



JUNE 2025

BEDFORD COUNTY CAMPUS CELEBRATES SPRING 2025 COMMENCEMENT

Seventeen graduates celebrated their academic accomplishments at the Allegany College of Maryland Bedford County Campus Spring 2025 Commencement Ceremony on May 19, 2025. These graduates, along with four others graduating in absentia, earned degrees and certificates in the areas of Addictions, Applied Technical Studies, Business Administration, Business Accounting, Business Management, Computer Technology – Cybersecurity, Criminal Justice Transfer, General Studies,

Nursing, and Psychology.

The Spring 2025 graduates bring the total number of Bedford County Campus graduates to 806. Thanks to the generosity of community members and businesses, the Bedford County Regional Education Foundation provided over \$64,000 to these graduates through scholarships, tuition assistance awards, early college support, and emergency book funding.



Graduates:

1st Row - Left to Right

Chelsey Mitchell, Brittany Brumbaugh, Danica Morse, Morgan Claar, Lydia Wright, Faith Gutshall, Alecsis Mowry, Kourtney Gates, Emma Clark, and Raegan Shindle

2nd Row - Left to Right

Kendra Feaster, Anthony DeBonis, McKenzi Nesbitt, Luke Hinish, Hunter Kagarise, Katrina Kisner, and Courtney Shaffer

Graduating in absentia:

Evan Arnold, Landon Defibaugh, Alyssa Foor, and Matthew Verba

STUDENT SPEAKERS SHARE THEIR ACM EXPERIENCES

Three academically deserving students were selected to serve as graduation speakers during the May 19, 2025 Bedford County Campus commencement ceremony. Anthony DeBonis of Bedford, Faith Gutshall of James Creek, and Hunter Kagarise of Hopewell shared their ACM Bedford County Campus journeys.

Mr. Joshua Leibfreid, Assistant Professor of Business Administration, introduced Anthony DeBonis, who earned an Associate Degree in Business Management. Mr. Leibfreid described the growth he witnessed in Anthony. “From class to class and semester to semester, I saw Anthony grow. He went from someone who had no idea about what he wanted to do to somebody who not only figured it out but is now working at a phenomenal job, who graduated with honors, and is a great representation of not only our business department but of every ACM student.”

Anthony described himself as a high school student who “wasn’t exactly a model student, and didn’t care much about grades or the future.” After high school, Anthony moved to Pittsburgh and “quickly learned what adulthood was really like.” Realizing that he wanted to make changes, he decided to move home, take the next step, and enroll at ACM.



Anthony DeBonis

As Anthony reflected on his time at ACM, he shared, “I could not have made it through without the support system here at ACM. The faculty do not just teach, they care. The faculty and staff are the reason students like me don’t just survive here. We thrive. I never expected to be standing here today. I never expected to be graduating with honors or working full-time as a manager at a business within the community, but here I am. I’m here because I decided to try, because my family supported me, my professors invested in me, and because I finally started believing in myself.”

Ms. Devon Corle, Assistant Professor of Nursing, introduced Faith Gutshall, who earned an Associate Degree in Nursing. Faith completed 37 college credits while in high school and started in the nursing program directly out of high school. Ms. Corle introduced Faith as “a remarkable student who exemplifies the heart, resilience, and dedication that is required to excel as a college student and a nurse. Each semester, she excelled in the classroom as well as in the clinical setting.”

Faith, graduating magna cum laude, described the challenges and rewards of nursing school. “For those of us who went through nursing school, we know this wasn’t just a path – it was a calling. We didn’t just go to class. We learned to hold life in our hands. We saw people take their first breath, and sometimes, their last. We memorized textbooks and



Faith Gutshall

medication charts, yes – but we also memorized the quiet signs of someone in pain, the sound of a worried family’s voice, and the way to stay calm in chaos. Nursing school pushed us harder than we thought we could go. It demanded our compassion, our strength, and our faith in ourselves.”

She reminded all of the graduates that “each of us walked our own difficult, meaningful road to get to this stage. Each of us has a story of resilience. We didn’t just earn degrees. We unlocked a new step in our futures.”

Faith accepted a full-time nursing position on the medical-surgical unit at Conemaugh Nason Hospital. Her goal is to gain experience and eventually become a labor and delivery nurse.

Mrs. Leah Pepple, Director of PA Advancement and Community Relations, introduced Hunter Kagarise, who earned Associate Degrees in Criminal Justice Transfer and Applied Technical Studies. Mrs. Pepple described Hunter as a “graduate who displayed integrity, academic excellence, and kindness throughout his time at ACM.” She also thanked Hunter for “volunteering his time generously, lending his talents to a wide range of campus activities where he displayed humility and graciousness as he shared the impact of his ACM journey with others.”

Hunter, graduating summa cum laude, began his college path during high school by completing 15 college credits. Even though he was familiar with college coursework, he shared, “Roughly two years ago, I found myself standing outside the ACM Bedford County Campus, uncertain of the obstacles that lay ahead of me. A new school, new people, even a new way of learning, was something I had never experienced before. The ACM Campus and the people within it were unfamiliar to me. However, one must realize that calm waters never make a good sailor. I soon realized that ACM wasn’t just another school, it was people, it was a community, and it was an unrelenting will that has brought so much betterment to each of us and this county.”

Encouraging all the graduates, Hunter shared, “The boundaries of what we call possible are not fixed; they are merely waiting to be changed by those who refuse to accept the limits. Remember, not only are you turning the page on this chapter today, but you are holding the pen that will write the next.”

Hunter plans to embark on his next chapter by pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and then complete law school to become a corporate attorney.



Hunter Kagarise