

NETWORK



JANUARY 2024



HIGHLIGHTS



LTC FBLA to serve as IRS VITA location to help community with taxes



LTC FBLA students travel to Career Connections Conference



LTC hosts 260 educators for a professional development event

LTC RANKED AS #1 ONLINE AGS PROGRAM

Intelligent.com, a trusted resource for program rankings and higher education planning, awarded Lincoln Trail College another top national ranking. LTC was ranked number one in their Best Online Associate in General Studies Degree Programs of 2024. This comes on the heels of LTC earning their number 8 ranking in the Best Community Colleges of 2024 and number 6 as the Best Community Colleges in Illinois.

"Receiving the number one ranking from Intelligent is a tremendous honor and a testament to the emphasis that Lincoln Trail College is putting on all online courses and programs," said LTC President and Vice-Chancellor of Institutional Outreach Tona Ambrose. "We have seen a dramatic change in education since the pandemic, and a significant rise in the number of courses we deliver online. This ranking gives evidence to the fact that the course design, educational content, and student learning outcomes have remained the highest priority and highlights Lincoln Trail College's adaptability and resilience in responding to these changes."

Intelligent.com's institutional rankings, which are

set apart from other conventional ratings, are deemed the benchmark of academic evaluations for online and hybrid programs. An exclusive methodology is used to rank each institution on a scale from 0 to 100 across six categories. Evaluations are based on quantitative measures such as academic quality, graduation rate, cost and ROI, and student resources. With top picks that are highly regarded, affordable, and offer the tools and resources students need to successfully graduate and excel in their fields.

Lincoln Trail College earned an Intelligent Score of 99.16 and was the only college in Illinois to earn a spot on the list of 39 colleges.

"I believe that this is an affirmation that our goals, initiatives, and commitment to the IECC mission are being achieved," said Ambrose. "This ranking in online education implies that Lincoln Trail College is effectively meeting the needs and expectations of online learners and suggests a student-centered approach that prioritizes accessible, engaging, and effective online learning experiences. The way that this happens is via the dedicated faculty and staff who work together towards these common goals. Our faculty members are not just educators; they are mentors and partners in the educational journey of every student. Their passion for teaching, expertise in their respective fields, and dedication to student success have played a pivotal role in earning this recognition."

Intelligent.com provides unbiased research to help students make informed decisions about higher education programs. The website offers curated guides that include the best degree programs and information about financial aid, internships, and even study strategies. Intelligent.com is a trusted source among students and prospective students with comprehensive, user-friendly guides and hundreds of program rankings.



**UPCOMING
FEBRUARY
EVENTS**

- 1** **Phi Theta Kappa Blood Drive**
10 a.m.-2 p.m., Learning Commons
- LTC Foundation Concert Series: Chicago Rewired**
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 6** **Dinner Etiquette Class**
6:30 p.m., Lincoln Room
- 8** **FAFSA Night**
4-7 p.m., Williams Hall 112
- Basic Sign Language Class Begins**
6 p.m., Learning Commons
- Sociology of Cults Class Begins**
6 p.m., Learning Commons
- 19** **COLLEGE CLOSED - Presidents' Day**
- 20** **Marshall Junior High Music Visit**
1:30-7 p.m., Various Locations
- 22** **LTC Foundation Meeting**
12 p.m., Lincoln Room
- 27** **Growing Your Garden From Seed Class Begins**
6 p.m., Greenhouse
- 28** **Eagleton Book Club**
6 p.m., Learning Commons

Ambrose believes that this recognition should show prospective students that LTC is an excellent choice. "This speaks volumes to the quality of education that students can expect here. LTC is committed to helping all students, both traditional and non-traditional, and whether students are looking for programs within our Career and Technical Educational programs or taking general education courses to prepare to transfer on to a four-year university, our Student Services staff is ready to help. Choosing Lincoln Trail College means choosing a path to success."

She says that the rankings will also help motivate the College to continue striving for success. "Our goal is to meet the needs of students where they are at and we will move forward from here with ongoing efforts to enhance both traditional and online education and maintain the high standards that led to this recognition."

FBLA OFFERING TAX PREPARATION HELP



Lincoln Trail College students will help others with their tax preparation this year. The Future Business Leaders of America Collegiate program at LTC is participating in the Internal Revenue Service's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, which offers free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals.

The VITA program has operated for over 50 years. VITA sites offer free tax help to people who need assistance in preparing their tax returns. The program helps people who generally make \$60,000 or less, persons with disabilities, and limited English-speaking taxpayers.

"The FBLA is excited to offer an IRS VITA Tax Office this spring," says program advisor Amie Mayhall. "Our goal for the 2023 tax season is to prepare 50 returns."

Mayhall says they first learned about the program from Barb Shimer, who learned of the program in Knox County, Indiana. Mayhall says she presented it to FBLA and they decided it was a perfect fit for a community service project.

Students will become certified tax preparers for the VITA program. They will complete the intake interview process and then complete the taxes with help and advice as needed. The taxes will be reviewed by Harlei Payne or Mayhall and then the students will walk the taxpayer through their tax return and give them their copies to take home.

LTC will operate its VITA Tax Office as an appointment-based dropoff and pickup site. People can make an appointment by calling Mayhall at 618-546-2229 or by emailing fblavitaoffice@gmail.com. She says they will be open for appointments from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Fridays in Williams Hall Room 119. Taxpayers will make an appointment, bring their paperwork to their appointment, and go through an intake interview. Mayhall says the students will scan their paperwork and complete their taxes by the next Friday.

The VITA service is free of charge to the community. It can also be used by students and employees who are interested in the service.

Mayhall says this is going to be a valuable service for both the community and the students who are helping. "Many citizens do not feel comfortable or confident to prepare their taxes. Our students will learn how to complete taxes, prepare several returns this tax year, and be able to put into real life the topics they have learned. This could lead to a side business, a career, or just more confidence in preparing their returns in the future."

FBLA PARTICIPATES IN CAREER CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE



Lincoln Trail College Future Business Leaders of America-Collegiate members traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina to participate in the FBLA's Career Connections Conference. The event is focused on connecting talented individuals with leading employers and helping them learn what it takes to succeed in the job market. The conference includes information on interviewing techniques, building a personal brand, and how to navigate an early career.

FBLA advisor Amie Mayhall says the students had a wonderful chance to network, bond with each other, explore career-related topics, and have fun.

She says the students had the opportunity to tour businesses like First Citizens Bank, Dunhill Hotel, BDO, and the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center. The featured keynote speaker was Tammy DeBoer, the president of Harris Teeter Grocery Stores. There was also an FBLA Collegiate Graduate panel.

Students had the opportunity to participate in many different breakout sessions, including The Employment Relationship: Employer and Employee Obligations; Interview Success; Defining Your Personal Brand; Landing the Job; and How to be Successful at Your First Corporate Job.

The students also participated in a Business Case Competition. They are put in teams to review a case student and then present their findings to a panel of judges. The case study incorporates many aspects of business, including economics, strategic analysis, international business, entrepreneurship, and marketing. Mayhall says she strategically structured the teams so there were more experienced case presenters with students who didn't have experience because she wanted each student to feel they had a good presentation and had some pride in their team.

Mayhall says it is important for students to participate in experiences like this in college. "My philosophy of education includes a very active learning environment and hands-on experience. Events such as this conference allow students to get out of the classroom and hear from other speakers, experience other cultures and have their eyes opened to opportunities outside of our local community. I love to experience these learning opportunities with students and get to know the students who choose to participate on a much deeper level. I hope the students come back with confidence in the job interviewing process and advice to help them succeed in their careers. I know that they have come back with stronger friendships and lots of memories."

LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE HOSTS TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY



Lincoln Trail College served as the host of the Regional Office of Education's Crawford County Teachers Institute on January 3. The event brought 260 Crawford County teachers and administrators to the College to help them kick-off 2024.

"Hosting our Crawford County K-12 teachers and administrators for a day of professional development at Lincoln Trail College was the perfect way to kick off the new year and spring semester," said LTC President Tona Ambrose. "We were so grateful for the opportunity to collaborate and serve our local educators, which I think attests to LTC's desire and commitment to support our K-12 community. The ROE 12 and Crawford County School Leadership Teams did an exceptional job of organizing an engaging day of continuous learning, sharing best practices, and facilitating professional growth and it was a privilege to play a part in such a wonderful educational event."

The CCTI opened with keynote speaker, Dr. Todd Whitaker. He is a professor of educational leadership at the University of Missouri and professor emeritus at Indiana State University. Whitaker is one of the nation's leading authorities on staff motivation, teacher leadership, and principal effectiveness. He has written over 60 books, including the national best seller, *What Great Teachers Do Differently*.

From there, teachers had the choice of several different breakout sessions, including *Dealing with Challenging Behaviors*, *Artificial Intelligence*, *Compassion Fatigue or Burnout: Are You at Risk?*, *Your First Years*, *SLANT Reading*, *PaCE Framework Overview*, *Elementary Technology/Coding*, and *Using Your Resources Wisely: How Do We Help Our Students?* Additionally, the teachers and administrators got the opportunity to tour the Crawford County Recreation Center.

LTC OFFERS DINNER ETIQUETTE CLASS



If you've ever wondered which fork you should be using, you might want to take Lincoln Trail College's Dinner Etiquette Community Education class. The course is designed to help equip people with the knowledge and confidence needed to navigate formal dining situations with ease and grace.

In an era where networking and social interactions play a pivotal role in personal and professional success, Lincoln Trail College recognizes the importance of instilling polished manners and etiquette. The Dinner Etiquette Class, taught by Tona Ambrose, is a response to the increasing demand for individuals to possess refined social skills in both business and personal settings.

Participants will receive hands-on training in a formal dining setting. Ambrose will guide participants through various aspects of formal dining, including table settings, proper use of utensils, and navigating conversations during meals. The class is tailored to address contemporary scenarios, covering everything from business dinners and networking events to social gatherings and interviews.

Registration for Dinner Etiquette on February 6 at 6:30 p.m. is now open. People interested in registering can call 618-544-8657. The cost of the course is \$30 and includes a meal.

The class comes on the heels of a December etiquette luncheon offered to students from Oblong High School. The students enjoyed a multi-course meal at the Statesmen Grill and learned about proper table manners and etiquette along the way.

After the luncheon, the OHS students toured Lincoln Trail College and heard from different instructors about the programs. The etiquette luncheon with Oblong High School has been an annual event for several years.



LTC OFFERS SOCIOLOGY OF CULTS CLASS



Lincoln Trail College is offering a new Community Education class, Sociology of Cults, offering participants a unique opportunity to explore the intricate dynamics of cults, their leadership structures, and effective strategies for countering the narratives that may ensnare individuals.

Instructor Joshua Pack will lead the class, which fosters critical thinking and a deeper understanding of these social phenomena. Participants will learn about the historical and sociological aspects of cults, and the characteristics and motivations of cult leaders, and will equip participants with effective tools to counter the narratives propagated by cults.

Sociology of Cults is open to community members of all backgrounds and interests. Whether driven by personal curiosity or a desire to contribute to the well-being of others, participants will find valuable insights in the class.

The class takes place February 8, 15, and 22 from 6-8 p.m. Students can register by calling 618-544-8657. The cost of the course is \$25.

Sociology of Cults is offered through Lincoln Trail College's Community Education program, which provides a variety of non-credit classes for the community. Other classes available now include Dinner Etiquette, Basic Sign Language, Growing Your Garden from Seed, and Cake Decorating.

LTC OFFERS BASICS OF SIGN LANGUAGE CLASS

A popular community education class is returning to Lincoln Trail College in February. Basic Sign Language will be offered on Thursdays February 8-29 from 6-8 p.m.

Led by Tony Austin, the class covers the basics of American Sign Language. Students will learn the essentials like the alphabet and counting to days of the week, basic greetings, and everyday phrases. Students will get the chance to gain confidence in communicating with sign language through hands-on practice.

Registration for Basic Sign Language is open now. People interested in taking the class can call 618-544-8657. The cost of the course is \$45.



LTC STUDENT-ATHLETES COMBINE FOR 3.39 GPA IN FALL SEMESTER



LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE 2023 ATHLETICS FALL REPORT CARD

SPORT	TEAM GPA
SOFTBALL	3.69
VOLLEYBALL	3.67
WOMEN'S SOCCER	3.55
MEN'S SOCCER	3.51
MEN'S BASKETBALL	3.35
BASEBALL	3.26
GOLF	3.24
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL	2.85
LTC ATHLETICS OVERALL	3.39

20 CONSECUTIVE SEMESTERS WITH AN OVERALL GPA ABOVE 3.0.



For 20 consecutive semesters, Lincoln Trail College student-athletes have combined for a GPA above 3.0. In the Fall 2023 semester, the athletic department combined for a 3.39 GPA.

"I'm incredibly proud of what our student-athletes do in the classroom," said Athletic Director and Volleyball Coach Dana Goodwin. "This is one of the most successful semesters we've had academically. This is exactly the kind of outcome we strive for."

Four teams had a combined GPA above 3.5 led by the softball team's 3.69 GPA. The volleyball team had a 3.67 GPA, the women's soccer team had a 3.55 GPA, and the men's soccer team had a 3.51 GPA. The men's basketball team's GPA was 3.35, the baseball team had a 3.26 GPA, the golf team had a 3.24 GPA, and the women's basketball team had a 2.85 GPA.

"This shows that our student-athletes are working hard in the classroom," said Goodwin. "It is also a team effort. We have excellent faculty and staff members who are dedicated to making sure all of our students are successful. It is clear that they are invested in the lives of our students and want to see them succeed."

**FEBRUARY 1
LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE**

**CHICAGO
REWired**

— THE PREMIER —
CHICAGO TRIBUTE BAND

FOR TICKETS:
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ACE THE MONOLOGUE IN SIX EASY STEPS!
MASTERCLASS WITH JULIO AUGUSTIN
JANUARY 26, 6-8 PM, DEMENT AUDITORIUM

A FREE MASTERCLASS FOR ACTORS AGES HIGH SCHOOL AND OLDER LED BY ACTOR, DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER, AND AUTHOR JULIO AUGUSTIN. THERE IS A LIMIT OF 30 PARTICIPANTS.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT LTC THEATER DIRECTOR TAYLOR DAHLBERG AT dahlberg@iecc.edu.

**The Arts at
LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE**

SHULL NAMED GRAC FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR



Two Lincoln Trail College volleyball players were honored by the Great Rivers Athletic Conference. Hannah Saucerman (left, number 10) and Faith Shull (far left, number 6) were named to the GRAC's All-Conference team while Shull was also named the conference's Freshman of the Year.

"I am beyond excited that Hannah Saucerman and Faith Shull both made the GRAC All-Conference team this season," said LTC Head Coach Dana Goodwin. "They are both so deserving!"

Saucerman, a sophomore setter from Bicknell, Ind., was 15th in the nation with 1,032 assists. Her 8.97 assists per set was 14th in the nation. She added 272 digs and 27 aces for the Lady Statesmen.

"I am eager to see Hannah continue her success at the next level," said Goodwin.

Shull, a freshman middle hitter from Hidalgo, Ill., was 9th in the country with 50 solo blocks. She had 83 total blocks for the season. She added 253 kills, 613 total attacks, and 345.5 points.

"It is such an incredible honor that Faith was named Freshman of the Year. I am so proud of everything she has accomplished this season."

Earlier this fall, Saucerman and Shull were named to the All-Region 24 Second Team.

EVERYONE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND STATESMEN DAY

Lincoln Trail College is hosting an event on January 20 called Statesmen Day and is encouraging people to come to the College to learn what's new at LTC.

Statesmen Day begins at 11:30 a.m. when participants will check-in. From there, they'll tour the college and enjoy a pregame pizza party. Additionally, participants will get free Lincoln Trail College swag and admission to LTC's basketball games against Rend Lake College that afternoon.

Statesmen Day is free and open to anyone. People who want to attend can register by visiting the Statesmen Day event online at <https://www.iecc.edu/ltc/statesmen-day>.



FEBRUARY ATHLETIC EVENTS

Baseball

2	at Northwest-Shoals CC	12:00
3	at Northwest-Shoals CC (DH)	11:00
9	at Georgia Highlands College (DH)	12:00
10	at Georgia Highlands College (DH)	12:00
16	at Jackson State CC	1:00
17	at Jackson State CC (DH)	12:00
20	vs. East Central (at Carterville, IL)	2:00
23	at Cleveland State CC	3:00
24	at Cleveland State CC (DH)	12:00

Men's Basketball

3	Olney Central College	3:00
7	at Southwestern Illinois College	7:00
10	John A. Logan College	3:00
13	at Greenville JV	TBA
17	Wabash Valley College	3:00
21	at Kaskaskia College	6:00
24	at Rend Lake College	3:00
28	Vincennes University	7:00

Softball

17	at Northeast Mississippi CC	7:30
18	vs Three Rivers CC (at Booneville, MS)	TBA
18	at Northeast Mississippi CC	2:30

Women's Basketball

3	Olney Central College	1:00
7	at Southwestern Illinois College	5:00
10	John A. Logan College	1:00
13	at Greenville JV	7:00
17	Wabash Valley College	1:00
24	at Rend Lake College	1:00
28	Vincennes University	5:00

PITTMAN COMMITS TO MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE



Lincoln Trail College left-handed pitcher Jackson Pittman will continue his college career at Mississippi College after graduating from LTC. He announced his commitment on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Extremely excited to announce that I'll be continuing my athletic and academic career at Mississippi College. Thank ya Lord."

Statesmen coach Collin Maynard believes that Pittman will make an immediate impact not just on the field, but as a leader.

"Jackson has been an impact pitcher for us since the day he stepped on campus. He competes every time he gets on the mound and attacks hitters consistently. His best pitch is his curveball which consistently gets swings and misses from any hitter he faces. Jackson is not only an outstanding player but also an incredible human being. He is always willing to give back to the community and put the team before himself. He has been a leader on our team this year and constantly leads by example."

Maynard says that Pittman has seen improvements in all aspects of pitching while at LTC. He says Pittman improves his command every day and the velocity of his fastball continues to climb.

He expects Pittman to be a strong contributor to the Statesmen this spring. "He has shown the ability to pitch in the biggest moments of a game. Last Spring, he pitched in one of the biggest moments of the season which resulted in a 9th inning save in the region tournament to keep our season alive."

As a freshman, Pittman appeared in 14 games for the Statesmen and struck out 21 batters in 24.1 innings of work.

HAYES COMMITS TO UNIVERSITY OF NORTHWESTERN OHIO



Lincoln Trail College volleyball player Jaylee Hayes will continue her college career at the University of Northwestern Ohio.

"From the moment Jaylee first came to Lincoln Trail, I knew she would go on to do big things," said LTC Coach Dana Goodwin. "She brings so much power and energy to the game and is a true leader on the court. I am very excited for her and eager to see the impact she makes at UNOH."

For her two-year career at LTC, the outside hitter had 611 kills and 581 digs. Hayes added 103 aces, 41 blocks, and 17 assists.