



47th Annual Commencement Ceremony – More than 2,300 Graduates Honored

Tri-C held its 47th annual spring Commencement Ceremony May 16; honoring 2,354 graduates.

Honor student Rick Westfall of Fairview Park delivered the student address. When Westfall moved to Greater Cleveland in 2004, he promised himself he would go back to school, “when the time was right.” Three years ago, he chose Tri-C because “it was very visible in the community.”

A fine-dining waiter for years, Westfall decided to switch career gears and enter the healthcare field so he could help people. He was originally studying to become an X-ray technician, but as he progressed in his studies, he discovered an aptitude for science. He decided that a career as a physician assistant would help him achieve his goal of helping people.



He’s glad he chose to come to Tri-C. “I loved my experience,” Westfall said. “I’ve been to every campus taking classes and found all the faculty to be top notch. The College does some remarkable things for the community and I’m glad to be a part of it.”

Westfall graduated with honors with an Associate of Arts degree and plans to transfer to Cleveland State University (CSU) in the fall. He has been accepted into the CSU honors program, and plans to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in biology in 2015. He will then transition into CSU’s Master of Science in Health Sciences program with a track in physician assistant science.

Rod A. Risley, Ph.D., executive director of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society, also spoke – delivering the commencement address. Founded in 1918, PTK is the oldest, largest, and most prestigious honor society serving two-year and community colleges in the United States and nine nations. More than 100,000 students are inducted annually into the society’s nearly 1,300 chapters.

Read profiles of some of the May 2013 Tri-C graduates below:

Miguel Sanchez



Miguel Sanchez never imagined he would receive a scholarship to continue his education at John Carroll University, where he will pursue a bachelor’s degree in sociology. A dropout from Cleveland’s West Tech High School, the 35-year-old believes he is getting a second change in life.

“After having dropped out my freshman year of high school and obtaining a GED, I have managed to graduate from Tri-C with summa cum laude honors and a cumulative GPA of 4.0,” he proudly stated. “Tri-C has equipped me with the foundation and courage needed to succeed at the

next level. [Read more...](#)

Kelley Reeves



Kelley Reeves is an ambitious and accomplished high school senior who, as a participant in the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options Program, finds herself in the enviable position of graduating from college one month before she graduates high school. Reeves has been attending Tri-C full time for the past two years earning her associate of arts and associate of science degrees and her high school diploma.

Reeves wants to become a pediatrician so she can “give back to the community.” To that end, she will study pre-med and international business when she arrives at a four-year college this fall. [Read more...](#)

Philip Wetzel



Far-reaching changes in the economy and technology have forced many people to reinvent themselves to stay employed. Luckily for Philip Wetzel, he had a clear picture of the skills he wanted to develop and knew exactly where to go to create his new career.

“I spent 34 years in the printing industry and realized (that) jobs operating printing presses and developing film, such as I did, were quickly drying up,” said Wetzel. “I decided to use my passion for cooking to catapult me into a new career. Tri-C’s culinary arts program is well advertised and has an excellent reputation, so I didn’t have to think twice about where to get professional culinary training here in Cleveland.” [Read more...](#)

Kara Ciresi



Kara Ciresi secured a job in her chosen field as a human resources generalist prior to completing her associate degree this May. Although she now knows what she wants to do for a living, she was unsure when she attended her first class at Tri-C. “When I started college, I was undecided about my major. Tri-C offers a variety of classes and majors,” she said, noting that learning from professors who have real-world experience was also beneficial. [Read more...](#)

Terence Elam



Recording Arts Technology major Terence Elam plans to complete an internship at an Atlanta recording studio this summer and take a few additional classes at Tri-C that support his major before transferring to Berklee College of Music in Boston to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in contemporary composing/production sound engineering.

“I was already into small hip-hop production and thought about attending Full Sail University to support my efforts, but I changed my mind when I learned Tri-C had a Recording Arts/Technology (RAT) program,” Elam said. “It was extremely affordable, close to home, and utilized state-of-the-art technology. I have been quite impressed with the RAT program at Tri-C.” [Read more...](#)