

# Olney Central College KNIGHTLINE



August 2023

## CALENDAR

### AUGUST

8 - New Student Orientation,  
OCC Theater, 1-3:30 p.m.

9 - New Student Orientation,  
OCC Theater, 9-11:30 a.m.

8 - Adjunct Faculty Meeting,  
OCC Banquet Room, 6-8 p.m.

11 - Last Day to Enroll in Fall  
Tuition Payment (4) Plan

12 - Baseball Alumni Golf  
Outing, Richland Country Club

17 - Fall Semester Classes  
Begin

17 - Last Day to Pay Fall  
Tuition & Fees

21 - Get the Scoop on OCC,  
9-11 a.m.

30 - Last Day for Fall Semester  
Textbook Refunds

30 - Last Day for 100 Percent  
Refund of 16-week Fall  
Semester Classes

### SEPTEMBER

4 - OCC Closed, Labor Day

6 - OCC 60th Anniversary  
Celebration, Student Union  
Patio, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

6 - Last Day to Enroll in Fall  
Tuition Payment (3) Plan

18 - Constitution Day  
Observance, Classes in Session

## OCC Welcomes 12th President Chris Simpson

Longtime Richland County educator and administrator Chris A. Simpson has been named Olney Central College President and Vice Chancellor of Business Operations for Illinois Eastern Community Colleges.

Prior to joining OCC, Simpson served as the Superintendent of Schools for Richland County Community Unit 1, where he led the school district from 2019 until his retirement in June. In all, he spent nearly 25 years with the district including four years as assistant superintendent.

During his tenure with the district, Simpson oversaw significant projects such as the \$31 million construction and renovation of Richland County High School and the completion of the \$7.5 million Pre-K Center. Simpson also implemented the Grow Your Own Program to address the current teacher shortage and developed a comprehensive long-term strategic plan and school improvement process.

“I am very humbled and grateful for this opportunity,” Simpson said. “This is a great opportunity to utilize my strengths to help move the college forward and to join the work that has been going on at Olney Central College for almost 60 years. I am excited to be a part of that legacy.”

Simpson holds a bachelor’s degree in biology from Greenville College — now Greenville University — as well as a master’s degree in biology education and an education specialist degree in educational administration from Eastern Illinois University.

A Fairfield native, Simpson began his career in 1988 as an elementary science teacher in Loda, Illinois. He later joined West Richland High School, where he served as a biology instructor for nearly nine years.

In 1998, he moved to East Richland High School holding positions as biology instructor, science department chair, assistant principal and ultimately principal in 2004. As principal, Simpson successfully facilitated the merger of West Richland into East Richland, resulting in the establishment of Richland County High School. He also spearheaded various initiatives, including a program to support ninth graders in their transition to high school and a cultural exchange program with a German high school.

Simpson’s exceptional efforts were acknowledged by the Wabash Valley Region of the Illinois Principals Association, which honored him as High School Principal of the Year in 2011 and presented him with its Innovative Education Award in 2007.

“I’ve had a lot of experience in educational leadership,” Simpson said. “One of my strengths is that I am an effective communicator. I’m someone that can develop positive relationships with colleagues and the community. I have a strong work ethic to get



**CHRIS SIMPSON**

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# OCC to mark 60th Anniversary with celebration on Sept. 6

Olney Central College will host its 60th Anniversary Celebration from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sept. 6 on the Student Union Patio.

Guest speakers will include OCC's new President and Vice Chancellor for Business Operations Chris Simpson, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Retired CEO Terry Bruce, Olney Mayor Mark Lambird and Don Wagner, a member of OCC's first class. Campus tours will be available from noon to 1 p.m., with golf carts available for transportation.

Refreshments will include Dairy Dee ice cream, Ginger Ale's drinks, and OCC Knight Kafe cookies. Giveaways, raffles and games also will be available.

Olney Community College — as it was known at the time — opened its doors to 154 students on Sept. 3, 1963 and more than 1,000 people attended a dedication ceremony on Oct. 6. OCC officially became a Class I College on July 1, 1968, and was renamed Olney Central College.

OCC introduced its first vocational and technical courses in 1969. Those initial offerings have evolved into the numerous career and technical programs that are available today.

That same year, OCC joined with Lincoln Trail and Wabash Valley to form what would become the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges District. With the new name also came plans to replace the former Pure Oil Building with a permanent administrative and classroom facility.

The groundbreaking ceremony for Wattleworth Hall was held on Dec. 8, 1971. Construction began early the next year and classes were first held in the building in 1974. Two years later the gymnasium and Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center were completed.

## President

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the job done.”

Simpson assumed his new role at Olney Central College on August 7. He emphasized the importance of building relationships during the transition.

“I'm excited to get on the job,” he

said. “My first priority is meeting and getting to know the people at OCC. I mentioned in my interview that I believe first comes the who, then the what. I want to get to know the faculty, staff, students and Foundation members and then begin the process of establishing specific goals.”

Simpson resides in Olney with his wife, Michelle, who is a teacher and librarian at Richland County Elemen-

tary School. The couple has three children, Haley, who graduated in 2022 with a master's degree in Environmental Science from the University of Illinois at Springfield; Cole, who graduated from Greenville University in 2022 with a double major in digital media and marketing; and Keen, a junior at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale who is majoring in history education.



**Top, OCC President Leslie E. Purdy, Dean Gail Lathrop and East Richland Board of Education President Paul Buss Sr., watch vote totals from the special referendum in 1967 to determine if OCC should become a Class I Area College. Above, OCC faculty members prepare for the start of classes.**



# TRIO UB provides students with six-week summer program

One of the components of the IECC TRIO Upward Bound program is a six-week summer program. This includes academic instruction, social, recreational, and leadership activities, and college and career preparation activities, along with so much more.

This summer 81 high school students participated in our summer program. We had 21 rising sophomores, 33 rising juniors, and 27 rising seniors.

Additionally, 28 of our 2023 graduates took advantage of our Summer Bridge Program. Summer Bridge is an amazing opportunity for our most recent graduates to receive free enrollment in up to three credit hours on any IECC campus.

This program covers the tuition and fees for these students; all they are required to pay for are the books and any other supplies needed for the course.

For our summer program component, students from 12 high schools attended classes on OCC's campus. Rising sophomores took classes to refine the skills they learned throughout the school year. These classes included subjects like Math, Spanish, Composition and Literature, Personal Development, and even Robotics! Rising juniors and seniors were able to receive college credit over the summer in classes like Psychology, Speech, and First Aid and Safety. First Aid and Safety was a highlight for many students this summer. Upward Bound partnered with Carle Richland Memorial Hospital to do a triage disaster simulation at the end of the summer. It was a fantastic firsthand learning experience for the students. Along with these courses, rising juniors took History and Lab Science.

Rising seniors took an internship course where they heard from guest speakers and improved on their personal college and career readiness skills. During this course, they also did mock interviews with IECC staff and a few outside professionals. Students said they enjoyed it because it gave them a chance to do a professional interview without all the anxiety and stress that would come with not knowing the interviewer, and staff agreed that it was a wonderful experience and want to continue doing it in the future.

On Fridays, rising sophomores stayed at OCC and discussed important life skills such as financial management and social emotional health. Then in the afternoon they did fun activities such as going to the Olney pool or Star Studio. Rising juniors attended college tours. This summer they visited Vincennes University, University of Southern Indiana, Eastern Illinois University, and Wabash Valley College. Rising seniors participated in various internships. These internships allowed students to see if what they are looking into as a career is something they can see themselves doing after school. They were able to learn from professionals in the field and gain firsthand experience.

Upward Bound also partnered with Dr. Alani Frederick and the Nursing and Allied Health Program to provide our students with an Introduction to Healthcare Careers course to prepare them for jobs in the current healthcare environment. Students were able to learn all about the major body systems, describe the major healthcare assessment techniques of inspection, identify the processes linking assessment to the body systems, and demonstrate the application of the various assessments.

Dr. Frederick and her team provided a simulation scenario using both volunteers and healthcare dummies so that the students could experience assessing health symptoms and diagnosing problems. This was a very thorough and in-depth course and the students interested in healthcare truly seemed to enjoy it, and there were even students who were not interested before who said they may be interested in the field of healthcare after.

At the end of our summer program, we accompanied our students on an educational and cultural trip to Nashville, Tenn.



# Join us for the OCC welcome event Aug. 21

New and returning students! Join us from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Aug. 21 for our welcome event, Get The Scoop on OCC.

This is an opportunity to learn more about various clubs and organizations on campus and to get any questions you have answered.

Stop by the many club booths to meet with members and advisors.

Find the perfect organization for you and get involved in campus life.

OCC will be serving free ice cream throughout the event.



## TRIO SSS Orientation

Trio Student Support Services held its annual orientation on Aug. 3. The event gave TRIO SSS participants from Frontier, Lincoln Trail, Olney Central and Wabash Valley colleges the opportunity to prepare for the fall semester while getting to know each and having fun.

## Upward Bound

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After a 4-hour bus ride we made it to the Wildhorse Saloon where we had our very own private line dancing lesson, saw the Parthenon, went to the Opry Mills Mall, and had an amazing dinner at Paula Deen's Family Kitchen before heading to the Grand Ole Opry Stage Show. The next day we visited the historic RCA Studio B and the Country Music Hall of Fame. Students

enjoyed a tour of beautiful Fisk University, which is a highly ranked historically Black university and is one of the oldest higher learning institutions in Nashville. Lastly, we toured the Belle Meade Plantation.

TRIO Upward Bound strives to provide our students with opportunities, both educational and cultural. Our summer program is designed to allow students to develop stronger relationships with their counselors, instructors, and peers from not only their own grant,

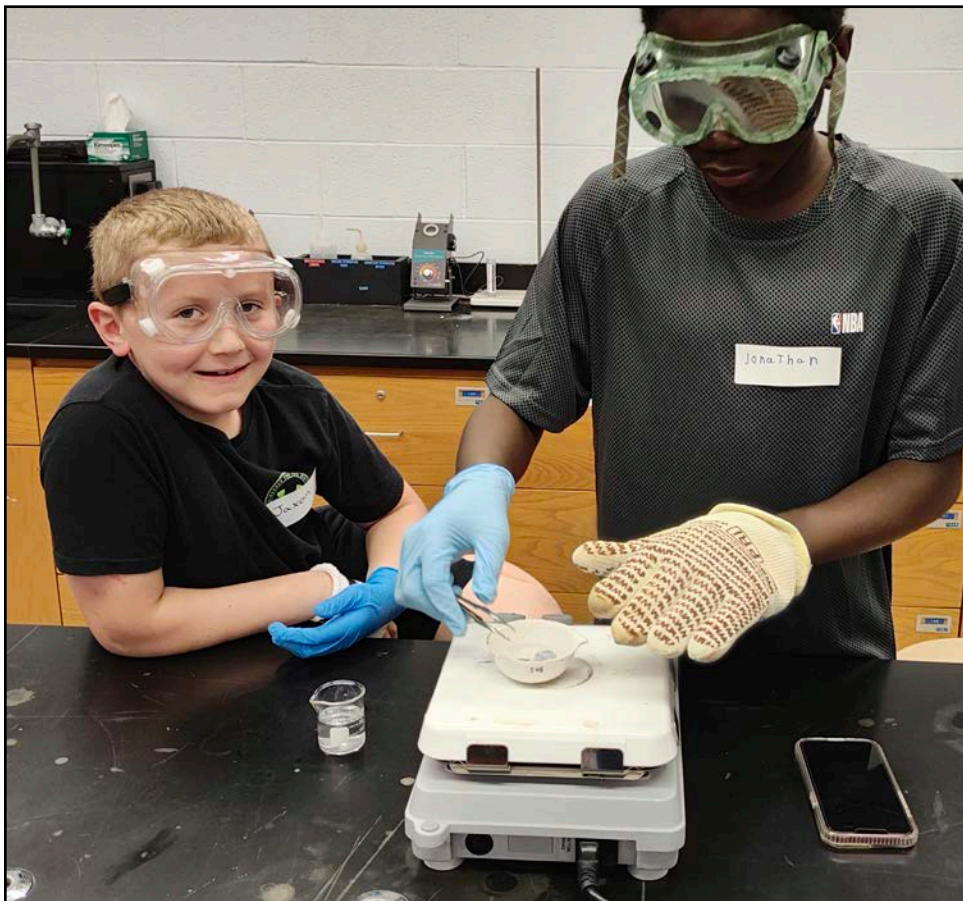
but the other IECC TRIO UB grants as well. We aim for our students to want to come to summer program rather than thinking of it as school or work. We offer many opportunities for students and strive to prepare them for their future.

Our summer program is just one little glimpse at all we have to offer. The TRIO Upward Bound programs are 100% federally funded by the Department of Education for \$312,480 (LTC), \$361,983 (OCC), and \$297,601 (WVC).



# OCC Youth Explorer Camps

OCC Youth Explorer Camps wrapped up last month with Ew! Awesome Biology and Blowing Up with Science.





# Sarah Bergbower presents research poster at national conference, ties for second place

Olney Central College Professor Sarah Bergbower presented her research poster at the national Joint Annual Meeting of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS), Association of Genetic Technologists (AGT), and Society of American Federal Medical Laboratory Scientists (SAFMLS).

More than 900 laboratory professionals met in Providence, R.I. for the June 26-30 event, which focused on integrated educational programs, posters and industry engagement platforms.

A 12-year member of ASCLS, Bergbower's attendance marked her second appearance at the renowned Joint Annual Meeting. Her initial participation was in 2018 when she embarked on her academic journey in the Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS) program at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). This initial exposure allowed her to connect with her program advisor, faculty, and thesis chair.

At the recent gathering, Bergbower presented the findings of her research, "Urine Culture Utilization in Pregnant Patients Screened for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria."

"I had developed an evidence-based algorithm to guide obstetric point-of-care urinalysis interpretation and suggested further testing, implemented it with obstetric providers at UTMB clinics as a quasi-experimental interventional study, and I found underutilization of urine cultures with underdiagnosis of asymptomatic bacteriuria during pregnancy"

Bergbower's research earned a second-place tie for "Best of JAM." This recognition underscores her commitment to advancing clinical laboratory science and exemplifies her significant impact on the field.

Beyond her research presentation, Bergbower actively contributed to the conference by moderating commercial symposiums and educational sessions. She also participated in the DCLS Steering Committee meeting and took advantage of networking opportunities.

"I'm grateful to IECC for their interest in and support of professional development," Bergbower said. "I consistently use my clinical experiences to form connections with the material I deliver to my students in each course, in both laboratory and lecture instruction."

She added, "Students respond best to real-world applications and examples, which I acquire through professional conferences such as this. It is imperative to stay current in the sciences when updates and changes occur frequently. Microbiology, for example, is quickly moving towards molecular and genomic methodologies such as sequencing, and I now have post-meeting plans to bring a sequencer and enhanced PCR equipment to OCC."



Sarah Bergbower presents her research poster during JAM.

## New Ambassadors

New OCC and TRIO Student Ambassadors, from left, Emma Gill, Isabella Cline, Lynden Fox, Will Bookhout, Rachel Shilling and Alexandra Ash (not pictured) participated Aug. 1 in their first campus event, Dual Credit Orientation.

