

## **NORWALK COMMUNITY COLLEGE RECEIVES TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT \$1 Million Investment Will Support NCC's Most Vulnerable Students Through Innovative Programs Targeting Women and Students of Color**

We are thrilled to share that Norwalk Community College Foundation received a \$1 million transformational gift from an anonymous donor over the holiday season, with one unique stipulation attached to the gift: that the funds be fully used within two years to help address the most pressing needs of Norwalk Community College (NCC) and its students.

To that end, this gift will make possible the enhancement and growth of much-needed wrap-around and emergency services for students as NCC emerges from covid-related challenges with a student population that is even more vulnerable than it was pre-pandemic.

"We know that our students are resilient and highly capable, but many of them face increasing challenges with childcare, transportation, housing, access to technology, food insecurity and mental health. These are all circumstances that must be addressed in conjunction with a full complement of academic support services if our students to be successful," said Cheryl DeVonish, Chief Executive Officer of Norwalk Community College. "We are extremely grateful for this donor's generosity and understanding of our needs, and we thank the Foundation and Carrie Bernier for their part in making it possible."

"The last two years have been exceedingly difficult for many of our students," CSCU President Terrence Cheng said. "Even before the pandemic, too many students, particularly at community colleges, faced external barriers which made academic success all the more difficult. This generous donation will make a real difference in the lives of some of Norwalk's most vulnerable students, removing barriers to completion and creating future opportunities. We owe this anonymous donor a debt of gratitude."

The \$1million unrestricted gift gives the Foundation and the College the flexibility to direct funds where they are most needed. It is particularly significant, during this period of change and growth for Norwalk Community College, to be able to expand existing services and initiatives while facilitating timely and adequate responses to emerging and urgent needs that may arise.

NCC Foundation President and CEO Carrie Bernier noted, "The costs associated with providing these services to students over the course of their academic journey is high, and this generous unrestricted gift will provide much needed seed money to truly be able to bring to life the vision for holistic student services that CEO DeVonish has long-championed. We hope that other philanthropists, be they individuals, foundations, or corporations, will look at this as an opportunity to join in the vision of this generous donor to truly create the support needed so students can reach their academic goals."

When asked their inspiration for the gift, the donors said, "We are passionate believers in the human potential, and we believe that an investment today in Norwalk Community College amplifies the opportunity to improve outcomes for thousands of NCC students. The strength of the NCC Foundation, the dynamic and innovative leadership of CEO DeVonish, and the strong support of President Cheng have us 'all in' on NCC. We couldn't be more excited to provide support to NCC's vision and strategic priorities and to see the enhancement and expansion of programming enable the realization of the highest potential for its students and community."

CEO DeVonish and her team are grateful to have been given this generous investment in College priorities, including targeted programs that support student parents, women, and students of color. They are especially excited about the opportunity to enhance the educational offerings that relate to in-demand jobs in STEM fields, such as coding, artificial intelligence and engineering. Additional priorities include hiring student navigators, job coaches, and peer mentors to assist with much-needed student engagement initiatives that support retention and guide graduating students as they prepare to enter the workforce.