

For Immediate Release

ACM TO GRADUATE NEARLY 350 AT 55th COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES MAY 20

CUMBERLAND, Md. – Allegany College of Maryland will recognize the accomplishments of nearly 350 students when it holds 55th commencement exercises Saturday, May 20, on the Cumberland campus.

Associate degrees and certificates will be awarded to members of the spring 2017 class at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Physical Education Building. Students in allied health care programs take part in the afternoon ceremony while those in career and transfer programs attend the morning exercises.

The college's president, Dr. Cynthia S. Bambara, opens the program with a welcome to the candidates for graduation and their guests, and Jane A. Belt, vice chair of the ACM Board of Trustees, offers greetings.

Five students of high academic achievement will give the commencement address on behalf of their classmates.

Michael W. Kerns of Cumberland, Micah Ludwick of Cumberland and Stephanie McCoy of Flintstone will offer comments in the morning ceremony while Hayley Smith of Flintstone and Kaleigh Whetzel of Westernport will provide the student perspective in the afternoon.

The speakers will congratulate classmates on their success, thank faculty and staff for guidance and praise family and friends for their encouragement. They'll also reflect on lessons learned, challenges confronted and confidence gained as they encourage their fellow graduate toward new goals and greater heights.

Kerns has completed associate degrees in accounting, business administration and general studies. After 24 years with the Cumberland Fire Department, Kerns has built a distinguished college career since enrolling in 2013. He's been president of both the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Student Government Association and also has served on college Budget Advisory and Strategic Enrollment Management committees. A small-business owner, his future goals include earning bachelor's and master's degrees in business and teaching at a community college.



Ludwick earned an associate degree in a computer technology program that prepares graduates for further studies in computer science, cybersecurity and information systems. He began at ACM in his senior year of secondary education, which he completed in 2015 through home-schooling. He will transfer to Frostburg State University to earn a bachelor's degree in computer science. Ludwick plans a career in programming or apps development and hopes to one day operate his own computer firm.



McCoy has earned an associate degree in administrative medical assistant and a certificate in medical coding and billing. A 1997 graduate of Flintstone High who studied for two semesters at Frostburg State, McCoy returned to college in 2015 to enroll in ACM's office technologies program. Married and the mother of two children, she hopes for a front-office position in a medical practice specializing in obstetrics.





Smith is graduating with an associate degree in respiratory therapy. Dual-enrolled at ACM while a high school student, she graduated from Fort Hill in 2015. Having completed her program's clinical training at Meritus Medical Center in Hagerstown, she's been hired there as a respiratory therapist.

Whetzel has earned a degree in human service associate. A 2014 graduate of Mountain Ridge High School, she has excelled amid the challenge of a visual impairment that only allows her nearsightedness. She plans to enter the workforce and hopes for a career working with children.



The commencement speakers will be introduced by faculty members in their academic programs and others with whom they have collaborated in their college careers.

Faculty members will announce the names of the graduates as they walk to receive their associate degrees and certificates. Dr. Kurt Hoffman, ACM senior vice president of instructional and student affairs, will present the candidates for graduation, and Belt will award them their diplomas.

Serving as grand marshal of commencement exercises is Steve Resh, professor of forestry. Jenna Gallion, associate professor of English and speech, is the assistant grand marshal.

A reception for the new graduates, their guests and others involved in commencement follows each ceremony. These activities will be held in the College Center on the Cumberland campus.