, gas cards, school supplies, and books.



Provide Workforce Development assistance in the form of tuition totaling **\$128,144**

Assist **8** students through the Emergency Relief Loan program, amounting to

\$15,289



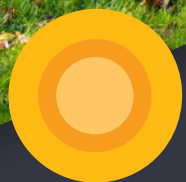
Raise \$70,305 Through the Alumni Annual Fund during the 2024-25 appeal to support critical college initiatives and student success

Week of Giving Raises Over \$25,000 for *FIRST* Tech Challenge Robotics

MVCC's Week of Giving this past March successfully reached its goal, raising \$25,560 in support of the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Robotics program, the world's leading youth-serving nonprofit advancing STEM education. Thanks to the generosity of our alumni, faculty, staff, and community supporters, we were able to expand hands-on STEM opportunities for middle and high school students. This funding helped to provide equipment, mentorship, and competition support to inspire the next generation of innovators across the state.



WEEK  **F**
GIVING



Establish **3** new scholarships to benefit MVCC students, bringing the number of unique scholarships to nearly



Award
385
individual scholarships to



students, totaling
\$411,869
in support



MVCC HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

Four esteemed individuals were selected for induction into MVCC's Hall of Fame Class of 2025.

The Hall of Fame recognizes those who have embraced the community, modeled the way, inspired confidence, and encouraged excellence at MVCC. Selections are chosen based on business or professional achievements, leadership support and involvement at MVCC, significant contributions to MVCC athletics, and any other contribution that has made a lasting impact on the development, progress and success of MVCC. For bios of all Hall of Fame members, visit halloffame.mvcc.edu.



Donna Felitto

Donna Felitto dedicated 37 years of exceptional service to MVCC's Athletics and Physical Education Department, becoming a warm and reliable presence for students, staff, and visitors. Known for her teamwork and willingness to support departments across campus, she also contributed

behind the scenes at athletic events and Foundation initiatives. Outside MVCC, she helps run Light-It-Up Sauce, her family's local specialty sauce business. Felitto's professionalism and commitment earned her multiple honors, including two MVCC Excellence in Classified Service Awards and the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Classified Service.



Jim Fiore

Professor Emeritus Jim Fiore served MVCC for more than 40 years, teaching across Electrical Engineering Technology, Engineering Science, and Verizon programs. A leader in curriculum development and ABET accreditation, he also created the popular Science of Sound course. Fiore is widely

recognized for his open educational resource (OER) textbooks

and YouTube channel, which dramatically reduced costs for students worldwide. He and his wife, Karen, also endowed a scholarship supporting EET graduates. His outstanding contributions earned him multiple MVCC and SUNY Chancellor's Awards, as well as induction into the Utica Roadrunners Hall of Fame.



Stephanie C. Reynolds

Vice President Emerita
Stephanie Reynolds shaped MVCC's student experience and culture through her leadership as Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and Title IX Coordinator. She played key roles in Guided Pathways, the Strategic Horizons Network,

the creation of Mo Hawk, and the launch of the Student Leadership Academy. Reynolds also founded Women of MVCC, advancing leadership development and workplace equity. A published author, award-winning administrator, and dedicated community volunteer, her impact continues to be felt across campus.



Rick Short

Rick Short built a distinguished four-decade career at Indium Corporation, rising to Corporate Associate Vice President and leading global marketing breakthroughs that earned national and international acclaim. A pioneer in business blogging, content strategy, and global branding, his

work has influenced marketing professionals worldwide. A committed community volunteer and mentor, Short has long championed education and opportunity for local youth. His dedication to MVCC includes service as past chair of the MVCC Foundation Board and longtime support of scholarships, student engagement, and alumni outreach.

Read the full biographies at halloffame.mvcc.edu.



thINCing BIG WITH GJI ELITE ASSIST

Meet Swasi Bradley — founder of GJI Elite Assist, a virtual assistant service that supports small businesses with social media management, email marketing, HR consulting, and administration. She's also a recent participant in thINCubator's Refinery Foundations Sprint.

Over the course of the program, Bradley worked tirelessly to refine her pitch, strengthen service offerings, launch her website, and perhaps — most importantly — step out into the community to network with local startups and established professionals, growing her client base in the process.

Bradley is also a natural connector, consistently helping fellow entrepreneurs and businesses in the community. She remains an active contributor to thINC and to business networks throughout the region.

Learn more about Bradley and GJI Elite Assist at www.gjeliteassist.com



Building the future: MVCC breaks ground on \$49M Applied Technology Center

On Monday, Sept. 22, 2025, MVCC broke ground on its new Applied Technology Center (ATC) — a two-story, 63,760-square-foot facility designed to prepare the region's future skilled workforce. Rising on the footprint between Payne Hall and Jorgensen Center at the Utica Campus, the ATC will enhance MVCC's science and technology programs and help address critical workforce shortages in both established and emerging STEM fields.

The building will feature advanced laboratories, modern classrooms, and flexible collaboration spaces, supporting transformational learning for students, employer partners, incumbent workers, apprentices, and pre-apprentices across the Mohawk Valley and New York State.

Made possible through funding from Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr., the Oneida County Board of Legislators, the State of New York, SUNY, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), and Fabmatics, the ATC was designed by MARCH Associates Architects & Planners. Construction — led by Beebe Construction and Murnane Building Contractors, Inc. — is expected to be completed by late December 2027.

"The Applied Technology Center will empower our students to succeed in high-demand science and technology fields while meeting the workforce needs of our region," said MVCC President Dr. Randall J. VanWagoner. "This project is a true partnership, and we are deeply grateful to Oneida County, the State of New York, SUNY, and Fabmatics for their generous support, and to Senator Schumer for his leadership with the FIPSE program. Together, we are investing in the future of our students, our community, and the economy of the Mohawk Valley."





Specialized Labs

With 16 industry-standard labs — including an Automation Training Center, Mechatronics & Robotics Lab, Welding Lab, HVAC Lab, and advanced chemistry and engineering labs — students will have access to equipment and spaces that mirror the private sector.

Flexible Learning Spaces

Students will benefit from a variety of new learning environments, including three first-floor classrooms, two meeting rooms, breakout spaces, and a multipurpose collaboration area with retractable partitions.

Striking, Sustainable Design

Highlights include a double-height lobby with dramatic feature stairs, glass front labs, and connection between the mass timber “head” and steel-framed “shed” sections. Sustainable design elements significantly reduce the building’s carbon footprint:

- Envelope exceeds the NYS energy code by 9%
- LED lighting for long-term efficiency
- Advanced materials to reduce environmental impact

Learn more about MVCC’s Applied Technology Center:
mvcc.edu/atc

39th Annual Golf Tournament Raises \$31,000

This year's MVCC Foundation Golf Tournament brought a high-flying twist with a Drone Golf Ball Drop. Built by students in MVCC's Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems program, the custom drone released a flurry of numbered golf balls onto the course, with the closest to the mark winning a prize. Tournament proceeds netted more than \$31,000 to support the Foundation's Areas of Greatest Need, a fund to help the College adapt to evolving challenges to serve our students.

And as always, thank you to our sponsors and donors.



2025 MVCC Golf Tournament Sponsors:

Gold



Mike Briggs' 63 /
Friends of Coach Jorgensen



Silver



Bronze

Breakfast Sponsor



Drone Contest Sponsor



Basket Raffle Sponsor

DAT Consulting by Dominick Timpano
ARD Consulting by Amy DeMetri

Snack Sponsor



Company Foursomes



Livin' on a Legacy: the Sandy Cummings Memorial Leadership Benefit



Sandy Cummings — beloved MVCC alumna and employee — was a positive force in the lives of countless students throughout her long career in Student Engagement at MVCC.

For 38 years, she poured her heart into the College, focusing on enhancing the student experience

and creating opportunities for meaningful engagement and leadership development. Whether working alongside Student Congress leaders to amplify student voices or guiding the Student Leadership Academy and numerous clubs, Cummings believed deeply in empowering students to lead with confidence and purpose.

On Oct. 28, 2025, the College community came together for Livin' on a Legacy: The Sandy Cummings Memorial Leadership Benefit.

The event included live music by Bon Giovi, a Syracuse-based Bon Jovi tribute band, an '80s-themed photo booth, signature mocktails and basket raffle — all with the goal of celebrating the extraordinary life and enduring impact of Sandy Cummings, who passed away in January 2025. Proceeds from the event supported a scholarship, now endowed, in her name.

Due to the success of the event, the scholarship, originally established by family, friends, MVCC alumni, and colleagues, will now be awarded each semester to students who exemplify the qualities Cummings valued most: outstanding leadership, campus involvement, and commitment to making a positive impact. The scholarship celebrates her passion for student success, as well as her famous phrase:

“Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable.”

For more information about the Sandy Cummings Memorial Student Leadership Scholarship, please visit:

mvcc.edu/scholarships

MVCC Raises Nearly \$62,000 through MV Gives

In September, the MVCC Foundation participated in the Community Foundation's fourth annual Mohawk Valley Gives campaign, raising a total of **\$61,569** in support of several key initiatives. Thanks to the generosity of donors and supporters, the Foundation also secured the full \$15,000 1:1 match provided by an anonymous donor, doubling the impact of most gifts made during the campaign. Funding helped to support:

- **The Sandy Cummings Student Engagement Scholarship (\$7,500)**, bringing the fund to full endowment.
- **A new Dental Hygiene Scholarship (\$10,890)** for students in MVCC's upcoming Dental Hygiene program, with the goal of fully endowing the fund before program launch.
- **The College's Laptop Loaner Program (\$8,179)** to purchase new laptops for students in need.

- **Community Education Summer Program Scholarships (\$3,050)**, expanding access to summer enrichment programs for local youth.
- **Fashion Design Program Scholarships (\$1,000)** for students pursuing careers in fashion design.
- **Miscellaneous Scholarships (\$950)** to help students fund their education.
- **ON-Ramp (\$30,000)** to strengthen short-term workforce training and career-readiness programs.

The Foundation extends its sincere thanks to everyone who participated in MV Gives 2025. Your generosity continues to create meaningful opportunities for MVCC students and programs.



MVCC's Inaugural Alumni Spirit Day a Success

On Oct. 14, 2025, the MVCC Foundation marked the College's 79th anniversary with its first Alumni Spirit Day — a tribute to the thousands of MVCC graduates making an impact across the Mohawk Valley and beyond.

Local employers — including Oneida County, Mohawk Valley Health System, ICAN, Pursuit Aerospace, S.R. Sloan, and Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency — joined the celebration by proudly wearing MVCC Alumni T-shirts and sharing team photos. These snapshots, featured throughout the day on the MVCC Foundation & Alumni Facebook page, showcased the strength and reach of our alumni network.

Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this inaugural event a success. As we prepare for MVCC's 80th anniversary next year, we look forward to expanding Alumni Day and sharing even more alumni stories from workplaces across the region. If you'd like your workplace to be part of next year's celebration, let us know by emailing alumni@mvcc.edu.

We'd love to celebrate you and your organization!



Mohawk Valley Health System



ICAN



Oneida County Workforce Development



Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency

A historic year for MVCC Athletics

This year will be remembered as one of the most extraordinary and successful seasons in the history of MVCC Athletics. From record-setting championship runs to prestigious regional honors, MVCC's student-athletes, coaches, and staff once again proved that the Hawks are one of the premier NJCAA Division III programs in the nation.

Back-to-back champions: Men's Soccer does it again

The Men's Soccer Team captured the 2025 NJCAA Division III National Championship, earning back-to-back titles in one of the most thrilling finals in program history.

After battling through a tense, weather-challenged tournament week, the Hawks faced Dallas College-Richland in their third straight championship matchup. MVCC overcame an early deficit to force overtime and a 1-1 draw, sending the game into a dramatic penalty-kick shootout. Key conversions by Francesco Tagliavini and Souayibou Diop, paired with exceptional goalkeeping by Anderson Costa Filho secured the Hawks' second consecutive national title and solidified their standing among the NJCAA elite. Dominic DiMaggio, Men's Soccer Head Coach and Director of Athletics, was named NJCAA Region III Athletic Director of the Year. And for the second consecutive year, MVCC's Jen Krohn was named NJCAA Region III Athletic Trainer of the Year — the first to receive back-to-back honors.



Men's Basketball wins first-ever National Championship

The 2024-25 season marked a defining moment for Men's Basketball, as the Hawks captured the program's first-ever NJCAA National Championship. MVCC defeated No. 10 seed Salem Community College, outlasted No. 3 seed Minnesota State in a high-intensity semifinal, and secured the national title with a strong victory over No. 5 seed Herkimer College. Freshman Andre Pasha of Syracuse was named NJCAA Region III Male Athlete of the Year.

Women's Soccer wins sixth straight Regional Championship

The Women's Soccer Team captured its sixth consecutive Region III North A District Championship. Entering the post-season as the No. 4 seed, the Hawks delivered a commanding 3-0 upset over top-seeded Onondaga to secure the regional crown and earn their seventh straight trip to NJCAA National Tournament — one of the longest active streaks in DIII Women's Soccer. While the Hawks fell short of a national title, their post-season run reaffirmed MVCC's position as one of the NJCAA's most consistently competitive programs.

A Program Built on Excellence

With 17 intercollegiate sports and a commitment to academic success and leadership development, MVCC Athletics continues to soar.

Learn more: gomvhawks.com





MVCC participates in Self-Study process for reaccreditation

MVCC is currently conducting its Self-Study as part of the College's eight-year institutional reaccreditation cycle, with an on-site evaluation scheduled for Spring 2027.

What is accreditation?

Because colleges operate with significant autonomy, accreditation provides an external check on quality. Institutional accreditors evaluate all aspects of a college — academic programs, student services, governance, planning, and more — and determine whether it meets established standards. Accreditation confirms that MVCC maintains high-quality practices and can continue its accredited status.

Why is accreditation important?

Accreditation assures students, families, and the community that our programs meet vigorous standards. It also allows MVCC to offer federal financial aid, as the government relies on accredited status to verify institutional quality.

Who is MVCC's accreditor?

MVCC is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE or "Middle States"), a U.S. Department of Education-recognized accreditor since 1952. MSCHE accredits over 500 institutions, including all SUNY campuses. Its evaluation is based on seven standards:

- Mission and Goals
- Ethics and Integrity
- Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
- Support of the Student Experience
- Educational Effectiveness Assessment
- Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Together, these standards ensure every part of the College advances student success and operational excellence.

What is the Self-Study process?

MSCHE's eight-year accreditation cycle culminates with an evaluation team visit. Leading up to that visit, the College completes a Self-Study report demonstrating how MVCC meets each Middle States standard. This self-evaluative process helps identify both strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring MVCC continues to grow and serve students efficiently.

More than 90 employees from all departments serve on Self-Study working groups, supported by many others who provide evidence or participate in interviews. Two co-chairs guide the overall process, and each of the seven standards has its own co-chairs and working group. These teams gather evidence, assess institutional effectiveness, and write the report that will inform the evaluation team's visit in Spring 2027.

The process is ongoing — look for more updates as we move close to our accreditation review.

Learn more: mvcc.edu/middlestates



1960s

Dominic Versage '60, Electrical Technology, earned an AA degree from Mohawk Valley Technical Institute (now MVCC). He worked at Cornell University in the Environmental Health & Safety Department for his entire career. Dominic passed away in July; his family shared this update in his memory.

1970s

Tom Russell '71, Civil Engineering Technology, retired from Rinnai America Corp.

Robert Hasemeier '71, Engineering Science, is partially retired but continues to work as an engineer at Barton & Loguidice. In 2018, he and his wife, Amanda, purchased a kitchen and bath design/remodeling business in the Harrisburg, Pa., area.

Russell Shaver '73, Civil Engineering Technology, worked for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as a Hazardous Waste Remediation Regional Construction Inspector. After retiring, he returned part-time to the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Clifford Costello '75, Business-Banking & Insurance, writes: "I have been working for 50 years since graduating from MVCC, with an awesome career in the Information Technology field. I am currently a Senior Principal Program/Project Manager with General Dynamics, working on the eMedNY, managing major new system implementations. I often think back on my education at MVCC and attribute most of my success to the outstanding education I received there."

Suzanne Collins '75, '96, Hotel Technology: Meeting Services Management, has served as Town Supervisor of Augusta for 25 years. She also served as a MetLife Claim Supervisor for 17 years, a NYS Fair employee for 25 years, treasurer of the Limestone Ridge Historical Society, and trustee of the Clark Memorial Library.

Thomas Nicholson '76, Engineering Science, writes: "After graduating from MVCC, I continued my education at RPI in Troy. I then joined the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory and qualified on one of the Naval Reactors prototypes in Saratoga County, where I taught U.S. Navy personnel how to operate a nuclear power plant. I moved to the main lab in Niskayuna, N.Y., and was involved in the core design for the SEAWOLF (S6W) and VIRGINIA (S9G) classes. I moved to a manager position in Los Angeles (S6G) fleet support doing reactor performance analysis. I have since retired and am now a CCE Master Gardener in Saratoga County, a member of the Town of Malta Zoning Board of Appeals, and a member of several Masonic groups."

1980s

Gregory Rindenello '80, Business Administration, retired from Johnson & Johnson Innovation Medicine as an Executive Cardiovascular Sales Specialist in 2024.

Enrico D'Alessandro '83 Criminal Justice, is retired but continues to serve as a part-time deputy sheriff in the Background Investigation Bureau at the Oneida County Sheriff's Office, a part-time police officer with the Rome Police Department, and an adjunct instructor at MVCC.

Laurie Kingsley '87, Nursing, writes:

"Since obtaining my AAS degree in Nursing, I have worked in Medical/Surgical, Pediatric, and Psychiatric nursing in Utica and Syracuse. I also enjoyed working as a travel nurse for a few years. I have found my education at MVCC to be greatly beneficial. I'm proud to be an alum!"

1990s

Paul Serianni '90, Advertising, Design & Production, writes: "The skills I learned at MVCC elevated me and inspired me to start my own business. I've been running Serianni Signs for nearly 30 years with good success! The design skills I obtained from the well-rounded teachers, especially Ron Labuz, helped me succeed."

Randall Conway '90, Data Processing, serves as Human Resources Director at Rome Health.

Musco Millner III '90, Mathematics, (Assistant Professor, Utica University) was selected to attend the Mentor Up Summer Soiree with Rochester Mayor Malik Evans as a mentor. This honor recognizes his exceptional community involvement and commitment to inspiring youth. It marks his third time being selected for the event.

Richard Matusiak '92, Engineering Science, is Senior Director of Development Engineering Onboard Rail at New York Air Brake, LLC.

Shaun Bowen '99, Business Accounting and Business Management, earned his MBA in Technology Management from SUNY Polytechnic Institute in May 2024.



2000s

James Genovese '02, Liberal Arts & Sciences: General Studies, has served as Oneida County Planning Commissioner since February 2020. In October 2025, he published his first novel, *Before the Ember Sparks: Book One of the Shattered Crown Saga*.

Heather Beebe '03, Human Services, graduated from Albany Law School with her Juris Doctorate in May 2025. She also organized a panel of first-generation lawyers to speak about overcoming barriers to pursuing a legal education, which was hosted by MVCC in September 2025.

Christopher Amato '07, Liberal Arts & Sciences: General Studies, earned his MBA in Finance in December 2023 and his MS in Entrepreneurship in December 2024 from Syracuse University's Martin J. Whitman School of Management. He began his Doctor of Business Administration at the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Graduate School of Business in August 2025.

2010s

Andrew Murphy '11, Liberal Arts & Sciences: General Studies, completed the Executive Associate Program for M&T Bank and was promoted within Commercial Lending Operations to Vice President.

Kelley Metell '12, Liberal Arts & Sciences: Childhood Education, is a special education teacher with Martha's Vineyard Public Schools.

Nicolina Castilla '13, Liberal Arts & Sciences: General Studies, writes:

"I participated in the MVCC Bridge Program as a senior at Proctor (2012) and earned my associate degree at MVCC in 2013. In doing so, I was able to get all my prerequisites out of the way before transferring to Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, where I earned a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. MVCC was amazing at starting my path to my professional degree, and I'm thankful I was able to attend the community college in my town."

Lonnie Linton '15, Liberal Arts & Sciences: General Studies, is Facility Maintenance and IT Manager for Walgreens' micro-fulfillment center in Brooklyn Park, Minn.

Stephen Losinger '18, Electrical Service Technician, works with Cordia Energy as Eastern Region Reliability Engineer.

Claire Parisi-Gilmore '18, Engineering Science, recently started a new job with Blue Origin as an RF Operations Engineer for the New Glenn rocket program in Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Lauren Lloyd '18, Graphic Design, writes: "I started my graphic design journey at MVCC, graduating in December 2018. I'll never forget the small, supportive community and the foundation it gave me. From there, I transferred to SUNY Cortland to earn my bachelor's in graphic design, finishing in 2020 amid the challenges of the pandemic with online classes and remote learning. Those experiences taught me how to thrive in new ways, both creatively and professionally. Today, I work at NYCM Insurance as a Digital Media Developer, capturing events,

directing creative projects, and designing everything from billboards to social media graphics. Looking back, MVCC sparked my love for design and set me on this path. Lessons and memories from those two years continue to inspire me every day."

David Zasada '19, Chef Training, writes: "After graduating, I continued running the non-profit catering service I began while at MVCC. I've been privileged to work with amazing chefs — one of whom served as a chef in Gen. Patton's Army during WWII. Many chefs volunteer to help with the Easter and Christmas ham dinners, summer clambakes and barbecues, as well as charity breakfasts and luncheons. After 10 years, I'm winding down my activities, but still try to attend the MVCC Hospitality Luncheons every year."

Heidi Palmiter '19, Health Information Technology, writes: "Since graduating from MVCC, I went on to complete my bachelor's degree and credential as a Health Information Administrator. Spending 12 years in the health information industry while completing both my associate and bachelor's degrees, I discovered a passion for educating others. Now, I've brought that passion back home to MVCC as the Program Coordinator for the very program that helped me succeed in life, Health Information Technology."

2020s

Tyler Whiteman '20, '22, Liberal Arts & Sciences: General Studies and Nursing, earned his BSN from SUNY Delhi, graduating summa cum laude with honors.

Ryan Martin '22, Business

Administration, graduated from Southern New Hampshire University in 2024 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and is pursuing a master's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance from Southern New Hampshire University.

Kelley McDougal '23, Emergency

Medical Services/Paramedic, earned a bachelor's degree in Healthcare Management from SUNY Canton and has begun graduate studies in Speech and Communication Disorders at Emerson College.

Ricardo Pacheco, Jr. '23, Human

Services and Chemical Dependency Practitioner, is a Supervisor at the Central New York Psychiatric Center (STARC Oakview).

Lauren Makenzie '24, Liberal Arts &

Sciences: Mathematics & Science, is continuing her education in Exercise Science at SUNY Cortland.

Chase Levesque '24, Metal Fabrication,

is currently a Machinist at Bartell Machinery Systems in Rome, N.Y.

Send us your news!

Have news?

Tell us what you are up to here:

www.mvcc.edu/alumni-update



Hailey Chrisman Anderson '17, Culinary Arts Management

Pastry Cook, Turning Stone Resort Casino

Hailey Chrisman Anderson discovered her passion for baking early on, sparked by a childhood cake-decorating class. That early interest eventually led her to MVCC, where she majored in Culinary Arts Management, graduating in 2017.

Now a pastry cook at Turning Stone Resort Casino, Anderson credits her MVCC education with preparing her for fast-paced, high-standards environment of professional kitchens. From essential safety and sanitation practices to the finer points of presentation, the skills she gained at MVCC continue to shape her success every day.

"MVCC taught me technical skills and proper procedures for safety — as well as making things look pretty," she says.



Celebrating the Wilcox Presidential and Exceptional Scholars



In October, the MVCC Foundation held its annual luncheon to celebrate this year's Francis A. Wilcox Presidential and Exceptional Scholarship recipients. This event not only recognizes the hard work and accomplishments of the students but also provides an opportunity for the recipients to meet members of the Wilcox family.

Attendees also listened to an inspiring message from President VanWagoner and Kevin and Sue Keehle, the donors who made these scholarships possible.

Wilcox Presidential and Exceptional Scholars are students who have placed in the top 10% of their high school class. These full-tuition scholarships are named for Francis A. Wilcox, an electrical engineer and decorated U.S. veteran who named the MVCC Foundation in his will when he passed away in 2011.



Foundation Awards Nearly \$412,000 in Scholarships at Dinner Sponsored by Strategic Financial Services



STRATEGIC



In May, the MVCC Foundation proudly honored this year's scholarship recipients at the 2025 Scholarship Awards Dinner & Ceremony, generously sponsored by Strategic Financial Services.

This annual celebration recognizes the outstanding achievements of scholarship recipients and the remarkable generosity of the donors who make these opportunities possible.

The MVCC Foundation now offers nearly 140 unique scholarships across a wide range of disciplines. Each scholarship fund was established for a deeply personal reason, serving as an enduring legacy of MVCC alumni, faculty and staff, students, loved ones, and community partners.

Between the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters, the Foundation awarded 385 scholarships to 205 students, totaling \$411,869 in support. Thanks to the commitment of our donors, more students than ever are receiving the financial assistance they need to pursue their educational goals.

A special thank-you to our event sponsor, Strategic Financial Services. Your support of this important celebration allows the Foundation to dedicate even more of its resources to helping students afford their education and achieve their dreams.



INVEST IN TOMORROW WITH A GIFT TO THE MVCC FOUNDATION!

About the MVCC Foundation

The MVCC Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that relies on the generosity of its alumni and donors to provide support and opportunities to the College and its students. Every dollar raised can make a difference, and there are many ways you can give and have a positive impact on our students and community.

How to Give:

Online:

Scan the QR code
to donate or visit

mvccfoundation.org



By Mail: Checks should be made payable to the
MVCC Foundation and mailed to:

MVCC Foundation, Inc.
1101 Sherman Drive
Utica, New York 13501

By Phone: 315-792-5555
Monday-Friday
8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Establish a Named Scholarship

With a minimum contribution of \$10,000, an annual scholarship can be established. Pledge commitments may be paid over time.

Underwrite a Program or Event

Whether it's a program, special event, or Golf Tournament, there are a number of opportunities to highlight your business or organization and support MVCC in creative ways.

Honor a Loved One

Celebrate a special occasion or remember a loved one with a gift to the MVCC Foundation.

Gifts In-Kind

Gifts in-kind are donations where, instead of providing monetary contributions, individuals or organizations donate goods or services directly. In the past, MVCC has received in-kind donations such as airplanes, office furnishings, and equipment.

Matching Gifts

You may be able to double or even triple the impact of your gift if you or your spouse's employer participates in a Corporate Matching Gifts program. Simply contact your human resources department to learn more.

Consider Gift Planning

One of the most powerful ways to make a difference in the lives of students for years to come is through a gift in your will. See information on next page.

Planned Giving is for everyone. Help advance the future of MVCC.

For more information, please contact
Deanna Ferro-Aurience, Executive Director
of Institutional Advancement and the MVCC
Foundation, Inc., at **315-731-5797** or
dferro-aurience@mvcc.edu.

Many MVCC supporters choose to leave a donation in their wills and trusts as an important way to have long-term impact without any upfront cost during their lifetime. Legacy giving isn't only for the wealthy — gifts of any size are deeply appreciated and have ranged from \$300 to \$3 million.

Gift planning with the MVCC Foundation allows you to help students while also meeting your financial and personal planning objectives. It allows you to make gifts beyond what you thought would be possible while connecting deeply and forever with your college and community. You can benefit the next generation of students with flexibility to adjust your plans if your circumstances change by naming the MVCC Foundation, Inc., as a beneficiary of your:

Will / Living Trust

A bequest is a gift to the MVCC Foundation that is not payable until death. A simple designation in your will or trust costs nothing during your lifetime and provides the peace of mind that your gift can be modified should your circumstances change.

Donor-Advised Fund

You can make a gift from your donor-advised fund to support the MVCC Foundation, Inc.

Retirement Plan Assets

Retirement plans such as an IRA, 401(k), or 403(b) can be subject to double taxation including ordinary income tax and estate tax. Retirement plan assets left to the MVCC Foundation may reduce the size of your estate and subsequent tax liability for your heirs.

Life Insurance Policy

The MVCC Foundation can be named as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, which can be modified at any time should your circumstances change.

Charitable Remainder Trust

A charitable remainder trust is an irrevocable trust that generates an income stream for you, your family, or other designated beneficiary for a fixed length of time, or for a lifetime, and will name the MVCC Foundation as the remainder beneficiary.

Cash

Cash is the easiest way to make a gift to the MVCC Foundation and provides the maximum tax deduction. The MVCC Foundation accepts cash, check, credit card, and wired funds.

Stock and Appreciated Securities

Giving appreciated securities can be more tax efficient than giving cash. When making a gift of securities to the MVCC Foundation directly, you will receive an income tax deduction for the full market value and may avoid paying any capital gains tax.

The information provided does not constitute tax or legal advice.

A consultation with your estate planning attorney and/or financial planner will help you determine the best vehicle for you and your family.

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Dana E. Jerrard, Vice Chair

Gubernatorial Appointment, 2021

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Human Services

Joanne Frances Szczygiel '00

Early Education



MEET THE MVCC FOUNDATION AND ALUMNI STAFF



Deanna L. Ferro-Aurience

Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and the MVCC Foundation

Deanna L. Ferro-Aurience has been a vital member of MVCC's Office of Institutional Advancement since 2006. She began

her tenure as Events Coordinator, advanced to Director of Development, and has served as Executive Director since January 2022, leading the strategic planning and execution of all fundraising and development initiatives for the College.

Ferro-Aurience works closely with campus leadership to advance comprehensive development efforts, strengthen donor and alumni engagement, and support institutional priorities. She also oversees grant management for key initiatives, including MVCC's thINCubator, contributing to the College's continued growth and impact in the region.

Ferro-Aurience holds an associate degree in Media & Marketing Management from MVCC, a bachelor's degree in Communication & Advertising Management from Marist College, and a master's degree in Communication from Ithaca College.

dferro-aurience@mvcc.edu

315-792-5555



Courtney Metacarpa

Development & Events Assistant

Courtney Metacarpa joined MVCC's Office of Institutional Advancement in October 2024. As Development & Events Assistant, she assists in planning and executing events that engage the

College community, alumni, donors, and students to support MVCC's development and fundraising goals. Before joining the Foundation, she served as the Community & Business Development Coordinator for GPO Federal Credit Union.

Metacarpa earned a bachelor's degree in Business Management with a concentration in Marketing from Utica University.

cmetacarpa@mvcc.edu

315-792-5340



Courtney Taurisano-Sprague

Director of Development

Courtney Taurisano-Sprague has been part of MVCC's Institutional Advancement team since 2016, starting as Development Assistant before being promoted to Director of Development

in 2022. In this role, Taurisano-Sprague manages several of the Foundation's signature campaigns and events, including MVCC's Week of Giving, the Faculty/Staff Campaign, the Alumni Annual Fund, and Year-End Giving initiatives. She also supports and coordinates key College-wide events, such as MVCC's Community Convening, Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Alumni Annual Awards Ceremony, and Foundation Golf Tournament. Her efforts help strengthen relationships with alumni, employees, and community partners while advancing the College's fundraising goals.

Taurisano-Sprague holds an associate degree in Individual Studies from MVCC, a bachelor's degree in Public Relations from Syracuse University, and a master's degree in Business Communication from Jones International University.

ctaurisano-sprague@mvcc.edu

315-792-5345



Angela Marken

Assistant to the Office of Institutional Advancement

Angela Marken joined the Institutional Advancement Office in February 2022 as Assistant to the Office of Institutional Advancement. Marken has a strong

background in higher education; previous roles include Registrar at Pratt Munson College of Art and Design, Executive Assistant at UC Irvine, and Adjunct Art Instructor at MVCC. She oversees the MVCC Foundation scholarship process — from application submission to committee review and award disbursement. She also manages the Foundation's financial records, maintains confidential donor records, processes accounts payable and receivable, assists students with Emergency Relief Loan requests, and prepares correspondence for the MVCC Foundation Board of Directors.

Marken holds a master of fine arts in painting from Laguna College of Art and Design, bachelor's degrees in business administration and visual arts from SUNY Potsdam, and an associate degree in Fine Arts from MVCC.

amarken@mvcc.edu

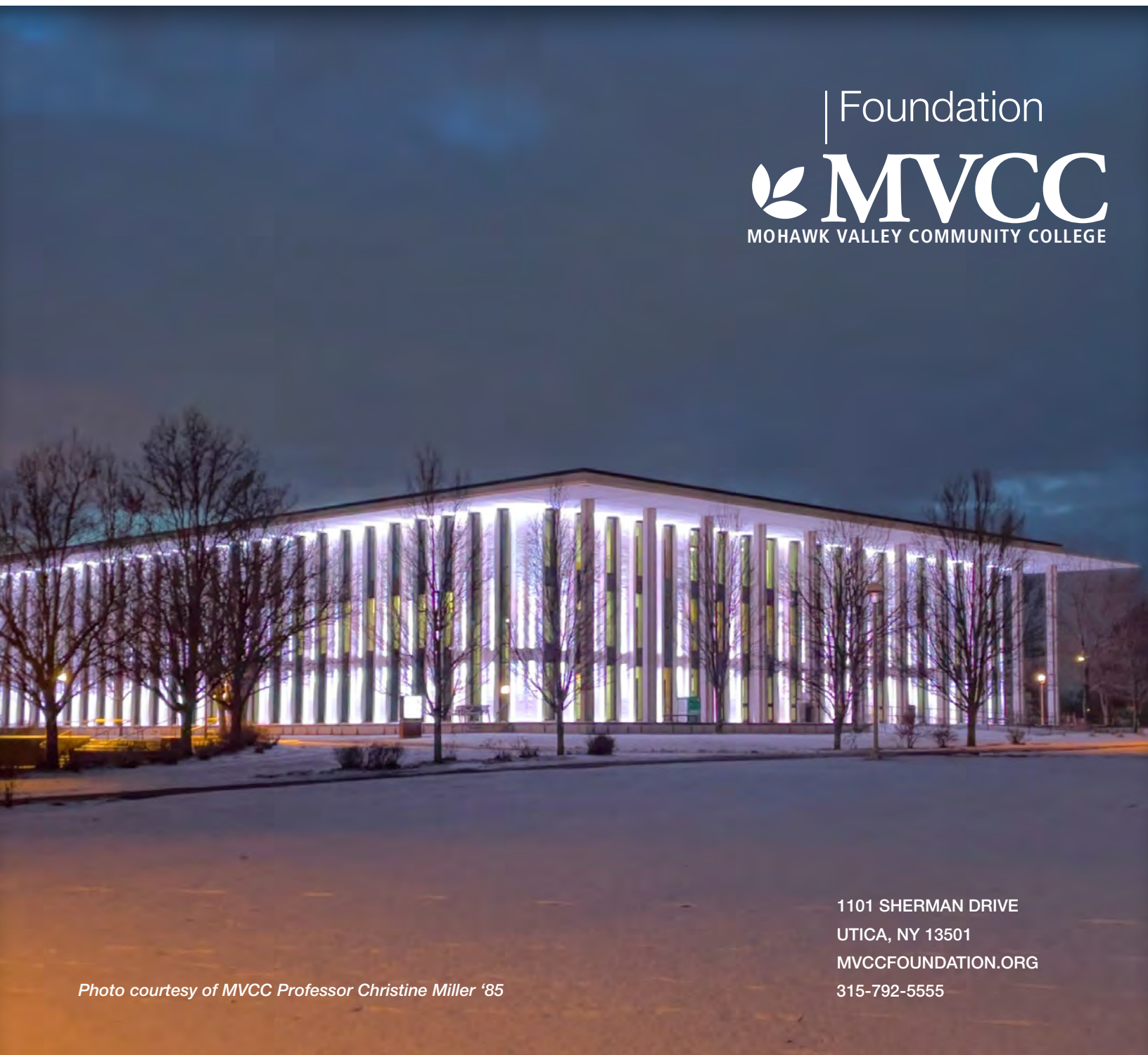
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Photo courtesy of MVCC Professor Christine Miller '85