Over 1,300 Stockton graduates received degrees in three commencement ceremonies last week. The master’s and doctoral graduation was held on May 8, and Baccalaureate ceremonies were held in the morning and afternoon on May 11.

Dr. Stephen Dunn, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in poetry and a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Creative Writing, addressed graduates of the Schools of Arts and Humanities, Business, Education, General Studies and Health Sciences at the first of two commencement ceremonies held on Sunday.

Dr. Dunn, who won the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for “Different Hours,” was presented with a Doctor of Humane Letters by Dean Pappas, vice chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Anthony Cicatiello, co-founder and CEO, CN Communications and president of the Research and Development Council of New Jersey, spoke in the afternoon to the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences graduates.

Cicatiello, who has long been an adviser to former Gov. Thomas Kean, told the graduates to celebrate the moment of their graduation without texting or looking at their smartphones. “Hashtag: Just focus on this right now,” he said in a reference to twitter, drawing an appreciative laugh from the crowd. “I did this, I made it. Today, I graduated from college.”

Dr. Dunn told graduates at the morning commencement, “The soul is character’s grid, its underpinning… To be a person of high character is no small thing, but what’s at stake in the Faustian bargain is our souls. There’s no doubt that during your lifetime you will be so tested. And speaking again for myself, one’s failures can be as instructive as one’s ability to hold the moral line.”

He ended by citing a Japanese proverb: “Fall down seven times, stand up eight.”

Dr. Dunn, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in poetry and Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Creative Writing, tells graduates, “Today you begin your own legacy, which I trust will add to Stockton’s,” at the May 11 morning commencement ceremony. Click for full text of speech.
Dr. Rodger Jackson, professor of Philosophy and president of the Faculty Senate, told the graduates that the faculty knew they were prepared “to fight back at stupid questions” or “thinly disguised threats” from unenlightened future bosses.

“Intelligent consent is radically distinct from blind obedience,” he said. “We have your back.”

Dr. Linda Williamson Nelson, professor of Anthropology and Africana Studies and the Grand Marshal at both May 11 ceremonies, was granted the title Professor Emerita.

Dr. Richard Berry, associate professor of Speech Pathology and Audiology, received the title of Professor Emeritus from Dr. Kesselman and Trustee Pappas.

Behind the scenes, Craig Stambaugh, associate dean of Students, and Tom O’Donnell, assistant dean of Students/Veteran Affairs, and interim dean of Student Development, were instrumental in coordinating a surprise for Nursing graduate Lacey Reger and her family. Lacey’s brother Zechariah Reger, a firefighter in the U.S. Coast Guard stationed in the Middle East, flew 17 hours from Bahrain to attend her commencement ceremony.

“Zech called the Office of the Dean of Students simply looking for an extra ticket to attend his sister’s graduation. Through a bit of prodding, we found out he was stationed in Bahrain and hadn’t seen his family or sister since October 2013,” Stambaugh explained. “It was great helping create such a special moment for a graduate and her family,” said Stambaugh.

Lori S. Herndon, Stockton alumnus (‘92) and president and chief executive officer of the AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center, and executive vice president of AtlantiCare, gave the keynote address at the Doctoral and Master's Degree Commencement on May 8. Visit Flickr to see images from all three ceremonies.

University Name Change Committee to Gather Additional Data

The College-wide Committee on University Name Change met April 14 and 30 and decided to gather additional data over the summer to further weigh the pros and cons involved when an institution changes its name from a college to a university.

Although Stockton’s current classifications fall among masters-level universities, a subcommittee is being formed to gather and analyze data, which will be presented to the full committee in September to help articulate and clarify the impact of the name change. The committee, which was formed based on the recommendation of the Faculty Senate Task Force on University Status Report, is comprised of faculty, staff, students, trustees, administration, alumni, union representatives, and community members, with President Herman Saatkamp serving as chair.

The committee membership includes: Dr. Harvey Kesselman (‘79), provost and executive vice president; Dr. Thomasa Gonzalez, vice president for Student Affairs; Dr. Philip Ellmore, chief development officer; Sharon Schulman (’80), CEO for External Affairs and Institutional Research; Ray Ciccone, CPA (‘79), trustee and Kyle Osgood, student trustee alternate; Dr. Johanna Johnson, Foundation board of directors; Dr. Michelle McDonald, vice president of the Faculty Senate and associate professor of Atlantic History; Janice Cambron (’79), Alumni Association representative and executive director, Seashore Gardens Living Center; Carl Archut, Jr., vice president of the Student Senate; Dean Claudine Keenan, School of Education; Dean Lewis Leitner, School of Graduate and Continuing Education; American Federation of Teachers representative Dr. Michael Frank, professor of Psychology; Communications Workers of America representative Gwen Govia, supervisor of Access Services, College Library; Dr. Tait Chirenje, associate professor of Environmental Studies; Dr. David Burdick, professor of Psychology; and community member David Hughes (’86), chief financial officer, Shore Memorial Hospital.
Dr. Ogden Serves as Liaison to Vernacular Architecture Forum

Dr. Kate Nearpass Ogden, professor of Art History, served recently as Stockton’s liaison to the Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF), a gathering of about 200 people from across the United States and Canada to explore “everyday, normal” architecture in a region. The event’s inaugural New Jersey opening was held at Stockton Seaview from May 7-11.

“It’s everyday, normal architecture, as opposed to the big stuff,” Dr. Ogden said on the definition of vernacular architecture. “It’s not state capitols and governor’s houses and banks – those would be more ‘high-style.’ Vernacular is regular people’s houses and barns. They love barns.”

The “Down Jersey: From Bayshore to Seashore” conference came to the state in large part because New Jersey is celebrating its 350th anniversary in 2014. This year’s VAF was held at Stockton Seaview mainly because the venue also celebrates its own 100th anniversary this year.

“The VAF-ers are like Energizer rabbits- they walk hour after hour after hour, exploring houses and barns and other kinds of buildings,” said Dr. Ogden, who also serves on New Jersey’s review board for historic buildings.

“On Thursday's tour we visited towns along the Delaware Bay, such as Greenwich and Mauricetown. They were once thriving towns, but in my 23 years as a resident of South Jersey, I'd never visited them. They had beautiful 18th and 19th century houses. On Friday’s tour, we started in Absecon, visited Lucy the Margate Elephant, and ended the day at Historic Cold Spring Village. It was lots of fun - but I'm feeling pretty worn out!”

Stockton was a co-sponsor of the event.

Stockton Community Helps Preserve History Through Memoir

A memoir edited by Claire Lopatto, assistant dean in the School of General Studies, and Dr. Maryann McLoughlin, assistant supervisor of the Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center, was taught during the 2014 Spring semester by Gail Rosenthal, director of the Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center, and Dr. McLoughlin in their courses.

Lopatto and McLoughlin worked together last year to edit “The Sound of Wings: WWII Navy Nurse in the Pacific,” written by Lopatto’s 93-year-old mother, Josephine Plummer Lopatto, about her experiences as a Navy nurse in the Pacific during World War II. The memoir, published in October 2013, was made possible by contributions from members of the Stockton community.

Dr. McLoughlin served as co-editor and researcher on the project, and Pam Cross, coordinator of the Skills Center Writing Lab, served as copy editor. Sarah Messina, program assistant in Graphics Production, designed the cover and layout of the book.

This spring, Rosenthal and Dr. McLoughlin asked students to write letters to Josephine Plummer Lopatto, which were then bound into a booklet for the author.

“Josephine’s WWII story will illuminate and inspire readers, adults and students alike. She understates the dangers that she and the other nurses confronted on those hot and humid Pacific islands, but it is clear that they lived through some harrowing experiences with courage, humor and faith,” Dr. McLoughlin said.

“Both my mother and I have been deeply moved by the generosity and hard work of my Stockton College colleagues who made this possible,” said Lopatto. “A heartfelt thanks to Maryann McLoughlin, Pam Cross, and Sarah Messina for their contributions and encouragement.”

The memoir is part of the “Writing as Witness” program, an integral part of the mission of the Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center. Since its inception in 2005, the “Writing as Witness” project has published 44 memoirs. These stories are used by local teachers, college students and the community at large.

“The ‘Writing as Witness’ program focuses on documenting the life stories of eyewitnesses, Holocaust survivors and rescuers of World War II, such as Mrs. Lopatto,” said Rosenthal. “This project is timely to the Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center because in the next five years, the Holocaust survivor population will be substantially diminished. These witnesses are aging and our aim is to document their stories before these resources are no longer available to us.”
Dean Weiss, Dr. Wu, Weeks Present at Bridges Conference

Dean Dennis Weiss of the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Dr. Chia-Lin Wu, associate professor of Mathematics, and Patricia Weeks, director of the Southern Regional Institute-Educational Technology Training Center (SRI-ETTC), were among the presenters at a panel titled, “Stockton’s Dual-Credit Program with Regional High Schools” at a recent conference in Cape May. The Bridges Conference: Connecting Higher and K-12 Education, a Partners 4 Connections in Education (P4CE) event, addressed partnerships between and among higher education and K-12 education. The program showcased unique partnerships and offered an arena to share ideas on planning and implementation. Stockton was one of the co-sponsors of the conference.

Stockton is ending the third year of its High School Partnership Dual Credit Program, which allows qualified high school juniors and seniors to enroll in college-level, credit-bearing courses while concurrently enrolled in equivalent high school classes. The college originally began the program with three high schools, offering two classes for a total enrollment of 33 students. In this academic year, the program reached 14 area high schools, offering 18 courses and a total enrollment of about 400 students. The program is enhanced by intensive professional development and dedicated Stockton faculty liaisons and master high school teachers.

The program serves a multitude of purposes, said Dean Weiss. The program offers qualified regional high school students the opportunity to take college-level courses. Low-cost tuition ($100 per credit) allow students’ parents to save money as their children progress into higher education. The partnership reduces the time taken to obtain a degree by providing students with college credit before enrolled in college. As a result of the program, professional bonds develop between Stockton’s faculty and the high school counterparts, Dean Weiss explained.

“Stockton’s dual enrollment program creates the bridge between high school and higher education. Our program also enhances the professional development for high school teachers and the scholarly work of faculty liaisons,” Dr. Wu said.

Lawrence, Boyle Represent Business Program at NJCBAAN

Esther C. Lawrence, assistant dean in the School of Business, and John Boyle, visiting assistant professor of Business Studies, recently attended a New Jersey Collegiate Business Administration Association (NJCBAAN) ceremony at the New Jersey Statehouse in Trenton. At the ceremony, five Stockton Business students were inducted into the statewide honor society, which recognizes students studying business at both the two- and four-year colleges in New Jersey.

Each year, the top 1 percent of undergraduate students pursuing degrees in business are invited to join the prestigious honor society.

“It was an honor to attend the NJCBAAN Induction Ceremony on behalf of the School of Business,” said Lawrence. “I was delighted to see our School of Business inductees recognized for their hard work and academic achievement. This ceremony truly reflects the work of our Business faculty and their commitment to academic excellence.”

Send Us Your News!

We want to know about things going on in the Stockton community. Do you have an unusual hobby? Did one of your co-workers win an award or perform outstanding public service? Births, weddings, graduations and the like are all good things to submit to the Stockton Times. Contact the editor at (609) 652-4593 or e-mail StocktonTimes@stockton.edu

News about distinguished students can now be found at Distinctive Stockton Students. To contribute a news item for the blog, please contact the editor at distinctive@stockton.edu