

# NETWORK



OCTOBER 2024



## HIGHLIGHTS



*IECC and Millikin University partner to create smooth pathways for students.*



*Popular Trick or Treat at the Trail event heads back inside this year.*



*Terry Johnson ('94) reflects on LTC experiences while talking leadership.*

## LTC COLLABORATES WITH SCOUTING USA FOR MERIT BADGE FAIR

Lincoln Trail College and Scouting America collaborated on a Merit Badge Fair on September 21. The event gave area Scouts a chance to come to Lincoln Trail College for the day and work on specific merit badges through the help of Lincoln Trail College employees.

President Tona Ambrose says the event came from a United Way meeting in the spring where Noah Olson talked about other similar events and that he was looking for a partner in this area.

"LTC has a unique geographical spot in the scouting world," said Olson, the Redhawk District Senior District Executive. "It's in a corner where events like this do not often happen because it is in this 'in-between land' it's too far from population centers like Indianapolis, St. Louis, Champaign, and Evansville."

Ambrose felt like it was a great opportunity to get involved and help the community.



## UPCOMING NOVEMBER EVENTS

- 1 **Dracula**  
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 2 **Dracula**  
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 3 **Dracula**  
2 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 5 **COLLEGE CLOSED - Election Day**
- 7 **LTC Foundation Concert Series Presents: Dancing Queen - A Tribute to ABBA**  
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 11 **COLLEGE CLOSED - Veterans Day**
- 12 **Business Plan Challenge Workshop**  
5 p.m., Statesmen Grill
- 19 **IECC Board Meeting**  
6:15 p.m., Statesmen Grill
- 22 **Fall Choral Concert**  
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 26 **Fall Instrumental Concert**  
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 28 **COLLEGE CLOSED - Thanksgiving**
- 29 **COLLEGE CLOSED - Thanksgiving Break**

"I think it's essential to always be looking for new opportunities to build relationships within the community, to collaborate on projects like this that benefit students, and to be creative in how we are fulfilling the IECC mission which is to deliver exceptional education and services to improve the lives of our students and to strengthen our communities."

Scouts had the opportunity to earn merit badges in Art, Theatre, Welding, Coin Collecting, and Family Life. Volunteers for the day included Angela Compton, Taylor Dahlberg, Jackson Hemrich, Krystal Riggle, Taylor Newlin, and Chris Forde.

Ambrose believes that this is an event that will continue to grow.

"We had six wonderful faculty and staff who volunteered their time and talents on a Saturday to facilitate various badges, and we definitely have more highly qualified badge facilitators at LTC and within the community, so not only could we offer more badge offerings, but we could turn the event into a career exploration day, take students and their families on a tour of our awesome campus, and have current LTC students facilitate a panel discussion where the scouts could ask our students questions and learn about what college life is like. Our LTC students could also ask the scouts questions and learn

more about what is involved with their scouting programs."

Olson says the event was great because the scouts got to work with top-quality merit badge counselors with LTC's experienced employees. He says it was also great to give the scouts a chance to visit the campus and explore LTC as a place to go to college.

He and Ambrose both said the event had good feedback, and the consensus is to build upon it and make it a larger event next year.

"It's fun to think about how this entire event started with unexpectedly meeting Noah at a United Way meeting several months ago and reiterates the power of community partnerships and collaborative efforts that have now culminated into positive student experiences, new friendships, and who knows, maybe even future Statesmen," exclaimed Ambrose.



Taylor Dahlberg helps area Scouts work on their Theatre Merit Badge

## **IECC VISIT TO MILLIKIN YIELDS POSITIVE RESULTS**



In a bold step toward expanding opportunities for students, nine representatives from Illinois Eastern Community Colleges embarked on a journey to Millikin University after the private institution extended an invitation to explore partnership possibilities. This collaboration, still in its early stages, promises to blend the strengths of both IECC and Millikin, potentially creating new avenues for students across the state.

IECC Vice Chancellor of Institutional Outreach and Lincoln Trail College President Tona Ambrose said the meeting started with an introduction and a phone call.

“Dr. [Ryan] Gower introduced me to a former colleague of his, Jodi Silotto, who is now the Vice President of Enrollment, Marketing & Communications at Millikin University,” said Ambrose. “Jodi had reached out to Dr. Gower to inquire about how Illinois Eastern Community Colleges and Millikin might look for ways to partner, and he shared with Jodi that IECC, as an organization, recently restructured and he encouraged her to connect with our Division of Institutional Outreach, which is how Jodi and I ended up on a phone meeting together.”

Ambrose led the IECC delegation on the visit which included leaders from each of IECC's four colleges. Among the group were Angel Maguire from Frontier Community College, Curtis Miller from Olney Central College, and a team from Lincoln Trail College including Jena Combs, Taylor Dahlberg, and Chris Forde. Representing Wabash Valley College were Matt Fowler, Cassandra Goldman, and Levi Johnson, all eager to see what the future might hold.

The team arrived on Millikin's picturesque campus, where they were greeted with the spirit of collaboration. The university leadership, represented by Provost Mary Black and an impressive array of deans, shared Millikin's vision of how a partnership with IECC could enhance academic pathways for both institutions. With an invigorating campus tour setting the tone, the day quickly shifted into productive conversations.

One of the standout moments came during a meeting with Millikin President Jim Reynolds, where the group discussed shared goals over lunch. As Reynolds, alongside key members of his leadership team like Executive Vice President Sarah Kottich and Vice President of Student Affairs Wallace Southerland III, laid out Millikin's aspirations, it became clear that this was more than a routine visit—this was the beginning of something transformative.

The afternoon was filled with vibrant exchanges, offering IECC's team an in-depth look into Millikin's admissions process, student affairs programs, and even their approach to student engagement. Notably, IECC's Director of Marketing and Public Information, Chris Forde, connected with his counterpart at Millikin, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications Kylee Roney. Their discussion on marketing strategies and student engagement sparked exciting ideas for future collaborations.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to build a partnership with Millikin," Forde later reflected. "The best part for me was getting to talk about student life and marketing with their team. When you meet peers from outside your institution, you open yourself up to new ways of thinking. It's a mutual exchange of ideas—there's so much potential to learn from each other and, ultimately, to create even better experiences for our students."

As the day wrapped up with insights into student leadership, campus life, and engagement opportunities, the IECC team left Millikin with renewed energy and a shared sense of purpose. The partnership's foundation had been laid, and both institutions were eager to explore the vast potential that lay ahead for their students.

"We engaged in meaningful conversations that not only culminated into an Articulation Agreement but other productive connections as well," said Ambrose. "This is a promising example of how the IECC Divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Institutional Outreach collaborated to create a new, seamless transfer pathway forward for our students, and this is also validation that as a District, we are aligning all of our efforts and moving in the right direction."

## LTC STUDENTS ATTENDING COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIR

Lincoln Trail College students will be able to participate in an event open to all students at Illinois Eastern Community College. Wabash Valley College is hosting this year's IECC College and Career Fair on October 18 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

LTC is going to have transportation available to the event. Amie Mayhall will take the students to the College and Career Fair.

The event will feature more than 45 colleges and universities from the tri-state area, giving students a chance to explore their transfer options as well as careers.

"It's a great chance for students to discuss job opportunities, create career plans, and practice networking," said Dean of Students Cassandra Goldman.

In addition to students from IECC, area high school students have also been invited to attend the event.

Goldman says that students attending the event will have the opportunity to win a Nintendo Switch. Food trucks will also be on hand for students to purchase food.

**ILLINOIS EASTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

# College & Career Fair 2024

scan QR code to register

- Opportunities to connect with over 45 Universities and Businesses!
- All IECC and High School students attending will be registered for a chance to win a Nintendo Switch
- Food trucks by Beer Bones BBQ & Lit Bit of Asia available for purchase
- Transportation is available from each IECC campus; sign up in Student Services for transportation

**For More Information, Contact:** Cassandra Goldman, IECC Dean of Students  
goldmanc@iecc.edu or 618-262-8641 ext. 3510

**FRI, OCT 18 | 9AM-1PM**

Wabash Valley College  
2200 College Drive, Mount Carmel, IL 62863

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity | IDES | IECC BUSINESS & INDUSTRY | IECC Adult Education

## **TRICK OR TREAT AT THE TRAIL RETURNS ON OCTOBER 24**



Lincoln Trail College's beloved Trick or Treat at the Trail is returning this year on October 24 from 4-6 p.m. The year's event will return to its roots and become an indoor event.

"We had a lot of success with this event outside the last two years," said Illinois Eastern Community College's Director of Marketing Chris Forde. "We're excited now to bring the event back inside for the first time since 2019."

The festive event is a staple in the community and draws more than 2,000 people each year to enjoy a fun and safe trick-or-treating experience. Once again, numerous Lincoln Trail College clubs and organizations will have booths to hand out candy to kids. They'll be joined by several community businesses and organizations. There are also several donors that make the event possible.

"This is a great event," said Forde. "It brings so many people here to experience some Halloween magic and wonder. We couldn't do this without the many people who donate their time and money to make Trick or Treat at the Trail possible. We're incredibly grateful for the community support we receive."

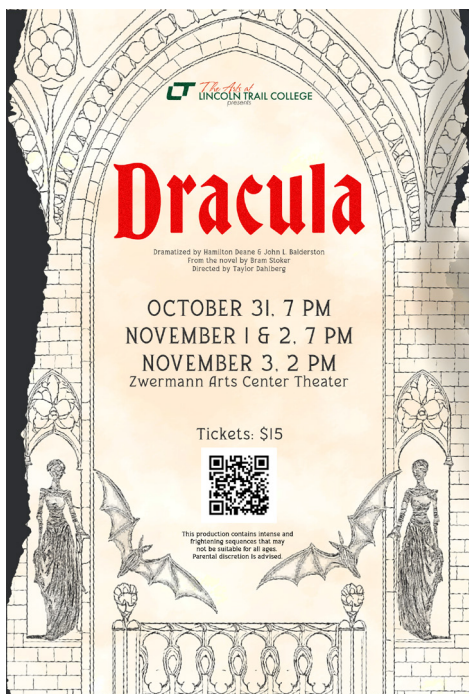
Visitors to Trick or Treat at the Trail are reminded to keep safety in mind.

"There are a lot of excited children in the parking lot with their families," said Forde. "They may not be paying attention, so drivers should be cautious as they are navigating the lot."

Drivers are also reminded not to park on the grass during Trick or Treat at the Trail.



## DRACULA TICKET SALES OPEN OCT. 12



The Arts at Lincoln Trail College is excited to announce that tickets for its highly anticipated fall production of Dracula will go on sale to the public starting October 12. Priced at \$15, tickets can be purchased online by visiting [cur8.com](http://cur8.com). Don't miss

your chance to experience this thrilling adaptation of Bram Stoker's classic novel!

Directed by Taylor Dahlberg, Dracula features a talented cast that promises to bring the gothic drama and suspense to life. Tom Moore stars as Dr. Van Helsing, with William Prindable as John Harker. Brady Thompson takes on the role of Renfield, while Ryan Pinkston plays Dr. Seward. Catlynn Underwood will portray Lucy, and Justin Janney will embody the infamous Count Dracula. The cast is rounded out by Grae Drake as the Maid and Brennan Seth Tracy as the Attendant.

Opening night for Dracula at the Zwermann Arts Center Theater is set for October 31 at 7 p.m., with additional performances on November 1 and 2 at 7 p.m. and a matinee on November 3 at 2 p.m.

In this timeless tale, Lucy Seward, whose father oversees an English sanatorium, falls victim to a mysterious illness. Dr. Van Helsing, a specialist, suspects that Lucy is under the spell of a vampire. The sinister Count Dracula is eventually revealed as the culprit, leading to a dramatic and novel conclusion. Please note that the show contains some frightening sequences that may not be suitable for all audience members. Parental discretion is advised.

## VAMPIRE COSTUME CONTEST OCT. 31



To celebrate the opening night of Dracula, The Arts at Lincoln Trail College invites theatergoers to participate in a thrilling vampire-themed costume contest. Attendees are encouraged to unleash their creativity and come dressed as their favorite Dracula-inspired characters on October 31.

The contest will be judged on five key criteria:

- **Theme:** Does your costume stay true to a Dracula theme? You can be inspired by any Dracula adaptation, not just the classic.
- **Creativity:** How imaginative is your costume? Does it reflect your personality?
- **Effort:** Did you go all out, or is it just a simple set of fake fangs?
- **Originality:** Does your costume stand out from the crowd?
- **Presentation:** Do you confidently showcase your costume or simply walk up on stage?

### Contest Rules:

- Costumes must be appropriate for public viewing.
- Any blood used in costumes must be fake and completely dry before entering the theater.
- Costumes should not obstruct the view of others, make noise, or cause distractions during the performance.

Important Notice: Excessive gore can lead to disqualification, as we aim to make the event enjoyable for everyone. Keep it spooky but fun!

Prizes will be awarded to the top costumes, so come dressed to impress! Join us for a night of eerie entertainment as we bring Dracula to life on stage.

# FORDE PRESENTING AT NATIONAL HIGHER ED SOCIAL MEDIA CONFERENCE



## Chris Forde

Director of Marketing & Public Information  
Illinois Eastern Community Colleges & Lincoln  
Trail College



Chris Forde has been with Illinois Eastern Community Colleges and Lincoln Trail College since 2014 after spending 15 years as a broadcaster covering news and sports. He started as the Coordinator of Marketing and Public Information at LTC and became the Director of Marketing for IECC in 2020. He has a passion for storytelling, especially when it comes to video on social media. Outside of work, Forde is an avid volunteer serving on a variety of local boards and was honored by the Robinson Chamber of Commerce with its Outstanding Service Award. When he has time, he enjoys performing and is the co-founder of an improv troupe. He is a graduate of DePauw University.

### Chris Forde's Sessions

⌚ 8:45 a.m.–9:45 a.m. PT — Tuesday, October 22, 2024

**SPEAKER-LED ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

#### [Social Media Content for Community Colleges](#)

⌚ 10:00 a.m.–10:45 a.m. PT — Tuesday, October 22, 2024

#### [Panel: Video Content Creation Do's and Don'ts: IG Reels, TikTok & Youtube Shorts](#)

Videos are engaging and can drive incredible results that are not easily achieved using other static content formats. This panel will break down important considerations and "do's and don'ts" for video content creation to help solo social media marketers and content teams streamline their processes and create their best-performing videos based on their brand goals.

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Director of Marketing and Public Information Chris Forde is one of the speakers at this year's Social Media Strategies Summit. The virtual conference for higher education social media professionals has more than 600 registered attendees this year.

Forde is involved in two sessions. He is a speaker for Social Media Content for Community Colleges and moderator for a panel titled "Video Content Do's and Don'ts: IG Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts."

"It is an honor for me to be a presenter at this year's SMS Summit," said Forde. "Very often, conferences focus on what large universities with large staffs and budgets do on social media. This is a chance to talk about how a community college with more limited resources takes on social media."

Forde is leading the Social Media Content for Community Colleges discussion, where Martha Acosta-Pieters, the Director of International Marketing and Contracts for Edmonds College, will join him. The session will include a roundtable discussion where other attendees can ask questions.

"This is a great opportunity," said Forde. "Martha and I plan to talk about how we have worked at scale in a community college setting to create engaging content."

The panel discussion Forde moderated featured Amherst College Director of Social and New Media Stephanie Ramirez, Keck School of Medicine at USC Head of Social Media Laura Nickerson, and Bates College Assistant Director of Digital Marketing Dave Ernst. The group will cover ways to make engaging videos, how to get students involved, how to create authentic videos, and the tools to use when creating content.

"Video is a powerful tool for social media," said Forde. "It is also an intimidating tool for a lot of colleges because there's a heavy investment of time in video, and it can have an intimidating learning curve. This session is all about giving people tips on how they can maximize their efforts, especially when it comes to short-form video."

Forde was invited to speak after attending last year's event with the rest of the Marketing Department from IECC. Once again, the entire department will be attending this year's virtual event.

Breanna Jacobs, who organizes the event, said they already have a record number of registrants.



## NOVEMBER ATHLETIC EVENTS

### Men's Basketball

2	Harry S. Truman College	3:00
9	vs. Jefferson College (at Mattoon, Ill.)	TBA
10	vs. Olive-Harvey College (at Mattoon, Ill.)	TBA
12	Three Rivers Community College	7:00
19	at Danville Area Community College	7:00
23	Kankakee Community College	3:00
29	at Southeastern CC (Broadway Classic)	7:00
30	vs. Highland CC (at Burlington, Iowa)	3:00

### Women's Basketball

1	at Marian University Ancilla	5:00
2	vs. Delta College (MUAC Charger Classic)	12:00
	vs. Macomb CC (MUAC Charger Classic)	
5	Lewis & Clark Community College	5:00
8	vs. Moraine Valley CC (at Triton College)	5:30
9	at Triton College	3:00
12	Three Rivers Community College	5:00
15	vs. Danville Area CC (at Lincoln Land CC)	7:30
16	at Lincoln Land Community College	12:00
19	at Danville Area Community College	5:30
22	Kaskaskia College	1:00
25	at Brescia University JV	5:30

## JOHNSON SPEAKS AT MAYOR'S BREAKFAST



Terry Johnson ('94) was a star athlete at Lincoln Trail College and remains the only athlete to be named All-Conference in baseball and basketball. He is now entering his fourth year as an assistant coach at Purdue. He served as the keynote speaker at the Robinson Mayor's Breakfast.

Mayor Mike Shimer ('72) asked Johnson to talk about leadership after Shimer gave his annual State of the City address. Johnson mixed together his experiences at Lincoln Trail College with his points about how leadership can be hard and lonely.

"What better place for me to start that today than right here in Robinson," said Johnson. "And to get a chance to tell a lot of people how much this place meant to me and how much they meant to me. Lincoln Trail College, the coaches, my baseball teammates, my basketball teammates, Gregg and Julie Brooks family, Don and Melanie Corn Family, and the community of Robinson."

Johnson talked about how his family raised him, and when he made his official visit to LTC, he wore a three-piece suit because that was what was expected by his family. He talked about the lessons he learned from his family growing up and how LTC enhanced what his parents taught him.

Johnson talked about how baseball coach Tony Vittorio and basketball coach Terry Collins taught him to have a strong belief in himself and how he had something greater inside. He also learned how to set very high standards.

He said that being a student-athlete is hard, and he was very nervous about leaving home, but he quickly found a fit at LTC.

"After my first semester here, being a basketball player and a baseball player, I was able to meet everyone and bring the basketball team and basketball team together. It was like a grand slam to bring different cultures together and we became one big family."

Johnson said that now, no matter where he goes, he finds a teammate and a brother.



He said he has some principles that he lives by. "Attack it head-on. Sometimes, when people say attack things, people forget to enjoy it. Enjoy every single moment. Strive for excellence. Be great at what you value most."

In addition to members of the public in the audience, Johnson was joined by some of his teammates and coaches. During his speech, he encouraged the audience to give to Lincoln Trail College.

Johnson was introduced by Andy Corn. He won a contest to be a ball boy when Johnson was at LTC. The two became friends, and Johnson became friends while the entire Corn family.

Johnson was a three-sport athlete at Anderson High School in Indiana and arrived at LTC in 1992. In addition to his All-Conference honors, he earned Honorable Mention All-American recognition in basketball. He transferred to Lamar, where he again played two sports. He transferred a second time to Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, where he was named All-Conference, team MVP, and co-Male Athlete of the Year.

After college, Johnson coached at Fort Wayne and Indiana Tech before coming to LTC as an assistant from 2001-03. He returned to Fort Wayne and then coached at Butler and Ohio State before joining the staff at Purdue.

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## ***MCCOLPIN BECOMES LTC'S FIRST PEER SUPPORT LEADER***

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Lincoln Trail College student Emily McColpin has been named the College's first Peer Support Leader. In her position, she will work closely with Mental Health Specialist Holly O'Brien to build awareness of mental health issues, services, and programs to support student wellbeing and growth.

"I decided to be a peer support leader because I value that everyone goes through hard times, and sometimes we just need someone to talk to," said McColpin. "As a student myself, I can see how it may be intimidating to talk to an adult rather than someone around my age."

O'Brien says that as a Peer Support Leader, McColpin will connect and refer students to college resources as necessary.

"Statistics show that at least 39% of students in college experience a mental health issue, and 1 in 5 adults have a diagnosable mental illness. Mental health is an important piece to a student's success in college and in life."

She says that mental health support helps foster the success of all students and having someone like McColpin will help break down barriers for students needing help and make it more convenient and accessible.

"The hope is to also decrease the stigma often associated with seeking help for mental health challenges."

Helping students will not be the only benefit for McColpin.

"This fits right into my career choice since I am a nursing student, and I deal with a lot of different age groups this will allow me to have more experience talking with others! I chose a very empathetic field of study to be in, and this will just allow me to be able to help others like I have always wanted to do!"

She says that serving as a Peer Support Leader means a lot to her because it gives her the opportunity to be there for other students and to help them with anything that they need help with.

# LTC IN PICTURES



Taylor Dahlberg leads students through a theater exercise during Arts Day.



Angie Compton interacts with a student drawing during Arts Day.



Students enjoyed pumpkin painting, free food, and fun and games while making memories during Fall Fun Day.



A total of 37 students attended the Pizza & Politics event at The Statesmen Grill. They enjoyed pizza while watching the Presidential Debate.



The Oblong Chamber of Commerce toured Lincoln Trail College and visited Student Senate to talk about collaborative opportunities.



Students learn a valuable lesson in the importance of communication while trying to assemble Mars Rovers in an exercise led by Marathon's Brian Barbee.



Students stack books on structures made from paper to learn how durable the post-and-lintel system is.



Lincoln Trail College students took time out of their busy schedules to enjoy a friendly game of kickball.