

Career advancement

Certificate and continuing education programs provide skills

By Linda L. Esterson, Contributing Writer

“Often, adults are interested in furthering their education, expanding their skills, but do not desire to earn an advanced or even a second undergraduate degree.”

With this in mind, McDaniel College created a unique program to help budding writers navigate the path to publishing. With other programs centered on earning a master’s degree, the writing for children and young adults (WCYA) certificate program at McDaniel was developed as a non-degree, certificate program to fill a niche, according to Ramona N. Kerby, Ph.D., L. Stanley Bowlsbey endowed chair of professor graduate and professional studies and McDaniel College WCYA certificate program coordinator.

The program includes five non-consecutive, eight-week courses, which may be individually selected based on desire. There are courses for fiction writing, writing picture books, non-fiction writing, reading like a writer and a writing workshop, which involves the evaluation of a completed manuscript in any of the genres. The courses, designed for working professionals, are offered fully online, enabling students from a larger geographic area to participate, and they work on their own schedules. Many are from out of state; last spring, a librarian from the Netherlands enrolled.

“For busy professionals, the online classes, the way we designed them to meet best practices, the quality of the work is just far superior than a face-to-face,” Kerby notes. “Since this writing program was a niche, and there’s not another one in the country that’s a certificate-only, I wanted to be able to offer it to anybody in the country.”

Classes are taught by published authors and experienced publishing house editors who undergo an extensive training regimen. Each course is offered once a year, with about 10 to 15 people enrolled per class. Courses are split into four two-week modules focusing on a specific objective and purpose. In the fiction course, for example, the first module might focus on plot and the next two weeks on characters, and students begin to craft their writing based on selected related readings. Students may choose to enroll in the courses consecutively and complete the certificate in one year.

“One of the key features in these courses is how we structure the feedback that students get from their peers,” Kerby says. “We teach them how to give quality feedback, not to much praising them but how to give quality feedback, going through to identify strengths and give suggestions.”

Identifying strengths in the student population is also paramount as society grows more diverse and cultural disconnects have surfaced in

education. Leaders at Notre Dame of Maryland University are working to build culturally responsive teachers, providing today’s educators with the tools needed to build relationships and connections with students to improve the educational experience and ultimately success for students.

The culturally proficient leadership certificate program was developed three years ago in collaboration with the university’s partner school, Woodlawn High, and the Office of Equity in Baltimore County, which expanded its staff in recent years in response to the county’s changing demographics. For the first time, Baltimore County’s student population comprised more students of color (African American, Native American and Latin American) than white students, while the educational workforce was 87% white, according to Stephanie Savick, Ph.D., associate professor in the school of education at Notre Dame of Maryland University. Coursework was purposefully developed over a nine-month period to promote cultural equity in teaching based on race as well as sexual orientation and disability.

“When you’re looking at equity, it’s looking at the fact that each student brings with them individual strengths and challenges. And sometimes those strengths and challenges are the result of things like a disability because of the marginalization of students, based on race and ethnicity or sexual orientation,” Savick says. “What becomes important is that (the teacher) understands students are human beings who live in a society that has created systems for them to either be successful or put them at a disadvantage.”

The Maryland Higher Education Commission-approved certificate program comprises four courses taught in succession, beginning with Introduction to Cultural Competency and Educational Equity, which provides a comprehensive understanding of the historical framework underlying access to educational equity in American schools. Critical Race Theory in Education focuses on the development and history of Critical Race Theory and discusses how racial, gender, socioeconomic, disability and orientation inequalities are produced, re-produced and maintained in educational institutions and society. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy focuses on the direct application of culturally responsive practices in and outside of the classroom to promote success for all students and their communities. The final course covers Learning Theory and Practice.

The certificate program was taught in Baltimore County schools as year-long programs — at Woodlawn, Kenwood High and Lansdowne Elementary — before moving fully to the Notre Dame campus last fall. A total of 29 teachers completed the cohort program its first three years. The goal is to complete the program in four successive semesters over a year, Savick says, but students may

extend their coursework over a longer duration or use the classes as part of a Leadership in Teaching master’s degree track.

Another fully online offering is a new Community College of Baltimore County program that provides an online and on demand option, enabling professional counselors to work at their own pace, at their own convenience to complete coursework to practice in a supervisory capacity. The Maryland Board of Professional Counselors requires a combined 30 hours of supervision and coursework to become a practicing supervisor.

CCBC is the only institution in Maryland to offer the clinical supervision in human services counseling coursework entirely online. It provides one-on-one sessions with an instructor, readings and reflective writing assignments, and culminates in a final portfolio in which the student holds a clinical supervision session with another counselor which is reviewed by the instructor.

According to Ted McCadden, D.Ed., associate professor and human services counseling program coordinator, the course not only addresses theory and practice of clinical supervision, but also focuses on interpersonal relationships and leadership, evaluating the student’s leadership style, from giving direction to eliciting problem solving ideas from others.

“It looks both at leadership style as well as our understanding of the practice of counseling and how those two come together,” he explains.

As counseling is a personal experience, leading other counselors and being integral in their professional development overlaps with their development as humans, he continues. Varying models of counseling focus on behavior, feelings and emotions and personal growth and development, but there are also legal requirements that necessitate the need for advanced coursework in supervision.

The course focuses on five general topics including principles and techniques of clinical supervision, models and techniques of supervision, ethical and legal dilemmas in clinical supervision, self-awareness and the dynamics of the supervisory relationship, and reflective development across both dyadic and group supervision models. There’s also specific content area for supervision with alcohol and drug counseling, a unique counseling modality. In all cases, supervision also can provide an alternate perspective particularly with difficult cases, according to McCadden.

“Just having that sounding board allows us to conceptualize things through a different lens,” he says. “Our own theoretical orientation as a counselor might lead us to one answer where somebody with a different lens would land in a different place. I always tell my students, when you’re feeling stuck, go to the person who you always disagree with because they’re most likely to give you something you haven’t considered yet.”

Learning to write for children

Jared Reck didn’t set out to be a writer when he started teaching 15 years ago. The eighth-grade English teacher who “wanted to be a good teacher” created writing workshops to achieve the designation. The writing workshops provided a chance for students to not only write daily but write alongside him.

About 10 years ago, Reck began his first novel, during the summer. But once school began, the process came “to a grinding halt” as he was busy reading up to 50 novels along with his students and mirroring their writing assignments. He resumed working on the novel the next summer, and again, at the start of the school year, he found it too daunting to continue.

A resident of nearby Hanover, Pennsylvania, Reck learned about the McDaniel College certificate program, writing for children and young adults, designed for working professionals who want a straight path to publishing. At the end of the summer in 2015, when he was about three-quarters through the novel, Reck decided the fully online program would provide a needed push to keep him working through the school year.

Reck enrolled in Reading Like a Writer and Writing Novels for Grades 3-12, both taught by award-winning published author Lisa Graff. During the novel course, he wrote a few chapters and was able to keep the momentum going.

Interacting with Graff and asking questions proved invaluable and “validated my teaching and also validated that I had done to that point,” he says. Reck published a Short History of the Girl Next Door in 2017 and is near completion of a third novel and revisions to a second.

Reck felt he gained so much from the McDaniel coursework that he’s joined the faculty.



Jared Reck

Reaching the underrepresented

Colleges step up efforts to help minorities succeed

By Gregory J. Alexander, Contributing Writer

Being a college student can be challenging, and even more so if you are a minority, first-generation college student or a member of an underrepresented community. Two innovative initiatives at Howard Community College (HCC) aim to bridge the achievement gap and help students succeed.

Howard P.R.I.D.E., which stands for Purpose, Respect, Initiative, Determination, Excellence, is a Black male success initiative that began in 2011 at HCC in order to increase the math completion, retention and graduation rates of black male students. “Howard P.R.I.D.E. also aims to build a community that resembles men of color,” says Shawn Lamb, assistant director of Howard P.R.I.D.E. “We offer tutoring, both one-on-one and in groups; academic advising programs, such as how to take notes and study; assistance with developing an academic plan; leadership workshops; opportunities to volunteer at women’s shelters and feed the homeless; and mentorships. We also connect students to peers who resemble them who are successful in their career.” Lamb adds that P.R.I.D.E. also informs students about opportunities that they may not be aware of, such as scholarships for studying abroad.

Lamb says to ensure that Black male students are aware of the services of P.R.I.D.E., he visits local high schools and holds open houses during college campus visits.

Participants in P.R.I.D.E. are expected to “attend workshops and seminars, utilize provided tutoring, have the desire to obtain a college degree and conduct yourself accordingly while on campus,” according to HCC’s website.

Sandy Cos, assistant director at Ambiciones, which builds community among Hispanic/Latino students at HCC by providing networking opportunities and educational and recreational activities, says, “There is a growing Latino population in Howard County, and we aim to bridge the gap between high school and community college for these individuals.” Cos points out that many of the HCC students who join Ambiciones are first-generation college students and have immigrated from outside the U.S.

“We refer students to the resources available here at HCC, encourage them to utilize the support system Ambiciones provides, check in with them each semester, and ask them to participate in events on campus, as well as off-campus field trips,” says Cos. “We take them to businesses such as Brown Advisory or large health care institutions to meet with peers — it’s important for them to see themselves in leadership positions. Some of them don’t know anyone in their life who is a doctor, for example. We also connect them to



Photo courtesy of Howard Community College

HCC alumni who are successful and urge them to follow in their footsteps.”

Cos says that Ambiciones started in 2015 serving about 25 students, and last year, it grew to serving over 100 students.

In order to increase access to higher education for students with developmental disabilities, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration awarded a \$250,000 contract to Harford Community College, in conjunction with the nonprofit The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region, to plan an inclusive higher education program. The program is still in the early planning stage, but the aim is to create a program called ACCESS (A College & Career Experience for Self-Sufficiency) that would provide support services to those with intellectual disabilities in programs that lead to certificates and employment in various fields. Opportunities to earn additional stackable credentials through credit and noncredit programs is also a component of ACCESS.

Neill Christopher, training center program manager, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region, says that his organization heard of a program by The Arc of Indiana where it created a hotel to serve as a training center for those with intellectual disabilities. “We partnered with The Arc of Indiana to see how we could develop a program here in Maryland. We approached the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration, and they suggested that we partner with Harford Community College,” says Christopher. “Our

planned hotel will also have a housing component included so that the students can live there and live independently for the first time in their lives.”

“The need for this type of program in Maryland is great, and we would like to provide opportunities for students to explore college and career opportunities in fields such as culinary arts, hospitality and building maintenance,” says Darryl Rogers, director for adult development and literacy programs at Harford Community College. “We do not have dorms at Harford, so this hotel (to be located at the Water’s Edge Events Center in Belcamp, Maryland) will provide housing and training opportunities at the same time,” says Kelly Koerner, dean of community education, business and applied technology at Harford. Brandy Naughton, coordinator for grants at Harford, adds that “The Arc will oversee the independent living component, while the college will provide the academic programs. A fall 2021 start date is anticipated.

“Restaurants, hotels and other businesses have already contacted us expressing interest in partnering,” adds Rogers.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) is proud of its commitment to inclusion, and with this in mind, UMBC is on the challenge of making all-gender restroom facilities more widely available on campus through existing facilities, renovations and new construction. “In 2013, LGBTQ+ student groups made the school aware of the lack of all-gender

Key components of Howard P.R.I.D.E. and Ambiciones

P.R.I.D.E.

- Tutoring
- Academic monitoring/advising
- Development of academic plans
- Leadership and success workshops
- Networking

Ambiciones

- Academic advising and tutoring
- Mentoring and coaching
- Financial aid, scholarship and work study opportunities
- Career counseling and internships
- Personal counseling
- Compliance with The Dream Act and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA)

Left: Graduation is an opportunity to celebrate how programs such as Howard P.R.I.D.E. and Ambiciones help students complete their associate degrees. Seen here are Howard Community College staff (Sandy Cos is in the middle with the striped shirt) and students served by P.R.I.D.E. and Ambiciones.

restrooms, so this initiative keeps in line with our value of inclusive excellence,” says Shelly Wiechelt, associate professor of social work at UMBC.

UMBC first completed designating all single-user restrooms on campus as all-gender restrooms through signage and by informing students, faculty and staff. Keith Bowman, dean of the college of engineering and information technology at UMBC, says that the problem with having only single-use all-gender restrooms available is that this can create inconvenient wait times, and students may have to walk three to four blocks to find an available all-gender restroom, so UMBC has also focused on expanding the number of multi-user all-gender restrooms on campus. UMBC’s new Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building, which opened for classes this fall, is the first brand new building on campus to include all-gender restrooms from day one.

“Phase One focused on the easiest restroom conversions, while some buildings are larger challenges, but in those, we at least have single-use all-gender restrooms until we can renovate to have more multi-user restrooms. The buildings with the largest concentration of classrooms had the fewest amount of all-gender restrooms, so it has been quite the undertaking,” says Bowman.

Wiechelt says that students, faculty and staff have all been involved in the initiative, and UMBC has a designated email address for those individuals with questions or concerns.