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## President's Corner: Semester Recap

With so many academic year-end events, award ceremonies, celebrations, and commencements, spring semester ended with a flurry of activity. I want to share some of the highlights in this edition of *Splash*.

Among the many notable College events, I was invited to speak about our Alameda Promise Scholarship Program on May 11, 2017, at an Alameda Collaborative for Children, Youth, and their Families (ACCYF) meeting. My presentation focused on ways that individuals and outside agencies can support the growth of the program. Among those attending the meeting were ACCYF co-chairs City of Alameda Mayor **Trish Herrera Spencer** and Alameda County Supervisor **Wilma Chan**.

One of the most powerful moments for me, this past term, was addressing our graduates at commencement for the first time as College president. It was at that moment that I was especially proud of our students, their families, and of the important work that all of you, faculty and staff, do to support their success.

Sincerely,

Timothy Karas, President

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## Aviation Program Open House for Oakland Unified Was a Hit

CoA's Aviation Maintenance Technology (AMT) Program held an open house May 3, 2017, for Oakland Unified School District students. Four high schools participated in a morning or afternoon program. The event was sponsored by United Airlines, Alaska Airlines, and Textron Aviation. Representatives from our industry partners spoke about abundant opportunities for students graduating from our aviation program. Department Chair **Hoi Ko** spoke about our program offerings. It's not every day that high school students get to see an aviation facility, and they expressed enthusiastic interest in the program. Aviation Facilities Supervisor **Ester Cheng**, Hoi Ko, and Career Technical Education Dean **Eva Jennings** all did a wonderful job in coordinating the successful event.

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*PAAA Scholarship recipient Almahady Toure*



*PAAA Scholarship recipient Tansha Stevens*

## CoA Students Awarded Peralta Association of African American Affairs Scholarships

CoA students **Almahady Toure** and **Tansha Stevens** received Peralta Association of African American Affairs Scholarships (PAAA) scholarship awards at the 19th Annual Peralta Association of African American Affairs (PAAA) reception on May 5, 2017.

**Almahady Toure** grew up in Mali West Africa and is the first in his family to attend college. He came to the United States hoping to earn an associate degree in biology or health science. His initial career goal to become a radiologic technologist changed after discovering that enrollments were impacted in the radiologic technologist program. Seeking a new course of study, he devoted himself to CoA's Diesel Mechanics Program. He plans to earn both a Certificate of Achievement and an Associate of Science Degree in Diesel Mechanics. Toure is thriving in the program with a 3.18 GPA.

**Tansha Stevens** joined the College of Alameda in Fall Semester 2015. Upon entrance she told her counselor that she planned to graduate valedictorian. She remains on course as she continues to maintain a 4.0 GPA. According to Stevens' Student Education Plan, she will complete her journey at College of Alameda next academic year. She expects to transfer to CSU East Bay where she intends to major in African American History. In addition to her academic achievements, Stevens is the current president of the CoA Street Scholars student club, a member of Phi Theta Honor Society, and an Interclub Council board member.

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## Phi Theta Kappa Holds Spring Induction Ceremony

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society honored their six newest CoA scholars at a Spring Induction Ceremony on May 18, 2017. The honored CoA scholars were: **Lenika Howard, Hayley Hope, Wubeshet Mekresalassie, Adrienne Hillis, Stephanie Huft-Robbins, and Bo Bosboom.**

A special thanks goes to EOPS Counselor **Marissa Nakano** for



*Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society inducts new Phi Theta Kappa members.*

serving as faculty advisor for the club and coordinating the ceremony. Phi Theta Kappa is the world's largest honor society for two-year college students. To be eligible for membership, a student must have completed at least 12 hours of associate degree course work with a cumulative 3.5 GPA.

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## African and African American Graduation Ceremony Celebrates Culture and Heritage

This year's well-attended African and African American Graduation Ceremony was held on May 20, 2017, at North Oakland Missionary Baptist Church. The event offered celebration and inspiration for students and their families and friends.

The African and African American Graduation Ceremony is a pre-commencement celebration to honor African and African American students who through unyielding determination have successfully completed an Associate Degree and or Certificate, from a Peralta College. The ceremony is representative of African and African American culture and heritage and embraces the values of community and scholarship.



*This year's African and African American Graduation Ceremony was held at North Oakland Missionary Baptist Church in Emeryville, CA.*



*Foster Youth Graduation with Senator John Burton (retired) seated in the front row.*

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## Foster Youth Accomplishments Honored at Special Graduation

Next Up/Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support Program (Next Up/CAFYES) Program Manager **Lydell Willis**, Program Assistant **Jiayu He**, and CoA President Karas attended the John Burton Advocates for Youth and San Francisco State’s Guardian Scholars Graduation Celebration for current and former foster youth graduates for the 2016-17 academic year. Retired California **Senator John Burton** spoke about championing foster youth in education in California.

The special graduation ceremony on May 23, 2017, acknowledged and celebrated current and former foster youth who had earned an associate’s or a bachelor’s degree, or completed a certificate program at a Bay Area higher education institution. CoA is one of 25 California Community Colleges selected to be part of Next Up/CAFYES.

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## EOPS/CARE and NextUp Hosted a Special Graduation Event for Their Students

The EOPS/CARE, CalWORKS, and NextUP/CAFYES programs held a special graduation event on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, honoring students who often face and overcome significant adversities in achieving their higher education goals. It is an inspiration to be in a room with them, sharing their experiences and honoring their hard work and achievements. Keynote speaker **Carl Chan** is a community organizer serving on the board of the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce and the board of Asian Health Services.

A special thanks goes to the team that supported the students on their journey at CoA and who planned the event, including Dean **Toni Cook**, **Kevin Tran**, **Lydell Willis**, **Marissa Nakano**, **Mary Shaughnessy**, **Charles Washington**, **Monetta Gilbert**, **Jiayu He**, **Martinet Phan**, and **Yoway Tong**.

*The mission of the College of Alameda is to serve the educational needs of its community by providing comprehensive and flexible programs and resources to empower students to achieve their goals.*

## CoA Academic Senate Hosted the Annual Emeritus Luncheon

Four retirees were honored at the Annual Emeritus Luncheon, May 25, 2017, hosted by the CoA Academic Senate. Two special guests joined the festivities: **Wise Allen**, retired PCCD Chancellor, and **Bill Riley**, PCCD Board of Trustees member. Both guests expressed deep appreciation for the many years of outstanding service to our students and CoA that these esteemed colleagues provided with passion and purpose. Honorees included **Sherrone Smith** (African American Studies) for 37 years of service; **Scott Albright** (Diesel Mechanics) for 15 years of service; **Teya Schaffer** (English) for 14 years of service; and **Lorna Shashinda** (ESL) for 18 years of service.



CoA Class of 2017

## An Inspiring Commencement Launches Students Toward a Hopeful Future

CoA conferred associate degrees and certificates upon graduates on Friday, May 26, 2017, in an event that featured speeches from a valedictorian war refugee and Oakland City Councilmember **Abel Guillén**, a vocal advocate for education, who served as a Peralta Community Colleges District trustee and president.

This year, 234 graduates received

98 degrees and 138 certificates and an estimated 158 graduates participated in the commencement ceremony. The commencement theme was *My Story, Your Story, Our Story*. Remarks were made by Peralta Chancellor Dr. **Jowel C. Laguerre**, Academic Senate President **Rochelle Olive**, Classified Senate President **La Shawn Brumfield**, and Associated Student President **Ernesto Eugenio**. Valedictorian **Fudhah “Silver” Al Khafaji** gave an inspirational student keynote address.

A native of Baghdad, CoA Class of 2017 Valedictorian Silver Al Khafaji believes that the story of her personal journey as an Iraqi refugee is one of hope and accomplishment. Al Khafaji, 21, graduated with an associate degree in biological sciences. She plans to transfer to UC Berkeley to study chemical biology and one day hopes to help make breakthroughs in pharmaceutical sciences and combat infectious diseases, and chronic illness.

During her three years at CoA, Al Khafaji volunteered at a summer chemistry lab at Laney College and as a math tutor at CoA. As an active member of the MESA



CoA Class of 2017 Valedictorian Silver Al Khafaji

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program last year, she helped with outreach and youth leadership programs. She was also active with the Muslim Student Alliance and a volunteer with Girls Incorporated of the Island City, a program to help girls succeed.

Al Khafaji wants other refugees to know they too can reach their dreams. Although she still remembers being a second grader in 2003 and cowering with her family in the hallway while the U.S. dropped bombs to oust the country's leader Saddam Hussein, today she knows that her experience allows her to help others. She doesn't want to focus on being a war survivor. Looking back, she wouldn't change a thing.

"Whatever hardship I go through now or in the future, it won't be as hard when I compare it to my experience or my mom's experience in war times," said Al Khafaji. "There's nothing worse than being in a refugee camp or being in a house that is shaking because of Apache helicopters. I think I get my strength from that instead of my weakness."

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## Science Annex Open House Was a Great Success!

Over 50 people participated in CoA's Science Annex Open House on Thursday, June 15, 2017. President **Tim Karas**, Interim Vice President of Instruction **Myron Jordan**, Dean **Amy Lee**, Coach **Linda Thompson**, and Staff Assistant **Charlene Maney** were among the CoA staff who joined the classroom science demonstrations. A number of representatives from various companies also attended the event, including those from **Emery Pharma**, **Magnetic Insight**, **BioTime**, **MBH Architects**, **Sila Nanotechnology**, **Taylor Engineering**, and **Premiere Healthcare**.

The inspiration for the open house came from a Biology Department meeting, where the College's growing partnership with Emery Pharma was discussed. In February 2017, Emery Pharma invited CoA faculty and staff to an open house. From that initial event, Vice President and Co-founder at Emery Pharma Dr. **Chuck Francavilla** and other members of Emery Pharma have subsequently presented at several CoA student events, hosted tours of their company, and most recently, offered summer internships to two CoA students.

The event featured interactive science demonstrations, tours, light refreshments, and live music. Science lab demonstrations were conducted by **Michelle Badura**, **Peter Niloufari**, **Leslie Reiman**, **Karen Wedaman**, **Alex Madonik**, **Helena Lengel**, **Scott Shultz**, and **Leslie Bach**. **Hank Fabian** and **Brian Rowning** provided tours of the Merritt College Genomics Laboratory housed in the Science Annex. Live blues, gypsy jazz, and swing music were performed by CoA student **Nathaniel Markman** and **Laura Lackey**, and several people danced, including **Lilia Celhay**, Interim Dean of STEAM. The success of the event is attributed to support from various departments and student volunteers. With the momentum and enthusiasm gained from the open house, the STEAM Division looks forward to planning and executing future events.

Submitted by **Lilia Celhay**, Interim Dean, Division I (STEAM), [LCelhay@peralta.edu](mailto:LCelhay@peralta.edu)



*CoA Science Annex Open House guests learn how to use safety equipment, including protective gloves and safety glasses.*



*CoA AMT Student Shawn Furness*

## Aviation Student Praises Program That Prepared Him for New Job

**Shawn Furness** has been a student in CoA's Aviation Maintenance Technology (AMT) Program since August 2015. He recently received an Airframe Certificate and is currently working on earning a Power Plant Certificate. Shawn has great things to say about the AMT Program. He credits the program with helping him get hired as a maintenance technician at Pacific States Aviation in Concord, CA, where he helps maintain a small fleet of Cessna 172s. In a recent email to AMT faculty and staff, Furness says that his experience at CoA has been positive and life changing.

"I feel that this school has had a tremendous effect on improving my career path and life by teaching me the basic principals of maintaining aircraft and helping me understand the opportunities out there as an Aviation Maintenance Technician," said Furness. "I have learned a lot in these past two years from this school and the excellent staff that keep this program running; and as the graduation date closes in I am truly excited for my future in this career."

*Submitted by Esther Chang, Aviation Facilities Supervisor, [echeng@peralta.edu](mailto:echeng@peralta.edu)*

## Make Your Splash!

Do you know an outstanding student whose story you'd like to share?

Did you attend an interesting workshop or conference?

Do you have unique projects planned for your students this semester?

Is there an upcoming event that we should all know about?

Have you or a colleague been honored with an award or been published recently?

Send us your news so we can share it with the campus community in the *CoA Splash!*

It's easy – just send us a short article and a good photo or two, and we'll take care of the rest. Don't forget to include the name of the writer, the photographer, and anyone who's pictured (if possible). The next issue deadline is **Monday, July 10, 2017, for publication on Thursday, July 13, 2017**. Be sure to email your news and information to: [coasplash@peralta.edu](mailto:coasplash@peralta.edu). See past issues at: [alameda.peralta.edu/office-of-the-president/coa-splash-newsletters/](http://alameda.peralta.edu/office-of-the-president/coa-splash-newsletters/)

