



# President's Report

October 2024

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



## Reporting on a Strong State of the College

At our second annual State of the College event on Sept. 24, with a crowd of community stakeholders and local leaders, I was happy to report on Waubonsee's strong enrollment and financial position.

Since enrollment is a series of snapshots in time, the numbers have grown even stronger since then. As of the first week of October, we had almost 10,500 students enrolled across our programs and campuses -- a more than 4% increase from last year.

My State of the College address also marked the first time the priorities of our upcoming strategic plan were shared more broadly with the community. As you know, they are:

- Relevance to the Community
- Invest in Academic Innovation
- Student-Ready College Experience
- Enrich the Employee Experience

Later that week, the college finished up its series of strategic planning feedback sessions with local industries, with a great discussion among several area nonprofits and community-based organizations. My thanks to all who participated.



## Staying Connected with Local Communities

In recent weeks, several Waubonsee employees have attended events designed to get updates on local communities. Ne'Keisha Stepney, Dr. Melinda Tejada, and Dr. Toya Webb attended Aurora's State of the City event with a focus on education, while Dr. Stacey Randall, Noelia Ruiz and I were able to attend the Aurora Regional Chamber's annual Legislative Luncheon, which featured several local officials including U.S. Congressman Bill Foster, U.S. Congresswoman Lauren Underwood, State Senator Linda Holmes, State Senator Karina Villa, State Representative Matt Hanson, and State Representative Barbara Hernandez. It seems like there are great opportunities to engage with our elected officials on mental health, housing, justice involved individuals, and clean energy. In addition, the Sugar Grove Campus was the host site for an early October career fair put on by Congressman Bill Foster and the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Dr. Webb and I have also continued our meetings with local elected officials. Most recently, we've had the chance to meet with State Representative Barbara Hernandez and State Senator Dave Syverson.



*Dr. Brian Knetl pictured with State Representative Barbara Hernandez and proud Waubonsee alumnus (on left).*

## Waubonsee SBDC and Kane County Sheriff's Office Partner Up for the First of Its Kind Center

Waubonsee is proud to be a partner in the nation's first Small Business Development Center satellite office located in a correctional facility. Celebrated with a ribbon cutting last month, The Honorable William H. Hall IV Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is now open at the Kane County Sheriff's Office, where justice-involved individuals will develop their own small business plans, learn skills for success, and more.

## Aspen Executive Seminar

Earlier this month, I had the great opportunity to attend the Aspen Executive Seminar on Leadership, Values, and the Good Society. It was a great experience to engage in intensive leadership development with executive leaders from across the country and in areas outside of higher education.

## AROUND THE COLLEGE



### What I'm Reading

- ♦ *Radical Reimagining for Student Success in Higher Education*, Edited by Jo Arney, Timothy Dale, Glenn Davis, and Jillian Kinzie
- ♦ *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



### What I'm Following

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

### Biking and Biscuits

September was a busy month for a lot of reasons, including two alliteratively named events that have become traditions -- Bike the Burbs and Biscuits with the Boss.

This year's biking event moved to the Sugar Grove Campus, but unfortunately, the rain moved along with us. Still, it is a unique way to get community members to have fun on campus. At Biscuits, I was able to give updates to staff members in person and online, along with answering questions.



### Picnic and Pancakes

For this year's Employee Picnic, the college closed Sugar Grove student services and extension campuses to allow all to spend time connecting. Most even wore their new Waubonsee Together t-shirts! And earlier that week, faculty had a chance to connect with students over food at a special



Flapjacks with the Faculty event in honor of National Pancake Day.

## Coming Up

**October 23-26**

ACCT Leadership Congress

**November 7-8**

Achieving the Dream (ATD) Coaches Visit

**November 8**

Waubonsee Foundation Scholarship Fest