



WAUBONSEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

President's Report

November 2023

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Our college-wide data summit was held on October 27 with more than 100 faculty, staff, and administrators attending. This event, through our new partnership with Achieving the Dream, focused on understanding how to strategically use data to transform an institution. Our goals for this partnership are to: expand our strategic focus from the college to the community to maintain impact and relevancy; to identify key data points to measure as a mark of progress; and to support the development and enhancement of programs and services that result in equitable learning for students and our community. The Data Summit was a great first step.



I am excited to share that our proposal for the [Cyber Skills for All: Community Colleges Lead the Way Initiative](#), funded by Microsoft Foundation has been accepted. Managed by the American Association of Community Colleges, this three-year initiative is building a community of practice focused on elevating cybersecurity pathways through community colleges as a means of economic development. Each community college chosen receives \$20,000.

Several of us have had the opportunity to participate in a number of national and regional conferences including the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) 37th Annual Conference right here in Chicago as well as the Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA) 2023 Summit at the College of Lake County. We also participated in the Illinois Manufacturing Workforce Ecosystem Symposium hosted by our neighbor Elgin Community College.

Some of my community engagement connections included a welcome and presentation on leadership for the Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce Leadership Academy. Thank you to Dr. Marleigha Evans for her presentation on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Faith LaShure for providing a tour of the Sugar Grove Campus. In addition, I attended a number of local events such as the Batavia Chamber of Commerce Mayor's Breakfast, the CASA Kane County 11th Annual Super Heroes Lunch, and the Valley Industrial Association Economic Forecast Breakfast. Various meetings included the Northern Illinois Workforce Coalition Governing Board; Ray Kennelly, Senior Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer with Lewis University; Dr. Evan Glazer, President and CEO of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy; and Jim Di Ciaula, Executive Director of CASA Kane County. In addition, I met with City of Aurora Alderman, John Laesch, and Mavis Bates, Owner of Strategic Sustainability Consulting, to discuss our participation, with other Illinois community colleges, in submitting a Climate and Equitable Jobs Act grant proposal. I also have meetings scheduled soon with Michael Cassa, Director of the Sugar Grove Economic Development Department, and Liz Moe-Garcia, Chief Development Officer, and Cathy Russell, Chief Executive Officer, with the Boys and Girls Club Elgin.

I was pleased to attend the Psi Beta and Psychology Club lunch, a PRISM meeting, and our annual Foundation Scholarship Fest where I was able to interact with several students. I also enjoyed attending the Guest Artist Talk with Diana Gabriel. In addition, I would like to thank the planning committee for organizing not one, but several events to honor Veterans this year. With Veterans Day falling on a Saturday this year, it was a wonderful lead up to the formal ceremonies held in various communities. I enjoyed visiting with a number of our Waubonsee veterans during the Veterans Brunch.



What I'm Reading

- *America's Hidden Economic Engines: How Community Colleges Can Drive Shared Prosperity* edited by Robert B. Schwartz and Rachel Lipson
- *Credentials: Understand the Problems. Identify the Opportunities. Create the Solutions.* by Paul L. Gaston and Michelle Van Noy



What I'm Following

- @waubonsee social media channels
- Follow me on Twitter at @WCCPresident

It is also beneficial when I have the opportunity to engage with my peers at the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents (ICCCP) meeting and at other events such as the Investiture of my colleague, Dr. Pamela Haney, President of Moraine Valley Community College. As part of our involvement with the ICCCP, we are participating in a new [advertising campaign](#) called "For Every Student, For Every Community". The campaign will highlight the benefits community colleges bring to Illinois like economic development, as well as unite the 48 community colleges across the state under a single brand.

AROUND THE COLLEGE

Congratulations to Dr. Robert Cook, TRIO/Upward Bound Manager, who successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, "High School Interrupted: A Case Study of Postsecondary Pathways and College Choices Following the COVID-19 Pandemic," on October 31 at Northern Illinois University.

Student Life hosted a Tree Lighting Ceremony on November 13 to kick off the Giving Tree program. Student Life, in partnership with Fox Valley United Way, sponsors 20 children in their Holiday Assistance Program. This partnership supports families in need who are looking to provide their children with gifts on Christmas. Students, faculty and staff will have the opportunity to select a child's name from the tree to purchase gifts for.

Coming Up

November 17

High School Counselor Breakfast at Waubonsee

December 1

50K Coalition of Chicago Area Hub Convening for Community College-to-Engineering Pathways

December 6

Aurora Education Commission

December 12

Invest Aurora Board of Directors

December 14

Biscuits with the Boss