

Students in BC3's historic Class of 2018 look back before marching forward

May 16, 2018

(Butler, PA) An 80-year-old Air Force veteran. An ordained minister. A former diver on a swimming team at a university from which she earned a bachelor's degree. A model who has appeared in three magazines. A mother of two sets of twin boys, and another who will graduate with her daughter on May 16.

Nearly 580 Butler County Community College students will receive associate degrees and-or certificates during BC3's 2018 commencement, which will be held at 7 tonight in the Field House on the college's main campus in Butler Township.

BC3's Class of 2018 includes 58 registered nursing students, a married couple, a woman born 8,470 miles away and a 46-year-old Karns City resident who is one of 14 student-veterans and for whom travel is no barrier when competing in paintball games.

BC3's salary-to-cost ratio is the highest compared to that of 41 regional colleges and universities, according to the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard. Seventy-five percent of BC3 graduates are debt-free.

Among them, many of the 50 students who will represent the college's main campus, and additional locations at BC3 @ Armstrong, BC3 @ Brockway, BC3 @ Cranberry, BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and BC3 @ LindenPointe in BC3's 50th commencement anniversary tonight:

Eric Hoffman



E. Hoffman

Hoffman, 43, of Johnsonburg, attended BC3 @ Brockway in Brockway and will earn an associate of applied science degree in business management. The father of three is a soccer and softball coach and will graduate debt-free.

“I came to BC3 as an older student who had been displaced from a job that I worked for many years,” Hoffman said. “Because the staff at BC3 @ Brockway was so warm and inviting, it gave me the feeling of a relaxed family atmosphere. The instructors in my grade book will always get an A-plus for teaching with you and not at you, which makes it rare, unique and inspiring for the student. I leave BC3 with a heavy heart and a bright future for myself and my family through the efforts of good teachers, faculty and great students. I am proud to say I am BC3.”

Allison Elizabeth Castello



A. Castello

Castello, 28, of Bethel Park, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in physical therapist assistant. A wife, dancer and Pilates teacher, Castello will graduate debt-free.

"My two years at BC3 have been a whirlwind of learning, studying, meeting new people and making lifelong friends," Castello said. "The PTA program is a rigorous one in which I've gained knowledge and hands-on tools to prepare myself for my job as a physical therapist assistant. Whether it was in a lecture class or the lab, I always felt comfortable in the environment to learn and be myself. I always had someone to go to if I had a question or needed any extra support. I feel that BC3 wanted me to succeed not only while at the school but also after I graduated."

Alyssa Nusser



A. Nusser

Nusser, 20, of Cranberry Township, attended BC3 @ Cranberry in Cranberry Township and BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in technical trades-cosmetology management option. Nusser, recognized in 2018 as an All-Pennsylvania Academic Team Workforce Student, will graduate debt-free.

"My experience at BC3 has been hands-down the best decision I made for my career in cosmetology," said Nusser, who also represented BC3 at Lobby Day in Harrisburg in April. "The cosmetology management program at BC3 has fit all my needs in the areas where I needed to grow and learn the most to succeed in the cosmetology business field. I have been able to apply what I have learned in my classes to the real world and it has only benefited me for better hopes of my future. The faculty was always very helpful in any way they could assist me and I'll have a degree debt-free! What more can I ask for?"

Ariel Lynann Junkin



A. Junkin

Junkin, 21, of New Castle, attended BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle and will earn an associate of arts degree in psychology. A drip painter who is learning to play the violin, Junkin will graduate debt-free.

"I had an amazing experience at BC3," Junkin said. "I received an excellent education that I could afford. I couldn't have asked for a better way to start my college experience. I will truly miss the amazing staff and students that made every class fun. I would like to give a big thanks to the staff and students at Lawrence Crossing for making my experience amazing!"

Ashley Frye



A. Frye

Frye, 20, of Evans City, attended BC3 @ Cranberry and will earn an associate of applied science degree in graphic design. Frye, who has been involved in the 4-H Club for 12 years, will graduate debt-free.

“BC3 has provided me with the necessary tools to enhance my skills and has given me valuable knowledge regarding this diverse world, people and concepts,” Frye said. “This will enable me to hopefully become more successful in life. It has also taught me the importance of thinking critically and asking questions in many situations. All of these aspects of college have confirmed my thoughts that communication is vital and key to any situation and that there is no one way to do something, this allows for an open mind for achieving happiness. These experiences are truly irreplaceable and I would not trade them for anything.”

Hallie Moore



H. Moore

Moore, 20, of Sharpsville, attended BC3 @ LindenPointe in Hermitage and will earn an associate of arts degree in psychology. A “dog mom” to her puppy Niko, a Labrador and boxer mix, Moore will graduate debt-free.

“I originally decided to go to BC3 to stay local because I was going into college undecided,” Moore said. “I took general classes, hoping to find something interesting, and a general psychology class – and it just clicked. I was extremely interested in the human mind and how it worked. There have been some tough classes and many late nights of studying. However, there have also been so many good things out of my journey at BC3. I have taken some very interesting classes that I never thought would excite me. I have learned a lot and I have made some lifelong friends. Attending a community college was one of my better decisions.”

Rachel M. Fisher



R. Fisher

Fisher, 24, of Wolcott, N.Y., attended BC3’s main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in physical therapist assistant. She was employed as a student in BC3’s admissions department and was president of BC3’s PTA Club.

“My experience at BC3’s main campus has been fantastic,” said Fisher, a pianist since the age of 8 and a violinist since 10. “I enjoyed working with my classmates both in the classroom and the community. BC3 offers numerous opportunities for students to be involved both on campus and in the community with many clubs and organizations. I enjoyed my two years at BC3 and graduating will be bittersweet as I move on with my career.”

Autumn Gressly



A. Gressly

Gressly, 39, of Saxonburg, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in registered nursing. Gressly served as a student ambassador, was a member of BC3's nursing club and Phi Theta Kappa, an international academic honor society.

"Being enrolled in the BC3 nursing program has been a life-changing experience, one that drives me to work hard, but is extremely rewarding," said Gressly, the mother of three girls and one boy whose eldest daughter, Alexis, will graduate from BC3 on May 16 and with an associate of arts degree in criminology. "It challenges my mind and skills as it prepares me for my future.

When I started in the program, I was full of fear and uncertainty. What I was not expecting were all the great experiences along the way. The friendships that have developed while on campus have made a great impact on my time at school. I want to thank the faculty and staff for all their knowledge, time and effort! Thank you BC3!"

John DeRose



J. DeRose

DeRose, 46, of Karns City, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in physical therapist assistant. DeRose, an Army veteran and paintball player since 1990 who with his wife has participated in competitions in Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, New York and Tennessee, will graduate debt-free. DeRose attended BC3 for three years, during which time he took an early retirement from his job with the state of Pennsylvania to pursue his BC3 studies full time.

"Throughout my schooling I made many valuable friendships," DeRose said.

"My classroom and clinical experiences were informative and interesting, and were essential in preparing me for my future career. In visiting so many varied clinical sites, I was able to not only gain insight into which setting I may want to seek employment in, but also to make contacts and begin networking to help with procuring employment after graduation. My time at BC3 has been very satisfying and fulfilling."

Brooklyn Cox



B. Cox

Cox, 20, of Kittanning, attended BC3 @ Armstrong in Ford City, and BC3's main campus, and will earn an associate of arts degree in psychology.

"I had a great experience at BC3!" said Cox, who enjoys kayaking on Crooked Creek near Ford City. "I love having small classes so I can get to know my professors and they can get to know me. Everyone at BC3 was very helpful and friendly. It was affordable and very close to home."

Brittney Bianco



B. Bianco

Bianco, 21, of Freeport, attended BC3's main campus and will earn associate of arts degrees in criminology and in psychology. Bianco, second on the all-time assist list on the BC3 volleyball team with 1,254, will graduate debt-free.

"When I first transferred to BC3, I was nervous I was not going to like it because I originally attended Slippery Rock University," Bianco said. "Attending BC3 was a great decision for me. I got involved with the volleyball team, was able to get my own apartment, buy my first car. All in all, BC3 was a great choice for me and I'm thankful of the people I met."

Carli Marie Crawford



C. Crawford

Crawford, 21, of Kittanning, attended BC3 @ Armstrong and BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of science degree in business administration. She will also pursue a bachelor's degree in accounting on BC3's main campus through BC3's degree-completion partnership with Clarion University of Pennsylvania.

"I have really enjoyed my time here at BC3," said Crawford, the mother of a 9-month-old girl. "The small class sizes, caring teachers and close locations make it the best place to start. I will be continuing my education after graduation in working toward a bachelor's degree in accounting. BC3 has so many options that I am able to receive my bachelor's degree from Clarion University while I get to stay at BC3's main campus for the courses."

William "Don" Thomas



W. Thomas

Thomas, 80, of Saxonburg, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of arts degree in history. The Air Force veteran, husband of 57 years, father of six children, eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren will become the most senior student ever to graduate from BC3 and will do so debt-free.

"BC3," Thomas said, "is A-1. I had to give the effort. And I was willing to do that. So I did it. BC3 said, 'If you do that, here is what we are going to do to get you to where you finally want to be.' I liked every one of the instructors. They taught. I learned. They sold me. They sold me. Don't go anywhere else."

Chad Yaroschak



C. Yaroschak

Yaroschak, 21, of Butler, attended BC3 @ Armstrong, BC3 @ Cranberry and BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of science degree in business administration. Yaroschak, who has visited 10 islands and six states, will graduate debt-free.

"Not knowing what to do right after high school is a common trend among many, including myself," Yaroschak said. "Figuring it is best not to fall behind after graduating from high school, I started looking around. BC3, being local, gave me the option to stay ahead. I quickly applied to enroll and got started. BC3 then provided me with a great service, along with an exceptional class schedule that worked around a personal life. Every teacher was personable and understandable, teaching the material effectively and with great efficiency. I feel confident that wherever I may be led, the educational benefits received at BC3 were well worth it!"

Chris Slay



C. Slay

Slay, 36, of Butler, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of arts degree in social work. A member of Phi Theta Kappa, Slay represented BC3 on the 2018 All-Pennsylvania Academic Team and at Lobby Day in Harrisburg in April.

"BC3 has surpassed my expectations in many ways," said Slay, a husband and father of three children. "Entering college for the first time at the age of 34, I had many concerns and insecurities about being a nontraditional student. Not only did the faculty and staff embrace me, but so did my younger classmates. I have gotten heavily involved on campus, and have met some of the most incredible people. I have made connections with people of all ages, and have formed bonds that will not soon fade. I enjoy learning, and I enjoy interacting with people from different walks of life. My experience at BC3 has left me with a lifelong mark!"

Derica Skarbek

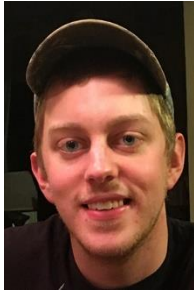


D. Skarbek

Skarbek, 21, of Punxsutawney, attended BC3 @ Brockway and will earn an associate of applied science degree in business management.

"My experience at BC3 was great," said Skarbek, a barrel racer since the age of 5 who competes with her brown quarterhorse, Penny. "It felt like we were all one big family from day one. The students and staff are all so nice and willing to help in any way they can. I think all of my professors did an amazing job at preparing me for the next chapter of my life in the business field. I could not have picked a better school from which to obtain my degree."

Devon Brocious



D. Brocious

Brocious, 20, of Worthington, attended BC3 @ Armstrong and will earn an associate of science degree in business administration.

“Throughout my time at BC3 I have learned many new things and met many new people,” said Brocious, an avid whitetail deer and small-game hunter. “I enjoyed myself and my time spent. I have gotten to know my professors and the BC3 staff well. And they have all been very supportive of me and my endeavors. I believe that all my experiences at BC3 have helped prepare me for what lies ahead, whether it be more school or moving on into the work world.”

Elliot Zydonik



E. Zydonik

Zydonik, 22, of Kittanning, attended BC3 @ Armstrong and BC3’s main campus and will graduate with an associate of arts degree in general studies.

“My time at BC3 has been amazing,” said Zydonik, who has played jazz on his saxophone since fourth grade and is a Little League umpire. “With BC3 not being the first college I attended, I was very pleased with how most of the teachers were so helpful. They cared. It was nice not to feel like a number in the classroom. I met some amazing individuals at BC3. I hope that they will lead to lifelong friendships.”

Isabella Mariacher



I. Mariacher

Mariacher, 20, of Jamestown, attended BC3’s main campus and will earn an associate of arts degree in psychology. A pianist since the age of 7, a BC3 student ambassador and member of Phi Theta Kappa, Mariacher will graduate debt-free.

“My time here at BC3 has really impacted my life in a positive way,” Mariacher said. “The staff has always worked well with the students. If I didn’t start here at BC3, I would not have put myself out there to sign up for even the simplest of clubs at a university. I’ve had my ups and downs, but I know for sure, starting out at a college where I can be debt-free, recognized and helped was the way to go to start out my career.”

Hana Daisy Richani



H. Richani

Richani, 21, of Pittsburgh, attended BC3 @ Cranberry and will earn an associate of science degree in business administration. Richani, a model who has appeared in Body Beautiful is Your Medical Spa and in magazines, will graduate debt-free.

“BC3 has opened great doors in my future,” Richani said. “My professors and staff were all very helpful in this journey. I’m proud for what I’ve accomplished to get my associate degree. Thank you to everyone who supported me throughout this entire experience.”

Janelle Fox



J. Fox

Fox, 20, of Ellwood City, attended BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and will earn an associate of arts degree in early childhood education (Pre K-4). A pianist since the age of 5 who plays classical, Christian, country and Broadway songs, Fox will graduate debt-free.

“I decided to go to BC3 because I wanted to save money, and stay out of debt as much as possible,” Fox said. “When I first started I had no clue what college would be like, because neither of my parents had the opportunity to go. Now, graduating from BC3, if I were asked to do it all over again, I wouldn’t change a thing. The people here at BC3 are so friendly and helpful, and you can tell they really care about each student as an individual. I have made so many great friends, and developed many professional relationships that I know will stick with me into my future outside of BC3. I have loved going to BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and will forever be proud to be a Pioneer.”

Kayla Troutman



K. Troutman

Troutman, 22, of Brookville, attended BC3 @ Brockway and will earn an associate of arts degree in psychology.

“BC3 @ Brockway has been a great experience from the start,” said Troutman, who has worked with children the past five years as a teachers’ aide at a daycare. “Teachers and staff go above and beyond to get you the help you need! Class sizes are small so you get to interact with everyone in the classroom. I choose BC3 because it’s a close commute from my hometown. I’m very thankful for BC3 because it let me continue my education while still living at home and having the flexibility to work while attending college.”

Jennifer Kriess



J. Kriess

Kriess, 19, of Butler, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of science degree in business administration. Kreiss, a President's Scholarship recipient and Phi Theta Kappa member, has been to 14 country music concerts in the past four years, including four Georgia Florida Line performances. She will graduate debt-free.

"As a senior in high school, I made the decision to attend BC3 for the first two years of furthering my education," Kreiss said. "Little did I know the impact this decision would make on my life. I soon began connecting not only with old friends from high school, but also with new classmates. Not only does BC3's campus make connecting with friends easy, but BC3 professors also make teaching as hands-on and as relatable to the real world as they can. The staff at BC3 works in a way to help you succeed and thrive during your time. After my two years at BC3, if I had the chance, I would still choose to attend BC3 to begin my undergraduate degree."

Jessica Palascak



J. Palascak

Palascak, 35, of Pittsburgh, attained a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Clarion University in 2006. Palascak attended BC3 @ Cranberry and BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in physical therapist assistant. The mother of two boys who married her "best friend" will graduate debt-free.

"I began my education at BC3 about three years ago with anatomy and physiology courses at BC3 @ Cranberry," Palascak said. "I was testing out the waters of going back to school and decided the following fall to apply for the physical therapist assistant program. I have had all positive experiences at BC3. I'm amazed at the resources we have as students for additional assistance, whether it's tutoring, career prep, financial assistance and or many other resources. Campus always has exciting things happening to get the students involved and the campus itself is beautiful and safe. I'm proud to be a BC3 graduate and feel that BC3 has done an excellent job preparing me to start my new career."

June Cessna



J. Cessna

Cessna, 22, of Kittanning, attended BC3 @ Armstrong and BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in accounting and an associate of science degree in business administration. The mother of a 3-year-old boy enjoys camping and kayaking and will graduate debt-free.

"I have had a wonderful experience at BC3," Cessna said. "I like BC3's main campus because of its beautiful scenery and professors. There are a lot of things to do and see on main campus. I really enjoyed BC3 @ Armstrong because it

felt like family there. Most of my classes were smaller, which enabled me to do better because it was easier to ask questions and get more one-on-one help. I made many friends at BC3 @ Armstrong because with a small classes, you get to know everyone on a more personal level. I had a wonderful experience at both campuses and would highly recommend attending BC3. I get to graduate with two degrees and be debt-free!”

Kenneth M. Findley



K. Findley

Findley, 20, of Greenville, attended BC3 @ LindenPointe and will earn an associate of arts degree in general studies. Findley, who loves the challenge of solving the Rubik’s Cube, will graduate debt-free.

“I am truly sad to say goodbye to BC3 and everybody here,” Findley said. “I am excited knowing BC3 gave me a great experience and the knowledge I can succeed. Through everybody I met and the classes, I have grown into an incredible person that I didn’t know I could grow into. BC3 gave me a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I am proud to be graduating from here.”

Lindsey Schall



L. Schall

Schall, 19, of Kittanning, attended BC3 @ Armstrong and will earn associate of arts degrees in general studies and in psychology. Schall, who enjoys reading dystopian novels and mysteries, will graduate debt-free.

“I was rather nervous to go to college, as it would be completely different from what I was used to,” Schall said. “I was so relieved by how kind the staff was and how capable and understanding the professors were. I am so thankful I was able to have fun, informative sources at such a convenient distance from home. I will definitely miss the staff and everyone else there.”

Mickenzie Renee Bennett



M. Bennett

Bennett, 20, of New Castle, attended BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and will earn associate of arts degrees in psychology and in social work. Bennett, who rescued two kittens – Tiger and Sebastian – six years ago, will graduate debt-free.

“I have loved my time at BC3,” Bennett said. “It has been an incredible experience and I will greatly miss it after I leave. The teachers made it feel like a second home for the years I spent there.”

Loretta Maelynn Dawson



L. Dawson

Dawson, 19, of Sharon, attended BC3 @ LindenPointe and will earn an associate of arts degree in psychology. At 19 years, eight months and 27 days the youngest graduate in BC3's Class of 2018, Dawson enjoys cuddling up with her four cats and watching reality TV shows – especially “Jersey Shore” – and will graduate debt-free.

“BC3 was an awesome choice for me,” Dawson said. “It’s very close to home, affordable and the people I have met here are great! The professors genuinely care about the well-being of their students and they are well-educated. The small classes make the relationships with the professors more personal and enjoyable.

I’m proud to be a BC3 Pioneer and I am going to miss BC3 as I move on to further my education.”

Lucas Carroll



L. Carroll

Carroll, 20, of Beaver, attended BC3 @ Cranberry, BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of arts degree in communications. Carroll, an avid golfer whose best round is an 84 at Seven Oaks Country Club in Beaver, will graduate debt-free.

“BC3 has been a great experience to me because I loved the intimate and small classroom sizes that give you the opportunity to know your classmates and work with your professors,” said Carroll, who represented BC3 at Lobby Day in Harrisburg in April. “BC3 has also provided me with the opportunity to graduate debt-free.”

Leota May McDivitt



L. McDivitt

Leota May McDivitt, 21, of Ford City, attended BC3 @ Armstrong and will earn associate of arts degrees in general studies and in psychology. The cosplayer who portrays characters that include Marvel's Loki and Fem Mad Hatter from Alice in Wonderland will graduate debt-free.

“BC3,” McDivitt said, was “fun-tastic! My decision to attend BC3 @ Armstrong is one of the best I have made. With its amazing faculty, the incredible (director) Karen Zapp, and its fun, competitive courses, BC3 has really helped guide me to my find my path in life. Also, with BC3 @ Armstrong campus being so close to home, commuting was a breeze. I have learned new skills, made new friends and had a lot of fun in the last two years. I will miss it greatly as I move on in life.”

Ricky Carlson



R. Carlson

Carlson, 26, of DuBois, attended BC3 @ Brockway and will earn an associate of applied science degree in business management. An avid angler for 15 years and fly-fisherman on North Fork Creek in Brookville and Penns Creek near State College, Carlson will graduate debt-free.

“Deciding to make a commitment to pursue further education, five years after high school, was kind of intimidating,” Carlson said. “BC3 @ Brockway made the transition back to school extremely easy. Thanks to BC3 @ Brockway, I was able to achieve a great education at an affordable price. Jill (Martin Rend, BC3 @ Brockway director) and the instructors made my time at BC3 so easy and a true joy. I was able to enjoy my life with little stress while attending college and working a full-time job. Being able to achieve a degree, working full time and graduating debt-free would not have been possible without the wonderful campus at Brockway and their staff. I couldn’t have done it without them.”

Seth Queen



S. Queen

Queen, 20, of Butler, attended BC3’s main campus and will earn an associate of science degree in engineering. The right defenseman who has played ice hockey for 16 years will graduate debt-free.

“Working with the staff at BC3 has been a great experience, in and out of class,” Queen said. “The professors work hard to make sure we have an understanding of the subject. BC3 has every reason to be named the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania.”

Shane Stouffer



S. Stouffer

Stouffer, 22, of Kittanning, attended BC3 @ Armstrong and will earn an associate of arts degree in psychology. An ordained minister with the Universal Life Church, Stouffer will graduate debt-free.

“Since the first time I stepped into a classroom at BC3, I knew that I made the right decision,” Stouffer said. “The professors here are very helpful and want to see their students succeed. They understand that students have other obligations to fulfill such as jobs and family emergencies that come up unexpectedly. The student population is also very welcoming. The school is small enough for close friendships to evolve and to be able to know the faculty. All in all, I would give BC3 an A-plus.”

Thomas M. Stoops



T. Stoops

Stoops, 47, of New Castle, attended BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and BC3 @ LindenPointe and will earn an associate of applied science degree in business management. The independent filmmaker of thriller, action, drama and horror films who is planning a children's television show will graduate debt-free.

“My experience at BC3 has been pleasant and enjoyable,” Stoops said. “The staff were helpful and easy to work with at every level. I loved helping other students with issues of understanding aspects of the ‘outside world’ and the workforce in general from my past experience. I’ve made some friends along the way and many I foresee a prolonged friendship well beyond graduation. I would recommend BC3 to everyone looking to extend their education.”

Amanda Torr



A. Torr

Torr, 41, of Hermitage, attended BC3 @ LindenPointe and will earn an associate of arts degree in social work.

“By attending BC3 I have increased my knowledge of the community and the world around me,” said Torr, the mother of sons ages 17 and 12. “I have learned many valuable lessons at BC3, have strengthened my personal integrity and stayed true to my values.”

Lilibeth N. Best



L. Best

Best, 36, a Butler resident and native of Philippines, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in registered nursing. Best earned a GED diploma in 2012 and envisioned a future in BC3's registered nursing program.

“My experience at BC3 was tremendous and wonderful,” Best said. “Within three years of taking my prerequisite classes, I was accepted in the nursing program at BC3. The nursing program at BC3 is hard and I am impressed with how well the instructors teach the content in the classroom and in clinical. I struggled in the nursing program, but my teachers were helpful and took the time to listen to me when I reached out to them to help me figure out what I am doing wrong and what will I do to improve my grades.”

MaryAnn T. Steinmiller



M. Steinmiller

Steinmiller, 20, of Butler, attended BC3's main campus, where she helped to create a history club, and will earn an associate of arts degree in history. Steinmiller, who enjoys roping and can lasso a steer from the ground and from a horse, will graduate debt-free.

"Attending BC3 has been one of the best decisions of my life," said Steinmiller, a member of Phi Theta Kappa who represented BC3 on the 2018 All-Pennsylvania Academic Team. "I have met many great people, several of whom have become close friends. In my time at BC3 I have found myself and what I want to do with my life. The teachers are amazing, specifically instructor Deborah Kruger, who has become a mentor to me. She has helped me find my passion for history and encourages me every day to follow my dreams. BC3 has taught me that dedication and hard work pay off. I am so thankful for my time at BC3. It has helped shape me into the person I am today."

Teresa Hall



T. Hall

Hall, 58, of Sharon, attended BC3 @ LindenPointe and will earn associate of arts degrees in criminology and in social work.

"My experience here at BC3 was more than I expected. It has been superior," said Hall, the mother of five children, including two sets of twin sons – Terrance and Bryan, 30; and Brandon and Michael, 28; and daughter Patrice, 36 – and who wants nothing more than to one day experience Greece. "As a nontraditional student, I had my fears and apprehensions of the college experience. I was afforded the ability to access any needed resources to succeed so that I could achieve my goals. The administrators, faculty and staff here at BC3 @ LindenPointe, in my opinion, are the cream of the crop."

Caitlyn Kaufman

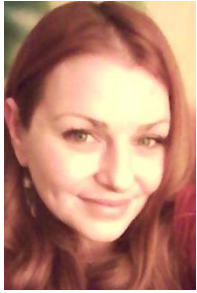


C. Kaufman

Kaufman, 23, of Chicora, attended BC3's main campus. She earned bachelor's degrees in 2016 from Clarion University of Pennsylvania in liberal studies and from California University of Pennsylvania in athletic training. She will graduate from BC3 with an associate of applied science degree in registered nursing. Kaufman, a 1- and 3-meter diver during her four years at Clarion, will graduate debt-free.

"I would recommend BC3 and the nursing program to any student," Kaufman said. "While it is a challenging program, it has helped me not only to become a better student, but also prepared me for my future career. My clinical experience has given me the opportunity to have one-on-one interactions with a diverse group of patients, and has prepared me for what is expected as a nurse."

Amanda Leigh Wilson



A. Wilson

Wilson, 37, of Butler, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in medical assistant. Wilson, who survived leukemia as an adult and whose love of horses inspired her to start drawing pictures of the animals when she was 3, will graduate debt-free.

"My experience at BC3 was amazing," Wilson said. "I was a KEYS (Keystone Education Yields Success) student and a single working mother of two, trying to go to school to make my way out of public assistance. The staff from KEYS were amazing and went above and beyond in order to help me achieve my goal – including pointing me in the direction of scholarships, one of which I got. I am so thankful for KEYS and BC3. Words do not even begin to describe. The teachers and staff want you to succeed. The help, support and encouragement I have received from BC3 as a whole was instrumental in my success. Thanks for helping me change my life."

Jarrett Schreiner



J. Schreiner

Schreiner, 19, of Seven Fields, attended BC3 @ Cranberry and will earn an associate of science degree in business administration.

"From my first day to now, BC3 @ Cranberry has been with me every step of the way," said Schreiner, who has played trombone since the third grade and performed four years with the Seneca Valley High School marching band. "All I had to do was ask, and they would do everything they possibly could to help me succeed. The classes were challenging and enjoyable, and the instructors were very knowledgeable and flexible. I made a couple of new friends who I think will remain my friends for a long time to come. BC3 was an enjoyable experience, and going there is still truly one of the best decisions I made in my life."

Levi Pintirsch



L. Pintirsch

Pintirsch, 21, of Butler, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in registered nursing. Pintirsch, a former equestrian who competed at the local and tri-state level and who primarily showed warmbloods and thoroughbreds in hunter-jumper and equitation classifications, will graduate debt-free.

"I have made many new friendships, professional relationships and have learned so much both related and non-related to my specific major," Pintirsch said. "I look forward to graduation where I will proudly accept my associate degree in the applied science of nursing and joining the workforce where I will impact individuals' lives every day."

Ryan Michael Simmons



R. Simmons

Simmons, 23, of Zelenople, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of arts degree in criminology. Simmons, once a full-time HVAC service technician, was a member of Phi Theta Kappa and will graduate debt-free.

"When I first decided to come to BC3, I wanted to just get my degree and move on," Simmons said. "After my first semester, however, I was invited to become a member of Phi Theta Kappa and that is where my path changed. Getting involved in PTK and all of the events brought me out of my comfort zone and made me enjoy my time at BC3 much more. I was fortunate enough to meet some unique people and create friendships that I will have with me as my life goes on. The professors are some of the best around and are always available to help you succeed in whatever you want to accomplish. BC3 has changed my life for the better and I have become a stronger individual from my experiences here."

Jamil Booker



J. Booker

Booker, 29, of New Castle, attended BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and will earn an associate of applied science degree in business management.

"My experience at BC3 was great," said Booker, who has played bass guitar to jazz and gospel music since he was 14. "I met some of my best teachers I ever had. I also met some amazing people along the way. I made a ton of friends while attending BC3. I felt like my experience forced me to challenge myself working a full- and part-time job while going to school full-time. My experience at BC3 was great and wouldn't trade it for anything."

Jocelyn Guy



J. Guy

Guy, 20, of Prospect, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of science degree in business administration. A majorette who twirled a baton for two years with Slippery Rock Area High's Danceline Rock'n-ettes will graduate debt-free.

"I had a great experience my two years at BC3!" said Guy, a member of Phi Theta Kappa who represented BC3 at Lobby Day in Harrisburg in April. "There were so many opportunities for me. The affordability and convenience of going to community college is amazing. I get to transfer without any debt. Also, the teachers and administration were so helpful and would do anything to help students succeed."

Jacob Hetrick



J. Hetrick

Hetrick, 22, of West Sunbury, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of arts degree in English. Hetrick – who says he has been “obsessed” with “Godzilla” since he was a child, has all the “Godzilla” movies on DVDs and has read stories about the creature in comic books – will graduate debt-free.

“Without a doubt, my time at BC3 has been one of the best periods of my life,” Hetrick said. “I was a shy and awkward kid when I first arrived, and had a pretty poor academic record. I was held back a year in high school and barely graduated. Once I came to BC3, that all started to change. I quickly made friends, joined a slew of clubs and plunged headfirst into every course and career path that interested me. By the end of my second semester, I had been elected secretary of Phi Theta Kappa, where I was challenged to think not just about myself, but about the community and the world around us. I will forever be grateful for the friends that I’ve made and the experiences I’ve shared on this campus. Thanks to my time at BC3, I’ve grown stronger as both a student and a person, and I only hope to keep improving from here.”

Jason Nagle



J. Nagle

Nagle, 37, of Zelenople, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in electronics technology, a workplace certificate in basic manufacturing, and a certificate in technical trades-applied technology. He earned an associate of applied science degree in robotics technology in 2017 from BC3. A former Eagle Scout with Troop 399 in Evans City, Nagle will graduate debt-free.

“In the past eight years I have met some great people at BC3,” Nagle said. “It is where I met my lovely wife. BC3 has taught me many things. The biggest thing my instructors have taught me is to believe that with hard work comes great reward.”

Nicole Nagle



N. Nagle

Nagle, 25, of Zelenople, attended BC3's main campus and will earn an associate of applied science degree in business management and a certificate in business skills. A bowler whose high game is a 279, Nagle will graduate debt-free.

“BC3 is a great school,” said Nagle, the wife of Jason Nagle. “If you are looking for a school that has a reasonable price, a good atmosphere and an overall goal of helping you succeed, then this is the right place for you! There are always going to be ups and downs with everything. I never thought I would honestly finish, but I did and I am proud to say it. Was it a lot of work? Yes. But if it

wasn't for the support of the counselors, professors and the tutoring program on campus, it wouldn't have happened for me."

James Carey LaShawn Smith



J. Smith

Smith, 24, of New Castle, attended BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and will earn an associate of science degree in computer science. The first person from his immediate family to graduate from college, Smith will do so debt-free.

"Going to BC3 was quite a journey," Smith said. "Originally I did not want to go to college. I was convinced shortly after graduating from high school and so one year after that I started college. I thought it was going to be worse than high school, but the teachers were considerate and the majority of them would try to help you if you did not understand or needed help. The staff were very nice and Garrett (Nogan, former student services/technology support specialist) at Lawrence Crossing tried to make everyone feel welcome. Of all my classes I enjoyed my computer courses the most. I also took some at main campus and those teachers were just as cool. BC3 was an unexpected journey but it was a journey well worth the time."