



President's Report

April 2023

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



COLLEGE ENGAGEMENT

I had a great time competing in the annual Big Pink Volleyball tournament on the faculty team, "Walks Like a Duck." The tournament was organized as part of our Women's History Month events and it was great to see our students, administrators, faculty, and staff having a great time with some friendly competition.

Big Pink Volleyball originally started at Western Illinois University in 2002 for students to raise money for breast cancer awareness. Since then it has spread to college campuses across the United States and Canada. This year, participants donated \$300 worth of women's hygiene items to benefit the Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry's Women's Empowerment Mobile Pantry. More photos available on our [Waubonsee flickr page](#).

My introductory meetings with elected officials throughout our district continue and I have enjoyed meeting Jennifer Konen, Village President of Sugar Grove; Mike Rennels, Mayor of Plano; and Illinois Representative Barbara Hernandez, 50th District. In addition to elected officials, I was pleased to meet with Loretta Daly, Acting President and CEO of Invest Aurora, and Michael Cassa, Sugar Grove Economic Development Director. As a result of my meeting with Loretta, I have agreed to serve on the Board of Directors for Invest Aurora and have attended my first meeting. It has also been great to meet several of my colleagues within education including Dr. Evan Glazer, President and CEO of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, and Dr. Laurie Borowicz, President of Kishwaukee College, as well as through my service on the Aurora Education Commission.

In addition to my participation in the Big Pink Volleyball Tournament, I have enjoyed attending a number of college, community, and professional events. I attended a viewing of *No Small Matter* at the Copley Theater as well as the important discussion about the importance of early childhood education that followed. The Aurora Education Commission is working on follow-up events on this important issue. Also within the community, I was able to attend the 2023 Multi-Chamber Economic Outlook Luncheon and Business Expo and hear from keynote speaker Leslie McGranahan, Vice President and Director of Regional Research with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Around Waubonsee, I've been able to attend, or stop by, several great events such as the Illinois Design Educators Association (IDEA) Regional Competition, a Latinx/E in STEM presentation, and our Annual Sugar Grove Open House, as well as serving as one of four panelists for our Spring Engaging Leaders Panel for students. I was also able to join our Foundation directors as they explored the potential of a capital campaign for the Foundation. There is a great deal of enthusiasm among the Foundation Board for the potential impact a capital campaign can have on removing obstacles for students.

We were all excited when our men's basketball team made it to the NJCAA Region 4 Division II National Championship. Seeded #12 for the tournament, we experienced some of that March Madness when we defeated the #5 seeded team winning our first ever first-round game at the national tournament. With two subsequent losses to the #4 and #1 seeded teams, our season ended with a 26-10 overall record.



Linda O'Connell-Knuth, Heather Weber, Kathleen Randall, Mari-beth Brown, Kim Livingston, Dr. Brian Knetl, Scott Hollenback, Patty Saccone



Dr. Brian Knetl and several Waubonsee employees celebrate Waubonsee's first ever first-game win at the national men's basketball tournament during the Watch Party at the Sugar Grove Campus.

Several of our student-athletes received recognition being named to the All-Conference, All-Region, and All-Tournament Teams. And our congratulations to Head Coach Lance Robinson on being named NJCAA Region 4 Division II Coach of the Year, and 2022-2023 Collegiate Co-Coach of the Year by the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association. Continuing with our athletics accomplishments, we will be cheering on our Competitive Co-Ed Cheerleading squad at the Chicago Nationals Grand Finale competition. Our baseball and softball seasons are just getting underway and we have students who have received recognition as an NJCAA Player of the Week for our division. Follow Waubonsee Athletics news on [Twitter](#).

Also this month, several administrators and I attended the Higher Learning Commission's 2023 Annual Conference in Chicago, and I appreciated the opportunity to attend the 2023 AACC Annual and New CEO Academy in Denver.



Stages of Listening and Learning

My [Tour de Waubonsee](#) listening tour is going great! I've completed six stages, or weeks, of listening sessions and I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of our fantastic students, faculty, and staff. It has been wonderful to hear about all the things we are proud of at Waubonsee as well as the areas where we can continue to grow forward together. You can see the sessions I've completed in the first six stages as well as the upcoming stages on the [Tour de Waubonsee](#) web page. The tour will culminate in an all campus meeting on May 10th when I will share themes from the tour and provide information on moving the college forward.

AROUND THE COLLEGE

Student Senate elections were held online April 3-6. Student Senate President is Shakena Ellis. Student Trustee is Van (Caylin) Wheeler and Senators include: Angel Camarillo-Tolentino, Riff Talsma, Jack McGreevy, Madison Stevens, Vanessa Torres, David Pedro, Joyce Tikeng Tiotsop Debbie (Oluwaseun) Fakeye, and Diego Vargas. Student Senate will have two open Senate seats to be elected in the Fall.

Our congratulations to Dr. Amy Powers, Professor of History, on being selected the 2023 American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) [Faculty Member of the Year!](#) This recognition was announced recently at the AACC Annual meeting in Denver, CO.

Congratulations also to Dr. Jamal Scott on his acceptance to the [Aspen Institute Rising Presidents Fellowship](#).

The Waubonsee Community College Foundation is gearing up for its third annual Walk, Run and WIN Trail Race on Saturday, June 3. This family-friendly fun run follows a mixed-terrain trail through the Sugar Grove campus grounds, followed by a post-race celebration with food trucks. Additional information is available in your Info Items. To register or to sponsor the event, visit waubonsee.edu/5k.

Dr. Jeanine McMillen co-authored research with three Northern Illinois University colleagues that was published in the Journal of Student Affairs Inquiry (Vol. 6, Issue 1). The article, "Students' Mental Well-Being During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Exploring Ways Institutions Can Foster Undergraduate Students' Mental Well-Being", is a study of students' mental well-being and institutional support during the pandemic.

Denise Nakaji, Professor of Massage Therapy, was recognized during the AACC Annual meeting as a [Dale P. Parnell Distinguished Faculty](#) member.





Coming Up

What I'm Reading

- Inclusive Directions: The Role of the Chief Diversity Officer in Community College Leadership by Clyde Pickett, Michele Smith, and James Felton



What I'm Following

- Short-Term Pell Legislation
- @waubonsee social media channels
- *Follow me on Twitter at @WCCPresident*

April 20

Meeting with Margaret Perreault, President/CEO of the Batavia Chamber of Commerce

April 21

Health Professions and Public Service Team Based Challenge Event

April 24

Meeting with Illinois Representative Dan Ugaste, 65th District

April 25

ACUE Waubonsee Class of 2023 Pinning Ceremony

April 27

Retirement and Service Awards Banquet

May 4

Gustafson Banquet

May 13

Commencement Ceremonies

May 18

Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Student-Athlete Recognition Banquet