



WAUBONSEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

President's Report

April 2026

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



Elevating the Student Voice - and Cuisine - at “Burgers with the Boss”

I, along with John Bryant, Dr. Kim Chavis, Dr. Scott Peska, Dr. Stacey Randall, and Dr. Toya Webb, were happy to participate in the recent “Burgers with the Boss” event put on by Student Senate.

A take-off of my “Biscuits with the Boss” employee sessions, the event allowed administrators to have real dialogue and conversations with students in a less formal environment. Along with the conversations and connections, participants enjoyed the namesake cuisine and an icebreaker round of Waubonsee Jeopardy.

My thanks to all who planned and participated as our work to strengthen the student experience demands that we center the student voice.



Responding to Student Needs

Waubonsee proudly hosted U.S. Representative Lauren Underwood on April 8 to celebrate a \$450,000 federal investment in student success in the form of a planned Center for Parenting Students on campus. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Representative Underwood announced that she secured \$10,954,800 in Community Project Funding to support childcare, career training, and critical infrastructure throughout northern Illinois. The \$450,000 in federal funding the college has received will be used to repurpose a variety of existing campus spaces into child-friendly spaces for student parents.



A Major Month for Community College Celebration and Conferences

April is national Community College Month, and the theme from the Association of Community College Trustees is “The Smartest First Step. The Strongest Next Step.”

This month is also the annual American Association of Community Colleges conference with the theme of “Pioneering Minds: Shaping the Future of Education.” I attended along with 12 other administrators and faculty, including Psychology Professor Dr. Lisa Fozio-Thielk who was honored as a finalist for Faculty of the Year. Congratulations Dr. Fozio-Thielk!

Honoring High-Achieving Students

This time of year provides many great opportunities for the college to recognize student efforts and achievements. One of those is the annual Joint Honors Induction Ceremony.

This month's event honored 53 student inductees into five honor societies:

- Alpha Beta Gamma (*business students*)
- Alpha Sigma Lambda (*adult students 25+*)
- Phi Theta Kappa
(*academic excellence and community involvement*)
- Psi Beta (*psychology students*)
- SALUTE (*for veteran students*)



Celebrating, Elevating, Enriching and Developing Our Employees



SpringFest

Employees enjoyed this year's SpringFest, which for the second straight year was held at Aurora's Two Brothers Roundhouse. The "Baskets and Beyond" raffle continues to be a highlight of the evening, along with dinner, dancing and the ever-popular photo booth. Opportunities like these to connect with each other outside of work can then help us better collaborate at work as Waubonsee Together.

Achieving The Dream (ATD) Capacity Cafe

After presenting at the March board meeting, our coaches spent time with each of our RISE teams to talk through their work and then hosted a college-wide Capacity Cafe to share and discuss the results of that recent survey that got employees' thoughts on seven key college capacity areas: Leadership and Vision, Data and Technology, Equity, Teaching and Learning, Engagement and Communication, Strategy and Planning, Policies and Practices. Overall, the survey results show the college making real progress in the areas that matter most to students, particularly in how we connect with our community and support the student experience. At the same time, the results make it clear that our internal systems - how we align, communicate, and execute - have not yet caught up with the strength of that work. A lot of those opportunities are being addressed through the work of the RISE strategic plan.



Coming Up

April 16

- Student Advocacy Day
- Aurora Mayor John Laesch's State of the City Address
- Honors Program Fair and Reception

April 18

Waubonsee Day of Service

April 30

RISE Summit

May 7

Gustafson Scholarship Banquet

May 16

Commencement