

BC3's advantages on display during BC3 Bound

Oct. 26, 2020



Sarah Thiel, of Fenelton, attended Butler County Community College, graduated debt-free with an associate degree in accounting in 2020 and was a member of BC3's fourth consecutive graduating class of at least 560 graduates. She is shown during BC3's commencement on Aug. 1, 2020.

(Butler, PA) Prospective students can explore the 56 associate degree and 22 certificate programs Butler County Community College offers at its main campus in Butler Township, or the 10 associate degree programs available at BC3 @ Cranberry in Cranberry Township, during an in-person tour or virtual visit as part of the college's BC3 Bound Event.

BC3 will also waive its \$25 application fee during the BC3 Bound Event, to be held from Nov. 10-12. Prospective students can learn about the transferability of BC3's credits and BC3's savings compared to Pennsylvania's public four-year and state-related institutions.

Prospective students can schedule an in-person tour or virtual visit to be held between Nov. 10-12 – and apply free by entering the code BC3Bound2021 – at bc3.edu/bc3bound.

BC3's main campus is located at 107 College Drive. BC3 @ Cranberry is located at 250 Executive Drive.

During an in-person tour or virtual visit, prospective students can ask BC3 representatives about financial aid, BC3's five start dates each semester, BC3's 17:1 student-to-faculty ratio, support services, BC3's programs of study and how 80 percent of BC3 graduates are debt-free.

BC3 has been ranked as the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania for 2020 by BestColleges.com. The BC3 Education Foundation in 2020-2021 will award more than \$200,000 in named scholarships which, with financial aid and BC3's affordable tuition, allow 80 percent of BC3 graduates to graduate debt-free.

BC3's main campus offers associate degrees in 35 career programs and in 21 transfer programs. Its menu also includes 22 certificate or workplace certificate programs that take one year or less to complete. BC3 @ Cranberry's selection features six transfer and four career programs.

Credits transfer to four-year institutions

Students can apply credits earned toward a bachelor's degree at public, private and online four-year colleges and universities. Students in BC3's career programs can develop the skills needed to enter the workforce immediately after graduation.

Sixty-six percent of BC3 students this fall are enrolled in transfer programs.

Students who complete an associate degree at BC3 in one of 12 select programs can transfer all credits to a parallel program and with junior standing to any Pennsylvania public four-year institution, such as Clarion, Edinboro, Indiana and Slippery Rock universities of Pennsylvania

BC3's 486 outgoing transfer agreements with Pennsylvania public four-year universities are the third-most among the 14 institutions within the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

Students who complete an associate degree at BC3 in one of eight select programs can transfer all credits to a parallel program to any Penn State University commonwealth campus.

BC3 savings range from \$6K to \$30K per year

Full-time BC3 students from Butler County can save \$6,115 annually in tuition and fees compared to the average charged by Pennsylvania's public four-year universities or \$8,785 compared to the average charged by Pennsylvania's state-related institutions' branch campuses.

Tuition and fees average \$11,215 for students pursuing 15 credits per semester for one year in 2020-2021 at a Pennsylvania public four-year university; \$13,885 at a state-related institution's

branch campus; \$16,926 at a state-related institution's main campus; and \$35,087 at a private institution.

Tuition and fees for BC3 students from Butler County pursuing 15 credits per semester for one year in 2020-2021 are \$5,100.

The average student-loan debt for the Class of 2019 was \$38,521 in Pennsylvania, according to an Aug. 19 report in LendEDU, a website that provides comparisons for loans, credit cards and other financial products. Only student borrowers in New Hampshire and Connecticut were reported to have higher student-loan debt.

“When you first get out into the workforce with a new career, it can be overwhelming,” said Sarah Thiel, of Fenelton, who earned an associate degree in accounting from BC3 and in 2020 was a member of BC3's fourth consecutive graduating class of at least 560 graduates.

Thiel graduated from BC3 debt-free.

“It is nice to start that new part of your life, that new chapter in your life debt-free, and without that burden of debt, especially if you plan on transferring to a university, where you probably will acquire debt. It's nice to get a lot of your basic classes completed without owing anything at the end of your two years.”

Her choice to attend BC3, she said, “was a great decision. Especially if you are someone who doesn't necessarily know what you want to do or if your plans aren't concrete. You might think you want to do something but you are not sure. It's nice to go somewhere affordable and close to home to figure it out.”

Thiel has accepted a position as an accounting associate in Cheswick.