



President's Report

April 2024

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

This week we welcomed Hope, our Comfort K-9 dog, to the Waubonsee community. The timing of the start of her service at Waubonsee was particularly impactful as we have been hit with hard news this past week with the death of a current student and a current employee.

In addition to the many ways that students and employees have access to counseling resources, Hope lived up to her name visiting classrooms and all four campuses. Our thanks to Officer Danny Ramirez for sharing his expertise and providing Hope on campus.

April is community college month and this month is filled with celebrations of Waubonsee students as we lead up to the highlight of every academic year, commencement. I have been able to participate in several events including the Spring Joint Honors Induction Ceremony and Student Life Awards and a Student Workers Appreciation Celebration and look forward to our first Waubonsee Honors Fair and annual Gustafson Banquet. In addition to celebrating our students, we look forward to recognizing our employees at the annual Retirement and Service Awards Banquet. These celebrations all contribute to a culture of caring that we hope to grow and expand in the coming months and years.

You may have noticed the south entrance at the Sugar Grove Campus looks strikingly bare now that fencing is up and construction has begun on the site for our new Technical Education Center (TEC). Combined with the recent tornado that swept across the north side of the Sugar Grove Campus, our campus trees have taken a hit. We are mindful of our responsibility to the land and I know that there are landscaping plans and discussions between our Campus Operations staff and some of our biology faculty on projects to replant trees. We are all looking forward to the groundbreaking ceremony on April 23 and this next era for the college and these programs.

Kim Caponi and I attended the recent State of Economic Development address by City of Aurora Mayor, Richard Irvin. Our attendance resulted in a meeting and tour of the Aurora Downtown Campus with Dr. Kenneth Campbell, Economic Development Coordinator with the Mayor's Office of Economic Development. Dr. Campbell is specifically working on the casino project and we discussed partnership opportunities for recruiting and training employees. I also joined Rich Kiefer, Professor of Political Science and History, in welcoming Illinois Representative, Harry Benton, 97th District, to the Sugar Grove Campus for a visit to Professor Kiefer's class. Dr. Toya Webb and I look forward to visiting several of our Illinois legislators during the Illinois Community College Trustees Association Lobby Day on May 2. As you know, advocacy on behalf of our students is important to maintain awareness and support for the critical needs our students face.

Dr. Diane Nyhammer, Suzette Murray, Robert Cofield, and I all participated in our recent virtual site visit with the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM) for our Health Information Technology program. My thanks to Patty Saccone, Professor of Health Information Technology, and Dr. Alyson Gaspar, Career and Technical Education Services Manager, for preparing us for the visit. We are happy to report that all 10 CAHIIM standards were fully met. The reviewers commented more than once that Professor Saccone did a "stellar job," and noted the strong institutional support and highly engaged students. Congratulations to Professor Saccone!





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

In other exciting news, Waubonsee has been awarded a \$350,000 National Science Foundation grant. This was a three-year development process for the college and specifically Dr. Sheela Vemu, Associate Professor of Biology, Dr. Nancy Christensen, Associate Professor of Chemistry, and our grants team. This grant will allow us to explore a new program in water treatment and waste water treatment.

Last month, I mentioned an upcoming tour of REVV Aviation. This tour was part of ongoing conversations with Ne'Keisha Stepney and other Waubonsee leaders to explore ways to offer a program that would meet the increasing need for qualified Aviation Maintenance Technicians in the region. A memo documenting workforce needs in this area as well as next steps for this collaboration is included in your Info Items book this month. We will share more information as we move through the internal and external approval process.

Coming Up

April 20

Sugar Grove Campus Open House

April 22

Earth Day Open House and Employee Picnic

April 23

Technical Education Center Groundbreaking

April 24

Waubonsee Honors Fair

April 25

Retirement and Service Awards Banquet

May 1-2

ICCTA/ICCCP Meetings and Lobby Day

May 2

Gustafson Banquet

May 11

Commencement Ceremonies



What I'm Following

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

