



# Maine Community College System

## The MCCS 2015 All-Maine Academic Team

### Celebrating the Accomplishments of Maine's Community College Students

On Tuesday, March 24, the Maine Community College System will recognize 13 outstanding students who have been named to this year's All-Maine Academic Team. The students have been selected for their academic achievement, leadership, and service and are preparing for careers in education, law enforcement, health care, business, human services, and automotive and information technologies. They represent more than 18,000 students who are enrolled this year at Maine's seven community colleges. Like so many other community college students, they are working hard to achieve their educational and career goals while contributing in important ways to their communities.



**Chyanna Millett-Cordwell**, Central Maine Community College, Auburn  
**Residence:** Waterford  
**GPA:** 3.9  
**Major:** Criminal Justice – Forensic Investigation  
**Career goal:** State Police investigator

Motivation has never been a problem for Chyanna. A gifted student, she graduated third in her high school class and earned an associate degree in criminal justice from CMCC in May 2014 with a near perfect GPA. She continued at CMCC and will earn a certificate in forensic investigation this spring. Her next steps include studying social and behavioral sciences at the baccalaureate level. After she gains more experience and education, she plans to study to become a Maine State Trooper.

*CMCC provided an environment that fit my personality and needs as a student. It provided excellent transfer and career options that could help me work towards my bachelor's degree once I received my associate degree. It was exactly what I needed to start out.*



**Janelle Thornley**, Central Maine Community College, Auburn  
**Residence:** Liberty  
**GPA:** 3.8  
**Major:** Human Services  
**Career goal:** Work with families and children

Because of her experiences in and out of the classroom at CMCC, Janelle says she has gone from a shy student, who stayed in her room, to a self-described social butterfly. Her CMCC experiences include working as a residential assistant, being a member of the women's championship basketball team, and working as an intern with children with disabilities. After graduating from CMCC, she plans to attend the University of Maine at Augusta to major in mental health and human services with a concentration in child and family.

*I could tell CMCC was the place for me the moment I stepped foot outside my car door. I instantly got the feeling it was a close-knit community. I liked how much it felt like a family here.*



**Phillipa Gilmore,**  
 Eastern Maine Community  
 College, Bangor  
**Residence:** Hampden  
**GPA:** 3.9  
**Major:** Medical Office  
 Technology  
**Career goal:** Certified  
 medical coder

After losing her job nearly two years ago, Phillipa knew as a single mother she needed a new career to provide a secure future for herself and her daughter. She has let nothing stand in her way (not even a house fire last year where she lost everything including her books) and has maintained a high GPA. Through the Veterans Retraining Assistance program she got her start and is on her way to earning her degree and finding employment in her chosen field when she graduates.

*Being out of school for 28 years, it was scary to come back. I was nervous the first week of school but now I am enjoying myself! I am excelling in classes. I was very impressed with the college's professionalism, willingness to help, and overall friendliness.*



**Melissa Mitchell,**  
 Kennebec Valley Community  
 College, Fairfield/Hinckley  
**Residence:** Canaan  
**GPA:** 3.7  
**Major:** Liberal Studies  
**Career goal:**  
 Psychologist

It didn't take Melissa long to discover that attending a community college was the right fit for her. She preferred to be closer to home, in a small, supportive environment that offered an affordable education. Described by her instructor as an excellent writer and thinker, she plans to continue her education and become a psychologist.

*I hope to better help those with mental disorders and help erase the stigma around the disorders.*



**Jennifer Salls,**  
 Eastern Maine Community  
 College, Bangor  
**Residence:** Greenfield  
 Township **GPA:** 3.8  
**Major:** Business  
 Management  
**Career goal:** Accountant

There is a good reason Jennifer won the EMCC business management Outstanding Student Award. She works 30 hours a week while attending college full time. She also cares for her young son and husband, who is a disabled veteran, all while maintaining a high GPA. Her professor says she never hesitates to assist others and is well respected by other students. She says attending EMCC has helped her save money and earn credits that she can transfer to a four-year college or university, where she plans to continue her studies in accounting.

*After graduating from EMCC I feel confident I can handle anything that comes my way and in my abilities to transition to a four-year college.*



**Elizabeth Roy,**  
 Kennebec Valley Community  
 College, Fairfield/Hinckley  
**Residence:** Waterville  
**GPA:** 3.9  
**Major:** Liberal Studies  
**Career goal:** Teacher

Starting college at 48 was very intimidating, says Elizabeth, who is a mother of two. She found the support she needed at KVCC. A fiber artist and 4H leader for many years she wants to find work as a teacher and incorporate natural elements into teaching children art.

*I am very excited to graduate from KVCC in the spring and start at a university in the fall. PTK has encouraged me to always excel. I didn't believe I was smart enough to attend college, and I am so proud of my GPA and PTK membership.*



**Samantha Buck,**  
Northern Maine Community  
College, Presque Isle  
**Residence:** Easton  
**GPA:** 3.6  
**Major:** Early Childhood  
Education  
**Career goal:** Teacher

Samantha previously  
earned her degree in

liberal studies and will graduate in May with a degree in early childhood education, all while balancing two jobs. She is well on her way to reaching her childhood goal of becoming a teacher. She plans to continue her studies in elementary education at a Maine university in the fall and eventually find employment in her field close to home.

*I have established relationships with people I never would have had the chance to meet, and have become a mentor for others.*



**Joshua Pike,**  
Northern Maine Community  
College, Presque Isle  
**Residence:** Caribou  
**GPA:** 3.7  
**Major:** Diesel Hydraulics  
and Automotive  
Technology  
**Career goal:** Technician,  
shop owner

It's safe to say Joshua knows his stuff. He's completing a dual major in automotive and diesel hydraulics technology and previously earned a certificate in welding and metal fabrication. As a tutor and lab assistant he assists other students in both fields.

*I chose to go back to school at age 28 to provide a legacy for my kids. I realized I needed to go back to school and get my degree so I could get a good job. I eventually want to open my own shop, building, customizing, and modifying vehicles.*



**Saman Baghestani,**  
Southern Maine Community  
College,  
South Portland/Brunswick  
**Residence:** South  
Portland **GPA:** 4.0  
**Major:** Business  
Management  
**Career goal:** Chief  
sustainability officer of a  
multinational firm

Saman is a non-traditional student and an entrepreneur. He started his first business when he was 23 and recently established SoPoBooks.com, a company aimed at saving students money on textbooks. Now nearing graduation with a 4.0 GPA, he has been named the Maine New Century Scholar and has his choice of 4-year colleges to attend this coming fall.

*Choosing to attend a community college was the right decision and I couldn't have gone about my reintroduction to academia in a better way.*



**Benjamin Bussiere,**  
Southern Maine Community  
College,  
South Portland/Brunswick  
**Residence:** Hollis  
**GPA:** 3.9  
**Major:** Business  
Management  
**Career goal:** Financial  
advisor

Benjamin has overcome a number of financial and personal obstacles in his quest to obtain a degree. Knowing that education and knowledge are two powerful resources, he is determined to finish his degree and continue his studies in finance at a university, and make a difference in the world through responsible investing. He credits SMCC for helping him achieve his goals.

*Going to a community college was the best decision I have made. I have been very successful in this environment. It has allowed for financial stability, a personalized learning environment, and convenience.*



**Charlotte Southard,**  
Washington County  
Community College, Calais  
**Residence:** Baileyville  
**GPA:** 3.7  
**Major:** Business  
Management  
**Career goal:** Financial  
Counselor

Charlotte has juggled working full time at a local motel and being a full-time student while maintaining a consistently high GPA. Described by her instructor as a leader and a giver, Charlotte hopes to take what she has learned in the classroom to help others become financially independent. Her next step is to transfer in the fall and continue her education.

*Through my classes I have learned many life skills that will help me not only complete my degree, but skills I will use for the rest of my life.*



**Victoria Webber,**  
Washington County  
Community College, Calais  
**Residence:** Brooks  
**GPA:** 3.5  
**Major:** Business  
Management  
**Career goal:** Maine  
Guide/Outfitter/  
Entrepreneur

Coming from a large family, Victoria was looking for something she loved to do that was affordable. She was homeschooled until her junior year when she started taking college courses. With the help of scholarships, she graduated from WCCC's adventure recreation and tourism program in May 2014 having double majored in business management. She plans to attend the University of Maine at Machias in the fall and earn her degree in adventure tourism, with a minor in business.

*Attending a community college has done wonders for me. I have become a very confident and strong person thanks to my college experiences.*



**Rosaleen Moore,** York County Community College, Wells  
**Residence:** York **GPA:** 3.9  
**Major:** Computer Technology  
**Career goal:** Computer technician

After being laid off in 2012, Rosaleen, who already holds a degree in theater arts, decided she needed a new career that would offer more opportunities. A single mother of three, two of whom are also in college, she enrolled at YCCC to train for a career in information technology. She works full time on weekends so she can attend classes during the week. Her hard work has paid off. Not only has she maintained her grades, she has a work/study job in the IT department at YCCC and is optimistic about her future job prospects. While her immediate plans are to find employment in her field after graduation she isn't ruling out a bachelor's degree in IT.

*I know that in the field of computers I will be taking classes and workshops to stay current. I think it will be valuable to be back in the workforce and see what opportunities are available to me.*