

For Immediate Release

## ACM TO GRADUATE NEARLY 300 AT 56<sup>th</sup> COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES MAY 19

CUMBERLAND, Md. – Allegany College of Maryland will recognize the achievements of nearly 300 students when it conducts 56<sup>th</sup> commencement exercises Saturday, May 19, on the Cumberland campus.

Associate degrees and certificates will be awarded to members of the spring 2018 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. Kim B. Leonard, chair of the ACM Board of Trustees, will offer greetings.

Six students who have taken academic achievement to a high level will give the commencement address on behalf of their classmates.

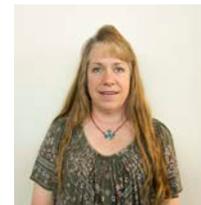
Robyn Knestrick of Confluence, Pa., Melissa McKenzie of Meyersdale, Pa.; and Danita Smith of Corriganville will offer comments in the morning ceremony while Stefan Keiser of Somerset, Pa.; Abigail Lane of Garrett, Pa., and Julia Wiland of LaVale will provide the student perspective in the afternoon.

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



Keiser has completed an associate degree in the college's human service associate curriculum. The 2005 graduate of Somerset Area High School earned a journalism degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2011. He works now as a counselor at Somerset Hospital Twin Lakes Center.

Knestrick, a returning college student and native Texan, earned an associate degree in accounting. Her work history includes managing the campground at Youghiogheny River Lake. She plans to continue toward a bachelor's degree at Penn State University-Fayette and seek a position in public or private accounting.



Lane has completed an associate degree in respiratory therapy. She began her ACM studies in early college in summer 2014. By the time she received her diploma from Apostolic Christian Academy in 2016, she'd earned 30 college credits. Now 19, she is ready to begin a career as a respiratory therapist.

McKenzie has earned an associate degree in multimedia technology. A 2008 graduate of Meyersdale Area High School, she currently works part time as a pharmacy technician and freelances as a graphic artist, author and designer. She also plans to market clothing and shoes of her own design through online retail.





Smith has earned an associate degree in early childhood education. A 2016 graduate of Lighthouse Christian Academy, she plans to earn a bachelor's degree in education at Frostburg State University and seek a teaching position in the area.

Wiland completed a degree in human service associate. The 1998 graduate of Beall High School and mother of a 17-year-old son with special needs, Wiland returned to ACM after many years of work at an area supermarket. She plans to earn bachelor's and master's degrees at Frostburg State, become a licensed clinical social worker and pursue a career in community advocacy.



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 Leonard will award them their diplomas.

Serving as grand marshal of commencement exercises is Jenna Gallion, associate professor of English and speech. Stacey Rohrbaugh, professor of medical laboratory technology, is the assistant grand marshal.

The West Virginia Brass Quintet, under the direction of Dr. Brian Plitnik, will perform a prelude to the exercises and the national anthem as well as a processional and recessional of graduates and college faculty and staff.

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.