

# VIEW FROM THE VALLEY

VOLUME 18 - ISSUE 01

MAGAZINE

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT  
ORIENTATION  
NEW COACHING STAFF  
AND MORE!



The ones  
who are **crazy**  
**enough** to  
think they  
can change  
the world,  
are the ones  
**who do**

STEVE JOBS

A young man with short brown hair, wearing sunglasses and a red polo shirt, is smiling and giving two thumbs up. He is wearing a black watch on his left wrist. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green trees and a white fence.

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As I sit here typing away in a bedroom full of new bedding and moving boxes for my future apartment up in Normal, IL, my mind is reminding myself of one question: “WHAT IS HAPPENING?”

Well, what is happening? In August, I'm moving to live in an apartment with 2-3 other girls and start a new chapter of my life in Bloomington/Normal, IL. I plan to earn my Bachelor's in Arts at Illinois State University with a major in Journalism. Am I excited? Yes! Am I perpetually nervous and freaked out about all of these new changes? YES!

However, if there's one lesson I've learned about life, it's this: change is uncomfortable. Yet, the un-comfortability of change has followed me my whole life. I've moved and started new schools plenty of times. I've made friends, lost friends, gained new friends, then had to say goodbye to friends again. I've switched up my major multiple times. I went from graduating high school to graduating from community college—and, in two years (I hope), I'll graduate from university! Gosh, in the next couple of weeks, life will be a huge adjustment—but I am excited (and cautiously nervous) about what is to come.

I want to thank Jonathan Leach for allowing me to express my thoughts in these monthly VFTV editors' notes. They're fun! Jonathan has been a great boss and friend to me. I hope his writing will continue to spark and inform readers everywhere!

I have loved writing for VFTV, and I am happy I was given this opportunity to write about employees and on-campus events/programs/opportunities. Now, I must spread my wings at another educational institution. I won't ever forget the love and great memories from the WVC community.

Although change is uncomfortable, it's what keeps me and other humans moving toward the next big thing. So—without further ado—change the page, flip the page, switch to the next page (however you do it), and read on to the next best story!

This is Maggee, signing off ♥

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As we bid farewell to the sunny days of summer and embrace the arrival of August, we at WVC are filled with a mix of emotions. It's that bittersweet time of year when we are both sad to see summer go and excited to welcome back our faculty and students for another amazing fall semester.

We take pride in our community of learners, educators, and staff who bring life and vibrancy to our campus. It's heartwarming to see familiar faces returning, eager to begin new academic pursuits.

While the carefree days of summer might be fading away, the sense of camaraderie and excitement that accompanies the beginning of the fall semester fills our hearts with enthusiasm.

So, dear readers, as we enjoy the last bit of summer, let's also look forward to the new academic year with eagerness and optimism. We are excited to welcome back our faculty and students and start another amazing fall semester at WVC.

Wishing you all a wonderful end to the summer and a successful and enriching semester ahead!

Read on!

*Jonathan Leach*



# UPCOMING EVENTS

*August 16, 2023*

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New Student Orientation

*August 17, 2023*

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First Day of Fall Semester

*August 23, 2023*

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Lady Warriors Soccer

*August 26, 2023*

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Lady Warriors Soccer

Be sure to follow us on social media for event reminders, game schedule changes, Student activities, and more!

# ORIENTATION

The excitement of starting college is a mix of emotions, from anticipation to anxiety. At WVC the journey begins with New Student Orientation, a crucial event that eases the transition into campus life. This year's orientation will be held on August 16th, the day before classes start, after careful consideration to strike a balance between confidence-building time and practical preparation.

Selecting the ideal day for New Student Orientation has always been challenging. On one hand, students need time to acclimate and feel confident before starting their academic journey. On the other hand, for out-of-town students, it's essential to ensure they arrive on campus in time. This year, the orientation is strategically scheduled for the day before classes, allowing students to get acquainted with the campus, set up resources, and receive valuable insights just before starting classes.

The primary goal is to set students up for both academic and social success. Collaboration among various departments is key to achieving this. Partnerships with financial aid, the athletic director, international students' office, advisors, and retention staff ensure comprehensive coverage of topics students often find challenging throughout the semester.



The collaborative approach also encourages students to build connections early on. This support network becomes invaluable when issues arise during the academic year. Whether students need academic assistance, community connections, or information on university policies, the orientation ensures they know who to turn to for help.

Moreover, New Student Orientation embraces the diversity of our incoming students. We welcome students with various backgrounds. Some have taken classes with us before and need a refresher, while others are transfer students seeking new opportunities. We also embrace those with degrees who are returning for a transition into new fields. New Student Orientation caters to the needs of all incoming students, providing a supportive environment for everyone.

By emphasizing both academic and social aspects of campus life, New Student Orientation strives to instill confidence, foster a sense of belonging, and provide essential tools to excel in academics and beyond. With a diverse and inclusive community, students embark on their college journey ready for success and growth throughout their time at WVC.

# PUT ME IN COACH

Wabash Valley College is experiencing a powerful transformation with the addition of three remarkable coaches who are poised to reshape the athletic landscape. The college has proudly welcomed Terrance McGee, Rachel Refenes, and Jade Montgomery, each bringing unique experiences, expertise, and a shared passion for excellence to their respective teams.

Terrance McGee, a seasoned basketball player and coach, has been appointed as the new head men's basketball coach at Wabash Valley College. His impressive track record as a player and mentor ensures a dynamic future for the Warrior basketball program. McGee's commitment to building a culture of excellence on and off the court aligns seamlessly with WVC's values. McGee's coaching journey includes roles at SIU-Edwardsville and Milwaukee Panthers, and his contributions to SIU-Carbondale's recruiting efforts were instrumental in a remarkable 22-win season. With a focus on daily competition and rigorous preparation, McGee aims to equip his players to face any challenge head-on, forging a team that's ready to conquer any opponent.

Rachel Refenes, a coach with NCAA Division I experience and a professional playing background, has taken the helm as the head volleyball coach at Wabash Valley College. Her dedication to empowering athletes to excel in both athletics and academics is setting a new standard for the Warrior volleyball program. Refenes' impactful coaching journey spans Binghamton University, Rutgers University, and a successful tenure at Lehigh Carbon Community College. Refenes' deep understanding of the game is rooted in her experience as a standout player at Ball State, where she earned all-conference honors and an honorable mention NCAA All-American distinction. Her passion for fostering a positive

experience for her players aligns seamlessly with WVC's commitment to holistic development, ensuring that Warrior volleyball players thrive both on and off the court.

Jade Montgomery's triumphant return to Wabash Valley College as an esteemed coach marks a full-circle journey of excellence. Having played two impactful years at WVC, including a standout sophomore season that earned her 3rd team All-American recognition, Montgomery's connection to the college runs deep. After continuing her career at Eastern Illinois University, her path came full circle when she joined Wabash Valley's coaching staff in August of 2022. In a remarkable turn of events, Montgomery assumed the role of interim head coach for the spring season, showcasing her leadership and coaching prowess. Her dedication to her alma mater's softball program is undeniable, and her recent appointment as the new Softball Head Coach solidifies her role as a driving force behind the team's success.

The triumvirate of Terrance McGee, Rachel Refenes, and Jade Montgomery represents a new dawn for Wabash Valley College athletics. As each coach brings their distinct expertise and unwavering dedication to their teams, a shared vision of fostering excellence, character, and resilience unites them. Together, they are shaping a legacy of achievement, mentorship, and empowerment, propelling Wabash Valley's athletes toward greater heights on and off the field.





# MUSIC CAMP



of these instruments but also fostered a sense of camaraderie among the attendees. As the day progressed, participants split into smaller groups to explore individual instruments such as the violin, guitar, drums, piano, trumpet, saxophone, bass guitar, and even vocal lessons.

The culmination of the camp was a concert held on the final day, featuring guest performers Tony Booth and Dotsy Dwyer. Instructors also took the stage to demonstrate their skills! Some of the camp's talented students even had the chance to perform, demonstrating the progress made during their time at camp.

The concert not only provided a platform for showcasing musical talents but also served as a way to give back to the camp. Donations collected during the performance will be reinvested to enhance the music camp experience for future participants, ensuring an even more enriching program next year.

A new chapter in musical exploration unfolded as the first-ever music camp, under the guidance of Dennis Stroughmatt and directed by Doug Hawf, brought together a diverse group of 41 participants ranging from ages 6 to 80. This unique event provided an opportunity for attendees to delve into the world of music, learn new instruments, and create lasting memories.

The camp kicked off each day with dulcimer and ukulele classes, setting the tone for a journey of musical discovery. These sessions not only introduced campers to the basics





# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

MAGGEE BLEYER

Robert Conn is the Dean of Instruction at WVC. As the Dean, Robert is involved with the campus' leadership, values, needs, and

mission. Robert serves on the Chancellor's Cabinet, the Deans Committee, and the Illinois Articulation Initiative Business Panel, and holds other multiple committee chairperson appointments.

Robert was born and raised in Mt. Carmel. To further his Industrial Design career in 1993, Robert achieved his Associate's in Science from WVC and his Bachelor's in Arts from Southern Illinois University of Carbondale. Over time, he became interested in educational teaching and learning. In 1997, he landed a full-time faculty position in Indianapolis. Later on, he took teaching design and engineering courses which amounted to his earned Master's in Science in Management from Oakland City University in 2005.

Robert first served as the Dean of Instruction at Lincoln Trail College in 2013 before being selected as the Dean of Instruction at WVC in 2015.

"Being selected as Dean of Instruction at Wabash Valley College in 2015 has afforded me the ability to make a positive impact on my hometown while implementing a vision that embraces the revolutionary transformation occurring in higher education," Robert expressed.

Robert reminds his readers about IECC's five main values:

- Stewardship. "Accepting our responsibility to be good stewards of the public trust, we will sensibly use our financial, human, and physical resources to achieve our mission."
- Responsibility. "Encouraging personal growth and learning through leadership, citizenship, and accountability."
- Integrity. "Providing an environment where people are encouraged and empowered to do the right thing in their work and interactions with others."
- Respect. "Recognizing and appreciating our similarities and others demonstrate mutual regard for others through our words and actions."
- Accessibility. "Providing access to a high-quality college education for everyone who seeks one, while providing the support needed to facilitate the attainment of academic and professional goals."

Robert is continuously impressed with WVC's assessments and rankings. For example, in 2021, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program named Wabash Valley College as one of 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

"Being the student advocate on campus," Robert said, "helps me fulfill the mission of the college: deliver exceptional education and services to improve the lives of our students and to strengthen our communities."



# ALL-AMERICAN HAUL

The athletic year of 2022-23 proved to be yet another remarkable chapter in the annals of Wabash Valley College sports. The achievements extended beyond the six dedicated Warrior and Lady Warrior teams, as the spotlight shone brightly on four exceptional student-athletes who earned the esteemed title of NJCAA All-Americans.

Among these accomplished athletes, two distinguished individuals secured a place on the prestigious First Team, while another claimed a well-deserved spot on the Second Team. Additionally, one remarkable talent earned an honorable mention, underscoring the college's legacy of sporting excellence. In fact, this accomplishment marks the sixth consecutive year that WVC proudly boasts a First Team All-American selection, a testament to the unwavering commitment to athletic prowess.

## SHAULANA WAGNER

Women's Basketball - First Team

A dominant 5-foot-10 sophomore guard, Shaulana, secured a coveted spot on the First Team. Averaging 19.9 points per game, she propelled the 12th-ranked Lady Warriors to their seventh consecutive NJCAA Division I national tournament. Her pinnacle moment arrived with a record-setting 47-point performance against nationally-ranked Three Rivers during the ESPN Game of the Week at Spencer Sports Center. Wagner's illustrious two-year career concluded with a total of 1,000 points.

## NICKLAS WILLIAMS

Baseball - First Team

Nicklas, a standout 6-foot sophomore, earned his place on the First Team All-American roster. With an impressive .482 batting average, he claimed the top spot among the nation's hitters. His exceptional skills shone in the Juco World

Series, boasting a remarkable .667 batting average and securing a well-deserved spot on the all-tourney team. As a key player for the third-ranked Warriors, Nicklas led in home runs (15), runs batted in (102), and his remarkable .482 batting average. His exceptional talent has earned him a spot at Michigan State, a testament to his promising future.

## RICHARD BONOMOLO, Jr.

Baseball - Second Team

Richard, a 5-11 freshman, earned a spot on the Second Team. He showcased his versatility with a strong .449 batting average, seven home runs, and 62 RBIs. Richard's remarkable speed led the 57-13 Warriors with 43 stolen bases, highlighting his prowess on the base paths. His exceptional performance sets the stage for a promising return to Wabash Valley in the upcoming season.

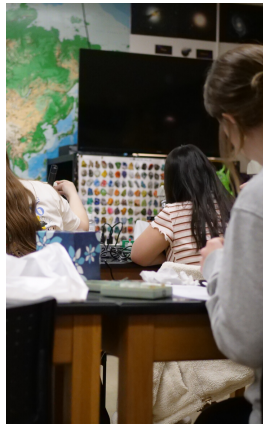
## BROOKLYN GRAY

Women's Basketball - Honorable Mention

Brooklyn made her mark in women's basketball, earning an Honorable Mention All-American distinction. As a 5-11 freshman forward, her prowess on the court was evident, contributing to the Lady Warriors' impressive 31-2 season record. Averaging 13.9 points per game, she delivered standout performances, including seven games with 20 points or more.

These exceptional student-athletes, embodying dedication, skill, and determination, have etched their names in the college's history as NJCAA All-Americans, further solidifying the institution's commitment to fostering excellence in both sports and character. As the college looks to the future, these achievements serve as a testament to the enduring spirit of athletic achievement that courses through the veins of Wabash Valley College.





**ASPEN PRIZE**  
 FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXCELLENCE  
 THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

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**TOP 150**

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**2021**



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VIEW  
FROM  
THE  
VALLEY

