



THE Lumberjack

A Publication for Alumni and Friends
of Alpena Community College

LINK

SUMMER 2023

Nothing Runs Like a Deere – or Welds Like a Lumberjack!

How does a young man from Atlanta end up working at one of the nation's top 100 largest corporations?

His first step was enrolling at Alpena Community College. ACC alumnus Jay Webster ('16, '18), who is a welding engineer for John Deere at its Harvester Works plant in East Moline, Illinois, says ACC helped get him ready for his future.

"My experience at ACC was a great one," Jay said. "I acquired multiple American Welding Society certifications and an associate degree in welding technology...ACC gave me all the tools I needed to be successful upon graduation."

Jay went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Welding Engineering Technology from Ferris State University and secured a job as a welding engineer with John Deere even before he graduated.

"I support the production of the body for the S Series combines," Jay explained. "My job is to define and control manufacturing processes on the factory floor. I support five welding/assembly departments and roughly 15 robotic welding arms."



John Deere Welding Engineer
Jay Webster ('16, '18) & Family

Jay was recently able to reunite with his former welding instructor Tim Ratz and meet a group of ACC welding students who are where Jay was in his educational journey less than a decade ago. Thanks to funding from an Alpena Community College Foundation Emphasis on Learning Grant, students were able to go on an exciting field trip in early May to discover some of the options earning an ACC welding degree offers.

The group traveled to meet with Jay and get a look around his workplace at the John Deere Harvester Works in East Moline, Illinois before crossing the Mississippi River to tour the John Deere Davenport Works in Davenport, Iowa. The group got to see farm, construction, and forestry equipment being made and had an insider's look into where their welding education at ACC could take them.

On the way back north, the students stopped at Ferris State University to tour the welding and manufacturing engineering programs. ACC graduates with an Associate in Applied Science in Welding Technology degree are able to transfer to Ferris to



FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

complete a bachelor's degree in welding engineering technology, just like Jay and ACC welding instructor Tim Ratz both did.

When asked what advice he'd give ACC welding students, Jay urged them to think big.

"The opportunities are endless. Get out of your comfort zone and explore them! You've already taken the first step."

ACC Welding Students Visit
Alum Jay Webster (center) at
John Deere Harvester Works
in East Moline, Illinois



Lumberjack Wins U.S. Forest Service Award

The land along the Middle River in southern Missouri looked different back in 1885, when on a hot summer night, a 19-year-old slave named Celia put a stop to years of abuse by killing her enslaver. The resulting trial became a famous piece of Missouri's history after the court decided that property, which is what Celia was in the eyes of the law, had no right to self-defense. She was found guilty of murder and hanged.

The farm where Celia suffered was swallowed by what is now the Mark Twain National Forest and is virtually indistinguishable from other parts of the 1.5 million-acre woods. Celia's story, however, remained and now, because of the work of Amanda Campbell, Alpena Community College's new anthropology, history, and geography instructor, visitors to the national forest can see where Celia lived, worked, and broke free of the bondage and abuse that had plagued her life.

A historical archaeologist for the United States Forest Service, Campbell has dedicated her life to uncovering the buried sites of Americans' struggles for human rights. Her 2022 Western Michigan University graduate thesis became the basis for the United States Forest Service Enterprise Sites of Civil Rights and Resistance Program, which highlights the interplay of history, equity, and outdoor recreation at significant places in America's forests. Her work, along with that of her teammates, won a 2022 USDA Forest Service Chief Award, which recognizes forest service employees for outstanding contributions to the agency's mission.

Campbell's thesis argued for the benefits of researching historic settlements within the U.S. National Forest Service



ACC Instructor
Amanda Campbell

system where settlers pursued civil rights and resisted racism.

"Essentially, public lands are more than woods and rivers," Campbell explained. "They were home to countless people for countless years that worked, played, prayed, fought, and lived long before us."

She chose three 19th century archeological sites on federal lands in Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana to focus on in her thesis and serve as pilot sites for what is now the nationwide Enterprise Sites of Civil Rights and Resistance Program. Six permanent employees, including historians, anthropologists, and social justice

workers, will be hired by the forest department to staff and implement the program.

An Alcona High School graduate, Campbell grew up on a dairy farm and earned a bachelor's degree in history from Albion College before graduating from Western with a Masters of Arts in Anthropology and a certificate in ethnohistory. A twenty-year employee of the U. S. Forest Service, she was a project manager for Michigan's first archeological exploration of the Underground Railroad and has served on the state's Freedom Trail Commission since 2017. Prior to being hired at ACC, Campbell worked at Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home, and helped identify the burial grounds of several people enslaved by the former president. In addition to being a full-time faculty member at ACC, Campbell is a project manager for the U.S. Forest Service's Sites of Civil Rights and Resistance program, identifying sites and working with descendants, partners, and stakeholders to preserve history and make it accessible to everyone.



Nursing Support Fund Helps New Graduates Afford Licensure Test

At the recent ACC nursing pinning ceremony, after the graduating nurses had each been pinned and recited the

Florence Nightingale Pledge, ACC Director of Nursing Kelli Leask announced a surprise addition to the program and invited ACC Foundation Executive Director Brenda Herman to the podium.

Each semester, ACC nursing graduates have the knowledge, hands-on experience, and passion for their profession needed to become good nurses. But before they can begin to put all that knowledge into practice, they must pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Unfortunately, the exam isn't available locally. Students from Northeast Michigan are forced to travel hundreds of miles away to take the NCLEX, having to book a hotel to be ready for early-morning examinations. The testing fee, combined with the cost of food, lodging, and fuel, could range between \$400 and \$600.



ACC nursing students traditionally conduct multiple fundraisers each semester to help offset these costs.

At the 2023 ACC nursing pinning ceremony, Herman addressed the graduates and recognized the hardship they faced in affording the cost of testing. She announced the creation of the Nursing Student Certification Support Fund in Memory of Maxine Moran, R.N., a beloved Alpena nurse who passed away in 2022. Created from generous gifts from two unrelated donors, the fund reimburses recent ACC nursing graduates with the costs associated with taking the NCLEX when they successfully pass the exam.

The Alpena Community College Foundation is seeking donations to ensure the fund's longevity. Because each semester more than 35 nurses graduate from ACC, there will be a near-constant need to replenish funds.

Those interested in contributing to the Nursing Student Certification Support Fund in Memory of Maxine Moran, R.N., may do so with the donation slip enclosed with this newsletter or by giving online at: <https://discover.alpenacc.edu/donate.php>



2023 ACC Distinguished Graduate Laura Hickman



**Distinguished Grad
Laura Hickman ('00)**

Alpena Community College has chosen marketing and advancement executive Laura Sutton Hickman ('00) as its 2023 Distinguished Graduate, an honor awarded annually to an ACC graduate who has demonstrated extraordinary professional achievement and has made a remarkable positive impact on others through philanthropy or service.

Back in 1998 when Hickman graduated from Oscoda High School, she had two immediate objectives: to

be a full-time student at ACC and to get a full-time job to help pay for school. Hickman weighed her employment options and ultimately decided to take an offer from Au Sable Valley Community Mental Health to be a community support worker for developmentally disabled adults because they paid ten cents more per hour than fast food restaurants in town.

The job changed her life. Hickman fell in love with the work and the community of people living with developmental disabilities. She went from wanting to become a web designer who made a million dollars a year to wanting to run her own nonprofit helping people with developmental disabilities.

Hickman shifted the focus of her plan of study at ACC to better align with her passion. She graduated with a liberal arts degree in 2000 and moved to Georgia to pursue a bachelor's degree in human services from Kennesaw State University. A few years later, after moving to the Big Apple, Hickman continued her education at the Metropolitan College of New York and earned a Master of Public Administration degree.

She worked throughout college and, in between degrees, went from being a direct support worker to coordinating services at the administrative level for people with developmental disabilities. After earning her master's degree, Hickman graduated to marketing and then fundraising, working in the Cleveland Clinic's development department for a few years before returning to New York.

Hickman's job with ADAPT Community Network, which was formerly known as United Cerebral Palsy of New York City, is expansive. Each year, ADAPT leverages its \$200 million budget to provide cutting-edge programs and services for over 20,000 people and families living with developmental disabilities. As Senior Vice President of Marketing and Fund Development, Hickman champions the work ADAPT does to positively impact the community, one person at a time.

"I feel lucky that they allow me to be on the peripheral (of the community). There's just something about being brave enough to be your authentic self. When you remove so many layers of judgment and concern, you can just be the person that is in your core—and that's what I find so joyful and so amazing. There's so much that you can learn from people who are different from you in every way and learn differently and see the world differently and activate in the world differently. It's a privilege to me to get to be a champion to articulate that to other people in any way possible," Hickman said.

Hickman and her husband, Kevin, traveled to Alpena for the college's 2022/2023 commencement ceremony at ACC's Park Arena on May 11 to accept her award. Her name will be added to the plaque commemorating ACC's Distinguished Graduates, which is hung outside Crittenden Commons in the Donald L. Newport Center.

ACC Nursing Celebrates 50 Years

While 20 new licensed practical nurses and 16 new registered nurses prepared to enter Park Arena on the evening of May 10 to mark their accomplishments and be welcomed into the professional world, ACC President Dr. Donald MacMaster approached the podium to address the large crowd that had gathered in the bleachers to watch their loved ones enter a new phase in their lives.

"We have a bit of a special event tonight. The ACC nursing program is in its fiftieth year and we have reached out to our nursing graduates all the way back to the beginning and invited them here tonight," Doctor MacMaster explained. "Many have come, so this is a doubly delightful night for ACC."

Nursing alumni from the class of 1973 all the way to 2022 were led into Park Arena by ACC Director of Alumni Relations Mary Eagan and ACC Foundation Executive Director Brenda Herman. The crowd enthusiastically clapped as about 50 ACC nursing alumni, some wearing their nursing caps and lab coats, filed in and were seated behind the graduating nurses.

As the new graduates prepared to recite the Florence Nightingale Pledge, a mainstay of pinning ceremonies all over



ACC Nursing Alumni Gather for 50th Anniversary

the country, ACC Director of Nursing Kelli Leask invited alumni to stand and recite the pledge along with them. The chorus of voices, young and not-so-young, earnestly pledging themselves to faithfully carry out the mission of nursing made for a poignant moment.

A tradition to signify the completion of a level of nursing education and official initiation into the nursing profession, pinning ceremonies are highly meaningful events for nursing graduates. The addition of nursing program alumni to ACC's pinning ceremony is a new tradition that the ACC Office of Alumni Relations intends to continue.

"Our nurses graduate in tight cohorts that become like a second family," Eagan said. "But I want them to understand that the larger alumni nursing family is one to which they belong, too, and it's a family that will support them as they progress through their careers. ACC nursing graduates are represented at the highest levels of the profession. I want tonight's graduates to know that what our alumni have done, they can do, too. And I want to see them return next year—and for years to come—to support future graduating nurses."



2023 Fellows of the College Timothy and Susan Fitzpatrick

Two Alpena Community College alumni who began their life together modestly, worked diligently, and built a business empire, alongside a loving family, were recently honored as the 2023 Fellows of the College.

Lifelong residents of Alpena, Tim and Sue ('92) Fitzpatrick have forged a lasting legacy by investing in the health and education of Northeast Michigan. Tim is the founder and President of WMCR Corporation, a subsidiary of the KFC Corporation. He started out in the restaurant industry at the age of 13, working after school at KFC for his stepfather, Ray Jakubiak. When Sue came into the picture, she shared Tim's dedication and joined him in working for her future father-in-law. Tim had an aggressive goal to acquire and operate 50 KFC restaurants. After several tough starts, his business finally took off. Over the years, the business grew steadily and the Fitzpatricks eventually surpassed Tim's goal of owning 50 restaurants through a merger with a larger operation. The result was WMCR Corporation, which continued to grow through markets in Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

In more recent years, Tim has explored additional entrepreneurial ventures as a director and executive officer of Bank of Alpena and owner and operator of River's Edge Golf Club. Tim and Sue have achieved remarkable success in the business world and have leveraged that success to benefit the community in numerous philanthropic endeavors.

The Fitzpatricks have been ardent supporters of ACC and the students it serves. Sue has been a longtime member of the Alpena Community College Foundation Board of Trustees, serving as its president for the past 10 years. Since she became involved in 2002, the ACC Foundation has raised more than 14 million dollars to support the college and provide scholarships for thousands of students.

The Fitzpatrick name can be easily spotted throughout campus, as they have been enthusiastic supporters of every college capital campaign for the past 30 years. Most recently, the Fitzpatricks were the guests of honor at the ribbon-cutting



2023 Fellows of the College Tim and Sue Fitzpatrick (center)

of the Ruth C. Julian Hall of Health Sciences, a state-of-the-art healthcare education wing of ACC's Van Lare Hall. The renovated wing was named for Sue's mother, a longtime nurse in Alpena, and stands as a testament to the couple's commitment to ensuring Northeast Michigan has high-quality healthcare providers for generations to come. That project was followed by the construction of the Fitzpatrick Lecture Hall, a 50-seat multimedia theater-style classroom that was integral in enabling the partnership between ACC and Saginaw Valley State University to offer Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees on ACC's campus.

Tim and Sue have been described as true philanthropists who use their time, talent, and resources to create a better world for their family, friends, and community. They have a deep sense of integrity, community, and an appreciation for hard work that shines through in everything they do. Those that are close to them would agree that their humbleness masks a lifetime of servant leadership.

Alpena Community College created the Fellow of the College award in 1972 to honor those who make outstanding educational, cultural, or economic contributions to Northeast Michigan.

Will you please help support ACC students by making a gift today?

Mail to:

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665 Johnson Street
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**For more information,
contact:**

Brenda Herman
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ALPENA
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From The Desk of the President



**ACC President
Dr. Don MacMaster**

Commencement this year at Alpena Community College was a festive affair. Toward the end of the ceremony, after the speeches and handshakes and passing out diplomas, standing at the podium I asked the graduates to stand and face the crowd of family, friends and loved ones who helped them complete this stage of their higher educational journey. The noise rose in a wave you could feel in your chest.

“Ladies and gentlemen,
I present to you the graduates
of the Class of 2023!”

After about 15 seconds of clamor and excitement, a throaty triumphant chant germinated within the student body that spread quickly through Park Arena: “ACC! ACC! ACC!”

Gazing out on the throng of cheering parents, loved ones, faculty, staff, graduates, and friends—700 seated in chairs on the gym floor, another 800

in the bleachers, all smiling and making joyful noise—it occurred to me how blessed we are to be in this business. And after 70 years, how relevant Alpena Community College continues to be to the people of Northeast Lower Michigan.



2022-2023: #1 in Graduation Rate, #1 in Enrollment

Higher education in Northeast Lower Michigan is characterized by two challenging demographics: a declining number of high school graduates and an aging population. Over the past 45 years, the number of high school graduates in the region has declined more than 60%. Despite the demographic challenges, ACC’s financial position is strong and its enrollment remains stable. In a declining enrollment environment statewide, ACC was #1 in enrollment growth among Michigan’s 28 community colleges this past semester, up more than 11% compared to Spring semester 2022. Based on the most recent IPEDS (Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System) report, a national clearinghouse of comparable data sets applied across all community colleges and public universities nationally, ACC was #1 among Michigan community colleges with 42 percent of first-time, fulltime students completing in 150% of time from their first enrollment. Forty-two percent is an ACC record.

How does a small rural remote community college remain relevant? We work together, seek opportunity, innovate, and focus on student success. Using Webex technology, we deliver dual enrollment and Early College coursework to 25 K-12s from the Upper Peninsula to Au Gres—a 230-mile footprint north to south. Through the Michigan Transfer Agreement, we partner with four-year universities across the state, often seeing data documenting that ACC transfer students achieve higher GPAs than students who began at the transfer institution. ACC offers unique occupational programs leading directly to employment that draw students from across Michigan, most notably for the Utility Technology, Concrete Technology, and Nursing programs. ACC also provided leadership statewide in partnering with Saginaw Valley State University to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing beginning in Fall semester 2023.

Looking Ahead...

In terms of infrastructure and capital improvements, ACC intends to add more on-campus student housing. We are working to raise \$4 million to add another 48 beds to our existing 64 at College Park Apartments. We will seek funding from the State to upgrade the Natural Resources Center, projected to cost \$8.5 million. We want to upgrade Oscoda campus and find resources to add housing there.

We plan to complete \$3.5 million in upgrades to the welding and manufacturing labs. We continue to focus on improving the appeal of campus through our college-wide ambient-learning initiative.

Bottom line, on behalf of the faculty, staff, administrators, Foundation and Trustees, I resolve to continue working together so that next year and the years thereafter ACC students at Commencement will be moved to chant: “ACC! ACC! ACC!”

Sign up to receive the
ACC newsletter
electronically at
discover.alpenacc.edu!



2022-2023 ACC Highlights

- Opened \$1.6 million Fitzpatrick Hall, completing the \$8.7 million upgrade of Van Lare Hall.
- Began \$3.5 million in upgrades to the welding and manufacturing labs.
- Fielded first ACC baseball team in 50 years, reviving Veteran's Field in Ossineke.
- Received a shout-out by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer during her state of the state address.
- Enjoyed the 70th anniversary open house in September.
- Led a national and statewide effort to gain athletic eligibility for Early College 13th year students.
- Felt pride at the success of Utility Tech and manufacturing students in state and national competitions.
- Continued productive partnerships with Alpena Public Schools, AMA school districts, employers, and local, state, and federal leadership, while serving as a trusted resource for dozens of groups and organizations requesting meeting space to conduct important community business.

Open and read more from
Dr. Don MacMaster about the
good things happening
at ACC in his column,
From the Desk of the President.

