

# 6 Riv-Ell students receive BC3's Workplace Certificate in Entrepreneurship

May 16, 2019



Students at Lincoln High School in Ellwood City who earned a Butler County Community College Workplace Certificate in Entrepreneurship are shown Wednesday evening before BC3's 2019 commencement, which featured the college's largest graduating class of the century. The Lincoln High students received 16 free, transferrable credits by completing the yearlong Riv-Ell Entrepreneurship Program, held in collaboration with the Community College of Beaver County and the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce. They are, from left, Mikayla Beachem, Hannah Froce, Hunter Gulish, Joseph Houk, Destiny DiMaggio and Abby Schlafly.

(Ellwood City, PA) Butler County Community College's Class of 2019 was its largest of the century with 599 graduates – 14 more than in 2017, its previous top class since 2000.

Five-hundred-twenty-seven graduates received at least one associate degree, and 72 at least one certificate from BC3, which held its 2019 commencement exercises at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Field House on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

Among the 599 graduates were 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.

And six high school students who achieved a Workplace Certificate in Entrepreneurship by completing the first Riv-Ell Entrepreneurship Program.

Lincoln High School students Abby Schlafly, Mikayla Beachem, Destiny DiMaggio, Joseph Houk, Hannah Froce and Hunter Gulish participated in the first 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.

Ellwood City resident Beachem, at 17 years, eight months and 22 days, was BC3's youngest graduate in the Class of 2019, 37 days younger than BC3's second-youngest graduate, fellow Riv-Ell classmate DiMaggio, also of Ellwood City.

BC3 and CCBC faculty instructed high school seniors in financial literacy, psychology, entrepreneurship, marketing, public speaking and business plan development on Monday through Thursday afternoons during the yearlong program. Field trips on Friday afternoons provided students the chance to network with and gain insight from successful Ellwood City area business leaders. Students who attend Lincoln and Riverside high schools are eligible to participate.

Donors of the Riv-Ell Entrepreneurship Program include Armstrong, the Ellwood City Wolves Club, the First National Bank of Pennsylvania, Frank and Carolyn McElwain, Kevin and Debra McElwain, Good Wheels Inc. of Ellwood City, the Hoyt Foundation, the Hungarian Home, Dave and Ann Hunter of Smokin' Dave's BBQ, the Neupauer Corp., TMK IPSCO and WesBanco Bank Inc.

"I am extremely thankful to the donors," Houk said. "On the face of it, we had this great opportunity to earn 16 credits, but also I made so many memories every day. It was overall just a great experience."

Owning or operating a business, Beachem said she learned, "is not easy. It takes a lot of work and time. People who do it, kudos to them because it takes a lot. So much goes into it. Much more than people may think."

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

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

Vanessa Eberle, 35, of Butler, a married mother of six, received an associate degree in psychology, as did 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, received an associate degree in criminology.

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.

For more information on the Riv-Ell Entrepreneurship Program, contact Erin Cioffi, BC3's assistant director of high school programming, at 724-287-8711, Ext. 8254 or at [erin.cioffi@bc3.edu](mailto:erin.cioffi@bc3.edu).