



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Halifax Community College Celebrates Student Achievement at Inaugural TRIO Awards Gala



Inaugural TRIO Awards Gala group photo.

WELDON, NORTH CAROLINA – Halifax Community College (HCC) proudly hosted its Inaugural TRIO Awards Gala on April 29, 2026, at The Griffin Centre, honoring the accomplishments, resilience, and academic success of TRIO Student Support Services participants. The evening brought together students, faculty, staff, and community partners to celebrate the impact of TRIO programs and recognize scholars for their dedication to higher education and personal growth.

A highlight of the evening was the recognition of students who completed the first-ever TRIO Academy. These completers received special awards acknowledging their commitment to academic development and success. In addition, graduating TRIO scholars were presented with red honor cords to wear during HCC's Commencement Ceremony on May 8, 2026, symbolizing their participation in TRIO and their academic achievements.

Students graduating this spring who will transfer to four-year institutions in the fall were also recognized for their continued educational pursuits, reflecting TRIO's mission to support students beyond graduation.

The program featured keynote remarks from Mr. Gary Redding, Esq., Halifax Community College English and Criminal Justice Instructor, Department Head, and PTK Co-Advisor. Redding offered words of encouragement, inspiring students to remain committed to their goals and to continue striving for excellence as they transition to the next phase of their academic journeys.





In addition to student recognitions, TRIO introduced the inaugural TRIO Champion Award, established to honor outstanding faculty and staff who demonstrate exceptional support for TRIO students. The 2026 faculty recipient was Ms. Chrisola Ham, HCC Social and Human Services Program Chair, recognized for her unwavering dedication and advocacy for TRIO participants. The staff recipient was Ms. Vanessa A. Council, HCC Director of Public Relations and Design, honored for her creativity, dedication, and artistry in elevating TRIO's image and presence across campus.

TRIO Student Support Services at Halifax Community College provides academic support, guidance, and resources to help students meet college requirements, persist in their studies, and successfully complete their postsecondary education. The program plays a critical role in increasing retention and graduation rates while supporting students as they transition to higher levels of education. The Inaugural TRIO Awards Gala served as a meaningful celebration of student achievement and the strong community that supports their success.

For more information about TRIO Student Support Services at Halifax Community College, please visit www.halifaxcc.edu/services-support/trio-sss or contact Cindy L. Dunn, Director of Student Support Services/TRIO, at cdunn393@halifaxcc.edu or 252-536-7290.

Halifax Community College's Mission

Halifax Community College strives to meet the diverse needs of our community by providing high-quality, accessible and affordable education and services for a rapidly changing and globally competitive marketplace.

Media Contact: If you have any questions, please contact Vanessa Council at 252-536-7214 or e-mail vcouncil512@halifaxcc.edu.



Jatayvian Thomas, Kameron Ashburn, Director of Student Support Services, Cindy Dunn, and Ny'Zaious Jones.





Staff TRIO Champion Award recipient Ms. Vanessa A. Council, Director of Public Relations with Student Support Services (TRIO) Retention Specialist, Ashleigh Pincheon.



Faculty TRIO Champion Award recipient Ms. Chrisola Ham, Social & Human Service Instructor/Program Chair with Student Support Services Development Advisor, Laura Zollicoffer.