



President's Report

November 2024

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



Achieving the Dream Work Continues with Coaches' Visit

Our Achieving the Dream (ATD) journey hit another milestone as we hosted our two ATD coaches, Dr. Cheryl Calhoun and Leon Hill, on Nov. 7-8.

The highlight of the visit was an all-college session on Nov. 7, where I talked about my personal "why" for wanting WCC to undertake this work, with a focus on ATD as a mindset, a framework, a partner and a resource rather than a singular initiative. Then the coaches gave background information on ATD and what our journey make look like before we opened it up to a panel Q&A.

During the visit, the coaches also met with two key teams comprised of individuals from across the college — the ATD data team and ATD core team. These teams will help surface and prioritize items for the college's ATD action plan. That plan is set to launch at the end of this academic year and be aligned with the college's strategic plan efforts.



Honoring Veterans and Their Service

Waubonsee is proud to serve those who have served our country, helping around 150 military members and veterans access their education benefits each year, while supporting their academic success. We're also thankful for the 30 veterans on the college's staff as they bring unique skill sets and leadership abilities.



During the week of Veterans Day, the college held two events to pay honor to these heroes — our annual Veterans Day Observance on Monday, Nov. 11 and a special invitation-only lunch on Nov. 13, which featured keynote speaker Richard C. Irvin, veteran and Mayor of the City of Aurora.

Waubonsee Works to Scale Up Apprenticeship Opportunities

Apprenticeships are truly emblematic of what community colleges strive to do each and every day - put students to work in solid careers by working together with local employers and partners. And so Waubonsee is working to scale up these mutually beneficial opportunities across the college and the region. Part of that effort included a special Apprenticeship 101 session for employees, which took place during National Apprenticeship Week on Nov. 18. Members of Waubonsee's Workforce Development Division teamed up with their counterparts at Harper College to conduct the training and facilitate discussion.

Working Together With the City of Aurora

The college continues to collaborate with the state's second largest city and our district's largest population center in a variety of ways. As a board member of the Invest Aurora economic development group, I participated in a recent leadership retreat to discuss the consolidation effort of that group plus three others -- the Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce, Aurora Downtown and the Quad County African American Chamber of Commerce. This new single entity is known as the Aurora Regional Economic Alliance and is designed to bring a streamlined and singular focus to the important issues of developing the local workforce, growing small business, and inspiring innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the city. I look forward to the college's role in its efforts and impact.

AROUND THE COLLEGE

Foundation Scholarship Fest and Launch of 2025-2026 Application

Waubonsee's tuition is among the lowest in the region, yet many students still struggle to afford higher education. That's why the work of the Waubonsee Foundation is so important and why we gather to celebrate donors and scholarship recipients at our annual Scholarship Fest, which this year was held on Nov. 8.

Attendees heard the powerful stories of recipient and donor duo for the Iverson Family Scholarship - Hilda Alvarado and Judith Iverson, respectively. In total, 377 awards were given for this current 2024-25 academic year, valued at nearly \$367,000. Meanwhile, the Foundation Scholarship Application for the upcoming 2025-26 academic year is now available online at waubonsee.edu/scholarships, so please encourage future and current students to apply!

Native American Heritage Month

In recent years, Waubonsee has worked to better understand its namesake, along with other native individuals and communities who owned and occupied local lands. This month is a good time to familiarize/re-familiarize yourself with the [college's Land Acknowledgment](#), which was approved by the board last year, and includes a commitment "to pairing this acknowledgment with action--leading to greater levels of respect and inclusivity in all our teaching, learning, and community building efforts."

Waubonsee Runner Finishes Among Top 10 in the Nation

Waubonsee freshman David Valkanov recently finished 9th at the 2024 NJCAA Division II National Cross-Country Meet — the highest finish ever for a WCC runner. The Region 4 Runner of the Year, Valkanov crossed the finish line in a time of 25:45, the fifth fastest 8K time in school history and three seconds better than his previous best time. Congratulations, David!



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

Coming Up

November 22

Winter Season Holiday Lights Parade with WCC Cheer Team

December 2

Aurora University and WCC Innovative Partnerships Discussion

December 5

- Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) Luncheon
- All-Staff Holiday Open House

December 6

- Auto Body Hood Refinishing Competition
- Student Senate Meeting

December 12

Biscuits with the Boss