



LTC STUDENT BENEFITING  
THROUGH CEFS PROGRAM



LTC HOLDS PERFORMANCE OF  
ALL TOGETHER NOW!



IECC ENCOURAGES VETERANS  
TO EXPLORE COLLEGE BENEFITS

# LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE

## Network



### LTC NAMED TOP 150 U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR SIXTH TIME

The Aspen Institute named Lincoln Trail College one of the 150 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. The colleges selected for this honor stand out among more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide as having high and improving levels of student success as well as equitable outcomes for Black and Hispanic students and those from lower-income backgrounds.

The 150 eligible colleges have been invited to submit data and narratives as the next steps in an intensive data and practice review process, culminating in the announcement of the Prize winner in spring 2023.

"We're very proud to be an Aspen Prize Top 150 U.S. Community College," said LTC President Dr. Zahi Atallah. "This shows that Lincoln Trail College delivers a quality education to students. I'm even more excited that we have sustained excellence. This is the sixth time LTC has been recognized by the Aspen Institute. This shows how dedicated our faculty and staff is when it comes to student success."

Lincoln Trail College was first recognized by the Aspen Institute in 2011 and has subsequently been recognized in 2013, 2017, 2019, and 2021.

**ASPEN PRIZE**  
FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXCELLENCE  
aspen institute

**TOP 150**  
2023

**ASPEN PRIZE TOP 150 U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

2011 TOP 120    2013 TOP 120    2017 TOP 150    2019 TOP 150    2021 TOP 150    2023 TOP 150

The Aspen Prize spotlights exemplary community colleges in order to elevate the sector, drive attention to colleges doing the best work, and discover and share highly effective student success and equity strategies. Since 2010, Aspen has chosen to focus intensively on community colleges because they are—as First Lady Dr. Jill Biden stated at the 2021 Aspen Prize ceremony—“a powerful engine of prosperity.”

But student outcomes vary enormously among community colleges, and improving those outcomes is essential to securing our nation’s economic future, strengthening communities, and ensuring that diverse populations experience economic mobility and prosperity. With these goals in mind, the Aspen Prize honors colleges with outstanding achievement in five critical areas: teaching and learning, certificate and degree completion, transfer and bachelor’s attainment, workforce success, and equity for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.

“In an era of persistent inequity and workforce talent gaps, our nation’s best community colleges are stepping up to deliver more degrees to increasingly diverse students so they are prepared for the good jobs waiting to be filled,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. “Leaders of exceptional community colleges understand that achieving excellence requires expanding college access and increasing degree completion, but it doesn’t stop there. They are committed to ensuring that all students—including students of color and those from low-income backgrounds—graduate with the skills needed to secure a job with family-sustaining wages or successfully transfer to and graduate from a university. That same commitment that stands at the center of the Aspen Prize: to advance the goals of social mobility and equitable talent



development.”

The eligible colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community college sector. Located in urban, rural, and suburban areas across 34 states, these colleges serve as few as 230 students and as many as 57,000. Winning colleges have ranged from smaller institutions serving rural community and smaller towns—including Lake Area Technical Institute (SD, 2017 Prize winner) and Walla Walla Community College (WA, 2013)—to large community colleges serving major metropolitan areas, including Miami Dade College (FL, 2019) and San Antonio College (TX, 2021).

The four other previous winners are Indian River State College (FL, 2019); Santa Fe College (FL, 2015); Santa Barbara City College (CA, 2013); and Valencia College (FL, 2011).

In this first round, eligibility for the Aspen Prize is based on publicly available data. Eligible colleges must show strong and improving student outcomes in key areas such as retention, completion, transfer, and equity. Nationwide, 15 percent of community colleges (150 of the approximately 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide assessed for the Prize) have been invited to apply—the full list can be accessed on the Prize homepage.

The next steps in the process include:

- Selection of the top ten finalists by an expert panel of 15 experts in community colleges, higher education, and workforce training, to be announced in spring/summer 2022
- Fall 2022 site visits to each of the ten finalists, during which the Aspen Institute and partners will collect additional information, including employment and earnings data and insights about promising practices
- A distinguished jury will meet and make award decisions in the first quarter of early 2023
- Announcement of the Aspen Prize in late spring 2023



Work continues on the Rowland-Nicholas Natatorium. Rough framing of the rooms is completed.



## STUDENTS USE INTERNSHIPS TO PREPARE FOR CAREERS



Students at Lincoln Trail College are using internships to further their hands-on education and prepare for careers. Several programs at the College provide students the opportunity for internships and many students take advantage of them.

“The Broadband Telecom program uses internships to give students real-world experience in the communications field,” says Broadband Telecom Lead Instructor Travis Matthews. “These are paid internships with communication companies, where students work at least 40-hour weeks and must attain at least 375 work hours during the internship.”

Matthews says the internships give the students a chance to put into practice what they’ve learned at Lincoln Trail College while also gaining important workplace skills like customer service training, working with other employees, and organized work skills.

“They learn to be dependable, reliable, and responsible for their actions on the job and outside of work, as issues outside of work can and will affect their job performance,” says Matthews.

He says students are unanimous when talking about how their internships help them mature with both work-related and life skills. “We usually notice returning sophomore students have a different demeanor than when they were freshman. They seem to be more at ease with school and more focused on their learning.”

Dr. Jared Gullett sees similar growth with students in his Health Careers programs. “It’s always enjoyable to hear feedback from students, especially after the first couple of weeks following the start of the internship. They always seem to have their excitement for healthcare ignited during their internships. The almost immediately gain confidence in their skills and start relating what they have learned in class with what they are learning in their internship.”

Gullett says gaining confidence is very important as students prepare for careers. He says it also gives students a great opportunity to network with professionals in the field.

Gullett’s program requires students to participate in an internship at a health care facility before graduation. He says the internships help them sharpen the skills they have already learned at LTC and help them gain real-world experience.

“Internships give the students the knowledge of what the healthcare world is really like, prior to graduation and employment. This is a key factor for student success. We can’t give the students this knowledge without the internship experience.”

## LTC HOLDS PERFORMANCE OF ALL TOGETHER NOW!



Lincoln Trail College announced that they will be joining thousands of theatrical organizations around the globe by producing their own local production of Music Theatre International's All Together Now!: A Global Event Celebrating Local Theatre. Theatrical licensor Music Theatre International (MTI) created this revue for theatres across the globe to use as a local fundraising event performed over the same weekend of November 12, 2021. Lincoln Trail College's performances are scheduled for November 12 and 13 at 7:00 p.m. and November 14 at 2:00 p.m.

A fantastic selection of songs are featured in this brand new musical revue from shows including *Rent*, *Les Misérables*, *Godspell*, *Sister Act*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Mamma Mia!* and many more.

Featured soloists for LTC's production are X Brown, Dan Dix, Amy Drake, Amanda Evinger, Haley Fryer, Becca Geffs, Taylor Gray, Colby McGahey, Ryan Pinkston, Antje Pippin, Sicily Rawlings, Faith Sanders, and Brennan Tracy.

The ensemble is comprised of Brown, Drake, Evinger, Geffs, Marla Graham, Sabrina Malone, Brian Manhart, McGahey, Allison Nichols, Pinkston, and Rawlings.

The Statesmen Singers, made up of Camryn Antes, Geffs, Gray, Keeley Johnson, Abigail Metheny, Sammi Parker, Addison Pinkston, and Faith Sanders, also perform.

MTI's President and CEO, Drew Cohen stated, "MTI's All Together Now! is about bringing people back to the theatre, whether as audience members or cast, crew and musicians. The revue features songs from the world's most iconic musicals, so there is definitely something for everyone to enjoy. Our goal with this worldwide event is for organizations to provide hope, inspiration and excitement to their communities through the transformative power of musical theatre.

We are incredibly excited to celebrate the return of live theatre globally with performances of MTT's All Together Now!," stated Lincoln Trail College President Dr. Zahi Atallah. "The past year has been a challenging time for everyone, particularly arts organizations. We look forward to welcoming our patrons back with this truly wonderful revue."

## LTC HOSTS FALL CONCERT

Lincoln Trail College will hold a concert on November 2 at 7:00 p.m. at the Zwermann Arts Center Theater. The concert will feature performances by the LTC Trumpet Choir, the Statesmen Singers and the LTC Jazz Band.

“Since this concert will be close to Veterans Day, we wanted to perform some music to pay tribute to our veterans and America,” says Dr. Michael Patilla. “The Trumpet Choir is performing The Star-Spangled Banner and the Statesmen Singers are performing The Pride of America.”

Other pieces performed by The Statesmen Singers are “Ode to Trees,” “The Gift to be Simple,” “The Water of Tyne,” and “Duerme, No Llores.” The Statesmen Singers is LTC’s signature student choir directed by Dr. Patilla.

He also directs the LTC Jazz Band, which is made up of students and community members. The Jazz Band will perform “Route 66,” “Harlem Nocturne,” “Basie – Straight Ahead,” “Kansas City,” “Go Daddy-O,” and “Fireshaker.”

There is no admission for the concert, but donations will be accepted.



Brennan Seth Tracy performs “Pure Imagination” from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* during LTC’s production of *All Together Now!*



Members of the cast of *All Together Now!* perform “Seize the Day” from *Disney’s Newsies*.



Dr. Michael Patilla directs members of the Statesmen Singers during LTC’s Fall Concert.



The Lincoln Trail College Jazz Band prepares to perform during LTC’s Fall Concert.



## DECEMBER ATHLETIC EVENTS

### Men's Basketball

1	at Vincennes	6:00
4	Olney Central	3:00
8	Lewis & Clark	7:00
11	at Kaskaskia	3:00
15	at Southwestern	7:00
18	at Ancilla	12:00

### Women's Basketball

1	at Vincennes	4:00
4	Olney Central	1:00
6	Danville Area CC	5:30
11	at Kaskaskia	1:00
15	at Southwestern	5:00
18	at Ancilla	12:00



## VETERANS ENCOURAGED TO EXPLORE BENEFITS

Each November, America takes time to honor the men and women who have served on Veterans Day. Illinois Eastern Community Colleges is also reminding veterans that there are educational benefits available to them.

IECC Director of Financial Aid Andrea Puckett says there are both state and federal benefits available for veterans to help them earn a college degree. She says federal benefits are available to qualifying veterans and/or their dependents based on GI Bill® payments or disability status. The benefits range from tuition and fee coverage to a monthly housing allowance to book stipends. Illinois veterans returning to the state after service can earn educational benefits to cover tuition charges and most mandatory fees.

She says veterans can apply online for both state and federal benefits. She says once they are approved, the process of using the benefits at Frontier Community College, Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College or Wabash Valley College is easy. Veterans will need to print their certificate of eligibility and a copy of their DD-214 and give that to the Financial Aid Office. They'll also need to schedule an advising appointment to register for classes. Once that's complete, the Financial Aid Office can provide a certification of enrollment.

Puckett says any veteran that has questions about the process can contact any of the Financial Aid Offices and they can help with the application or locating resources. She says veterans can also get help about their benefits through a Veteran Service Officer at an Illinois Veterans Affairs Department. She says the most accessible offices for veterans in the IECC District are located in Lawrenceville and Salem.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Working with the LTC Student Senate and their faculty advisors (Professors C. Boyce and P. Thorsen), we are identifying adjustments that would make the college more welcoming to students to spend time. We are working on identifying activities, furniture, spaces, and other areas where LTC would allow students to spend a comfortable and engaging time. This is key to increasing the amount of time that students spend at LTC, which typically translates into more services sought, more tutoring, more use of the library resources, and completion. In turn, such student engagement enhances success, and tends to create a campus life and feel. In looking at enrollment data, about half the students are full-time students, and LTC is currently predominantly set up as a commuter college. Therefore, taking a broad look at what would make learning fun and engaging may be key to enhancing retention and success.

We are diligently pursuing LTC becoming the quintessential player in the economic and workforce development of Crawford County. Toward this goal, we are proposing to the LTC Foundation, Crawford County Development Association (CCDA) and local businesses the creation of the Crawford County and Lincoln Trail Innovation Center (CLIC). This endeavor would couple an innovation workshop and a business incubator. In return, this would allow members of the community and PK-20 students to channel their creativity and develop their design, engineering, innovation, and inventive skills. The driving force is centered on the abundance of creative talents in Crawford County, whereas opportunities for these talents to be expressed and reared are scarce. The CLIC Innovation Workshop will include classes in creativity, safety and improvisation, and innovation, in addition to spaces dedicated to the hands-on activities in visual arts, manufacturing, information technology, and design. Moreover, the CLIC Business Incubator will offer classes in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, workplace skills, or business development, in addition to assisting in planning, business pitches, marketing tactics and other such management needs.

In line with the workforce development efforts, Dean Todd and I are working with the CCDA and the leadership at the Robinson Hershey plant to implement a training program that introduces 11th and 12th grade students to the manufacturing world. The intent is to create exploration opportunities for youth, and future worker exposure for businesses. Our vision is to develop two certificates that stack and lead to AAS degrees, in addition to entry into the workforce.

Dean Todd and I met with local K-12 districts to discuss possible alignments that create pathways into the workforce as well as transfer. This effort is in conjunction with those of Dr. Roger Eddy on behalf of IECC. Our focus currently is on why county-wide collaboration is important, and how it benefits local students and employers. All school districts showed high interest in an alignment with LTC to create seamless pathways for students. Among other pathways of interest are: manufacturing, healthcare, teacher preparation, STEM/Engineering, visual and performing arts, telecom and IT.

LTC is a partner with the community, local businesses, organizations, and institutions. And we will continue to lead through innovative education and workforce development.

Dr. Zahi Atallah  
President  
Lincoln Trail College