



President's Report

March 2024

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

I was so pleased that I was able to stop by the Business, Technology, and Workforce Education Open House and Signing Day this year. It was a fantastic opportunity to greet students from our area high schools, our Waubonsee students, and several industry partners. I could feel the excitement in the air.



This year, I also had the opportunity to demonstrate support for our students participating in the first-ever MOPAR Career Automotive Program (CAP) Bracket Challenge. We are all looking forward to hosting the event in the new CTE building soon.



Our Aurora Fox Valley Open House/Health Care Careers is scheduled for March 23 and the Plano Campus/Innovation and Design Center Open House is April 3.

Last week, our consulting partner, Huron, joined us on our Sugar Grove Campus for a visioning meeting with our Strategic Planning Steering Committee. I am thrilled by the progress made during this session and our ongoing strides towards shaping our next Strategic Plan.

In recent engagements with community leaders and industry stakeholders, a standout moment was the tour of Fermilab alongside Margaret Perreault, President and CEO of the Batavia Chamber of Commerce, and Tom Kim, Superintendent of Batavia School District #101. Led by Bill Pellico, Fermilab's Engineering Manager, the tour marked the beginning of what promises to be a series of discussions on potential collaborations between Waubonsee, the school district, and Fermilab. During the visit, we met one of their engineers who shared a personal journey of discovering a passion for engineering while attending Waubonsee Community College. His story underscores the tangible impact of our work. Additionally, I eagerly anticipate an upcoming tour of REVV Aviation at the Sugar Grove Airport as we explore the prospect of launching an aircraft mechanic program together.



Chris Edwards, Fermilab Engineer and Waubonsee Alum

Another exciting update from the month was the opportunity to meet and hear from Arthur Levine, co-author of "The Great Upheaval" which served as our Waubonsee summer read last year. Mr. Levine met with the presidents at our March Illinois Council of Community College Presidents meeting in Kankakee. The fundamental questions raised in the book regarding the evolution of colleges, the adaptability of higher education in the face of challenges, the potential transformation of our educational model, and the increasing significance of higher education resonate deeply as we continue our strategic planning process.

I was honored to join Dr. Melinda Tejada in welcoming the esteemed judges for the John J. Swalec, Jr. President's Achievement Award to the Sugar Grove Campus last week. The distinguished panel included Michael Isaacson, Executive Director of Kane County Health Department in Aurora; Jessica Medrano, President and Owner of R.J. O'Neil in Montgomery; Caroline Rossow, Vice President, Commercial Banking of Wintrust in St. Charles; and Nick Scanlan, Commercial Real Estate Broker and Leasing Agent of BEI Properties in Batavia. Their commitment to spending the day interviewing candidates for this prestigious scholarship award reflects their dedication to Waubonsee and our students.



What I'm Reading

- *AI and the Future of Education: Teaching in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* by Priten Shah
- *College as a Public Good* by Karin Fischer, published by The Chronicle of Higher Education



What I'm Following

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

As a board member, I thoroughly enjoyed participating in the Valley Industrial Association's 8th Annual Spark Awards. Among the deserving recipients were Aurora Specialty Textiles Group, Inc. and MTH Pumps, Marcia Ayala and Tim Tremain, members of our Foundation Board, are the respective Presidents of these companies.

Lastly, we are excited to officially reopen the Fitness Center on the Sugar Grove Campus to employees and students. There has been community interest in our facilities as well and we continue to explore how to best support community members while maintaining our fiscal responsibility.

Coming Up

March 18

Fitness Center Ribbon Cutting

March 20

Sugar Grove State of the Village Address

March 21

Mayor Richard Irvin, The State of Economic Development in the City of Aurora Address

March 23

Aurora Fox Valley Open House/Health Care Careers

March 28

Dr. David Livingston, President, Lewis University

April 3

Plano Campus/Innovation and Design Center Open House

April 5-9

AACC Annual Meeting

April 11

Dr. Susana Rivera-Mills, President, Aurora University

April 13-16

Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference