

Spring
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PEIRCE

PERSPECTIVES

NATALIA GAMARRA '06

Proving What is Possible

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Peirce Perspectives is produced by Peirce College.

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Dear alumni, students and friends,

We are pleased to reintroduce you to ***Peirce Perspectives!***

We have redesigned and reimagined this publication and expanded its focus so we can more effectively tell the Peirce story. This publication brings the Peirce story to life through the lives and accomplishments of our graduates and students, and keeps the Peirce community informed and engaged with our institution.

In this issue, we are honored to share the story of Natalia Gamarra '06, who came to the United States in 2000 to create a better life and reach new heights. Natalia's story reminds us that the key to achieving our personal and professional goals often requires us to stay focused on our "true north," and keep driving to where we want to go.

Also in this edition, we are thrilled to share news about several new Peirce programs and initiatives.

This includes the launch of our new Career Bridge program, which prepares students, including displaced workers and career changers, with the skills, certifications and credentials needed for jobs that pay family-sustaining wages, and guides them to those jobs in a matter of months. We are grateful to the Lenfest Foundation for its generous support of the program.

In addition, we talk with Dr. Charlene Glenn about receiving a Fulbright Award and how she has adapted her work due to the pandemic.

We are also happy to share information about other new academic programs now available at Peirce and introduce you to the new officers of the Peirce College Alumni Association.

I hope you enjoy this issue of ***Peirce Perspectives.***

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Ellen Caro
President & CEO

Proving What is Possible

NATALIA GAMARRA '06



When she arrived in the United States from Argentina, Natalia Gamarra worked tirelessly to achieve her goals, and has earned success in the global produce industry.

Natalia Gamarra knows all about perseverance.

Growing up in Posadas, Argentina with her four siblings, she was inspired by her parents who worked hard to provide for their family. Gamarra has come a long way since then, and has transformed herself into a master networker and a multi-lingual star in the international produce industry.

“My dad would peddle 10 km daily to go back and forth to work,” she said. “My mom was an entrepreneur who did what she could to raise her children.”

Gamarra admired her parents, but wanted to explore new opportunities and reach new heights. With the support of her family, she left Argentina to come to America.

“I came to the United States in 2000, with a dream of learning the culture and language and to see if what I saw in the movies was real,” said Gamarra.

For Gamarra, it all started in Philadelphia, where she landed a job as an au pair with Deborah Diamond, who, at the time, was president of Campus Philly, an organization that encourages college students to study, live and work in the Greater Philadelphia region.

While she was working for the Diamond family, the economy in Argentina collapsed. Gamarra initially planned to return home, but decided to remain in Philadelphia to advance her education and Diamond, who is now director of Campus+City Consulting, recommended that she consider Peirce College.

She visited Peirce and immediately felt a connection.

“I met with the College’s international advisor who was extremely nice and welcoming,” recalled Gamarra. “Peirce’s flexibility, customer service, authenticity, location and its history sold me, and I decided to apply.”

Channeling her mother’s entrepreneurial spirit, she enrolled in Peirce’s BS in Business Administration program.



“Peirce’s flexibility, customer service, authenticity, location and its history sold me, and I decided to apply.”

Gamarra immediately realized she was in the right place when she met other busy adult students and found the flexibility and support she needed to complete her bachelor’s degree while working during the day.

“The Walker Center was very helpful, especially with English and math,” she said. “Also, the Peirce College Library was an atmosphere where I could get work done. I was living in a studio apartment at the time, so I needed a working space and Peirce provided that to me.”

Even though she was far from her family, Gamarra drew inspiration by thinking of them and remembering why she came to the United States.

“I wanted to make my parents proud, be the first in my family to earn a bachelor’s degree, and never allow someone to bully me due to a lack of education,” she said. “Finally, I wanted to travel the world and increase my salary.”

Gamarra earned her bachelor’s degree from Peirce in 2006.

Then, her journey really started.

While working for a medical billing company, she began networking through the Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and discovered her potential as someone with a degree who also spoke four languages – including Spanish, Portuguese and Italian.

Gamarra moved into logistics in the import/export field, which provided her with international business experience and connections with the Chilean and American Chamber of Commerce in the city. Through the Chilean chamber, she met an executive leader who became her mentor and connected her with an opportunity at the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau.

“I had one of the best times working for the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau,” she said. “It was my first introduction to international sales and I got to talk about and sell the city I loved so much – Philadelphia!”

Gamarra was traveling to other countries and working with chambers of commerce, embassies and international trade agencies.

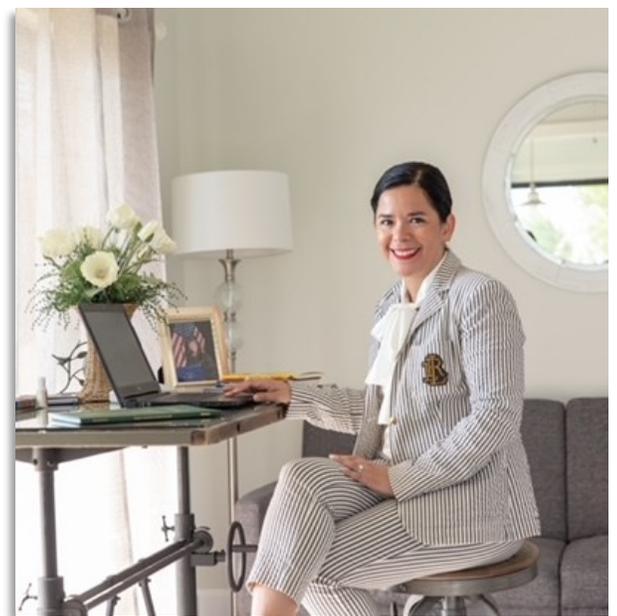
She also finished her master’s degree in business administration and management, and started to gain recognition for her extraordinary work.

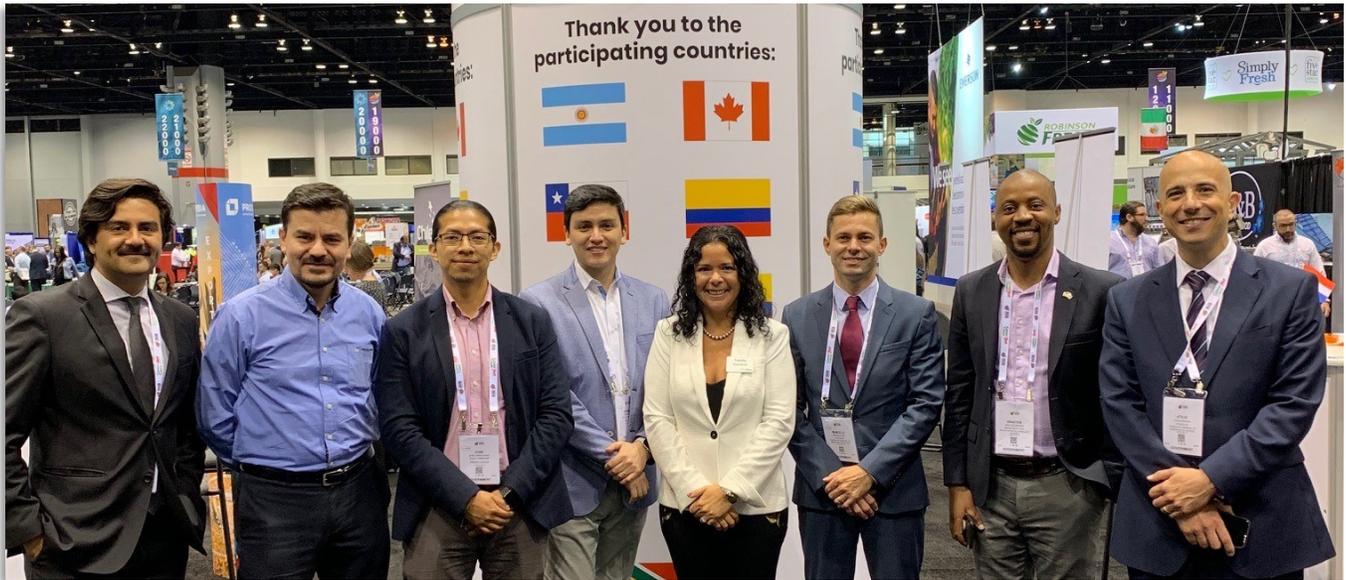
In 2012, Gamarra received the Pennsylvania Multicultural Leadership Award from the National Diversity Council, and was named one of the most influential Latinas in the Delaware Valley.

Following her successful tenure at the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, Gamarra joined the Produce Marketing Association as manager of Global Business Development in 2015, where she leveraged her logistics skills, continued to hone her international business acumen and expanded her professional network.



“I wanted to make my parents proud, be the first in my family to earn a bachelor’s degree, and never allow someone to bully me due to a lack of education.”





Gamarra’s ongoing drive to advance her career – and her life – led her to the United Fresh Produce Association.

How she landed the position with United Fresh is a textbook example of Gamarra’s mastery of networking, self-direction and perseverance.

She paid her own way to attend a professional industry event in Texas where she met an executive of the company and talked about her interest in joining United Fresh and what value she could bring to the organization.

Gamarra stayed in touch with the company for months, and was eventually contacted for an interview. In 2018, she was invited to join United Fresh as manager of International Member Relations.

“Natalia Gamarra is an excellent example of how our students prove what’s possible through their own ambition and hard work,” said Dr. Mary Ellen Caro, president & CEO of Peirce College. “Her story is an inspiration to us all.”

At United Fresh, Gamarra works with members to grow their businesses through the development of international opportunities and serves as staff liaison to United Fresh’s International Advisory Board, with a mission to expand the association’s

international portfolio. Gamarra also serves on the Global Women Fresh Network Board of Directors with the mission to connect, inspire and empower women in the fresh industry around the world.

Recently, Gamarra was promoted to director of International Member Relations.

Gamarra has sound advice for busy adults who want to

advance their careers but have not yet taken the next step.

“You are the hero of your own story, if you want to advance your career. This takes not only words, but also action on your part knowing there is an end goal in sight,” she said.

Gamarra added that a student’s success requires a student being willing to do the work.

“Everyone has a life, but you must have an incredible focus that results in making time to pursue your goal and your dream,” she said. “You will sacrifice sleep, TV time, or anything else that might distract you from studying. I currently wake up at 5 a.m. and do two hours of reading related to international exports/imports. It doesn’t matter what I did the night before. I wake up and force myself to read - knowing it is the pathway to my goal and to my success.” 🌄

“You are the hero of your own story, if you want to advance your career. This takes not only words, but also action on your part knowing there is an end goal in sight.”

Peirce Launches Career Bridge

Lenfest Foundation Supports Program Launch with \$500,000 Grant

Peirce College has recently launched a new program called Career Bridge that helps displaced workers navigate career change by acquiring the skills, certifications and credentials needed for jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and providing guidance and support to help find employment opportunities.

The Lenfest Foundation recently awarded Peirce College a \$500,000 grant to support the launch of Career Bridge and make the program more accessible to displaced and unemployed workers and those in underserved communities by covering the cost for 40 need-based students.

“We are grateful to the Lenfest Foundation for its generous support of this innovative initiative, which is aligned with the needs of students and employers,” said Dr. Mary Ellen Caro, president & CEO of Peirce College. “Career Bridge is like a GPS for navigating career change. It will help adults in our region prepare for in-demand, family-sustaining careers in less than a year, and provide employers with diverse, job-ready candidates.”

The program will allow many adults to earn 16-25 credits (depending on the career track) at no cost, earn an industry-recognized credential, possibly intern at a leading company, and interview for actual job openings in the region's fastest growing occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

The program, which also serves veterans and other career changers, blends Peirce courses and industry-recognized certifications with career-integrated advising and counseling to create stackable tracks that validate students possess the skills required by employers for jobs with projected growth.

Career Bridge tracks can be completed in as little as six-to-nine months and prepare students for jobs in medical coding, information technology, cybersecurity, project management, financial/business operations, and sales/client service.

The program is also integrating with social service and job training programs in the region, such as the Philadelphia Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc. (OIC), to leverage existing workforce development efforts in the city. Peirce awards three credits for OIC's BankWork\$ program – which provides inner-city adults with the hard and soft skills needed to start a career in banking – that apply to an introductory customer service course in most of the Career Bridge tracks. This means BankWork\$ graduates can enter Career Bridge with a three-credit head start to prepare for professional advancement or career change, depending on their goals and interests.

“Philadelphia OIC is thrilled to partner with Peirce on this visionary initiative to leverage our highly effective BankWork\$ program as a first step for people to enter one of the fastest growing industries in our region,” said Philadelphia OIC President & CEO Renée Cardwell Hughes. “We look forward to expanding our partnership with Peirce to credential additional programs, providing supplementary educational resources for OIC graduates and opening more opportunities for our community.”

Peirce is also working with JEVS Human Services, PA Career Link and other organizations to identify candidates for Career Bridge and additional job training programs that can be evaluated for credit.

“We need to find better ways to make the benefits of higher education more tangible for displaced workers and other career changers who do not always have the ability or the time to complete an entire degree,” said Caro. “Career Bridge will help students validate that they possess the skills needed by employers, and provide the support and guidance that many need to help find their way to a better job and a new career.”

For more information:

www.peirce.edu/careerbridge • upskill@peirce.edu

Peirce Students honored by Greater Philadelphia Chamber

The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia recently honored four Peirce College students who are 2021 recipients of the chamber's Paradigm Scholarship for Working Women.

Each year, the chamber awards the scholarships to women working full-time at chamber member companies, which provide up to \$5,000 to use towards tuition and/or books. The chamber has awarded \$537,000 in Paradigm Scholarships since 2001.

'We are incredibly proud of these extraordinary women, who are balancing their careers and their lives to advance their education, and we are honored that they have selected Peirce as their college,' said Dr. Mary Ellen Caro, president and CEO of Peirce College. 'We are grateful for the generous support of the chamber and the Paradigm Scholarship program.'

Peirce students honored this year include:

Special thanks to The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia for providing the photos and quotes of this year's Paradigm Scholarship recipients.



Veronica Sapp
Nemours/A.I. duPont
Hospital for Children

"This scholarship gives me the freedom to pursue my goal of a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration, releasing the financial burden and allowing me to double my classes."



Sheralina Baker
Independence
Blue Cross

"The Paradigm Scholarship for Working Women will allow me to achieve my bachelor's degree so I can begin my studies to obtain my Master's from Peirce College's Bachelor's to Master's in Organizational Leadership degree program."



Kristina Elton
WSFS Bank

"Being a recipient of this scholarship gives me an opportunity to ensure that my number one priority – my children – are taken care of and that my betterment can be a lesson that they can do anything they set their mind to."



Adrienne Holiday-Singleton
Southeastern Pennsylvania
Transportation Authority

"I am beyond ecstatic to receive the Paradigm Scholarship for Working Women, which will allow me to join both my daughters as a college graduate and accomplish my ultimate goal – earning a degree."



Peirce Launches Master's in Higher Education Leadership

Peirce College has recently launched its latest master's degree program – the Master of Science in Higher Education Leadership, which prepares students for professional advancement in the higher education sector.

“Our new master's in Higher Education Leadership is ideal for higher education professionals and those in related fields who are interested in advancing their career in a wide range of areas, such as admissions, advising, advancement, faculty development and student services,” said Dr. Adrian Zappala, professor and dean of Graduate Studies at Peirce College. “One of the things that makes our program unique is a focus on developing leadership with a focus on serving adults and other nontraditional students as well as diversity, inclusion and social justice in higher education.”

In addition, graduates will gain competencies and expertise in assessment, accreditation and compliance.

Students will also be able to select one of the following areas of focus as part of their program:

- Student Services & Enrollment Management
- Instructional Technology & Online Learning
- Data Analytics
- Development and Philanthropy
- Organizational Leadership

Like all programs at Peirce College, the new master's in Higher Education Leadership is offered completely online and features optional, weekly live sessions for students to meet with faculty in a virtual setting.

The program is one of the most affordable master's programs in higher education leadership in the region. Total tuition for the 30-credit program is less than \$24,000.

For more information:

www.peirce.edu/masters • masters@peirce.edu



Peirce Develops Three Stackable Graduate Certificates

Peirce College has developed stackable graduate certificates in Operations Management, Nonprofit Leadership and Higher Education Leadership that can upskill students interested in gaining new competencies that prepare them for professional advancement.

“Our new graduate certificates are affordable, stackable graduate options that students can complete on a part-time basis in a year or less,” said Dr. Adrian Zappala, professor and dean of Graduate Studies at Peirce College. “Each certificate is 18 credits, which apply directly to our master’s degree programs.”

Operations Management

The Graduate Certificate in Operations Management prepares students with knowledge, skills and competencies required to help businesses maximize efficiency and productivity and link people, performance and business processes. Credits earned in the certificate apply directly to the MS in Organizational Leadership and Management with a concentration in Operations Management.

Nonprofit Leadership

The Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership prepare students with the knowledge, skills and competencies required to advance to leadership roles at nonprofit organizations in the public and

private sectors, with a focus on philanthropy, finance and operations, and governance and leadership. Credits earned in the certificate apply directly to the MS in Organizational Leadership and Management with a concentration in Nonprofit Leadership.

Higher Education Leadership

The Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Leadership prepares students with the knowledge, skills and competencies required to advance in the higher education sector with a focus on serving adults and other nontraditional students, diversity, inclusion and social justice in higher education, and assessment, accreditation and compliance. Credits earned in the certificate apply directly to the MS in Higher Education Leadership.

Like all programs at Peirce College, the graduate certificates are offered completely online and feature optional, weekly live sessions for students to meet with faculty in a virtual setting.

The new graduate certificates are among most affordable graduate programs in the region. Total tuition for the 18-credit certificates is less than \$14,000.

For more information:

www.peirce.edu/masters • masters@peirce.edu



Certification Prep Courses Now Available

Peirce College is working with Kaplan University Partners to provide flexible, noncredit courses that prepare students to earn a wide variety of industry-recognized certifications in the top industries in Philadelphia, including information technology (IT), cybersecurity, project management and securities.

"Peirce is rapidly responding to the needs of the U.S. workforce and those of the Philadelphia region in particular. Their leadership shows that universities can serve both degree and non-degree seeking students in valuable and timely ways," said Brandon Busteed, president of University Partners and global head of Learn/Work Innovation at Kaplan.

Peirce currently awards credit for select industry-recognized credentials and training that apply directly to a certificate or degree and is expanding its evaluation of certifications to create more transfer credit options for students and those interested in embedding these certifications into their Peirce program.

Hassan Charles, vice president for Workforce Innovation and Career Partnerships at Peirce, said that a skills-based framework aligned with the needs of employers is one of the most effective ways to guide people from lower-wage jobs to in-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

"It is really a great partnership," said Charles. "Our students gain a better understanding of the local jobs and skills that can lead to fulfilling lives and careers while we work to continuously refresh and strengthen programs that improve student outcomes. Local employers who are actively hiring are also able to more precisely identify and develop diverse talent for key roles and positions across their organizations."

For more information:

www.peirce.edu/degrees-programs/stackable-credentials

upskill@peirce.edu

AT A GLANCE:

Below is a current list of employer-recognized certifications that Peirce offers prep courses for and the credits Peirce awards for the certifications, which can be embedded into a degree program.

CERTIFICATION	CREDITS AWARDED
Project Management Professional (PMP®)	3
Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM®)	3
Securities Industry Essentials (SIE)	3
A+	3
Network+	3
Security+	3
Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	12
Linux Professional Institute Certification (LPIC)	3
Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	6
Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH)	3
PenTest+	3
Systems Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP)	3

Reaching Out: Dr. Charlene Glenn Earns Fulbright Award

Peirce College Business Professor Dr. Charlene Glenn is reaching out - without leaving Philadelphia.

Last year, Glenn earned a Fulbright Award to teach students at Barbados Community College about innovation in business, creative thinking and disruptive technologies.

She was scheduled to teach on the Caribbean island from January to May in partnership with the Barbados Ministry of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce, but the pandemic has forced a change of plans.

"I'm working with my students in Barbados virtually," said Glenn. "I facilitated workshops in the fall via Zoom and I'm now serving as a guest lecturer in an online small business and entrepreneurship course and using prerecorded videos."

The course she developed, Creativity and Innovation Management for Entrepreneurship, examines the factors that influence innovation in an organization as well as leadership practices and organizational cultures of innovative companies from around the world.

Glenn said she is interested in bringing an agile approach to learning, teaching and leadership to colleges globally.

"In searching for opportunities within the Fulbright program, my goal was to find a country and college that had a similar student population as Peirce," she said. "Barbados Community College is a good fit as 65 percent of their students are women of color."

Glenn said the course prepares students with the knowledge and skills required to develop an innovative mindset, become a change agent in their workplaces and become an entrepreneur.



"We are using lean, agile and design thinking, and experiential learning frameworks to develop innovative and disruptive products and services for the marketplace," said Glenn. "Faculty are evaluating student ideas and providing feedback."

Glenn joined Peirce in 1998 and has served as a faculty member in the college's Business division since 2000. She specializes in online and hybrid course development and delivery; curriculum design; instruction in business with a focus on leadership, ethics, management, entrepreneurship, strategic planning and human resource management; learning outcomes and assessment; accreditation reporting; soft skills development; and agile principles and methodology.

"We are extremely proud of Dr. Glenn and her selection as a Fulbright Award recipient," said Dr. Rita Toliver-Roberts, vice president of Academic Advancement and provost at Peirce College. "She is a critical part of the Peirce community. The students of Barbados Community College are receiving an extraordinary learning experience working with Dr. Glenn."

Message from the Alumni Association President



Hello!

My name is Steven Amster, and I am the newly elected President of the Peirce College Alumni Association.

I encourage our growing alumni group to become more engaged with Peirce and help the College deliver on its mission to serve working adults further their education and advance their careers. I also want to help each of you leverage the Alumni Association in support of your own goals.

Your involvement with Peirce can take many forms. You can volunteer your time working directly with students or participating in Peirce events. You can share your industry expertise with our faculty and staff through our advisory boards and panels. You can also support the Alumni Scholarship Fund. Any amount you give is deeply appreciated.

Whatever your interest and capacity may be, we can find a way for you to connect and participate. As part of our alumni community, you are both valued and appreciated.

I look forward to working with all of you, and thank you in advance for the work we will do together.

All the best,

Steven Amster '10, '16
President, Peirce College Alumni Association
alumni@peirce.edu



Peirce Welcomes New Officers of Alumni Association



Steve Amster, President



Dawn Bruno, Vice President



Stephanie Estriplet, Secretary

The Peirce College Alumni Association now has new officers, including:

- President: Steve Amster '10, '16
- Vice President: Dawn Bruno '04
- Secretary: Stephanie Estriplet '17

The Alumni Association represents all 18,000+ graduates of Peirce and alumni connected to the College and each other.

“We are honored to have Steve, Dawn and Stephanie serving as our new officers of the Alumni Association and look forward to leveraging their passion and dedication to advance Peirce’s mission,” said Dr. Mary Ellen Caro, president & CEO. “Special thanks go out to Noel Abejo, Steven Rodriguez and Shandai Moore-Jenkins for their service to Peirce and their extraordinary efforts as our past officers.”

Amster encouraged alumni to get involved.

“Dawn, Stephanie and I will work diligently with our board of energized alumni to achieve our Alumni Association's goals, but we cannot do this alone,” he said. “We invite you to join us in this important work! Please reach out to me if you have any thoughts or ideas on how to continue growing the Alumni Association or if you are interested in getting involved.”

Peirce alumni are encouraged to send their feedback and ideas to: alumni@peirce.edu





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We Want to Hear From You

Keep Us Posted

Send us your news about getting a promotion, a new job and other personal accomplishments for our new Class Notes section in *Peirce Perspectives*.

Tell Us What You Think

How do you like the new *Peirce Perspectives*? Tell us what you think about the new layout, our content and story ideas you may have for future editions.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO:
perspectives@peirce.edu

SUPPORT PEIRCE

Alumni support makes it possible for Peirce to continue its mission to empower adults to improve their lives.

- Approximately 85 percent of Peirce students receive some form of financial aid
- Approximately 60 percent of Peirce students are Pell eligible

Last year alone, philanthropic support helped make it possible for Peirce to award scholarships to more than 300 students.

Make a secure, online donation via the link below:

peirce.edu/donate

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