

BridgeValley

# SUCCESS STORIES



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Community college was not part of the original plan for Veronica Bumpus. She had initially attended a four-year university but had to leave for personal reasons. When she was ready to return to college, they required her to complete a semester at BridgeValley Community and Technical College (BVCTC). Her unplanned detour proved to have a silver lining, one that eventually led her to Washington, D.C., to advocate for all of the nation's community college students.

"After that first semester, I chose to stay at BridgeValley because of all the support, encouragement, and help I had received," Bumpus said. "From the time I enrolled, I have received nothing but care and guidance with financial aid, accessing classes online, campus events and everything in-between. Everyone is very welcoming, and being on campus is such a comfortable environment. I love being a student at BridgeValley

so much I decided to stay enrolled instead of transferring into a four-year university after my first semester."

Once she knew she was staying at BVCTC for the long term, Bumpus got involved in campus life. Guided by her passion for helping others, the Human Services and Rehabilitation Studies major is now the Vice President of The Student Government Organization at the South Charleston campus and the Vice President of the National Society of Leadership and Success BridgeValley chapter.

Bumpus' leadership caught the attention of free higher education advocacy group RISE, who invited her to go to the nation's capital with them and show their support for President Joe Biden's Free Community College portion of the Build Back Better Bill. Although lawmakers removed the free community college part of the bill, Bumpus said she is glad she attended and is hopeful for a future where students can attend a public

institution of higher education, no matter their socioeconomic status.

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**"Our children are our future leaders, and they need multiple avenues to succeed. If anyone has had a hard time paying for college, I know this could be beneficial," she said. "I feel like if we tried free community college, we could probably convince someone to change their views about it."**

Bumpus is slated to graduate from BVCTC in spring 2022. She plans to transfer to West Virginia State University and study Social Work.

**- Veronica Bumpus**