



WAUBONSEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

President's Report

May 2025

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



Enriching and Recognizing Employees

In this season of student learning, success and recognition, we've also taken time to recognize faculty and staff who balance their own professional development with student service and support.

The annual Retirement and Service Awards banquet always honors those celebrating milestone anniversaries with the college, along with retirees.

I was also honored to "pin" the college's sixth cohort of faculty members earning certification in the Association of College and University Educators' (ACUE) Effective Teaching Practice Framework. Based on national data from ACUE, certified faculty typically increase first-year retention rates by 4%, lower DFW rates by 3%, and become more confident in themselves and more inspiring to their students.



RISE 2030 Implementation Continues

RISE 2030 continues to move forward with foundational steps and events, including a recent RISE retreat and capacity building workshop, led by Dr. Toya Webb. More than 140 employees have stepped up to be directly involved in the RISE effort, many of whom attended the retreat, where priority leads, goal champions, and action team members discussed their individual strategic action plans. I also set the stage for this transformational and historic work. Referencing "The Power of Moments" by Chip and Dan Heath, I asked: Do significant moments in our lives and in our institutions happen by chance or by design? My answer: We are the architects of Waubonsee's future. We're writing our own story. And as we look to write our story and build our future, we're also looking at our current state to see what we can let go of or change to build greater capacity for RISE-focused initiatives. So we were happy to welcome priority leads and goal champions to our recent capacity building workshop, where we reviewed current committees and initiatives to discover and determine need, redundancy, RISE alignment and impact.



2025 Outstanding Faculty Members Named

Dr. Lisa Fozio-Thielk, Professor of Psychology, has been selected as Waubonsee's 2025 Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Member, while Audrey Farrell, Instructor of Personal Wellness and Yoga, has been selected as the 2025 Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Member. Both are being honored for exemplifying the College's mission by enriching the lives of our students, colleagues, and community, creating opportunities to explore new passions, share knowledge, and foster a culture of inclusivity. They will be officially recognized at the August board meeting and during the fall Faculty Development Day program.

Students Win at State SkillsUSA Contests

Twenty-nine Waubesa Community College students competed at the SkillsUSA Illinois 2025 State Championships last month. Seventeen students placed in the top three in their contests, standing out among more than 2,000 students from across the state. Those finishing first will represent WCC at the national contests in June and include: the team of Ennis Ballines, Kevin Bustamante Fontanel, Briana Harris, and Sarah Pawlus, Entrepreneurship; Trent Butzen, HVAC; Julian Flores, HVAC; Aleah Sauder, Automotive Refinishing Technology; Joshua Stover, Automotive Service Technology; and Benjamin Swanson, Collision Damage Appraisal.

Students Show Off Research Projects at Annual Skyway STEM Poster Contest

WCC students were responsible for seven of the 20 entries to this year's Skyway STEM Poster Competition. Brianna Yackley placed second in her division for her work on "Examining Anthropogenic Effects on Blackberry Creek and Surrounding Watershed," mentored by David Voorhees. Sneha Sharma also placed second for her work on "Kimberling's Conjecture on Harmonic Numbers Ordered with Logarithms," mentored by Steve Kifowit. Ronja Schmidt-Wiencke placed third for her work "Meteo-rite or Meteor-wrong?," also mentored by David Voorhees.



The WCC baseball team huddles at Northwestern Medicine Field on April 27. This special game at the home of the Kane County Cougars featured an exciting matchup with Morton College.



Sharing Information and Advocacy

During this month's Lobby Day, Dr. Toya Webb, Trustee Tina Willson, and I participated in discussions focused on our new Technical Education Center, new certificate programs, and the Community College Baccalaureate proposed legislation. During this busy event, we were glad to be able to connect with Karina Villa, IL State Senator of the 25th District; Donald P. DeWitte, IL State Senator of the 33rd District; Linda Holmes, IL State Senator of the 42nd District (*pictured above*); and Jeff Keicher, IL State Representative of the 70th District.



- May 22**
WCC Athletics Banquet
- June 3**
WCC Foundation Quarterly Board Meeting

- June 7**
WCC Foundation Trail Run
- June 12**
Adult Education Recognition Ceremony