

Mom, daughter to graduate from BC3 @ LindenPointe with “superior education”

May 7, 2019



Michelle Jasmer, 42, of Greenville, left, and her daughter, Lindsey Findley, 19, of West Middlesex, students at BC3 @ LindenPointe in Hermitage, will graduate from BC3 with associate degrees in business administration May 15. They are shown with Lindsey’s daughter, Aria, 10 months, on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township on May 7, 2019.

(West Middlesex, PA) Butler County Community College’s Class of 2019 will be its largest of the century with 599 graduates – 14 more than in 2017, its previous top class since 2000.

Five-hundred-twenty-seven graduates will receive at least one associate degree, and 72 at least one certificate during BC3’s commencement exercises, set for 7 p.m. May 15 in the Field House on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township.

Among the 599 graduates are 32 student-veterans. A 70-year-old grandmother of three who is the Class of 2019’s most senior graduate. A 35-year-old married mother of six. BC3’s first two-

sport All-American. Six high school students who achieved a Workplace Certificate in Entrepreneurship by completing the first Riv-ElI Entrepreneurship Program.

And Lindsey Findley, 19, of West Middlesex, a BC3 @ LindenPointe student who will receive an associate degree in business administration, as will her best friend.

Her mother, Michelle Jasmer, 42, of Greenville.

“I heard so many times, ‘If I went to college with my mom, I would go crazy,’” said Findley, a 2017 graduate of Reynolds Junior-Senior High School in Greenville. “I would honestly get annoyed because my mom is my best friend. I don't find it annoying one bit. It means so much to graduate with my mom because my biological dad died when I was real young, so even though my dad will miss out on my graduating, my mom will be right there by my side. You never know what will happen with your family, but now I have made more memories because we have crossed this bridge together.”

“A superior education,” mom says

She and her daughter will travel lightly as they cross that bridge together toward Youngstown State University, said Jasmer, in that she and Findley will be among the 75 percent of BC3 graduates who are debt-free.

Pennsylvania college students owe an average of \$36,193 in student-loan debt, the highest in the nation, LendEdu reported Aug. 8.

“I always worry about how my family will make it from paycheck to paycheck,” said Jasmer, who has a husband, five children and two grandchildren and with Findley will pursue a bachelor's degree in human resources at YSU. “Instead of worrying about how I will pay for school, bills and life in general, I just have to worry about life.”

And from BC3 @ LindenPointe, Jasmer said, “I needed exactly what I got. A superior education that was local and affordable.”

Not just affordable, said Findley, whose brother, Kenneth, attended BC3 @ LindenPointe and earned an associate degree in general studies in 2018.

“It is a family,” Findley said. “The staff there is so friendly. ... My brother graduated last year and John (Suesser, BC3 @ LindenPointe director) still asks how he's doing. That means so much, knowing that even when you're gone from there, the staff still wonders how you're doing. I know that I am something to them and not just another student to graduate.”

“We found strength within each other”

May 15 represents the culmination of a conversation that began two years ago, when Jasmer sat on Findley's bed, according to Findley, and said, "If you're scared to conquer college, then I will go with you and we can be each other's support systems."

"And so we did," Findley said. "Let's just say I would not have been able to do it without her. My mom is my best friend, and I love that she did this with me."

Added Jasmer: "I honestly thought that my chance to go to college was gone. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to attend with my daughter. She was nervous about attending and fitting in. We found strength within each other."

Evans City woman most senior graduate

Seventeen graduates will receive two associate degrees, two will receive two certificates, and 13 will receive one associate degree and one certificate from BC3, which has been selected as the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania in three consecutive rankings by Schools.com.

BC3 also has the highest salary-to-cost ratio and the most affordable tuition among 43 regional colleges and universities, according to U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard data.

Evans City resident Deborah Carter, at 70 years, one month and 12 days on May 15 will be BC3's most senior graduate, 285 days more senior than Brenda Haney, of Cranberry Township. Carter will receive an associate degree in social work and Haney, in criminology.

Vanessa Eberle, 35, of Butler, a married mother of six, will receive an associate degree in psychology, as will her husband, Ethan, 41.

Mackenzie Craig, of Karns City, who since December was named a National Junior College Athletic Association Division III All-American in volleyball and in women's basketball, will receive an associate degree in criminology.

Ellwood City resident Mikayla Beachem, at 17 years, eight months and 22 days will be BC3's youngest graduate, 37 days younger than fellow Riv-Ell classmate Destiny DiMaggio, also of Ellwood City.

Ellwood City and Riverside high school students were able to participate in the first, yearlong Riv-Ell Entrepreneurship Program, a collaborative effort among BC3, the Community College of Beaver County and the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce, which blended classroom learning with real-world experience. Students who completed the program earned 16 tuition-free, transferrable credits.

Past three graduating classes largest since 2000

BC3 will also graduate its second class of Presidential Scholars. Meghan Hyatt, of Butler, will receive an associate degree in mathematics; Kelly Kriley, of Butler, in chemistry; Drew Meier, of Fenelton, in electronics technology with CADD; Noah Pollock, of Chicora, in business administration; Claire Rodgers, of Saxonburg, in history; and Haley Vissari, of Renfrew, in early childhood education (Pre K-4).

The Presidential Scholars program is in its third year at BC3. The full-tuition President's Scholarship is presented to students in the Top 10 percent of their graduating class and who have achieved at least a 3.5 grade-point average at any of Butler County's public high schools. A cyber school student counted in those public schools' graduating classes is also eligible. Students must also enroll at BC3 in the first semester following their high school graduation to be eligible for the scholarship, and are required to take Scholars-only courses and maintain at least a 3.5 GPA at BC3.

More than 125 members of BC3's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, an international academic honor society, will graduate, as will 13 members of Delta Theta, BC3's chapter of Kappa Beta Delta, an international honor society for business students.

Eight students will receive from BC3 11 reverse-transfer degrees, an opportunity created in 2016 as part of an agreement among Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges and 14 Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education institutions.

Seven employees of Oberg Industries, a precision manufacturer in Freeport, will receive apprenticeship technology workplace certificates as a result of a program instructed onsite by BC3. BC3's 26-credit apprenticeship technology workplace certificate program, launched in fall 2016, is taught entirely at Oberg Industries.

Dr. Steve Tyrell, president of North Country Community College, Saranac Lake, N.Y., will be the keynote speaker. Sandra J. Ihlenfeld, a 2007 BC3 graduate and executive director of the Butler YMCA, will be the distinguished alumni speaker.

BC3's three most recent graduating classes have been its largest of the century. The college's Class of 2017 had 585 graduates and of 2018, 578. BC3's Class of 2018 also had 32 student-veterans. Its class of 2012 had 34.