

The Hocking College Press

NELSONVILLE, OHIO

FROM FASHION STUDENT TO BOUTIQUE OWNER HOW HOCKING DEFINED ONE ALUM'S FUTURE



When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, many careers were put on hold. Lauren Parrish, a former esthetician, found herself at a crossroads. "I had been working in skincare for almost three years, and suddenly, everything shut down. I had to rethink my career."

With an interest in fashion, Lauren started researching educational programs. "Hocking College stood out because it was one of the only two-year, in-person fashion programs at the time. Plus, being close to Columbus, which has a growing fashion scene, made it even more appealing."

The Hocking College (Hocking) Fashion Design and Retail Merchandising (FDRM) program provided hands-on learning that shaped her career. "I learned so much, such as pattern drafting, sewing, working with different fabrics, and even learning CLO3D software. Some projects were serious, and some were just fun. I once tried to make vegan leather. It was a disaster, but I learned a lot!"

Beyond the coursework, Lauren took advantage of every opportunity. "We went to museums, toured the Columbus Fashion Alliance, and worked with the Film & Video Production program to create branding segments. But the biggest highlight was co-producing Hocking's first Annual Fashion Show. That was something special."

Hocking's FDRM Program Manager, Coral Wedel, played a key role in her success. "Coral was the one who pushed me the most. She challenged me academically but also supported me as a person. She'd never admit it, but I wouldn't have accomplished half of what I did without her encouragement."

Some of the most valuable courses were focused on draping, pattern making, and tech packs. "I didn't realize how much I'd enjoy the technical side of fashion until I was in those classes. It's something I still use today."

After graduating, Lauren spent a few months trying to figure out her next move. "I thought I wanted to be a technical designer, but when I started looking at job postings, I realized most companies required a four-year degree. That was frustrating, but it pushed me to explore other options."

In 2022, she transferred to Kent State University to study Fashion Merchandising with a minor in Fashion Media. "I felt like I had learned the hands-on side of fashion, but I needed a deeper understanding of the business. Kent State helped fill in those gaps."

Lauren graduated in August 2024, thanks in part to an articulation agreement between Hocking and Kent State. "That agreement made a huge difference. I have to thank Coral and Terry

Koons for making that happen. It's a game changer for future FDRM students who want to continue their education."

Her career path has been anything but straightforward. While attending Hocking, Lauren gained real-world experience in retail and alterations. "The summer between my two years at Hocking, I worked at American Eagle in merchandising. That gave me a taste of the industry. Later, we started offering alterations on campus. I had never done alterations before, but those skills have stuck with me through every job since."

After Hocking, she worked as a bridal stylist while attending Kent State. "I loved working with brides, helping them find their dress, and seeing how much joy it brought them. I moved into a management position within a year, but something still felt off. It was a dream job on paper, but I wanted more control over my career."

Her final semester at Kent State required an internship, and Lauren landed a position in fashion trend forecasting with a company based in Los Angeles and New York. "It was interesting, but I quickly realized that corporate fashion wasn't for me. The remote work, the lack of communication, it wasn't what I expected."

That experience led her back to an idea she had tossed around for years: owning a boutique. "People would always ask me what I wanted to do, and I'd jokingly say, 'Open a boutique.' At some point, I realized that wasn't a joke anymore. It was what I actually wanted."

Now, as the owner of Elle & Kay Co., Lauren is putting everything she's learned into practice. "I love the freedom of making my own decisions. Seeing my ideas turn into something real is the best feeling."

Of course, running a business comes with challenges. "Marketing is the hardest part. Social media is constantly changing, and figuring out what works takes time. The boutique industry is competitive, so standing out is tough. But I love the creative side of it."

As Lauren looks back, she sees value in every step she has taken. "The skills I learned, garment construction, marketing, networking, have been essential. The fashion industry is huge, and sometimes the best opportunities are the ones you least expect."

Her advice to current students? "You don't have to have it all figured out. Try different things. Take opportunities that don't seem obvious. And most importantly, don't be afraid to fail. That's how you learn. It's never too late to change paths or start something new."

CAMPUS EVENTS

FDRM
FASHION DESIGN & RETAIL MERCHANDISING

The Fourth Annual
FASHION SHOW

A RUNWAY SHOWCASE FEATURING THE
FASHION DESIGN & RETAIL MERCHANDISING PROGRAM

MAY 2, 2025 DOORS OPEN 6:00pm
The Lodge at Hocking College - Nelsonville, Ohio

TICKET SALES AT: WWW.HOCKING.EDU/FASHION-SHOW

PRODUCED IN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH
COLUMBUS FASHION ALLIANCE | PASSPORT 2 FASHION | COLUMBUS FASHION COUNCIL | (DE-FI)

HOCKING COLLEGE

EVERY WEDNESDAY
BINGO NIGHT

4 PM DOORS OPEN
BINGO STARTS AT 6 PM

Hocking College students spread holiday cheer with festive carols at the 2024 Tree Lighting Event.

- hocking.edu
- [/hockingcollegeohio](https://www.facebook.com/hockingcollegeohio)
- blog.hocking.edu
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Hocking College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Hocking College Ombudsman
ombudsman@hocking.edu | 740-753-7050

All of Hocking College's career and technical education programs follow the district's policies of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability in all programs, services, activities and employment. In addition, arrangements can be made to ensure that the lack of English language proficiency is not a barrier to admissions or participation.



SAM JONES PRESENTS: BRATS & BOXING A BENEFIT FOR TRIMBLE HIGH SCHOOL

Mark your calendars for April 26 for the Brats and Boxing Exhibition—a high-energy event featuring multiple rounds of boxing. Doors open at 5 PM, with bouts starting at 6 PM. Ticket prices are set at \$15 for singles, \$25 for couples, and a special rate of \$10 for Trimble and Hocking students, with sponsorship tables available for \$300. This exhibition promises an action-packed evening—just note that alcohol will likely not be served. Look out for more details in the coming weeks.



Welcome Party The Welcome Party brought students together with casual games, food, and karaoke. It served as a simple way for students to meet one another and start the term on a fun and friendly note!



Club Day at Hocking College Club Day offered students a chance to visit various clubs and learn about campus organizations. It was a practical opportunity to see what clubs are available and find a place to get involved. For more information on how to get involved, visit <https://www.hocking.edu/get-involved-at-hocking-college#clubs>

WHERE **NATURE** MEETS **KNOWLEDGE**

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFO

HOCKING COLLEGE PARKS & MUSEUM EDUCATION

Parks and Museum Education

The Parks and Museum Education Program trains you to become an educator who works in parks, museums, and similar settings. The program combines classroom study with real-world experiences, using local sites like Hocking Woods Nature Center and Robbins Crossing. You will learn to lead educational programs, design exhibits, and share local history and environmental information with the public. If you are interested in building a career in education through hands-on experience, discover more about the Parks and Museum Education Program at <https://www.hocking.edu/parks-and-museum-education>

YOUR STORY OUR STAGE

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFO

HOCKING COLLEGE FILM & VIDEO PRODUCTION

Film and Video Production

The 2-year Film and Video Production Program is designed to introduce you to work in the film industry. In this program, you will take courses that cover key film crew roles such as cinematography, sound recording, editing, and production. Through a mix of classroom learning and hands-on projects, you gain a solid foundation that prepares you either to work on a film set or to move on to further studies. Ready to start your career in film? Learn more about the Film and Video Production Program at <https://www.hocking.edu/film-and-video-production>

DIAMOND DAWGZ
Americana
EATERY
REOPENS MARCH 19, 2025

Rhapsody
Music and Dining

SCAN ME FOR RESERVATIONS!

Make Dinner Memorable
WEDS - SAT 5 PM TO 9 PM



Manners Class

Come, Sit, Stay and Train with us.

Monday or Tuesday
5:30 -6:30 pm
At the Hocking College Canine Training Center-185 West Canal St, Nelsonville, OH
Beginning Monday March 24 and Tuesday March 25th thru April
Student ran class, \$80

Call the Canine B&G Facility to reserve a spot!
740-300-5056

The Hocking College Boarding, Grooming and Training Facility is holding Manners Classes.

THE LODGE AT HOCKING COLLEGE
The Perfect Getaway
Whether you're looking for a relaxing weekend away or a venue for an event, The Lodge has a room for you!
<https://thelodge.hocking.edu/>

Upcoming Important Dates

- Sun, Mar. 16 - Last Day to Register (second 8-week courses)
- Sun, Mar. 17 - College Opens (second 8-week courses begin)
- Wed, Mar. 19 - All HC Learning Day (All Students, Faculty & Staff 8-5; All evening Courses held)
- Fri, Apr. 18 - Last Day to Drop/Withdraw (16-week and second 8-week courses)
- Fri, Apr. 18 - Holiday - Good Friday - College Closed
- Fri, May 9 - Spring Term Ends Friday
- Sat, May 10 - Spring Commencement Saturday
- Mon, May 12 - End of Term for Faculty Monday