

MONTHLY



Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2022



Pictured: ICCB Deputy Executive Director Jennifer Foster and Deputy Majority Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth (92nd District)

Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI), Credentialing Thousands of Illinoisans of Poverty and Color with a Success Rate More Than Double the National Average

A press conference held August 18 at Illinois Central College (Peoria) touted the outstanding success of the WEI program. On hand for the event, Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth, a driving force behind the program's inception remarked:

"I'm ecstatic about the positive results we have seen thus far, but more work remains. I am committed to helping residents receive the support and opportunity they deserve to pursue a good-paying career. When programs like this one succeed, all of Illinois Benefits."

Statewide, this program has served over 6,500 residents producing over 6,100 credentials with a 62% completion rate and a 70% employment rate, more than doubling the national average completion rate for African American individuals.

"The last few years have brought education and employment challenges for our hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans, disproportionately affecting African American and other minority communities. Through WEI, participating community colleges have supported and scaled effective educational and career opportunities to help these targeted populations, enabling them to gain the necessary skills and credentials to earn above a living wage, a task that has always been a critical role for community colleges," said ICCB Executive Director Brian Durham.

About WEI: The WEI has been a critical tool for African American and other minority students to turn ambition into solid paying jobs. Funded at \$18.7 million to 18 participating community colleges throughout Illinois, WEI focuses on improving workforce inclusivity by providing a credential and above living-wage job for adults of poverty residing. African American participants represent a minimum of 60 percent of the population served by the grant due to their underrepresentation in high-demand, high-wage careers. The end goal is for participating adults to secure full-time employment in a job paying at least 30 percent above the regional living wage. For more information about the statewide Initiative, visit illinoiswei.org.



Message From The Executive Director

September is Workforce Development Month!

Our system's 48 community colleges deliver over 4,000 degrees and certificates in career and technical education fields that range across nearly every occupational area in Illinois. They train truck drivers, educate nurses, prepare future farmers, produce account techs, and supply police and firefighter candidates across the state. They start students off early through dual credit that allows for career exploration and cost savings for high school students. They enable transfer for students who want to go to the university. They deliver countless non-credit vocational training programs and are active training providers and partners with the American Job Center network throughout Illinois.

Let us not forget their connection to employers. According to ICCB's Economic Impact study, community colleges touched 9,800 unique employers during AY2020, by developing apprenticeships, contract training, facilitating internships, providing professional development, and through job placement. Community colleges have been meeting the needs of local business, industry, and the ever-changing workforce for decades.

The community college commitment includes expanding workforce opportunities in high-need communities and for disadvantaged populations. With a variety of programs targeting these communities specifically, a community college's impact on its district and its citizens are essential to the economic mobility of its most disadvantaged citizens, across their regions and throughout the state.

I think it is fair to say that community colleges are the foremost workforce training providers in Illinois. Happy Workforce Development Month to all of our community college colleagues across the state that are changing lives every day!

-Brian



2022 ICCCA/ICCFA Conference November 17 - 18

The 2022 joint conference of the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators and the Illinois Community College Faculty Association will be held at the I-Hotel in Champaign. The ICCCA/ICCFA invites you to attend this exciting annual professional development and networking opportunity on November 17-18. They encourage you to bring a team!

Early bird registration ends 10/7/22. Register [here](#).

You can reserve a guest room at the I-Hotel at the special conference rate (available only until the conference block is filled) by clicking [here](#).

CNA Registration- Accepting ITINs January 1, 2023

Effective January 1, 2023, the Illinois Department of Public Health will accept a federal taxpayer identification number in place of a Social Security Number for Certified Nursing Aide (CNA) application and registration. This change was made through a revision of the Healthcare Worker Background Act (P.A. 102-1063) and is in alignment with LPN and RN requirements in the state that do not require a social security number for licensing or registration. This change will expand access to healthcare careers, such as CNA, which is often a person's first job in the field.

Students who may use this option, including dual credit students, may begin their CNA coursework and training previous to the January 1 effective date as application and registration occurs after program completion, so long as students register within 12 months of program completion.

ICCB Board Meeting to Be Held September 16th

The next meeting of the Illinois Community College Board will be held September 16th, 2022 at John A. Logan College in Carterville, Illinois at 9 a.m.

When available the agenda, minutes and information from the meeting will be posted [here](#).

Statewide WEI Outcomes - FY20 & FY21			
WEI Goals	FY 20 Outcomes	FY21 Outcomes	Two-year Impact
Participants	3,209 enrolled	3,323 enrolled	6,532
Credentials Earned	2,526	3,613	6,139
60% AA Students enrolled	76% (2,429)	71% (2,345)	Exceeding goal
60% Completers	60%	62%	Exceeding Goal
60% Completers Employed	65%	70%	Exceeding Goal
Hourly Wage Target: 2019 (\$13.88) 2020 (\$16.08)	Average hourly wage of \$17.69	Average hourly wage of \$21.66	Exceeding Goal
Average Cost of Students Enrolled	\$5,565	\$5,227	

Comparative Outcomes: Nationally, of students who start college at a community college, 41% of students have earned a postsecondary credential in 6 years. The comparable rate for African Americans is 29% (AACC, July 2020). WEI students have a 62% completion rate (33 points higher) and more than twice the national average, which was achieved in a one year or less.



we're hiring!

OPEN POSITIONS

- Director for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)
- Accounting Assistant
- Systems Administrator II
- Systems Administrator III

Visit www2.iccb.org for full details



Important News from the **ICCB**

Dr. Durham Attended the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) Meeting.



Pictured from left to right: Jennifer Foster with ICCB, Meredith Fergus with the Office of Higher Education in Minnesota, Lindsey Reichlin Cruse with the National Skills Coalition, and Kermit Kaleba with the Lumina Foundation

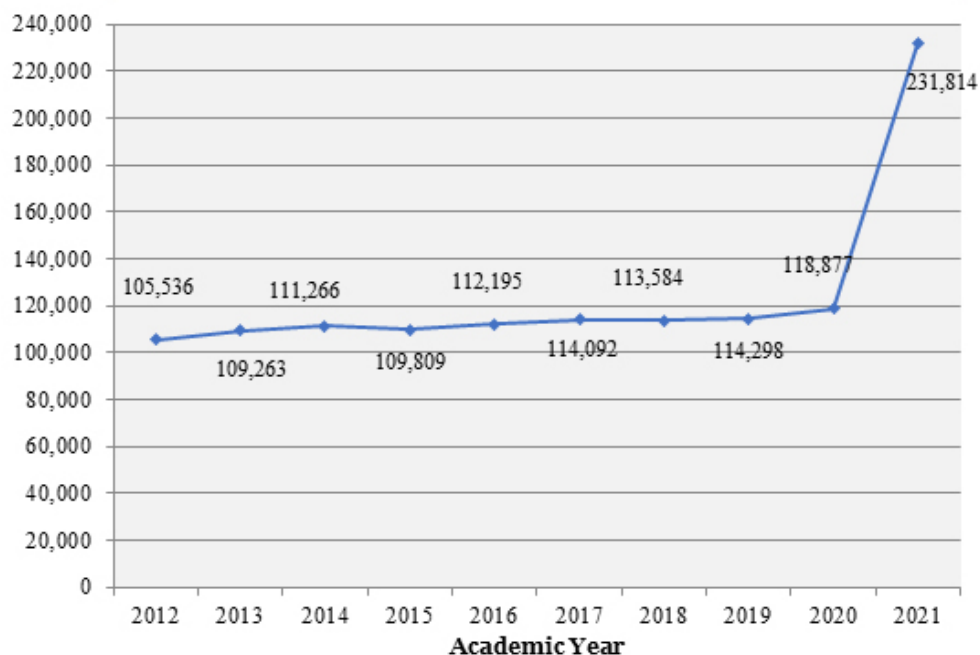
During this meeting, Deputy Director for Academic Affairs and Student Success Dr. Marcus Brown presented a session entitled “Building Capacity Across Illinois to Scale Corequisite Supports,” alongside representatives of the Partnership for College Completion. Additionally, Deputy Executive Director Jennifer Foster participated in a panel discussion highlighting the state’s work in the Workforce Equity Initiative alongside the National Skills Coalition and the Lumina Foundation.



Pictured from left to right: Tanisha Earwin and Mike Abrahamson with Partnership for College Completion and Marcus Brown with ICCB.

Projects and Initiatives Spotlight

Illinois Community College System Online Enrollments



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgency in meeting the needs of students, distance education offerings saw unprecedented growth in academic year 2021. Distance education courses provide options for students to meet the requirements to obtain their educational certificates and degrees through a host of different instructional delivery methods. These offerings often combine some traditional classroom activity with courses that are internet-based, allowing students to complete the requirements to complete a program with reduced costs for travel and additional flexibility to meet family and personal obligations.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the convenient and cost-effective options provided by online/Internet-based courses became an increasingly common method of instructional delivery at community colleges. Due to the pandemic, online/Internet-based courses grew dramatically in academic year 2021. Illinois community colleges reported a total of 231,814 headcount enrollments in online credit courses during academic year 2021. This was a 103% increase in online enrollments from academic year 2017. Detailed information on distance education in Illinois community colleges can be found in the most recent [ICCB Distance Education Report](#).

Grant Opportunities

The Illinois Community College Board is pleased to announce a new round of the Innovative Bridge and Transitions Grant Program (posted September 1, 2022 [here](#)).

The ICCB will provide approximately \$9.194 million in grant funding opportunities to be administered to support innovative bridge and transition programs.

The purpose of this grant is to:

- create, support, or expand innovative bridge programs and services;
- support or create transition programs which improve student transitions to and through postsecondary education and into employment;
- create programs that promote equity and diversity among those served; and/or
- create programs and services that support individuals with disabilities.

Grant Period: January 1, 2023- December 31, 2023

Applications Due: October 17, 2022 11:59 p.m. to ICCB.IBT@illinois.gov

We are very excited about this next year of funding and we look forward to working with the FY23 grantees. If you have any questions, please contact lavon.nelson@illinois.gov or alex.weidenhamer@illinois.gov. Thank you for your interest and support.

Additional ICCB News

Illinois Central College was Recently Awarded \$14.6 million Via the \$500 million Good Jobs Challenge Grant.

ICCC was one of only 32 organizations to receive funding, the only Illinois institution to be funded, and one of only two community colleges. Their focus will be on the Information Technology sector. The focus of the funding from the American Rescue Plan is to develop training programs that support local economies and place an additional 50,000 workers in quality jobs.

Read more [here](#).

OCCRL Welcomes New Director

OCCRL is pleased to announce Dr. Lorenzo Baber as the Director of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership. Dr. Baber is a Professor of Higher Education in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a long-time faculty affiliate of the Office.

Read more about Dr. Baber [here](#).

Racial Equity 10-Hour Facilitator Training Series Oct. 4th - Oct. 25th; Virtual

Presented by the Equity Literacy Institute, this racial equity facilitator training will provide participants with the ins and outs of designing and leading effective, well-organized, deep-reaching racial equity and justice professional learning opportunities based on the equity literacy framework. It will also explore how to effectively engage colleagues in deep learning about racism, white supremacy, and related conditions in less formal and/or impromptu contexts.

Read more and register [here](#).

TIME IS RUNNING OUT! Apply Now for Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Take Advantage of Temporary Benefits Ending Oct 31!

There are less than **two months remaining** for federal student loan borrowers to take advantage of the temporary changes, <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/pslf-limited-waiver>, to the PSLF Program. These temporary changes end on **October 31, 2022**; don't miss out!

Public sector workers who have federal student loans may be eligible for loan forgiveness under the PSLF program. Temporary changes to the program, called the "Limited Waiver," will allow borrowers to gain credit for past student loan repayments that may not have previously qualified. This means that you could be closer to loan forgiveness under PSLF based on new, qualifying payments!

To get these benefits, you must submit a PSLF form and/or consolidate your non-direct federal student loans by October 31, 2022!

To learn more about eligibility, how to take advantage of the limited waiver, and the PSLF application process, join ISAC for a free PSLF webinar in September:

Friday, September 9, 1-2 p.m. (CT) / Thursday, September 15, 8-9 a.m. (CT)
Wednesday, September 21, 5-6 p.m. (CT) / Monday, September 26, 1-2 p.m. (CT)

Learn more and register: <https://www.isac.org/pslf>. For questions on the webinars, contact the Professional Development team at isac.pslf@illinois.gov.



Adult Education and Literacy: A Vibrant Work-Based Literacy Program

The Mundelein Consolidated High School District #120 partnered with Ruprecht Company to develop a vibrant work-based English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Employees participated in English language instruction twice a week after working their full shift. Susan Feltz, the Program Administrator for Mundelein High School's Adult Education Program, reported that student attendance and effort was remarkable. Feltz noted that upon completion of the course, the students were tested and the results showed all students improved their English language.

To celebrate the employees' success, Ruprecht held a recognition event. Senator Adriane Johnson (D-Buffalo Grove) was present to award certificates of completion to the participating students. She said, "Individuals who prioritize the time to learn English while living, working, and raising a family in America have better opportunities for job training and therefore, an improved quality of life. The Mundelein High School Adult Education department is a blessing in our community, and this literacy program will continue to make a significant difference to immigrant families who call our area home."

Steve Porter, Chief Operating Officer for Ruprecht Company, presented a monetary award to each student who participated in the pilot work-based ESL program. Ryan Klatt, Director of Human Resources and Tysha Rodriguez, Human Resources Manager, coordinated the event and were present for the distribution of awards.

Having witnessed the successes of the current students and experiencing first-hand English being used by many of these beginning literacy students, Ruprecht Company has asked to begin two new classes for interested employees.



September 18 – 24 is Adult Education and Family Literacy Week. The goal of this week is to raise awareness about the importance of adult education and family literacy. In the U.S., the number of adults who struggle with basic academic skills is approximately 36 million. Below is the proclamation made by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker in recognition of Adult Education and Literacy Week.



WHEREAS, the Adult Education Act of 1966 was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on November 3, 1966, establishing a vibrant education system comprised of a partnership between the federal government and the states; and,

WHEREAS, over 22 million American adults nationally have Basic or Below Basic literacy skills that limit their ability to advance at work and in education; and,

WHEREAS, over 20 million adults nationally do not speak English very well or at all; and,

WHEREAS, in Illinois more than 1.2 million adults do not have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate and approximately 2.73 million immigrants speak a language other than English in their homes; and,

WHEREAS, the best predictor of the educational achievement of the child is the educational achievement of the parent; and,

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services so they can compete in the global economy; and,

WHEREAS, a literate and skilled workforce promotes job creation and economic growth in the state, and Illinois adult learners have access to basic education, high quality career pathways, postsecondary education, and training programs in high demand occupations; and,

WHEREAS, approximately 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs of the future will require education or training beyond high school; and,

WHEREAS, adult education promotes the lifelong process of self-improvement including the acquisition of self-sustaining high skilled employment that provides a family sustaining wage, promotes self-esteem and a sense of empowerment, increases a person's ability to reach their maximum potential, and assists the state and nation to reach economic stability and competitiveness;

THEREFORE, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim September 18 – September 24, 2022, as **Adult Education and Literacy Week** in Illinois recognizing that our state honors the teachers, adult educators, community partners, and the thousands of adult learners that have created and participated in this unique education system which promotes the inclusion of all Illinois residents in the democratic, social, and economic processes of our state and nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,
this SEVENTH day of SEPTEMBER, in
the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and
TWENTY-TWO, and of the State of Illinois,
two hundred and FOURTH.



Desse Whitt
SECRETARY OF STATE

JB Pritzker
GOVERNOR

Illinois Student Assistance Commission Approves Plan to Improve Equity and Affordability for Students Through Additional MAP Funding

\$601 Million in FY23 funding will provide grants to as many as 155,000 students

CHICAGO –As part of the Pritzker administration's hallmark commitment to make college more affordable for students in Illinois, Governor Pritzker and the General Assembly added \$122 million in funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 23, bringing the total funding for this state grant for low-income college students to a historic high of approximately \$601 million.

Each year the Commissioners on the Board of the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission \(ISAC\)](#) approve a framework for distributing MAP grants to eligible students (the MAP eligibility formula), taking into account the amount of funding available and college tuition and fee costs—balancing meaningful grant size with the goal of serving more students. In FY22, the program was able to offer grants to essentially every eligible student who applied through the end of the academic year—effectively leaving no one on a waiting list for the first time in 20 years. With the new MAP eligibility formula approved by ISAC's Board last week, it is estimated the additional funding for FY23 will allow ISAC to provide grants to virtually every eligible student, while significantly increasing grant size.

"I came into office with a promise to increase MAP grants by 50 percent in my first term, and with this budget, we've fulfilled that promise – with a year to spare," said Governor JB Pritzker. "This past year alone, no student was left waiting for a grant for the first time in 20 years. And this year, more students will receive more support to attend more programs than ever before. I'm incredibly proud of this progress and will continue to fight to make education more accessible for all our learners."

"A person's dreams shouldn't be deferred because they can't afford college. During my office's statewide tour of colleges and universities, I heard from students who had to put their education to the side because

they couldn't make ends meet after tuition and all the expenses for school," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "Illinois is investing over \$600 million in MAP grants—and increasing award amounts to move us closer to our goal to have MAP cover 50% of tuition at public universities—because we bridge the gap when we invest in students' futures."

As a result of two decades of limited funding, MAP grants have not kept up with tuition and fee growth. With the additional \$122 million, ISAC's Commissioners approved a framework that will increase the average MAP grant by about 30 percent. These improvements will result in increased purchasing power for MAP—a key component of [A Thriving Illinois](#), the state's new strategic plan for higher education. The strategic plan set a goal for MAP to cover 50% of tuition and fees for recipients attending public institutions within the next 10 years. The MAP eligibility formula recently approved by ISAC, with the support of the additional funding, goes a long way to moving the state towards that goal, and exceeds the goal for community colleges.

The highest MAP grant at a community college will now cover 55% of the average tuition and fees for Illinois community colleges, and the highest MAP grant at a public university will now cover 42% of average tuition and fees at the state's public universities.

More students will also be eligible for MAP. The Governor's signature on new legislation extending eligibility to students at public institutions in credit-bearing, short-term certificate programs of less than one year could increase the number of students receiving MAP by an estimated 15,000 recipients.

"More than 50 years of experience in supporting low-income students with MAP grants has demonstrated that the program works to improve equi-

ty and helps ensure that more of our students can make it to and through college," said ISAC Executive Director, Eric Zarnikow. "We are grateful to Governor Pritzker and the General Assembly and to all who tirelessly advocated for MAP, including our sister agencies the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), our partner institutions of higher education, students, and other supporters. The additional funding and the new approved formula will offer even more Illinois students the opportunities they need and deserve."

"The addition of short-credential eligibility for community colleges is transformational," said ICCB Executive Director Brian Durham. "It will dramatically increase access to financial assistance for community college students who want to pursue short-term certificates in important fields including welding, transportation, distribution and logistics, and emergency medical technicians, among 2,000 other eligible programs. These additional dollars will help strengthen Illinois' workforce and empower students to find meaningful careers here in Illinois."

"The MAP grant is crucial in closing equity gaps that have historically negatively impacted students of color, students from low-income households, students from rural communities and working adults," said IBHE Executive Director Ginger Ostro. "Increasing MAP grants and expanding eligibility will help meet the needs of Illinois residents on their journey to economic empowerment, regardless of whether their path is job training, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree."

This release was provided by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC).

6-Week Fulbright-Hays Trip to Ghana, Togo ‘Exhausting, but Very Rewarding’ for Sandburg Associate Dean Lara Roemer



Article and photos courtesy of Sandburg.edu

When it comes to the traditional back-to-school question of “What did you do over summer break?” Lara Roemer has a pretty good answer.

Roemer, associate dean of social and business sciences and an assistant professor of political science and history at Carl Sandburg College, spent nearly six weeks in Ghana and Togo as part of a Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad grant. She joined 11 instructors from Oakton Community College, two from the College of Lake County and a Chicago-area high school teacher as they immersed themselves in the countries’ communities and cultures. Together, they explored the legacy of colonialism in the nations and the connection of the transatlantic slave trade in their history to American history.

“We were together basically all day, every day,” Roemer said. “We’re talking about starting at seven o’clock in the morning and finishing at nine or 10 o’clock at night almost every day. For me, that was exactly the kind of experience I was looking for.”

Roemer applied and was selected last year to be part of the federal grant program. Long fascinated by Africa, she had traveled to the continent on multiple occasions before, but her longest previous stay was about two weeks. The length of this trip and amount of time spent with her colleagues and local guides, she said, made it unlike anything else she’d done.

“This is a very unique kind of travel experience,” Roemer said. “It was extremely rewarding to have it be structured in that kind of way. Exhausting, but very rewarding. It creates a bonding opportunity between you and your colleagues that can produce lifelong, very powerful relationships.”

While the subject matter on many days could be emotionally daunting, others included hikes, examining plants, learning about local farming and engaging with teaching professionals from the region. On one day, the group was set to meet with a paramount chief for a couple of hours. When they arrived, they learned the community had organized a celebration day for them, which turned into a seven-hour festival full of food and dancing.

“Those types of experiences were just off-the-charts exceptional and things that one would never expect to have happen,” Roemer said.



Being with instructors from different subject matter backgrounds led to a richer and more fruitful learning environment, Roemer said. One instructor from Lake County was a linguist who had taken lessons prior to the trip on native languages and helped others in the group pick up local phrases. Another was a biologist who would share in the group's WhatsApp chat a "Species of the Day" they discovered on their daily run. The program itself was designed to connect each individual's discipline to specific topics at some point in the trip.

"Having that variety of backgrounds and experiences altered the trip in such profoundly lovely ways. I can't even imagine having done something with just a group of political scientists," Roemer joked. "It would have been so much more boring. We're great people, but you would have lost a lot."



Roemer's next step is to integrate her experiences into her teachings. She's previously taught an African history course at Sandburg that she said would have changes to it based on her most recent adventure, and she has more primary material that she can include as part of American history classes.

"If nothing else, I now have a plethora of new resources that I'm prepared to use that have been provided to me by all my colleagues at the University of Ghana, University of Togo and other individuals that I met along the way," Roemer said. "It's been very transformative to my curriculum already. That's really what we will be doing going forward. How can you take all these things that you have now learned and engaged with and pass them on to others so that you're impacting the broadest swath of individuals you possibly can?"

While finally returning home to her family was a welcome sight, the transition of going from Ghana to Galesburg proved to be more difficult than Roemer anticipated. For a month and a half, she and her colleagues had developed morning routines and grown accustomed to the local diet in which almost everything was fresh. ("I can't even remember a meal where I did not have fresh pineapple. That's been the hardest thing for me to have withdrawal from," Roemer said.) Just a few days after returning to the US, she even made a trip up to Chicago to be among her travel peers one more time.

"It's a culture shock in reverse almost. That part was and continues, to some extent, to be a little bit of a challenge," Roemer said. "It is very strange to spend that volume of time with individuals who really began as colleagues and then not be spending any time with them at all."

Roemer hopes to pursue additional Fulbright-Hays Program opportunities in the future and encourage others — especially from rural areas or smaller institutions such as community colleges and K-12 schools — to do the same. The friendships, moments and memories from her trip are ones that she'll carry with her for years to come.

"The people in Ghana and Togo are some of the nicest, most intelligent, kind and compassionate individuals that I've ever had the pleasure of encountering, and I've done a fair amount of travel in my lifetime," Roemer said. "It's those connections to people that were the most impactful, the most memorable."



JWCC Ag Sciences Complex Dedication & Ribbon Cutting Held on August 9th

By Benjamin Cox/WLDS News

The official dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony of the John Wood Community College Agricultural Sciences Complex and the Fred L. Bradshaw Learning Center was held Tuesday, August 9th at the John Wood Community College Agricultural Education Center near Baylis, just off of Illinois Route 104.

The ceremony showcased a 44-year education partnership with the University of Illinois, John Wood Community College, and the Orr Research Center Corporation. Private fundraising efforts between multiple families, the local county farm bureaus, and more were highlighted in the unveiling of the \$2.5 million project.

The new ag sciences complex was dedicated to the late Fred L. Bradshaw who began championing the need for the facility several decades ago. Bradshaw also helped lay the groundwork for the purchase of the property for the complex and was the main leader for fundraising efforts.

More than 300 people were in attendance to commemorate the dedication including community members, key stakeholders, legislators, and donors.

John Wood Community College President Michael Elbe says the day was a defining moment: "For me, being involved with this from a concept to a reality today in 5 years – it's a defining moment in the life of John Wood Community College. It's a defining moment for our agricultural program, our partnership with the University of Illinois College of ACES, and a really defining moment for this region as far as economic development and what it is going to do to serve this community in the future."

Elbe says that the defining moment will ultimately lead to serving the region's agriculture community and economy for years to come: "I think we live in an ever-changing world, and agriculture is no different than that. I think we have to be able to pivot and move to be relevant in today's world. I think this facility allows us the space and the technology to continue to be relevant in what we are doing to help the agricultural industry. There is so much that is changing, but one thing that won't change is people have to eat. It's the production side of agriculture and the support that these production partners need with grain and livestock that the program leads to. It's not just producing. It's supporting the producer. There is just so many opportunities that this facility is going to serve in the future."

During festivities and remarks, the local farm bureaus were thanked for their overall support of the project. The farm bureaus of Adams, Pike-Scott, and Brown were specifically mentioned as major contributors and donors to the complex's completion.

Pike-Scott Farm Bureau Executive Director Jenna Morrow says that being a native of the region and having personal connections to John Wood Community College, she sees the generational impact the facility will have: "Having grown up in the area, this has always been an important place in having an ag background. My brother and many of friends went here. It's huge for the area. It's really exciting that they have been able to expand and add on to it, and involve all of these groups, especially the farm bureaus. It's a perfect fit for the farm bureaus because many of the members have gone here, have children or grandchildren enrolled here currently, so they want to see it continue the educational piece of agriculture – just helping everybody prepare themselves through the educational side of it to take on rolls in the community and be successful. That's what farm bureau wants to see is people involved in agriculture, helping it out, making a good living, and enjoying all that it has to offer."

Several local officials were on hand for the ceremonies including State Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer of Jacksonville, State Representative Chris Miller of Oakland and his wife 15th District Congresswoman Mary Miller, and State Senator Jil Tracy of Quincy.

Tracy says that Fred Bradshaw's vision for the facility becoming a reality is a massive opportunity for the agriculture community of West Central Illinois: "This is the heart of Illinois agriculture. This is a learning research center. It's obviously a great opportunity for the youth here that want to be involved in agriculture. We have seen it grow over 45 years. It's very promising for the future of what we can do with agriculture and feed the world, as it was talked about. This is a part of that process. It's exciting for this area."

The Orr Corporation and John Wood Community College are still looking to raise a little less than \$500,000 to complete the project. HVAC systems, minor interior upgrades, and technology are still being sought for purchase.

The 24,000-square-foot facility's construction began last September 2021 at the JWCC Agricultural Education Center and the U of I Agricultural Research and Demonstration Center in Baylis. The newly completed facility houses offices and classrooms, an exposition/arena space, and an animal care unit designed for short-term or temporary housing for the welfare of animals. The facility will be full open to registered students of John Wood Community College this Fall.

Spoon River College Announces ICCB Grant to Fund Dual Credit Courses

Courtesy of The Canton Daily Ledger

Spoon River College has announced due to the award of an Illinois Community College Board Bridge grant, all dual credit students enrolled in courses with Spoon River College will be granted a full scholarship for tuition and fees for the 2022-2023 academic year.

"We are thrilled to receive this grant and be able to offer this significant savings to dual credit students in our district, and hope it will help our district students begin their college careers at Spoon River College," said Holly Norton, dean of transfer education at the college.

The award will cover all courses taken at all SRC locations and taught by SRC faculty, including online courses, and all courses taken at high schools in the SRC district and taught by high school instructors. Courses that will be excluded are those being funded by other sources such as grants, or those for which the students are not charged tuition and fees such as school-funded courses.

Because the grant was only recently awarded, all internal and external scholarships will be applied to students' accounts, with this latest scholarship applied to the remaining tuition and fees. For those who have paid their tuition in full, the amount paid for the fall semester will be refunded. They will be processed through the Spoon River College business office after Sept. 2.

There is no application to fill out to receive this grant, as all dual credit students will be included.

Spoon River College is still accepting new students for all fall dual credit courses. To register, students should contact their high school counselor or Spoon River dual credit advisor Sarah Fouts, sarah.fouts@src.edu or by calling 309-649-6221. Fall classes start Monday, Aug. 22.



Roy Rhares - Photo by Melissa Lachcik

Apprenticeships Are Entry Points into IT Careers

For a long time, Roy Rhares has known the importance of getting a college degree, but the high cost of college made pursuing his dreams of working in computer programming difficult. For several years, Roy attended Joliet Junior College (JJC) part time while working in retail jobs. Prior to starting as an apprentice, Roy was working as an assistant manager for a T-Mobile store. Even while working as an assistant manager, Roy struggled to pay for college and his living expenses. Roy had to take a break from classes during the 2021 Spring and Summer semesters in order to work on paying off an outstanding tuition bill.

Fortunately for Roy, GAD Group Technology was struggling to hire new staff to provide help desk support for the Village of Bolingbrook's police, fire, and emergency IT systems. When GAD Group Technology reached out to JJC seeking to fill IT openings for computer systems analysts, JJC's apprenticeship specialist was able to provide them with resumes for over 20 students within days.

Roy was one of those 20 students. When he received an email with information about a computer systems analyst apprenticeship position, he recognized this would be a valuable opportunity to earn full time wages and get his tuition paid for while gaining hands-on industry experience. Roy worked with JJC's apprenticeship specialist to improve his resume and applied for the apprenticeship. Roy was one of three JJC students hired into GAD Group's apprenticeship program.

While apprenticeships are not frequently utilized in the Information Technology industry, Roy believes they offer a successful entry point into an IT career. "It's a very innovating experience considering the fact that there are many aspects and skills that have been gathered from classes that I had previously taken at JJC. To put that knowledge in the actual job really allows for me to get familiar and to put my intellect to the test with everything that I have learned." Roy said, "The best thing about being an apprentice is that I'm in a way developing more and more skills and essentially growing to become more of an expert on certain things that we learn in the job." Roy's apprenticeship with GAD Group Technology has provided him with hands-on experience fixing hardware components and remotely assisting customers with networking issues.

Roy recommends to others looking to get started in a career, "If the opportunity is given to you, take it because with being an apprentice it not only lets you jump into a career field, but it helps you get a better understanding and comfortability in what you are trying to learn or trying to fulfill in your career. Of course, in the end you would want to become more refined and knowledgeable from everything that you are learning as an apprentice."

In May of 2022, Roy accomplished another step in his journey to working full-time in computer programming when he earned his Associate in Applied Science in Web Design and Social Media. Roy plans to continue working for GAD Group Technology, Inc. and will finish his apprenticeship in January of 2023.

Every month the ICCB Newsletter will feature articles from various news sources reporting on the posts, programs, events, press releases, and happenings of Illinois' community colleges.

[Recent Waubonsee Graduate Named 2022 SkillsUSA National Champion in Automotive Service Technology \(Waubonsee.edu 07/07/22\) - Waubonsee Community College](#)

[Morton College President Announces Resignation Effective November 2023 \(morton.edu 08/15/22\) - Morton College](#)

[Lincoln Land CC welcomes new vice president, deans as classes begin \(SJR 08/16/2022\) - Lincoln Land Community College](#)

[IVCC president Jerry Corcoran to retire July 1 \(ivcc.edu 08/16/22\) - Illinois Valley Community College](#)

[Junior colleges make higher education more affordable \(WGN Radio 08/23/2022\) - Prairie State College](#)

[John Wood Community College in search of new president \(WGEM 08/23/2022\) - John Wood Community College](#)

[Kaskaskia College approves \\$3.1-million computer system upgrade \(WJBD 08/23/2022\) - Kaskaskia College](#)

[Governor, lieutenant governor take time to listen to local college students \(The Southern illinoisian 08/26/2022\) - John A. Logan College](#)

[Colleges seek to meet mental health needs \(WICS 09/06/2022\) - Parkland College & Richland Community College](#)



A Lifetime of Artistic Activism: MCC Gallery Features Ceramics Solo Project by Elaine Kadakia

When speaking with Elaine Kadakia, one quickly learns her passions in life. She speaks glowingly of her family. She sheds light on her lifelong commitment to protecting and advancing women's rights. And she conveys what a powerful influence art has made on her.

Elaine has been a ceramics student at McHenry County College (MCC) for many years, but is now featured in her first ever solo exhibit at the college.

Now through August 31, MCC will be hosting A Journey in Ceramic Activist Art in artspace 144, located just outside the doors to the MCC gym in Building A.

"The spectacular survey of Elaine's work represents an extraordinary commitment with clay while conveying and sharing a deeply personal message," said Tom Vician, instructor of Art and Ceramics at MCC. "All the work in this exhibition was created at McHenry County College over the past fifteen years."

Now 82 years old, Elaine has been making art since she was a young child. Early in her life, she realized art could send powerful and meaningful messages. As a young adult, Elaine shined during weekend art classes. "The Art Institute of Chicago had a Saturday school, so I would take the bus and go down there," she said. In the early sixties when it came time for her to go to college, she followed her passions the Art Institute where she pursued a Bachelor of Arts with an emphasis in Art Education.

"We worked in all different kinds of modules—plastics, ceramics, drawing, painting," she said. "It was a well-rounded education to introduce you to all the mediums you might teach at some point."

Learning about various artists, movements, and artistic styles that included the Arts and Crafts movement, Art Deco, early twentieth century fashion illustration, and Art Nouveau all captured her imagination while influencing her own art-making world view.

"I kept drawing as I was raising my two daughters," Elaine said. "When we moved to Huntley in the early 2000s, my sister Josie was taking classes at MCC; then I started taking classes."

Over the years, the ceramics classes at MCC have provided Elaine with countless opportunities to implement her ideas through wheel-throwing, hand-building, relief carving, digital transferring, decal ornamentation, underglaze painting, air brushing, soda firing, and three-dimensional printing.

"With Tom's instruction, I learned different mediums, different ways to handle clay, and just kept going," she said. "I realized it was a way to express myself about some of the things that were important to me, such as women's issues."

For over thirty years, Elaine has been an active member in the American Association of University Women, which parallels her interests of equality in the workplace, reproductive rights, and the advancement of women's leadership roles.

Elaine marched for women's rights with her daughters in 1976 at the Equal Rights Amendment rally in Springfield and recently supported both the reproductive rights rally in Woodstock and the "Me Too" protest in McHenry. The ceramic artwork in this exhibition uniquely shows a highly confident individual stance forcefully showing a deeply felt ideology.

One of the first pieces Elaine created in her ceramics classes at MCC was "Hidden Women," a series of three sculptures inspired by women in burkas. The piece is featured in her art exhibit.

"In a lot of countries, women can't go out of the house without a male present," she said. "I was inspired to create this piece after reading about these women and the power and control dynamics of the societies they live in."

Earlier this year, Elaine realized she had accumulated quite a collection of work and approached Tom with the idea of doing a show.

"He was all for it," she said. "He got on the ladders, fixed the lights, helped with placement and labeling—he's been very supportive. I honestly can't say enough about Tom and everyone at MCC. All of this would not have happened without their instruction, ideas, and encouragement."

Elaine plans on continuing her classes at MCC for a long time to come.

"It's a life-enhancing experience," she said. "You start with a lump of clay in your hands and all of the sudden you're making something. I enjoy the challenges and the opportunities to experiment on your own. It's always a surprise when something comes out wonderful."

There will be an artist's reception at the gallery with Elaine on Thursday, August 25 from 2–4 p.m. The reception is free and open to the public.



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