

Eastern Shore Community College



ESCC NEWSLETTER

FOUNDATION

Fall 2024/Winter 2025



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The mission of the ESCC Foundation is to make a positive difference in the lives of all Eastern Shore citizens by helping to provide the best possible learning and teaching environment.

Update from ESCC President Jim Shaeffer

For the first time since 2014, Your Eastern Shore Community College has exceeded 500 Full-Time Enrollments! Strong enrollment in our academic credit programs indicates that our high demand programs are meeting the needs of our Shore community, and 500 FTE is an important threshold for continued state funding. Much credit goes to our hard-working Student Services team and the faculty and staff that support our students.

Additionally, ESCC's workforce programs continue to grow. We are up 130% compared to this time last year and are on track to exceed 900 Workforce enrollments again this year. We are proud of this 570% jump from the 157 Workforce enrollments in 2019. Our Adult Education Program has expanded English Language Learner and GED offerings to meet rising demand, and we have added pathways into degree and certificate programs.

ESCC helps students transition to good jobs. Funded by a \$1.7 million grant from U.S. Department of Education, our Career Services Center served over 300 students, placed 20 interns, and hosted multiple career fairs in 2023-2024.

Thanks to generous supporters, ESCC Foundation provides numerous scholarships to help students enroll and complete. We now have a scholarship for nearly every qualified student and are grateful to our donors who make these possible.



Dr. Shaeffer with ESCC's 2024-25 Johnsen Presidential Scholars. L to R: Michaela Swift, Autumn Patton, Madison Acevedo, Layla Jones, Indyah Davis; Absent: Jackson Thierfeldt. As full-time students in our associate degree program, Johnsen Scholars must maintain a 3.4 GPA, serve as student ambassadors at ESCC events, host campus tours, assist with our food pantry, and more.

I am pleased to announce that ESCC is launching men's and women's soccer teams. Building on the success of our Shore high school, club and recreational teams, ESCC Soccer will integrate student athletes into our school environment which should boost their academic performance and outcomes. Student athletes will experience a higher level of competition as well as honing their skills, all while attaining their associate



Shore Soccer League players at Randy Custis Memorial Park

degrees and building pride in our college.

Starting a soccer program has truly been a community effort with support from Accomack and Northampton's Boards of Supervisors and ESCC Foundation. Shore Soccer League, Randy Custis Memorial Foundation, and Accomack Parks and Rec will provide fields. Intramural play will begin in Spring 2025, and ESCC's inaugural soccer season will launch in Fall 2025.

I hope you will join us for our annual Oyster Roast fundraiser on January 31, 2025. We'll have delicious local seafood and BBQ, live music, a fun silent auction, and more. Proceeds fund scholarships and support students, and I look forward to seeing you there.

A generous new four-year grant from the Ratcliffe Foundation will support workforce students and help transition ESL and Adult Ed students into pursuing workforce certificates. This nearly \$900,000 grant starting in Fall 2025, is in addition to the over \$600,000 grant we received from Ratcliffe Foundation four years ago, also in support of our trades students.



Electronics students visit with Ratcliffe Foundation CEO Carlene Cassidy and Dr. Shaeffer

Finally, this will be my last newsletter as I will retire on June 30, 2025. A search is underway for the new president, and the Summer newsletter will introduce that person. It has been an honor to serve as President of Your Eastern Shore Community College. I hope you will welcome the new president with the warmth and support that the community extended Peggy and me.

Update from Vice President Dr. Joey Walter

On October 18th, ESCC hosted 445 local 10th grade students for ESCC's Career Adventure Day. Each high school on the Shore was represented, and this inaugural event showcased the diverse careers available on the Shore through hands-on activities. More than 30 businesses, organizations, and ESCC faculty came to campus to promote careers and opportunities available for students. Your Eastern Shore Community College offers a multitude of career paths to students of all ages and backgrounds through our expanded academic and workforce programs.



Pat Benner, NASA Wallops Education Coordinator, discusses career pathways at NASA with Eastern Shore 10th graders at ESCC's Career Adventure Day in October

In spring 2024, ESCC was selected to join the 2nd annual Rural-Service College Cohort of Achieving the Dream. As one of six Accelerating Equitable Outcomes colleges in this cohort, ESCC joins the ATD Network of more than 300 community colleges nationwide. College leaders from around the country actively engage as a community of practice, sharing strategies and learning as they seek to serve rural communities in innovative, evidence-based ways.

The cohort brings ESCC and other selected colleges together with ATD coaches and subject matter experts in a three-year engagement with the following goals:

- Focus on deepening analyses of data to better understand students' needs
- Increase institutional capacity
- Deploy dynamic student support both inside and outside the classroom
- Develop an action plan to continue and sustain student success work

In October, ESCC met with our Achieving the Dream Coaches to begin implementing the initiative on our Melfa campus. Our plan is to utilize ATD's past success with other rural colleges to greater assist our students in meeting their educational goals. ATD's work aligns closely with ESCC's goal to be the national model for a rural-serving institution of higher learning.



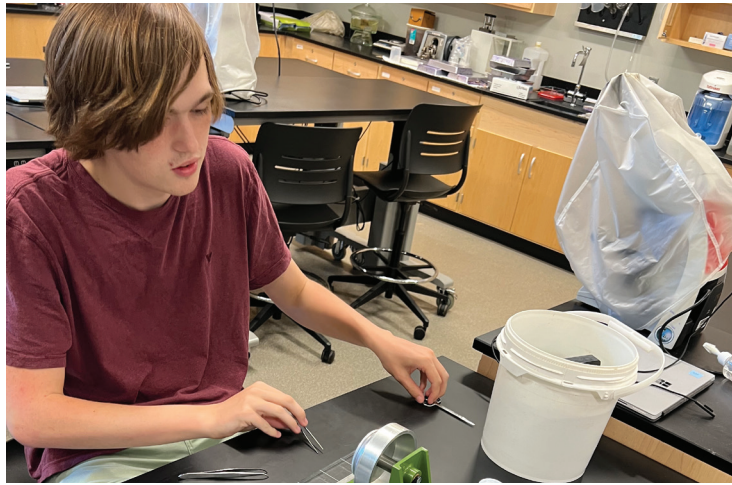
ESCC's Student Services team practices our YES! culture of hospitality, accountability, transparency and inclusion to help students plan their course of study, register and apply for financial aid.



ESCC welcomes Tonya Martin (L) as nursing faculty and Susan Greer (R) as Practical Nursing Program Coordinator. They bring extensive nursing experience from Accomack County Schools and Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital respectively.

I am excited to announce that ESCC has hired a new Academic Dean, Dr. Amy Gilley, who will start on December 10. Dr. Gilley brings a wealth of community college knowledge and expertise. One of her main roles will be to serve as a resource for both faculty and staff.





Mark Niederhofer uses rotorods, the Bukard Sampler, and an AI enabled automatic sampler by PollenSense™ to process allergens collected in Melfa for the National Allergy Bureau during his Summer 2024 internship at ESCC. He is now pursuing his B.S. at Salisbury University.

ESCC Biology instructor Dr. Alex Foxworthy recently established a National Allergy Bureau (NAB) aerobiology station. NAB maintains a national network of sampling stations that provide data on daily pollen and mold spore levels across the U.S. Currently, there are only 50 active stations in the country, and ESCC's Melfa station is the only in Virginia.

Dr. Foxworthy explains, "Surprisingly little is known regarding what biological substances are in our air, how these vary from location to location, and how these vary depending on different meteorological and geographical features." In addition to providing pollen and mold spore counts for our area, Dr. Foxworthy is engaging student interns to perform a number of scientific studies, thanks to a grant from the Philip E. and Carol R. Ratcliffe Foundation.

ESCC student, Jesus Lopez, is currently working with Luke Groff, a graduate student at UVA's Coastal Research Center, to investigate regional and altitudinal differences in air quality in Oyster and at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel in Kiptopeke. Recent ESCC graduates Mark Niederhofer and Sarah Baugh investigated differences in mold and spore counts in locations across the Shore and at different altitudes in summer 2024.

The goal is to use such automated devices to expand coverage across the Eastern Shore and eventually the state of Virginia. To this end, the first Virginia Community College System collaborator - Shalini Upadhyaya at Reynolds Community College in Richmond is running similar experiments in partnership with ESCC throughout Fall 2024.

Together these efforts engage students in meaningful scientific research to provide critical information about what is in our air and how it is changing over time.

ESCC Connects DARS Students with Drone Program

DARS (Division of Rehabilitative Services) Eastern Shore once again partnered with Eastern Shore Community College, Sentinel Robotics Solutions (SRS) and Eastern Shore Community Services Board to provide a one-week career exploration learning experience for students with disabilities and an introduction to ESCC.

Students explored the field of aerospace as well as careers in uncrewed aircraft systems (drones). Kaleb Jeffries, a previous DARS participant, taught the class with Jason Taylor from SRS. Kaleb had observed the DARS Academy in 2023 which was a turning point in his DARS journey and career path. Now an employee of Sentinel Robotics Solutions, Kaleb's childhood interest in weather has grown into a promising career involving drones and more.

Nine students from four Eastern Shore high schools attended the July 2024 program with their family members. Students toured the ESCC campus and learned about programs and services. Eastern Shore Community Services Board provided transportation at no cost.

Students demonstrated their newly acquired talents and skills at a graduation ceremony, and each received an FAA Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST) Certificate, as well

as resources on Labor Market Studies on Drone Operators, upcoming transition programs, and more.



DARS student Grant Davidson (center) and his father (L) learn to fly drones with SRS instructor Kaleb Jeffries (R). Kaleb is a former DARS student and is now employed full-time at Sentinel Robotic Solutions as Engineering Technician and Instructional Assistant.

My journey at ESCC began in 2009 after receiving my GED. I met great people and had amazing instructors like Mrs. Wanda Smith who taught English and led the Theater Club. I graduated from ESCC in 2012 with an Associate degree in Business Administration and continued my education at ODU while working as a Library Technician for the Navy.

I graduated from ODU in 2016 with a B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing. From there I pursued a Master of Science in Marketing at Walden University, graduating in 2018 with the goal of becoming a federal employee. With a master's degree and over five years of experience, I thought I would be able to transition to a civil servant position quickly. It took five years of applying for federal jobs, but I finally received a YES from NASA Wallops in 2022, and I am currently employed there as a Contract Specialist.

In November 2023, I received my Christian Life and Leadership Coach Certification, and last summer I published my first children's book. You can find my books on Amazon and at Thirst No More Christian Store in Salisbury, MD. I

currently reside in New Church, VA with my son, Quincy.

Looking back, when I was taking my GED exam in 2008, I never imagined that I would be where I am today. I pray that my story encourages others to persevere and never give up on their dreams! I also encourage anyone to attend ESCC. It is truly a great starting point that leads to future success!!



Zakia Bright, NASA Wallops contract specialist and published children's book author, got her start at ESCC

ESCC Intern at The Nature Conservancy

Jasmin Escalante is pursuing a degree in Early Childhood Education at ESCC with her goal to become an elementary school teacher. ESCC's Career Services team coached Jasmin to apply for a 2024 paid summer internship which landed her at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Brownsville Preserve in Nassawadox.

As TNC's 2024 Bilingual Community Engagement Intern, Jasmin supported a variety of local nature-based outreach & education efforts, including summer field trips for ACPS & NCPS school groups, a bilingual picnic at Brownsville Preserve, and forging new relationships between TNC and the Shore's Hispanic community.

For more information about internship and mentoring opportunities through ESCC's Career Services, contact hbradbury@es.vccs.edu.



L to R: ESCC Career Services Mentor Hayleigh Bradbury and student Jasmin Escalante welcome TNC's Margaret Van Clief to a Lunch & Learn about TNC opportunities in October.

ESCC Adult Education



ESCC English Language Learner students with instructor Heather Littlefield

ESCC is the sole provider of Adult Education services on Virginia's Eastern Shore. Officially called the Office of College and Career Readiness (CCR), ESCC's dedicated professionals provide instruction and support to over 350 students seeking to improve their English language skills or earn their High School Equivalency Diploma. CCR also provides digital literacy instruction to seniors, partners with Eastern Shore Regional Jail in delivering instruction to incarcerated students, and supports learners enrolled in several ESCC FastForward Workforce classes.



Project Horizons/Discovery 12th graders measure and weigh fiddler crabs at UVA's Coastal Research Center

Twenty-nine Project Horizons /Discovery students experienced what it is like to be a scientist at UVA Coastal Research Center's "Day In the Lab" event in October. Organized by UVA's Site Director Dr. Cora Baird in partnership with Project Horizons/Discovery Coordinator Miriam Cornwell, scientists from local agencies including UVA, VIMS, The Nature

Conservancy, and Master Naturalists showed students in grades 9-12 pathways to careers in science. Students rotated through hands-on stations to band birds, measure fiddler crabs, study seagrasses, evaluate changes in tidal flow, and more. At lunch, students engaged with science professionals from across the Shore to learn about careers in science and coastal ecology. The trip concluded with a boat ride on the seaside, which for some students, was their first time on a boat.

Funded by a grant from Project Discovery of Virginia and individual donors, ESCC's Project Horizons/Discovery program currently serves 40 students including 13 seniors. The program provides an extra academic, social, and cultural boost for economically disadvantaged students, most of whom would be first generation college students. It also provides a direct pathway to ESCC where two years of free tuition, fees and books are guaranteed by ESCC Foundation.

In November, Project Horizons/Discovery students toured the mock pharmacy and virtual lab at University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Additional trips are planned to Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital, Camp Occohannock for outdoor adventures, and a tour of St. John's College and the Banneker Douglass Tubman Museum in Annapolis.

ESCC Promotes Programs on Chincoteague

ESCC Foundation hosted an October event on Chincoteague to provide updates on ESCC programs, partnerships with NASA Wallops, and scholarships for Chincoteague students. Alumna Joe Bass and Dave Filipic, co-owners of Blackfin Island Grill, provided delicious appetizers at their recently renovated eatery, and ESCC students Autumn Patton (Johnsen Scholar) and Sara Godwin helped serve.



David Landsberger funds scholarships for graduates of Chincoteague High School, and the David & Melody Landsberger Workforce Scholarship supports students in Workforce programs.



ESCC Students Sara Godwin and Autumn Patton (Johnsen Scholar from Chincoteague) were all smiles at Blackfin Island Grill.



Kathy and David Russell with Melody Landsberger and Peggy Shaeffer

ESCC partners with Chincoteague High School to provide dual enrollment classes to 37 juniors and seniors so they can earn college credit. Currently 28 students from the island are enrolled in ESCC credit and workforce programs including drone pilot, in partnership with Sentinel Robotic Solutions, as well as cybersecurity. Plans are underway to add Additive Manufacturing that will include CNC machining and 3D printing.

ESCC Foundation thanks our donors, friends, business partners, and Board members on Chincoteague and the surrounding area for their support of ESCC programs and scholarships.



face like food insecurity, transportation, and housing.

Mrs. Hancock passed away in January 2024. ESCC Foundation is honored to be included in her estate, and her bequest will support students on their educational pathways and help them overcome obstacles for years to come.

Mrs. Agnes West Hancock grew up in Onancock, attended kindergarten at Ker Place and graduated from Onancock High School in 1939. After completing a two-year elementary education program at Stratford College in Danville, she taught first grade in Chincoteague, then returned to Onancock to work for Farmer's Exchange and then for a local attorney. Mrs. Hancock loved the Eastern Shore and cared deeply about education and youth on the Shore. She enjoyed hearing about ESCC students and was touched to learn about obstacles that some students

How Do Foundation Scholarships Help?

Foundation Scholarships are critical in helping students enroll and complete. Below some of our 2024-2025 recipients share their gratitude.



Receiving this scholarship significantly eases the financial burden of my studies and allows me to fully commit and dedicate myself to my academic endeavors. I am extremely passionate about nursing and I have always known that this is something that I wanted to do from an early age. This support enables me to continue to strive and reach the mark in becoming a LPN. I am thankful for the opportunity and 100% committed to making the most of all opportunities that come my way.

Domine' Dennis, Practical Nursing



Your generous scholarship relieves financial pressure for me and my family, allowing me to focus on what really matters: my health and my goals for the future. I am excited to continue earning my associates degree and then on to my bachelors.

India Turman, General Studies



Being selected for a scholarship is an honor. This was perfect timing, as I didn't know how I was going to afford school. Being a new mother to my 5 month old daughter has pushed me to further my education and really get serious about it. I plan on opening a Youth Center and Day Care that includes night hours due to so many parents working schedules. I want to give youth the resources that I lacked when I was a young child. I also want to say thank you to the donors and I won't let myself nor you down.

Aliehya Tazewell, Early Childhood Education

LEAVE A LEGACY FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

The ESCC Legacy Society encourages all who support the College's mission to use their financial and estate planning to help us maintain the affordable access and educational excellence that help our students succeed. When you include ESCC Foundation in your long-term planning, you are making a difference for generations to come.

Foundation scholarships are critical in helping students reach their full potential and achieve fulfilling careers.

If you have included ESCC Foundation in your estate planning, or would like details on how to do so, please contact Patty Kellam at (757)789-1749 or pkellam@es.vccs.edu. Info is also posted online at: es.vccs.edu/about/escs-foundation/



Nursing instructor Felicia Blake with Nurse Aide graduate Angelina Garcia. ESCC can launch students into Allied Health fields all the way to RN.



We invite you to show your support by giving online here or in the enclosed envelope to help all students access ESCC programs.



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SAVE THE DATE!

Sat., Feb. 22

10am - 2pm

Indoor

Winter Art Walk

Featuring

Local artists & crafters,

Live music, & food



**COME TO OUR
OYSTER ROAST
FUNDRAISER**



ESCC Foundation will host its annual Oyster Roast with all proceeds funding scholarships and supportive services for students such as tutoring, healthy snacks, and emergency aid.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025 FROM 5:30 TO 8:30 PM

Join us on campus for live music, local seafood roasted and steamed on site, chowder, BBQ, sides, craft beer, wine and more, plus a fun silent auction! This is our primary fundraising event, and sponsorships are available.

Thank you to our Lead and Major Sponsors:



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