



WAUBONSEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

President's Report

May 2024

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



HONORING OUR COMMUNITY

In remembrance of Waubonsee students Sandra Sanchez and Emma Grzesik and employees Deb Banker and Melissa Cole, our Waubonsee community observed a moment of silence on Thursday, May 9, at 12:15 p.m. Students, faculty, and staff were invited to gather for a statement and moment of silence on each campus. All were also invited to observe a moment of silence wherever they were at that time.

Students were also invited to stop by to draw, paint, or otherwise create art on Wednesday, May 8 and Thursday, May 9 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the TRIO Tutoring Center, Collins Lounge in Collins Hall at the Sugar Grove Campus and in the Latinx Resource Center at the Aurora Downtown Campus.

Counseling services continue to be available to students through our Counseling office, the Waubonsee Talk Line, and other community resources. We also arranged for on-site grief counseling through our Employee Assistance Program to provide additional support for employees during this time of grief.

The past month has been marked by two significant events—the groundbreaking ceremony for our new Technical Education Center and the commencement ceremony. It was heartening to see a large turnout of students, faculty, staff, and community partners at the groundbreaking ceremony, underscoring the shared excitement for this long-awaited project. While I regrettably couldn't attend this year's commencement ceremony in person, it was nonetheless a deeply impactful day for me as I celebrated my daughter's graduation from the University of Illinois. Being among the many proud parents in the audience reminded me once again of the privilege I have in playing a small part in helping students achieve their goals. It was fitting that during the commencement ceremony, we also honored our Waubonsee Community College Distinguished Alumni, [Cynthia Gamboa](#) and [Shannon Kennedy](#), as the class of 2024 embarks on their next chapter in life.

This time of year is always a whirlwind of activity as we wrap up the spring semester and the academic year. I've had the pleasure of attending numerous events, including our Sugar Grove Campus Open House, the Earth Day Open House and Picnic, the TRIO graduation dinner, the 2024 Adult and Workforce Education Recognition Ceremony, our annual Retirement and Service Awards Banquet, and our first Waubonsee Honors Fair. Among the highlights of these events was the recognition of Barb Gore, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, for her astounding 55 years of service to the college. We also celebrated former student trustee Jack McGreevy and Lucie Jumonville for receiving full-tuition scholarships to Elmhurst University and North Central College, respectively. In addition, students Lesli Herrera and Olivia Nieves were recognized by Phi Theta Kappa as members of the All-Illinois Academic Team. Looking ahead, I am eagerly anticipating attending the Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Student Athlete Recognition Banquet, as well as presenting graduating seniors with Gustafson Scholarships at Aurora Catholic High School.

Dr. Toya Webb and I recently visited Illinois Representative Jeff Keicher, 70th District; Illinois Senator Linda Holmes, 42nd District; and Illinois Senator Sue Rezin, 38th District, as part of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association Lobby Day in Springfield. During our meetings, we highlighted our participation in Achieving the Dream, our Peer Support Program, the Technical Education Center, and some of our appropriations requests and recent grants. Additionally, we had the pleasure of hosting Illinois Representative Matt Hanson, 83rd District, for a tour of our Sugar Grove Campus.

I was also honored to join Dr. Susana Rivera-Mills, President of Aurora University, as a guest on Dr. Jeff Craig's [podcast](#), where we discussed our recent role transitions, future visions, and the evolving educational landscape. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to interact with colleagues at East Aurora School District #131 while serving as a judge for their All Staff Talent/Variety Show. Additional-



What I'm Reading

- *AI and the Future of Education: Teaching in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* by Priten Shah
- *The Agile College: How Institutions Successfully Navigate Demographic Change* by Nathan D. Grawe

ly, I attended a retirement event for Dr. Brian Caputo, President of the College of DuPage, whom I have greatly appreciated for his mentorship through the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents. I look forward to developing a relationship with his successor in the future.

The Waubonsee Community College Foundation recently held its third annual board retreat, where Dr. Melinda Tejada, John Bryant, Emma Donatille and I led discussions about the Foundation's vision and the next steps in developing a Foundation strategic plan. The retreat focused on empowering board members and aligning strategies to maximize donations.

I hosted an All-College Meeting on May 13 to share updates on the organizational structure within the provost's area, our executive searches, and the progress on our strategic plan with faculty and staff. Due to the busy time of year as we end the semester, the meeting was also livestreamed and recorded for later viewing.

AROUND THE COLLEGE

Kathleen Randall, Professor of Education, and Debra Gardner, Adjunct Instructor of Psychology, have been selected as the Outstanding Faculty Members for 2023-2024. Both recipients will be recognized during the 2024 Fall Faculty Development Days program and honored at the August Board of Trustees meeting.



What I'm Following

- @waubonsee social media channels
- Jobs for the Future (JFF) on LinkedIn

Coming Up

May 21

HVAC Excellence Accreditation Site Visit

May 30

Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) Annual Membership/Spring Luncheon

June 1

[Waubonsee Foundation Walk Run Win 5K/10K Trail Race](#)

June 7-8

ICCTA Annual Convention

June 11-13

Achieving the Dream Kick Off Institute