



The Roger Lehecka Double Discovery Center

Getting community youth to, through, and beyond college



In this April 2021 Issue:

1. Spotlight on:

- Aldon C., DDC '21, was interviewed by Macquarie Group Limited, the multinational independent investment bank and financial services company, about his experience with their summer Leadership Education Advancement Development Support (LEADS) internship program. Every year, several DDC students participate in Macquarie's LEADS internship. [Click here](#) to read Aldon's interview.
- Iovanni R., DDC '21, was awarded the prestigious Gates Scholarship, a highly selective award for outstanding high school seniors of color from low-income households. In the fall, he will attend the University of Chicago.
- Jane W., Columbia College '22 and Expanded Learning Opportunities Coordinator at DDC, will intern this summer at the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Chief Data Officer. *My work with DDC has given me a foundational understanding of how education policy lives at the local level. I am thrilled to now be able to see how policy is created and implemented on a larger scale,* says Jane.

Congratulations Aldon, Iovanni and Jane!

2. DDC Class of 2021 - Early Results!

3. Insights from Oscar H., DDC '21 and Jackie N., DDC '20, Princeton University

DDC Class of 2021 - Early Results!

As of April 16, DDC seniors collectively have been awarded about \$2,900,000 in scholarships and received 219 letters of acceptance from the best colleges and universities in the country, including CUNY Hunter and Baruch, Babson College, NYU, Boston University, Colgate, Michigan University and Northwestern. In addition, four DDC students were admitted at Columbia, Brown, University of Chicago, and University of Pennsylvania as Questbridge Scholars. Look for the final results in our May issue!

Insights from Oscar H., DDC '21 and Jackie N., DDC '20, Princeton University

Oscar H., DDC '21: *Persevere, put in the hard work, do not be discouraged, in the end, it will pay off!*

I know, it did for me! I am amazed at all the letters of acceptance I got this year from colleges and universities, from Siena College to Baruch College to Alfred University, and in many cases they came with full scholarships. I have not made my final decision yet. It will depend on the institution's ranking of course, the courses, the teachers and the campus, but it is wonderful to have so many options.

I have been attending DDC since 9th grade. Between the different subjects the program introduced me to and the rigorous college prep courses it offers, the Center prepared me really well for college! I learned about coding, photography and journalism. I even made a documentary on the objectification of women. Then last summer, DDC helped me enroll in the LEADS internship program at Macquarie and I found out that I do enjoy marketing. I decided this is the career I want to pursue and a good marketing program is the main criteria for my college choice.

My years at DDC also taught me very valuable lifelong skills, like independence, advocacy and the value of community. College prep classes can be overwhelming but we cheer each other up, it is amazing.

Senior year in the midst of the pandemic was quite a challenge. I had to work from home and I missed going out with my friends, the times together, good and bad. The lack of social interactions was hard.

On the other hand, I found that I had more control over my time, I could go at my own pace, and for me that was a plus. The DDC counselors and mentors were all there for us though, if only through Zoom, and I really appreciated that. I could

always contact my mentor or my counselors if I had questions or if I needed help writing my personal statement or filling out the FAFSA application to access federal student aid programs.

Year after year, DDC counselors drilled into us the value of a college education. There were times over these four years when I was overwhelmed by the workload and I was tempted to quit, but my counselor was there to encourage me and make sure I persisted. It took a lot of work and sweat, but now I have several offers to go to college and prepare for a career in marketing, which is my goal.

To current and prospective DDC students I say: attend as many classes as you can - and DDC offers a ton - because it will help you find the field you like and the career you want; take time to research all of your college options; and if you have any questions or difficulties, make sure you contact your counselor. DDC is an amazing program. In your time of need, they are there for you!

Jackie N., DDC '20, Princeton University: *I am at Princeton today in large part because of the support I got from DDC since 9th grade. If you feel overwhelmed, do not dwell in the discouragement, ask your DDC counselor for help!*

I used to look forward to my time at DDC during the week. My peers were motivated, the staff always routed for us and I enjoyed the classes, the college trips and Summer Academy. DDC gave me the opportunity to explore so many fields. For example, DDC introduced me to the business world through the Macquarie LEADS internship and to the joy of writing poems through poetry classes taught by graduate students from Columbia's School of the Arts. I still write poems and I even enrolled in a poetry course this semester.

My DDC counselor and mentor guided me through every step of the college application process to ensure I would find the "best fit." From DDC, I learned to factor in tuition costs/scholarships, type of majors offered, academic support for students, location and size. Princeton was my first choice because it met most of these criteria and it offered me the opportunity to experience many different subjects so that I could make a more informed choice of a major and career. At this point, I still have not made a decision, but I will be doing so soon.

My transition to college life at Princeton this year was a bit tough! My two biggest challenges were 1) Writing and 2) Time management/Procrastination.

Last semester, I submitted a paper I thought was perfect. Imagine my disappointment when after our conference, my professor told me to rewrite it. My second draft turned out very differently. It felt like I had to relearn how to write! I would encourage students to attend the writing classes and workshops at DDC as well as use DDC's new Writing Center because college writing is very different from high school writing. I was happy to learn that DDC alumni also can access the Writing Center for help.

Another skill that students need to master is time management. Your success in college depends largely on it and the decision about how to manage your time is

yours alone. You may have only one or two classes a day, but that does not mean the rest of the day is free. I spend the majority of my “free” time completing homework assignments or else I will not be able to keep up with my courses! I decided to attend workshops to learn how to avoid procrastination and one of the best strategies I learned and currently employ is to plan every block of time in my calendar.

I would also strongly encourage DDC students to build their reading stamina. It is not uncommon in college to be assigned a hundred pages to read in one day. I had the opportunity to begin building my reading stamina in high school when I took AP Chemistry and that has helped me immensely here.

Do not hesitate to ask for help when you are feeling overwhelmed. Fortunately DDC taught me how to advocate for myself and look for available resources whenever I needed support. Colleges and universities offer many resources to students. At Princeton for instance, we have the writing center and the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning, which are very popular because they offer personalized support. Professors also are available to help during office hours. I was expecting them to be intimidating, but they have been very accessible and willing to answer all sorts of questions I have had.

I would tell DDC students that it is normal to feel overwhelmed. We all do at times. When this happens, keep going to DDC. The counselors are there to help you even when it is not academic-related. Do not give up, that would be a terrible mistake. Instead, take a break and when you are ready, go back to DDC because everyone there will be ready to support you with your journey to college.

**Double our Discovery, Double our Impact!
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