

# The Cranberry Eagle

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## **BC3 ranked Pa.'s top community college**

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**BUTLER TWP** — Butler County Community College is the best community college in the state, according to a study by Schools.com.

The study used seven criteria when ranking Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges. BC3 President Nicholas Neupauer said, "Frankly, this came a bit out of the blue, but this is incredibly exciting information, and it really validates what's been going on here." The data in the survey only accounts for the main campuses, not branch campuses, according to California-based Schools.com, a national company owned by QuinStreet Inc.

The study used the following criteria: total cost of attendance, number of transfer agreements with other Pennsylvania institutions, student-to-faculty ratio, percentage of students enrolled in distance education, average student retention rate, graduation rate and flexibility, which measures the availability of evening and weekend classes and on-campus day care options.

BC3 was ranked as the best community college due to its affordability and transfer rate, which Schools.com deemed "chart-topping." In addition, BC3 had the second-highest graduation or certification rate and the third-lowest cost, the study said. The study also highlighted the class size of BC3 at an average of 18 students in 2015, providing for better, individual attention. Second behind BC3 was Johnstown's Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, Schools.com said.

Neupauer said BC3 emphasizes affordability and retention.

BC3's ranking in the survey "validates a lot of the larger strategies we've taken on," he said. An aspect of this improvement strategy includes ensuring that credits and degrees earned at BC3 transfer to other institutions.

With the college in its reaccreditation process, BC3 continues to seek areas of improvement. "We're always in a continuous improvement mode," he said.

