



March 2024

# The VOYAGER

The Frontier Community College Newsletter

## New Signage in Learning Commons



Recently installed lettering in Learning Commons

Meagher Sign and Graphics installed the updated lettering to reflect the name change from the Learning Resource Center to the Learning Commons. In the Fall of 2023, IECC designated the 'Learning Commons', a space to provide a supportive environment that empowers students to overcome challenges, achieve their academic goals, and develop the skills necessary in both their educational and professional endeavors. Learning Commons components consist of library resources, tutoring, testing services, and disability services. New signage was installed in Cox Hall to indicate the change. Director of Learning Commons Lori Noe explained the reason for the name change. "The name Learning Commons was chosen because we see this as an academic hub. Tutoring, testing, library services, and accommodations all fall under this umbrella, so the name Learning Commons represents this conglomeration," said Noe.

## Upcoming Events

### March

29 Colleges Closed.  
Spring Holiday

### April

8 Solar Eclipse

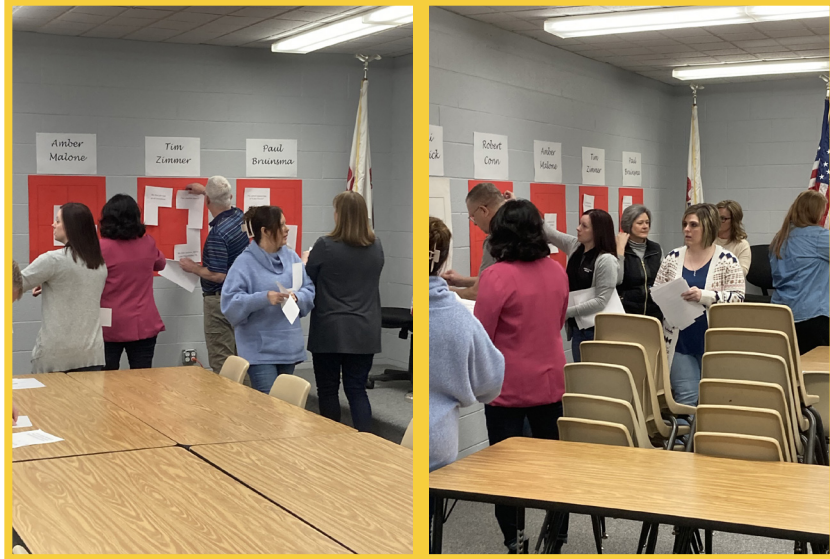
19 Last Day to Withdraw from  
Courses

20 Lineman Rodeo

### Bobcat Den Hours

Monday-Friday  
7:30AM-4:30PM

# Inaugural Academic Affairs Retreat



Academic Affairs group participating in a team-building activity

On Friday, March 8th, the Academic Affairs group held their first meeting at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center. FCC President and IECC Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs Jay Edgren welcomed the group and went over the day's agenda before the kick-off team-building activity.

Next, a video was presented of Dr. Gower, who addressed the group and discussed the objective of Academic Affairs, including the collective understanding of mission-based decision making process(es) at IECC.

After Edgren spoke further on decision-making, along with the Academic Affairs philosophy/goals and updated organization chart, various other speakers followed such as Executive Director of HR Andrea McDowell to discuss hiring and CFO Ryan Hawkins to discuss the budget. Other topics under discussion included CETL purpose & initiatives led by Director Mike Conn, class scheduling by CAO Paul Bruinsma and Dean of Instruction Cyndi Boyce, and Transfer Pathways/ Degree Works by Director of Academic Advising & Records Jamie Carman.

To round out the day, Dean of B&I Sharmila Kakac gave a department update including specifics on Mining and Industrial Training and Emergency Preparedness.

IT Division Managers also addressed the group on the application of academic technology in courses as well as the tech plan moving forward.

Overall, the day consisted of team-building as well as valuable and informative discussions that helped for a collective understanding and confidence moving forward, according to Vice-Chancellor Edgren.

“The meeting was very informative. Dr. Gower’s message was inspirational and the various discussions that took place were a good starting point for the group. Overall, the first meeting for Academic Affairs was a tremendous success,” said Edgren.

# PTK Hosts Fundraiser for FCC Student/Family



PTK Advisor and FCC Faculty Linda Monge with FCC Students & PTK Members



Phi Theta Kappa hosted a taco bar/fundraiser to raise money for the family of an FCC student's family, who tragically lost their home in a fire. La Fuente Mexican Restaurant in Fairfield generously donated food to assist PTK with the fundraiser. PTK raised approximately \$1,000 for the family, and the participation of the FCC students, faculty & staff, and community members is another example of the continuous support and camaraderie between the college and community. PTK Advisor Linda Monge spoke about the collective effort it took to make the fundraiser successful. "We have such a great group of students who are always more than willing to lend a hand to help others, but also a community full of businesses and people who truly care about one another, and this was yet another example of that," said Monge.

## Spring Break Fun



A high-intensity pickleball game in the WDC




Derek Dunn Presenting Nursing Advisor Julie Bullard with the 3rd quarter employee recognition award

As students took the week off during spring break, FCC faculty and staff remained on campus but things were not 'business as usual'. Every year, the week of spring break is filled with fun activities on campus for the staff and faculty and this year was no different. Monday, a breakfast was provided in the Learning Commons before the quarterly employee recognition award was presented. On, Tuesday a pickleball game took place in the WDC as the crowd cheered on, ice cream in-hand. At the Thursday potluck, all of campus gathered to share some of their favorite dishes. In addition to these on-campus activities, volunteer opportunities were available throughout the week, as members of FCC assisted throughout the community at the food pantry as well as the senior citizen center. The week concluded with various departments holding meetings across the district including the Marketing team as well as Academic Affairs.

# Library BINGO Competition

The libraries of IECC continue to hold a BINGO competition among the four colleges, which will end as the month winds down. Patrons have cards to complete when they read a book from a particular genre. Each college will pull a winner from the completed cards at each respective campus at months end and give a prize away to the winner. The college who had the most cards turned in last year was Lincoln Trail, but the other three colleges are hoping to hold that title after this year. The four library administrators across the district were appreciative of the excitement and support from across campus. They plan to continue to work together on reading challenges in the future.

**IECC Libraries Present...**

Psychological Thriller	Christmas Theme	A new to you author	A Classic Novel	Choose a book because of the cover
A book set during winter	Title begins with "O"	Read Any Book	Try an Audio book	One Word Title
Read a book written by a woman	A Banned Book		Turned into a Movie	Historical Fiction or Non-Fiction
A Memoir/ Biography	Out of your comfort zone	A Romance	Based on a true story	Book recommended by celebrity book club
Read a book with a blue cover	A book with a number in the title	Murder Mystery	A Bestseller	A book set in the past or future

**Winter Reading**

**B I N G O**

## District-Wide Nursing Program Success

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulations have released the 2023 national and state pass rates for the candidates who completed the NCLEX-RN and LPM examinations in the last five years.

Below are the list of the district improvements in comparison to the numbers from the previous year.

District wide improvements from 2022 to 2023 include:

- An RN pass rate of 88%, a 24% increase
- A PN pass rate of an impressive 98%, up 9%
- A completion rate of 61%, a 10% increase
- An employment rate up to an encouraging 93%, up 22%

One improvement that stood out above the rest, is the PN pass rate of 98%, which is more than 10% higher than state and national average.

The data marked a significant improvement in numbers district wide and illustrated the amount of hard-work and dedication made by the students, faculty, and staff of the nursing program(s) in the across IECC.



## Student Spotlight

Bob Ellis is one of FCC's student ambassadors this semester. Bob is from Albion, IL, and attended Edwards County High School before attending FCC. Bob is pursuing an associate degree in science and arts and plans to further his education to ultimately become a teacher. Bob has always been very involved on campus and spoke about how being an ambassador is another way to do that. "Being a student ambassador is a great way to meet new people and stay involved on campus. It teaches you new skills and makes the community college experience so much more enjoyable," he said.



Student Ambassador Bob Ellis

## Title III Update

Student surveys in 2018 revealed a clear need for flexibility in course offerings to help students balance their college studies with work and life demands. The survey showed that two-thirds of FCC students were maintaining employment with an average number of hours worked per week of 32. Almost half of FCC students had children at home and about a third of FCC students with children were single parents. In those 2018 surveys, nearly three out of four FCC students indicated that one answer was for FCC to offer more online/hybrid courses.

In its application for the Title III Grant funding of the project, FCC set an ambitious goal of increasing its online and hybrid offerings steadily each year during the five-year grant. The benchmark for enrollment in the fifth year of the grant was a 12 percent increase over the baseline of 270. FCC Academic Advisor Kara Blanton reports that Fall 2023 data shows an enrollment of online/hybrid courses at FCC to be roughly 575 students. This represents an increase of 113 percent over the 2018 baseline, and a 50 percent increase over Fall 2022 enrollment.

Research has shown that high quality online/hybrid instruction is as effective as face-to-face instruction. Dambo & Kayli, 2018; Bowen, 2014; Liu et al, 2016; Ryan et al, 2016. Title III grant funding has enabled FCC to not only increase the number of courses offered in hybrid format, but to also dramatically increase the quality of those hybrid courses. Since the beginning of the grant, FCC has introduced evidence-based faculty training in effective practices of online teaching, Quality Matters standards, and an incredible faculty recording studio to assist instructors in creating outstanding educational content for their hybrid courses.

As the Title III Team begin the final approach to complete the last year of the grant program, FCC is set to grow its high-quality hybrid and online courses, fulfilling the vision of the grant to meet students where they are, offering quality courses to students who are encumbered with family and employment obligations.

# Business & Industry Update

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**Business and Industry (B&I):** B&I held the first Excel training course with new client, Frey Farms, which was a success and led to the scheduling of a follow-up.

A Lean Leadership training took place at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center with the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center.

B&I co-hosted the CEO Summit with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for the area CEO programs.

Meetings took place with the City of Albion to discuss OSHA safety and incumbent worker training.

In addition to the CEO Summit, SBDC Director Michelle Brooks conducted a 'How to Start a Small Business in Illinois' workshop in Mt. Carmel and Claire Vaughan hosted a Canva workshop at the Lawrence County Chamber.

**EP:** The Emergency Preparedness Department taught CPR to students in Red Hill, Flora, and Robinson High Schools in February. Classes were also held for IECC staff and faculty. Additionally, classes took place at businesses such as the Career Development Center and Brookstone Estates.

Fire science classes continued and EMT classes will begin this month in Flora.

**MIT:** The Mining and Industrial Training program added TCI Manufacturing out of Walnut, IL. TCI booked IECC through 2025.

