



NOVA | Northern Virginia
Community College

Every Student Succeeds
Every Program Achieves
Every Community Prospers

2020-2021





A letter from the president

Anne M. Kress

During the pandemic, NOVA came together around our remarkable and resilient students, and in spite of extraordinary challenges, they thrived! I am grateful to our extraordinary faculty and staff for always putting our students at the center and to the federal government, Virginia and generous NOVA Educational Foundation donors for their much-needed financial support during COVID. At an unprecedented time, our college made a commitment to keep our students on the path to their goals, and we kept it: this is why we are Boldly NOVA.

Whether seeking the workforce credentials needed to begin an exciting career or earning the associate degree needed to transfer to a four-year college or university, students find their futures at NOVA. Our college reflects the diversity and depth of our region. One of every three students attending a Virginia community college studies at NOVA, and we welcome our lead role in connecting them to equity in academic and economic opportunity.

We are the largest supplier of talent in the region. Employers like Amazon, Alarm.com and Inova partner with NOVA on programs that prepare our graduates for good jobs and great careers. Thanks to funding through FastForward and G3, these career pathways are more affordable than ever. And we are grateful for Virginia's investment in expanding NOVA's Medical Education Campus and building a new Trades Center at the Manassas Campus—thereby increasing our capacity to meet the workforce needs of the future.

For every student success story, there are dozens more waiting to be written; and NOVA is committed to ensuring that every student succeeds, every program achieves and every community prospers. Thank you for helping us fulfill this mission!





A word from the chair

Zuzana Steen



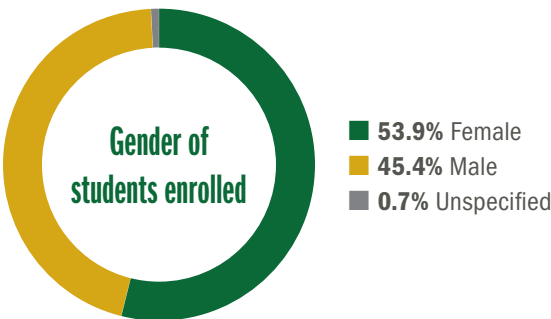
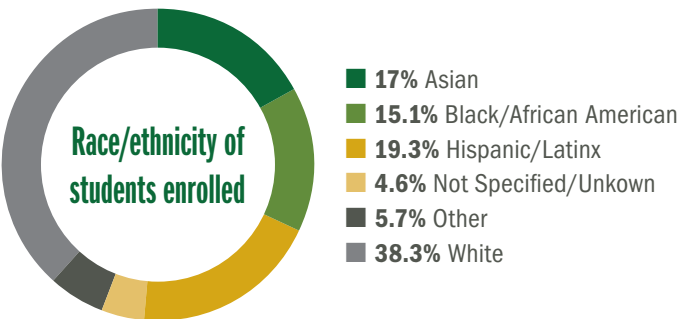
In the time I have served as a member and now chair of the Northern Virginia Community College Board, as well as in my previous roles on the NOVA Foundation Board, several K-12 and CTE boards and perhaps most importantly, in my role as mom to teens approaching college, I have seen NOVA's value firsthand. And in my “day job” as director of academic and community relations at Micron, I have an understanding of the skills employers are seeking. NOVA is producing graduates able to step into critical industries that serve the region, and it is allowing employers like Micron to upskill their existing workforce through credit and non-credit programs and certificates.

Under the leadership of Dr. Anne Kress who assumed her role during a most challenging time—just weeks before the coronavirus pandemic really took hold—NOVA has continued to thrive, serving students and our region. This is no small feat! I am proud of Dr. Kress and the NOVA community; and particularly of our students who have remained steadfastly on course to realize their dreams of a better life through education.



Come as you are

In the 2020-2021 academic year, more than 80,000 students from many backgrounds, each with their own unique interests and talents, came to NOVA to find their path to success.



68.5%

of NOVA transfer students enroll at four-year schools in Virginia

\$54,114

median salary of applied degree graduates



“We picked NOVA because we heard it was the best school in the area, and because it was veteran friendly.”

– Quintoya Bell and Spencer Brown
Veterans, Human Resource Management and Information Technology Students, NOVA



Become who you want to be

With their inspiring commitment to excellence in instruction and equity in opportunity, NOVA's 3,400+ faculty and staff members develop and deliver world-class programs for our students.

66

two-year degree programs

10

certificate programs

45

career studies certificate programs



students enrolled in tech programs

A leading

producer of IT associate degrees and credentials



students enrolled in healthcare programs

Only

dedicated medical campus in the VCCS



students enrolled in trades and career programs

"I was in my second semester at NOVA when I got hired. I had just finished my first semester when I got the interview. That first semester prepared me for the job in the data center industry already."

- Brian England

WMATA Engineer Technician, NOVA Alum



G3 (Get a Skill, Get a Job, Get Ahead) at NOVA

Students share their stories



Fandrea Preston

Information Systems Technology student, NOVA

From Cancer-Surviving Mother to NOVA Cybersecurity Student

Fandrea Preston, who has a background in the medical field, had worked as a medical assistant for 10 years. She is a cancer survivor, mother of three and a proud NOVA Nighthawk. She previously attended Everest College to become a medical assistant, trained at Germanna Community College to pursue nursing and then realized technology was her passion. She decided to pursue a career in cybersecurity at NOVA.

"G3 is going to help a lot of students financially. Without financial aid and FAFSA, and with the medical bills I had, I wouldn't have been able to stay at NOVA. This will help so many families," she said. "If my kids can see that their mom can do it, then they can too."

"My tagline would be: Fandrea Strong! Cancer, whatever!"



Nick Carr-Voigt

Information Systems Technology student, NOVA

A Single Father Who Left the Restaurant Industry During the Pandemic

At 33, and after a few attempts at college, Nick was working in restaurants for more than a decade. His plan is to work in the IT support field; but he says he has enjoyed every field he has dabbled in through the classes he has taken.

"Between the pandemic and hitting a roadblock with my career, I found my way back to school. I was a beneficiary of both Virginia's G3 program funds, which is a big deal for me down the road since I won't really have any student loans to repay, as well as the HEERF emergency grant. When the stimulus hit back in March and the same with the G3 funding, it meant I could do the spring and summer semesters without working. It meant pouring every fiber of my being into schoolwork."

Student feature

Brothers thrive taking non-traditional approach to Higher Ed

Four years ago, NOVA published the story of 15-year-old Ryan Bhojwani who was working on his second associate degree from NOVA, while also attending high school full time.

Ryan was young for his grade, so for the 2016-17 school year, his parents decided to give him a “gap year” before high school to give him a chance to catch up in his verbal communication skills. He spent that year enrolled in NOVA Online completing an A.S. in science. By summer 2018, he was 16 and had earned two NOVA degrees from NOVA Online (then known as ELI), ticking off 68 credits in 15 months with all A's. More importantly, he had gained a sense of purpose and serenity he had never known.

Ryan's younger brother Jonathan took the same track as his brother. Three years younger, Jon's folks pulled him out of public school and enrolled him in NOVA Online, completing 113 credits in less than two years, while he was concurrently enrolled at H.B. Woodlawn High School.

The two clearly have a great gene pool. Dad, Roger, is a doctor and on the faculty of GW's med school and hospital. Mom, Brandi, had a career in marketing but chose to focus instead on her boys' academic and extracurricular pursuits—Ryan is an outstanding baseball player and Jon is a gifted guitar player.

When Ryan finished at NOVA, he went on to become a freshman at Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington. He eventually transferred to Yorktown High, as Arlington Public Schools embraced and fostered his nontraditional educational growth. Ryan graduated from high school in June 2021 and is now playing baseball for UVA and majoring in applied statistics. His dad says that his NOVA credits transferred very easily and have afforded him a very flexible schedule at UVA.

Jon also finished two degrees at NOVA—an A.S. in science and an A.S. in IT – just like Ryan; and he is a sophomore at H.B. Woodlawn High School in Arlington. He is leaning toward the bio medical fields, perhaps becoming a physician like his dad or a biomedical engineer. He plans to put his NOVA education to good use during the summer doing biomedical research for a local university. Like his brother, his success at NOVA created more opportunities for him than he could have imagined.

“We are so thankful! NOVA Online is the best,” Roger said. “As COVID has shown us, a lot of education can be done online. For better or worse, those students who feel comfortable learning online will have an edge. NOVA Online is the future, but it's available now!”



L-R: Ryan, Brandi, Jon and Roger at Edinburgh Castle, Scotland, December 2019

Nursing alumna, healthcare executive gives back with \$1 million gift

Debra Coffman Howe of Palm Beach, Florida, a NOVA nursing alumna and now managing partner and president of Airamid Health Services and Kaine Financial Services, donated \$1 million to NOVA's Educational Foundation in March 2020. This generous gift added to her existing endowed scholarship fund to increase her support for NOVA's nursing students. Howe also donated to the NOVA COVID-19 Emergency Student Aid Fund.

As a nursing student at NOVA, Howe reached a point where, financially, she could not afford to finish her degree. She went to a trusted NOVA nursing instructor to say she was postponing her studies. Within days, she was notified that her tuition and books for that year had been paid for by an anonymous donor. She was put in touch with NOVA Financial Aid and the NOVA Foundation and, with their help, received grants, scholarships, loans and even a part-time job. She was able to complete her studies and went on to earn a B.S. in science from St. Joseph University in Windham, Maine.



"I was able to fulfill my dreams thanks to the dedicated faculty, staff and donors at NOVA. I will never forget the relief and gratitude for those who allowed me to focus on moving forward," Howe said. "NOVA was truly my launching pad to a very successful career in healthcare, and I am happy that I am now in a position to 'give back' to other hard-working and focused NOVA students."

– Debra Coffman Howe

President, Airamid Health Services and Kaine Financial Services



Student feature

Award-winning singer becomes life-saving nurse

Filipina-Asian singing star, Claire Cee, otherwise known as Carol Banawa, has had a long career in the music industry spanning decades.

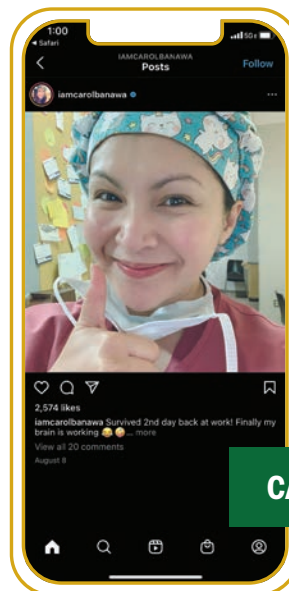
In July 2018, Banawa became a registered nurse after graduating summa cum laude with her nursing degree from NOVA's Medical Education Campus (MEC). She says she started at NOVA because it had the most flexible schedule for her family. Her husband is active-duty military and they have two children, so it was important for her to find a program that would accommodate her family's schedule.

Graduating from MEC gave her a sense of pride and joy; not just for herself but also for the whole group of people with whom she finished the program. She knew how hard everyone worked, studying endlessly, reading chapter after chapter just to make sure that they were all ready for exams.

"It is a mixed feeling, being in the field of nursing during these times," said Banawa. "I am proud to say that I am part of a workforce that is making a difference and that is helping to save lives; but at the same time, there is that fear, knowing that I am a young nurse and I still have a lot to learn. However, I also know that this experience will help me grow to become a better and wiser nurse."



CAROL, THE SINGER



CAROL, THE NURSE

COVID-19 pandemic

Supporting students through uncertain times

In March of 2020, less than two weeks after NOVA moved to remote learning, the NOVA Foundation stepped in and committed \$250,000 to launch the COVID-19 Emergency Student Aid Fund.

“The pandemic has exacerbated an already dire situation,” said Ellen Dyke, then chair of the NOVA Foundation Board. “In fact, in just a few months’ time, the NOVA Foundation has provided nearly \$750,000 in emergency grants to assist NOVA students struggling to meet their basic needs.”

And since the beginning of the pandemic, NOVA has been able to provide support to **more than 49,000 NOVA students** thanks to the federal government’s Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF).

That support came in many forms, including:



Direct emergency aid



Training and technology
to convert courses
to remote and
HyFlex delivery



Loaner laptops for
students in need



WiFi in parking lots for
students who could
not afford internet
service at home



Forgiveness of
student loan debt

For nearly 5,600 students who were facing additional financial difficulties during the pandemic, forgiving their outstanding loan balances removed a substantial barrier keeping them from continuing their education.

The College also offered an incentive to all students willing to show proof of vaccination at a NOVA Parking Office. As of October 2021, more than 10,000 students had claimed the \$250 NOVACard credit that can be used to pay for books, food and many other benefits and services on campus.



Alexandria Campus



Student feature

NOVA alumna makes tough choices daily, but Higher Ed is non-negotiable

Romelia Belteton was a junior at Hayfield High School in Alexandria when she learned she was pregnant. It took three months before she got the nerve to tell her parents. She was just so afraid of letting them down.

“Growing up, my parents always wanted the best for my siblings and me. I knew the moment I told my parents I was pregnant, their views and dreams for me would change, and it was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. My mom made me realize that, no matter what, I needed to finish school. Not finishing was just not an option. I’ll never forget her telling me that I was no longer going to succeed for them, I had to do it for him—for my son.” Romelia gave birth to Ariel in December 2014, graduated from Hayfield in June 2015 and enrolled at NOVA’s Alexandria Campus in the fall of 2015.

She worked while attending school so she could take better care of her son and herself without putting a financial strain on her mother. Each year, she received financial aid that helped cover the cost of tuition and books. She also was part of a scholarship program spearheaded by the non-profit Generation Hope, which provides assistance to teen parents in college; as well as providing emotional support and resources to become better students and parents. Generation Hope has even started an internal program helping young parents learn how to prepare their kids for kindergarten.

After graduating from NOVA, Romelia went on to George Mason University, graduating with her degree in engineering in spring 2021. She is now an associate project manager for the I-66 Outside the Beltway construction project. Ariel is happy and healthy and rocking first grade!

“I made the decision to go to NOVA and pursue engineering so that I could avoid going into debt. I didn’t want my first years as a parent to start with me putting myself into debt.”

– Romelia Belteton
Project Manager, NOVA Alum



Annandale Campus

A commitment to inclusive excellence

Come as you are. Become who you want to be. That is our promise.

NOVA's Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) supports our college's commitment to inclusive excellence, working to create a learning and working environment in which all can succeed.

Dr. Nathan Carter, NOVA's first chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer was appointed in December 2020.

December 2020

NOVA establishes the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Spring 2021

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) selects NOVA as a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Center.

Summer 2021

NOVA launches its first Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan.

September 2021

NOVA launches DEI InNOVation Grant Program.

October 2021

The U.S. Department of Education awards a \$1.3M grant to NOVA to support Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander (AANAPI) students.



"I am honored to serve NOVA and the entire college community in this role. Now, more than ever, the charge to improve diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education will ask much of all of us. All students, staff and faculty should receive the support they need to feel included so they can thrive and achieve their education and career goals. I look forward to working alongside my colleagues to engage in the important work ahead."

– Nathan Carter

Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, NOVA



NOVA staff feature

Looking back. Going forward.

Rommel Aguilar Cardenas was born in a very poor town in Honduras. Like many immigrants, he grew up separated from his parents. His mother became a single mom in her early 20s and had to leave home to make a living to support her children. She left her three beloved boys in the care of her parents.

“Growing up, I understood the sacrifices my family had made in the hopes of a better future. A future where pursuing a college education was the dream. My grandparents instilled in us the value of education. Even though neither of them could read or write, they put education at the forefront of our upbringing.”

Emigrating to study in the United States wasn't easy. As a student at NOVA, he had to overcome barriers his peers did not. But he pushed himself. He graduated with an associate of science in business administration; a bachelor's in international business from James Madison and a master's in higher education with a concentration in leadership for student success from Walden University—making him the first in his family to hold a graduate degree.

He then chose to return to NOVA for his career. He began work at NOVA's Woodbridge Campus in 2014, going from admissions and enrollment to student life, and now he is a retention advisor.

“I cannot help but to see myself in the eyes of the many students that still struggle in pursuit of their American dream, a college education.”

– Rommel Aguilar Cardenas
Retention Advisor, NOVA



Northern Virginia Workforce Index Report

This fall, Northern Virginia Community College and the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce released their first annual Northern Virginia Workforce Index. The index combines survey responses from 91 local business leaders with real-time labor market data to provide detailed analysis on employer sentiment and workforce practices in the Northern Virginia region.

The index shows that while Northern Virginia weathered the pandemic better than many other regions economically, many area businesses are now facing meaningful challenges in finding and hiring talent due to labor shortages. This presents an opportunity for regional businesses and employers to expand their talent pipelines through alternate means, such as apprenticeships. Apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs enable employers to develop a customized strategy to address talent gaps within their organizations. They also offer the opportunity to tap into a broader, more diverse pool of job seekers, which was identified as a hiring priority by two-thirds of survey respondents.



“At Amazon, diversity, equity and inclusion are central to innovation as a way to overcome confirmation bias. When humans have an idea, we tend to recognize and emphasize information that supports our idea, and overlook or discount information that conflicts with it. Because Amazon wants only good ideas to reach customers, we attempt to disconfirm our beliefs. A diverse group of colleagues is much better positioned to overcome biases and reject bad ideas or improve imperfect ones.”

– Paul Misener

Vice President, Global Innovation Policy & Communications, Amazon



Talent development at NOVA

Apprenticeships prepare students for the future

With the tight job market in technology, Alarm.com was looking for innovative ways to build its candidate pipeline. Implementing a tech apprenticeship program with NOVA proved to be an excellent solution.

The first cohort—focused on the job roles of IT business analyst, accounts payable and budget analyst apprenticeships—launched in July 2021. The apprentices came with diverse backgrounds; some had prior degrees in information technology, nursing or hospitality management. A few apprentices had moved to the U.S. within the last several years. Following eight weeks of classroom instruction, they are now gaining full-time, on-the-job training with the guidance of a mentor. Next year, the apprentices will graduate and become full-fledged employees of Alarm.com.

“The apprentices are super excited when they make the transition from coursework to on-the-job training. They have this whole world opening up to them and NOVA helped them get there.”

–Victoria Schillinger

Vice President of Human Resources, Alarm.com



To the NOVA community

Thank you for your continued support

With your support, NOVA gives every student the opportunity to succeed. Whether they are first-generation college students, veterans who have been serving their country here or abroad, returning students who have decided to earn their degree or mid-career professionals who desire to change their career direction—students just need to bring the desire to achieve, NOVA provides the opportunity.

We are not content with the status quo. Looking into 2022 and beyond, we will continue to work toward further equity in access, opportunity and success.

Our new Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Eun-Woo Chang, brings to NOVA a vision focused on encouraging innovation and inclusivity in all aspects of our academic planning.

NOVA's new Business Engagement Center, the first of its kind at a community college, will make it easier for higher education and the business community to strategically collaborate and develop meaningful partnerships that benefit both employers and students and help our region prosper.

Everything we do at NOVA will be guided by our commitment to Inclusive Excellence. This ensures we are constantly instilling value in all members of our community—NOVA students, faculty, staff and our regional partners.

At the heart of it all are our students. Their grit, tenacity and desire to succeed give us the determination to do what we can to ensure they will. For those who see in them the promise that we see and sacrificially give to help meet their financial needs; to the business community with whom we have a mutual commitment to provide graduates for the jobs and jobs for the graduates and for the elected officials who advocate and provide support to benefit those students, as well as the greater community, we thank you!

Together, we are Boldly NOVA.



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Vice Chair: Ron Gill

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Scott Price, Dominion Energy

Mordecai Scott, Savills

Matt Shank, Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges

Zuzana Steen, Micron Technology

Joe Teipe, Jr., The Washington Times



Thank you to the NOVA community and those who contributed to this report.

The health and safety of our community has always been our top priority, but especially so during the last two years. Although many images show the College's safety protocols (which were informed by the CDC, VCCS and public health guidance), please note that some photos may have been taken prior to the pandemic.

