

# FOUNDATION UPDATE

MAR 2025

## COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Dr. Brian Knetl, College President*

The College's total headcount is up nearly 12.99% this semester (to 9,775) and 7.43% (to 5,487) in degree- or certificate-seeking students. As part of the larger effort to make processes more student-friendly, the College has implemented a January 6 spring payment deadline in lieu of the rolling deadlines previously used. As a result, only 5% of students (246) were dropped for nonpayment, compared to 15% in the past.

Board members are encouraged to continue telling Waubonsee's story out in the community and to spread the word about the RISE 2030 strategic plan. The College continues to work with Achieving the Dream (ATD), and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the College's main accrediting body, will visit the downtown Aurora and Fox Valley campuses.

The College has also begun a Current Conversations series, where administrators answer faculty and staff questions about external factors and impacts. The Waubonsee community remains focused on the College's mission and students.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*Dr. Melinda Tejada, Vice President of Community Engagement & Executive Director of the Foundation*

Rich Hoster has stepped into the role of Vice President, with Matt Dennison now serving as Secretary/Treasurer and Chair of Finance and Audit. Kris Wano will chair the Nominating Committee as the Foundation begins to address the governance work identified at the February 6 board retreat. The three days at the AGB Leadership Forum were intense but productive; all board members are encouraged to consider going at some point.

## EXECUTIVE TREASURER'S REPORT

*John Bryant, Interim Vice President of Finance & Administration & Executive Treasurer of the Foundation*

The Foundation's assets were approximately \$7.6 million as of December 31, 2024. Fundraising event proceeds were up, and expenses were comparable to 2023. The portfolio gained a little over \$300,000 over the first six months of FY2025.

*The Foundation's quarterly meeting was held on March 4 in Sugar Grove.*

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Finance and Audit

*Matt Dennison, Chair*

The committee recommended a spend rate of 3.5% for FY2026, which was subsequently approved by the board.

### Investment

*Dr. Thomas Huberty, Chair*

The portfolio returned 9.7% net of fees for CY2024. The committee approved strategic allocations to optimize the portfolio for a 7% rate of return, which correlates to a 10.1% level of risk.

### Nominating and Governance

*Kris Wano, Chair*

Serving as judges at the President's Achievement Awards on March 12 are the Honorable Bianca Camargo, Circuit Judge Kane County; Ravi S. Jayaraman, PE Regional Manager, Water, HR Green; Jason Pesola, Commercial Real Estate Broker; and Matt Tokarsky, President, Odin Industries.

### Revenue Generating

*Matt Winkle, Chair*

The Foundation raised \$394,558 in 2024, compared to \$363,000 in 2023, and an additional \$100,000 in the first two weeks of 2025. The Development team continues to build, evaluate, and refine foundational processes and is creating a dashboard to keep the committee abreast of current efforts.



WAUBONSEE  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
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## DEVELOPMENT OFFICE REPORT

*Emma Donatille, Director of Development*

The Development team has been recording student stories and will gather more at the alumni dinner on March 20, which has 91 registered attendees and counting. Registration is open for both the June 7 trail race and the September 15 golf outing. Talking points have been prepared for board members to use as a reference when telling the College's story, and Ms. Donatille and Matt Dennison will present at an upcoming Yorkville Kiwanis meeting to share information about the Foundation and about the club's Foundation scholarship.



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

*Vivian Tapia, AAS Emergency Med Tech-Paramedic  
Spring 2025 Recipient of the Valley Emergency Care  
Southern Fox Valley Paramedic Scholarship*

From the time she was little, Vivian Tapia knew she wanted to be a firefighter paramedic. At Waubensee she met Assistant Professor Andrea Montgomery, who encouraged Vivian to enroll in the Fire Science program and apply to the Montgomery Fire Department. "I love being a firefighter," Vivian says. "I love, you know, running into buildings. Some people are afraid of it, but it's a lot of adrenaline!"

Vivian felt extra pressure because fire science is such a male dominated field. "I was physically tired, mentally tired," she says, "but I had to pursue it." Having completed the yearlong probationary period, Vivian has graduated from Fire Science and entered the Southern Fox Valley Paramedic Program. She continues to work in Montgomery but has also been accepted into the Sugar Grove Fire Department, where she'll do her ride time.

"This Foundation scholarship means a lot," she says, "because of the struggle I have paying for school. My parents help me help a lot, and it means a lot for relief for them as well – my mom is working three jobs to help me pay for school." She's excited for what lies ahead. "I know there's going to be a lot of things I'm going to see, good and bad, but I'm ready for it."

## COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONT)

### Scholarship

*Dr. Diane Homan, Chair*

By the February 7 priority submission deadline, the Foundation had received 492 applications, a 30% increase over last year, with a 78% increase in new-student applications. Seven new scholarships have been established, including three by Foundation board members Tom Huberty, Jessica Medrano, and Tim Tremain.

### EDUCATION & STRATEGY: Student Financial Aid Services Overview

*Mary Greenwood*

*Director of Student Financial Aid Services*

Student Financial Aid Services supports more than 5,000 credit students. The team provides financial aid counseling at all four campuses and administers state and federal programs including veterans' education benefits, the Pell Grant, federal work-study, and federal student loans. They provide hands-on assistance with the FAFSA application, promote Foundation and external scholarships, and connect students with community partners to address food and housing insecurity, mental health, and financial wellness. They also work closely with the Development team, integrating scholarship information into students' financial aid awards, providing Student Aid Index numbers to verify financial need for scholarship applicants, and managing Emergency Needs Funding.

**The mission of the Waubensee Community College Foundation is to cultivate philanthropic donors, to responsibly steward its assets and to equitably award scholarships to students to help them achieve their educational goals.**