

# Musician to graduate from BC3 @ Cranberry, lauds instructors' "experience from the field"

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Maya Hampson, 19, of Cranberry Township, will receive an associate degree in general studies from BC3 @ Cranberry in Cranberry Township on May 15. Hampson, a 2017 graduate of Seneca Valley High School, sings, plays the guitar, ukulele, mandolin and bodhran, and hopes to become a music therapist.

(Cranberry Township, 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 Maya Hampson, a 19-year-old BC3 @ Cranberry student whose dream occupation is that of a music therapist, which, she says, “combines my two passions, music and taking care of people who are struggling with mental illnesses and mental disabilities.”

The 2017 Seneca Valley High School graduate and Cranberry Township resident sings, plays the guitar, ukulele, mandolin and bodhran, and often writes her own songs “when I find enough free time.” She will receive an associate degree in general studies from BC3, and plans to transfer to Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, where she will pursue a bachelor's degree in music therapy.

“I really believe it can help people recover from debilitating mental illnesses like depression and anxiety,” Hampson said. “I've always been a nurturer. Helping people is something that truly makes me happy. Watching people overcome these issues would be so rewarding to see and be a part of. By combining it with music, my other great passion, I feel like I would be able to provide a better life for me and for others in my care.”

## “The staff is so incredibly kind and welcoming”

Such care was also evident at BC3 @ Cranberry, the 19-year-old said.

“The staff is so incredibly kind and welcoming,” Hampson said. “They really made my experience at community college so much better. All the teachers that I have come in contact with have been very caring about their students and are willing to work with them to make any adjustments or aid them in the class. Overall, it is just a really nice environment to be in.”

And to leave debt-free, she said, as do 75 percent of BC3 graduates.

“I will have more time to invest in furthering my career goals and personal character development without worrying about a looming cloud of financial debt,” Hampson said.

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

BC3 has also been selected as the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania in three consecutive rankings by Schools.com.

“The faculty and staff are amazing,” Hampson said. “They have always provided help for me when other schools would probably tell me to figure it out myself. The teachers are experienced in the courses they teach. Every teacher I have had has had an active role in the field that correlates to what subject they are teaching.”

Her instructors, she said, “use their experience from the field and apply it in the classroom, which really supplemented my learning experience, as well as made the course feel more applicable and more exciting to hear about.”

## Evans City woman most senior graduate

Seventeen BC3 graduates will receive two associate degrees, two will receive two certificates, and 13 will receive one associate degree and one certificate.

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.