

# Blue Ridge Community College **Making a Difference for 50 Years**

1967-2017

Houff  
Student Center



# 1967-2017

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President Emeritus

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This history is organized to reflect BRCC's history relative to its Values  
Statement (2003)

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## From the President

**F**ive decades ago, on farmland in Weyers Cave, Virginia, a crop of a different sort took root in the rich soil of fifty acres of ground. Cletus and Charlotte Houff had generously provided the land for the Commonwealth of Virginia to establish what was originally called Shenandoah Technical College. I often wonder whether the many men and women who worked so hard to bring a new type of higher education to the central Shenandoah Valley ever envisioned the remarkable impact that institution would have in changing the lives of countless residents. The mission of Blue Ridge Community College has always focused on anticipating and addressing the educational needs of the region it serves. When 908 students first entered the new institution in 1967, few could have anticipated that one day the College would serve more than 4500 students annually. Significant innovation and academic milestones pervade the history of the institution. The first distance learning Veterinary Technology program in the country began here; the first guaranteed admission agreement between a community college and a university was created here; and the Commonwealth's only publicly funded Aviation Maintenance Associate Degree program was established here. As I reflect on the fifty years that Blue Ridge Community College has served our region, my thoughts immediately attend to the countless employees whose primary motivation for working here was always service to our students. I've had the distinct privilege of serving here myself for the past 25 years, and my enormous pride in the institution swells from the stories graduates tell of the many individuals who helped them overcome tremendous difficulties on the way to a better life; dreams that might not have been realized if not for Blue Ridge Community College. As we celebrate our fiftieth anniversary, I hope this publication that continues the history of the College through the last 25 years will serve as a timeless reminder of the tremendous need for this community college in our region. No other institution can help individuals transform their lives in quite the same way our mission allows us to do. In the region of Virginia whose economy has been so enriched by agriculture, Blue Ridge Community College annually produces another crop of graduates who nurture the abundant quality of life we enjoy in the Central Shenandoah Valley!



Dr. John Downey  
Blue Ridge Community College President  
2009-present



Dr. Douglas M.  
Montgomery  
1966-1969



Dr. James  
Armstrong  
1969-1985



Dr. James C.  
Sears  
1985-1989



Dr. James R.  
Perkins  
1989-2009



Dr. John A. Downey  
2009-present

# Foreword

In 1989, the College initiated a search for its next president. Among several well-qualified candidates, I was fortunate to be selected for this position. My supervisors, Robert Templin and George Vaughan, at Piedmont Virginia Community College, generously mentored me and helped me prepare for this new challenge. Nevertheless, I was apprehensive, as were many others with strong interest in the College, about its future.

Initially, what struck me most about the College was the pride the faculty took in their programs and their college. Jim Eiland and Rupert Chandler described for me the success graduates of the Electronics and Mechanical programs experienced following transfer to Old Dominion University. Stuart Porter made sure I understood the importance and success of the Veterinary Technology Program. In fact, all faculty made it clear that they were committed to the College by presenting me with the "Faculty Manifesto" asking for a stronger voice in decisions affecting the future direction of the College.

During my first several months, conversations centered on creating a vision for the future, stating what we value most, and developing a strategic plan involving all stakeholders in the process. Following an all college retreat, a strategic plan was developed which called for the creation of a shared governance model, a stronger voice for our support staff in the decision-making process, partnerships with our community, increased professional development opportunities, further development of the College's computing environment, facility enhancement, and support for the College's educational foundation.

Strategies to achieve our shared vision required additional resources and a renewed effort to grow the College's enrollment. Fortunately, our community was ready to help. Both Rockingham Memorial Hospital and Augusta Medical Center were willing to invest in the growth of the fledgling nursing program. The local poultry industry was happy to support a foreign language initiative. And, our local governments worked closely with the College to ensure adequate resources were available to support their share of the cost of new facilities and grounds improvements that were badly needed. State representatives did their share by helping create funding for outreach initiatives and for new or renovated facilities.

A key initial funding boost came from the award of a Federal Title III Grant that supported the development of the computing environment, provided resources to staff, and equipped the Foundation office. A challenge stimulated the College's first capital campaign resulting in \$2 million in gifts and nearly 100% giving from College employees.

Of course, during my 20 years as president, we faced many challenges that threatened to throw us off course. Budget cuts, tuition freezes, and proposed staffing reductions challenged us in many ways. With support from all college employees, we man-



aged to weather those storms without major disruption of our shared purpose. In fact, over those years, I must credit our faculty and staff and our community leaders for seeing the opportunity the College had for supporting the educational and economic growth of our region. State representatives invested their energies and political power to bring state-of-the-art facilities to the College and to improve the existing facilities through renovation funding. When the state was not able to help, the community stepped in. For example, without a large gift from Frances and Robert Plecker and considerable financial help from Augusta and Rockingham Counties, the Plecker Workforce Center would not have been possible. When I thought a Recreation Center would be a nice addition to our campus, student leaders stepped forward to support a fee structure necessary to fund the project. When I thought a green space would enhance the collegiate look of our campus, the faculty abandoned their parking lot and a generous community member stepped forward to fund the project.

Through the years, our employees helped me to become their servant leader, trusting that new concepts like "Chaos Theory" would allow them to use their creative energies to help BRCC become a leader in the VCCS. Through their efforts, I was able to announce proudly that we led the community college system in professional growth opportunities, student persistence to degree completion, and enrollment growth. New programs were initiated, including new opportunities in the arts, improved and expanded workforce training options, and degrees in aviation mechanics, computer networking, and mechatronics. Guaranteed admission agreements with JMU, MBC, BC, EMU, and ODU helped our community understand the quality of the opportunities available at their local community college.

I am proud of the success we enjoyed together during my 20 years of service to the College. We accomplished much by working together, driven by our shared values and common vision. With President Downey's continued leadership, I am also very enthusiastic about the College's next 50 years. We know the formula for success; I am confident that that knowledge will serve the College well into what promises to be a challenging but optimistic future.

Dr. James R. Perkins  
President  
Blue Ridge Community College  
(1989-2009)

# BRCC VALUES: Learning

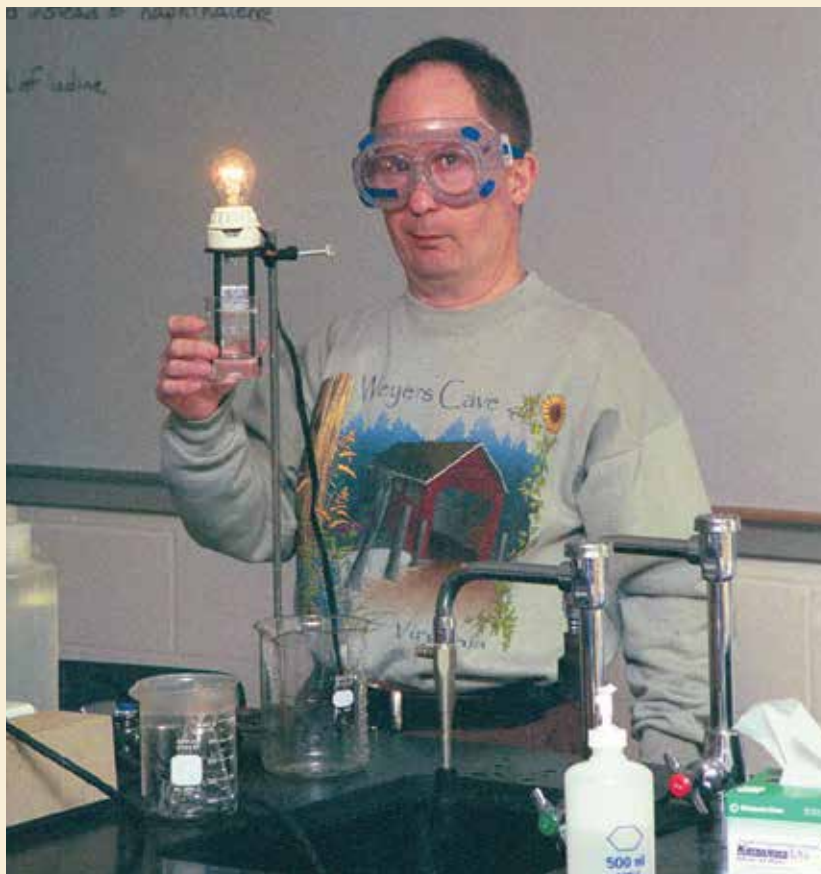
**B**lue Ridge Community College has transformed the Shenandoah Valley over the last 50 years by providing access to affordable “open door” educational opportunities for individuals to achieve personal goals and meet the challenges of a complex modern world. The College started its service in the Shenandoah Valley in 1967 primarily as a technical school to train individuals for employment in area businesses. By the end of the first 25 years, preparing students to graduate with Associate degrees and to transfer their credits to a four-year institution had also become central to the college mission. Now, at the end of the second 25 years, BRCC has significantly expanded its mission in both academic and technical programs to meet “the educational needs of the community, empowering students through comprehensive programs and services, within an environment of academic excellence.”



*“BRCC is a wonderful place to teach. You work with good people, the students are here to learn, and you have the resources you need to teach in whatever style you're most comfortable.” Warren Wise was a student and faculty member who retired in 2016.*



*Dr. Bud Levin was fundamental to several versions of the College's Strategic Directions, was the Administration of Justice and Psychology program head, and chaired numerous committees over the years. His interests in behavioral sciences, policing, and technology extended beyond the classroom as he worked in the field, and actively pursued research and professional development opportunities.*



*Dr. William Munsey brought chemistry to light for decades of students. In addition to his role as professor, he also was the College's safety officer, and a delightful performer! His witty vocals and guitar were often the featured entertainment for College functions.*

Community colleges offer educational opportunities to anyone seeking advancement through education and educate more than half the nation's undergraduates. BRCC admits all students over the age of 18 and qualified high school students in its credit and non-credit courses. For degree-seeking students, the College administers standardized placement tests and additional measures to determine college readiness. Developmental classes in English and mathematics have been offered since the opening of the college to help underprepared students be successful in curricular level classes.

A liberal arts education has always been an important part of the degree curriculum for BRCC. This general education exposes students to a broad body of knowledge of the major social, cultural, historical, and scientific forces that have shaped human identity and the world. The liberal arts provide the foundation for future academic experiences and help develop the skills, aptitudes, and perspectives characteristic of an educated person. BRCC requires a liberal arts component (also known as General Education) in all of its degree programs whether students are going immediately into the workforce or continuing their education. The BRCC 1975-76 Bulletin and Student Handbook described these courses as “meaningful to the individual in his development as a person, as a family member, and as a citizen.” In 2006-2008, the College's Curriculum committee developed a rationale for foundational courses and identified specific student learning outcomes that could be measured and assessed. The 2015-16 BRCC Catalog describes general education courses as teaching “students how to reason and learn through studies that are intended to provide knowledge and foster intellectual abilities, rather than more specialized occupational or professional skills.”



# PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE... ON LEARNING

Going to Blue Ridge Community College is one of the most logical decisions you could ever make as a student here in the Valley. Whether you are transferring, earning a degree, or earning a certificate, Blue Ridge provides an amazing opportunity for everyone. When you leave this institution, whether to transfer or to begin work, you don't just leave prepared. You leave Blue Ridge ahead of the game. You leave with an amazing education, with

personal connections and friendships, and in a lot of cases, you leave debt free.

Whether we like it or not, there's an unfortunate stigma that community college is "less than." Less than universities or private institutions - less challenging, less rewarding, less significant. And it's sad. It's sad that I heard this in high school not only from my peers but from adults, parents, television, the internet, even from other universities.

However, I knew it wasn't true. I knew how logical community college was. Even as a high school student, with peer pressure and influence, I knew Blue Ridge was the best option for me and probably for most of the people in my class. But not just because I couldn't go anywhere else because I could have. I graduated top 10 in my class with above a 4.1 GPA. I was a president of a club, a member of three honor societies, and captain of the soccer team. So, I could've gone almost anywhere. However, Blue Ridge was right for me. I knew I could afford an education here, I knew I could transfer to a university in two years, and most importantly, I knew I would be successful if I began here at Blue Ridge.

In my senior year of high school, I would hear slanderous remarks about community college over and over again, and it made me second guess what I knew was right for me. I was embarrassed just to say, "I'm a student at Blue Ridge Community College" without some "good" explanation of why. I gave up on what I knew.

Today, I'm embarrassed for a different reason. I'm embarrassed that I ever felt less than anyone. I'm embarrassed I ever avoided saying, "I'm a student at Blue Ridge." As it turns out, the word "community," the word people tend to slander when in the name of a college, our college, the word I once hid from conversation, is the word we at Blue Ridge are most proud of. Community is what makes up Blue Ridge, it's what Blue Ridge is, and it's what Blue Ridge supports and always will.

So, today, I'd like you all to know I'm proud. I'm proud of the people I met and the friends I made here. I'm proud to have the best professors I could ever hope for. I'm proud of the Blue Ridge Educational Foundation, and the family of Charles Pascal for investing in me and trusting me to succeed. I'm proud of my parents, who have loved me and supported me through everything. Today, I'm proud I can now share this lesson with future students who are in the same position I was. I have never been more proud to be a part of this community, the community of Blue Ridge.

Albert Gene Stainback, BRCC Graduate  
Excerpts from a speech for the  
2014 BRCC Scholarship Luncheon



Mr. E. Houston Lynch was a founding faculty member of the College, teaching physics up until his retirement. He was the keynote speaker of the commencement ceremony in 2006.



Charter employees of BRCC (shown here circa 1992, left to right): John P Calabria, Edward L. Harlow, Sharon Hudson, Metro Lazorack, and Darrell W. Hurst.



Dr. Darrell Hurst was the first faculty member hired to teach at BRCC. His love of art, music, theater, and literature made an impression on employees, students, and community members. He was an active member, and chair, of the Cultural Affairs Committee, and after his passing the Dr. Darrell W. Hurst Endowment for Cultural Enrichment was established to further support the arts on campus.

## ASSOCIATE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DEGREE (A.A.&S.) AND ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE DEGREE (A.S.)

The A.A. & S. and the A.S. degrees prepare students to transfer to a baccalaureate degree program at a four-year college or university. The Virginia Community College System sets standards that align with the requirements of the regional accreditation agency (SACSCOC) to ensure that the faculty members are qualified and coursework is rigorous. Most of the credits required in a transfer program are general education classes to satisfy the requirements and expectations of the four-year schools, but students can also choose from approved elective or specialization courses.

Blue Ridge Community College has experienced significant growth in its College Transfer program. Although many students still attend BRCC and transfer individual credits to a four-year institution without graduating, the percentage of students completing the A.A. & S. and A.S. degrees has significantly increased. In 1970, about 25% of the students were awarded transfer degrees. By 1992, the number had increased to about 30%. In 2007, when enrollment at the College hit a new high, the percentage of transfer students had peaked at 53%. In recent years, the percentage of graduates with a transfer degree has stabilized at over 40%. Students from the community are able to complete two years of a college education at a significantly lower cost of tuition than if they had attended a public or private four-year institution. Many students attend Blue Ridge Community College who would otherwise have no access to higher education.

To ensure that students will be able to transfer all the work they have accomplished at BRCC, College administrators began negotiating articulation plans with area colleges and universities. As early as 1990, Bridgewater College and Mary Baldwin Adult Degree Program agreed to honor all the course work for associate degrees.

In 1993, BRCC partnered with Old Dominion University to create a new way to obtain a bachelor's degree without leaving the area. Students entering the program called "Teletechnet" could complete their first two years through BRCC, and take the remaining coursework from ODU at the BRCC campus via interactive audio and video technologies, as well as on-site classes or laboratories.

In the 2000-01 academic year, BRCC was the first community college in the Commonwealth to sign a Guaranteed Admissions Agreement with James Madison University. Students completing the AA&S degree with a certain GPA are assured acceptance as a junior at JMU. The College then negotiated with ten additional colleges and universities in the area to provide BRCC graduates with guaranteed admissions. The Virginia Community College System has since signed articulation agreements with 19 Virginia colleges and universities providing guaranteed admissions for students from any of the 23 community colleges in the Commonwealth.

For over 20 years, the College has been monitoring the academic success of its students who transfer to ensure that the students are well prepared for their continuing education. Independent assessment indicates that BRCC students consistently perform as well as or better than students who have taken all of their course work at four-year institutions.



*Electronics, robotics, electrical repair, computer networking.... these fields have been in-demand and taught at BRCC since its inception, although the skills have certainly changed over the decades. Faculty members Leon Smith, Jim Richerson, and Jim Eiland helped guide students through the changing landscape of electronics in the workplace.*



## ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE (A.A.S.)

The community college mission to meet the needs of the community is actualized most distinctively in its Associate of Applied Science programs. The AAS degrees have been designed to train graduates for entry-level employment, although most AAS degrees also transfer to particular majors in specific colleges and universities. The career and technical curricula have grown and developed to meet the demands of local and state employers. The first list of AAS programs has been doubled, with expansion in important fields of study such as Health Sciences, Manufacturing, Law and Public Safety, Information Technology, and Business Administration. Students are prepared for employment in these areas immediately upon graduation from the College. The College is especially proud of the following signature programs that have been developed or expanded in the last 25 years:

### Associate and Applied Science Programs (AAS) 1967

Agricultural  
Business Technology  
Business Administration  
Business Technology; Chemical Technology; Data Processing;  
Drafting Technology  
Electronics Technology  
Industrial Technology  
Mechanical Technology  
Secretarial Science

## NURSING

The creation of the Nursing Education program at BRCC is an example of the College's responsiveness to community needs. When there was a shortage of RNs in the Central Shenandoah Valley, BRCC responded. In spring of 1984, the College received approval to offer an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree Nursing Program from the Virginia State Board of Nursing, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) in cooperation with Germanna Community College. The first class graduated 10 LPN students.

In 1989, BRCC submitted a proposal to the State Board of Nursing, VCCS, and SCHEV for expanding the program to include an Associate of Applied Science degree in Health Technology, with a major in nursing, to prepare students for licensure as registered nurses. In 1992, the State Board of Nursing approved an independent BRCC program, which has flourished through the years. The program currently graduates an annual average of 60 nurses into the workforce. The majority of the BRCC graduates are hired by local facilities.



*Nursing graduates in 1984, wearing all white including the classic nurse's cap.*



*The Vet Tech program draws students from across the Commonwealth to the Weyers Cave campus.*

## VET TECH

The Animal Technology program first began at BRCC in 1972 to train individuals to become veterinary technicians in animal hospitals, animal shelters, wildlife centers, and zoos. The program was expanded significantly in 1997 when the College began offering synchronous distance education Veterinary Technology courses through four locations at VCCS colleges. The BRCC program remains the only distance education vet tech program which is transmitted synchronously through interactive compressed video in the nation. Students in this program complete their coursework through BRCC classes broadcast at an interactive facility in their local community college and perform their clinical requirement in veterinarian practices across the state. Every graduate of the BRCC Veterinary Technology program has passed the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) since the program began 1972.



# PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. ON LEARNING

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR 50 YEARS



I had never heard of Blue Ridge Community College or Veterinary Technology (actually the term used was Animal Health Technicians back then) when I came here in 1977. Nor had teaching ever been part of my career plan. I applied for the job because I was familiar with the Shenandoah Valley from my college days at Washington and Lee University, and I wanted to escape South Texas and my current job at a local zoo.

I arrived two weeks before school started and was given my course assignments and notes from a previous teacher whose hand writing was illegible. Instructional technology consisted of slide projectors, overhead projectors, filmstrip projectors, mimeograph machines, typewriters and tape recorders. The Veterinary Technology program, the first AHT program in Virginia when it started in 1974, was equipped to function as a regular veterinary clinic. We even saw patients belonging to faculty and staff several hours a week, plus performed surgery on Wednesdays to give the students hands-on instruction. The faculty consisted of program director, Dr. Ken Clever and a veterinary technician. The animal holding facilities consisted of a metal building with cat cages and outdoor dog runs with metal barrels for shelter.

It was a steep learning curve for me. I was able to stay only a week ahead in all my classes, constantly searching for visual aids to make lectures on anatomy and lab techniques less dry. The president, Dr. Armstrong, taught parasitology in the program which made for an interesting relationship. By the end of my second year, both the technician and Dr. Clever had left and I was “promoted” to program director and had to hire a new faculty member. No committees or lecturer demonstrations were involved.

I attended conferences from professional organizations, and I found the College was supportive and helpful in allowing me to grow as an educator and enable the program to improve. I was allowed to change the curriculum and add two new courses which are still being taught. We were allowed to purchase new equipment and tests to keep up with changes in the veterinary profession.

Dr. Armstrong retired, and I had to break in a new president, Dr. Sears, who was a dog lover and supported the program. Dr. Sears was at BRCC a short time and was replaced by Dr. James Perkins. Dr. Perkins was a good listener and also an animal lover.

In 1994, at an Association of Veterinary Technician Educators meeting, I heard about a distance learning program being used in some veterinary technology programs. One of the issues facing our program was our remote location from the population centers. Veterinary practitioners complained that they could not find veterinary technicians, so they were hiring local people and “training” them. However, the Veterinary Practice Act provided specific regulations concerning what techniques could be performed by unlicensed personnel. With this emerging need, Dr. Perkins agreed that a distance learning program using new compressed video technology (VDEN) might alleviate this problem.

In 1996, I developed a compressed video distant education program satisfying the VCCS, SCHEV, Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine and the AVMA. I targeted the Tidewater area as being the most needy, entered into an agreement with the Virginia Beach campus of Tidewater Community College, and started recruiting students and veterinary practices to participate.

In 2000, 15 of the 20 original distance education students graduated and all passed the National exam (VTNE). The distance education program had an immediate impact on the on-campus program in that applications from the Tidewater area increased. In 2000, we added a second site at Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke. Other sites added were at John Tyler Community College in Midlothian and Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton. While enrollments have varied, all of the distance education graduates have passed the VTNE.

There were many other specific improvements to the teaching program over the years including digital radiography, laser surgical and treatment units, digital laboratory testing machines, slide digitalization, LED microscopes, and much more. Of course the technology needs personnel to demonstrate and supervise its use and the College supported the growth of the program from three to ten, five veterinarians, four LVTs, and an administrative assistant to keep everything organized and running smoothly.

I didn’t have a new career plan when I arrived at BRCC back in 1977, but it evolved over the years, and there was never a day when I didn’t want to come to work. I consider myself very lucky.

Dr. Stuart Porter  
BRCC Professor of Veterinary Technology  
(1977-2015)



Lester Smith was instrumental in collaborating with local school divisions to establish the regional Tech Prep Consortium in 1997.

## DUAL ENROLLMENT AND TECH PREP CONSORTIUM

In 1990, Blue Ridge Community College began a dual enrollment program with area high schools. Dual enrollment (DE) allows qualified juniors and seniors to be enrolled in BRCC courses that are offered at the high school during the regular school day. Instructors of these courses are employees of the high schools, but must also meet the qualifications and credentials of the VCCS. Program leads from the College work closely with DE instructors to ensure the comparable rigor and course content of the classes they teach. The program began with five partner schools and 336 students. Currently, 17 area schools work with the College to provide between 550-650 students a semester with dual credits in both general education and career training classes. A pilot program at Harrisonburg High School, the "Blue Ridge Scholars," allows selected students to take a two-year pathway in order to earn an A.A. & S. degree from BRCC and their high school diploma simultaneously.

The Blue Ridge Regional Tech Prep Consortium (which today is known as the Career Pathways Consortium) was activated in 1997 as a facilitator for technical education between BRCC, local school systems, and business and industry. The Tech Prep Committee collaborated to offer workshops for guidance counselors and teachers to promote career and technical instructional improvement at the secondary and post-secondary levels. This led to the development of the Tech Prep Academy, which allows high school students to take classes at BRCC in a variety of career fields, such as Nursing, Veterinary Technology, Mechanical Design, Automotive Technology, Computer and Electronic Technology, and Business Technology. Tech Prep Academy students complete 12 college credits before high school graduation. This successful partnership continues today under a new name: the Career Pathways Academy.



## AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY

A new academic program in Aviation Maintenance Technology was launched in Fall 2007, addressing a growing need for trained aviation mechanics. Besides the degree, the College offers four certificates in various aviation applications, including commercial pilot training. Facilities and equipment are located at the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport in Weyers Cave, with support from Dynamic Aviation and Avotek.

In 2012, BRCC made history when it offered the first online airframe and power plant certificate approved by the FAA.



## ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

While the College had been offering classes in police science for many years to provide formal training and professional development for local law enforcement, the Administration of Justice degree program was formalized in 2002. This is a flexible and customizable program for people who seek employment as a police officer, state trooper, deputy sheriff, jailer, correctional officer, investigative officer, security guard, or loss prevention manager. Students choose between three degree categories or three career studies certificates. There are 150 to 200 students who are annually trained in this program. Two full-time faculty members are augmented by qualified community law enforcement professionals who draw on experience and expertise to prepare students. In 2001, the Shenandoah Valley Criminal Justice Academy built a facility adjacent to the College campus in order to foster a relationship between the two educational institutions.





*Dr. Jan Larsen (above) and Lloyd Meadows teach courses remotely in the Commonwealth Classroom. BRCC was on the forefront in the state and nation in using new technologies.*

## DISTANCE LEARNING

The rise of computer and electronic communications has had a profound impact on higher education. As new technologies were being developed to allow students to study at different times and locations from their classmates, BRCC was in the forefront in the state and the nation for incorporating these innovations into the curriculum. Individual programs and instructors explored how the technology could enhance learning and access to learning for their students.

In 1997-98, the BRCC Veterinary Technology program was offering the only distance education veterinary technology training in the country, with compressed video delivered synchronously to individual locations throughout Virginia. Two individual instructors soon developed online courses, creating their own webpages and submission methods. In 1998-99, nine courses were offered with 214 students enrolled. BRCC purchased the use of the Blackboard course management system, which helped to provide a consistent format and student access to online classes. This system was later adopted by the VCCS, and BRCC began generating course shells for all sections of classes in order to provide electronic supplementary support whether classes were offered seated or online. The distance learning options increased to over 50 classes offered exclusively asynchronously at a distance, and over 100 classes with a web-based component.

By 2017, over 70 percent of BRCC students take at least one online class, and some programs can be achieved exclusively at a distance. BRCC has recognized the challenges presented by this new instructional delivery method by creating a Distance Learning Plan, which establishes policies, procedures, and regulations to ensure consistent and high quality distance education. Faculty members must complete specialized training to assure their expertise in online instructional methods. Students must follow procedures that validate their identity and accurately assess their successful learning. A position of Distance Learning Coordinator has been established to monitor and facilitate a successful distance learning program for the College. BRCC now offers a wide array of seated, hybrid, and online classes, with synchronous and asynchronous formats.



Percent of Students Taking at Least One Distance Course





*With a passion for ESL, cultural awareness, and Spanish, Nell Tiller helped guide the College's community outreach to the Hispanic population of the Shenandoah Valley.*

## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

In recent years, Virginia has become ninth in the nation in the number of foreign-born residents. The College's service area and specifically the city of Harrisonburg have become a well-known area for immigration and refugee resettlement. As the numbers of bilingual students on campus increased, BRCC moved to create a separate track of courses for students whose first language was not English and whose English proficiency was not yet at college level. The ESL program is an English for Academic Purposes program designed to increase reading and writing proficiency. In Spring of 2013, the ESL program started with 13 students. By Fall of 2013, there were more than 85 ESL students. Since the end of 2014, approximately 115 students have been enrolled each academic year, including recent high school graduates, adult immigrant professionals, and adult non-professionals. As of 2016, the major linguistic groups served are Spanish, Arabic and Kurdish, though individuals from Korea, Vietnam, China, Nepal, India, Myanmar, Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine, Nigeria, and Italy are also represented.



## MECHATRONICS SPECIALIZATION

In 2013-14, local employers advised the College on the development of a new degree to provide the technical skills and knowledge needed to work in highly automated manufacturing environments. The Mechatronics Specialization blends mechanical systems, instrumentation, electronics, robotics, automation, computers, and control systems needed in today's manufacturing sector. The College delivers specific training for occupations in highly skilled technical fields. Specific employers rely on the College to train new employees and to provide professional development for their current workforce.

## CERTIFICATES AND CAREER STUDIES CERTIFICATES

Certificates and Career Studies Certificates allow students who are not pursuing a degree to obtain recognition for completing a minimum set of specialized courses in career and technical programs. The College has offered a limited number of certificates since its opening in 1967, but the expanding needs of the community have led to the development of over 30 CSCs in the last ten years. Some of the newer CSC's include Alternative Energy, American Sign Language, Introduction to Two- or Three-dimensional Art, Graphic Design, and Medical Coding.



*An early class in American Sign Language.*







# Its Campus and Its Culture

## Constituency Groups

Administrative Faculty Association  
Faculty Senate  
Staff Association

## Standing Committees

Cultural Affairs  
Curriculum  
Educational Strategies  
Financial and Facilities Resources  
Healthy/Safety and Human Resources  
Planning  
Research and Assessment  
Technology



**B**RCC is a community of administrators, faculty, staff, and students who are truly united in mission and values. Everyone works together to "empower students" and inspire "academic excellence." The atmosphere of the campus is welcoming and encouraging. Over its 50 years, employees and students have become a family that retains its identity while continuing to grow and expand. The campus, too, has expanded to meet the growing demand for quality education.

The purpose of the College, as iterated in early documents, was distilled into formal Mission, Vision, and Values statements under the leadership of President James Perkin in 1990. These became the basis for strategic planning and the development of Strategic Directions for the future. All activities and plans of the College must demonstrate a relationship to these foundational documents and principles.

One of the elements that makes Blue Ridge Community College distinctive is the opportunity for everyone to have a voice in how the College achieves its mission. Shaping the process of shared governance was one of the innovative contributions that Dr. Perkins made when he first came to the College. As the Governance Model document indicates, "The purpose of the Blue Ridge Community College Governance Model is to ensure participatory decision making. Its fundamental premise rests upon the active and responsible involvement of all BRCC faculty, staff, and administration. . . to engage in interactive communication. Through this engagement, details of issues and policy matters shall be brought into a forum where full participation in the decision-making process can be assured." The model describes the purposes, procedures, and membership of the College Assembly, the constituency groups, and the standing committees. Each standing committee has on-going charges to address the issues in its specific area. In addition, administrative liaisons annually ask each committee to address concerns that arise from changing educational trends, philosophies, innovations, and challenges.

## THE EVOLUTION OF WORD PROCESSING

*What started as a degree in Secretarial Science has evolved into several different career paths over the past fifty years. Instructors like Carolyn Spangler have facilitated the evolution of business-related career paths.*





## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. ON THE CAMPUS AND CULTURE OF THE COLLEGE

The problem with most institutions that have established shared governance is the misguided notion that because they have created the proper structure, they are actually functioning in a shared governance environment. In most, the drift will be toward linear decision making because of things such as time restraints, administrative ego, and the path of least resistance. In the rare institution where true shared governance is practiced, the environment is, by necessity, much more chaotic. Ideas turn into seemingly endless drafts that need to be approved by multiple committees, turning into what some might see as an endless process. So why is this dynamic a better result? First, the institution reaps the benefit of ideas emerging from all corners, which in a college guarantees lots of uninhibited ideas from a large group of highly educated people. Second, it provides a structure where those ideas can be fed in, processed, and refined. Finally, after all the dust settles, the result is large-scale buy-in and a sense of inclusion that can create a driving force for success.

Blue Ridge Community College is that rare institution. With the inauguration of Dr. James Perkins in 1989, the College made a sharp departure from the top-to-bottom decision-making process that dominated the first 25 years of its history. Beginning with a fall retreat at Wintergreen Resort in 1989, the collective members of the Blue Ridge community hammered out the first Strategic Plan for the College. It was the first link between Mission, Vision, and Values and practical application. Among those Values was to “Establish and Maintain a Governance Structure” and set as an objective to “encourage and enable active participation in decision-making by all full-time employees of the College.” Easier said than done.

I became a member of the Planning Committee in 1991 and was elected Chair in 1992, serving in that role for four years. In 1995-96, a sub-committee of the Planning Committee began to revise our strategic documents. It soon became clear that in writing our first Strategic Plan, we had been too prescriptive, particularly in the area of technology. We began to understand that our planning process needed to be more fluid and based more on our vision of the future and the values we hold collectively for the college:

the outcome of planning is not a plan, it is “planning.” The College utilizes the intelligence of a highly educated workforce to drive Blue Ridge forward as opposed to being driven solely by the administration.

As the Governance Model evolved, committees were added as needed. In 1997, it became evident in the Curriculum Committee that serious issues about teaching and learning couldn’t be discussed because the agenda was too full of nuts and bolts decisions needing immediate attention. We proposed the creation of a new committee, Educational Strategies. It would be the “Planning Committee for Teaching.”

One of the most important advantages of shared governance is having so many eyes on the processes of the College. In 2006, discussions in the Curriculum Committee led to some major changes in required and elective general education courses. Dr.

John Downey, at the time Vice President of Instruction, convened a sub-committee that spent a year vetting the General Education course offerings. First, we defined specific categories of general education as it related to the College Values. Describing the importance of a general education curriculum, the definition began, “A College Education is more than the sum of its parts.” We then went on to describe why the College collectively believed each category of general education instruction was important and required. The rationale was published in the catalog for students to see. The result of our revisions was a cleaner, more logical pathway for students.

Since true shared governance is not the norm for most institutions, new employees always need to be oriented. Many are coming from linear institutions, so this structure is alien to them. Such was the case over the last decade and a half as Blue Ridge grew so fast. An important document, “Guiding Principles for Blue Ridge Strategic Planning and Governance,” was produced by governance to communicate the College’s vision. A similar document had existed already from the time of the Planning Committee’s work with applied Chaos Theory around 2000. This flowed from a paper written by Dr. Perkins, Dr. Levin and me in 1995 on Linearity and then published in 2000 along with Dr. Downey in a book called Chaos Theory and Higher Education. The result was a modernized version of a document and ownership of both the process and the principles as well as our values by a large part of our new and younger employees.

For those who may still doubt that real shared governance such as Blue Ridge practices is too chaotic a system to sustain, I can personally attest that they are wrong. The real evidence though is for the past seven years, 28 years after the establishment of shared governance, Blue Ridge Community College has been chosen by The Chronicle of Higher Education as one of the “Best Colleges to Work For” in its annual poll. It seems that structure put in place long ago at Wintergreen still works. I am an example. The opportunities I have been provided since I walked on this campus are a laundry list of shared governance. Never forced, but encouraged, I served 11 years on the Strategic Planning Committee, seven as Chair; 16 years on the Curriculum Committee, one as Chair; and four times as Chair of the Faculty Senate. I have served and chaired sub-committees and search committees. I have written numerous successful grants, written papers with two presidents, and served major roles on two accreditation reports. This is not a resume; rather it is a list of opportunities provided to me from day one. Some may look at this as a lot of extra work. I have always viewed it as being provided the opportunity to be an integral part of how this institution functions. That is real shared governance, and that is rare. My experience at Blue Ridge has been a rich and fulfilling career, not just a job.

Jeffrey Lanigan  
Professor of History



## THE PEOPLE OF THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

### ADMINISTRATION



*Sandra Showalter*

### FACULTY



*Rupert Chandler*



*Bill Broome*

### STAFF



*Elvin Fawley*

Blue Ridge Community College has enjoyed five presidents in its 50-year history who have worked in partnership with the VCCS and as the College's representatives to the community: Dr. Douglas M. Montgomery was the first president of the College 1966-1969; Dr. James Armstrong served as president 1969-1985; Dr. James C. Sears served from 1985-1989; Dr. James R. Perkins served from 1989-2009; and Dr. John A. Downey has been serving as president since 2009. The College has had many exemplary administrators throughout its history. Vice presidents and deans have responsibilities over the academic, financial, service, and student areas of the college. Additional administrative faculty work closely with the administrators in the functioning of the College.

A distinguishing characteristic of community college faculty members is the commitment to teaching students. Full-time faculty members at BRCC teach a standard load of 30 credit hours a year, unlike faculty at four-year institutions who prioritize research and publication over contact hours with students. In addition to teaching responsibilities, faculty members commit to additional service at the College, including participating in the governance system, administering grants for special projects, directing international travel and study-abroad opportunities, and sponsoring student clubs and activities. All faculty members must meet the level of education and experience required by the VCCS, including at least a Master's Degree in the subject area. The College opened in 1967 with 33 full-time teaching faculty. This number grew to 42 by 1992, and there are currently 65 teaching faculty members. Throughout the College's history, it has also relied on the abilities of qualified adjunct faculty members who augment the faculty with their experience and expertise. The College has always placed a high priority on faculty members staying current in their fields. Professional Development opportunities are available on-campus, through the VCCS, and through national professional organizations and conferences. Faculty issues and concerns can be addressed through their constituency group, the Faculty Senate. Faculty members comprise over half of the positions in governance committees, taking an active interest in decision and policy making.

Without a team of dedicated staff to support the many areas of the organization, no college could be successful. BRCC staff members, an integral part of the community, serve students and enhance the educational environment. The College started with fewer than 20 support staff members but grew to 33 by 1992. The number has more than tripled with almost 100 full-time staff members at present. For example, the position of business manager has become a 20-person unit of Finance and Administration. Two counselors have expanded to become the Division of Student Services with 22 full-time employees. In 1967, the College did not need an Informational Technology department, but it now consists of a director and 13 staff members. Educational technology applications have now expanded under the Director of Learning Technology and a Blackboard Administrator. The public relations for the College has grown into its own department, relying heavily on presenting the face of the College through the website, electronic communications, and graphic design. With the current emphasis on continual improvement through research and assessment, the College maintains an office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. From customer service to facilities maintenance, the staff of BRCC provides the infrastructure to support the College. Members of the Staff Association participate in all governance committees.



*Patsy Shreckhise  
Terri Showalter*

## STUDENTS

Students have always been the central focus of the mission of Blue Ridge Community College. The College is an attractive option for traditional and non-traditional students, offering a significantly lower-cost alternative path to higher education. BRCC's students in the new millennium come from diverse backgrounds and reflect a diversity of purpose. They may attend to pursue an associate degree, upgrade their skills for a particular job, or for personal enrichment. Students value that classes are smaller than in four-year institutions and that they have opportunities for personal interaction with their instructors. Students reflect on their time at BRCC as an important period of growth and self-actualization. BRCC students enrich the community with the new skills and education they have gained. They become the nurses, veterinary technicians, automotive technicians, and university students that enrich the community every day.

When the College opened its doors to 908 students in 1967, no one expected such a high enrollment, and no one could have anticipated the growth over the next 50 years. By the 25-year mark, annual enrollment was close to 4000, growing to as high as 7000 students during the economic crisis of 2010-12. Women have consistently made up over 50% of the student body. In the late 1980s, students were predominately white, female, part-time, and 25-34 years old. By 1992, there was a shift in age group, with the largest age group being traditional students (18-21). The College also began reflecting more ethnic diversity. Currently, 87% of the student population is 22 years of age or younger, still mostly female, but 23% represent other ethnicities. Over a quarter of the BRCC students represent the first in their family to attend college.

The number of degrees, diplomas, and certificates awarded at BRCC commencement ceremonies has continued to increase significantly through the last 50 years. In the first graduating class, in 1968, 133 students received awards. That number increased to 292 after 25 years and tripled to 951 in 2015. In addition to these awards, many students transfer successfully before completing a degree and others attend BRCC for training and enrichment without seeking degrees.

# PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. ON THE CAMPUS AND CULTURE OF THE COLLEGE



BRCC has afforded me two decades of a most wonderful journey – professionally, academically and personally. I have been continually challenged in a variety of work roles; participating in college governance, serving on diverse campus committees, aiding students in a host of arenas, and seeking leadership avenues have offered growth at every turn during my tenure on campus. Participation with colleagues in the implementation of the new Student Information System, serving as president of the Support Staff constituency group, and attending two major college-wide retreats were vital integrations in my work, and I gained immense knowledge that synced with current jobs and paved the way for future program responsibilities.

After pursuing general studies at BRCC while working in WSCE, I completed a B.S. degree in Management and Organizational Development at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), which afforded me much more than academic training. It paved the way to a four-year supervisory position at one of two BRCC satellite campuses – Harrisonburg Center - providing an enriching experience with students, faculty, and facility coordination. Those years were invaluable, with a vast array of networking and relationship-building opportunities. As an off-campus supervisor, I collaborated with community business leaders, worked directly with faculty and students, served in student admissions and provided facilities coordination – all immensely satisfying. That position offered a vast and diverse path to the next logical transition; I had expressed before leaving Weyers Cave/main campus in 2004 that I was very interested in returning to the Humanities building, developing an arts program if such opportunity arose. I continued to envision further goals, especially in the humanities realm, and was offered the position of Fine Arts Center Program Manager when the FAC building opened in 2007.

In conjunction with BRCC's role in supporting local businesses, the arts and humanities continued to grow. As part of the economic development in our local area, external customer demands indicated a need for enrichment programs. Not only does the College offer strong academics that broaden career opportunities and sustain a local workforce, it also offers individuals a variety of ways to increase connections through personal engagement and enrichment with the arts and one another. Social relationships through collaborative networks build stronger commitments to BRCC, and often provide additional funding sources through donor support to BRCC's Educational Foundation.

BRCC opens doors to relationships, not only for students, but also for employees and faculty. Many of my closest friends are at work—a rare gift. The College's encouragement of individuals to create new initiatives and collaborate on decision making through committees and within constituency groups is reflected in its consistently high ratings in the "Great Colleges to Work For" annual reports. A tenet I treasure: BRCC believes in opportunity, innovation, creativity, personal and professional growth, and often paves the initial public path to substantial and invaluable anchors for the future.

Perhaps my journey sounds unique; it has been incredibly rewarding. My personal "winding road" embraces the gentle blend between studies, hard work, visual and performing arts, a focus on learning, and the next exciting initiative of tomorrow. In tandem with administration and supervisors, potential can be realized. One may dream first, research what options/monies might be available, align a direction, and then "create" an appropriate route to bring identified plans to fruition. Over the years, I admit I've been hesitant occasionally to embrace new concepts; however, my experience affirms that BRCC is all about education and life-long learning, forging a win-win for those who engage. Whether one's education entails learning academic discipline, achieving a degree, acquiring a credential certification, enrolling in personal enrichment or workforce courses, or improving one's health by taking fitness classes in BRCC's Recreation Center, opportunity awaits each student, faculty member, employee, business partner, or customer. The College community shares ideas and suggestions generously, as it takes a village to refine and shape the College culture. Synergistic conversations are constantly developing the next best thing at BRCC. I trust that I am giving back a small measure of the many gifts that have been bestowed on me through my work on campus and in the community. Thank you, BRCC!

Jennifer Whitmore  
Program Manager  
Workforce and Continuing Education



## SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY



*Employees from Student Services and other offices in the Houff Center perform the YMCA dance during a student activities event.*

### STUDENT SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Supporting student learning and development through programs, services, and activities has always been an essential and pervasive value at Blue Ridge Community College. Student academic support has been expanded in the last 25 years through advising, tutoring, career services, and disability services as well as extensive academic resources.

As the first people to interact with students, academic advisors are available to help students establish their occupational and educational goals and to identify and address obstacles to academic achievement. In addition to recruitment fairs and new student orientation, advisors meet with students individually and in workshops on curriculum, time management, study skills, and test anxiety.

The College is mindful that the growing cost of attending college can be prohibitive for students. Annual financial aid awarded to students has increased dramatically, from less than a million dollars in the late 1990s to over \$14 million in recent years. Faculty members have been committed to reducing the cost of required textbooks as much as possible. In 2008, the College responded to the fuel crisis by implementing area-wide free shuttle service for students. By 2014, there were 44,000 riders annually.



*Audrey Slaven, Rachel Mohler, Donna Alexander*

**The Houff Library** has clearly expanded its access and services since 1992. The increase in bound volumes from 40,000 to 55,000 is just one example of the wealth of resources now available. BRCC is a member of the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA) that provides students and faculty members with 24/7 access to over 78,000 electronic journals, over 49,000 electronic books, and over 150 research databases covering subject areas from science, medicine, and technology to the arts and humanities.



**The CAVE**, Blue Ridge Community College's Center for Academic Vision and Excellence, was designed in 2012 as a student-friendly facility to enhance student success through technology and collaboration with faculty and fellow students. The Educational Foundation provided a \$100,000 grant to develop the facility. Students go to the CAVE to work with tutors, meet with faculty members, study in groups, or use the technological resources. In 2015-16 academic year, there were 1,632 tutoring sessions conducted in the CAVE.



*Martha Pack*



As needs have arisen in the BRCC community and beyond, students and staff of the College have taken responsibility to step up and help out. One of the early outreach efforts on campus, in the 1990s, was the **Women's Resource Center**, later known as the **Student Outreach and Resource Center (SOAR)**, which is primarily funded by donations from community members, BRCC alumni, faculty, and staff who give generously to "pay it forward." In addition to providing financial assistance, SOAR offers referral services and workshops throughout the year. A similar service was begun as a project from the Human Services Program in 2012. Beyond the Blue volunteers assist students in crisis by providing educational information on a variety of mental health topics and resources.



## STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS



Administrators and PTK advisors attend a luncheon in Richmond with All USA Scholarship Nominees Deanna Corder and Mandi Ortiz.

BRCC has had special interest clubs and honor societies since its beginning, which provide opportunities for intrinsic personal growth, socialization, and service to the community. Twenty-five years ago, there were three active clubs on campus: **Student Government Association**, **Nursing Connections** and **Veterinary Technology Club**. There are now 16 active clubs and organizations and additional programs for student engagement. Individual clubs bring students together according to special interests, outstanding scholarship, opportunities for service, or discipline-related activities.

**Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society** has been active on campus for many years, honoring students who are enrolled in an associate degree program, have completed at least 12 hours of college-level course work, and maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher. These students perform service for the community and engage in activities that promote intellectual excellence. More recently, **Alpha Beta Gamma Business Honor Society** was chartered in 2007 for transfer students majoring in business or related fields. Activities include a Leadership Forum and a Career Expo, which annually has 350-500 in attendance, including 40 employers.

As diversity has increased on campus, the College has encouraged understanding and inclusion for all students. The **SPECTRUM** club began in 1998 to "unite students of color" and promote self-esteem and self-confidence. The mission of this club has been extended in the last ten years to support awareness of



and appreciation for the growing international immigrant and refugee population. Early in the semester, students are welcomed to BRCC and the country, while sharing elements of their cultural heritage at the President's Annual International Tea. Club members volunteer to help with the Harrisonburg International Festival and to pack backpacks for the Refugee Center at Christmas. In the last few years, the **Rainbow Coalition** began with a mission of creating an open and safe educational environment for people of all genders and sexualities to learn about diversity. For over 25 years, the College has celebrated International Month with a variety of events including workshops, lectures, personal reflections of life in other countries, and a dinner featuring international cuisine. For Black History Month, the College has sponsored concerts, workshops, and many community events.

The **BRCC Ambassadors** organization began in Fall 2000 as a volunteer leadership pool of students who are available to assist with various



on- and off-campus functions that promote and represent the College. The College sponsors a conference for high school students called "Moving Forward Education Conference," which began in 1995 as the "African American Education Conference: a Chance 2 Change" before expanding its focus to a broader audience. The Ambassadors own the BRCC Balloon Shop on campus whose proceeds go to a designated non-profit organization at the end of the academic year.



Another outstanding example of collaborative effort is the **Enactus** Team, which was chartered in 2004 as part of an international organization to help students use their education to solve real world problems through entrepreneurial action. The BRCC chapter has won national awards for their efforts in creating awareness of the challenge of domestic hunger within the United States by participating in the Virginia Hunger Symposium for the past decade; working with at-risk women and rehabilitated felons through the BRIDGE program; enabling the start-up of a commercial bakery outside of Port au Prince, Haiti; and building a school for handicapped children who were orphaned after the 2010 Haiti earthquake. In addition, Enactus created the Coffee Corner on campus as an independent, award-winning, student-run business to help support its special projects.



**Dream, Believe, Achieve Club**, established in 2008 as a partnership between Shenandoah Valley Regional Program for Special Education and the College, is a "community service club that provides opportunities for students to foster friendships while serving others" and to promote awareness and understanding for people of all abilities. Students who are 18-21 years old and have completed four years of high school form a "gradCLASS" on campus for skills development and job training. BRCC student volunteers work with gradCLASS students to expand their learning experiences and foster friendships.







## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. ON THE COLLEGE

My first involvement with the College started in 2001 when I was asked by my city manager to represent Waynesboro on the BRCC Local Board. I pondered for a bit and my husband encouraged me to give it a try. I thought a lot of Dr. James Perkins, and he and the local board members made me feel welcome. Dr. Perkins was so inclusive and kind, inviting me to participate in College activities and join him for trips to Richmond for sessions of the General Assembly. I met legislators, the VCCS Chancellor, Dr. Glenn DuBois, other state/local board members, and college presidents from the other 22 community colleges. I felt good about the friends I made, and I came to understand and appreciate the priorities of each college and understand the importance of the BRCC mission to the Shenandoah Valley.

I spent the first four years serving on the Finance and Facilities committee. This is when I realized I would be instrumental in helping with decision making for new facilities and transforming the campus in the coming years. I didn't hesitate when I was asked to serve another four years. I was proud to be serving at the time the Board was interviewing for a new president. I was very happy that Dr. John Downey was appointed President, since he is also a very caring and committed president who has the College's best interest at heart. He is very goal-oriented and believes in moving the College forward even while faced with challenges, and in the educational needs of the College and the communities. I've had the privilege and opportunity to know Dr. John Downey as Vice President, and I thought he would make a great leader. When my tenure was up, I was given a Resolution plaque from Dr. Perkins thanking me for my service on the board.

I was again appointed to the College Board in 2011. My time on the Board has been a great learning experience. I've come to understand the significant impact the College has in the community. My oldest sister had graduated from BRCC as an adult learner, and when the illness and passing of my husband forced my son to return home from college, he was able to complete a Business Administration degree at BRCC in 2013. This college provides a great education that is close-at-hand, especially now with the free shuttle service. I was happy to promote the shuttle by arranging a pick-up location in Waynesboro. Working with Student Activities Coordinator, Mary Kier-Smith, has allowed me to interact with students and to hear their powerful testimonies. BRCC changes students' lives and impacts the community. I have been impressed by the humanitarian work of the College, especially Enactus helping with world relief funds for the hurricane victims of Haiti, and the fundraising for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank through the Hunger Symposium. This influenced me personally, and I became a board member for the Food Bank.

As a teacher of the ISAEP/GED in the Waynesboro school system, I've been happy to tell them about the many wonderful educational programs and advanced technology programs that are offered at BRCC. I constantly hear many good things about the college and the positive effect it has on the local community. My work with the advisory board for Workforce Training has made me aware of how flexible the College is in providing training for manufacturing. The other special services BRCC offers whether online or long distance learning give great options for students.

I'm honored to be an African American woman serving on the College Board and serving now as chairperson. This has given me even more insight as to how open-minded the college has become. I have seen how BRCC has moved forward to represent the diversity of the community. BRCC is always looking for ways to be more inclusive and welcoming to all students. My dedicated and committed attitude toward serving has made it hard to believe that by the end of my tenure, I will have served 16 years on the Blue Ridge Community College Board. Did I see this coming? No, but I've never been able to say no to open doors.

Joyce Coleman  
ISAEP/GED teacher  
Waynesboro Public School System  
Blue Ridge Community College Board Chair





## PHYSICAL FACILITIES FOR THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY



When BRCC first enrolled students in October 1967, 524 full-time students and 303 part-time students occupied less than 40,000 square feet in four buildings (A, C, D, E). This surprising enrollment was already overflowing the capacity of the facilities, which were intended to accommodate 300 students.

Phase Two of construction, added three new facilities (buildings B, F, G), including dedicated space for Vet Tech animal facilities, an engineering and shop building, an automotive shop, the Houff library, and a student lounge. These new buildings, completed in 1973, more than doubled the amount of square footage from 39,400 to more than 95,000. A dedication of these buildings was held in 1973. In 1999, the G Building was named the Houff Student Center in recognition of continuing support from the Cletus and Charlotte Houff family.

The second 25 years brought rapid growth in facilities and set forth a new vision for the campus. A new science and technology facility of 12,100 square feet (J building) was approved in 1992 and included space for science classes and laboratories. Dr. Robert Baldygo joined the administration in 1993 as the new Vice-President of Finance and Administration and helped to create the College's first comprehensive Master Plan, implementing the vision of Dr. James Perkins for an expanded campus with dedicated green space surrounded by modern and innovative facilities. Objectives of the plan were to maintain and create a pedestrian-oriented campus, to re-brand the College visually, and to foster the creation of intimate learning environments and more traditional college settings. The first implementation of this plan began with the addition of the Plecker Workforce Center. The General Assembly approved a 2.5 million dollar bond for construction of a workforce center. In 1999-2000, Robert and Francis Plecker donated funds for this structure, which has become the center for the expansion of workforce training and community outreach. The 19,800 square foot facility was completed in 2003.

Expansion continued in the next few years with several major projects. In 2003-2004, BRCC graduate Dr. Bruce Bowman and the Bowman family donated funds to build a Large Animal Teaching Facility (the barn), impacting the Vet Tech program and expanding its

outreach. The College began construction for a Humanities/Fine Arts Building, which was dedicated in 2007. The new 23,500 square foot facility provides studio and exhibition space for expanded physical and visual arts curriculum. The Black Box Theater, the art gallery, and the kinetic gallery expanded the College's cultural impact on the community, spotlighting college and community productions and exhibits. The creation of a green space/quad offered outdoor space for passive and active recreation and outdoor learning facilities. Additional construction included the Bookstore, Personnel/Building and Grounds facility, and the Advanced Technology building. The Technology building utilizes high-tech equipment and machinery integrated with instructional technology to create a state-of-the-art learning environment.

With the completion of the Advanced Technology Building in 2011, the College had fully actualized all of the original facilities included in the 1997 Master Plan. Updates to the Master Plan in 2002 and 2011 included the Student Recreational Center, realized in 2014, and the Houff Center expansion, completed in 2016. The Recreational Center is a cutting-edge facility that has been paid for and maintained entirely by student fees and no state funding. It offers a place to gather, exercise, and play sports between and after classes. The Houff Center expansion includes science laboratories, classrooms, and new office spaces for Student Services, Financial Aid, Student Activities, and Human Resources. A much-needed parking structure is under construction for 2017.

The Bioscience Building is projected to be completed in Fall 2019 providing specialized facilities needed for the Bioscience, Microbiology, Histology, Medical Technology, Allied Health, and Nursing programs in a 40,000 square foot facility. The Bioscience suite is a simulated clean room space, which consists of a Vestibule, Gowning Room, Biomanufacturing Lab, Media Prep Lab, and Purification Lab. The suite is a dedicated space for simulating the demanding requirements of industrial labs that are involved in the production of cell-based products. The Nursing Skills Training lab is intended for basic instruction in nursing skills and includes a simulated suite of three hospital rooms: ICU, OB-GYN, and Pediatric.

The 40,000 square foot in four buildings from 1967 will have grown to an expansive 310,000 square feet in 19 buildings by 2019 on a thoughtfully landscaped campus, providing spaces for education, recreation, and relaxation for more than 6,500 students annually.





*Harrisonburg Center*



*Waynesboro Center*



*Augusta Center at Augusta Health*

## **OFF-CAMPUS FACILITIES**

Over its 50-year history, the College has utilized facilities in addition to its campus for instruction and specialized training. Locations in Waynesboro, Augusta County, and Harrisonburg have included at various times the Waynesboro Center, the Augusta Health Center, the Harrisonburg Center, as well as short-term relationships with local manufacturing companies. The College has designated specialized facilities where training in welding, commercial truck driving, and aviation mechanics can be taught.





## BRCC VALUES: Positive Relationships with its Community

BRCC has always taken the "community" part of its name seriously. Beyond providing educational courses leading to degrees, diplomas and certificates, the College has had open communication with business leaders and employers to train the workforce and provide cultural enrichment for the community. The mission statement of the Blue Ridge Community College Workforce & Continuing Education Center is to provide "... a dynamic program of workforce services and personal enrichment opportunities for Central Shenandoah Valley employers and residents." In the early years, the College offered a limited number of non-credit courses for community enrichment. By 1975, the College committed to addressing the interests and needs of area businesses and specialized training for industries. In 1986, the new president, Dr. James Sears, made a number of changes and innovations. He made it a priority to begin the Center for Training and Development, expanding and strengthening existing programs of continuing education, training for certification and licensure, and developing strong business/industrial training programs. The noncredit programs were designed as enhanced outreach efforts to the community, which would flexibly address community needs and improve personal lives.



*Spinning wheel at the Folk Arts Festival in 1977*







*Bonnie Moyers and Susan Crosby*

During the Sears presidency, the Workforce and Continuing Education Center representatives met with business and corporate leaders to determine their workforce training needs and to develop creative partnerships. The first major corporate client was Coors Shenandoah Brewing Company in 1986. The College engaged in pre-employment assessment, training, team-building, and technical assessments. College personnel worked extensively, over a two-year period, training employees on their schedules, to help establish the company's first workforce in Virginia. In 1987, the College formalized an agreement with the American Management Association to deliver seminars to the business community. In the same year, the Virginia Rider Training Program was introduced, in cooperation with the Department of Motor Vehicles, to prepare individuals for motorcycle licensure. This on-going program has trained thousands of beginning and advanced drivers and continues to improve motorcycle safety in the Valley. The Center has continued to develop customized training programs and feasibility studies for several corporate clients, such as supervisor training for the construction industry.

As Dr. James Perkins assumed the leadership of the College in 1989, he expanded the initiatives of his predecessor and cultivated creative collaborations that would continue to enhance the outreach efforts of the newly named Center for Business and Human Resource Development. One of the most exciting new programs, the Professional Tractor-trailer Driving School, was developed with the direct support and input of area trucking companies.

The Shenandoah Valley Private Industry Council provided start-up funding. By 1991, as many as 21 firms had contributed time, money, equipment, and personnel to the program. Within the first six years, there were 477 graduates, addressing the area demand for qualified drivers. The program has continued to generate healthy enrollments and has produced over 1,500 well-trained commercial drivers.

The Center began pursuing, in 1991, a Training Education Partnership with the DuPont plant in Waynesboro, placing a BRCC resource person at the plant to develop training programs for employees who wanted to broaden their educational experiences. By 1994, two state-of the art labs for on-site training at the DuPont facility were staffed five days a week by eight full-time BRCC employees. The plant's employees were offered pay-for-knowledge incentive for assessment and training in team work, communications, and computer soft skills. This mutually beneficial relationship continued for ten years, yielding well over \$2M in revenue. This income provided the College with money for advanced computers and equipment, which put "a computer on every desk," of the campus as education moved into the computer age.



In 1991-1992, the College cooperated with the Private Industry Council, the Virginia Employment Commission, and the Valley Vocational-Technical Center to utilize funds provided by the Federal Trade Act program to address unemployment needs in the Valley. The closing of one plant and significant layoffs in another had left many dislocated workers. The College served more than 175 of the workers through non-credit and credit training and education, helping them to acquire new skills for new employment.

In 1992, the poultry industry in the Valley, represented by ROCCO, Wampler, and Tyson, sponsored a foreign language initiative which included a BRCC Spanish language instructor to train their supervisors to communicate with Spanish-speaking employees. This type of specialized instruction was later continued with the national "Command Spanish" program in 2003, addressing the needs of the criminal justice profession. The College developed additional programs in "Spoken Spanish" to improve communication with the increasing Hispanic immigrant population. Since diversity was increasing in the Valley, the College sponsored workshops about the challenges of immigrant families. The programs were designed for human service professionals but were also open to those interested in learning more about the rapidly changing community.

In the early 1990s, the College developed classes for teacher recertification in math and language arts. As new guidelines from the Virginia Department of Education emerged in 2001, the College began providing training on the use of computers and technology in the classroom. Hands-on courses were created and taught to prepare K-12 faculty to meet the required Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel. The courses were taught to Staunton and Harrisonburg cities, as well as Augusta, Highland, Page, and Rockingham counties between 2001 and 2005. Also in support of teacher education, in 2004, the College began hosting Career Switchers, a fast-track, alternative licensure program offered through EducateVA, a statewide initiative to address critical shortages in the teaching profession throughout the state. Using a combination of online and on-site instruction, EducateVA helps individuals who have already earned a bachelor's degree become licensed teachers in the state of Virginia.

The widespread demand for computer literacy near the end of the 20th century led the College to create a Computer Training Center (CTC) in 1995. Within the first two years, the CTC had trained over 5,500 users. Customized corporate training in all of the Microsoft

Office applications were developed, and many classes were offered to train individuals for personal enrichment and workforce training. Training in specific computer applications continues to be available for groups of employees from individual industries and through open enrollment.

The Workforce and Continuing Education Center, renamed the Workforce Services and Continuing Education division (WSCE), identified that businesses in the area were having difficulty identifying and assessing the specific workplace skills that their employees would need to be successful. In 1997, the College adopted WorkKeys, a national system for assessing and developing workplace skills, created by American College Testing (ACT). Using this tool, the College continues to provide trained profilers who analyze the skills required to perform specific jobs. From 1998-2016, 119 job profiles have been completed by the College for over 40 area businesses. Job candidates are then assessed on the basis of those skills for hiring or retraining, which earn them Career Readiness Certificates (CRCs). Besides helping businesses hire the best employees for the job, the WorkKeys system has allowed the College to become better acquainted with area employers and to effectively anticipate future training and development needs.

To address the requirements of a modern workforce, the College recognized the need for a committed facility to serve as a focus for workforce division activities. The launching of a \$3.5M construction project in 1999 demonstrated the College's commitment to ensure that the workforce of the central Shenandoah Valley is well-prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Realization of this goal was only possible by a generous donation from Robert and Frances Plecker, who further established an endowment to ensure that the Center would continue to have the resources to support quality workforce development programs in the future. The Plecker Center for Workforce, Economic, and Community Development opened in 2003, providing 21,000 square feet of space for WSCE classes and training, community events and meetings, and professional conferences. In addition to providing facilities for non-credit classes and workforce training, the Plecker Center is a popular rental space for business and community events, bringing in an average of 9,000 people to attend over 125 events a year.

In the early part of the 21st century, the College was gearing up for the new age of manufacturing. The College's service area, with more than 250 manufacturing businesses, is one of the largest employment sectors in the region with a high demand for a skilled workforce. WSCE developed a curriculum to prepare students for high performance manufacturing. In 2009, the College hired its first Manufacturing, Engineering, and Technology Coach (MET-Coach) to recruit for high performance manufacturing. The focus of the program is to increase the number of young adults, ages 24 and under, who are interest-



ed and engaged in post-secondary education and workforce training related to high-performance manufacturing careers.

With the opening of the Advanced Technology Center building in 2011, Dr. John Downey noted that the Technology Center "demonstrates to businesses the commitment we have to the manufacturing community." With state-of-the-art labs replicating the equipment found in local plants, classes offered in the Technology Center give students a realistic look at modern manufacturing. In 2015, the Educational Foundation purchased two additional robots to increase the student-learner-to-robot ratio to four students per robot. The increased focus on manufacturing has led to the

creation of the Mechatronics specialization within the Technical Studies Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S) degree as well as multiple Career Studies Certificates. The College also sponsors several programs that make young people more aware of potential jobs in manufacturing. BRCC partnered with several local businesses and industries to acquaint more than 600 local high-school students with in-demand, high-tech jobs in celebration of National Manufacturing Day 2015. The students toured the campus as well as multiple local manufacturing facilities.

In response to local employer demand for qualified welders, the College unveiled its 4,000 square foot welding and machining facility in Mt. Crawford in May 2014. Funding from the VCCS Equipment Trust Fund, the American Subcontractors Association, and the BRCC Educational Foundation enabled the purchase of specialized machinery. Several local employers continue to be involved in the advisory group to convey employers' needs in order for the College to create specific classes and programs that effectively train highly skilled welders and related trades that have been in short supply in the region for some time.



In addition to offering on-site workforce training with area businesses, Workforce and Continuing Education has created a series of noncredit courses leading to certificates and licensure in horticulture, healthcare, complementary alternative medicine, business, leadership, management, safety, contracting and trades licensure, and more. WCE also offers access to additional skills training through online classes. The College partners with nationally recognized companies Ed2go and ProTrain to provide an option of affordable, self-paced, online certificate programs for many in-demand occupations.



## PERSONAL ENRICHMENT

From its very beginning, Blue Ridge Community College has welcomed the community to the campus for interesting and enriching classes and activities. The College has offered an array of cultural events, personal enrichment courses, and leisure activities providing intellectual growth and entertainment. Advisory committees, end-of-course evaluations, surveys, and focus groups guide the selection of specialized offerings each year. BRCC personal enrichment courses instruct, entertain, and enhance quality of life.



## CULTURAL OUTREACH

From the time the College opened in 1967, it has valued providing cultural opportunities and experiences for its students and the community. One of the earliest outreach activities was the Folk Arts Festival, which brought together local artists and performers with a broad audience to share in a two-day fair. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the event, in 1998, had thousands of participants enjoying food, fun, crafts, and entertainment. As the campus has grown, the College's cultural energy has found expanded expression in art, music, theater, and social awareness.

Celebration of Black History Month has been an on-going tradition that began more than 25 years ago. The College continues to offer a number of very successful activities including a conference for high-school students, Gospel sings, panel discussions, African-American storytelling and literature, historical presentations, and presentations by leaders in the community.

The Cultural Affairs Committee, part of the governance system, has been an important promoter of cultural activities of all kinds for the last 25 years. Each year the committee has sponsored guest lecturers, musicians, Artists in Residence, an Artist's Lecture series, and performers to come to campus for the benefit of students and the community. Other early participants included the local theater, ShenanArts, and the newly established Shakespearean company, Shenandoah Shakespeare Express (SSE). Before SSE, now known as the American Shakespeare Company (ASC), found its home in the Blackfriar's Theater in Staunton, it was regularly invited to perform on the BRCC campus. This popular tradition continues with the ASC traveling troupe, allowing students to see professional productions of the works of Shakespeare on campus, without charge, and at a nominal cost to the community.

High-quality programs require high-quality facilities and support. In 2007, BRCC was proud to open the Humanities and Fine Arts Center. The 23,500 square foot building includes a black box theater, an art gallery, a kinetic exhibit, art and ceramics studios, classrooms, and faculty offices. This facility has allowed expansion of the fine arts and performing arts credit and non-credit curriculum as well as performances and exhibitions for the public. Between Fall 2007 and Spring 2016, more than 34,500 students and community members have enjoyed an array of performances and exhibits. During that time, the College has offered 89 separate events (including 178 individual performances). Community members consider this center to be their access to quality cultural enrichment.



## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. ON POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY

I never entertained thoughts of attending college. After being out of high school for 7 years, only BRCC allowed me a shot at a degree. At the time, I didn't realize how important this would be. I didn't even attend my own graduation! I was able to transfer seamlessly to Virginia Tech to complete undergrad, then on to successfully complete my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. Time passed, life happened, and years later, I returned to BRCC in search of specially trained veterinary technicians for my growing practice! Later, I returned to the College for Continuing Ed in my profession, plus each member of my family attended classes and/or summer events on campus. I have come to realize that BRCC has a huge footprint in my community. I've enjoyed serving on the Educational Foundation Board, the College Board, and as chair for the second major gifts campaign.

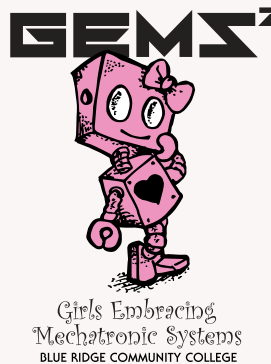
Blue Ridge is truly a community college. The overwhelming majority of BRCC grads live here, work here, raise their families here, and pay taxes here. I 'get it' that donating resources – time and money – to the college in support of those who need a 'hand up' results in a tremendous return on local investment.



Bruce M. Bowman, DVM  
Field Veterinarian, Office of  
Veterinary Services  
Virginia Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services

Student Bruce Bowman gives a  
backpacking demonstration in  
1977.

## PERSONAL GROWTH OUTREACH

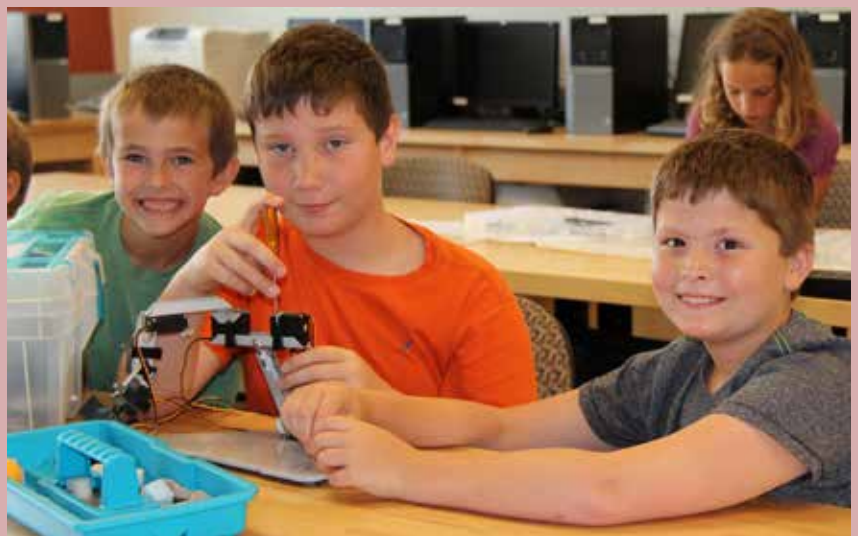


The College has offered extensive youth programs from as early as 1988. Learning Can Be Fun, a summer series of subject-oriented classes for school age children, has offered challenging, informative, and fun instruction to ever-increasing numbers of children. From 1990-2015, close to 7,000 children have been brought to the BRCC campus to participate in classes that include robotics, Legos, sports, music, art, theater, creative writing, and computers to name a few. Forty-six percent of these students have grown up to take at least one course at the College, and 11 percent of those have graduated from BRCC.

Many youth initiatives have particularly emphasized the importance of the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics fields (STEM). In 2008, the "Tech-facturing Camp" was a BRCC/JMU partnership for Valley youth. The mission was to give youth early exposure to manufacturing career pathways through hands-on projects. In 2013, a science camp for middle-school girls called "Girls Embracing Mechatronics Systems" (GEMS) was started. The Educational Foundation funded a program for the girls to build wind turbines using a variety of mechanical, electrical, and aero-dynamic concepts. The camp encouraged the girls to pursue careers in the STEM fields. In 2014, another free-of-charge camp, "Females in Technology (FIT)," introduced ninth and tenth grade girls to applied technology.

Special interest events and seminars on various topics over the years have sparked community enthusiasm. For example, from 1982-1998, renowned horticulturalist Andre Viette organized an annual Horticultural Symposium for the College. The Foundation hosted a White House teleconference on philanthropy and a financial management seminar for area Veterinary practices in 2000. A Chancellor's Innovation Grant made possible the "Growing Green in the Valley" symposium in 2010. That same year, WCE sponsored the first of four annual "Making Art Your Business" seminars featuring internationally acclaimed artist P. Buckley Moss in a day of workshops, networking, and resources to inspire and motivate artists. In 2013, the "Wild Virginia" lecture by Ernie Reed, former Director of Living Education Center for Ecology and Arts, invited the community to be active in forest conservation. Many other events occur annually to inspire community interest and participation.

Community members of all ages are invited to pursue personal interest classes such as flower arranging, cake decorating, and creative writing. Exercise classes in Zumba and yoga, martial arts, and coaching of team sports have kept individuals active. With the opening of the Fine Arts Center, more classes in studio art, ceramics, dance, and theater have been popular.







A 2008 student production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* also featured a number of faculty actors including Margaret Marangione, Randy Lilly, and Rebecca Evans. Right: Dr. Bob Baldygo and Chip Yates perform in a holiday skit.



### FINE ARTS CENTER HIGHLIGHTS: IN THE THEATER

- Musical performances by Mike Seeger, Robin & Linda Williams, Jen Chapin, and Tom Paxton
- Musical styles ranging from country to classical, jazz, blues and pop, to opera
- An Appalachian Heritage Arts series
- Ten BRCC theatrical productions
- Community performances, Theatre Workshop for Youth productions, and BRCC's Children's Theatre Workshop
- Performances by Wayside Theatre, Theatre West Virginia, and the Barter Players
- Six programs featuring survivors and rescuers from the USS Indianapolis
- Three Jefferson-Hamilton Debates

### IN THE ART GALLERY:

- Quilts: Past, Present & Future regional celebration
- A Fall 2009 "found materials" exhibit showcased works by area high school students
- Exhibits of local artist/artisan groups
- Solo and group student exhibits representing a variety of artistic expressions: watercolors, oils, acrylics, ceramics, fiber, furniture, welded metal sculptures, stone sculptures, photography, collage, and more.

## SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

An overriding sense of community impels Blue Ridge to continually involve itself in humanitarian, educational, and social awareness projects that benefit the College's service area. As early as 1991, the College was sponsoring the Shenandoah Valley Adult Worker Resource Fair to present resources to people pursuing new career choices. The College also participated in the Caring Canine Companion program, which trains dogs to assist the elderly and handicapped. A Virginia State policeman gave presentations on campus focusing on alcohol and drug abuse.

Currently, an annual activity that highlights humanitarian commitment is the BRCC Virginia Hunger Symposium. The week-long symposium began in 2007 in order to address a general lack of awareness and knowledge about the issue of hunger in the Valley: its causes and the wide range of community agencies who work tirelessly to alleviate it. A volunteer committee of administrators, staff, faculty, and students organize activities including an interactive simulation, workshops, panel discussions, and lectures. During this

week, the College also sponsors fundraising activities like the Enactus Empty Bowl Dinner, the SGA salad bar, and concerts for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank in Verona. The Virginia Hunger Symposium completed its tenth year, and has helped to raise over \$71,000 in funding and 34,000 pounds of food to support local families. Because of the purchasing power of the food bank, these figures translate into over 300,000 meals for the hungry.

In 2013, the Human Services program sponsored the Aging in Place Community Resource Fair. One hundred participants learned from local aging-issues professionals about health care, retirement planning, wellness and fitness, and quality of life enhancement. HMS students give back to the community through an internship experience with local professional agencies. Since 2015, 109 agencies have provided venues for students to volunteer approximately 8800 hours of service to the community. These are only a few examples of the many initiatives and efforts made by the College, its students, and its employees to support and enrich life in the Valley.



## BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION



2017 "Student Focus, Community Impact," campaign results

In 1985, the College completed the organization and approval of the BRCC Educational Foundation, Inc., an autonomous, non-profit corporate body which "builds community relationships and secures resources to strengthen the programs and services of Blue Ridge Community College." The Foundation provides scholarships to support worthy students, grants to encourage faculty innovation, and special funds for acquisitions not provided through the College budget. The Foundation gives businesses and individuals an opportunity to acknowledge the College's contribution to the community and to support the continuation of its vital work.

The Foundation annually organizes events and activities to raise funds for the support of the College. In addition to its ongoing fundraising efforts, the Foundation has undertaken four significant campaigns: "Pathways to the Future," launched in 1995, raised \$2,029,733; "Securing Our Future," launched in fall 2004, raised \$6,629,377; Dr. James R. Perkins Fund for Academic Excellence, launched in spring 2009, (a fund that would honor Dr. Perkins and benefit Blue Ridge Community College), raised \$157,052; "Student Focus, Community Impact," launched in December 2013, concluded in December 2016, raised \$8,552,376 to support students and education at the College.

Beyond fundraising and major gifts campaigns, local supporters and businesses have made special donations over the years to enable the work of the Foundation. In 1999, local trucking industry entrepreneur Robert Plecker made possible the development of the Robert E. Plecker Workforce Center through the largest gift in the College's history. Also in 1999, another trucking giant, Dwight Houff and the Houff family, donated to the Foundation land adjacent to the Weyers Cave campus. The Foundation later sold a portion of this land to the Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy to develop its training center.

In 2000, retired Harrisonburg educator and College Board member Julia Grandle donated her Victorian home in Harrisonburg to establish the Foundation's first charitable gift annuity. At the death of former president James A. Armstrong in 2006, the Foundation received the proceeds from his estate and established the Foundation's largest scholarship fund, providing \$20,000 in scholarship awards annually.

In 2004, the BRCC Educational Foundation worked with brothers Bruce and Ken Bowman to secure funding so that the Veterinary Technology program could expand its large animal services into the Bowman Large Animal Teaching Facility on the grounds of the campus. In 2006, then-president Dr. Perkins's vision for a "campus commons"

inspired Shenandoah Landscape Services to provide a gift-in-kind that transformed the parking lot into a green space that is now the hub of the College.

As a result of brainstorming between Blue Ridge Community College and local businessmen Karl Stoltzfus, Mike Stoltzfus, and Karl Stoltzfus Jr., BRCC was able to launch its Aviation Maintenance Technology program in 2007. Classes are conducted at the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport. Dynamic Aviation, Avotek, and the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport have been tremendous partners with the BRCC Educational Foundation in this effort.

The College lost a valued supporter when BRCC alumnus Dennis O. Burnett died suddenly in 2014. As Executive Director of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership and a member of the BRCC Educational Foundation Board of Directors, Dennis was an enthusiastic champion of BRCC's mission to enhance workforce and economic development in the Shenandoah Valley and beyond. His family, friends, and colleagues honored his legacy by raising \$122,067 and establishing the Dennis O. Burnett Memorial Endowed Scholarship at Blue Ridge Community College.

A society named in honor of the year of the College's founding, "The 1967 Society," recognizes the Foundation's most generous donors. Each of the 54 members of this elite philanthropic group has given over \$100,000 to the Blue

Ridge Community College Educational Foundation. The Blue Ridge Vision Society recognizes friends who have made commitments to the BRCC Educational Foundation in their estate plans. To date, there are 41 members of this forward-thinking collection of donors.

The Educational Foundation has judiciously and creatively used the funds that have been donated. In 2011, as part of a College initiative to improve student success, the BRCC Educational Foundation invested \$100,000 in the development of the CAVE – BRCC's Center for Academic Vision and Excellence. The mission of the CAVE is to enhance student academic success by increasing student engagement with each other, faculty and peer tutors, and academic resources outside the classroom.

Blue Ridge Community College developed programs in Welding and Machining, in response to several local companies that had expressed their needs for well-trained employees in these fields. To establish these two state-of-the-art programs, the College partnered with InterChange, Inc. from which it rents space in a Rockingham County warehouse. In 2014, the BRCC Educational Foundation allocated \$150,000 for the build-out of the warehouse space to accommodate the special requirements of these new programs.



Results of 2004 "Securing Our Future" campaign.



The BRCC Educational Foundation continues to support special programs throughout the College. The Foundation annually invests more than \$60,000 in the College's vital Nursing program, which has partnered with Augusta Health and Sentara RMH Medical Center for decades. Blue Ridge Community College has been a leader throughout the Commonwealth in the career coach movement that places college employees in the regional high schools to provide academic advising and career counseling. The Foundation raises money through the VCCS Rural Virginia Horseshoe Initiative to fund the transition of coaches from part-time to full-time.

Important support for the faculty comes from the Foundation's Strategic Initiative Grants and Mini-Grants. These competitive awards allow faculty members to dream beyond the confines of their usual job description. From developing electronic educational support materials, to researching cowboy poetry in Wyoming, to supporting educational travel for special learning communities, to bringing prominent guest speakers to campus--these awards provide a valuable opportunity to explore new and creative strategies for enhancing faculty preparation and student learning.

The BRCC Educational Foundation was created in 1985, and when Dr. Perkins began as BRCC President in 1989, the BRCC Educational Foundation had \$53,471 in assets. At the end of his tenure, in June 30, 2009, those assets had grown to \$5,272,967. Under Dr. Downey's continued leadership and efforts, as of December 2016, the Foundation boasts assets of 13,202,630 – an impressive number, to be sure. However, that number does not fully reflect all of the investments made in Blue Ridge Community College, its students, its faculty, and its campus every year.

- The BRCC Educational Foundation from 1998-2017 has awarded unrestricted funds for the following purposes:
- Student Scholarships, totaling \$3,204,643
- Emergency student financial assistance through the Student Outreach and Resource (SOAR) Center (formerly known as the Women's Resource Center): \$94,463
- Strategic Initiative Grants – designed to address projects with strategic, far-reaching impact for the College: \$150,285
- Instructional Mini-Grants – for the development and implementation of programs by faculty with the goal of improving instruction: \$74,168
- Professional development activities for BRCC Staff Association members: \$26,979

## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. ON POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY



In 1996-97, President James Perkins and the BRCC Educational Foundation Board of Directors implemented the College's first ever major gifts campaign. They successfully met their goal of \$2 million and determined that there was, indeed, significant support for our mission in this community. As a result, the College decided to put more effort into friend-raising and fund-raising by hiring a full-time Director of Development. What a blessing for me that I was selected for this position and came to BRCC on July 1, 1998!

The interview process was the first significant sign to me that Blue Ridge Community College values its partners in the community. The search committee was made up of tremendous community leaders, including Doug Houff, Pam Huggins, Stuart Porter, and Carl Rosberg. Throughout my now-19-year career at BRCC, I have continued to see that the College appreciates the community's perspective and community leaders invest their time and energy in BRCC because they believe in our mission.

Our generous donors do the same – investing their resources in the BRCC Educational Foundation because they support our mission, our students, and our faculty. The establishment of numerous endowments over the years is representative of our donors living out the Greek proverb: "A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit."

When I came to Blue Ridge after that first major gifts campaign, the BRCC Educational Foundation had approximately \$1.2 million in assets. Through the end of 2016, that amount had increased to more than \$13 million. This is impressive and reflects the phenomenal generosity of our community. It also places BRCC in the upper third of community college foundations throughout Virginia.

What encourages me most at BRCC is not the assets that have accumulated over time, but the funds we have spent and the good we have done all along the way: scholarships for students with financial need; strategic initiative grants for innovative ideas; technology purchases to keep our courses cutting edge; instructional mini-grants for faculty projects; professional development for employees across the College; emergency financial assistance for students in crisis, and much, much more.

Blue Ridge Community College benefits from the time, talents, and treasures of so many generous people in our community. Our students, our faculty, our college, and our community are better as a result of their investments.

Amy Laser Kiger  
Executive Director  
BRCC Educational Foundation

# BRCC VALUES: Excellence

"Blue Ridge Community College meets the educational needs of the community, empowering students through comprehensive programs and services, within an environment of academic excellence." (BRCC Mission Statement, 2017)

BRCC aspires to excellence in all areas of the academic experience. The College holds itself to its own high standards and to the standards of three governing agencies: the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC); the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia; and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). By ongoing assessment and continual improvement, the College demonstrates that it has a "purpose appropriate to higher education and has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain its purpose" (SACSCOC website). Within the College, faculty members, administrators, and staff members share the responsibility of governance committees that shape the direction of the College. The administration, faculty, staff, and students at Blue Ridge Community College demonstrate excellence in visible, public achievements as well as in quiet, personal actions.

## ADMINISTRATION

Blue Ridge has had a series of presidents who have distinguished themselves as leaders among their peers. The two presidents of the last 25 years, Dr. James Perkins and Dr. John Downey, have modeled a vision for educational excellence through their practice of servant leadership. According to Robert Greenleaf's Center for Service Leadership, "While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the 'top of the pyramid,' servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible." Presidents Perkins and Downey's ex-

emplification of this philosophy, as well as their compassion for others, has inspired those under them to achieve at the highest possible levels. Parallel to this environment is the endorsement of "chaos theory," the empowerment of all employees to express ideas and opinions that are valued and influence important directions for the College. Reflected in the governance system, faculty, staff and administrators work together on committees to hire employees, oversee the curriculum, and determine changes in policies. This presidential perspective has made every employee important and integral to the success of the institution. The annual Virginia Hunger Symposium,

a week-long event showcasing the urgent food needs in the College's local area, is one example of how a president's leadership inspired faculty and staff to serve the greater public. In addition, Dr. Downey is often found playing basketball with students in the Fitness Center on weekends. The empowerment of faculty and staff to develop creative projects has produced outcomes like the College's Quality Enhancement Plans that have engaged students through learning communities, soft skill modules, an enhanced honor system, and the Humans of BRCC project that honors the diversity of the Blue Ridge family. The broad outlines of QEPs are determined after

much brainstorming and discussion by all constituencies at BRCC and the community. This collaborative approach can be cumbersome at times, but it gives everyone a stake in the outcome and pride in the results.

Over the last several decades, the Commonwealth has experienced times when the economy was growing as well as times when it was declining. A sign of excellence is to be prepared for both. Because of the expert planning by Vice President for Finance and Administration Dr. Robert Baldygo, the College has been well-positioned to handle whatever has occurred. During the lean years, careful







*John Downey (then, counselor) and Elizabeth Hall.*

management of resources was needed to ensure that the College was not forced to sacrifice quality to survive. In spite of difficult circumstances, the College financial staffs' guiding principle has always been to safeguard both educational resources as well as personnel positions. As funds were available, the campus has grown extensively guided by a thoughtful master plan and with attention to quality and future needs. The College Educational Foundation has assisted BRCC in establishing a strong financial footing. The Foundation's tireless outreach to the community, sharing "the Blue Ridge Story" has brought in donations that continue to fund student scholarships as well as faculty, staff, and student projects.

On the academic side, the College Vice President of Instruction and Student Services and the Academic Deans have overseen the quality, content, and availability of the College's curriculum and developed new programs that meet the needs of the broader community. They have recruited, hired, and mentored adjunct and full-time faculty, both credit and noncredit. They have worked closely with area high schools, colleges, and businesses. One vice-president led an extensive effort to increase student engagement and retention through Welcome Week activities and academic support. One dean developed a leadership professional development seminar series, and another dean spearheaded the establishment of the BRCC chapter of the American Association of Women in Community Colleges. Another dean has successfully administrated the Workforce Credential Grant, providing financial assistance to students in noncredit classes. In spite of the academic administrators' busy schedules, they have still made time to stay involved with students by teaching classes in a Leadership Learning Community or by engaging with student activities like the Dream, Believe, Achieve Club, the Adventure Club, or disc golf. They have also taken a collaborative approach in working with their faculty. They support faculty members while encouraging them to experiment with new approaches to teaching.

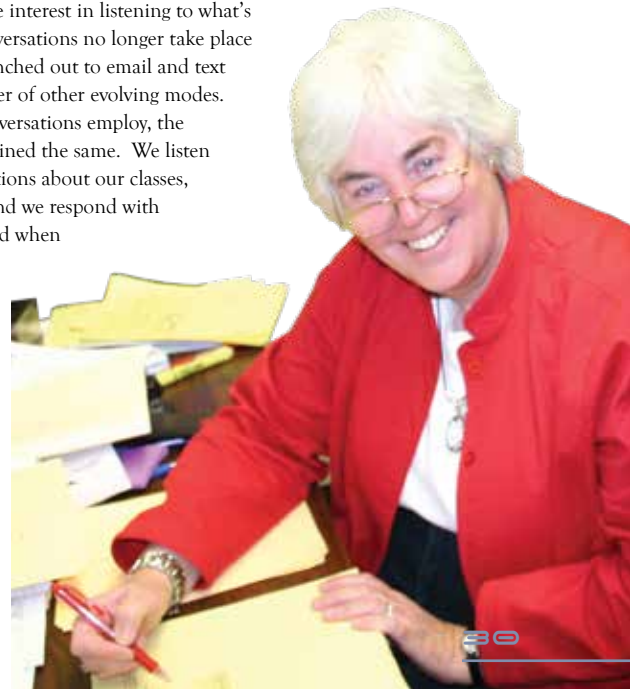
## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. ON EXCELLENCE

It is hard for me to believe that more than a quarter of a century has flown by since I first began teaching at Blue Ridge Community College. My prior teaching experience had been at a Public Ivy, and I wasn't sure what to expect when I made the transition to a community college. What would my students and fellow faculty members be like? Would I have to adjust what I taught and how I taught it? Would I receive the support and encouragement I needed to do my job well?

It didn't take long for my questions to be answered. During my first semester at BRCC, I quickly discovered that my students were just as interested in learning and that my fellow faculty members were just as dedicated to teaching as at any other school with which I had ever been associated. I found a "can do" level of support from both the staff and administration that freed me to try new things in the classroom and provided me with the materials that I needed to be successful. I also discovered that my students were a much more diverse group than I had worked with before. Some were on par with the best of the best at any four-year school, while others were less prepared for the rigors of college-level work. Many were grappling with non-academic issues like poverty or difficult family situations or lack of support for higher education. Some were farm kids, and some were city kids. Others were recent immigrants or military vets. Many were adults coming back to school to train for second careers, while still more were younger adults who had no idea what career they wanted. I've taught occ-tech students and transfer students and senior citizens who take classes just for the pure joy of it. For each of these students, Blue Ridge opened doors to educational opportunities, but faculty also needed to help them walk through those doors and feel comfortable with and excited about what they found on the other side. There is a familiar saying in higher education that we need to take our students from where they currently are to where they want and need to be. Over the years, I have seen faculty at Blue Ridge embrace this idea wholeheartedly. Without lowering rigor or content, we have brought a much more personal approach to teaching by reaching out to individual students to let them know that they are important to us, that they are capable of great achievements, and that we are here to support them every step of the way.

Having arrived at Blue Ridge near the middle of its 50-year history, I have had a chance to work with both the original faculty, who pioneered the idea of what a community college education should be all about, as well as with the very newest faculty, who are reshaping that vision with cutting-edge skills in the use of the latest technology. I have seen us evolve from electric typewriters to electronic tablets, from chalk boards to smart boards, from filmstrips to YouTube videos, and from seated classes to flipped classes, with online and hybrid classes added along the way. Keeping up with all these changes has often been a challenge but one the faculty has readily embraced. I have been inspired by the extensive activities and creative approaches that our faculty have employed in the classroom to engage our students in learning, and I have been impressed by faculty who have experimented with new approaches to teaching rather than simply relying on what worked well in the past. I have witnessed the evolution of clubs and activities that push learning beyond the walls of the classroom, and I have seen faculty devote countless hours to service at the College and in the broader community to further the mission of the College. But what is perhaps most impressive about our faculty is their caring attitude. Teaching at Blue Ridge is not just a job to them—it is a passion. Faculty go out of their way to tailor their classes to the individual needs and abilities of their students, and they take a genuine interest in listening to what's on students' minds. Granted, those conversations no longer take place exclusively in our offices. They have branched out to email and text messages and Skype as well as to a number of other evolving modes. But no matter what the format these conversations employ, the faculty response to them has always remained the same. We listen to our students' life stories, to their questions about our classes, and to their dreams about the future. And we respond with patience, with empathy, with wisdom, and when needed, with a dose of reality. We are trying to teach our students much more than just the subject matter in our discipline. We do our best to teach them about life both inside the Valley and beyond. To me, this is the hallmark of excellence.

Kathi Fields  
Assistant Professor of  
Mathematics





*Graduation day is always especially rewarding for faculty and staff as another "crop" of students celebrates their achievements.*

## FACULTY

The faculty members of Blue Ridge Community College are dedicated to liberal education--expanding the general development of human potential--as well as vocational education--the imparting and acquisition of specific skills. Unlike many four-year universities, faculty members at the community college teach five three-credit classes each semester, multiplying the direct contact and influence with the students. In addition, faculty members spend hours tutoring and mentoring students beyond the classroom to encourage their academic success.

Faculty members at Blue Ridge Community College have long been known for exploring new ways and methods of teaching more effectively. When project grants are awarded by the VCCS based on competitive proposals, Blue Ridge is usually a prominent winner. In fact, the VCCS grants were renamed "Paul Lee Professional Development Grants" in honor of a BRCC dean who provided exceptional leadership and encouragement for faculty development and innovation. Locally, BRCC Educational Foundation Instructional Mini-grants and Strategic Initiative grants also encourage faculty members to strive for excellence by experimenting with new pedagogies.

Excellence in education is demonstrated in multiple ways throughout the College. It can be highly personal like mentoring an at-risk student or

instructing students for whom English is a foreign language. It can be highly visual like the kinetic gallery of student artwork or the mineral and gem display for geology. It can be highly experimental like flipping classrooms or offering developmental studies through a modular approach. In the end, faculty members are excellent at finding more effective ways to engage students to be successful learners.

Technology has had a major impact on education, and BRCC faculty members have been leaders in the VCCS in applying technology to student learning. With the expert assistance of the College instructional technologist, faculty members have integrated into their classes a wide variety of improvements from classroom clickers to video lecture-captures, from Blackboard slide libraries to simulated experiments, and from supplemental electronic support to complete online classes. Professors have also guided students in a broad spectrum of hands-on activities such as creating websites for customers, running an on-campus computer repair shop, building a wind turbine to capture energy, and repairing automobiles using state-of-the-art electronic equipment.

As impressive as the College faculty members are in the classroom, it is also the activities of the College faculty outside of the classroom that indicate their level of excellence. One College dean

used to describe it as the difference between being an instructor, whose only focus is classroom teaching, and being a faculty member, whose commitment goes beyond the classroom in service to the College. Faculty members serve and are leaders in the College, the community, and their professions. Some have given countless hours to advising student clubs and activities, while others have researched and written assessment and accreditation reports. Several faculty members have taken the lead in developing study abroad opportunities for students, giving them access to the broader world outside of their Valley. Recognizing an unfulfilled student need, a group of college personnel devised a plan for what became the Center for Academic Vision and Excellence (CAVE), a unique gathering spot where students can study in a comfortable setting, work on group projects, or receive peer and volunteer faculty tutoring assistance. In a few short years, the CAVE has already maxed out its seating capacity, a testament that it is meeting demand. These are just a few examples of how faculty have perceived a need and have voluntarily stepped up to satisfy it.





Bill Parkins shared a smile and a story with everyone. As a long-time Buildings & Grounds staff member, Bill knew most students and employees by name, and was always ready to talk local high-school and college sports!



More BRCC staff (clockwise from top left): Lowell Roberson, Sandy Martin, Toby Whitesell, Ann Sheets, Sue Ellen Church, and Roy Lilly.

## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. ON EXCELLENCE



My time at BRCC as a student, an alumna, and now a staff member, has deeply shaped my academic, professional, and personal growth. My experiences here have embodied the value of excellence that

BRCC exemplifies, both inside and outside of the classroom.

My classes pushed me beyond mediocrity and toward excellence. Upon entering BRCC in 2008, I was given the opportunity to join a learning community centered on leadership. This experience provided the guidance and mentorship that I needed to have a successful college experience at BRCC and beyond. The class materials were engaging and relevant, as they were in my later courses. Throughout my time as a student, the faculty and staff members I had the pleasure of learning from went above and beyond to guide me through my academic career. They encouraged me, challenged me to be better, and fostered the personal and academic growth that would prepare me for my university studies.

As a student at BRCC, I was also afforded many opportunities to excel outside of the classroom. Through my involvement with the Enactus program, I gained valuable experience in leadership, project management, and professional networking. I seized the opportunity to excel in a number of leadership roles, and to have experiences that the average student would likely not have access to at another community college. I had opportunities to travel, to prepare professional presentations, and to be a part of a team representing a school that embodies excellence. These experiences not only made me a successful candidate for competitive programs and scholarships in my later university years but also have shaped my professional trajectory as I move into my professional career.

My experiences at BRCC have empowered me to pursue a career that utilizes the skills and interests that I have developed. My time working in Haiti with the Enactus program sparked a passion for the region that I carried into my later academic years, leading me to study abroad in the Caribbean and seek opportunities and courses surrounding regional issues. This passion guides my professional life as well, as I work to pursue an advanced degree in Latin American and Caribbean studies as well as a J.D. in human rights and immigration law.

BRCC empowered me with the skills, knowledge, and experiences I needed to pursue and achieve excellence. Upon graduating with my B.A., I have had the distinct pleasure of returning to BRCC to work with Enactus as a staff member while saving to return to graduate school. This is a professional move that represents my deep appreciation for, and belief in, the opportunities this program provides the students of BRCC.

Megan C Samples  
BRCC graduate



Doris Cline, Donna Bothof and Deana Jones modeling Folk Arts tee shirts.



Linda Hurt—a great sport!

## STAFF

The staff at Blue Ridge are equal partners with the faculty in providing outstanding educational opportunities for students, in devising strategies to remove barriers and to streamline procedures, and in ensuring that the College campus is attractive, accessible, and safe. Much of their work goes unheralded but not unappreciated. Their contributions are characterized by going above and beyond what is expected.

Support staff and administrative assistants ensure that every area of the College runs efficiently and effectively. They are committed to the success of their areas of influence and the overall success of the students' educational experience. In the Human Resources Office, Administrative offices, Workforce Services, the Fine Arts Center, the Fitness Center and more, these dedicated professionals are proactive in providing strategies and solutions to everyday issues.

Student Services exemplifies the axiom of doing more with less. They provide a myriad of services to thousands of students: processing admissions and records, advising students on the best programs and courses to take, and assisting special groups such as veterans, students with disabilities, adults over 50, or foster youth. Through the SAILS program, they seek out and counsel students at academic risk. The Testing Center allows students to complete required assessments outside of class and supports the mandatory in-person testing for distance education. Transfer counselors connect students with the local colleges and universities through road trips or on-campus events. The Student Activities Office organizes a wide range of engaging activities that provide students with valuable leadership opportunities as well as much-needed fun.

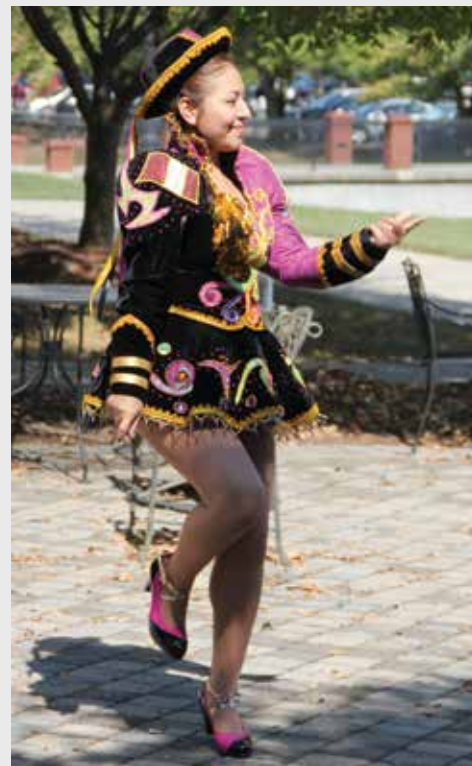
The Houff Library, open seven days a week, is excellent at providing access to a variety of informational resources and promoting the understanding of effective ways to use these resources. The Library staff assists faculty members in teaching research methods through customized library orientation and information literacy sessions. Users can email a librarian from the library website for 24/7 assistance. Library surveys consistently indicate a high rate of customer satisfaction.

The College technology infrastructure and staff have long been a model in the VCCS, and the College technology specialists have often been sought out as consultants by sister schools. The College help desk employees are just a phone call away and rush to address questions or problems.

Buildings and Grounds workers are called upon not only to keep the College physical plant in good repair but also to set up and tear down venues for conferences, meetings, and graduations. Because the College campus has grown greatly over the last half century, construction on campus has been constant. B&G has been called upon frequently to move offices, classrooms, and even the entire library to accommodate the smooth transition from building to building. They have managed to incorporate requests for moving assistance in their other duties, meeting this additional need with careful attention to detail and with remarkably good humor.



Doris Darne



The ultimate test of excellence, however, is the difference the College makes in students' lives as well as the difference they make in the College. BRCC students come from diverse backgrounds—first generation college students, recent immigrants, single parents trying to make a better life for their children, military veterans looking for a new pathway, college transfer hopefuls, career switchers, current workers in need of upgraded skills—and on and on. The challenge is to provide students with the tools that they need to forge a better life. Some of those tools are, of course, acquired in the classroom. The College's occupational and technical graduates are in great demand for jobs in local businesses, industries, and hospitals. The College's transfer students are accepted by numerous colleges and universities, and assessment reports document that Blue Ridge students perform well at their four-year institutions.

Students also acquire important tools for success before graduation through their participation in student activities and clubs. The BRCC Enactus club has won an impressive number of state and national awards, including being the first two-year school to place among the top four colleges and universities in the Enactus USA Competition. Locally, they have brought workforce skills training to groups such as low-income women and rehabilitated non-violent drug offenders, and they have mentored single mothers returning to school. In far-away places like Haiti, they have provided solar lights, water filtration systems, techniques to convert trash to cooking fuel, chickens and rabbits for farming, and numerous other projects all focused on empowering people to better their lives through sustainable, entrepreneurial activities. The College's Phi Theta Kappa interna-





*A student in the print shop*

tional honor society chapter has consistently achieved 5-star status, the highest possible level, based on their many service and scholarship projects, and it has been named three times as a top 100 chapter internationally. It hosts an Undergraduate Research Conference, hosts a "found materials" art show for middle school students, contributes to the newspaper archive of the National Holocaust Memorial Museum, and supports a number of local charities. The College's Beyond the Blue Club is a training ground for human services students to hone their helping skills. They work with fellow students who are experiencing social, financial, or emotional difficulties by referring them to appropriate community resources. The Alpha Beta Gamma business honor society has hosted annual job fairs bringing employers to campus and running workshops on interviewing and résumé skills. The Vet Tech Club has raised money to purchase canine ballistic vests for police dogs and has organized pet food and supply drives. The Spectrum Multicultural Club celebrates the diversity of the student body. It hosts international teas and dinners and participates in international festivals to promote awareness of the vibrant array of cultures present in the Blue Ridge family. The club has donated storybooks about different countries to public school children and has raised funds to sponsor surgeries for children in impoverished countries. The Student Ambassador Program provides a corps of students who volunteer to assist at campus events. They take prospective students on campus tours, sponsor the campus bloodmobile, run the campus Balloon Shop, and promote the BRCC Unity Day of community service.

BRCC students' determination to overcome hardships and excel in education and service is inspirational and transformational. Although students juggle jobs, family responsibilities, and in some cases, poverty, their perseverance reflects the expectation of excellence promoted by the College community. The actions and attitudes of the BRCC community demonstrate clearly that the statement, "BRCC values excellence," is not just a series of words, but rather a plan by which the College lives both at work and beyond.



*BRCC May Queen and her court, 1969*

## Looking Towards the Future of Blue Ridge Community College



## In Closing...

I hope you have enjoyed reviewing this history of the College. Reflecting back over the past 50 years, I am amazed by how much we have accomplished in service to our community. At the same time, so much has changed since that group of community leaders first pushed their shovels into the rich farmland in Weyers Cave. I am so grateful for those early supporters of Blue Ridge Community College, especially Cletus and Charlotte Houff, who first envisioned the great potential that our community's college would become. Finally, I think often of the countless lives that have been transformed because of Blue Ridge Community College, and I remain in awe of the many sacrifices made by our students over the past 50 years in order to achieve a better life through higher education and workforce training.

Now, as we look forward, there's no possible way one can predict what the future holds for Blue Ridge and what changes await our next half century of service. What I can be certain of, however, is the knowledge that our employees will continue to serve the needs of our students with dedication, pride, and professionalism as we continue to fulfill our mission to the Shenandoah Valley.

With Sincere Thanks,

*John A. Downey*



