

## **BC3, SRU deserve praise**

**September 9, 2021 Our Opinion**

Not that an excuse is ever needed to praise the county's two excellent institutions of higher learning, but both are certainly deserving of it this week.

Earlier this week, we praised Slippery Rock University for its recent decision to add an esports minor program. We believe the university is smart to adjust its curriculum to fit the changing interests of students and staying relevant at a time when students have numerous secondary education options available to them.

Then, on Wednesday, the Eagle was pleased — but not surprised — to report that Butler County Community College was ranked by Pittsburgh's Niche.com as the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania.

For its 2022 Best Community Colleges in Pennsylvania report, Niche analyzed information from the U.S. Department of Education and Brookings Institution, and took into account other sources — professors and academics, and facets — such as value — to come up with its rankings.

In its final analysis, Niche — which aims to connect people with the right schools, communities or workplaces — chose BC3 as the state's best community college for 2022.

But Niche isn't the only place giving BC3 good reviews. BestColleges.com ranked the school as the state's No. 1 community college in its most recent ranking in 2020 as well as in its 2017 report. And Schools.com chose BC3 as the best in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

WalletHub said BC3 was the second-most affordable Pennsylvania community college this year.

“What this latest ranking tells us is that our position as the No. 1 community college has been sustainable,” BC3 President Nick Neupauer said. “It also tells us that there is not just one organization that is validating us as the top-ranked community college.”

Both BC3 and SRU deserve praise, respectively, for being recognized for their innovative programming.

For many college-bound students, it is exciting to get away from home and have more independence. Going to a college or university provides many new experiences. Others may stay

closer to home, and can balance their new experiences with the capacity to see friends and family more readily.

At the county's institutions of higher learning, some students may choose to live on campus, while others commute from home. Regardless, the takeaway is that to get a great education, county students have two great options right here at home.

Congratulations to BC3 for being recognized again in community college surveys, and to SRU for thinking outside the box with its programming. Both schools are doing great work in Butler County.

— NCD