

Tears and cheers: Students, families celebrate at BC3's Awards Day

April 17, 2018



Thuy Tran, a native of Vietnam and registered nursing student at Butler County Community College, is shown April 17, 2018, during BC3's Awards Day, when she was recognized for being named to the president's list.

(Butler, PA) Molly Trodden, Thuy Tran and Mikala Henry were among the 230 students and guests who packed Founders Hall for Awards Day as Butler County Community College recognized the academic achievements of those selected in 2017 to the president's and dean's lists, and of those participating in the presidential scholars and leadership certificate programs.

Trodden chose BC3 to begin her pursuit of a career in biomedical engineering. Tran, in registered nursing. And Henry, in law enforcement. The BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing student was grateful BC3's recognition was witnessed by her parents, Alton and Charmagne Henry, and grandmother, Gwen Allen.



Mikala Henry, of New Castle and a criminology student at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle, is shown April 17, 2018, with her parents, Charmagne and Alton Henry, during BC3's Awards Day, when Mikala was recognized for being named to the dean's list.

“My family and I felt a sense of gratitude,” said Henry, 19, a criminology major from New Castle who in 2017 was named to BC3's dean's list, for students who earned a 3.5 to a 3.74 grade-point average while carrying at least 12 credits. “I was so thankful to be a part of something so big and it made my family very proud of me being recognized for that great of an achievement.”

Tran, a May 2013 graduate of To Van On High School in Khanh Hoa, Vietnam, said her family was proud that she was named to BC3's president's list, for students who earned at least a 3.75 grade-point average while carrying at least 12 credits.

“They know how hard I worked for it,” said Tran, a registered nursing major from Munhall. “I came to the United States right after I finished high school in Vietnam, and I knew just a little English back then. I have to spend so much time studying compared with others because English isn't my language. It makes me feel good about myself, and I can look back and say my hard work paid off.”

Awards Day, Tran said, “is so important for students who are achieving their academic success to be recognized by their peers, teachers and family who have supporting them through the year.”

Named to the president's list in the spring semester of 2017 were 200 students and in the fall, 260. Named to the dean's list in the spring semester of 2017 were 382 students and in the fall, 387. Twenty-one students participated in the presidential scholars program and 20 in BC3's leadership series.

“My hard work ... paid off”

Those enrolled in BC3's presidential scholars program are recipients of the President's Scholarship, a full-tuition award presented annually to students in the Top 10 percent of their

graduating class at any of Butler County's eight public high schools – Butler, Freeport, Karns City, Knoch, Mars, Moniteau, Seneca Valley or Slippery Rock – and who enroll at BC3 the following semester. A cyber school student counted in those public schools' graduating classes is also eligible.

Among the requirements for students to receive a certificate for participation in the BC3 Leadership Series include attending Leadership sessions on topics titled "Leading with a Purpose;" "Professional Development," "Team Building" and "Community and Cultural Awareness." Students must also complete a supporting activity or workshop.

Tears of joy welled in her eyes that day in 2017 when she opened a letter that announced she had been named to BC3's dean's list, said Trodden, like Henry a graduate of Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School in Midland.

"My hard work and effort had paid off," she said, "and my parents took me out to celebrate."

Her father, Tom Trodden, was among those seated at 35 tables inside Founders Hall to watch his daughter weave through the crowd and receive a certificate recognizing her academic achievement.

"I didn't stop looking at it the whole ride home," Trodden said. "My father made sure to mention how proud he was of me. I was proud of myself in knowing that I truly was capable of the achievement. Everyone who knew about it congratulated me."

"The faculty is amazing"

Trodden's goal is to one day manufacture prosthetic limbs.

"I like helping people," Trodden said, "and I thinking being able to give someone the ability to walk, run, brush their hair, or play an instrument again would be an amazing way to spend the rest of my life."

BC3, Henry said, will help her "step-by-step" reach her career goal of becoming a U.S. marshal, a path that will travel through Glynco, Ga., where she would attend several weeks of basic training at the U.S. Marshals Service Training Academy.

"I believe BC3 will provide me with right materials that I need in order to reach my goal," she said. "It has been a passion since I was a little girl, and I am in the right mindset to achieve this as my goal."

BC3's affordability, accessibility and quality of education resonated with Trodden, Tran and Henry.

“Money and time are tight for kids now, and it’s not worth the ego stroke to say that you went immediately from high school to a revered private college that costs \$40,000 a year when you can receive the same quality education for a fraction of the price,” Trodden said. “My most expensive semester was \$3,950. The faculty is amazing, and we have more than one campus that allows you to find the one most convenient for you.”

BC3 is very affordable, Henry said.

“Attending a community college straight out of high school is the smartest decision I have made,” she said. “Going straight to a university would have put me in debt. With BC3, it is very affordable and by the time I graduate I will be debt-free. Another factor I considered was the major I wanted to pursue at BC3. BC3 has a good criminology program. I am glad I have made the decision of attending BC3.”

Tran, who moved 8,200 miles from her native Vietnam, echoed the findings of two consecutive surveys conducted by Schools.com.

“BC3,” she said, “is the No. 1 community college in the state.”