

# NETWORK



JANUARY 2025



## HIGHLIGHTS



*Nucor Skyline's donation to welding program helps strengthen partnership.*



*Mallery Mundy's LTC journey served as a foundation to shape her future.*



*International students celebrate the holidays.*

## LTC HOSTS ANNUAL ETIQUETTE LUNCHEON FOR OBLONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Students from Oblong High School's FFA and FBLA programs visited Lincoln Trail College for the annual Etiquette Luncheon, an event designed to teach professional dining skills, social etiquette, and networking strategies.

The luncheon, organized and led by LTC President Tona Ambrose, provides students with hands-on experience in formal dining settings.

"I often start the event by having students take a deep breath and then I promise that by the time they leave, they will know what to do with each and every fork, spoon, and knife spread out all around them," Ambrose said.

Beyond table manners, the luncheon emphasizes social awareness, professional attire, and communication skills. Ambrose said the goal is to ensure students feel confident in formal dining situations, whether at a wedding reception, scholarship banquet, or business dinner.



## UPCOMING FEBRUARY EVENTS

- 5-14 Celebrate Art! Children's Art Show**  
7:30-4:30, Learning Commons
- 5 Celebrate Art! Children's Art Show Open House**  
6 p.m., Learning Commons & Statesmen Grill
- 10 Business Operations Town Hall Meeting**  
9-11 a.m., Lincoln Room
- 11 Institutional Outreach Town Hall Meeting**  
1-3 p.m., Williams Hall Conference Room
- 14 U of I Extension Eat. Save. Move. Booth**  
9:30-2, Williams Hall
- 17 COLLEGE CLOSED - Presidents Day**
- 18 Student Affairs Town Hall Meeting**  
1-2 p.m., Lincoln Room
- IECC Board of Trustees Meeting**  
6:15 p.m., Statesmen Grill
- 26 Eagleton Book Club**  
6 p.m., Learning Commons
- 27 LTC Foundation Meeting**  
12 p.m., Lincoln Room
- 28 Midterm**

The event began four years ago when Oblong High School's FFA and FBLA leaders sought a way to introduce their students to professional etiquette. Since then, LTC has hosted the event annually, providing both the dining experience and a campus tour.

This year's luncheon also marked a milestone for longtime Oblong High School FFA advisor Kerry Travis, who is set to retire at the end of the school year. To honor his contributions, Ambrose and the students made a special toast, offering a real-time lesson on how to give a proper toast at formal events.

The luncheon is a collaborative effort, with LTC faculty, staff, and community volunteers assisting in various roles. Taylor Newlin and her team at the Statesmen Grill prepare the five-course meal, while LTC faculty and staff serve as table hosts and servers. Ambrose said these interactions help students build early connections with LTC personnel, easing their transition should they choose to enroll at the college.

"Events like this help students develop confidence in professional settings while also fostering relationships that can benefit them in the future," Ambrose said.

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## NUCOR SKYLINE DONATES TO LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE WELDING PROGRAM

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Lincoln Trail College's Welding program recently received a generous donation from Nucor Skyline, further strengthening the partnership between the college and industry leaders.

The donation will provide critical resources for the Welding program, specifically supporting the purchase of steel used in lab and hands-on training portions of the welding classes. The contribution comes in response to discussions during a recent Welding advisory committee meeting, where industry partners were made aware of the rising costs of materials and equipment.

“During our recent Welding advisory committee meeting this fall, we let our community partners know what supplies and equipment we require to provide classes to our students,” said Amy Tarr, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Associate Dean of Instruction. “The rising cost of resources was discussed, and we let them know that we gladly accept donations from our industry partners.”

Tarr emphasized the value of industry partnerships, noting that they help the college stay current with advancements in the welding industry. “Our industry partners are our source to the latest in advancements and training needed in this fast-growing and ever-changing industry. By forging these partnerships, we are staying up to date and allowing our students to see what the local workforce is in their area.”



Eric Pitts, Quality Control Manager at Nucor Skyline, highlighted the company's commitment to supporting educational initiatives and building relationships with the local community.

“Nucor Skyline was invited to the Welding program's advisory board meeting in November,” Pitts said. “In talking with staff and instructors, it became apparent that additional funding would be beneficial to the program so they could keep providing quality instruction to the welding technology students.”

Pitts further expressed Nucor Skyline's desire to help students prepare for careers in the welding industry. “Nucor Skyline believes in being a good neighbor and giving back to the communities where we are located. We also believe it is important to support students looking to begin a career in the welding industry, no matter what direction their path may take them. We hope to continue and expand our relationship not only financially, but also by sourcing and procuring materials, offering advice from industry experts, and providing direct communication to students regarding welding, safety, and opportunities in the field.”

Lincoln Trail College President Tona Ambrose underscored the significance of the connection between Nucor Skyline and the college, especially as one of the company's representatives, Tanner Holt, is an LTC alumnus.

“It's inspiring to see how our graduates give back to the college and community that helped shape their careers,” said Ambrose. “When we can build these meaningful partnerships, our students benefit by gaining access to essential resources, industry expertise, and opportunities for real-world training.”

Nucor Skyline is part of Nucor Corporation, the largest steel manufacturer in the United States. The company produces approximately 20 million tons of steel annually and employs more than 32,000 teammates nationwide. Nucor Skyline's Newton facility specializes in manufacturing large-diameter steel pipe for the heavy foundation market, supplying projects across the country.

## **MALLORY MUNDY: FROM LTC TO DEPAUW AND BEYOND**



For many students, community college serves as a stepping stone, a place to gain experience, explore opportunities, and prepare for the next phase of life. For Mallory Mundy, Lincoln Trail College was much more than that. It was a foundation that shaped her personally and professionally, leading her to DePauw University and now to an exciting career with iHeart Media.

### **Discovering a Community at Lincoln Trail College**

When Mundy first arrived at LTC, her primary focus was soccer. However, she quickly realized that the college had so much more to offer.

"It didn't take long after arriving to LTC to see all the reasons to stay," she recalls. "The community aspect was huge for me. Every local business, high school, professor, and member of the community cares for LTC and puts in the work to give students the most opportunities."

Her involvement in various student organizations, including Phi Theta Kappa, student government, and the TRIO program, provided her with valuable skills that would later help in her transition to DePauw. "TRIO helped with transfer application fees and scholarships. Phi Theta Kappa gave me public speaking and leadership experience, and student government helped with time management and event planning. Everything offered at LTC gives you a leg up at your next institution."

### **Transitioning to DePauw University**

As Mundy considered her transfer options, DePauw University stood out. Interestingly, she first learned about DePauw through her marketing internship with Chris Forde at LTC.

"He highlighted the excellent education and learning experiences he had from his alma mater, and that was what I was looking for," she explains. "I ended up scheduling a visit to DePauw the next week, loved the campus and everyone I met, and later, I contacted DePauw's soccer coach. I ended up getting an offer to play soccer as well."

Thanks to the rigorous academics and support she received at LTC, the transition to DePauw was smooth.

"DePauw took almost all my classes, and I found that my classes were easier at DePauw because Lincoln Trail had taught me ahead of what was necessary."

Beyond the academics, DePauw's small class sizes and engaged professors helped Mundy thrive. "Having the opportunity to make solid relationships with all my professors was a huge part of my DePauw experience. I think my biggest class had 10 students, so we all got to know our professors and peers well."

Mundy also credits her time on DePauw's soccer team for shaping her discipline and time

management skills. “We had a very strict training schedule, and this made me invest a lot of time into my physical and mental health.”

### **Advice for Transfer Students**

For students considering a transfer from LTC to a four-year university, Mundy has one key message: “It is 100% worth it.”

She emphasizes the importance of planning ahead and using the available resources. “The transfer process from Lincoln Trail was relatively smooth for me, and I think in large part because I started looking early. Remember there are always resources to answer questions, so find those people and send some emails!”

### **Entering the Professional World**

After graduating from DePauw, Mundy began her career journey with a job that wasn't the right fit. Recognizing that it didn't align with who she wanted to be, she took the bold step of seeking new opportunities.



“As soon as I came to that conclusion, I started looking for something better, and I knew I wasn't okay with settling. After a lot of work, I found out that iHeart Media wanted to give me a shot, and it has been a dream come true.”

At iHeart Media, the world's largest audio company, Mundy has found an exciting career path in sales. “The two biggest things for me were career development and culture. Not only are we the largest audio company in the world, but we are rapidly expanding to streaming services as well. There is so much to learn.”

What excites her most about the job is the variety. “I love how every day is different. One day I may be out in the local community, and the next I could be on a virtual call with a marketing director for a huge company based in California. There are always new faces, new advice, and more experiences to come.”

### **Looking Ahead**

Mundy's journey is far from over. “My plan is to be a part of our CEO club for a few years here, which is a program that shows you are continually a top performer. I also still plan to continue school. That may be law school or a master's related to communication and leadership. It is hard to say step by step what will happen, but I know that there is so much more to come.”

### **Encouragement for LTC Students**

For current LTC students, Mundy offers a piece of advice: “If you are at all interested in getting involved in the clubs, community, or any extracurriculars, then do it! Go to every class, ask questions, and get to know your peers. I met some of my best friends during my time at LTC, so never shy away from getting to know those around you.”

She also encourages students to take chances and pursue their dreams. “Find your north star and then go after it. Find the one thing that makes you happier than anything else. Sometimes you don't need to ask questions. We're all human, and we like plans, but take as many chances as humanly possible.”

## AUDITIONS ANNOUNCED FOR LTC'S PRODUCTION OF FOOTLOOSE

The Arts at Lincoln Trail College is proud to announce auditions for its spring production of "Footloose," scheduled for Jan. 30 and 31 at 5 p.m. in the Zwermann Performing Arts Center.

"Footloose" tells the story of Ren and his mother as they move from Chicago to a small farming town. Unprepared for the town's strict ban on dancing, instituted by a local preacher aiming to control the youth, Ren challenges the status quo. The narrative unfolds into a heartfelt tale contrasting a father's longing for his lost son with a young man's yearning for the father who left him. To the rockin' rhythm of its Oscar and Tony-nominated Top 40 score, augmented with dynamic new songs, Footloose celebrates the wisdom of listening to young people while guiding them with a warm heart and open mind.

Audition participants will be asked to perform a 30-second monologue of their choice, sing one of the preselected sides, and dance a set piece of choreography. No prior experience is necessary, and individuals who don't consider themselves singers or dancers are encouraged to try something new.

Rehearsals will begin on Feb. 10. Performances are slated for April 4, 5, 11, and 12 at 7 p.m. and April 6 and 13 at 2 p.m. Tickets, priced at \$15, will be available at the box office or online starting March 8.

For more information or to access audition materials, please contact Taylor Dahlberg at [dahlbergt@iecc.edu](mailto:dahlbergt@iecc.edu).



## LTC CELEBRATING YOUNG ARTISTS



Lincoln Trail College is hosting two upcoming events to celebrate young artists in the community.

The Children's Art Show will run from February 3 to 14 in the Learning Commons. Students in grades one through eight will have their artwork on display, showcasing their creativity across various mediums. There's an open house planned for the artists and their family and friends and the community on February 4 from 6-7:30 p.m.

In March, the college will host the "Celebrate Art!" Juried Art Show, a one-day event for high school students. This program, open to students in grades nine through twelve, will take place on March 4. Participants can submit artwork in categories including drawing, painting, computer-generated art, 3D artwork, and photography. Entries will be judged on creativity, composition, and technique.

Both events highlight the artistic achievements of area students and reflect Lincoln Trail College's commitment to fostering creativity and education in the arts.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS WITH LTC COMMUNITY



For many international students at Lincoln Trail College, the holiday season looks different from what they're used to back home. But this year, thanks to the kindness of the LTC community, students staying in the U.S. over winter break found warmth, hospitality, and a few special moments to make the season bright.

Cristobal "Cris" Vargas, an international student at Olney Central College, and Luis "Dudu" Rocha, an international student at LTC, stayed on campus through the Christmas break. While campus life was quiet, the two found ways to celebrate, including a special evening with the Ambrose family. LTC President Tona Ambrose, along with her family—Mark, Isaac, and

Haley—welcomed Cris and Dudu into their home, giving them a taste of holiday hospitality.

Before the break, LTC's International Student Liaison Rachel Greenwood hosted a Christmas party for LTC's international students and soccer coaches. While OCC's international basketball players opted to rest up for their game the next day, those who attended enjoyed a night of food, fun, and festive cheer.

One of the most memorable exchanges of the season came from a simple, yet meaningful, cross-cultural tradition—sharing chocolates. In August, Shaheen Chebil, an LTC international student from France, arrived on campus with a special gift: chocolates from his family. Greenwood and her family enjoyed the treat, sending a picture back to the Chebil family as a thank-you. Before Shaheen returned home for the holidays, Greenwood sent him off with American chocolates to share in return. The Chebil family later responded with a photo of their own, enjoying the sweets from the U.S.

For these international students, the holidays were more than just a break from classes—they were a reminder that home isn't just a place, but the people who make you feel welcome.



## LTC RELEASES FALL 2024 ACADEMIC HONORS

Lincoln Trail College has released its academic honor lists for the Fall 2024 Semester. Three lists have been established by Illinois Eastern Community Colleges to indicate students who have achieved academic excellence. They are the Chancellor's Honors List, the President's Academic Honors List, and the Dean's Academic Honors List.

To qualify for any of the honor lists, a student must be enrolled full-time (12 hours or more) and must be taking college-level classes.



To be named to the Chancellor's Academic Honors List, students must achieve a grade point average of 3.90 or greater on a 4.0 scale; between 3.75 and 3.89 for the President's Academic Honors List; and between 3.50 and 3.74 for the Dean's Academic Honor's List.

The following students have earned Fall 2024 academic honors:

### CHANCELLOR'S ACADEMIC HONORS LIST

Chayse Aldrich, Collin Alger, Luke Anderson, Ashton Bullard, Sajjen Chester, Kelliann Clapp, Madison Davis, Bernardo Deberaldini, Jessica Henry, Khamryn Hopkins, Kylee Hosman, Elise Lampert, Gracie Lemmon, Chance Moscardelli, Adam Newell, Peyton Osteen, Jeremiah Patterson, Judson Pinkston, Kollin Ramos, Nathan Rich, Levi Richardson, Faith Shull, Joshua Silva, Adyson Smith, Lucas Smith, Colleen Steber, Autumn Stevenson, Rebecca Trivett, Brynndalyn Varner, Paige Waggoner, David Wilson, Bianca Wyatt.

### PRESIDENT'S ACADEMIC HONORS LIST

James Attwood, Cameron Baker, Louison Beaumont, Joseph Bonds, Leigh Carnes, Kaitlyn Cooper, Kaley Flynn, John Gafner, Eliot Gallaher, Barbara Golish, Jared Jackson, Lidia Kelsey, Aubrey Lawson, Maxwell Layne, Benjamin Meier, Jazmin Osborn, Jaycee Phillips, Samuel Rickman, Jeremy Schwartz, Sally Shelton, Maci Smith, Dalton Spahn, Kendyn Syfert, Cole Tingley, Aiden Vandehatert, Joelee Wiseman, Catelyn Witte, Kaydence Woodsmall, Kline Woodward, Melanie Wyatt.

### DEAN'S ACADEMIC HONORS LIST

Elijah Bearden, Claire Boehm, Andrew Brandenburger, Evan Daugherty, Kaitlyn Didion, Bailey Duke, Erika Garrard, Andrew Gilliam, Anna Hargrave, Kevin Hilton, Dawn Holmes, Harley Jean, Hunter McBride, Clair McGehee, Samiah Mitchell, Cassie Morehead, Jayden Nantz, Bella Nottger, Elahna Perry, Jacqueline Reel, Laniya Richardson, Kassey Shipman, Gabriel Skelton, Horacio Solis, Brooklynn Stubblefield, Duke Thompson, Faith Tooloose, Cole Weber, Elijah White, Caitlyn Wilson.





## FEBRUARY ATHLETIC EVENTS

### Baseball

7	at Northwest-Shoals Community College (DH)	12:00
8	at Northwest-Shoals Community College (DH)	12:00
14	at Georgia Highland Colleges (DH)	12:00
15	at Georgia Highland Colleges (DH)	12:00
21	at Calhoun Community College (DH)	12:00
22	at Calhoun Community College	12:00
28	at Vincennes University Classic	TBA

### Men's Basketball

1	Olney Central College	3:00
5	at Vincennes University	6:00
8	at Shawnee Community College	3:00
12	Greenville University	7:00
15	Wabash Valley College	3:00
19	at Kaskaskia College	6:00
22	at Rend Lake College	3:00
26	Lake Land College	7:00

### Softball

15	Pellissippi State (at NEMCC Tigerfest)	1:00
15	at Northeast Mississippi CC (Tigerfest)	3:00
16	Jefferson College (DH) (at Tigerfest)	10:00

### Women's Basketball

1	Olney Central College	1:00
5	at Vincennes University	4:00
8	at Shawnee Community College	1:00
12	Shawnee Community College	5:00
15	Wabash Valley College	1:00
22	at Rend Lake College	1:00

## NUGENT COMMITS TO LOUISVILLE



A Lincoln Trail College basketball player has been honored by the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame. The Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Board of Directors honored Ron Dokes ('02) as a member of the 2025 Men's Silver Anniversary Team.

Dokes, a 6-9 forward, was a McDonald's All-American nominee, AP honorable mention All-state, IBCA honorable mention All-State, first team all-Northern Indiana Conference, and South Bend Tribune first-team All-Metro player his senior season at South Bend Riley. He averaged 16.4 points, 11.0 rebounds, 2.0 assists, and 2.5 blocks that season.

As a sophomore at LTC, Dokes was named the team MVP, first-team all-Great

Rivers Athletic Conference and NJCAA all-Region 24. He averaged 11.7 points and 6.7 rebounds that season.

After graduating from LTC, Dokes played at Duquesne University where he averaged 9.4 points and 4.9 rebounds over his two seasons. He was a team captain his senior year.

He played professional basketball from 2004 to 2007 in Turkey, France, the Dominican Republic, Bahrain, and in the CBA, ABA, and WBA.



Ron Dokes ('02) reads to children in 2001.

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER – HAPPY NEW YEAR AND GO TELL THE WORLD!**

Happy New Year, Lincoln Trail Family and Friends! I am excited for what this Spring semester will bring, can already envision students walking across the stage at our May graduation, and can't wait to celebrate with the Class of 2025.

In addition to doing all that we can to support and help our current students thrive, we are simultaneously focusing on the new students who will join our LTC student body this summer and fall. There is a lot of talk nation-wide and much that is written these days about college enrollment, and that is certainly the case at IECC - many of our strategic planning meetings and conversations revolve around increasing our enrollment across the district, yet the discussions are never just about the numbers. Behind this focus on growing our enrollment is also a commitment to remain student-centered and to recruit, attract, and support students who will attend LTC and bloom here where they are planted. We welcome diverse students who will learn to navigate their new post-secondary environment with embedded support services, students who have not yet figured out what career they may want to pursue, yet can be guided into a pathway that best fits their interests, and students who can get a strong start academically and personally, while taking classes that are rigorous AND affordable.

Stories shared monthly in this newsletter - like Mallory Mundy's and countless others - are evidence that LTC is an amazing place to "go to college," and we want the world to know it. I'm proud of LTC - our faculty, staff, and students, and I want more students to come and experience what I'm talking about and to know what students who have attended here have to say. Yes, our aim is to increase enrollment, because when we do that, then we are providing even more students with these same opportunities to be successful and transform their lives. Please join me in "telling the world" this year how wonderful LTC is, how choosing any of our IECC schools is a great choice, regardless if students are looking for a transfer degree or a career and technical certificate of some kind. There truly is something at LTC for everyone. Whether it be full or part-time studies, community education classes, participating in or attending a choral or theater production, college for kids summer programming, or coming to watch a sporting event, we welcome you out to LTC anytime. Tell a neighbor or a friend, encourage your own kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews to call to schedule a campus tour, and share this newsletter and other stories of how LTC is impacting the lives of people in and around our community, and let's make this 2025 year one to remember—together.

## **LTC IN PICTURES**



LTC recognized three-year employees Angel Kerner, Heather Watts, and Cameron Ireland at its Spring Workshop.



LTC recognized five-year employees Mike Wagaman and Dennis York at its Spring Workshop.



LTC recognized ten-year employees Danelle Davis, Chris Forde, and Robyn Zachary at its Spring Workshop.



Winter's quiet magic blankets the path to Lincoln Trail College. Frost-kissed trees, crisp air, and a sky painted in pastels helped start a new day in January.