# EXCELSIOR COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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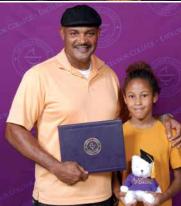










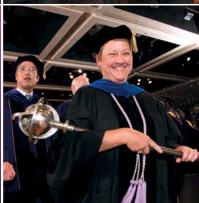






























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**ON THE COVER:** Walter Brown, of Burlington, N.J., celebrates with his wife Domica and daughter Dajanna at Commencement. Brown, a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, started his studies at Excelsior not knowing his schedule or where he would be but wanting "to complete school." After earning his associate degree in 2011, he is pursuing a BS in information technology, also at Excelsior. Photo: Kris Qua.

**INSIDE COVER:** Scenes from the Awards Convocation on July 12, Commencement on July 13, and the popular photo booth that was open both days to provide mementos to graduates.

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SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

#### **PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE**



Dr. John F. Ebersole

ver the weeks since the graduation ceremony, I have had occasion to reflect on comments made by our Commencement speaker, Professor Robert Reich. In very few words, he assessed the state of our economy, described the connection between education and employment, and painted a picture of the future.

An economist and former U.S. Secretary of Labor, Reich pointed to the increasing complexity of work and the need for more advanced skills and knowledge by those in the workplace, now and in the future. In complimenting the graduates on their decision to complete a degree, he noted that with their degrees, they are now more employable. "That degree signals to prospective employers that you have skills and understandings that they need" [as well as the potential to meet the needs of today's jobs]. He went on to say that the future will hold fewer and fewer meaningful jobs for those without a degree. Echoing his comments is an August 2012 report from the Brookings Institute that notes a "mere 24 percent of all jobs in 2012 are available to workers without at least some post-secondary education."

In addition to attesting to the importance of a degree, Professor Reich also validated the graduates' Excelsior experience, noting that "online learning with careful assessment of what students have learned is the future of education."

At Excelsior, that future is now. The College took a giant step this spring by offering a bachelor's degree that can be completed entirely through course assessments (exams). Students can prepare for these assessments using free courses available online from some of the nation's leading providers. These courses have been vetted by Excelsior faculty to assure alignment with our exams. Thus, for those receiving a passing grade, the cost of fulfilling a course requirement can be as low as a few hundred dollars. The College now has degrees in both liberal arts and business that can be completed in this manner.

Excelsior's mission always has been and will continue to be about the expansion of access to higher education. We fulfill this through our online courses, our credit-by-examination program, the acceptance of credit from recognized noncollegiate sources, and an expanding collaboration with community colleges (we have 56 academic partners nationwide with more on the way). At stake is the future of our nation's economy and the financial well-being of the thousands of working adults who pass through our "hallowed halls" every year.

Professor Reich's comments reinforced the link between economic growth and education. As Excelsior moves beyond its first 40 years to its second, we will strengthen our efforts at providing the rigorous yet affordable means for working adults to advance and prosper.



### LIVE&LEARN Excelsion College Magazine

#### Vol. 14, No. 3 | Fall 2012

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Live & Learn is published by the Office of Institutional Advancement at Excelsior College twice a year, in April and October. © 2012 by Excelsior College.

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of the magazine online may be sent to

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#### Excelsior's Courses Make the Grade

uality Matters (QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online and blended courses. Excelsior College is moving to adopt these standards in all its courses, ensuring a quality experience for all students. Recently, all four schools submitted courses (one per school) for review by quali-

fied QM peer review teams, and each course was determined to have met the Quality Matters standards, achieving scores of 90 or above. QM certificates of recognition were granted for NUR 438 Nursing Informatics, CYS 455 Business Continuity,

PH 323 Principles of Public Health, and HUM 300 Humanities Ethics.

"Quality Matters has recognized the Excelsior College Three-Year Implementation Plan as a model for other institutions," explained Joan Mikalson, associate provost. "The QM research-based standards have provided a common denominator among the schools for the design of online courses."

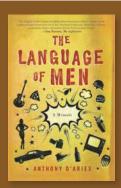
QM standards measure course design components for such things

as alignment of course and module outcomes (learning objectives), assessment and measurement, learner interaction and engagement, and course technology. QM has received national recognition for its peer-based approach and continuous improvement in online education and student learning.

In addition to creating courses to

"Quality Matters has recognized the Excelsior College Three-Year Implementation Plan as a model for other institutions." QM standards, Excelsior staff and faculty are participating in training to become certified QM peer reviewers. This will allow them to evaluate Excelsior's courses and serve as a resource for other institutions. Mikalson and Lynne Johns, director of

faculty development and support, have been trained as QM-certified facilitators to conduct ongoing training in applying the basic rubric for staff and faculty members, and to offer an online pilot program for instructional faculty working at a distance. According to Mikalson, more than 50 staff members have been trained in the basic rubric and over 20 have received additional peer reviewer training.



**NEW ON THE BOOKSHELF** *The Language of Men* by Anthony D'Aries is the latest book from Hudson Whitman/Excelsior College Press. In this memoir, D'Aries searches to learn more about the father he emulates, a Vietnam veteran who works at the local deli and rebuilds muscle cars in his spare time. A trip to Vietnam to retrace his father's tour brings realizations that not only begin to explain his father's life but also shed light on his own troubling behaviors. Excerpts from *The Language of Men* received honorable mention for Fourth Genre's Michael Steinberg Essay Prize and a nomination for the 2011 Best of the Net nonfiction award. To learn more about the book, to browse an excerpt, or watch the author read, go to www.excelsior.edu/collegepress.



#### High Praise

THE PRESIDENT'S MEDAL RECOGNIZES A MAJOR CURRENT OR PAST COMMITMENT OR CONTRIBUTION TO EXCELSIOR COLLEGE.

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**RUSSELL POULIN**, the deputy director of research and analysis for the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET), was presented with a President's Medal at Commencement on July 13. President John F. Ebersole recognized Poulin for his exceptional contributions to the field of adult distance education. Poulin directed the Transparency by Design project, which produced the CollegeChoicesforAdults.org website.

**CAROLYN BAKER**, chief of continuing education programs for the Department of Defense, received a President's Medal during a reception hosted by Excelsior at the DoD Worldwide Education Symposium on July 25. The symposium brought together professionals dedicated to military voluntary education. Baker was recognized for her leadership and vision regarding the importance of education for servicemembers, and for her understanding of how online and distance learning meets their needs.

### Four Named Distinguished Faculty for 2012

with Excelsior's annual Distinguished Faculty Award. Provost Mary Beth Hanner presented the award July 12 at the All Faculty Luncheon. This year's recipients are Terry Conry, PhD, in the School of Business & Technology; Carol Shenise, MS, RN, in the School of Health Sciences; Tracy Caldwell, PhD, in the School of Liberal Arts; and Joanne Bonesteel, MS, RN, in the School of Nursing.

**TERRY CONRY**, PhD, joined Excelsior College in 2010 as a lead member of the School of Business & Technology faculty committee and began teaching online courses in 2011. Conry has taught undergraduate and graduate online courses and recently developed a new course, BUS 512 Compensation and Benefits, to support the newly approved MBA concentration in human resource management.

CAROL SHENISE, MS, RN, is a longstanding adjunct faculty member in the School of Health Sciences. In 2003, Shenise approached the College with an idea for an online education program to prepare nurses for employment in hospice settings that resulted in a grant award of \$500,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor to create the Certificate Program in End of Life Care. She subsequently served on the committee charged with developing curriculum for this program and created and taught its first course: Introduction to End of Life Care. She has also developed HSC 402 Managing Stress and HSC 406 Introduction to End of Life Care as well as contributed to



the curriculum development for the health education area of emphasis.

TRACY CALDWELL, PhD, has served as a faculty program director and faculty advisor to the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MA/LS) program in the School of Liberal Arts for the past six years. She has developed and taught ENG 360 Literature for Children and Young Adults, ENG 350 Modern Fiction, and MLS 500 Graduate Research and Writing. She has also served on various College committees, including the Middle States accreditation committee, the Student Appeals Committee (chair), the Graduate Council, the Student Success Steering Committee, and the MA/LS Admissions Committee (chair). Additionally, Caldwell was recognized in 2008 as a NACADA Certificate of Merit recipient in the Outstanding New Advisor—Faculty Role category.

JOANNE BONESTEEL, MS, RN, began working with Excelsior students in 1987, and for the past 25 years she has tirelessly ensured the excellence of the College's competency-based, pre-licensure nursing program. She is an expert in associate degree (AD) **O**UTSTANDING IN THEIR FIELDS:

Tracy Caldwell, School of Liberal Arts; Joanne Bonesteel, School of Nursing; Terry Conry, School of Business & Technology; and Carol Shenise, School of Health Sciences, were honored with distinguished faculty awards at the All Faculty Luncheon held in conjunction with Commencement.

nursing education and works collaboratively with many Excelsior faculty and staff to maintain a curriculum that is rigorous and contemporary. She chairs all eight of the AD in nursing theory examination subcommittees, provides exemplary leadership to adjunct faculty and makes data-driven recommendations to the curriculum committee. In her leadership role, she guides faculty to ensure nursing theory examinations test principles that support current clinical nursing practice and are consistent with the ADN graduate competencies established by the National League for Nursing. Additionally, Bonesteel created Critical Thinking and the Nursing Process, an online tutorial addressing important learning needs of new AD nursing students around enhancing critical thinking skills.

#### NEW STUDY OPTIONS

The MBA program now includes a HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT CONCENTRATION. This MBA concentration meets the needs of experienced managers who have completed a bachelor's degree in a health care/health services program and who seek to enhance their management abilities. The health care management concentration includes courses such as Communication Strategy for the Health Care Leader, Strategic Management of Health Care Organizations, and Health Care Policy, Politics and Power.

Students pursuing a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Technology Management can choose RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY AS AN AREA OF FOCUS and complete 15 credits from among five new courses. Developed in partnership with General Electric, this area of focus meets the needs of individuals who have completed an Associate in Applied Science and would like to earn a bachelor's degree in their career field. It's also a fit for those – including graduates of community colleges - who would like to enter a baccalaureate program in the field of renewable energy.

Students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nuclear Engineering who work in the nuclear industry or are coming into the field from the military can earn their MBA at the same time. The DUAL TRACK PROGRAM provides a technical education as well as the business experience needed for management positions, and it includes three courses in technology management. The degree can be completed with 151 credits – up to 21 credits fewer than would be required for two separate degrees.

#### Employment Service for Students; Alumni to Follow

he Excelsior College Career Center recently introduced EC JobLinks to support career advancement opportunities for students and increase potential employment opportunities. This free premier Web-based job search database allows enrolled students to access thousands of U.S. and international job postings. This service also provides a user-friendly resume development tool.

"Available 24/7/365, EC JobLinks offers the most current information and allows students to conduct job search activities when it's convenient for them," says Maribeth Gunner Pulliam, Excelsior's career services coordinator with the Center for Online Education, Learning, and Academic Services. An EC JobLinks account exists for each Excelsior student and can be accessed at www.excelsior.edu/web/ec-joblinks. The service will be available for alumni in the coming months.

EC JobLinks enables users to search for all types of jobs, research employers, and access the Resume & Cover Letter Builder to create a resume and apply for jobs in real time. Users may upload a "primary resume" to be included in the EC JobLinks Resume Books, create Job Search Agents and receive automatic notifications of new job postings that meet personalized preferences, and track where they have sent resumes. In addition, users can store up to 10 documents, including resumes, cover letters, and unofficial transcripts. Personal data is never distributed to a third party.

"EC JobLinks is your best connection to catalyze your career," says Gunner Pulliam.

#### Associate Provost Timmons Named ACE Fellow

eorge Timmons, PhD, associate provost of the Center for Online Education, Learning, and Academic Services, has been named an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow for the academic year 2012– 2013. Following a rigorous application process, he is one

of 57 higher education leaders selected for this prestigious leadership development program.

The ACE Fellows Program was established in 1965 and is designed to strengthen institutions and leadership in American higher education by identifying and preparing promising senior faculty and administrators for responsible positions in college and university administration. This year's class of



fellows includes individuals from the United States and other nations.

Timmons was named dean of Online Education and Learning Services at Excelsior in 2004, and associate provost-COELAS in 2012. He leads development and oversight of the College's online

courses, student and faculty support services, comprehensive library services, and other institution-wide academic resources. He earned a doctorate in higher education administration from Bowling Green State University and a Master of Science in education from Old Dominion University; he earned his undergraduate degree from Norfolk State University.

#### It's an Honor

he School of Liberal Arts is now home to a chapter of the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society. Founded in 1946, Alpha Sigma Lambda recognizes adults who achieve academic excellence while maintaining their home and work obligations. It has more than 300 local chapters nationwide.

"It will also serve as an inspiration to all of our hardworking adult learners to continuously strive for lifelong learning and scholastic growth."

Students will be inducted into the Excelsior chapter, Sigma Zeta, based on individual academic merit, although other factors may be considered. Students elected to the chapter's board will have direct involvement in chapter governance, including assistance with fundraising, planning, operations, and publications.

"To be approved for a chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda is a true honor, and one that will allow us to recognize our highest achievers for their academic excellence," said Scott Dalrymple, PhD, dean of the School of Liberal Arts. "It will also serve as an inspiration to all of our hardworking adult learners to continuously strive for lifelong learning and scholastic growth." Sigma Zeta held its first induction ceremony on July 12.

Excelsior is home to two other honor societies: the Tau Kappa Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International, the Honor Society of Nursing, and a chapter of the Alpha Nu Sigma Honor Society, an affiliate of the American Nuclear Society.

#### Veterans' Center Opens

he more than 3,000 veterans enrolled in the College can now connect and find peer support at an online veterans' center. The center provides a mentorship program for new students, access to College orientation materials and other resources, a discussion area, and a place to share educational and career achievements.

"Traditional colleges provide a space on campus for veterans to come together to socialize, support each other in their academic pursuits, and find appropriate resources to aid success in attending college and obtaining a career," says Judy Reed, director of veteran services and outreach. "Veterans attending Excelsior can now do the same."

Eligible students can visit the Excelsior College Veterans' Center at www.excelsior.edu/VeteransCenter (login required).

#### A First for Excelsior

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hen General Electric sought to partner with a college to train a large, educated workforce to support the global expansion of renewable energy, it turned to Excelsior. GE employees can receive up to 49 credits from the College for completing the company's intensive wind technician certification program. Offering college credits for work experience helps GE to compete for and retain the skilled workers the company needs to support its global wind turbine business, according to Andy Holt, the general managerrenewable energy services for GE Power & Water.

#### Research on the Go

he Excelsior College Library is now mobile-friendly. When accessing the library from a smartphone, the library home page at www.excelsior.edu/library (log in required) will automatically reformat to a more mobile-friendly layout. The library's research guides also support the mobile layout, making it easy for students to conduct research no matter where they are.

To see the mobile look without using a smartphone, go to http:// libguides.excelsior.edu.vlib.excelsior .edu/mobile/3333.



In July President John F. Ebersole (right) and Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Joseph J. Taluto (left), an executive in residence at Excelsior College, signed an agreement with Maj. Gen. Steven N. Wickstrom (center), commander of the 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard, to provide special pricing on tuition and fees to members of the Rainbow Division Veteran Memorial Foundation and their spouses or domestic partners. The College also recently began a partnership with The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Vermont to provide members and their spouses or domestic partners educational opportunities at reduced tuition and fees. PHOTO: COURTESY OF RAINBOW DIVISION VETERAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



**BY MARIBETH GUNNER PULLIAM** 

### SHARPEN YOUR GOTIATION SKILLS

Most job seekers agree - the one aspect of a job search that causes the most angst is the process of salary negotiation.

Once you have proven to be a top candidate, compensation will need to be addressed. How can you be sure to negotiate the best salary? With some basic knowledge and proactive preparation, you can reduce your stress and increase your potential for a successful outcome.

#### Know What You Want

Preparing for effective salary negotiating should begin well before the job interview. Evaluating your priorities and examining your needs is a good starting point. What do you want to attain in your next career step? What type of organization do you want to work for? The size, scope, and mission of an

organization will dictate the type of compensation package that is offered. For example, a small business may not offer as competitive a salary as a larger one, but it may provide comparable benefits that augment salary, such as stock options or comprehensive health benefits. Would you accept a lower salary as a trade-off? What if other benefits are offered? You need to consider your bottom line. Review your personal budget. What amount do you need to sustain or enhance your lifestyle? What is the minimum salary offer that you will accept? Assessing your wants and needs prior to the interview will help to define your desired work/life balance and allow you to confidently pursue salary negotiation.

#### Do Your Research

Another important task to complete prior to an interview is salary research. It is critical to know what both the job and you are worth to ensure the best bargaining power when negotiating. Compensation is not determined solely by your experience and abilities. Other factors that affect potential salary are geographic location, economic

conditions, trends in the industry, size of the organization, job level, and the overall status of the job market. For successful salary negotiation, you need to determine the fair market value for the position in a specific geographic location.

There are several resources that can aid in your research. The Internet provides many useful links for salary calculators, salary surveys, and cost-of-living calculators. These tools are generally free and designed to provide an overview of salary information that is pertinent to your specific situation. You can also access many of these resources on the Job Search/Salary Negotiation pages of Excelsior's online Career Center.

Salary calculators compute salaries for jobs by title, industry, and geographic location. Some salary calculators will also provide more personalized reports for a fee. Salary surveys, too, reflect the general range of compensation awarded for jobs in your career field by occupation, industry, and location. Some salary surveys also provide information on starting salaries, based on college major.

To determine if a specific employer's salary offer is reasonable, you need to have a good assessment of what the going rate is for the position you are seeking. Professional associations in your field are another excellent source of salary information. These associations often conduct regular surveys of their members, which yield the most current and job-specific salary information. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Occupational Outlook Handbook are two online resources that also provide helpful data and statistics on salaries.

Although salary surveys and calculators provide good estimations, the results may not match your job description exactly. However, the information can still be useful as a baseline for what is generally standard in your field. It's a good idea to investigate more than one of these resources to obtain several perspectives. If you plan to relocate for a job, cost-of-living calculators are good indicators of what you'll need to earn to make a living in various locations in the U.S. For example, a larger city may have a much higher cost of living than a small city or town. It is important to allow for differences in the cost of living when determining the salary you will seek in a new location.

The more information you gather about the current overall job market—and your value within that market—the stronger foundation you'll have to successfully negotiate and maximize your chances for an optimal compensation package.

#### Considerations for Negotiations

Once you've done your research and have a good understanding of your worth, you will be prepared to talk salary. Many employers have an established range of salaries budgeted for specific jobs, and they anticipate that a candidate will bargain. There are several points to consider in the negotiation process:

During the interview, avoid being the first to mention salary. Allow the employer to introduce the topic. Delaying any salary discussion opens the door for you to tout your strengths and establish why you are the right one for the job, before compensation is determined. Postponing the topic of salary also provides time for you to glean more information about what the position entails. When it is evident that there is a strong mutual interest, and you are deemed to be an exceptional candidate, place the onus on the employer to pitch the best offer. You'll have greater leverage for successful negotiation.

Assessing your wants and needs prior to the interview will help to define your desired work/ life balance and allow you to confidently pursue salary negotiation.

2. Be aware that some employers may attempt to engage you in a salary discussion early in the interview process. In this case, you may need to take a different tack. You don't want your response to price you out of the job or invite an offer that is less than the going rate. If asked what your salary requirements are, try not to disclose a specific figure that could minimize your bargaining power.

#### YOU HAVE SEVERAL OPTIONS:

- Explain that you would like to know more about the expectations and duties of the position, prior to the salary discussion.
- State a salary range that you seek, and let them know you can be flexible for the right opportunity.
- Indicate that your salary requirements are contingent upon review of the total compensation package being offered.
- Focus your reply on a salary you believe to be commensurate with the job responsibilities, based upon your previous research.

If asked about your salary history, be honest. If your previous salary was considerably higher or lower than the range being offered, be prepared to address this. Be creative. Contextualize your past salary. Note if there was a difference in location or size of the prior organization. Highlight any additional benefits you may have received, such as extensive health care coverage or investment options that account for the disparity in compensation.

**REMEMBER:** During a salary negotiation, you and the employer are working toward a shared goal. Be prepared to compromise. If you are not successful at negotiating the

exact salary you want, consider asking for other alternatives to achieve your objective. It is also important to consider the benefits offered as they can significantly add to your base pay.

While benefits are considered standard and may not be negotiable, some employers do offer flexible benefit packages that provide employees with choices. A trade-off might be to secure an increased pension plan, flexible working hours, tuition reimbursement, bonuses, additional vacation time, or coverage of moving expenses. At this point, pursuing all options can bring you closer to your desired goal.

Of course, always maintain a positive and professional communication style when negotiating. Your demeanor during negotiations gives the employer a view of who you are. Even if you don't take the job, you never know if your paths may cross in future business situations. When salary negotiations conclude, and an offer is made, it is prudent to ask for time to review the offer—if you are still unsure.

Once you do accept the job offer, it is important to get the final offer in writing. Regardless of whether you choose to accept or decline, be sure to confirm your response in writing and acknowledge your appreciation for the employer's time and efforts.

#### De-stress the Process

Sufficient preparation for salary negotiations can change a challenging aspect of the job search process into a rewarding experience. Sharpening your salary negotiation skills will give you the tools you need to get the compensation you deserve and set your career path in the right direction.

View related resources and additional career-related links at **www** .excelsior.edu/career. You'll find salary negotiation tips on the Job Search Tools and Techniques page. The Career Center is also on Facebook at Facebook.com/ECCareerCenter.

Maribeth Gunner Pulliam, MS Ed, is the career services coordinator, Center for Online Education, Learning, and Academic Services, at Excelsior College.

### A Good Investment Annual giving reaches record level of support to benefit students

n April, just prior to completing her bachelor's degree program, Sandra Calhoun spoke to community members at the Partners in Lifelong Learning fund-raising event about the impact of scholarships

on her academic experience. In addition to alleviating a financial burden, Calhoun asserts the scholarships are a source of pride.

"Receiving an Excelsior scholarship not only was a financial help but also gave me a morale boost," Calhoun explains. "I was so proud to be chosen that it made me even more determined to finish my studies and do as well as I possibly could. The money itself helped to offset some of the cost

of student loans that I relied on for tuition and fees. Every little bit that I didn't have to take in loans made such a difference."

A total of 1,905 people made a difference in the lives of students this past year, giving nearly a half million dollars to Excelsior College in 2011–2012. Their gifts to the annual campaign and endowed funds enabled the College to provide more than 550 students with scholarships averaging \$678 as well as support for faculty and programs.

"Those dollars go a long way at Excelsior," says Cathy S. Kushner, vice president for Institutional Advancement. "Every gift makes a difference in the lives of our students and allows Excelsior to continue offering flexible, valueadded degree completion options for working adults," she explains. The year brought overall growth in contributions

> Receiving an Excelsior scholarship not only was a financial help but also gave me a morale boost. I was so proud to be chosen that it made me even more determined to finish my studies and do as well as I possibly could.

> > SANDRA CALHOUN, BA '12

EXCELSIOR

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to the annual campaign, with increased support from friends of the College, employees, and other groups as well as increased support for funds specifically benefitting spouses of active-duty military servicemembers and students in the associate degree in nursing programs.

> In addition, 25 percent of supporters made their third consecutive annual gift to the College and 15 percent of all contributors were new donors to the annual campaign. The increase in first-time givers and the support of loyal contributors helped grow the annual giving rate by 27 percent over the previous year. Across the United States, charitable contributions to colleges and universities were up in

2011 after two years of no or slow growth in annual giving, a trend commonly linked to the state of the economy.

The uptick in giving to Excelsior meant that more students could receive scholarships to assist them in completing their coursework and earning their degrees. The need for tuition support is great; a total of 11,609 Free Application for Federal Student Aid forms, known as the FAFSA, were completed by Excelsior students to determine expected family contributions toward education costs and eligibility for College-sponsored, state, and federal aid. Excelsior uses the form to determine eligibility for need-based scholarships.

The scholarships alleviate worry and ease financial concerns, and according to some letters from grateful recipients, come when they are needed most. "This award

has really changed the once rocky road to completing my RN education," writes Derrick Martin in a recent email to the College. "Because of financial challenges I have endured this year, I did not know when I would be able to complete my CPNE [capstone nursing examination]. Thus, when I received a call from financial aid congratulating me on being a recipient of this scholarship, I literally thought I was dreaming. Words cannot express my sincere gratitude."

When it comes to measuring the success of annual giving, participation is as important as the dollar amount given. Every cent awarded in scholarships must be used, and the investment in students pays off when they earn their degrees. After earning a Bachelor of Arts in liberal studies, Calhoun enrolled in a master's program at Excelsior with plans to pursue a law degree.

27% increase in giving

### Excelsior's provost receives prestigious nursing fellowship in recognition of contributions to outcomes assessment

BY DANA YANULAVICH

Lead the n individual who has made a career out of assessing learning now has had the roles reversed—her contributions to leadership have been assessed as exemplary by a national nursing organization. Mary Beth

Hanner, Excelsior's provost and chief academic officer, will be inducted in October as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing in recognition of her leadership in the area of outcomes assessment.

Dr. Hanner's long and fruitful association with Excelsior began more than 30 years ago as a part-time item [question] writer for the College's credit-bearing examinations. Since then she has transitioned into full-time employment and worn many hats. "In my 21-year [full-time] career here, I have had 12 titles!" she quips. Included in her Excelsior experience are stints at the helm of each of the College's four schools as well as several academic departments. "It's great for me, because I have some understanding of each of the schools and many of the other units. I have a good overview of the institution. I have never had the opportunity to get bored: I'm always doing something different!"

It's that depth of experience and significance of her contributions that have earned Hanner the fellowship recognition.

"Mary Beth Hanner brings her excellent academic credentials and vision to the education of nurses," explains Ida Androwich, a member of Excelsior's Nursing Faculty Committee. **"She clearly understands the value and importance of sound competency assessment and has devoted much of her career to improving innovation in assessment methods."** 

Hanner's entree into the assessment field began with her own career, first as a graduate of a nursing diploma program from St. Peter's Hospital School of Nursing in Albany, N.Y. Quickly realizing she needed a bachelor's degree to progress in the field, she enrolled in a BS program at Boston College. Next she worked as a public health nurse for Albany County's Health Department, which led to her pursuit of a Master of Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A friend from nursing school told her of the rewards of teaching, which led Hanner to begin her own instructional career. After a brief stint as an instructor at the University of Evansville, she began a 17-year teaching career at Russell Sage College in Troy, N.Y. Much like Excelsior's lifelong learners, she, too, continued her academic pursuits while working, earning a PhD in nursing at the University of Texas at Austin.

Lending her leadership skills in the community, Mary Beth Hanner, PhD, RN, is not only a member of the board of directors at the LaSalle School in Albany, N.Y., but also has taught a leadership class to its students. Dr. Hanner continues the tradition of service begun by her father, who went to the school when it was an orphanage, ultimately became a banker, and served on its board for 25 years. The George E. Hanner Chapel/Cultural Center is named after him.

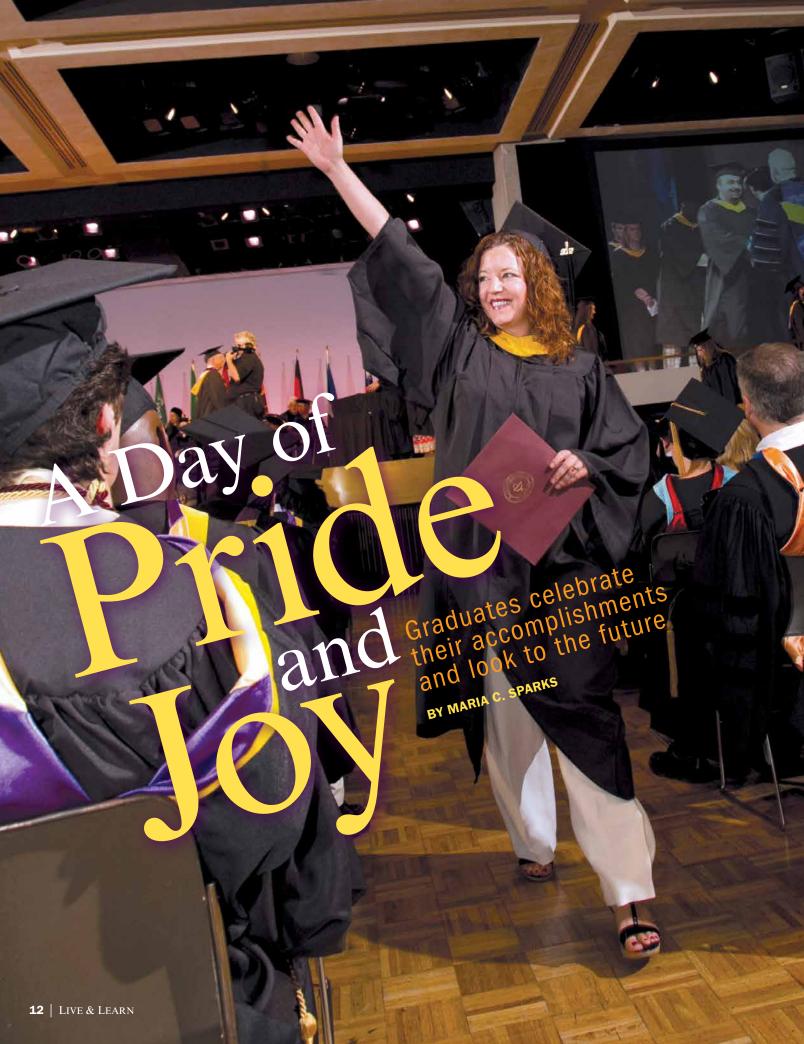
The genesis of Hanner's long Excelsior career began at Sage, when Carrie Lenburg, then dean of Excelsior (then Regents) College's School of Nursing, came to recruit adjunct faculty. The experience of serving as an Excelsior item writer and subsequent service on testing and development committees helped Hanner foster a new understanding of her role as a nurse educator, learning that there were really two sides to the coin: the caring/ teaching/coaching piece coupled with the critic/evaluator role, where it's important to determine if a student has achieved the expected learning outcomes and knowledge in order to be a safe and effective nurse. The synergism of this combination really hit home for Hanner at Excelsior. She explains, "This institution taught me how to be a far more effective teacher-both in [a] clinical setting as well as the classroom."

When the dean of nursing position became available at Excelsior, Hanner transitioned from teaching at Sage to a full-time leadership role at Excelsior. "I felt like it was a perfect fit for me," she recalls. While at Excelsior, she has had the opportunity to present at conferences all over the world on the competency-based nursing education model for which the College is known. This laid the groundwork for her to apply lessons learned from nursing assessment to other fields, which helped propel her career progression from nursing dean to vice president for health sciences, to vice president of outcomes assessment and institutional research, and ultimately to her current position as provost and chief academic officer, overseeing the entire College's academic endeavors.

Hanner's leadership in the field and at the College has not gone unnoticed. In 2007, she was named a fellow of the Academy of Nursing Education in the National League for Nursing's inaugural group. She has also been recognized with an Excelsior Distinction in Leadership Award, and received many state and local honors, including an award from the Black Nurses Association of the Capital District for leadership in minority student retention, diversity, and nursing education.

The changing diversity of Excelsior's nursing grads is something Hanner takes pride in observing. When she became dean of nursing, nearly all graduates were white women, a reflection of the profession at the time. However, now they are much more diverse with regard to both race and gender. "I really think we are changing the face of nursing and having a real impact on the diversity of the nursing population," Hanner observes. "And if we're going to give culturally competent care, that's really important."

While Hanner may be best known for her work in assessing student learning, she hopes her legacy will be in leadership and mentoring others. She says, "Leadership is a relationship. It's helping people develop those relationship skills. Not everyone can be a manager, but everyone can be a leader."





sher name was read, Wendy Myers **O**, of Elizabethtown, Pa., raised her arms over her head triumphantly and walked across the stage. This day, she said afterward, still smiling, was a long time coming. It took 12 years— 12 eventful years with military service, marriage, starting a family, and raising a child among other life happenings. But she had earned her baccalaureate degree.

Her story is at once personal yet familiar to many of the nearly 300 Excelsior graduates who participated in Commencement in Albany, N.Y., on July 13. For these adult learners, representative of the 5,184 people who had completed their studies at Excelsior in the 12 months preceding the ceremony, achieving their sought-after degree was a cause for celebration as well as a passport to a new beginning.

The night before, at honor society induction ceremonies and the Awards Convocation, graduates shared their stories about attaining their degrees. "It took me five years to complete my master's, even after all the transfer credit that Excelsior accepted, and 90 percent of the work I did was during the hours of 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.," said Kathryn Elder B, a former civil engineer who found that volunteering in classrooms was her favorite part of the day and decided to become a certified teacher. "Everything else had to be done before I could sit



Smiles were everywhere at Commencement, where nearly 300 graduates crossed the stage to the applause of family, friends, and the Excelsior College community. Tracy Egler, of Broomfield, Colo. (at left), beams as she acknowledges those who made the trip to celebrate her achievement.

Also shown: C Charity Prater; E Lucretia Roberson; H Herman Green;

I (I-r) Donna-Marie Huff, Juliet Ibemere, Marilyn Dunn, Donna Kent, Boulong Farrell, and Irene Beaman; and K Pulasthi Marawanagoda.

PHOTO: MICHAEL HEMBERGEF

down, read, write, and respond," said Elder, a working mother and elementary school teacher from Cobleskill, N.Y., who earned a Master of Arts in liberal studies.

Elder was one of several award recipients to comment on the flexibility that Excelsior offers. A common theme emerged as she and other graduates mentioned the challenges of completing coursework and studying while balancing family responsibilities, work, and other priorities. Henry Gudino (A), a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy who earned a Bachelor of Science in liberal studies this year, talked about the limited time to study aboard a submarine while working 18- to 20-hour days. It was the second degree from Excelsior for Gudino, of Winchester, Calif., who earned an Associate in Applied Science in 2003 while on a tour of duty aboard the USS *Portsmouth*. Shawn Manning (L), of Lexington, S.C., a veteran of the U.S. Navy and now a plant engineer/operations

# **6 6** I admire and respect the different paths you each have taken to earn your degree. Your individual stories are truly unique and inspirational."

manager at a cogeneration facility, earned a Bachelor of Science in nuclear engineering technology. He remarked that Excelsior was a great fit for him and others, such as those on deployment, who work many hours.

"I think you'll agree with me that they [the award recipients] exemplify the College's collective success," Provost Mary Beth Hanner told the audience at the Awards Convocation. During the convocation, 12 students were recognized with awards celebrating academic achievement, among other criteria, and an award was presented acknowledging the impact of student support. In addition, two previous graduates received Alumni Achievement Awards (see page 20) and two trustees emeriti, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Arthur J. Gregg and Dr. Joshua L. Smith, the recipients of honorary degrees, spoke about their educational experiences. Ind., earned a Bachelor of Science in liberal studies in 2012, his second degree from Excelsior in two years. "Excelsior has helped me to achieve that goal of fulfilling that empty void, of realizing my dream, and achieving my vision," he said.

The same was true for other graduates, including Steven Heard **1**, of Norwich, Conn., who earned a Bachelor of Science in nuclear engineering technology at age 63. Heard, the recipient of an award for excellence from the Excelsior College chapter of the American Nuclear Society, said there were times in his career when he was poised for job advancement but didn't have the degree. "I had the ability, I had the will, but I did not have the paper," he told the audience at the chapter's award ceremony. Heard, a U.S. Navy veteran of the Vietnam War who works in the nuclear power industry, told everyone



The more than 5,000 graduates in the class of 2012 range in age from 17 to 78, with the average age of 37. Thirty-four percent of the graduates are members of the U.S. military. In all, 26 countries were represented. But no matter where — or when — these graduates began their Excelsior experience, they arrived at the same place, to celebrate the same thing: accomplishing their goal.

Keith Taylor **(**right, with Vice Provost Patrick Jones), a self-described independent learner, said he began with Excelsior at age 50. He took 31 exams, driving 65 miles one way to the testing site each time. Taylor, from Demotte, that now that he had his bachelor's, he was "moving up."

At Commencement, President John F. Ebersole acknowledged the achievements of the graduates. "I continue to be amazed at the dedication, perseverance, and academic accomplishments you display," he remarked. "I admire and respect the different paths you each have taken to earn your degree. Your individual stories are truly unique and inspirational."

Saying her story was "no more heroic" than anyone else's, graduate speaker Mary Beth Bobik-Kadylak G, from Johnson City, N.Y., described her journey as one of

highs and lows, persistence, and humbling moments as well as one of great love, belief, and an overwhelming drive. A layoff propelled her to return to school in 2008, becoming a full-time student for the first time since 1981. After earning her second associate degree, from Broome Community College in Binghamton, N.Y., Bobik-Kadylak enrolled in Excelsior College through an academic partnership. In November 2011, she earned a Bachelor of Science in business.

"I took my last exam on September 21, began a fantastic new job on October 18, and turned 50 years old on November 24, and my whole life changed," she passionately told her fellow graduates to a round of applause. "What a ride!"



#### HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENCEMENT

In his comments to graduates, Richard Yep, chair of the Excelsior College Board of Trustees, said, "... as you move forward, don't forget those who helped you along this path and return the favor by helping those who follow you."



Honorary degrees were awarded to **Arthur J. Gregg**, lieutenant general (ret.) in the U.S. Army and chair emeritus of Excelsior College (above), and **Joshua L. Smith**, PhD, professor and director (ret.), Program in Higher Education and Center for Urban Community College Leadership,



School of Education, New York University, and chair emeritus of Excelsior College (above).

**Robert B. Reich**, a professor, economic analyst, and former U.S. secretary of labor in the Clinton administration, delivered the Commencement Address to the graduates. Although he interspersed humor with his comments, he took a serious tone when he told graduates, "... doing well with your degrees is not just about making more money. It's also about contributing more to our society. Whether you're in the armed services or you're in other aspects of public service, or you're just volunteering your time, we desperately need you and your skills and insights...



with your skills and life and career you will inspire others."

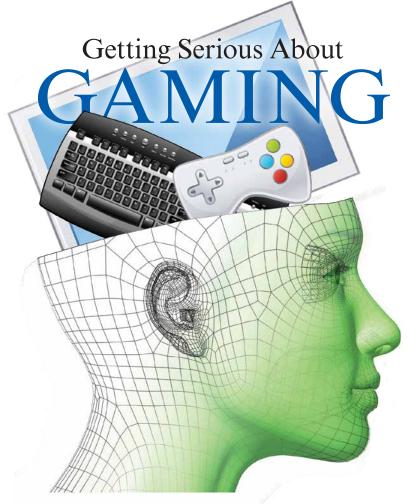
**Gabriel Leighton**, who earned his Associate in Science in nursing, sang the National Anthem and *America the Beautiful*. In sharing his audition video, Leighton, of Sarasota, Fla., wrote that he was continuing a family legacy in nursing by earning his degree. His immediate family, with more than 60 years of



combined nursing experience, attended Commencement, and he kept his singing a surprise for his mother, "the most amazing person on the planet."

#### FOR A FRONT ROW SEAT

at Commencement and the Awards Convocation, go to <u>www.excelsior.edu/</u> <u>webcast</u> to watch – or relive – these events, hear graduates' stories, and see the pride in their accomplishments.



ecent events at Excelsior show that the College isn't just playing around when it comes to gaming. In May, a workshop and symposium were held, bringing together industry and academic experts in a lively discussion of how serious games can be used to enhance student learning. Serious games — video or online games designed to address education and/or training needs — are being examined as a possible platform to improve student writing. These events were just the start of what may prove to be a very innovative way to support student success via a variety of multimedia approaches. The College had also received a \$639,000 grant in June from The Kresge Foundation to fully integrate multimedia into Excelsior's Online Writing Lab (OWL) for greater student engagement and increased academic success.

A survey completed by Excelsior faculty identified the need to help students with their writing skills, and evidenced concern that a lack of writing proficiency presented a significant barrier to students' ability to successfully complete undergraduate composition courses. Students share this concern. A 2012 student survey noted that of those who felt they needed academic assistance, 42 percent said it was in the area of writing. "The number of adult learners who do not possess college-level writing skills has reached a near-crisis level, acting as a hurdle for many seeking out a college degree," explains David Seelow, PhD, director of writing programs in Excelsior's School of Liberal Arts.

To help improve student writing skills, faculty and staff are considering the impact of multimedia on learning, including the integration of serious games into the OWL. The May event was one way to further explore the opportunities and challenges presented by multimedia. The day began with a one-hour workshop, "Collaboration in the Course Development Process: An Exercise in Excellence. A Workshop for SMEs, Program Directors and Instructional Designers," presented by Jon Aleckson, PhD, author of *MindMeld*. Using his own game to focus on the importance of momentum in the collaborative process, he showed that momentum is the force that propels the four factors of collaboration: flat power relationships, effective management, formative evaluation, and shared language.

Following the workshop, nationally renowned experts gathered to address how games might contribute to improvements in student writing. The symposium, "Meeting Students Where They Play: Exploring the Use of Video Games to Teach College Writing and Research" included Jon Aleckson (Web Courseworks Ltd.), Pat Belanoff (Stony Brook University), Dickie Selfe (Ohio State University), Andrew Phelps (RIT), Tobi Saulnier (1st Playable Productions), and Marc Destefano (RPI). The event was moderated by international expert in simulations and games Clark Aldrich, and it generated broad interest with more than 170 people attending either in person or online.

The gaming symposium offered a springboard on which to explore the addition of serious games to the College's OWL. A free, publicly available online writing service designed for adult learners, the OWL features four interlocking components: Grammar Essentials, Writer's Studio, Essay Zone, and Research Corridor. In addition to facilitating the integration of multimedia throughout the OWL, the Kresge grant will enable Excelsior to introduce gaming technology into one module.

"The Kresge Foundation's education program seeks to promote access and success in higher education by supporting innovative non-profit educational programs such as the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab," says William F. Moses, Kresge's education program director. "Academic under-preparation is probably the single biggest reason why students, especially low-income students, are not able to complete degrees. Our shared mission to serve the traditionally underserved creates a natural partnership between Kresge and Excelsior, and we look forward to continuing to work with the College on this initiative."

### On the Road Less Traveled

ALUMNUS GARRY JAUNAL LENDS SUPPORT FOR THE JOURNEY

t the Awards Convocation the night before Commencement in 2011, Garry Jaunal listened attentively to the graduates' heartfelt tales of their jour-

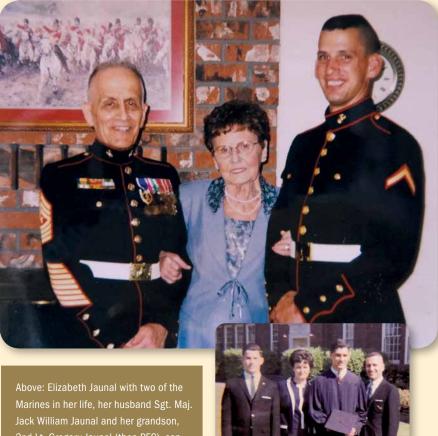
neys to earn a college degree, and in those poignant stories of challenges and triumphs, he found the answer to his own quest.

Jaunal, a third-generation Marine and a graduate of Excelsior (then Regents) College, had for many years been searching for an appropriate place to start a scholarship in memory of his mother. Elizabeth Jaunal, a military wife who sacrificed for her husband, her family, and her country, was a lifelong learner dedicated to education. "She never stopped learning," says Jaunal, warmly recounting that his mother took computer classes in her 70s and was zealous in her support of him, his brother, and their father. His mother's own dedication to learning was mirrored in the graduates he heard speak at that Awards Convocation he attended with his wife Bridget. "As a whole, people at Excelsior are dedicated to the quest for knowledge, so we said, 'This is the right place'," recalls Jaunal. "It's the kind of place that's worthy of my mom's memory."

The Elizabeth Margaret Ann Jaunal (née Davidson) Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in December 2011. The intent

of the fund reflects the importance Elizabeth placed on family and education as well as her personal understanding of the stresses of military family life. Recipients of the scholarship must be members of the armed forces of the United States or Canada (Elizabeth's home country), an honorably discharged veteran of those services, or a child or spouse of a servicemember or veteran meeting those criteria. The fund supports students who are pursuing their first degree at the associate or bachelor's level.

Jaunal considers earning his own bachelor's degree a milestone in his life. He came to Excelsior with a substantial number of credits and earned a Bachelor of Science in history in 1992. In quick succession, he went on to earn



Marines in her life, her husband Sgt. Maj. Jack William Jaunal and her grandson, 2nd Lt. Gregory Jaunal (then PFC), son of Garry and Bridget. Right: Garry Jaunal with his parents and brother at his high school graduation in 1967.

> a master's degree from Krannert Graduate School of Management

at Purdue University in 1994 and a juris doctor from Northwestern University School of Law in 1999. "None of that would have occurred but for Excelsior," he comments. "Excelsior was the key that opened the doors."

A partner at Baker & McKenzie in Chicago, Jaunal is a member of the global private equity practice and the banking and finance practice. Law wasn't his first career, or second, or even third. Before pursuing the legal profession, he had more than 25 years of experience in the design, construction, and start-up testing of commercial nuclear and fossil-fueled power plants, and was a consultant in the areas of management and technology for the energy, telecommunications, air, and marine port industries. And earlier he was an officer and detective with the New Castle County [Delaware] Police Department and served in the U.S. Marine Corp.

Named an "Illinois Rising Star" in 2008 and 2009 by *Super Lawyers* magazine, Jaunal says his proudest professional accomplishments include building a successful law practice and using his legal skills to help others.

This work ethic informs Jaunal's choice of pro bono activities, as he delves into legal matters he describes as "not without redeeming social merit." He points to his work representing a student with a learning disability and his parents in an Individualized Education Plan conference. His efforts resulted in the student's diagnosis as having special needs and in obtaining services for the student, who Jaunal says went from facing expulsion from school to earning all As. His pro bono activities also include developing policy with the Public International Law and Policy Group to stop piracy on the high seas, representing the indigenous peoples of Nepal in a complaint before the United Nations Human Rights Commission, and involvement with other matters closer to home. In recognition of his outstanding public service and community involvement, the Excelsior College Alumni Association presented Jaunal with the C. Wayne Williams Award in July 2011.

"Education is a gift that one gives to one's self," Jaunal remarks, adding that Excelsior provides a framework for people to do that. "It opens paths to a higher education that might not otherwise be available to people. [For] people who don't have, or who are unable to follow for whatever reason, the traditional path to a degree, Excelsior provides them with that alternate road."

Jaunal calls this alternate road "the path less traveled. The people who choose that path manifest a supreme commitment to knowledge," he says.

And that's something of which his mother would be proud.  $\blacksquare$  -M. Sparks

Education is a gift that one gives to one's self ... [For] people who don't have, or who are unable to follow for whatever reason, the traditional path to a degree, Excelsior provides them with that alternate road."



Garry Jaunal and his wife Bridget Kennedy Jaunal honored the memory of his mother by establishing a scholarship to support the educational pursuits of servicemembers and veterans, or their family members. Elizabeth Jaunal was the wife, mother, grandmother, daughter-in-law, and sister-in-law of a Marine.

#### **NEW ENDOWMENT FUNDS**

Endowment funds further the mission of Excelsior College by helping to support the College's initiatives while fulfilling the passions of donors. Over the past two years, endowment funds have become a popular way for people to assure that the causes they feel strongly about—for example, scholarships for military students or for helping women pursuing studies in technology—receive funding. These funds have also been a way to memorialize loved ones and to perpetuate their memories.

Setting up an endowment is easier and more affordable than one might expect, says Cathy S. Kushner, vice president for institutional advancement at Excelsior College. A fund can be established and contributed to over a period of time, with the expectation that it will be fully funded within 10 years. In fact, Kushner and her husband recently established one.

Whether through gifts to an existing fund or by initiating new ones, interest in endowments has jumped from 14 donors in 2007 to more than 100 in 2012. Endowments initiated over the 12 months ending June 30, 2012, include:

**ELIZABETH MARGARET ANN JAUNAL (NÉE DAVIDSON) MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND,** established by alumnus Garry Jaunal, BS '92, in memory of his mother. Jaunal is a member of the College's board of trustees.

KUSHNER AND LINDHOLM FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND, initiated by Cathy Kushner, vice president for institutional advancement at Excelsior College, and her husband David Lindholm.

**DR. JANE LECLAIR '94, '95 SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY,** initiated by Jane LeClair, PhD, dean of the Excelsior College School of Business & Technology, who has earned an associate and a bachelor's degree from Excelsior.

#### **THOMAS C. PICKENS MEMORIAL**

**SCHOLARSHIP FUND**, established by Patrick Moran, a friend of the College and brother of Bill Moran, BS '00, an alumnus and former member of the College's board of trustees.

DANA E. AND BARRY J. YANULAVICH SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND, initiated by alumna Dana Yanulavich, MA/LS '08, senior editor at Excelsior College, and her husband Barry.



you

Whether

#### ALUMNI CONNECTION

One of the 23,275 graduates of USNY-Regents External Degree Program, or

One of the **55,723** graduates of USNY-Regents College, or One of the **14,027** graduates of Regents College, or

One of the more than **40,000** graduates of Excelsior College

Read on for news of your alumni community

#### **GREETINGS, EXCELSIOR ALUMNI!**

want to especially greet our new grads who have received their degrees in the past few months. Welcome to the Alumni Association! Each year at Commencement, I watch the graduates walk across the stage, representative of all Excelsior graduates, everywhere, and I experience the emotion of seeing dreams fulfilled and goals accomplished.

Excelsior graduates have many reasons to be proud. There is a deep feeling of satisfaction that comes with attaining an educational goal, sometimes against many odds, and a spirit of celebration is evident throughout the Commencement activities. Commencement for many is not an end, but the beginning or continuation of lifelong dreams and goals.

With your dream of a college degree behind you, what will be the next dream? A master's degree? Further professional development classes? Finding your perfect job? Perhaps you graduated several years ago, or even several decades ago, and you now feel like it's time for something new. Excelsior's motto is "Ever Upward," and its commitment to lifelong learning means that any time is a good time to begin working toward your dreams.

The Excelsior College Office of Alumni Affairs offers career counseling and other services, webinars, and job search resources. The Alumni Association offers opportunities for networking, both electronically and at regional events around the country. And Excelsior College has opportunities to take your education to the next level. Why not check out some of these resources, and see how we can help you on the way to your next dream?

Ever Upward,

Dara Waldorf.

Sara Waldorf, BA '03, President Excelsior College Alumni Association

#### **NEW MEMBERS OF THE ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD**

**DWAYN HANFORD, BS '05** of Springfield, Va., has been elected to fill a two-year term. In 2010, he was the recipient of the Excelsior College C. Wayne Williams Award in recognition of outstanding public service and community involvement. Hanford has been active with the Washington, D.C. / Baltimore alumni chapter. This year, he retired from the U.S. Army and is a professor of intelligence studies at American Military University.

ADRIENNE MASON, BS '11ROMof Endwell, N.Y., has beenof Welected to fill a one-year term.beeIn 2011, she was the recipientterm

of the Jean M. Smith Award,

presented to a graduate who

demonstrates outstanding

academic and professional

achievement in the world of

business. Mason has been

an active Alumni Ambassador

volunteer since 2011. She is

employed in the grants finan-

cial management department

of the Research Foundation

at Binghamton University.

#### RONALD TOSTO, BPT '12

of Walnut Creek, Calif., has been elected to a three-year term. This year, he earned a bachelor of professional studies in technology management. He came to the attention of the Alumni Advisory Board when he attended Commencement and the Alumni Association Annual Meeting. Tosto served for 24 years in the U.S. Navy and is now employed by Verizon as a telecommunications project lead.

#### 2012-2013 ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD

#### OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Sara J. Waldorf, BA '03 Warren, MN Serving 2006-2013 swaldorf@excelsior.edu

VICE PRESIDENT

William Senn, BCI '07 McKinney, TX Serving 2011-2015 wsenn@excelsior.edu

#### SECRETARY

Wayne A. Oppel, BS '91 Winston-Salem, NC Serving 2009–2015 woppel@excelsior.edu

#### MEMBERS

Kadidia Doumbia, BS '85 Washington, DC Serving 2010-2013 kdoumbia@excelsior.edu

**Dwayn Hanford, BS '05** Springfield, VA Serving 2012–2014 dhanford@excelsior.edu

Adrienne Mason, BS '11 Endwell, NY Serving 2012-2013 amason@excelsior.edu

LCDR Shannon McMillan, AS '07, BA '09 Virginia Beach, VA Serving 2010–2013 smcmillan@excelsior.edu

> Danny Scott, AS '01, BS '02 Sierra Vista, AZ Serving 2007-2013 dscott@excelsior.edu

> > Ronald Tosto, BPT '12 Walnut Creek, CA Serving 2012-2015 rtosto@excelsior.edu

Megan Wilcox, AS in nursing '11 Nassau, NY Serving 2011–2014 mwilcox@excelsior.edu

Marie Wrinn, BS in nursing '10 Tucson, AZ Serving 2011–2014 mwrinn@excelsior.edu

#### **ALUMNI CONNECTION**

### **WEB CHATS**

To register, go to www.excelsior.edu/AlumniChatReg

#### The Art of Cover Letters ... A Guide to Getting Noticed



Gain practical and proven advice, techniques, and strategies for writing cover letters that stand out. *Presented by Ed Hallenbeck, Career Consultant to Excelsior College* 

New-Cover Letter Critique Service! Visit www.excelsior.edu/web/career-center/ alumni for information on having your cover letter critiqued by a career counselor.

Take Your Career to the Next Level with EC JobLinks: Your New Free Job Search Service



Interested in career advancement? Want to gain a competitive edge in your job search? Take advantage of EC JobLinks, the new Web-based job search database for students and alumni. Access thousands of job postings from within the United States and internationally, research employers, create a dynamic resume, and more. Join us to learn more about how to use this premier free service to take your job search to the next level. Presented by Maribeth Gunner Pulliam, Career Services Coordinator, and Renee Kelly, Alumni Affairs Manager

#### How Can I Help? Utilizing a Career Counselor or Coach in the New Year



Maybe you're interested in career advancement, or even a career transition, but you're not sure how to get started. Find out how to use the expertise of a career counselor or coach to establish and achieve your goals. *Presented by Ed Hallenbeck, Career Consultant to Excelsior College* 

### EVENT

Central Texas Alumni Event Killeen, TX

Visit www.excelsior.edu/alumnievents for information about winter and spring events around the country and to register to attend.



#### **ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS**

t Excelsior's Awards Convocation, part of the College's annual Commencement celebration, the Alumni Advisory Board recognized two outstanding graduates whose achievements it considered inspiring to other graduates and students. David Washington, PhD, received the Alumni Achievement Award, and Shelley G. Moriston, PsyD, RN, was presented with the Carrie B. Lenburg Award.

Washington of Mobile, Ala. (right), willingly became the sole provider for his family at the age of 14. By the time he was a senior in high school, he was working four jobs. After graduation, he joined the U.S. Army and began pursuing a college degree. He earned a Bachelor of Science in general business from Excelsior College in 2001. Upon completion of his military service, he earned three additional degrees.

His life story inspired him to write his first book, *Life is a Choice:* A Guide to Success in Life, which won the Best Business Book award at the 2011–2012 Los Angeles Book Festival. Currently, he is managing partner of Washington & Company, a business consultancy and training firm in Raleigh, N.C.

Moriston of Longmont, Colo. (left), is a three-time graduate of Excelsior College's School of Nursing, having earned an associate degree in 1996, a bachelor's degree in 2007, and a master's degree in 2010. Dean of nursing education programs at the Denver School of Nursing, Moriston has dedicated his life's work in nursing to the care of and advocacy for vulnerable populations. These include children and adults with developmental disabilities, adolescents and adults with acquired or traumatic brain injuries, and people of all ages with pervasive and severe mental illness.

To read more about the recipients, go to www.excelsior.edu/web/ alumni/award-and-achievements, where you'll also find the self-nomination award criteria, nomination instructions, and the self-nomination form. Accepted on a rolling basis, self-nominations must be received by January 15 of the award year.

WHERE ARE YOU @? By sharing your email address with us, you will receive our monthly alumni newsletter. It's your connection to information about the Alumni Association, benefits for alumni, new degree programs and career announcements, Excelsior in the news, and profiles of your fellow alumni. You will also receive invitations to regional events and career and professional development Web chats, as well as surveys about the alumni services you're interested in. Send your name, address, phone number, email address, and unisex t-shirt size to alumni@excelsior.edu to be automatically entered for a chance to win Excelsior gear! A growing number of volunteers reach out to other alumni for networking and fun



ne of the reasons why Excelsior works for so many people is because of the College's commitment to meet students where they are, academically and geographically. As a graduate, however, this means that unless you attended Commencement, you may never have met another Excelsior grad face-to-face. For many graduates, that's okay, but for some, the opportunity to connect with others truly enhances the alumni experience.

This year, a group of volunteers known as alumni ambassadors, in collaboration with the Office of Alumni Affairs, has been able to bring together a total of 165 people in Central Texas; New York state; Orlando, Fla.; the Pacific Northwest; and Washington, D.C. As a result, the College can continue to meet you where you are through regional alumni events and outreach.

The Alumni Advisory Board established the Alumni Ambassador program to help expand its overall outreach to Excelsior's more than 145,000 alumni. The program launched two years ago with regionally based Facebook groups for North Carolina and Washington, D.C. alumni. The concept expanded exponentially last year when a call-to-action posted on the alumni website and Alumni Association Facebook page turned up willing volunteers from 13 states and several recent graduates who learned about the program at Commencement 2011.

"We aren't looking for alumni to take on this volunteer opportunity as if it were a part-time job," says Alumni Advisory Board Member Dr. Wayne Oppel, BS '91. "We know that our alumni have just as many personal and professional commitments as our students, if not more."

So what is the board looking for in a volunteer? Graduates who are enthusiastic about engaging with other graduates, whether it's for professional networking, continuing education opportunities, or good old-fashioned fun. Brad Woodruff, BSL '11, an alumni ambas-

sador from Oregon who was discovered by the Alumni Advisory Board at Commencement 2011, hosted the Great Northwest Alumni Gathering at the Bridgeport Brewpub in Portland. Brad began planning his event by emailing grads from Portland to Seattle to gauge interest in attending an event in that region—something that had never been done in the Northwest. Just as significant as the actual event was the email communication that provided an extra touch from a fellow graduate, someone who is geographically closer than any of the current Alumni Advisory Board members.

"The goal of this program, as far as the Alumni Advisory Board is concerned, is engagement," says President Sara Waldorf, BA '03.

The increasing number of opportunities for inperson alumni interaction has met with positive response, but events aren't the only way in which ambassadors can foster connectedness.

After attending an event for alumni and students in Orlando, ambassador Luis Sterling created a Facebook group for Excelsior College students and alumni in Central Florida that engages both those who attended the event and those who didn't.

Similarly, Michelle Vega, BS '11, alumni ambassador from Texas, spearheaded a phone and email campaign last year to encourage alumni to attend an event near Fort Hood. While Vega lives three hours from Killeen, Texas, the distance did not deter her from engaging her peers in a way that the College's Alumni Affairs staff would have been unable to handle.

"We hear from graduates all the time who say, 'Excelsior changed my life, I want to give back.' The Ambassador Program is a realistic and meaningful way for them to do that and the Alumni Advisory Board is grateful for their help," says Oppel.

#### WHAT: Binghamton, N.Y. Alumni Luncheon WHEN: April 26, 2012 WHERE: Lost Dog Café WHO: 16 alumni, students, faculty, and staff joined host Adrienne Mason, BS '11 alumni ambassedor from

staff joined host Adrienne Mason, BS '11, alumni ambassador from New York, for a keynote address by Dr. Jane LeClair, dean of the School of Business & Technology. Laura St. George from Broome Community College, one of Excelsior's community college partners, joined the group to reconnect with some of her advisees who went on to achieve bachelor's and master's degrees from Excelsior.

WHAT: Washington, D.C. Alumni Reception **WHEN:** May 23, 2012 WHERE: Madhatter Restaurant **WHO:** 60 alumni, students, faculty, and staff joined **Excelsior President John Ebersole** as he signed copies of his book, Courageous Learning. The record attendance at this event was due to the stellar outreach conducted by the following DC-metro area alumni: Richard Adams, BS '87; James Thomas Hatt, BSL '95; Dwayn Hanford, BS '05; and Daniel Woods, AAB '01, BSL '03. In addition, Alumni Advisory Board Vice President Danny Scott, AS '01, BS '02, formerly of Suffolk, Va., led attendees in sharing their Excelsior stories.

WHAT: Great Northwest Alumni Gathering WHEN: June 9, 2012 WHERE: Bridgeport Brewpub, Portland, Ore. WHO: 10 alumni, students, and staff gathered with host Brad Woodruff, BSL '11, alumni ambassador from Oregon, for a casual evening of food, drinks, and fun that included a tour of the Bridgeport Brewery.

WHAT: Capital Region Alumni Event WHEN: August 14, 2012 WHERE: Albany Pump Station (C.H. Evans Brewery) WHO: 24 alumni, students, faculty, and staff gathered with host Megan Wilcox, AS in nursing '11, Alumni Advisory Board member, for a casual gathering with food and drinks to welcome the newest class of graduates and share Excelsior stories.

# HATS OFF!

#### WHAT HAVE YOU, OUR GRADUATES, BEEN DOING? READ ON TO FIND OUT.

#### ARKANSAS

#### Gerard A. Doran, BS '02,

Russellville - is an American Board of Health Physics-Certified Health Physicist (CHP). He works at Arkansas Nuclear One and was the recipient of Excelsior's Marvin Curling Memorial Award. Doran also teaches radiation health physics at Arkansas Tech University. He writes, "Excelsior was a great help in assessing my transcript and providing a path to success. ..."

#### CALIFORNIA

David Spero, BS in nursing '99, San Francisco - has published two books on self-care and chronic illness, The Art of Getting Well: Maximizing Health and Well-being When You Have a Chronic Illness and Diabetes: Sugar-Coated Crisis: Who Gets It, Who Profits and How to Stop It. A third book, Diabetes Heroes: Ordinary People Reversing Type 2 is scheduled to be published mid-2012. Spero has regular columns appearing in two diabetes magazines and websites, and is a frequent speaker at national and regional diabetes and multiple sclerosis events.

#### COLORADO

Robin A. Hemmer, AS '94, Denver is a field technical instructor with Xerox Corp and holds the following certifications: CompTIA CTT+, CompTIA A+, CompTIA Network+, and CompTIA PDI+. She was a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society while earning a BA in behavioral science in 2006 at Metropolitan State College of Denver. Hemmer graduated with honors with an MA in human resources development in 2012 from Webster University, where she was a member of the Delta Mu Delta International Honor Society in Business.

#### ILLINOIS

Michael Borsos, AS '04 and BSL '05, Naperville - graduated from the Thomas M. Cooley Law School in May. He was on the dean's list seven times, had a 75 percent Honors Scholarship, and participated in the Public Sector Legal Clinic.

#### **KANSAS**



Karla Kearney, is an adjunct instructor in adult education at Bryan College

and is working on a doctorate degree in business psychology at the University of the Rockies. She also earned a master's degree in liberal arts in 2012 at Baker University, where she was elected to the National Omicron-Psi Honor Society. She is the author of the ebook, 21 Work from Home Careers for the 21st Century, available at Amazon.com. Kearney recently ran a 5K for charity and her future plans include full-time teaching and corporate consulting work in the areas of business relationships and adult learning.

#### MARYLAND

Shawn Daniel Hendricks, BSL '10, Fairplay - self-published an ebook, Deployment Kosovo, on Amazon.com. He began the book in 2007 while on a 30-month deployment as a U.S. Department of the Army civilian. He credits the composition courses he took at Excelsior with serving him well during the editing and polishing of his book.



Mathew Koch, BSL '10, Glen Burnie – was accepted into the Global MBA program of the Johns Hopkins University's Carey

Business School as a member of the class of 2014 and was awarded the prestigious, merit-based Dean's Scholarship. He works for Deloitte Consulting LLP and earned a diploma with honors in Chinese from the Defense Language Institute in 2010.

#### MASSACHUSETTS

Mark Butler, BS '94, North Attleboro - works for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and recently selfpublished an ebook, The Coffee Break Guide for Veterans Seeking Federal Employment, on Amazon.com. The book provides guidance on veteran's preference, the benefits of federal service for prior military personnel. and advice on how to write the unique resume in order to land a federal job. Butler also earned an MS in quality assurance in 2006 at CSU-Dominguez Hills and an MBA in 2009 from Trident University International.

#### **NEW YORK**

"I understand what challenges they are faced with in pursuing their degrees at a later time in their life."

Kristin Cornell, BSL '12, Schenectady - talks to students every day as an advising assistant at Excelsior College and says, "I understand what challenges they are faced with in pursuing their degrees at a later time in their life." Not only does she talk the talk, but she

walks the walk, as she participated in this year's Commencement as an Excelsior graduate. "I walked in the Commencement ceremony and

it was a great experience," she writes. "My family was there to support me and congratulate me. My coworkers were there to cheer for me. ... this was a great accomplishment and I am thankful that I was afforded this opportunity." She transferred in her credits from a previous degree and took other courses both at Excelsior and elsewhere using the College's tuition benefit. She is one of 13 staff who

earned degrees this year.

Michael C. LaFerney, BSL '79,

Lakeville - was a finalist for an

International Dementia Excellence

Dementia Conference in Sydney,

Award, presented at the International

Australia, in June. He was commended

for doing everything possible to avoid

inappropriate medication for behavior

often caused by circumstances rather

Elizabeth Nelson-Frazier, AS in nurs-

ing '08, Middleboro - is working on

a master's degree in nursing/family

nurse practitioner at Regis College.

Association of Professional Women

and the American Academy of Nurse

Practitioners. Her first degree was a

and literature, but her love of helping

Bachelor of Arts in English writing

She is a member of the National

than a person's condition.

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people, coupled with experience as an EMT and 911 dispatcher, prompted her to return to school to become an LPN. Shortly thereafter, she enrolled at Excelsior to earn her associate degree. Now a mother of two, she writes, "I am grateful to Excelsior because the school was extremely accommodating to a working mother with a one-yearold at home."

#### NEW JERSEY

#### Georr Malaviga Birla, BSL '87,

Denville - recently completed his first ebook, God Repays Kindness & The Strings Attached: A Memoir, available via Amazon.com and other outlets. He was interviewed on Advantage Radio Ministries' Second Chances show.



Mkemo London, AS '01. Cherry Hill - is the author of Building Wealth with \$50: The 50 Best

Dividend Stocks

to Buy without a

Broker. He writes, "I am very passionate about teaching others about investing. I hope to continue to write books and help people understand personal finance." He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in business administration at Thomas Edison State College.

#### NEW YORK

Michele M. Chenette, MBA '11, East Greenbush - was recently elected a board member for the Project Manager Institute, where she is also a part-time consultant, providing on-site support for EMR Go-Live events at hospitals across the United States. She is a project manager at

the New York State Office of Mental Health, where she is responsible for implementing an electronic medical record system (EMR) based on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs VistA software at 26 state-operated psychiatric centers and over 300 OMH outpatient locations. Chenette writes, "The flexibility Excelsior offered allowed me to maintain balance between my full-time position and other personal responsibilities. I thoroughly enjoyed the program and have benefited from the skills I learned."



#### lan Jordan, AS '01 and BS '07. New York - is an administrative operations supervisor for New York State's

Department of Environmental Conservation Region 2 in New York. He also earned an MPA from DeVry University's Keller Graduate School of Management in 2009. Currently working on a doctoral dissertation on corporate governance in the public sector, he anticipates completing a Doctor of Management from Colorado Technical University in 2012.



Smulsky, MS in nursing '06, Loudonville successfully defended her dissertation "Measuring

**Nancy Calsolaro** 

Student-Faculty Interaction for Nontraditional College Students: A Comparison of Data Collection Tools" in January at Argosy University, earning an EdD in instructional leadership,



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higher education. Now faculty program director in the Graduate Nursing Program at Excelsior College, she writes, "I am most excited to have earned a doctorate and would not have ever taken this path if it were not for the stellar preparation I was given first as an MS nursing student at Excelsior and then as a member of the faculty." Smulsky is also the Allied Health Editor for MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching), and an adjunct instructor for Excelsior's School of Health Sciences and other institutions. She's working on her first postdoctorate research study, and has a proposal under consideration for a graduatelevel nursing textbook. She says, "I hope to continue along this lifelong learning journey through research and publication for a long time to come."

#### Rose Anne Urban, BS in nursing

'99 - is program chair of a new AAS nursing program at SBI Campus in Melville, Long Island. She also earned a master's in nursing education from St. Joseph's College of Maine, and writes, "Excelsior (then Regents) College inspired me to continue my education and help other students become the nurses they want to be." Urban recently became a member of the Worldwide Who's Who and will be featured in a section of its forthcoming publication.

#### NORTH CAROLINA

David Roberts, AS '98 and BS '01, Charlotte - completed his Juris Doctor at Charlotte School of Law. He previously earned an MBA at Queens University of Charlotte.

#### PENNSYLVANIA

William M. French, AS '81, Shippensburg-is director of the Bureau of Innovation and Transformation Office responsible for emerging technology and enterprise architecture initiatives for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Office of Administration-OIT An adjunct professor at Shippensburg University and Harrisburg Area Community College, French teaches courses in computer technology and management of information systems. French credits his Excelsior (then Regents) degree with giving him the confidence to continue his educational pursuits, including bachelor's degrees in physics and electrical engineering, and master's degrees in information systems and business administration.

#### IN MEMORIAM

**Rainelle P. Tostenson**,

BSL '92, Phoenix - died of pancreatic cancer on March 6, 2011. An academic counselor and disabilities services advisor at the University of Phoenix Online for over 10 years, she was named counselor of the quarter seven times and the 2002 University of Phoenix Online Counselor of the Year. She volunteered with the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society and received the Society's Meritorious Service Award in 1994. She is survived by her husband Thomas D. Tostenson, son Zachary, and mother Connie.

#### TEXAS

Charles H. Bartz, BSL '10, Temple - recently graduated from Regis University with a dual specialization Master of Science in organizational leadership: leadership management and project leadership and management.

Marvin Crews, AS '86 and BSL '91, Cypress - is vice president of engineering for CB&I where he is responsible for the day-to-day supervision and oversight of 1,400 engineers and support staff and all projects executed at CB&I's three Houston offices. After earning his Excelsior degrees, he went on to obtain a Master of Science in chemical engineering at the University of Arkansas.

#### Mary Walker, BS in nursing '96,

Universal City-retired from civil service with 30 years of nursing experience and is currently an assistant professor-clinical at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio (UTHSCSA). She earned an MSN from UTHSCSA in 2000, and is currently enrolled in a PhD program in nursing education at Capella University. She said her Excelsior education was excellent, and writes, "In teaching nursing, I try to share my compassion and love for the profession ... Thank you, Excelsior, for providing me the tools that I need to be successful and to move forward."

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Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich kept it brief when he delivered a Commencement address of 14 minutes. His advice to grads: "Go forth and do your best. Contribute to the common good. Respect others. Be a leader and use every opportunity... to renew and reenergize yourselves."



If the graduation caps of all 5,237 members of the class of 2012 were laid end-to-end, they would stretch the length of more than 12 football fields.



This is the first year the College used GreenWeaver<sup>®</sup> caps and gowns made from 100 percent, post-consumer recycled plastic bottles. It takes an average of 23 bottles to make each gown, so the Excelsior **College Commencement** saved more than 6,000 bottles from landfills. CO2 gas emissions are reduced by 54.6 percent in the process of manufacturing fabric from plastic versus virgin polyester. And, the gowns' tag-less size labels are stamped with soy ink.

# 14.5%

Say Cheese! More than 800 photos were taken of grads and their families and friends at the photo booth. The free, compli-

mentary framed photos were printed on the spot, giving grads

an immediate memento to bring home.

The percentage of graduates registered to attend Commencement who had earned their second or third degree from Excelsior this past academic year. Of the total number of graduates in the class of 2012, 56 earned more than one degree last year.

The flags of 26 countries graced the stage, symbolizing the nations represented by graduates of the class of 2012 and the worldwide reach of Excelsior College. Graduates hailed from six of the seven continents and all 50 U.S. states plus the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Among the most popular souvenir items sold at Commencement was the Graduation Bear. By the end of the day, 71 of the purple or white bruins found homes among the grads and their families. SNAP Shot Rakash Singh, a student pursuing an Associate in Applied Science in nursing, practices wound care while fellow student Joseph Paul looks on, during the first day of a three-day workshop in May. To prepare students for the Clinical Performance in Nursing Examination, workshops are held at Excelsior College and at other sites around the United States each month.

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