

# OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE KNIGHTLINE



NOVEMBER 2024

## CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

12 — Ticket Sales Begin for OCC Theater's Production of *A Christmas Carol*, 10 a.m.

12 — Future Teachers Club Meeting, Student Union, noon

22 — Last Day to Withdraw from Fall Semester Classes

22-23 — *A Christmas Carol*, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

24 — *A Christmas Carol*, OCC Theater, 2 p.m.

28-29 — College Closed - Thanksgiving Break

### DECEMBER

2-3 — HLC Visit

6 — Last Day of Fall Semester Classes

9-12 — Spring Semester Textbook Sales Begin

9-12 — Final Exams

12 — Music Department Christmas Concert, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

## College Visits

**Nov. 17** — University of Southern Indiana Representative Simone Payne will be on campus from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## Olney Central College Recognized as One of the Nation's Top Community Colleges

Olney Central College received high marks from Intelligent.com, as the education research website ranked OCC among the top community colleges in the nation.

A widely recognized source for higher education rankings and research, Intelligent.com evaluates each school on academic quality, graduation rate, costs, return on investment and student resources. Top picks are recognized for their commitment to academic excellence and their ability to prepare students for successful careers.

OCC secured the 50th position on Intelligent's 2025 List of Best Community Colleges in the U.S. OCC has consistently made appearances on these prestigious lists including being ranked the No. 3 Community College in Illinois last year.

"We are very excited about Olney Central College's selection in the Intelligent.com Top 50 Community Colleges ranking," said Chris Simpson, OCC President and Vice Chancellor of Business Operations for Illinois Eastern Community Colleges. "This is additional validation of the outstanding opportunity OCC provides to students to receive a high-quality education at an affordable price."

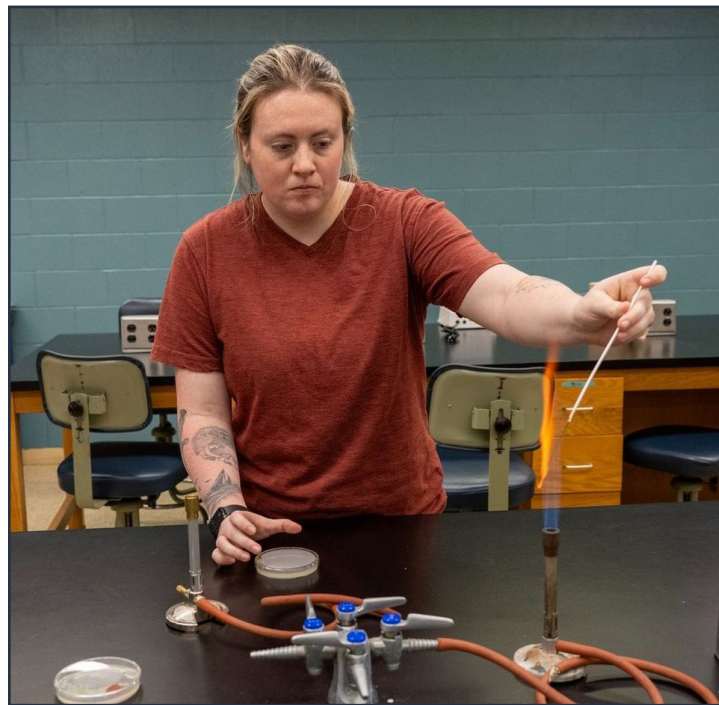
The selections is indicative of the college's continuing efforts to provide academic excellence.

"Olney Central College is a special place that is now entering its seventh decade of assisting students on their journey towards a successful future," Simpson said. "Whether a student is planning to transfer on to earn a bachelor's degree or earn an associate's degree or certificate in a high-demand career and technical area, OCC provides students with this path forward."

Simpson said this recent recognition underscores the college's ongoing mission to deliver exceptional education and services to its students and the communities it serves.

"This mission can only be accomplished with a dedicated faculty and staff that is focused on student success," he added.

Intelligent.com provides hundreds of program rankings on its website as well as information about financial aid, internships and even study strategies. A complete list of rankings is available at the site.



# Music Department Fall Concert

On November 6, the Olney Central College Music Department presented its Fall Concert featuring the OCC Concert and Big Bands along with various chamber ensembles, including a brass ensemble, clarinet trio, saxophone trio and flute quartet.



## OCC Foundation Awards \$30,000 in Mini-Grants

The Olney Central College Foundation has awarded \$30,000 in mini-grants for the 2024-2025 academic year, benefiting a variety of programs across the college.

This year's awards ranged from \$170.93 for the OCC Basketball program to \$11,619 for the Chemistry Department to purchase an optical system and chromatograph.

The OCC Automotive Program received \$1,628.60 for a new tool set while the Collision Repair Program was awarded \$2,297 for a Service Air Compressor.

Other programs recognized with grant funds include Cosmetology, and Woodworking, which received \$3,659 and \$4,618.16 respectively. Cosmetology will use the monies to

purchase new laptops while Woodworking will procure new equipment and tools.

In addition to classroom enhancements, the Foundation allocated funds that will enhance campus activities through Student Senate and TRIO Upward Bound. Monies also were awarded to the Knight Kafe for a new grill.

The OCC Foundation began awarding mini-grants in 2002 and since then has distributed more than \$500,000 to various college departments.

"One of the goals of the OCC Foundation is to be able to enhance student learning and experience at the college by providing equipment that is above and beyond that

which the academic budget allows," said Sherry Brauer, a member of the OCC Foundation Mini Grant Committee.

Faculty and staff at OCC are encouraged to apply for these mini-grants, which are evaluated based on their potential impact on students, prior funding provided to the department and the specific needs outlined in each request.

"The Foundation is able to fund these requests by hosting fundraisers such as golf outings, letter writing campaigns and the recent wine tasting event, along with generous endowments and donations from the community," Brauer added. "The students and faculty have benefited greatly from these gifts."



# Handelsman named Interim Baseball Coach

Olney Central College Baseball will begin spring play under the guidance of Interim Coach Darrell Handelsman.

"I'm proud to carry on the excellent tradition that Coach Dennis Conley established in his 43 years here," Handelsman said. "I've had a long-standing relationship from afar with OCC Baseball. I'm excited to continue turning out really good student athletes."

He added, "I've always had a passion for baseball. This is a special opportunity to share with these guys and I'm looking forward to taking advantage of it."

Handelsman brings more than 25 years' experience to the position, serving as head coach for the Green Bay Bullfrogs and Madison Mallards and most recently completing a second stint as head coach of the Waterloo Bucks. All three teams play in the elite Northwoods Collegiate League. NWL is the largest organized baseball league in the world with 26 teams and more than 340 alumni who have advanced to Major League Baseball.

Handelsman also served as general manager for the Souris Valley Sabre Dogs of the Expedition League and as general manager and head coach of the Fayetteville Swamp Dogs of the America Coastal Plain League. In the Prospect League, he served as head coach of the Alton River Dragons.

During his career, Handelsman has captured 800 career wins in summer collegiate baseball, earning a spot as the second winningest coach in Northwoods Collegiate and Coastal Plain League history. He earned Coach of the Year recognitions numerous times and was named Coach of the Decade in both leagues.

Handelsman was born in New York and grew up in Los Angeles. He earned a bachelor's degree in speech communication from California State University in Northridge. He has two sons, Sam, a freshman at Creighton University, and Benjamin, a sophomore in high school.

Handelsman joined the Blue Knights in late September, giving him the opportunity to work with the team during fall play.

"It's neat I got to have time with the guys to prepare," he said. "I'm excited to get to next semester. We have a lot of work to do between now and then."

Handelsman is eager to share his knowledge and passion for the game with his players.

"I love our guys," he said. "They have done everything I have asked of them. I look forward to seeing them develop as people and players."

Handelsman added, "I love the community so far and I feel like I'm in the right place at the right time."

He also praised assistant Coach Matt McLaren for his help.

"We would not have had as smooth of a transition if it had not been for him," Handelsman said. "He has been a big help to me."



## ER Nurses' Day Gift Baskets

OCC Student Nurses Association officers delivered gift baskets to Carle RMH Emergency Room nurses and OCC graduates Raegan Hires and Brianna Ochs in honor of Emergency Nurses' Day. Students contributed items and local businesses generously donated gift cards to help show appreciation for the dedication of these incredible health-care providers.







## Costume Contest

Olney Central College Active Minds hosted a Halloween Costume Contest on Oct. 31. Prizes were presented to the winners by Holly O'Brien.

**Below left, Best Overall Costume: Lumberjacks, Katelyn Stewart and Nathan Blackwell. Below right, Funniest Costume: Among Us, Jessi Hovious.**



**Best Group Costume: Student Services M&Ms**



**At left, Most Creative Costume: It's Raining Cats and Dogs, Kylie Rauch. At right, Scariest Costume: Scream, Colson Walker.**



# Phi Theta Kappa members attend LIT Conference

Members of OCC's Alpha Theta Eta chapter of Phi Theta Kappa recently attended the Leading Illinois Together (LIT) Conference at Elgin Community College.

The event brought together PTK chapters from across the state, offering a platform for students to expand their leadership skills, engage in chapter-building workshops and connect with fellow honor society members.

The officers participated in sessions designed to equip them with tools to enhance chapter engagement at OCC. The training covered strategies for strengthening their chapter, fostering a more active membership and building a vibrant community that encourages student involvement.

Members also participated in team-building activities and fun social events, allowing officers to bond and strengthen their teamwork skills.



## Spring Registration now underway

Spring registration is now underway. Stop by Student Services or call 618-395-7777 to schedule an appointment with an advisor.

The Spring 2025 schedule is available at [www.iecc.edu/schedules](http://www.iecc.edu/schedules).

OCC is offering several spring Community Education classes including community band and art topics

For a complete listing of classes, visit [www.iecc.edu/occ/communityed](http://www.iecc.edu/occ/communityed).

Spring classes start Monday, January 6.

## Volunteers needed to help with float

Looking for a fun way to spread holiday cheer? Join the team helping create this year's OCC Christmas Float.

Students and staff are invited to help construct and walk with the float during the Olney Christmas Parade on November 30. Candy donations are also being accepted.

For more information, contact Courtney Crawford at 618-863-1032 or at [crawfordc@iecc.edu](mailto:crawfordc@iecc.edu).

*Bring in the holiday spirit*

as Olney Central College Theater presents



Performances

November 22 & 23 @ 7:00 pm

November 24 @ 2:00 pm

at the Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center

Tickets \$13 - On Sale November 12 @ 10:00 am

[www.iecc.edu/occ/theater](http://www.iecc.edu/occ/theater)

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