

## THE VIEW FROM THE VALLEY

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### WVC Transition Update

As we all know by now, COVID-19 has changed so much about the way we operate as an institution and as a society.

One thing that has not changed is our commitment to delivering exceptional education and services to our students and communities. With Thanksgiving Break signaling a transition for many students to an online learning format, we recognized a need to ensure that no student or professor would fall behind in this endeavor, so certain steps were taken to help both students and professors navigate the transition period.

Before the transition took place, WVC's Academic Success Center, Library and Student Senate partnered together to host an event entitled Survivor: Remote Learning Edition. The goal of the event was to help prepare students for schooling after Thanksgiving. Presentations were made concerning Entrata/Banner functionality, library resources and Office365.

Students were also reminded of a remote tutoring tool that was implemented back in April: TutorMatch. Across the district, students have access to a tutoring and e-learning platform developed by Brainfuse called TutorMatch. TutorMatch allows students to schedule online tutoring appointments through Canvas.

These tools were implemented as means of mitigating the chance of students falling behind academically as they transitioned to an online learning modality. However, this does not mean the transition has been without its challenges.

"We have faced all sorts of obstacles, and it's incredible what our faculty have done to help overcome those issues," said Dean of Instruction Robert Conn.

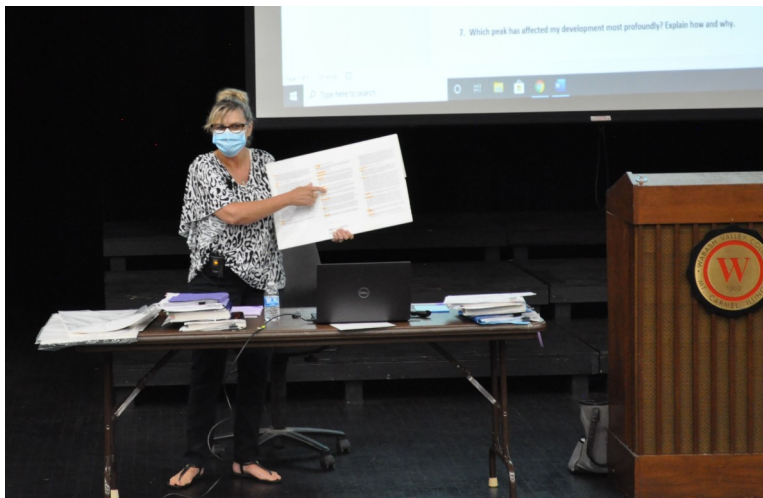
Professor of Social Services Ronda Hockgeiger noted that she had "problems with students not being able to submit assignments in Canvas. [She has] encouraged students to use Office365. If this does not work, [she has] them submit via email."

Hockgeiger stated that overall, transitioning has not been as difficult as she anticipated and has been smoother than she expected. This is due to the college's level of support throughout the semester and through the transition.

"The college has been supportive by providing information as we need it, as well as providing online tools and technology," said Hockgeiger.

Associate history professor Drew McMurray agreed that the provision of technology was invaluable.

"The IT Department at WVC replaced faculty desktop computers



Professor of Social Services Ronda Hockgeiger instructing from the Brubeck Theatre.

with laptop computers. The laptops provide faculty with the mobility and technological capability they need for remote instruction."

McMurray stated that the only unforeseen issue that he has dealt with during the transition relates to the use of Canvas Studio for lecture capture.

"While in my office, I have been able to record lectures without issue. However, when at home, I have lost two lectures during the saving process. To overcome this issue, I have simply come to the office," said McMurray.

McMurray noted that WVC learned a great deal following the statewide shutdown in the Spring.



Associate history professor Drew McMurray instructing from a temporary classroom set up this semester.

"Faculty members were much better prepared for the transition to full online instruction following this fall semester than they were in the spring. The spring transition

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## WVC Transition Update (Cont.)

was necessarily rushed and was done with little foresight. Of course, this is largely due to the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and how it affected every American this past spring."

After the Spring shutdown, instructors had a clearer understanding of what needed to be done with their classes, and heading into the Fall semester, faculty, staff and students alike all understood that there would be a transition to a more online learning format following Thanksgiving break.

According to McMurray, this prior knowledge was invaluable.

"I was able to tailor each of my classes in a way that would permit maximum content coverage so that learning objectives were met, whatever the modality of instruction. Moreover, I was able to adjust certain assignments, as necessary, to accommodate students completing the work online. Students are, in my estimation, now benefitting from the foresight and planning associated with the fall transition."

As McMurray suggests, WVC professors and their students were

able to prepare for the transition together thus diminishing the chances of any loss of student-learning outcomes.

WVC also brought on a retention specialist, Rannell Locke, to help assuage major dropouts over the course of the semester.

"Her efforts have had a tremendous impact on student success. It's nice for students to know that someone notices when they're gone," said Conn.

Locke has coordinated her efforts with professors, the Academic Success Center and other staff members to identify students that may be struggling and how the college could help them.

"This semester has reaffirmed, in my mind, the importance of 'meeting students where they are,'" said McMurray. "Over the course of the semester, I have had many students share with me that they had tested positive for COVID-19. Many others reached out to inform me that they were under quarantine.

In each instance, I was reminded that it is important for faculty mem-

bers to consider the circumstances in which students are working to attend class and learn. This semester has served as a reminder that students often face other obstacles and it is important for me to remain mindful of that fact."

While the transition may have been a heavy lift institutionally, Dean Conn stated that it could not have happened at a better time.

"The timing of this transition could not have been better. The number of COVID cases since Thanksgiving have spiked dramatically, and I'm sure that if our students were still here that we would see a spike in our numbers here too."

Despite the fact that many students would like to be on campus, Hockgeiger stated that those "students who wanted an education did the work. Most students were receptive to procedures put in place, adaptable to changes and followed the guidelines throughout the progression of this semester."

Hockgeiger has come to the conclusion that flexibility and endurance are some of the core and common strengths that WVC stu-

dents, faculty and staff have learned over the course of this semester. McMurray agrees with Hockgeiger's conclusion.

"Flexibility is invaluable. My sense is that faculty who have been flexible in their instructional and assessment strategies, their preparation and even their dispositions have been successful during the transition to online instruction as well as the entire semester.

Additionally, I believe that we have all been reminded of how fortunate we are. As an institution, IECC has the resources available to meet even the most unusual of challenges and yet is small and nimble enough do so in a manner that provides for autonomy and individual agency on the part of faculty members.

As a faculty member with friends who serve as faculty at other institutions of higher learning, I cannot think of one instance in which I would have traded places with those friends. The bureaucratic challenges and systematized approaches they have told me about have made me ever more grateful to be an IECC faculty member."

## WVC Fall Sports Brief

The fall sports season was dramatically altered due to COVID-19. The NJCAA earlier this summer revised its season lineup for the 2020-21 athletic season, and no regular-season competition will be held in any sport prior to Jan. 20, 2021.

Men's and women's basketball, and volleyball, will each have shortened seasons from January until April. Baseball and softball seasons will begin at about the same time, and women's soccer has been pushed back to a shortened April & May season. Whereas no regular-season competition has been allowed, WVC athletic teams have benefited from expanded pre-season contact days and a few scrimmages.

Athletic officials at WVC are busy putting together a plan of action utilizing state and NJCAA mitigation guidelines for the seasons ahead. They remain flexible in case those standards need to be altered as the seasons near. At the present time, schedules are being finalized for each sport.

The biggest Warrior news of this extended off-season has come in baseball. Former WVC baseball standout Mel Rojas, Jr. has been named the Most Valuable Player of the Korean Baseball Organization for the 2020 season. He led the KBO in two of the three Triple Crown categories. The announcement was made this week by the league. On top of the news concerning Mel Rojas, Jr., the WVC

baseball team was ranked #1 in the Nation (season ended by COVID).

Men's Basketball went 22-10 and finished 2nd in the GRAC. WVC moved into 1st place in All-Time NJCAA Basketball Wins in the State of Illinois (Surpassing Southwestern Illinois College). Head Coach Mike Carpenter is just 22 wins away from 300 career wins.

Women's Basketball went 30-2 and won their fourth straight Region 24 Championship. WVC has won 70 consecutive GRAC games.



Javier Turner (25) and Evan Worley put pressure on Lincoln Trail's Nelson Mbongo during a scrimmage at Spencer Sports Center.



## WVC Fall Sports Brief (Cont.)

Concerning softball, Asa Deffendall took over as Head Coach, replacing NJCAA Hall of Famer and All-Time NJCAA wins leader Paul Schnarre. Coach Deffendall had been assistant coach at WVC for 19 seasons prior.

The WVC volleyball team finished 4th in the GRAC in their second season as a program, and the women's soccer team completed their first season as an NJCAA Program

The WVC bass fishing team had a stellar first season. In only three events, the Warriors managed to crack the top twenty in the nation in their first season on the collegiate bass series.

WVC bass fishing coach Todd Gill said the team has "a lot to be thankful for this fall...a solid first fall season. I cannot wait for the spring season to arrive. Recruiting is already underway for the 2021-22 season; we have four recruits signed already for next season. We do have tuition scholarships available and great support from our college and sponsors."

The WVC archery team also had a great season. WVC's archery team competed in the USA Archery North Regional 3-D Collegiate Championship on Saturday, Sept. 26 at Southeastern Illinois College in Harrisburg, Illinois.

"Our team performed well at this event," said WVC archery coach

Earl Lawrence. "WVC archers took 1st and 2nd place in the men's and women's compound class and 2nd place in Women's Bowhunter. We also won the 1st place team award in men's and women's compound, as well as, 1st in the mixed team award."

WVC's archers finished strong by winning 1st in the overall team award for the second year in a row.



WVC Archery Head Coach Earl Lawrence and Team Captain Sydney Jones are pictured with the 1st Place Team trophy for the 2020 USA Archery Collegiate 3D North Regional Championship.

## Diesel Program Receives Grant for Purchase of Precision Measuring Instruments

WVC's Diesel Equipment Technology program received a grant earlier this month that allowed for the purchase of a Precision Measuring Instruments Certification kit from Snap-on Industrial. Purchase approvals are in progress.

Starrett, Snap-on and the National Coalition of Certification Centers offer the certification which features applied training on instruments vital to engineering, manufacturing, aerospace, power generation and natural resource fields.

The inclusion of precision measurement and torque certification to the Diesel Equipment Technology program will allow students to complete additional Snap-on certifications besides the meter certification that they presently do.

This addition to the diesel program will enhance students' knowledge and augment the skills needed to be technicians in today's diesel technology field.

According to Snap-on's website, "the successful completion of the Snap-on Precision Measuring Instruments Certification enables

graduates to demonstrate a solid understanding of the fundamentals of working with precision measurement instruments."

Diesel Equipment Technology professor Scott Balding stated that "the PMI kit will be used for instruction/certification of students to have a better understanding and the ability to properly measure clearances and sizes precisely using precision measuring instru-

ments. This will allow them to become efficient and productive when using precision instruments that is used in the diesel technology field."

The skills acquired during this comprehensive training are highly valuable and can lead to rewarding careers in a vast array of industries in the marketplace.



Measuring Certification Toolbox

"By having this certification, students will be able to show future employers that they are efficient with precision instruments and will be able to complete the job task correctly," said Balding

The kit's curriculum provides expertise in the instruments used in global precision manufacturing labs and is designed to meet the expectations of critical industries. The curriculum covers tape and rule measurement, side caliper measurement, gauge measurement, angle measurement, micrometer measurement and dial gauge measurement.

The Precision Measuring Instruments certification connects to auto collision repair and refinishing, carpentry, industrial maintenance, millwright, machine tool operation, nuclear technology, transportation technology and energy production and distribution.

The certification kit, gauge block and instructor kit cost \$40,745.33. Funds for the purchase of the certification kit were made available through a Perkins grant.

# FRESH Food Program Celebrates One Year in Service

## Over 500 Students Served to Date

Wabash Valley College's FRESH food program celebrated one year in operation this year. Since its inception a year ago, over 500 students have been served by FRESH. The program is prepared to continue serving students for quite some time after a record-breaking food drive.

"Despite all of the adversity 2020 has presented – we need to say THANK YOU to the WVC family who helped make this the BEST food drive yet at WVC!" said Student Senate sponsor Kyle Peach.

Donations this year (cash and food items) netted the college 4,829 total items which will be made available to students in FRESH. That's the highest total we've recorded since the IECC food drive competition began in 2016.

Here's a look back at the WVC campus totals: 2016 – 1047 items; 2017 – 2061 items; 2018 – 3230 items; 2019 – 4277 items; 2020 – 4829 items.

"Every single donation of items and cash will make a difference in the lives of our students! It is truly amazing to see the impact FRESH is having on our campus and it

wouldn't be possible without your profound generosity and support," said Peach.

WVC's on-campus club competition was once again won by the Ag/Collegiate Farm Bureau Club with 869 items collected! Here's a look at the club results: Ag/Collegiate Farm Bureau – 869; Social Services – 374; Health Professionals – 179; Student Nurses Association – 120.

WVC Student Senate through its "street corner fundraiser" netted 1961 items, and community donations totaled an additional 1326 items.

On top of the items collected for the annual food drive, the program has also received a \$2,500 grant from the Walmart store in Princeton, Indiana, which will be used to purchase items for the program. The donations received are made available to students without any strings attached.

"Once again, thank you!" said Peach. "The pandemic may have changed what Thanksgiving looked like this year, but our food drive serves as a reminder to me that we truly do have so much to be thankful for."