

Olney Central College KNIGHTLINE



October 2023

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

9 - College Closed, Columbus Day

10 - IECC Faculty/Staff Professional Development Day, No Day or Evening Classes

11 - Commercial Music Ensemble Fall Concert, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

12 - Midterm

14 — Live! And In Person From Orlando Featuring Veryl Jones and Grayson J. Smith, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

17 - Spring Registration Begins

18 - Southeastern Illinois Concert Association Presents David Shannon, Ireland's Greatest Showman, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

25 - OCC Jazz & Concert Band Fall Concert, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

27 - Fine Arts Day for High School Students

College Visits

Oct. 16 - Eastern Illinois University Representative Bri Bartosz will be here from 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.

Oct. 24 - University of Southern Indiana Representative Simone Payne will be here from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Tables will be located outside Student Services.



OCC hosts 185 students during annual Blue Preview

Olney Central College welcomed 185 high school seniors to campus for Blue Preview on Sept. 29.

Students from Richland County, Mt. Carmel, Edwards County, Hutsonville, Newton Community and Bedford North Lawrence high schools had an opportunity to interact with faculty, while learning more about OCC's academic programs and student life. The event concluded with lunch on the back patio.

"The OCC Blue Preview was a great success," said College Admission Representative Curtis Miller. "Students got hands-on experience from many of our faculty and with talking with a few of the students after the event, they thoroughly enjoyed it."



Amber Willis of Edwards County High School and Lucy Johnson of Richland County High School were the winners of two \$500 scholarships awarded during Blue Preview. Pictured, from left, are Student Ambassadors Emma Gill, Rachel Shilling, Admission Representative Curtis Miller, Amber Willis, Lucy Johnson and Ambassadors Bell Cline and Will Bookhout.

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IECC makes it easier to apply for scholarships with Steps to Success

Frontier Community, Lincoln Trail, Olney Central and Wabash Valley colleges are simplifying scholarship awards for incoming high school students with Steps to Success.

“We are streamlining the process to make it as easy as possible for parents and students, so it is less daunting for everyone involved,” said Krystle Riggle, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Director of Financial Aid.

“This is something we have all been working toward that will be a great benefit to our students.”

With Steps to Success, students follow a simple four-action process to qualify and receive the monetary awards:

- Step 1 — Apply to one of the four colleges by November 10, 2023.
- Step 2 — Complete the 2024-2025 FAFSA by February 29, 2024.
- Step 3 — Accept the Success Award by April 26, 2024.
- Step 4 — Enroll in at least 12 credit hours per semester.

Students can go to <https://iecc.edu/success> to begin the process. Awards will be announced in mid-March and funds applied directly to the student’s account once all steps are finalized.

In 2023-2024, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges awarded more than \$216,000 in tuition scholarships to incoming students. Riggle hopes the changes will increase student eligibility in the coming year, enabling IECC to assist even more families.

“This is a great opportunity to help students on the path they have decided upon,” Riggle said. “These institutional funding awards will make it even more affordable for students to go to school closer to home.”

Riggle also emphasized that IECC is prepared to support students and families in navigating the significant changes slated for the 2024-2025 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form.



“We want students to be prepared for these changes that are going to affect them through no fault of their own,” she said. “If they go to our website (www.iecc.edu/financial), we have a list of all the changes we know are coming and we will continue to update it.”

Riggle recommends students review the changes and return to the site periodically.

“The Department of Education is still making changes,” she added. “Nothing is set in stone, and we could still see changes up until the release of the FAFSA.”

Although an exact date has not been set, Riggle said the FAFSA is tentatively scheduled to open in December. Once the Department of Education makes that determination, IECC will notify students.

“We appreciate everyone’s patience,” she said. “We know people are anxious. As soon as we know more, we will get that information out as quickly as possible. We are dedicated to helping students get through the process and in the future, it should be much smoother.”

The forthcoming FAFSA form will contain fewer questions, reducing complexity for students and families. Additionally, there will be a shift

in the formula used to calculate the federal aid students receive.

Starting in the 2024-2025 academic year, financial aid determination will be based on the Student Aid Index (SAI) instead of the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The SAI considers both parent and student incomes, as well as assets, to determine the eligible amount of financial aid.

Riggle pointed out that family farms and small businesses must now be reported as assets, affecting the calculation for financial assistance.

“We know the FAFSA is a bit overwhelming and a lot to take in,” she said. “We don’t want students to get overwhelmed with the process. If they have questions, they can always reach out to us. We are 100-percent available to help parents and students understand the process. We don’t want them to get frustrated and give up.”

If families have questions regarding the FAFSA or Steps to Success, Riggle encourages them to contact FCC, LTC, OCC and WVC Financial Aid.

“Our department is always available to assist students and their families,” she stressed. “We know 2024-2025 Financial Aid will be different for everyone and we are committed to making this a successful year for our students.”

Live and in Person from Orlando!

featuring Veryl Jones and Grayson J. Smith

Tickets are now on sale for Olney Central College Theater's one-night-only concert Live! And in Person from Orlando at 7 p.m. on Oct. 14, in the Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center.

The concert will provide a night of family-friendly music, fun, and laughter featuring performers Veryl Jones and Grayson J. Smith.

Veryl Jones is an accomplished actor, singer, dancer, and comedian who has a huge list of credits in television and movies including *Bad Boys 2* with Will Smith, *The Punisher* with John Travolta, *Out of Time* with Denzel Washington, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* with Halle Berry, and many more.

Jones currently performs at The Walt Disney World Resort in the No. 1 rated show, "Festival of the Lion King," as the MC and Kimue. He has been performing at Disney World for 19 years in many different shows and attractions and received the Walt Disney Legacy Award.

Jones will begin his performance with his hilarious portrayal of Jeniah, an African percussionist who does not speak English. With the use of non-verbal communication and audience participation, Jeniah will have everyone roaring as he attempts to orchestrate a full percussion band. Then, Jones will use his amazing singing voice to tell the journey of his career through many standard Broadway and Disney songs, as well as a touch of opera.

Grayson J. Smith is a musician, actor, and artist. His work has been captured and shared on social media, garnering millions of views from around the world. Born and raised in Washington State, he began performing and playing piano at a young age. Now he specializes in ragtime piano, show tunes, and popular music styles of the early 1900s. He has performed at a variety of venues and can be seen regularly at Walt Disney World.

As an actor, Smith has traveled to Seattle and New York for musical theater roles onstage at Seattle's 5th Avenue Theater, the company responsible for major productions including *Hairspray*, *Shrek: The Musical*, and *Aladdin*. He was also a part of the world premiere of *Secondhand Lions: A New Musical Adventure*, a musical adaptation of the film. He worked alongside notable Broadway performers, writers, and directors, such as Scott Schwartz (*The Prince of Egypt*, *Tick, Tick... Boom!*) and Rupert Holmes (*The Pina Colada Song*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*). As an artist, Smith's artwork has been featured on "Make It" by Walmart, a virtual artwork course for kids. Smith is based in Orlando, Fla.



Grayson J. Smith



Veryl Jones

Music Department to host Fall Concerts Oct. 11 & 25

OCC's Music Department will host two concerts this month, beginning with the OCC Commercial Music Ensembles at 7 p.m. on Oct. 11 in the Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center.

The performance will feature three separate bands under the direction of OCC Director of Bands Wade Baker and adjunct faculty Trevor Parrent and Josh Moats, both OCC graduates.

Parrent is mentoring first-semester students, focusing on stage perfor-

mance, while Moats is working with students who have prior experience, having performed at various venues over the summer.

Baker's ensemble will showcase original student-written and arranged music, with plans to record the tracks in the new Music Department recording studio.

The concert will span a range of genres, from classic rock and roll to punk and modern pop rock.

At 7 p.m. on Oct. 25, the OCC Con-

cert and Jazz bands will present their fall concert. They are under the direction of Baker.

The concert band will perform pieces by renowned composers Richard Saucedo, Frank Ticheli, and Brian Balmages. Meanwhile, the Jazz band will dazzle the audience with selections from the legendary Duke Ellington.

Baker said the Music Department is flourishing with 33 talented students participating in this year's ensembles, doubling the numbers from last year.

OCC to host Fine Arts Day Oct. 27

Olney Central College will host its first Fine Arts Day from noon to 2 p.m. on Oct 27.

This is an opportunity for high school students to explore OCC's Art, Music and Theater programs while interacting with current students and faculty. Students will attend performances by the OCC Music and Theater Departments as well as experience a live demonstration of the pottery wheel. They also will participate in two 20-minute sessions with the OCC instrumental, vocal, theater or visual arts faculty. Students can register for the event on the OCC website at www.iecc.edu/occ/arts.

Olney Central College is home to vibrant and thriving Fine Arts programs, where creativity knows no bounds. OCC takes immense pride in nurturing the artistic talents of students and fostering a dynamic environment where their passion for the arts can truly flourish.

OCC provides many avenues for students to step into the spotlight and showcase their creative outlets whether they plan to pursue a career in the visual or performing arts or simply want to enrich their lives through creative expression.

OCC's Fine Arts programs take a student-focused approach. The faculty are dedicated to providing personalized attention, mentorship and support to help students achieve their goals.

For more information about the Fine Arts at OCC, contact College Admission Representative Curtis Miller at millerc3@iecc.edu, or 618-395-7777, ext. 2008.



David Shannon opens SICA 2023-2024 concert season

David Shannon, Ireland's Greatest Showman, will kick off the Southeastern Illinois Concert Association's 2023-2024 season at 7 p.m. on Oct. 18 in the Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center.

Shannon grew up in Ireland and has been singing professionally for more than 25 years. He is renowned for his engaging performance style, charming personality, and an ability to cross multiple musical genres.

He recently toured Europe with his "Best of Ireland" show, and released his second solo album *Abhaile*. He has also played the leading roles in some of Broadway's famous musicals, including The Phantom in *The Phantom of the Opera*, Valjean (*Les Miserables*), Miss Trunchbull (*Matilda*), Sweeney Todd (*Sweeney Todd*), Jesus and Judas (*Jesus Christ Superstar*), Chris (*Miss Saigon*), and, most recently, Kevin T in the original London Company of *Come From Away*.

Shannon was nominated for best actor at the Oliviers for Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Beautiful Game*. He also has a busy schedule working with the world's leading orchestras and promoting his web series *The Crooning Craftsman*.



OCC Foundation awards \$31,000 in Mini Grants

The OCC Foundation has awarded more than \$31,000 in Mini Grants for 2023-2024.

The Mini Grant Committee reviewed applications. Based on available funds, prior department awards, and projects that favored an

innovative student-centered campus, eight were selected.

This year funding will support a conference for students, welding stands, laptops, microphones and charging hub, vehicle lift, batting cage and bullpen refresh, Student

Senate Spring Fling, and a Nanopore MinION.

OCC Foundation Members are excited to see how projects will be integrated on campus.

Thank you to those who completed an application.

OCC welcomes Mari Yamato as full-time art instructor

Mari Yamato joined Olney Central College as a full-time art instructor this fall.

A familiar face at OCC, Yamato has served as an adjunct instructor since 2017, teaching ceramics, open studio and oil painting courses.

“I am really excited to teach here,” Yamato said. “When I completed my master’s degree, this was my goal. I was afraid I might have to move away when I was getting attached to the people I know here. I’m thrilled this position opened up.”

Although she was raised near Tokyo, Yamato’s maternal family has lived in Richland County for generations. Her parents met while attending college and relocated to her father’s native Japan so he could pursue career opportunities there.

“I’m hoping this position will allow me to get to know the community better,” said Yamato, who has lived in Olney since 2013. “I’ve always heard stories from my mom and my grandma about the area and I want to develop that same connection they have. My grandma always seemed to know everyone here, and I want to be like that.”

Yamato received her bachelor’s degree from Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion and earned a master’s degree in community arts from Eastern Illinois University. She has a background in illustration and spent two years as a freelance illustrator.

She is active in the local arts community, participating in the Olney Arts Council’s Traveling Arts program, which showcases area artists’ works in local businesses. The exhibits move to a new location each month. Yamato’s artwork is currently on display in the OCC Anderson Library Gallery.

Yamato’s interest in art began in kindergarten. Even then, she knew she wanted to become an artist. Yamato enjoys drawing, working with oils and has just started creating polymer clay jewelry. It’s a passion she loves sharing.

“Teaching art you get to know people and to be a part of the community,” she said. “Art is really needed in our small communities. It provides emotional support and promotes mental and physical well-being. Art is something that is needed in our world.”

Yamato encourages others to begin creating while exploring various mediums.

“I enjoy seeing someone who always believed they weren’t an artist come to class and find out it’s more fun than they thought, and they can see themselves doing more in the future,” she said. “I like giving them something they can take with them.”

Yamato encourages everyone to give art a try.

“Art takes practice,” she said. “It’s about being patient with yourself and how much time you are willing to put in it. Too often, people are concerned about perfection. There is no such thing in art.”



OCC Art Instructor Mari Yamato is pictured with her artwork. The pieces are currently on display in the OCC Anderson Library as part of the Olney Arts Council’s Traveling Arts program.



OCC Athletes host Beautiful Lives Project

The OCC Baseball and Softball teams hosted participants of the Beautiful Lives Project last month. Rain moved activities into the gym. The BLP advocates for special needs students in sports and society.



High 5 Friday

The OCC Women's Basketball team recently welcomed students to Richland County Elementary School on High 5 Friday.

OCC Student Senate Blood Drive scheduled for Oct. 27

The OCC Student Senate will host an American Red Cross Blood Drive from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 27. Donors will receive a free T-shirt while supplies last.

Visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: Olney Central College to schedule an appointment.

Sports Schedule

Baseball

Oct. 12 — OCC at VU, 2 p.m.

Softball

Oct. 8 — OCC vs. Kentucky Wesleyan, noon at home

Men's Basketball

Oct. 15 — OCC at John A. Logan Jamboree, TBA

Nov. 9 — OCC vs. Monroe, 6 p.m. at home

Nov. 18 — OCC at Triton, 3 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Oct. 7 — ICC Jamboree, OCC vs. St. Louis Community College, 2 p.m. at Illinois Central

Nov. 1 — OCC vs. St. Louis Community College, 5 p.m. at home

Nov. 4 — OCC vs. SAU Tech, 1 p.m. at Three Rivers

Nov. 5 — OCC at Three Rivers, 3 p.m.

Nov. 10 — OCC at Lake Land, 7 p.m.

Math tutoring available

Are you struggling with a math course or need help raising your grade?

Instructor Lisa Benson is offering free math tutoring on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

To schedule an appointment, email Benson at bensonl@iecc.edu.

Lost & Found

If you have lost an item, please stop by Student Services.

Keep Vehicles Locked

Students utilizing the OCC parking lots are advised to keep their vehicles locked when unattended.