

TRI-C®

# TIMES

# SPRING TRAINING

**PRO TIPS ON  
YARD PREP**

**IN THIS ISSUE P6:  
TIPS FOR LUSH LANDSCAPES FROM  
TRI-C'S EXPERTS**

**P12:  
POWERING THROUGH  
LIFE'S CHALLENGES**

**P16:  
INSPIRING STUDENTS  
THROUGH EXPERIENCE**



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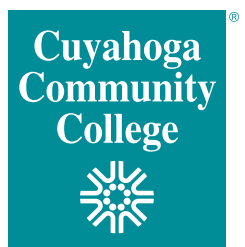
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# PRESIDENT'S Message

## TO OUR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

“Expert” is a term frequently floated around in a variety of settings. Anyone can label themselves an expert, to the point that we’ve become desensitized to the term.

Becoming an expert in a field takes years of dedicated work and study — the kind of dedication you’ll find throughout our programs here at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®).

Simply stated, Tri-C is the place where futures begin because we are a place where people train to become experts. And in this issue of *Tri-C Times*, you’ll meet some outstanding examples of our collective expertise.

You’ll learn valuable information about spring yard care from members of our Plant Science and Landscape Technology program — a program that routinely outperforms much bigger schools at the annual National Collegiate Landscape Competition. Tri-C placed first in the nation in 2023 and second in 2024.

You’ll meet Bo Skitsko, a graduate of our Sport and Exercise Studies program, who immigrated to the U.S. from Ukraine to pursue his dream of owning his own business. Each day at Bo-Fit Studio, he uses his expertise in exercise and fitness to lead his clients down a path to a healthier life.

You’ll also meet Nursing Professor Deborah Crider, an expert in this essential and growing field, who highlights the importance of using engaging teaching methods, such as discussions and case studies, to help students ultimately thrive.

And you’ll learn more about the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses* program offered at Tri-C, where entrepreneurs and business experts meet, network and learn from each other. We will soon see the 1,000th participant complete the program.

It takes many years of work to become an expert. And when those experts share their vast knowledge with the people and communities around them, everyone benefits immeasurably.

I am proud to say that Tri-C is a place that not only has a lot of knowledge but also strives each day to share that knowledge with everyone who seeks it.

Sincerely,



**Michael A. Baston, J.D., Ed.D.**  
President, Cuyahoga Community College



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## FOLLOW TRI-C



Tri-C Times is published by Cuyahoga Community College's Integrated Communications department for its friends and constituents. Feedback and story ideas are welcome. Send correspondence to Tri-C Times, 2500 E. 22nd St., Cleveland, OH 44115; call 216-987-4322; or email editorial@tri-c.edu.

### TRI-C ALUM WINS FILM AWARDS

*The Coroner's Assistant*, written and directed by Angeline Walsh, premiered on the Tubi streaming service in January. Walsh started writing the dark comedy in 2017 when she was a student in the Tri-C Film and Media Arts program. She and fellow classmate Giorgiana Lascu went on to produce the series, which received the Inaugural Indie Series Spotlight Award at the Astra Awards in 2024. Several former and current Tri-C students were part of the crew.



### TRI-C JAZZFEST LINEUP

The College announced the lineup for the 46th annual Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, presented by KeyBank, from June 26 – 28 in downtown Cleveland. This summer's festival features eight concerts inside Playhouse Square's historic venues. The lineup includes five-time Grammy winner Dianne Reeves, Grammy-winning saxophonist Kirk Whalum, Trombone Shorty and tributes to music legends Oscar Peterson, Chick Corea and Gary Burton. Festival passes are on sale through April 4 at [tri-cjazzfest.com](http://tri-cjazzfest.com).



# SPRING 2025

### CONTINUING TRI-C'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

As part of the College's focus on sustainability, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are operational at three College locations. Through a grant from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), EV charging stations were installed in parking lots at the Metropolitan, Eastern and Western campuses. All three stations have two plugs and can charge two EVs at a time in adjacent parking spaces.







# SPRING TRAINING

STORY BY Jarrod Zickefoose  
PHOTOS BY Victoria Stanbridge

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A walk through the gardening section of your local department store can be mind-boggling. The confusing assortment of fertilizers and pest controls, the niche tools and the wide variety of flowers and shrubs can overwhelm. However, the experts in the Plant Science and Landscape Technology program at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) say spring yard prep doesn't have to be complicated. Applying a few basic concepts will have your neighbors wondering when your thumb turned green.

“My No. 1 tip for people is to aerate your soil twice a year, spring and fall. It's a game changer,” said Jim Funai, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the program. “The biggest problem in Northeast Ohio landscapes is compacted soil.”

Aeration punctures the soil with small holes to improve its ability to absorb air, water and nutrients. It has a cascading effect on soil health, creating space for roots to expand and establish themselves. It also allows the natural biome to flourish: bacteria, fungi, nematodes and mites, which produce carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and other things that plants like.

“Plants can usually fend for themselves if they have the room they need to grow,” Funai said.

Most landscape companies should be able to perform this service. DIYers can rent equipment. Make sure you do the whole yard — your lawn and flowerbeds.

Aerating your yard will make everything else easier, said Funai. Get your yard tested once it's aerated instead of reaching for the multistep fertilizer and pest control applications. You may not need anything more, as aeration tends to help restore the soil to a natural, healthy balance.

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***“My No. 1 tip for people is to aerate your soil twice a year, spring and fall. It's a game changer. The biggest problem in Northeast Ohio landscapes is compacted soil.”***

— Jim Funai, Ph.D.

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Having physical and chemical tests run on your soil will help you determine the density and composition of the fertilizer if you need it.

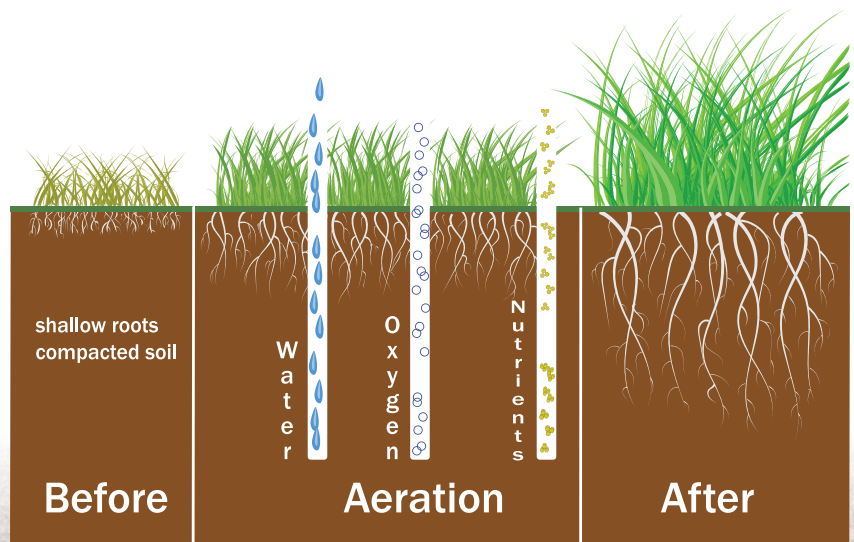
“Plants certainly need nutrients, but you need to understand which ones are present so that you can apply the right amount,” Funai said. “I'm not saying fertilizing is bad, but it's common to overdo it, wasting money and harming your lawn and potentially the environment. Getting back to aeration, the nutrients might be in your soil, but if the plants can't get to them, they do no good.”

Grub control can also be tricky. Funai said collateral damage must be taken into consideration. Chemicals may kill the grubs, but they can kill insects and microbes that are good for growing plants and grass, too.

“When you dump poison on your lawn, you may end up killing the good guys. It goes back to an ecosystem-management approach. If we're applying things correctly and doing our aeration, the grub problem usually minimizes itself,” Funai said.

Building healthy soil is key, then. Once that's done, the foundation of a healthy lawn and landscape is in place.

Now it's time to make it beautiful.



## Landscaping

When it comes to landscapes, Funai said there were two things to keep in mind: form and function.

Put shorter plants in front, middle heights in the middle, and taller plants behind and at the edges of your landscape. This is fairly intuitive. Use a good mix of evergreens, deciduous woody plants (such as dogwoods and magnolias) for a flowering effect, fruiting and flowering shrubs and, finally, annuals and perennials.

“Repetition is crucial. You want some good repetition there. As you look across, you get a rhythm going across the landscape,” Funai said.

“Clump your perennials in a couple of key spots, but don’t go crazy with them because those are high-maintenance plants. Stick with your woody plants more and then highlight with punches of perennials and annuals.”

There is no one perfect plant or set of plants to use, and picking plants can be a nuanced — even fraught — affair.

Plant hardiness zones are established to help gardeners choose plants that have the best chance of thriving in an area. They are determined by the coldest temperature one may expect, as recorded over a 25-year history of weather data.

Northeast Ohio is now considered Zone 6a, with some areas near the lake being in the warmer Zone 7. (Lake Erie has a stabilizing effect on temperatures.)



“Everyone who has been in the industry for a long time still holds onto the idea that we are Zone 5, and it’s hard for me to let go of Zone 5 because it makes you scared, like a winter that cold could happen again. But we have not had a Zone 5 winter in years and years and years,” Funai said.

Moving to a Zone 6a designation opens up gardeners’ options, making plants from farther south viable. Note, however, that some retailers have jumped on the Zone 6 designation and stock southern plants that are not necessarily suited to our climate.

Lori Zatroch, the director of the Plant Science and Landscape Technology program, advised visiting a local nursery.

“This will allow you to have conversations with experts who know what works and what doesn’t. Visit independent places. They will have the local knowledge to make informed recommendations,” she said.

What you already have will impact what you plant, too. In short, there is no one-plant-fits-all recommendation.

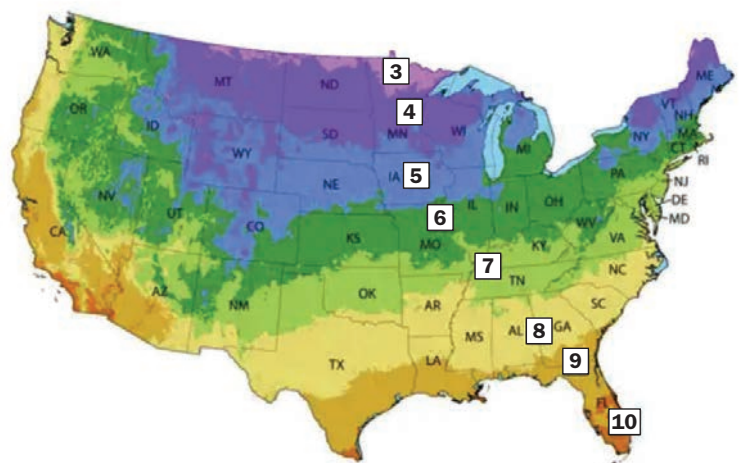
Further, diversity is a virtue.

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***“Clump your perennials in a couple of key spots, but don’t go crazy with them because those are high-maintenance plants. Stick with your woody plants more and then highlight with punches of perennials and annuals.”***

— Jim Funai

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Many professionals subscribe to the 30/20/10 concept: No more than 30% of what you plant should be from the same family, no more than 20% from the same genus, and no more than 10% from the same species.

Monoculture makes a landscape vulnerable. Think of ash trees, once planted all over Northeast Ohio. The ash borer comes along and wipes out the population.

“Someone will have a tree die and ask for a good replacement,” Funai said. “I am always cautious to say, ‘Plant this as your replacement.’ There are 80 trees that would be good substitutes. The more diversity we get, the more resilient we are going to be.”

While there are many advocates of native-only planting, some of that diversity can come from non-native species. Funai said there is no such thing as “native” anymore. The soil in Northeast Ohio has been bulldozed and built upon to the point where what was native topsoil is not there anymore.

Native plants are adapted to the region’s wildlife, climate and pests. But on the other side, development after WWII, particularly in the inner suburbs, moved and changed the soil.

“There are a lot of non-native plants that are perfectly suitable for the landscape,” Funai said. “I think we can straddle the line of native and non-native. It’s not either-or.”



### When To Do What

Mother’s Day is typically offered as a safe time to start planting, and as a rule, it’s sound advice. Northeast Ohio is almost certainly free from the threat of frost by then.

However, be aware that plants from a greenhouse can be several weeks ahead of the outside weather. They can be tender.

Take your cues from nature. Observe when things are happening.

“When the forsythias start to bloom, that tells me that you’ve got about a week left to get crabgrass control treatment down if you’re using it. By the time they are in full bloom, it’s too late. That crabgrass seed has already germinated,” Funai said.

Plant your leafy and flowering plants in spring, but save the trees and shrubs for fall. Shorter days and cooler nights trigger their root growth.

Spring is also the time to clean up any debris from winter and take inventory of your supplies. Basic tools — gloves, trowel, bypass pruning shears and loppers, cultivator, shovel, spade, rake and hoe — should be clean, in good shape and organized. It’s a good idea to buy high-quality tools up-front. This will save money over time, as the tools will last. And when it comes to pruners and loppers, you want them to be sharp and sturdy to ensure clean cuts.

## The Plant Science and Landscape Technology Program

The Plant Science and Landscape Technology program started at Tri-C in 1993. It offers an Associate of Applied Science degree with three elective options: Landscape Design and Contracting, Tree Care, and Garden Center and Nursery Management. Also offered are a Landscape Technician certificate and six short-term certificates that can be earned in two semesters.

In 2024, Tri-C's Plant Science and Landscape Technology program placed second in the National Collegiate Landscape Competition against four-year institutions. (At the 2023 competition, Tri-C placed first overall and had the top overall student among the competition's 529 participants.) It has been recognized as the top two-year plant science program every year since 2014. It is accredited by the National Association of Landscape Professionals, which named Funai the Outstanding Educator of the Year in 2022.

When the program was founded, it was male-dominated, with the majority of graduates going on to run landscape companies. But now, plant-landscape students are two-thirds female.

"We are bringing so many new perspectives into the classroom," Zatroch said. "We have students who have never lived in a house they owned. They are looking for ways they can feel empowered to change the environment around them by, for example, working at Holden Arboretum, the Metroparks or Lake View Cemetery.



"The student population has changed. It used to be mostly students whose dad owned a landscape company in exurban areas. Now, I'm seeing students from urban environments, which brings a completely different perspective on what a landscape can be. You can have an urban ecosystem that is very small, like on a postage stamp."

What was also a mostly entrepreneur-oriented program has made space for the basic plant nerd. The program is popular, with many students who see the field as a place where they can realize eco-minded values. The landscape business has also changed, becoming more eco-conscious and sustainability-minded.

Joshua Hackbarth enrolled in the program in the fall of 2023.

"When I started college, I wanted to be an arborist. The main problem I had was that I liked every part of working outside. I liked climbing trees, but I also liked landscaping and everything else," he said. "I like that with this major, I will have experience and classes in every aspect of working outside, and I can use this degree to pursue any career path that I want."

Haley Spiteri earned her plant-landscape associate degree at Tri-C in 2023.

"I had heard of Tri-C's landscape technology program through a friend and how amazing the program was. I have always been an outdoorsy and creative person and decided to merge those passions and pursue a career in landscape design. The Tri-C program allowed me to learn all sides of the landscape industry while still being able to have a specific focus within the major," she said.

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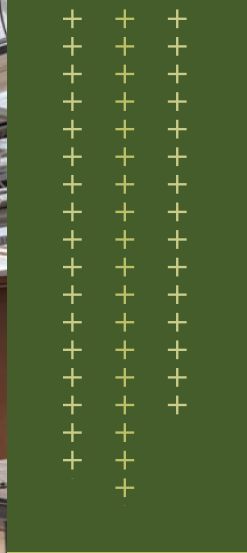
***"When I started college, I wanted to be an arborist. The main problem I had was that I liked every part of working outside. I liked climbing trees, but I also liked landscaping and everything else."***

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— Joshua Hackbarth, student







The program is more tech and science than it might appear at first blush. Computer modeling is involved along with probability, statistics and chemistry.

For Spiteri, the math was intense. Students must learn formulas for putting together irrigation systems, calculating slopes and more.

“It’s not ‘hard’ math,” she said. “There was just a lot more math involved in this career path than I expected.”

But it was worth it. In the summer of 2024, she landed her dream job in Fort Collins, Colorado.

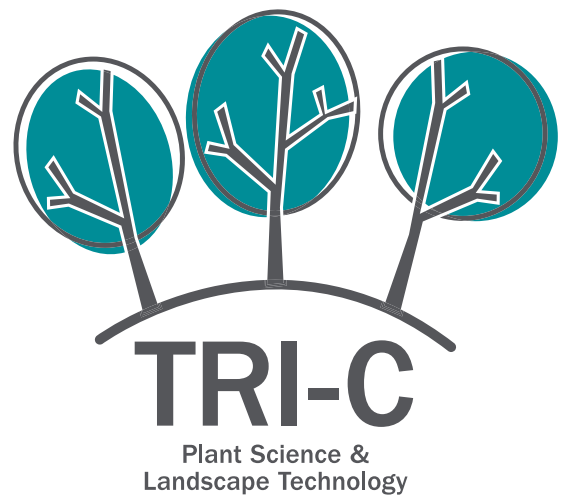
“Getting my degree from Tri-C and working for companies in Ohio allowed me to grow and become a better designer before making such a big jump and moving halfway across the country,” she said.



She now works remotely as a part-time designer for a company in Ohio and as a full-time landscape designer for a company in Colorado.

“I am still learning every day and building upon the skills I gained during my time at Tri-C,” she said. “I went from designing small planting beds to being able to put together designs that include outdoor kitchens, spas, pergolas and more.”

From your own yard to career paths, watching things bloom is always rewarding.





STORY BY Erik Cassano  
PHOTOS BY Cody York



# A SHOW OF STRENGTH

**BO SKITSKO POWERED THROUGH LIFE'S CHALLENGES TO REALIZE HIS AMERICAN DREAM. ALONG THE WAY, TRI-C PROVIDED HIM WITH THE CONFIDENCE HE NEEDED.**

At Bo-Fit Studio in North Royalton, owner Bo Skitsko has a fundamental idea that he and his clients train by:

"Everything we do must transfer to real life."

He doesn't train people to simply become bigger and stronger. He trains them to move better and perform better in real-world situations.

"We don't want you just sitting at a machine and doing repetitions of the same motion over and over," Skitsko said.

"We train on our feet. We use dumbbells and kettlebells. We get up and move like you'd move in your daily life. We want fitness to have practical applications."

Skitsko, a 2017 graduate of the Sport and Exercise Studies program at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®), trains his clients to move with purpose. It's a philosophy that reflects how he has approached his own life.

A native of Ukraine, Skitsko moved to the U.S. in 2009 not knowing any English. Needing to provide income for his family in Ukraine, he opted to find work instead of immediately going to school.

"I was 21 and was dating my wife at the time," said Skitsko, now 37 and a resident of Broadview Heights. "We put our marriage plans on hold until I could earn enough to bring her to the U.S. a few years later."

It was a risk to leave everything behind in Ukraine, but Skitsko knew he wanted to move elsewhere to pursue new opportunities. After living in the U.S. for most of his adult life, he says it was one of the best decisions he has ever made.

"I can now say from personal experience there are so many opportunities in America that you can't find in other parts of the world — opportunities you can seize if you are willing to put in the hard work," he said. "It is definitely a place where I am happy to be living and raising my family."

After initially settling in Minnesota, Skitsko moved to the Cleveland area in 2012, where some family and friends had already settled as part of Northeast Ohio's large Ukrainian community. By then, he had learned

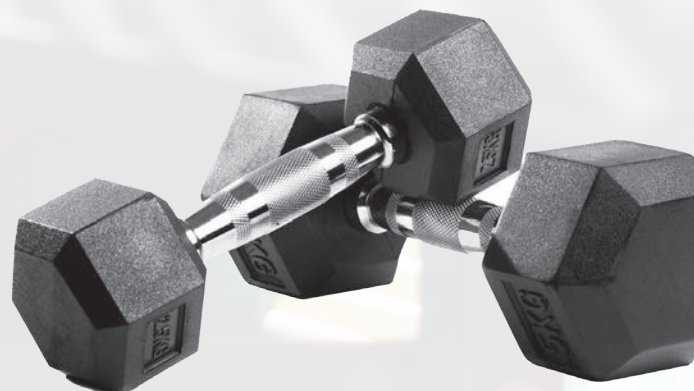
some English, his wife-to-be had immigrated to the U.S., and he was able to start building a career.

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***"Everything we do must transfer to real life."***

— Bo Skitsko

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## The Right Fit

Skitsko knew he had a passion for helping people live strong, healthy lives. He considered becoming a doctor, but financial constraints and family and job commitments made him reconsider. Instead, he decided to become a personal trainer, which would allow him to enter his career much sooner than the many years it would take to earn an M.D. degree.

He worked in gyms around the area and earned a certification as a personal trainer, but he wanted more than just a certification. He wanted a degree and a path to owning his own gym.

“I knew I had the drive,” Skitsko said. “I had been interested in exercise and fitness since I was a teenager. It taught me that if you put hard work into something, you’ll see results. But I also sustained some injuries from not working out properly. One was particularly serious and jeopardized my ability to lift weights at all. It was only through studying anatomy, learning proper exercise techniques, and consulting with specialists that I was able to rehab all the way.”

It was a lesson in the power of knowledge — the kind of knowledge he wanted to share with others. It’s what led him to Tri-C’s Sport and Exercise Studies program.

“I already had quite a bit of knowledge about how to train people even before enrolling at Tri-C,” he said. “But I felt that working for other gyms was going to limit my vision for how I wanted to train people. I wanted the type of education that would give me the freedom to open my own gym.”

At Tri-C, Skitsko found professors and instructors willing to adjust their curricula to incorporate the experience he already had. He found a supportive network of instructors and classmates willing to work with him and answer questions. Most importantly, he developed confidence.





# #STAYSORE



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*“I wanted to do things on my own terms, and thanks in large part to Tri-C, I was able to reach that goal.”*

— Bo Skitsko

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“When I came to Tri-C, I didn’t really have a lot of confidence that I could start and run my own business,” Skitsko said. “I didn’t feel like I had that level of credibility yet. But in the years I spent there, I really started to feel like I could make this happen.”

Skitsko’s version of the American Dream was to open a business that could help others achieve their dreams of a healthier lifestyle. In 2017, after graduating from Tri-C, Skitsko was able to realize that dream by opening Bo-Fit Studio on State Road in North Royalton.

## **Expanding Horizons**

Today, Skitsko trains hundreds of clients at his fitness studio, teaching them how to move with a purpose. If you drop by in the winter, you might even catch one of his classes playing in the snow outside to cool off after an intense workout.

In 2020, Skitsko also started his own line of Bo-Fit dietary supplements, adding another arm to his growing business, which also includes a line of apparel.

Through it all, he remains grateful to Tri-C for the education and confidence he received. He stays in touch with many of his professors, who still serve as a source of information and advice for him.

He also returns to Tri-C regularly to share his story with students in the Sport and Exercise Studies program and what he has learned as a trainer, a business owner and an immigrant who came to the U.S. with little more than a dream for what his life could become.

“I wanted to do things on my own terms, and thanks in large part to Tri-C, I was able to reach that goal,” he said. “If you have a passion for something, if you have a dream, Tri-C is a great place to begin chasing that dream. You’ll find not just an education — you’ll also find support and confidence. If you’re willing to put in the work, you’ll discover what’s possible.”

For more information on Bo-Fit Studio, visit [bofitstudio.com](https://bofitstudio.com).





# Nurturing NURSES

## NURSING PROFESSOR DEBORAH CRIDER INSPIRES FUTURE GENERATIONS THROUGH DYNAMIC TEACHING AND REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE.

STORY AND  
PHOTOS BY  
**Noelle Bye**

Nursing runs through the branches of Deborah Crider's family tree.

"I have tons of nurses in my family," she said. "I mean, tons of aunts and cousins and other relatives who are in nursing. I don't want to say they directed me in that way, but I guess they saw that I could do this well."

After decades working as a registered nurse herself, Crider has found there's a misconception about nurses' roles in health care. As a professor in the School of Nursing and Health Professions at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®), she aims to debunk the myths in the classroom.

"Most of the time, what I see is that people think nurses are like angels with wings, and they bring patients some medicine and help give them baths," she said. "That's just a very small part of what nurses do. It's not just about giving a patient a pill or a shot."

"I try to help my students understand that, a lot of times, patients come to the hospital for nursing care because that's the person who is around them the most. A nurse has to make good clinical judgments based on what they're assessing and requires a lot of critical thinking."

Her teaching philosophy encourages student engagement through interactive learning techniques.

"When students come to my class, it's not always a lecture. It may be a game, a case study or some type of interactive activity or discussion. We talk about how we can apply nursing concepts," she said. "It takes time, studying and a lot of application for students to learn how to think like a nurse thinks. I try to find ways to help students critically think and develop this skill."

Crider's introduction to Tri-C goes back to 1989, when her father enrolled her in a summer session class during her junior year in high school.

"I had never heard of Tri-C before," Crider said. "But I took my class, enjoyed it, and didn't think much about it."

Little did she know that more than 35 years later, she would be a professor at the College, sharing her passion for nursing with new generations.

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***"Most of the time, what I see is that people think nurses are like angels with wings, and they bring patients some medicine and help give them baths."***

— Deborah Crider

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Her reintroduction to Tri-C came in 2005 when Elizabeth Berrey, Ph.D., the former dean of Nursing, was looking for clinical faculty and asked her to lecture.

She was only supposed to teach for one year, but when a full-time position opened the following year, her love of helping students led her to apply.

“Here, 20 years later, I still sit,” Crider said. “I really cannot believe that 20 years have gone by that fast.”

In addition to serving as a course coordinator for several past nursing subjects and currently serving as the Behavioral and Community Health Nursing course coordinator, Crider was involved in a grant committee that secured a simulation device to give students hands-on experience with wound care — a crucial skill that isn’t always fully addressed in clinical rotations.

She’s also able to bring real-world knowledge into her teaching by continuing to practice as a nurse at Highland Springs Hospital in Highland Hills.

“Because I’m still working clinically, I’m not teaching old stuff. I’m teaching what I saw with patients last weekend,” she said.

Crider is especially fond of Tri-C’s nurse pinning ceremony, an event that marks the end of the program for students.

“Seeing students walk across the stage, surrounded by their families, knowing that they’ve made it to the beginning of their nursing careers, is one of the most rewarding experiences,” she said.

Crider got her first taste of nursing in high school, working as a nursing assistant and helping take care of her father, who passed away during her senior year.

She has spent her career working as a registered nurse for multiple institutions, including the Cleveland Clinic. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Andrews University in 1994 and earned her Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Phoenix in 2000. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Leadership in Education at the same institution.



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***“Here, 20 years later, I still sit. I really cannot believe that 20 years have gone by that fast.”***

— Deborah Crider

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Her passion for teaching extends beyond the classroom.

She's a Master Gardener volunteer in Lorain County, where she helps people learn how to grow their own food, regardless of their living situation.

Crider is also an avid beekeeper, giving away honey. In addition, she's an amateur harpist who enjoys continually studying the pedal harp.

Born in a rural town in Missouri, Crider's family moved to New York and then Cleveland during her elementary school years, and she considers the latter home.

Through her dynamic teaching methods and passion for education, Crider ensures that each student leaves with more than just a degree.

"Nursing is a highway of opportunities — and not everyone travels the same highway in nursing," Crider said. "There are different paths, and there are different clinical areas that they can find themselves working in. And each place that they work, they build a skill base, and they take that expertise with them. It's important for them to learn how to be a good nurse so, no matter where they go, they can take very good care of their patients."



# A NETWORK OF SUCCESS

**THE GOLDMAN SACHS 10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES PROGRAM  
AT TRI-C WILL SOON CELEBRATE 1,000 GRADUATES.**

STORY BY **Anthony Moujaes**

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*“Supporting our 1,000th graduate speaks to the need for the program over the last 12 years. 10KSB provides the support and fosters the learning environment for business owners from various industries to grow their business.”*

— Erika Hill, 10KSB Executive Director

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When the current cohort of business owners completes the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses (10KSB) program at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) in April, it will mark a milestone achievement: The 1,000th participant will graduate from the program.

The 10KSB program at Tri-C launched 12 years ago, just two years after Goldman Sachs kicked the program off at a handful of national locations. 10KSB is a \$750 million investment to help entrepreneurs create jobs and economic opportunity by providing them with greater access to education, financial capital and business support services.

10KSB fosters collaboration among participants and connects them with a broader network of resources, including one-on-one business advising and the opportunity to learn from other like-minded business owners.

“Supporting our 1,000th graduate speaks to the need for the program over the last 12 years,” said Erika Hill, the director of the 10KSB program at Tri-C. “10KSB provides the support and fosters the learning environment for business owners from various industries to grow their business.”

Each cohort has about 30 people, and the program is 12 to 14 weeks of business education classes that include group discussions, peer learning, skill building and hands-on experience. The curriculum focuses on practical business skills that owners can immediately apply, such as negotiation, marketing and employee management.

**Goldman  
Sachs** **10,000  
small  
businesses**





“The program is ideal for small business owners who have viable product or service offerings for clients and customers regionally, nationally or globally,” Hill said.

The results speak for themselves: Nationally, 67% of graduates increase revenue, and 44% of graduates hire additional employees within six months of graduation. Business growth and program impact are measured three, six and 30 months after graduation.

In Northeast Ohio, the 980 graduates to date have generated more than \$1.2 billion in total annual revenue and created more than 16,000 jobs since they completed their courses.

To be eligible for the program, participants must meet general criteria:

- Participants are business owners or co-owners.
- The business has been in operation for at least two years.
- Business revenues are over \$75,000 in the most recent fiscal year.
- The business must include a minimum of two employees, including the owner.

During the program, participants create a growth plan that lays out a path to business growth, from adding locations to expanding service offerings to reaching more customers in new markets.

“Business owners have a unique role of navigating challenges, making decisions and solving problems,” Hill said. “10KSB unites them as a cohort where they can learn from each other. That peer-to-peer learning is critical to understanding the curriculum through other perspectives on how to approach a problem.”







*“It has been a breath of fresh air to learn from instructors involved in their own businesses. The program challenged me to think of different ways to grow my business and impart skills and knowledge that I can implement.”*

— Amy Mucha, 10KSB graduate

Amy Mucha is a 10KSB graduate and owner of Daisy Cakes in Kent, Ohio. Mucha was a high school math teacher who baked cake pops as a “side hustle” before she launched her business in 2018.

“It has been a breath of fresh air to learn from instructors involved in their own businesses,” Mucha said. “The program challenged me to think of different ways to grow my business and impart skills and knowledge that I can implement.”

10KSB taught Mucha to aim higher than she thought was possible. She opened her first brick-and-mortar store upon graduating in 2022.

“Having our own space will allow us to ship nationally, get our pops on the shelves at grocery stores, and host cake-pop events and workshops,” said Mucha.

Mucha and her husband have since opened a second business that sells 3D-printed cake pop molds and tools for other cake pop makers to purchase and use for their own businesses.

“That was a great spin-off to take an essential product to market that became a separate company,” Hill said.



Hill credits the program’s success to the “human touch points” that she and her team prioritize.

“The role of a business owner can get lonely,” Hill said. “They face challenges from running a business that others may not relate to. The program provides a safe space for business owners to celebrate and commiserate with each other.”

There are three cohorts annually, and applications are considered on a rolling basis.

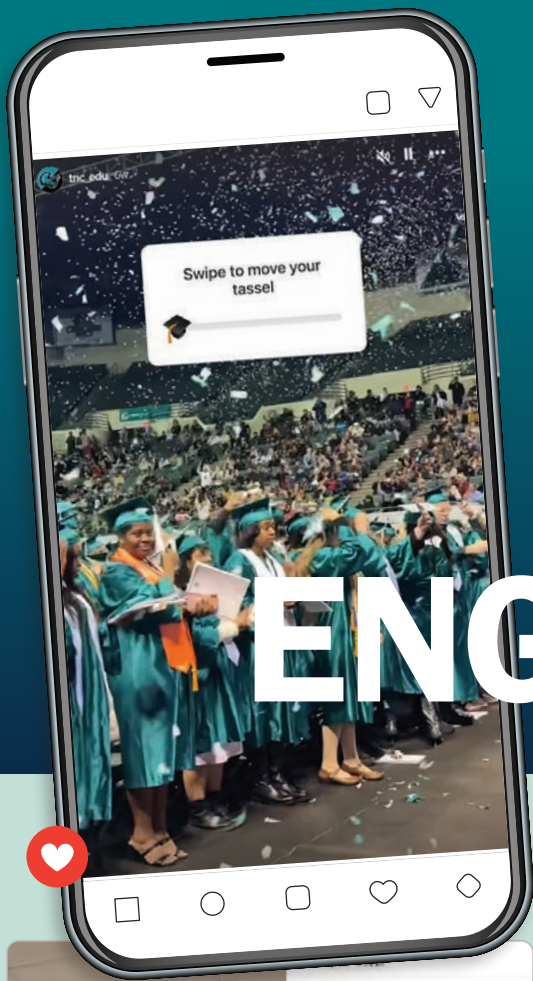
“The 10KSB program is for those business owners who want to get out of the weeds of running their business and turn their sights and effort toward growing their business,” Hill said.

Learn more about Goldman Sachs 10KSB at [tri-c.edu/10KSB](https://tri-c.edu/10KSB).

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# A NEW LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

## LIKE TRI-C TIMES? CHECK OUT THE COLLEGE'S SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES!

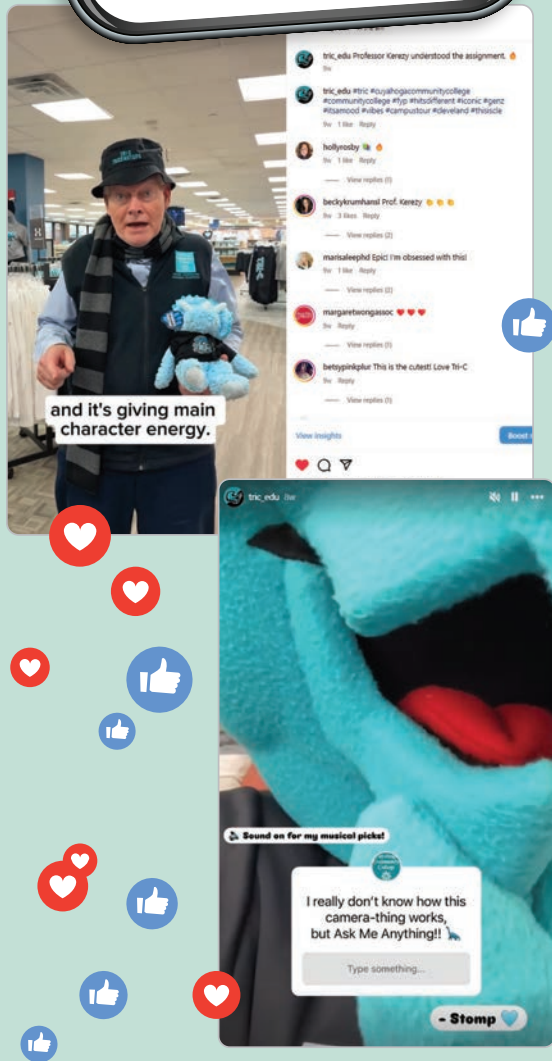
Love *Tri-C Times*? You'll find even more of it on the social media pages of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) in the coming months.

Look for supplemental photos to further enhance the stories you read on these pages. Occasionally, we'll post bonus videos of interview subjects. Summaries of stories you read here will be offered online. Peeks behind the scenes will shed light on our editorial process, including interviews, photo shoots and more. You might even meet some of the magazine's writers.

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*Tri-C Times* and the College's social media pages are working together to keep you up to date with all things Tri-C. Make sure you're getting the whole experience, and let us know what you think.





## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION



BY **Angela Johnson**

The partnership between Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) that was announced in December represents a transformative commitment by both institutions to students' future success.

Tri-C and CMSD have created a seamless high school-to-college transition that guarantees every student has equal access to higher education. With the backing of robust support systems, we aim to keep students on track and help them complete their educational goals.

By automatically admitting all CMSD seniors to Tri-C through the Direct Admission Partnership, we've removed traditional barriers and provided every student with a guaranteed pathway to higher education. This pathway ensures that as CMSD students enter their final year of high school, they know college is a path for their postsecondary success.

The Direct Admission Partnership focuses on equity, simplicity and inclusivity to deliver clear communication and streamlined processes, breaking down barriers to applying to college.

The partnership helps graduating CMSD students stay on track to achieve their educational goals by:

- Removing traditional barriers to higher education, such as application fees and complex applications
- Simplifying the admissions process through the efficient use of shared data to eliminate unnecessary steps
- Providing personalized resources, such as advising, wraparound services and financial aid workshops
- Empowering students and families by providing information about financial aid, enrollment steps and affordability

It also emphasizes the importance of retaining and supporting students through completion. Direct admission provides tailored resources, proactive advising and wraparound services to ensure students stay on track to achieve their academic and career goals.

This recent collaboration strengthens the ongoing relationship between CMSD and Tri-C and promotes postsecondary enrollment and success for CMSD graduates. Together, we're opening more doors for students and reinforcing our shared vision of building a stronger, more educated community.

Learn more at [tri-c.edu/cmsd](https://tri-c.edu/cmsd).





**NOW OPEN ONLINE**

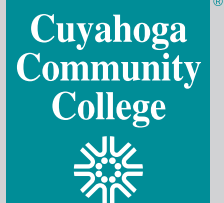
# Tri-C Spirit Shop

Show your Tri-C spirit in style with the all-new Tri-C Spirit Shop, the College's official online apparel and accessories store.

**Now open for shopping!**

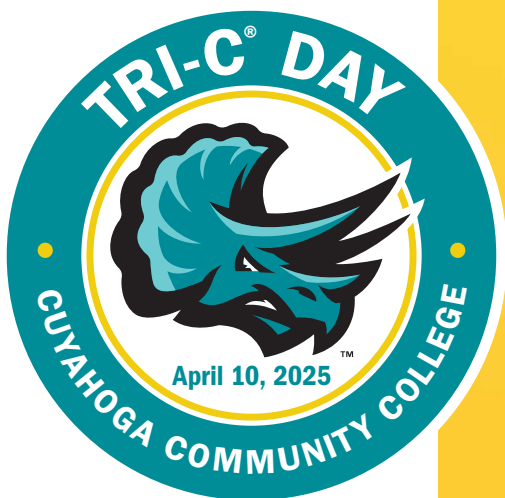
Whether you're looking for trendy apparel, accessories or gear, our shop has something for everyone. Browse by category to easily find what you need, or shop by your favorite national brands for high-quality, recognizable products.

From hoodies and hats to mugs and more, you'll find the perfect swag to represent Tri-C with pride!





TM



## Tri-C Day

Join us in making a Tri-C education accessible for everyone. This day of giving provides opportunities for student success through scholarships and programs.

**Thursday, April 10**

*Building Bright Futures*

Visit [tri-c.edu/tricday](https://tri-c.edu/tricday) to learn how you can help support student success.