



# NETWORK

## FLYING HIGH

Aviation program serves industry and students PG.6

PG.3 ONLINE PROGRAMS

ASL program celebrates 25 years

PG.10 FINANCIAL AID

Program offers assistance for workforce training

PG.4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

PG.9 MENTAL WELLNESS

PG.12 OPEN HOUSES

## A MESSAGE

# From the President

As we approach the holiday season and the end of the year, I would like to thank everyone who has made 2021 a spectacular time for Pierpont Community & Technical College. Pierpont has made tremendous progress toward a sustainable future as a separate and independent community college.

In July, we announced a new home for our Veterinary Technology program in Clarksburg, right beside our existing Gaston Caperton Center. We have located a new home for our Early Childhood Development program, collaborating with a local church to ensure quality instruction and support for our students and employees who need child care.

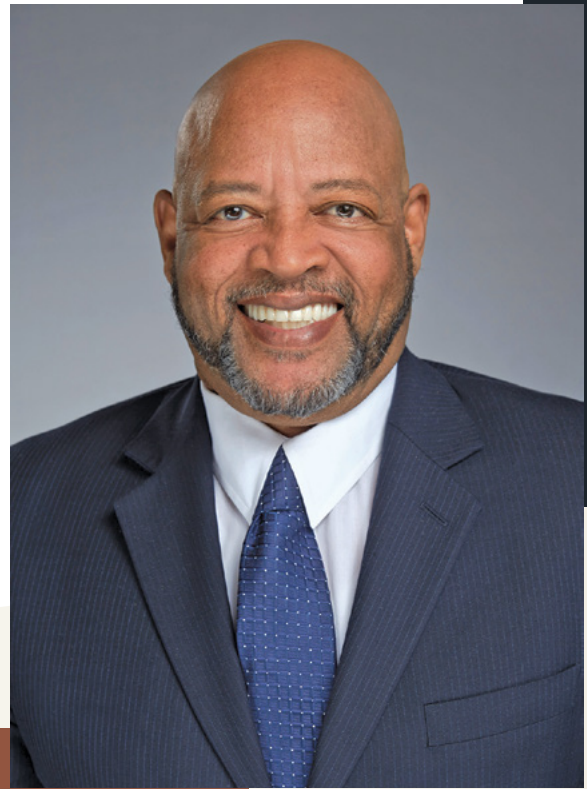
We are moving off of the Locust Avenue campus as quickly and as efficiently as possible, and we promise a smooth and seamless transition for our students, faculty and staff. Our students are our most valued assets, and we must ensure that everything that we do enhances their educational experience.

None of this could have been accomplished, however, without the support of our local and state legislators who ensured our independence in April. Thank you.

I would also like to thank and commend the faculty and staff, who have pivoted throughout the year to ensure continuity of services, even as we operated in the continuing shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are so many things for us to be thankful for this year and heading into 2022. We are purchasing a new customer relationship management system to ensure that we are reaching out to potential students and developing strong ties that will encourage them to attend Pierpont. This new system will help us boost enrollment and move our student services program into the 21st century of customer relations.

We are in the midst of a facilities study to determine where we need more space and to ensure that our facilities meet the needs of our students. We will also be re-evaluating our strategic plan to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the local and regional



economy and the businesses that will hire Pierpont students. Along those lines, we are evaluating our course offerings on both the academic and workforce sides of the house, as well as reestablishing strong ties with local companies to ensure we are meeting their needs.

We are hopeful for the coming year. We have been blessed with a new beginning and we are thrilled to be moving forward with energy and enthusiasm. Thank you for being a part of our success, and we can't wait to see what the new year brings for us all.

Happy holidays, best wishes, and be well.

**Anthony Hancock, Ph.D.**  
*Interim President*

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**ON THE COVER** Professor Cynthia Rodina demonstrates how to check a part of an engine at the Robert C. Byrd Aerospace Education Center.

## A SIGN OF THE TIMES

# Online Program Celebrates 25 Years, Offers Skills in High-Demand Career

**Twenty-five years ago, the head of the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing executive director recognized a need in the state for interpreters.**

And for 25 years, from August 1996 until today, the Pierpont Community & Technical College, under a few different names, has answered the call. Pierpont currently has more than 20 students enrolled in its American Sign Language/Interpreter Education Program (ASL/IEP), which is now offered totally online.

By being offered online, the program provides flexibility for students from across the region to earn a degree in an emotionally rewarding profession and a growing field. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand for sign language interpreters is expected to grow 19 percent between 2018 and 2028.

The ASL/IEP is a two-year associate degree to train individuals to become ASL conversationalists and/or professional ASL interpreters. Graduates of the program work in schools, hospitals, law offices and churches. More than 90 percent of students who go through Pierpont's program pass the West Virginia Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment and the Virginia Quality Assurance Screening exams.

"We are the only college in West Virginia that offers Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment and Virginia Quality Assurance Screening exams for our students so that they can be employed wherever they may decide to go," said Ruby Losh, who serves as Pierpont's program coordinator for ASL/IEP.

Losh taught as an adjunct in the program for four years and has served as a full-time faculty member for 19 -- for a total of 23 years with the program.

"Interpreters are in high demand for jobs in West Virginia and surrounding states," Losh said. "Video Relay Service, which allows those who are hearing disabled to use video to communicate with someone, needs interpreters because of high caller demands."

Some graduates choose to apply Pierpont's associate degree to a bachelor's program in Interpreter Training. Other graduates choose to use their degree to complement a variety of bachelor's degrees, including education and child development or a Board of Regents degree, which provides students with a more general education of their own design that may be most appropriate for their Interpreting assignments. ■




A Pierpont student practices her sign language with an online instructor.

### DID YOU KNOW?




**100%**  
online



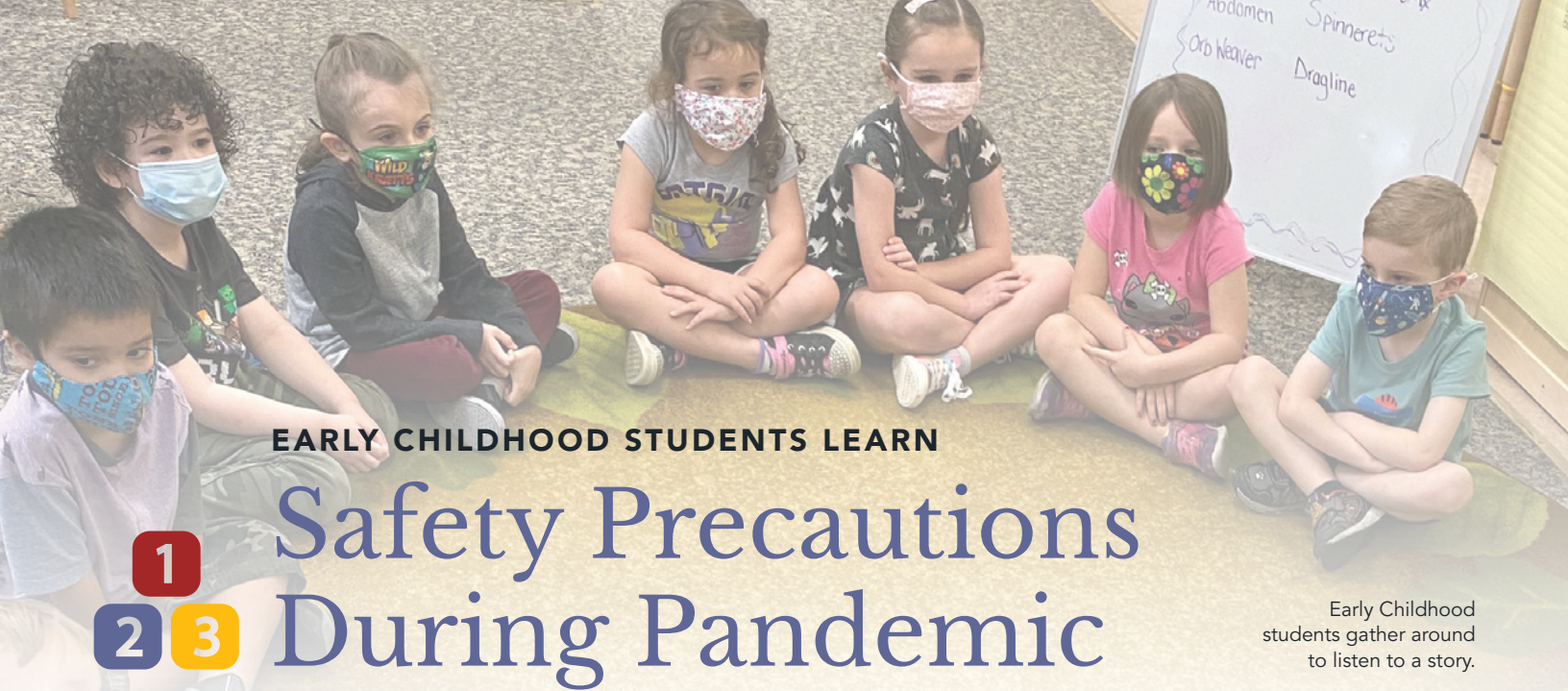
**90%**  
of student pass the West Virginia Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment and the Virginia Quality Assurance Screening exams



**19%↑**  
increase in demand for sign language interpreters between now and 2028



**\$57,565**  
average salary for sign language interpreters in West Virginia (ZipRecruiter)



EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS LEARN

# 1 2 3 Safety Precautions During Pandemic

Early Childhood students gather around to listen to a story.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has given students in Pierpont's Early Childhood program a crash course in teaching in a classroom with heightened safety protocols.

"The current [Early Childhood] practicum students have not experienced the laboratory preschool without COVID protocols in place," said Lori Barrett, assistant professor and program coordinator of the program.

Pierpont's Early Childhood program has an on-campus laboratory preschool that is certified by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that allows students to learn first-hand what it takes to be a teacher. And over the last year and a half, students have learned a little extra.

"The additional sanitizing, temperature checks, close observation for signs of illness, and social distancing are all part of a normal routine for them." Barrett said.

"Although we hope to return to a 'normal' classroom eventually, our students will be prepared to teach in a classroom with safety protocols in place."

The Early Childhood Program has also been giving students experience in virtual classrooms.

"We have been using Google classroom in case they eventually have to teach a class that has moved to an online format," Barrett said.

The laboratory preschool provides students with hands-on experience under direct supervision, Barrett said. Their experience begins with observation and leads to them taking on the role of the lead teacher.

The Early Childhood Education Associate of Applied Science Degree includes the study of the growth and development of young children, the planning, preparation, and implementation of appropriate curriculum and creating environments for early childhood programs.

The program teaches students a variety of skills they will need to lead a classroom.

"Students have the opportunity to learn and to implement everything from creating a lesson plan that incorporates state Pre-K standards to creating a menu that meets USDA meal patterns," Barrett said.

For more information on Pierpont's Early Childhood program, visit [pierpont.edu](http://pierpont.edu).

"Although we hope to return to a 'normal' classroom eventually, our students will be prepared to teach in a classroom with safety protocols in place."

LORI BARRETT, assistant professor and program coordinator

## LOCAL RESTAURANTS SHOWCASE

# Pierpont Flavor

**Recent Pierpont Community & Technical College graduates have found the right recipe for making their dreams a reality.**

Rachael Herrera and Michelle Clevenger both graduated from Pierpont's Food Service Management programs, which prepare students to be successful in the restaurant business.

Herrera, who owns and operates the Lunchbox food truck with her husband Julius, wanted to take her love of cooking to serve her small-town community.

"My initial reaction when deciding to go to culinary school was to go to a big city. After I realized that Pierpont is nationally recognized for its culinary program, within the top 10 in the country, I decided that I wanted to go there," Herrera said.

"Anyone who is contemplating between a large culinary school and Pierpont, choose Pierpont. I received so much individual attention from the instructors, and many of them are now my close friends," Herrera said. "They have the time to be more attentive to their students."

The Lunchbox, which was recently named the top food truck in West Virginia by Parade Magazine, has a wide variety of menu items that change from day-to-day. Their most recent delicious dishes have included chicken tacos, smash burgers, buffalo fries and Filipino egg rolls.

The Lunchbox has been a saving grace for some who were tired of cooking for themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As people became weary of dining in restaurants, as well as all of the mandated restrictions, our food truck offered an option for people to still maintain some normalcy by letting someone else prepare food for them in a safe, socially distanced way," Herrera said.

Clevenger, who owns and operates the Fairview Diner and Bakery, decided to attend Pierpont after being laid off from Mylan Pharmaceuticals. She told WBOY in an interview, "I worked for Mylan. I was part of the first round of lay-offs, but I was able to go to school." Clevenger attended Pierpont as a way to move forward with her career in a field that she desired.

The Fairview Diner and Bakery features a variety of traditional

diner favorites like their open-faced turkey sandwich. But they also put a twist on some classics.

At the Fairview Diner, you can get French toast topped with peanut butter and Captain Crunch cereal flakes, making it a favorite of local patrons.

After dinner, make sure to save room for dessert. The bakery is constantly churning out cookies and pies that will make resisting impossible. From cherry pies and cupcakes to fall favorites like pumpkin rolls and caramel apples, there's something to satisfy any sweet tooth.

For more information about these restaurants, check out their social media pages. For The Lunchbox, you can find them on Facebook and Instagram [@lunchboxwv](#). You can find the Fairview Diner and Bakery on Facebook [@thefairviewdinerandbakery](#).



The Lunchbox food truck outside of a local business in Bridgeport. Inset: Rachael Herrera, pictured here with her husband Julius, working hard at serving the people of North Central West Virginia.



Pierpont student checks the underbelly of the plane during class.

# *Flying* HIGH

**PIERPONT PROGRAM SERVES  
INDUSTRY AND STUDENTS**



**Gervice Tate was looking for a new start,** and he's hoping the Aviation Maintenance Technology program at Pierpont Community & Technical College will help him to soar in a new career.

Tate was one of about 1,500 employees who lost their jobs when Viatrix, formerly known as Mylan, announced last year that it would be closing its Morgantown location.

The plant officially closed in late July.

"After being laid off, I wanted to rejoin the workforce as soon as possible. When I was looking into new options, I saw the video for the Aviation Program," said Tate, who started in the program in August. "It seemed like it would be the perfect fit."

Pierpont's Aviation program is an associate of applied science degree that provides training in aircraft technology. Students learn to perform maintenance, remove and replace components, troubleshoot and repair aircraft systems.

"We take tremendous pride in preparing our students for their careers in aviation maintenance," said Dr. Brad Gilbert, Pierpont's director of Aviation Technology. "We have companies like Mitsubishi and Pratt &Whitney calling us looking for employees because of the reputation of our program, and we are able to provide them with highly-skilled and qualified workers."

Upon completion of the program, students will be qualified to take the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Part 147 tests, which are required for students to get jobs and stay employed. Although preparing for these exams can be daunting, Pierpont provides a test preparation course to prepare workers to pass the exams.

"We offer our FAA Test Prep course during our winter

session beginning December 6. We give not only former students but workers from around the area a chance to prepare for these exams that can help expand their careers," Gilbert said.

With the hope of reaching students from a young age and peaking their interest in careers in aviation, the program has also partnered with local public schools to take courses directly to local high school students.

"We signed a memorandum of understanding that allows high school students to begin taking dual enrollment courses for our program as early as their junior year," said Gilbert. "If they follow through with the program, they can complete their dual enrollment courses and take two semesters of classes and a summer session and be ready for their career." *(continued on Page 8)*

"After being laid off, I wanted to rejoin the workforce as soon as possible. When I was looking into new options, I saw the video for the Aviation Program. It seemed like it would be the perfect fit."

**GERVICE TATE**, Aviation Technology student



Pierpont student Gervice Tate stands in the door of an airplane at the Robert C. Byrd Aerospace Education Center.

Currently, students from Marion, Harrison, and Taylor counties can participate in the dual enrollment courses.

Students like Tate come to the program because there are so many job opportunities waiting for them after graduation.

“[Pierpont] is affordable, and the quality of education is incredible,” said Tate. “The return on investment is better than a doctor, lawyer, dentist or engineer and it’s only 20 minutes from my home. It’s truly a hidden gem.” ■



## STRONG FUTURE FOR FEMALES IN AVIATION CAREERS

The West Virginia Public Broadcast Station will feature Pierpont’s Aviation Maintenance Technology program in its upcoming special “The Future is You.”

This WVPBS project is a new collaborative effort to encourage West Virginians, particularly females, to explore careers in the aviation industry. An airdate for the special will be this fall. Follow Pierpont’s social media pages for updates.

“It’s all about featuring women in aviation throughout the state, the education opportunities that are right here in West Virginia, and also the job opportunities that you can get right here in West Virginia after you get that education and training,” said Emily Calandrelli, a West Virginia native, West Virginia University and MIT graduate, host of Netflix’s Emily’s Wonder Lab and collaborator on the project.

“The percentage of women in that field is so low,” she said. “A really good way to fulfill the demand in that position is just to have more women join. And so I’d love to see more women in that field.”

“We currently have several women in our aviation technology program, and we hope this project will demonstrate to the women

in West Virginia that there are excellent employment opportunities available for them at the North Central West Virginia Airport,” said Brad Gilbert, Pierpont’s director of Aviation Maintenance Technology.

Pierpont students have been lucky enough to learn from a trailblazing female in the aviation industry. Professor Cynthia Rodina, who has been teaching in the Aviation program since 2012, is a mentor to many of her students.

“I think many women do not even think of this field as an option and they make up less than 2% of licensed AMTs,” said Rodina. “But if girls were exposed to this at a younger age and told that it is an option, I think the numbers may go up.”

Although there are not many women currently in the field, that does not mean that they shouldn’t pursue this path.

“I believe this is a great career for women. It is not a traditionally female role, but that does not mean it is unobtainable,” said Rodina. “It can be very challenging, working with a dominantly male workforce, but once again it is very doable. Stick with it because it can be hard, but hard work and perseverance can and will pay off.”

“We have companies like Mitsubishi and Pratt & Whitney calling us looking for employees because of the reputation of our program, and we are able to provide them with highly-skilled and qualified workers.”

**DR. BRAD GILBERT,**  
director of Aviation Technology



GRANT FUNDS ADDITIONAL

# Mental Wellness Programs on Pierpont's Campus

"We know that student wellness is a core component of student achievement. Through these grants and this training, we hope to better support our campuses and their students in treating mental health care as fundamental to personal and academic success."

**DR. SARAH ARMSTRONG TUCKER**  
West Virginia's Chancellor of Higher Education



**MEET SUZAN!**  
Suzan Clemens,  
director of Support  
Services at Pierpont

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and Community and Technical College System have awarded Pierpont Community & Technical College a \$5,000 grant to assist with improving student mental health on campus.

"Mental health issues are increasing on campus, as they are everywhere," said Suzan Clemens, who is the director of Support Services at Pierpont and who applied for the grant. "We are seeing more students with difficulties because of the stress of what is going on in the world around us. Depression and anxiety, which can be difficult by themselves, exacerbate other mental and physical health problems."

The Campus Mental Health Grant will be used to support Pierpont's Campus-Wide Mental Health Initiative, which began in 2020.

The goals of the grant include having a staff member trained to begin training faculty, staff and students in Mental Health First Aid. The grant will also provide funds to work with a substance abuse program to help students who are recovering; increase the amount of suicide prevention trainings on campus; increase support for Pierpont students who are parents; and provide a trained staff/faculty Support Services "point person" to share information with faculty and students.

"We know that student wellness is a core component of student achievement," Dr. Sarah Armstrong Tucker, West Virginia's Chancellor of Higher Education, said. "Through these grants and this training, we hope to better support our campuses and their students in treating mental health care as fundamental to personal and academic success."

When Pierpont's Support Services department began its mental health initiatives in January 2020, Clemens assessed faculty and staff to identify gaps in Pierpont's services.

"Surveys showed that students lacked awareness of our current resources; lacked skill in the use of our resources; lacked time; and had difficulty accessing our location," Clemens said. "Those have been our main focus. These grant funds will allow us to add to and expand existing programs." ■



Students in Pierpont's Aviation Maintenance Technology program, which qualifies for WIOA funding, learn with hands-on training.

## NEED MONEY FOR COLLEGE?

# Program Offers up to \$12,000 in Financial Assistance for Workforce Training

North Central West Virginia's economy, much like the nation's, is changing fast, and the era of being able to obtain a good job with just a high school diploma is in the past.

"The focus is shifting toward manufacturing, information technology and, more importantly, the shortage of nurses in healthcare," said Maria Larry, Region VI Workforce Development Board executive director. "In order for these sectors to grow and to prosper, employers need skilled workers."

The bottom line -- job seekers need additional training to stay competitive in today's job market.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a federally funded program that is

designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in today's labor market.

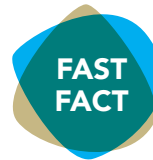
The program also helps employers by ensuring that services and training are aligned with their workforce needs.

But according to Larry, more people need to take advantage of the program, which offers up to \$6,000 annually for adults and others to gain a degree or certification.

"We have 8-12 students annually who seek WIOA funding," she said. "Hopefully, we can increase those numbers."

Over the last couple of years, WIOA has helped fund students

seeking degrees and certificates at Pierpont Community & Technical College in Applied Process

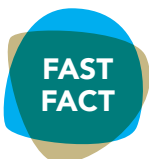


A FAMILY OF FOUR CAN MAKE UP TO APPROX. \$94,000 AND STILL BECOME ELIGIBLE.

Technology, Aviation Structure, Aviation Maintenance, Radiological Technology and Health Information Technology.

If you are an adult, a worker who is unemployed or has lost your job because of a company closure or relocation or a high school student who dropped out seeking your Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) or postsecondary certificate, you may be eligible for up to \$6,000 annually to help pay for college. Participants must apply for PELL and WIOA funds will then cover any tuition and approved costs not covered by PELL, not to exceed the current cap.

*(continued on next page)*



WIOA ELIGIBILITY MUST BE DETERMINED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE START OF CLASSES.



Pierpont student studying medical coding in the Health Information Technology program.

The Region VI Workforce Development Board can also provide monthly transportation funds of up to \$100 per week for those WIOA eligible individuals who have been assessed and determined eligible for assistance.

Students eligible for the program must be 18 years of age or older; a citizen or non-citizen authorized to do work in the US; and meet Military Selective Service Registration Requirements (males only).

Region VI Workforce Development Board policy requires the WIOA individual to complete training within 24 months in a nationally recognized certificate or associate degree or finish a bachelor's degree. WIOA will not fund those seeking to obtain a master's degree or higher.

"I would encourage those who are seeking a degree or certificate to apply for these funds," said Larry. "We provide application assistance, assessments and career counseling to help them on their way to a better future." ■



CONTACT THE REGION VI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM AT **304-368-9530**.

## HAWKINS NAMED

# Classified Staff Council Employee of the Year

Maynard "Chip" Hawkins has been selected as the recipient of the Pierpont Community & Technical College's 2021 Classified Staff Council Employee of the Year Award.

This award is presented annually to a classified staff member who demonstrates exceptional initiative, integrity and ability to work alongside students and colleagues.

Hawkins, Pierpont's facilities manager for the past three years, has been integral to the success of Pierpont's move off the Locust Avenue campus and has essentially become "The Physical Plant" for all of Pierpont.

"If Chip sees that someone needs assistance, he does everything in his power to help. No job is beneath him, and he does all work with a smile on his face," one nominator wrote. "He offers suggestions and makes everyone's day a little brighter with his positive outlook."

### How do you feel about getting this award?

Honored. It felt good to have the hard work during the move from Locust to the Advanced Technology Center recognized.

### What is your philosophy for work?

While facilities is an independent, virtually unnoticed job, it takes all of us working together as a team to make the business run smoothly. We depend on each other.

### What do you enjoy most about working at Pierpont?

I enjoy the hours. Coming from a hospital background, it's a welcome change. I enjoy the times I get to interact with the students, and they are all so polite. I also like that people depend on me and respect and support my decisions. ■



MAYNARD "CHIP" HAWKINS, facilities manager

# OPEN HOUSE DATES

Pierpont Community & Technical College is hosting multiple open houses for prospective students throughout the 2021-22 academic year.

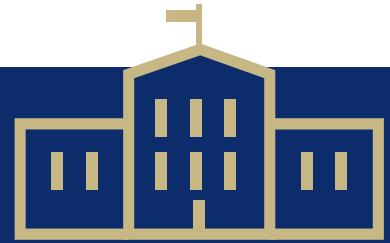
“Open houses are a good opportunity for prospective students, along with their families and supporters, to receive a robust understanding of Pierpont,” said Jennifer McConnell, executive director of admissions, recruiting and student engagement. “It’s important for us to give access to a lot of individuals that all have similar questions about the institution.”

Pierpont’s admissions office encourages students who are interested in attending to join them for an open house this year. It is a great way to give a students a sneak peek at what it’s like to attend Pierpont.

Upon the completion of the open house, potential students will take away a sense of what it means to be a part of the Pierpont Pride.

“At the end of the sessions, we want individuals to know the resources that our school has to offer, the quality of education that you receive, the affordability of that education and a strong sense of how classes work on a daily basis,” McConnell said.

To register for any of Pierpont’s open houses, visit [pierpont.edu/showcase](http://pierpont.edu/showcase).



*All dates and times are subject to change. All in-person events are subject to change to online only at the discretion of Pierpont Community & Technical College.*

DEC. 1	ONLINE
DEC. 11	ONLINE
FEB. 3	ONLINE
FEB. 26	IN-PERSON
APR. 2	IN-PERSON
MAY 18	ONLINE

DON'T MISS A THING!

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