

RCC GAZETTE

THE MAGAZINE OF ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SUMMER 2021

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
» MEET
COREY JONES &
AYO OYADIJI
PG 7



ROXBURY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ASSOCIATE
OF
ARTS

Unparalleled Success During Uncertain Times

STAYING GREEN
AT RCC PG 2

COMBATING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC PG 4

COMMENCEMENT
2021 PG 8

Welcome

»The end of the academic year is always a time of excitement and joy, and the end of the 2020-2021 academic year was an especially jubilant time. I was thrilled to join the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021 at RCC's in-person 45th Commencement Ceremony. The success and pride on display by our graduates, and their friends and families, was palpable. The event truly served as a gateway to a warmer and brighter future.

For the first time in over a year we can focus our time and efforts on the promise the future holds. However, it's important to take one final look at all we've accomplished during the past year.

I am still inspired by everything RCC students, faculty, and staff accomplished during the COVID-19 pandemic. The college community came together to support each other through peer mentoring programs, a successful food drive, and more. You'll learn more about our amazing community of support in this edition of the *Gazette*.

You will also learn more about the

College's firm commitment to combating the pandemic. In a matter of weeks, we helped to transform the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center into a COVID-19 vaccination site that became a nationwide model for vaccine equity. I am proud of the partnerships we established during this transformation, which will last long into the future.

RCC has remained a beacon of academic excellence throughout the COVID-19 pandemic because of the united efforts of our dedicated faculty and staff. It is because of our exceptional team efforts that AcademicInfluence.com named RCC the second most influential community college in its ranking of the 50 Best Community Colleges in the nation earlier this year.

I hope you enjoy learning more about the College's accomplishments throughout this edition of the *RCC Gazette*. And I know you share my excitement as I look toward a better and brighter future.

I look forward to seeing you back on campus over the coming year.



DR. VALERIE ROBERSON

PRESIDENT,
ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Visit us online at rcc.mass.edu.

- Publisher** Dr. Valerie R. Roberson, President of Roxbury Community College
- Managing Editor** Jordan Emily Smock
- Senior Writer** Vanessa Lewis
- Contributor** Nancy Santos
- Photography** Phuong Tang, BTS Design Studios
- Designer** Joanne Storin/BSB Design
- Copy Editor** Dorothy Clark

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Mission Statement

Roxbury Community College (RCC) provides a nurturing environment where all community members are welcome, regardless of past education. We transform lives through excellence and innovation, preparing our learners for active citizenry and success in a changing world.

Statement of Publication

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Chief Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer & Title IX Coordinator, 857-701-1294, Administration Building Room 313

Dean of Student Life and 504 Coordinator, 857-701-1494

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Staying Green at RCC

OUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO GREEN ENERGY

» Since the start of RCC's energy improvement project in the spring of 2016, the College has continued to grow and expand our green energy initiatives. From our recent partnership with Good2Go, to U.S. Sen. Ed Markey's May 2021 visit to announce the Civilian Climate Corps for Jobs and Justice Act, RCC is an educational leader in green energy support.



GOOD2GO PARTNERSHIP

In spring 2021, RCC partnered with Good2Go, an electric car share pilot with a focus on equity. Through the partnership, four Good2Go electric vehicles are parked and charged at RCC's electric charging stations, and available for community use. Discount rates are offered to RCC staff, faculty, and students, with community rental rates based on income. National research shows that sharing a car with your neighbors takes 9-13 privately owned cars off the road.



SEN. ED MARKEY VISIT

On Monday, May 3, 2021, U.S. Senator Ed Markey visited RCC to announce the introduction of the Civilian Climate Corps for Jobs and Justice Act. Sen. Markey discussed how his proposed legislation compliments the work that RCC is doing to provide outstanding training that closes the skills gap and increases diversity in climate-focused jobs through the Center for Smart Building Technology (C4SBT). RCC Board Chair and Sheriff of Suffolk County Steve Tompkins welcomed Sen. Markey to campus; and State Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz and C4SBT Executive Director Frank Mruk also discussed the ways RCC supports green energy initiatives.

CENTER FOR SMART BUILDING TECHNOLOGY (C4SBT)

RCC's C4SBT continues to grow and expand training opportunities for learners who need credentials in smart building maintenance. The Center offers certificate programs in Building Operator Training, Building Science Principles, Building Automation Systems Fundamentals, Intro to Building Automation Controllers, and more. This fall, RCC's Engineering Program will begin offering a minor in Smart Building Technology. Learn more at rcc.mass.edu/sbt.



Virtual Events and Community Efforts

REINVENTING COMMUNITY AT RCC

» The public health crisis challenged RCC to pivot the way we come together as a college community. It required us to reinterpret what it means to support this community beyond academic enrichment. From remixing signature events to hosting food drives, each decision made at the College has been with the intention of moving this community forward.



VIRTUAL MARKETPLACE

RCC welcomed the chance to create economic opportunities for community vendors who have been financially impacted by the pandemic. With the addition of a virtual marketplace, we provided a broad audience with the opportunity to support local business. The new initiative spotlighted vending partners who shifted their businesses and managed to thrive despite the challenges related to the lack of in-person sale opportunities. What started as a celebration of the traditional Black History Month Marketplace grew into an extended opportunity to support our local vendors and small business owners.

FOOD DRIVE

Our support efforts continued with events like the Spring 2021 Food Drive. Many of Boston's families have experienced difficulty putting food on their family table since the COVID-19 pandemic started in March 2021. Approaching one year of crisis, with no certain end in sight, RCC faculty and staff prioritized finding a solution for students experiencing food insecurity.

We asked RCC employees to donate nonperishable foods for a February food drive inspired by the community leadership of past generations, in tribute to Black History Month. The program was an opportunity to support and provide for some of the hardest hit families in the RCC community. Nearly three dozen families were served with care packages on that day. In addition, Stop & Shop gift cards were provided to the families, care of the RCCF Foundation.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In late April RCC hosted the in-person portion of the inaugural Boston Comics in Color Festival, in partnership with Boston Comics in Color. We are proud supporters of this community of comic creators who write and illustrate stories featuring people of color. While this was the first event of its kind in the Boston, the unwavering community support affirmed that it will not be the last.

STAYING CONNECTED

We are continuously striving to find ways to connect with our students. Last semester, the College hosted a series of virtual events including trivia night, stress management workshops, and a creative arts challenge. Students who attended the virtual session reconnected with classmates and staff.

RCC COMBATS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



“ We were thrilled to provide the Reggie Lewis Center — a familiar location accessible via public transportation — for this important effort to prioritize the vaccination of residents in surrounding neighborhoods to limit further devastation from COVID-19. We enjoyed collaborating with everyone at CIC Health and the many dedicated local organizations that came together to support our community.”

— Dr. Valerie Roberson,
RCC president

President Valerie Roberson receiving her COVID-19 vaccination shot in the Field House.

The partnerships and people paramount to our success

» From March 2020 to the present RCC has remained committed to combating the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety, security, and wellbeing of our campus community was our top priority throughout the pandemic. The College partnered with community organizations, public health organizations, and other entities to provide our constituents with all available resources. Through partnerships and the efforts of specific individuals, RCC is poised to serve current and future generations as a public health leader.



“Running the Reggie Lewis Center mass vaccination site has been an incredibly rewarding experience. We could not have done it so successfully without the help of RCC and more than two dozen community-based organizations. Together, we facilitated the administration of more than 160,000 vaccines at the site, with many of those going to residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. Personally, as a Latino and an immigrant, it has been an honor to be part of this effort.”

— Rodrigo Martinez, chief marketing and experience officer, CIC Health

REGGIE LEWIS CENTER AS COVID-19 VACCINATION SITE

» In February 2021 RCC partnered with the Boston Public Health Commission to transform the Reggie Lewis Center’s gymnasium into a COVID-19 vaccination site. At the end of February, CIC Health assumed operational control and began scaling the site; by mid-March, approximately 2,500 vaccines were being administered each day, in the Field House.

RCC was proud to serve as one of CIC Health’s many community partners supporting the Reggie Lewis Center vaccination site. As part of a robust community outreach plan, CIC Health reserved half of all appointments at the Reggie for priority booking of residents by designated community partners. CIC Health also mobilized a direct phone bank outreach to residents to book appointments. In addition, printed informational materials, website content, phone support, and on-site interpreter services have been available in English, Spanish, and eight other community-identified languages since the program began.

RCC alumna, Shana Bryant served as Community Liaison at the site. In her role, she helped to ensure language was culturally competent and reflective of the messaging for a community fighting the virus. “I am grateful I was able to create access for my immediate family and members of my community.” Bryant enjoyed her role as an advocate and

knowing she could confidently say “You can get your vaccine at RCC, it is going to be a positive experience.”

The Reggie vaccination site provided RCC faculty, staff, and students with an on-campus option for the COVID-19 vaccine. The College’s partnership with CIC Health will serve as a long-term model for public health collaborations.



In center of photo: RCC alumna and CIC Health Community Liaison Shana Bryant speaks with reporters at the vaccination site opening.



Meet the Staff

JOSHUA CRARY

**DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT
CHAIR, RCC REOPENING COMMITTEE**

» Since first moving all courses and student support resources to a remote environment in March 2020, RCC has remained committed to returning students and staff to the campus. As an institution of higher learning, it was important to our administrators that we find the safest way to return to an in-person learning environment. Josh Crary, RCC's current Director of Academic and Student Support, was tasked with overseeing a committee of about two dozen members of the various areas of the College. Our Reopening Committee met once a week to deliberate on five focus areas.

The Reopening Committee developed RCC's policies that would inform operations in the foreseeable future of the public health crisis. They created guidelines and training materials for safety on campus. They also developed pathways across the campus in the interest of pedestrian safety and precaution.

Crary has been with RCC three years, starting as the Director of Student Accessibility Services and later transitioning to our Director of Academic and Student Support. Hundreds of students each year access learning resources from the Learning Center and Testing Center. Crary recognized early on that the transition to remote learning was a particularly challenging undertaking for students with accessibility needs. Student referrals that were once a simple hallway conversation or verbal exchange now come from web-based tools.

Crary believes the key to success in any major transition, like our reopening, is compassion and gratitude for your team. "One of the most important things is to thank everyone as much as possible. We, probably, only hear a sliver of how difficult life has been for everyone," says Crary.



PARTNERSHIP WITH TRANSFORMATIVE HEALTHCARE

» RCC and Transformative Healthcare teamed up to connect RCC students to job openings at vaccination sites, such as the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center. The students served in nonclinical roles at vaccination sites as Check-In Associates, Check-Out Associates, and Post Vaccine

Observers. RCC students hired by Transformative Health were paid at a starting rate of at least \$22 per hour.

RCC students helped Transformative Healthcare fill the hundreds of staff positions necessary to provide COVID-19 vaccination programs to the most vulnerable populations. "Addressing systemic health inequities, improving patient outcomes, and



reducing healthcare costs are part of our mission at Transformative Healthcare," says Charles T. Lelon, Transformative Healthcare CEO. "We have found a like-minded partner with RCC. Together, we trained and hired a workforce that represented the communities we serve and created permanent employment programs that will far outlast the COVID-19 pandemic."

RCC has a longstanding tradition of meeting the workforce needs of Boston's largest employers in the field of healthcare. The College offers both credit and non-credit health sciences programs and regularly meets with industry leaders to update program curricula and ensure that students have access to the best clinical sites in Boston.



Meet the Students

AYO OYADIJI & COREY JONES

» In March, as part of CIC Health's community engagement efforts, two RCC students were selected to develop and oversee an art installation project at the Reggie Lewis vaccination site.

"Stepping Up for Vaccination: A Live Art Installation" celebrated the milestone of 100,000 vaccines administered at the vaccination site. Designed and created by two Roxbury Community College art students, Ayo Oyadiji and Corey Jones, the mural is by the community, for the community.

RCC Dean of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Jeff Van Dreason worked with RCC faculty to select Ayo and Corey for the project. Monika Chas, Senior Graphic Designer for CIC Health, provided Ayo and Corey with support and guidance while they were working on the mural.

Ayo was the lead artist for the mural. He sketched the 26-foot-long mural before Corey joined to help with painting. Ayo has enjoyed art studies since his time in high school. Currently in his final semester of studies at RCC, Ayo is majoring in Visual Arts and hopes to transfer to a four-year school to study for a career in product design. Ayo's advice to his fellow students is "do what you love and be good at it."

Corey Jones is majoring in Arts & Humanities, completing his first year at RCC. Corey discovered his love of art in 3rd grade and is hoping to pursue a career in animation. The mural project was Corey's first time painting a mural. He encourages other students to take advantage of the opportunities that come their way. "Practice and consistency, that's the only way you are going to get better," says Corey.

Now that the CIC Health vaccination site is closed, the mural is being moved to a permanent location on campus. The mural will serve as a beautiful reminder of how RCC's community survived and thrived during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Clockwise, starting at top: Corey Jones and Ayo Oyadiji in front of their mural, Ayo and Corey painting the final sections of the mural, Ayo and Corey with the installation overview poster, and the final mural, which will be installed in a permanent location at RCC.



COMMENCEMENT 2021

“There will be challenges and times when you get frustrated, or you feel that you’ve hit a brick wall. Know that there’s support outside of class that you can rely on. Don’t be ashamed to ask for help. I was a strong student, and I went to tutoring for help. There are qualified people who want to help you. Prepare for setbacks and don’t get discouraged.”

— Jon Luc Dumornay,
Commencement speaker,
Class of 2021



On Friday, May 14, RCC held its Commencement Ceremony honoring the accomplishments of the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021.



Meet the Student Speaker

JON LUC DUMORNAY

AA IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, CLASS OF 2021

» Mr. Jon Luc Dumornay was a standout student at RCC, both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. He was proud to serve as the Student Speaker at RCC’s 45th Commencement Ceremony on Friday, May 14, 2021.

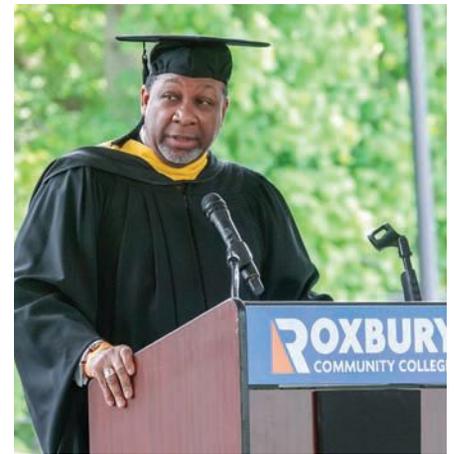
Jon Luc earned his AA in Business Administration through full-time studies while also working as a bank teller 30 hours per week. In addition to his job, Jon Luc was an unofficial tutor to other students before joining the Peer Tiger Mentor Program. As a high academic achiever, Jon Luc was one of three RCC students named to the 2021 *Phi Theta Kappa* All-Massachusetts Academic Team.

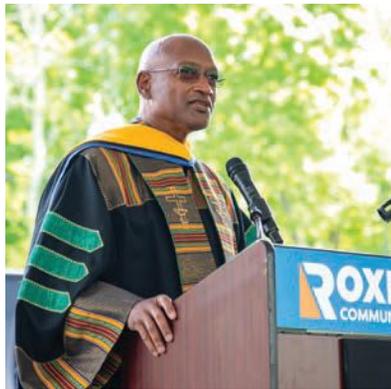
The keys to balancing Jon Luc’s rigorous schedule while performing at a high level are effective time management

skills and organization. “A lot of students struggle with distractions, especially during the pandemic,” said Jon Luc. “When I’m studying, I leave my phone upstairs in my room on ‘do not disturb’ and complete my assignments at my desk downstairs. I also use a planner and write everything down in it. It keeps me organized.”

Jon Luc will continue to use his time management and organization skills when he transfers to UMass Boston to earn a bachelor’s degree in Management. He is excited to begin a new chapter at an institution that has a similar environment to RCC.

Jon Luc wants future RCC students to know that everyone faces barriers during their studies and that it’s important to push through and overcome.







Enhanced Student Support

» Living through this pandemic has impacted each of our lives in different ways. Many RCC students have been profoundly affected by the circumstances over the last year and we knew that increasing our wraparound services would help to meet students' changing needs. In a public health crisis, our student support services needed to include crisis management.

Young people who have not sought out Project Access in previous semesters are now relying on its support. The demand for help is increasing, from problem solving in their personal lives to professional supports and social services. Our goal is to provide students with holistic support to address the nonacademic issues that often prevent degree completion.

EXPANDED SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Scholarships at RCC have historically been funded through the RCC Foundation, which helps current students based on the generosity of RCC alumni and friends. Thanks to the RCCF, we have several new scholarships available to our students. Financial awards are available to those with academic talent as well as students with interests in particular fields of study. Most importantly, we have funds designated for these students who've expressed a critical financial need.

TUTORING AND OUR NEW PEER TIGER MENTOR PROGRAM

Our tutoring is designed to enhance and support classroom learning so that students gain the skills and confidence to be successful in coursework. We thought students could benefit from peer support outside of the classroom and developed Peer Tigers. Through the new mentorship program, students can connect with a peer who is available to answer questions about the school and make suggestions about school resources. New students are encouraged to take advantage of the mentoring program and our free tutorial services, available in many subject areas.

FINANCIAL COUNSELING THROUGH PROJECT ACCESS

RCC offers its students counseling for credit and debt issues as well as budget management and savings. The College has partnered with local financial institutions to offer virtual workshops and provide more in-depth financial planning services. We are proud partners of CCCBI, a Boston-based organization that empowers community college students to learn the basics of credit, improve their financial skills and gain control of their finances.

GET IN TOUCH:
 Want to learn more about Project Access? Visit rcc.mass.edu/project-access-at-rcc or contact Director Lisa Carter at lcarter@rcc.mass.edu.



Legends of Roxbury:

A CELEBRATION OF BLACK WOMEN IN BROADCAST MEDIA

GET IN TOUCH:
To learn more
about the RCCF,
visit [rcc.mass.edu/
RCCF](http://rcc.mass.edu/RCCF)



Carmen Fields



Sarah-Ann Shaw



Rev. Liz Walker

» Over the past year, it has been important to find opportunities to celebrate the people who have made a lasting impact on our community. This year, the Roxbury Community College Foundation (RCCF) provided such an opportunity with its fundraising gala, “Legends of Roxbury: A Celebration of Black Women in Broadcast Media.”

The gala was held virtually on December 3, 2020. Tashanea Whitlow, an anchor from Black News Channel and RCC alumna, hosted the event. Throughout the livestream event, we honored the legacies of **Sarah-Ann Shaw, Carmen Fields, and Rev. Liz Walker.**

We extend our deepest thanks to our sponsors, donors, and virtual attendees! **Thanks to your generous support, we raised over \$240,000.**



(Above, left to right) RCCF Chair Rev. Dr. Ray Hammond, RCC Board Chair & Sheriff of Suffolk County Steve Tompkins, RCC President Dr. Valerie Roberson, honoree Carmen Fields, and host Tashanea Whitlow.

(Right) Carmen Fields joined the event in person to receive her award from Dr. Valerie Roberson and Sheriff Steve Tompkins.



Focused on Your Future

RCC'S PLAN FOR FALL 2021 AND BEYOND

» Although the past year has been exceptionally challenging, there were some silver linings. Our transition to virtual and online learning allowed us to add more flexible learning options to our schedule for the long term. We've also developed new student support programs and worked with the RCCF to create new scholarship opportunities that help to ensure that affordable higher education is available to everyone long after the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHOOSE THE LEARNING OPTION THAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU

The pandemic era has proven that RCC students know which learning styles they prefer. Students who work full time or have childcare needs may prefer asynchronous online courses that allow for coursework to be completed at any time. Other students now know that they thrive in an in-person classroom environment. Regardless of your preference, we have options to meet your needs:

■ **Online** = A fully online course without set meeting times. Online courses are completed fully online, without in-person meetings. You can complete the work at a pace that best suits your schedule, but you must submit assignments and exams by set deadlines.

■ **Virtual** = A fully online course with scheduled meeting times. Virtual courses are completed online but have set meeting times. You are required to log in and participate in course meetings via web-based communication (Microsoft Teams or Zoom) at the scheduled days/times.

■ **Hybrid** = A course with scheduled face-to-face meeting times and an online component. Hybrid courses are completed on campus during designated meeting times with the remainder of the assignments completed online.

■ **Traditional**. Some courses are offered through traditional, on-campus instruction.



TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE

We're committed to ensuring that you have the technology needed to complete courses, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Don't have a laptop? Don't worry! We'll provide you with one through our RoxSTARS program. Learn more at rcc.mass.edu/roxstars.

SCHOLARSHIPS & FREE WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

Beginning in the Fall 2021 semester, RCC will offer significantly more scholarships than in previous years. In addition to the existing merit- and need-based scholarships, the College is offering special yearlong scholarships for students majoring in IT or Engineering. Full-year scholarships are also available for students majoring in STEM fields who show an interest in green energy. Additionally, thanks to generous funding from the state's Rapid Reemployment Program, 15 students can complete the Pharmacy Technician Program at no cost. The program is offered in partnership with CVS Health, with guaranteed employment for students who pass the PCTB exam.

READY TO START THE REGISTRATION PROCESS?

Visit rcc.mass.edu/fall2021 to get started or contact the Enrollment Center at **857-701-1200** or enrollment.management@rcc.mass.edu to speak with an admissions counselor.



Lifelong Learning

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something for the whole family!

Upcoming Course Offerings

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MOST COURSES WILL BE OFFERED VIRTUALLY



- **ESOL English Classes**
- Starts September 13 & 14
* NEW students must take test.
Contact us for details
- **Spanish for Beginners**
- Starts September 13
- **American Sign Language**
- Starts September 13
- **Event Planning**
- Starts September 14
- **Home Staging**
- Starts September 15
- **Developing Creative Thinking Skills**
- Starts September 14
- **Building Black Wealth: FREE Financial Empowerment Series**
- Starts Aug 11, Sept 8, Oct 13, Nov 10, Dec 8
www.RCCWealth.Eventbrite.com
- **Meditation & Mindfulness (FREE)**
- Starts September 16



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LEGO Robotics,
and more!**

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Early!**

Courses fill up quickly
and registration closes
one week before the
course starts.

Lifelong Learning

Contact: Lise Snow

Email: LifelongLearning@rcc.mass.edu | Telephone: (617) 652-0083



STEP IN TO A NEW CAREER IN 2021



NEW CLASSES START IN FALL 2021

- Phlebotomy
- Clinical Medical Assistant
- Project Management
- Grant Writing
- Financial Management for Startups and Entrepreneurs
- Real Estate License Preparation
- Google IT Support Professional Certificate
- Veterinarian Assistant
- Medical Billing & Coding

To register or for more info:

Visit: www.rcc.mass.edu/cwd

Call: 857-701-1603

Email: [cwg@rcc.mass.edu](mailto:cwd@rcc.mass.edu)





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