

NETWORK



FEBRUARY 2025



HIGHLIGHTS



A love story written on the diamond: how LTC brought Ross and Nikki Westdorp together.



Felipe Silva ('23) has turned his passion for soccer into a budding career in journalism.



Jordan Brewer ('18) has been inducted into a Hall of Fame.

LTC CELEBRATES CTE MONTH WITH HANDS-ON LEARNING AND STUDENT STORIES

At Lincoln Trail College, Career and Technical Education is more than just classroom learning—it's hands-on training that prepares students for real-world success. Whether welding, telecommunications, process technology, or health careers, LTC's CTE programs provide students with the skills and confidence to launch successful careers.

Learning by Doing

Instructors at Lincoln Trail College emphasize hands-on learning, ensuring students are job-ready from day one. Welding Instructor Jackson Hemrich understands the value of real-world experience. "We spend a lot of time on welding projects, so students gain experience that translates directly to the workplace," he said.

For students like Evan Riggle, who thrives in hands-on environments, LTC's welding program provided the perfect opportunity. "I've always learned better by doing rather



UPCOMING MARCH EVENTS

- 3 NO CLASSES - Casimir Pulaski Day (Obs.)
- 4-7 NO CLASSES - Spring Break
- 4 **Celebrate Art!**
9-11 a.m., Theater, Statesmen Grill, Learning Commons
- 5 **Twin Rivers Career Day**
8 a.m.-12 p.m., Campus
- 6 **Young Women Lead**
8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 8 **Ticket Sales begin for Footloose**
- 25 **Community Employment Workshop**
8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Theater Hallway
- 26 **Eagleton Book Club**
6 p.m., Learning Commons
- 27 **LTC Foundation Meeting**
12 p.m., Lincoln Room
- Pancake Night**
6 p.m., Statesmen Grill

than reading from a book. This program has helped me develop the skills I need to succeed,” he said.

The Broadband Telecom program offers the same level of applied learning. Dennis York, a graduate of the program and now an instructor, ensures his students develop critical technical skills while also preparing them for the workforce. “We combine technical knowledge with hands-on training. Students learn pole climbing, fiber splicing, and how to operate heavy equipment,” he explained.

For Robby Eller, a senior in high school and in his second year as a Broadband Telecom student, that hands-on component made all the difference. “I love that we get to physically do the work instead of just reading about it. That experience makes everything click,” he said.

In the Process Technology program, instructor Tina Lindley uses her 33 years of industry experience to bring learning to life. “You can read all you want, but hands-on learning makes the difference. Here, students work with actual equipment they’ll use in the field,” she said.

Dennis York: From Student to Instructor

For York, Lincoln Trail College isn’t just where he teaches—it’s where he got his start. A graduate of the Broadband Telecom program, York built a successful career in telecommunications before returning to LTC to train the next generation of professionals.

“Coming through this program years ago and then working in the industry gave me an incredible foundation,” York said. “Now, I get to come back and teach future broadband telecommunication specialists how to do this job. It’s like coming home.”

York emphasizes that LTC’s Broadband Telecom program is unique in its blend of classroom instruction, hands-on training, and industry partnerships. Students spend the majority of their time working with real-world equipment, learning how to splice fiber, climb utility poles, and operate heavy machinery.

The impact of York’s experience as a former student is evident in his teaching. “I know what it’s like to be in their shoes. I know the challenges they’ll face when they step into the workforce, and I make sure they leave this program feeling prepared and confident,” he said.

His passion for the program and dedication to his students have helped make LTC a leader in Broadband Telecom education. “We have more job opportunities than we have students for this field. Companies are desperate for trained professionals, and we’re working hard to meet that demand,” he said.



For students like Chase Jones, having an instructor who has been in the field makes a difference. “Dennis is always there when we need help. He makes sure we understand everything before moving on,” Jones said.



One-on-One Attention and a Supportive Environment

Beyond hands-on training, students at LTC benefit from small class sizes and personalized instruction. Welding alumna Kylar Worstell ('24) credits her instructors with helping her build confidence in a challenging field. “Even after I graduated, my instructors still let me come in and practice. It's like having a second family,” she said.

For Amber Greenwell, a Certified Medical Assistant student, the one-on-one support has been essential. “If I struggle, I know I can get the help I need.

That personal attention has helped me succeed instead of falling behind,” she said.

The flexibility of LTC's CMA program allows students to balance education with other responsibilities. “We offer online and evening classes, making it accessible for students who are working or have families,” said Dr. Jared Gullett, Health Careers Instructor.

A Legacy of Skilled Workers

For some students, enrolling at LTC means carrying on a family tradition. Capri Ramsey is a fourth-generation welder, following in the footsteps of her father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. “It's an incredible feeling to be learning the same trade my family has worked in for generations. I'm standing in the same spot my dad was in 20 years ago,” she said.

Similarly, Eller is a third-generation telecommunications professional. “I grew up hearing stories about my family working in telecom, and now I get to continue that tradition. It's amazing to be learning the same skills they used,” he said.

Pathways to High-Demand Careers

CTE programs at LTC provide clear pathways to high-paying, in-demand jobs. Worstell is now preparing to take a welding certification test for a pipefitting union. “LTC set me up for success. I feel confident and prepared for my career,” she said.

Instructor Travis Matthews emphasized the strong job market for telecom graduates. “We have more job opportunities than we have students for this field. Many companies use our paid internships as a try-before-you-buy approach to hiring,” he said.

For Process Technology student Kollin Ramos, the program's career-focused curriculum was a major draw. “I started working in the industry at 18, and I wanted to further my knowledge. LTC's program is getting me to my career faster,” he said.

Health careers also continue to be in high demand. “I get calls for internships and job openings every week. Sometimes it feels like we can't graduate students fast enough to meet employer demand,” said Dr. Gullett.

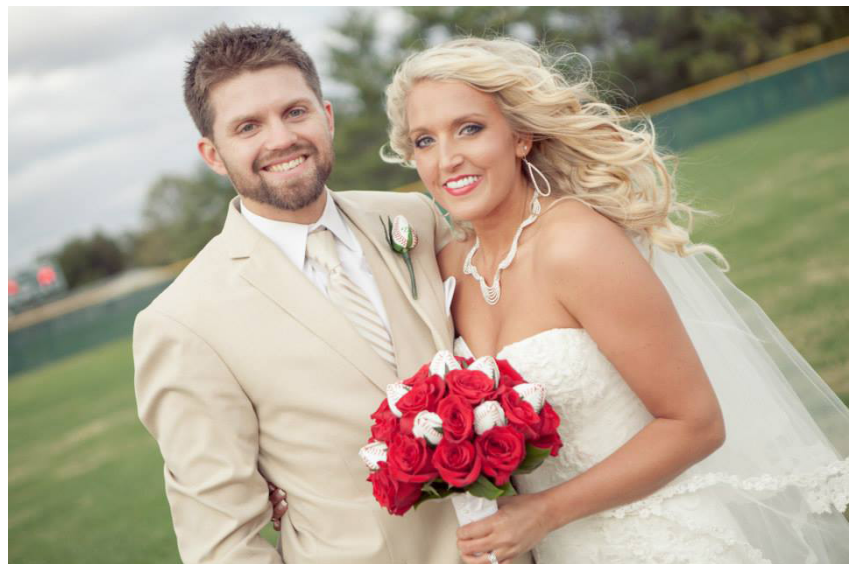
A LOVE STORY WRITTEN ON THE DIAMOND: HOW LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE BROUGHT ROSS AND NIKKI WESTDORP TOGETHER



Some love stories begin with a grand gesture or a chance encounter in a far-off place. For Ross and Nikki Westdorp, it all started in the halls of Lincoln Trail College—between classes, on the ballfields, and in the quiet moments of campus life. What began as a simple friendship grew into something greater, standing the test of time, distance, and the challenges of college athletics. Years later, they returned to the place where it all began, not as students, but as husband and wife—saying “I do” on the very field that had been their home for so many innings.

The First Meeting

Their story began in 2006. Nikki, a high school senior taking dual credit courses at LTC, spent time in the same hallways as Ross, a student-athlete on the baseball team. Those early interactions planted the seeds of something special, but neither of them knew just how significant the college would become in their journey together.



“It took a while,” Nikki admits. “We met in January of 2006 and didn’t get engaged until June of 2013! We made it through our college years together and worked through stints of long-distance relationships while going to different colleges after LTC.”

Through the years, Nikki realized Ross was “the one” because of his problem-solving nature. “He would figure out any issue thrown at us,” she says—a skill that proved invaluable in both sports and life.

The Bond of Student-Athletes

As student-athletes, Ross and Nikki shared an understanding of dedication, perseverance, and commitment—qualities that also formed the backbone of their relationship. “Being a student-athlete is very demanding,” Ross says. “It takes hard work, determination, and commitment, just like a relationship does.”

Their mutual drive strengthened their connection, helping them navigate both the challenges of collegiate sports and the transitions that followed.

LTC: A Stepping Stone with Lasting Impact

At the time, LTC felt like just another step in their journey. But as they moved on, they realized how profoundly it had shaped them. “When you’re young, you kind of overlook the importance of a small stepping stone like LTC,” Nikki reflects. “Until you leave. Once you leave, you look back and see how special it truly was.”

That appreciation made their decision to get married at LTC even more meaningful.

A Wedding Like No Other



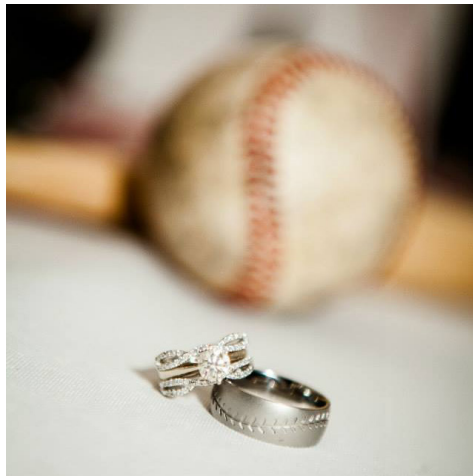
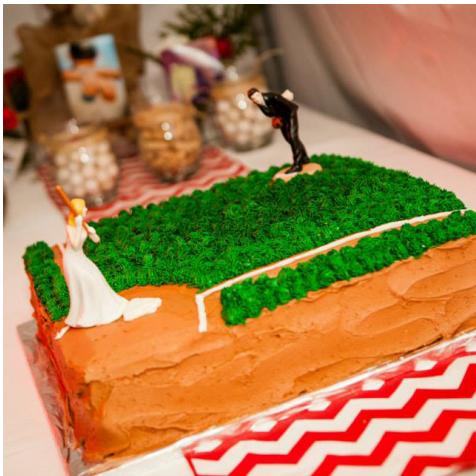
When it came time to plan their wedding in 2014, Ross and Nikki wanted something unique—something that honored their roots. “We were young and broke,” Nikki laughs. “But really, in Robinson, there weren’t many options at the time. We wanted to change it up from the ordinary church scene.”

So they turned to the place where their story began: Parker Field.

With Nikki’s eye for themes, the wedding transformed into a true baseball experience. The couple handed out programs styled like a starting lineup and announced their wedding party like batters stepping up to the plate. Team Bride and Team Groom occupied the first and third base dugouts, hidden behind banners featuring their bridal party’s photos until their big reveal.

Guests, seated on bleachers set up on the field, received popcorn and Cracker Jacks while they waited. The ring bearer carried a baseball glove filled with “rose” petals made from real baseball leather, while the flower girl walked with him, tossing petals from the pitching mound to home plate.

For Ross’s grand entrance, he stepped onto home plate and signaled for Nikki—who emerged from a pop-up tent at second base, making her way to him.



Even the smallest details embraced the baseball theme: the florist designed bouquets to resemble baseball seams, the couple’s cake mimicked a baseball field, and Ross’s wedding band featured engraved baseball stitches. The scoreboard proudly displayed the date: 10-4-14.

“It was a long time coming,” Nikki says. “But it felt so refreshing to come full circle—back to where it all began.”



Staying Connected to LTC

Today, the Westdorps remain tied to LTC, not just in memories but in presence. They're active members of the Rec Center and still keep in touch with former coaches. Ross even donated his time and construction skills to help finish the baseball locker room, continuing to give back to the program that meant so much to him.

“We also catch a game every now and again when our schedule allows,” Ross adds.

Advice for Current Students

For those currently walking LTC's hallways, the Westdorps offer simple but powerful advice: embrace the experience. “Take advantage of the small-town community,” Nikki encourages. “Our community is truly special. Get involved, make relationships, and keep a positive attitude.”

And, as their own story proves, you never know where those relationships might lead.

“Who knows,” Nikki laughs, “that positive mindset might score you your husband or wife in the halls at LTC!”

A Forever Home at LTC

Ross and Nikki's love story is more than just a romance—it's a testament to the lasting impact of a place like Lincoln Trail College. What started as two student-athletes pursuing their dreams turned into a shared journey, one that will always be connected to the college that brought them together.

“For us, LTC has and will continue to be so special,” they say. “If it weren't for LTC, we would never have met.”

And with every trip back to Parker Field, they're reminded that their greatest victory wasn't just on the field—it was finding each other.



FROM LINCOLN TRAIL TO THE SOCCER SPOTLIGHT: FELIPE SILVA'S JOURNEY



Felipe Silva ('23) has always had soccer in his blood. Growing up in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the sport was more than just a game—it was a way of life. His dream, like many young athletes, was to become a professional player. But life had other plans, and while his path didn't lead him to a playing career, it took him somewhere just as meaningful: the world of sports journalism.

Felipe's journey brought him to Lincoln Trail College, where he played soccer while pursuing his education. The transition to life in the United States came with its challenges, particularly adjusting to a new language and culture. But LTC became a home away from home.

"Lincoln Trail College played a fundamental role in my journey," Felipe says. "I grew so much as a person and professionally while I was there. The staff was incredibly kind and made me feel comfortable speaking English, even when I wasn't fully confident. They truly made me feel at home."

It wasn't just the welcoming environment that made an impact on Felipe—it was also the opportunities he found. While at LTC, he worked in the college's Marketing Department, where he

gained valuable skills in media, storytelling, and content creation.

"I started working in the Marketing Department, and that experience was key for me," he explains. "It gave me a foundation in writing, social media, and communication that I still use today in my work with Território MLS."

Covering Major League Soccer

Felipe's passion for soccer never faded, and after graduating from LTC, he found a new way to stay connected to the sport—this time from behind the scenes. He reached out to Território MLS, a media outlet covering Major League Soccer for a Brazilian audience, pitching himself as a correspondent.

"I had been following Território MLS for a while, and I realized that, since I was already living in the U.S. and knew the league, I could contribute," Felipe says. "I sent them a message explaining who I was, my experience, and how I could be a good asset to them. They responded, and we started from there."

Now, Felipe is a correspondent covering MLS teams in the Midwest, including Saint Louis City SC, Minnesota United FC, Columbus Crew, FC Cincinnati, and Sporting Kansas City. His work involves gathering news, writing reports and articles, and creating content for Território MLS's website and Instagram.

"Soccer has been a huge part of my life, and being able to write about it, especially for

people back home in Brazil, means so much to me,” he says. “Not being able to accomplish my dream of playing professionally was hard, but journalism gave a new meaning to the sport I love. It’s brought back the joy I felt as a kid, and it’s shown me how much I can achieve.”

Expanding His Reach

Felipe isn’t stopping at written journalism. As he works toward finishing his bachelor’s degree, he’s taking every opportunity to grow his experience in sports media. Last year, he was invited to join Bola em Jogo, a popular soccer talk show on Brazil’s Radio Tupi, a station that has been on the air since 1934.

“It was an incredible experience,” Felipe says. “I got to share the table with Gerson, also known as Canhotinha de Ouro, who

won the World Cup for Brazil and played alongside Pelé. We talked for three hours about the biggest soccer stories of the week, the Brazilian national team, and the top clubs from Rio de Janeiro.”



Felipe is also developing a new broadcasting project with his university’s marketing department. His goal is to enhance the quality of sports coverage by bringing in expert commentators, conducting pre- and post-game interviews, and creating social media content to recap the athletic week.

“We’re working on making game broadcasts more engaging,” he explains. “We want to give audiences more insight, more analysis, and more personality. It’s another way for me to build my skills and expand my career in sports media.”

The Future

Looking ahead, Felipe has big ambitions. His dream is to one day cover the world’s most prestigious soccer tournaments—the FIFA World Cup, Copa Libertadores, and the UEFA Champions League. His ultimate goal? A role with a major international broadcaster like ESPN.

“My dream is to reach thousands—maybe even millions—of people with my analysis and views about football,” Felipe says. “I want to be on the biggest stages, covering the most important tournaments in the world.”

As he works toward that goal, he remains deeply grateful for the foundation Lincoln Trail College gave him.

“I always try to express how thankful I am for the opportunities LTC and Cris (head of the marketing department) gave me,” Felipe says. “The environment at LTC is truly special, especially for international students. It gave me the support and confidence I needed to get to where I am today.”

CAST ANNOUNCED FOR LTC'S PRODUCTION OF FOOTLOOSE

The Arts at Lincoln Trail College has announced the cast and production team for its upcoming production of Footloose the Musical, directed by Taylor Dahlberg. Performances will take place April 11-13 and 18-20 at the Zwermann Arts Center Theater.

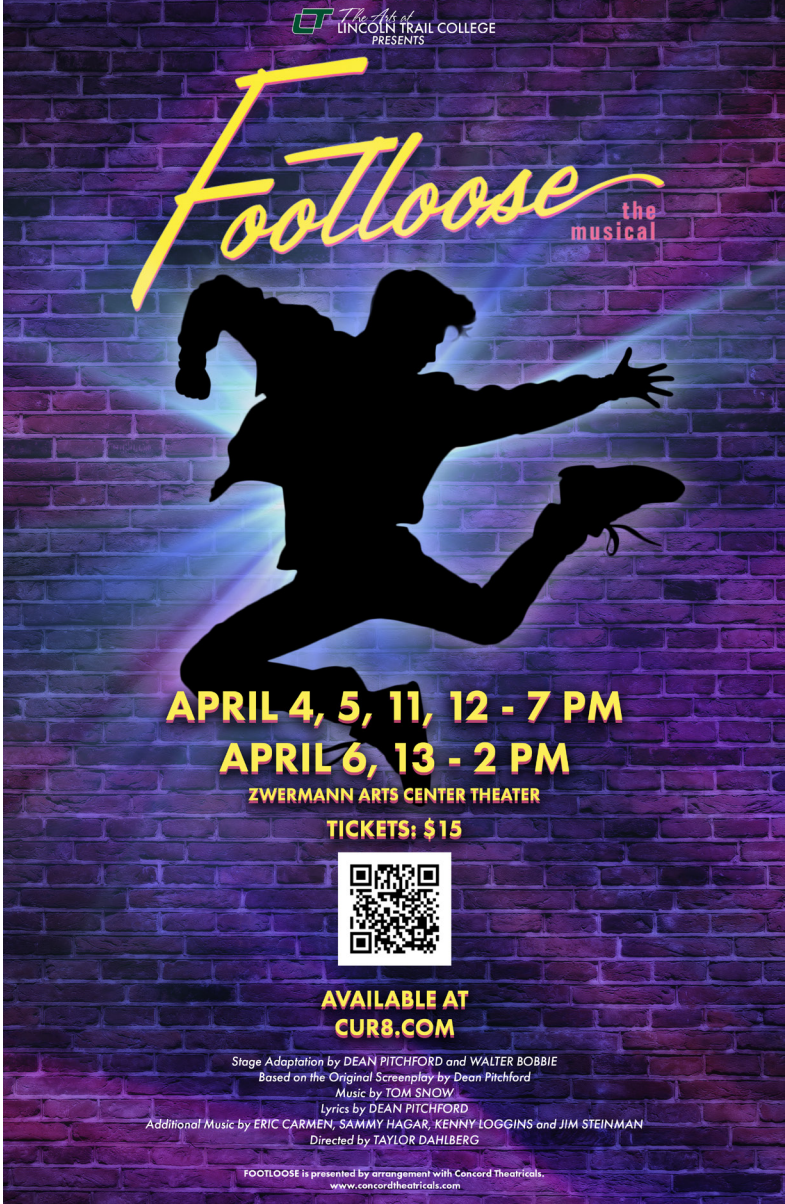
Dylan Batten stars as Ren McCormack, a city teen who moves to a small town where dancing is banned. Rebecca Trivett plays Ariel Moore, the rebellious daughter of Reverend Shaw Moore, portrayed by Justin Janney. Danyelle Ayres takes on the role of Vi Moore, with Mindy Evans as Ethel McCormack.

The cast also features Sicily Rawlings as Rusty, Anna Osborn as Urleen, Isabel Talamantes as Wendy Jo, and Al Crosley as Willard Hewitt. Isaac Ayres plays Chuck Cranston, with Cole Rehmel as Travis, Ryan Pinkston as Cowboy Bob, and William Prindable as Coach Roger Dunbar. Additional roles include Hannah Reid as Lulu Warnicker, Brady Thompson as Wes Warnicker, Brian Manhart as Principal Harry Clark, Jonathon Murray as a town cop, and Sabrina Malone as Betty Blast.

The adult ensemble includes Catlynn Underwood, Ella Lemirand, Monna Pinkston, Kandle Dart, Manhart, Reid, Murray, Malone, Thompson, Evans, Prindable, and Pinkston. The teen ensemble features Ashtyn Reid, Ivanna Araguez, Makenzi Carlen, Aubrianna Carter, Ariel Clayton, Cara Batten, Lucas Aydt, Kellan Dennis, Rehmel, Talamantes, Osborn, Rawlings, Cohlson Fearday, and Anna Bales.

The production team includes Music Director Yvonne Newlin, Choreographer Callie Reid, Costume Designer Bethany Dunlap with assistant Katelyn Murrell, Lighting Designer Taylor Dahlberg, Scenic Designer Colt Poettker, Sound Technician Devon Cheesman, Props Coordinator Kristi Rawlings, Marketing Director Chris Forde, and Box Office Manager Kristi Rawlings. Rachel Dollahan serves as the Stage Manager. Crew members include Ace Zink, Kinley Bradbury, and Lena Kreighbaum.

Tickets for Footloose the Musical go on sale March 8 and are \$15. Tickets can be purchased online through Cur8.com.




The Arts at LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE PRESENTS

Footloose

the musical

APRIL 4, 5, 11, 12 - 7 PM
APRIL 6, 13 - 2 PM
ZWERMANN ARTS CENTER THEATER

TICKETS: \$15



AVAILABLE AT
CUR8.COM

Stage Adaptation by DEAN PITCHFORD and WALTER BOBBIE
Based on the Original Screenplay by Dean Pitchford
Music by TOM SNOW
Lyrics by DEAN PITCHFORD
Additional Music by ERIC CARMEN, SAMMY HAGAR, KENNY LOGGINS and JIM STEINMAN
Directed by TAYLOR DAHLBERG

FOOTLOOSE is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.
www.concordtheatricals.com

LTC CELEBRATING YOUNG ARTISTS



Lincoln Trail College recently showcased the talents of young artists in the community with its Children's Art Show, which ran from February 3 to 14 in the Learning Commons. The exhibition featured 88 pieces of artwork submitted by students from Nuttall Middle School, Oblong, Palestine, and New Hebron Christian School. An open house on February 4 welcomed artists, their families, and community members to celebrate the students' creativity across various mediums.

Next, the college will host "Celebrate Art!", a one-day event for high school students on March 4. Open to students in grades nine through twelve, the program invites participants to submit artwork in categories such as drawing, painting, computer-generated art,

3D artwork, and photography. Entries will be judged on creativity, composition, and technique.

In addition to a reception for the artists on March 4, students will be invited to hear a presentation from a professional who has made a career out of art.

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

LTC IN PICTURES



Tona Ambrose and Curtis Miller welcomed students from Martinsville High School to Lincoln Trail College.



Krystle Riggles helps a student with her financial aid questions. February is Financial Aid Awareness Month.

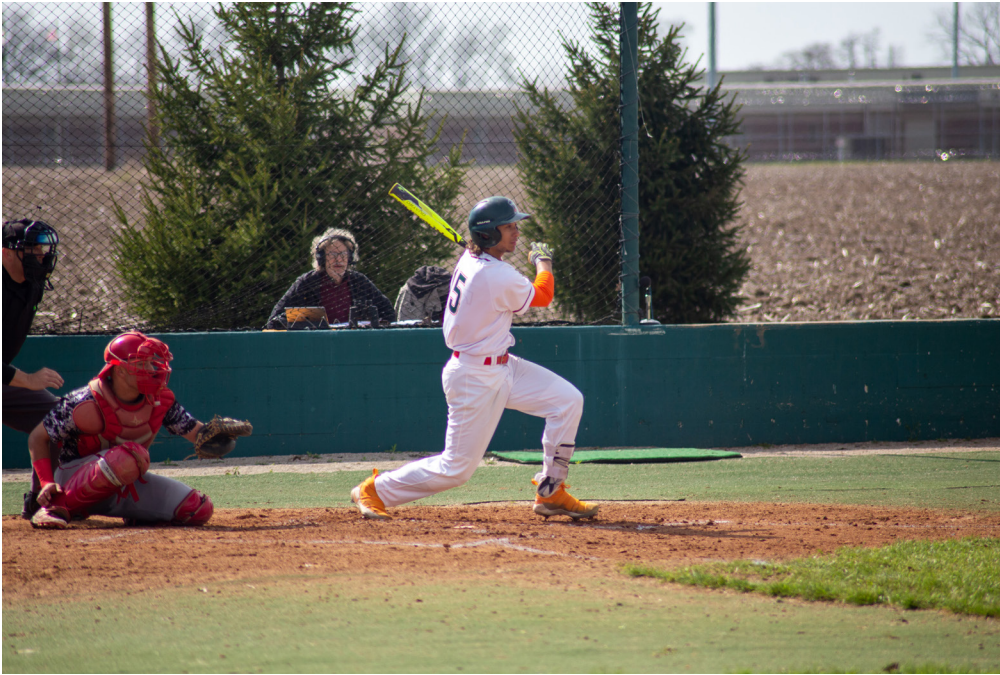


Tina Lindley shows two Process Technology students the inner workings of a pump.



Nursing students learned about EKGs by practicing on each other.

BREWER INDUCTED INTO NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS ATHLETICS HOF



Jordan Brewer ('18) will be inducted into the North American Indigenous Athletics Hall of Fame as part of the 2025 class. The ceremony will take place on June 7 at the Oneida Hotel and Conference Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Brewer, who represents the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, called the honor "one of the greatest achievements of my life."

"If you had told me back when I was at Lincoln Trail that this would happen, I would've thought you were crazy!" Brewer said.

"To now be recognized as one of the top Native American athletes is an incredible honor. For the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, this recognition reflects the dedication, heart, and courage we stand for. It's a true blessing to be able to represent our people in such a meaningful way."

Brewer was a three-sport athlete in high school and was recruited by the University of Michigan to play football. After a shoulder injury in his senior year, he shifted his focus to baseball and attended Lincoln Trail College.

During his two years at LTC, Brewer batted .367, drove in 74 runs, and scored 85 runs. He recorded 28 stolen bases, 13 home runs, 15 doubles, and six triples. He earned All-Northern District honors after his sophomore season and was a two-time All-Conference and All-Region selection.

Reflecting on his time at LTC, Brewer said, "The Trail will always be a part of me—it's in my DNA. It's the place that truly taught me the grit and grind mentality. The Trail was the starting point for my incredible career, and I will never forget that."

After graduating from LTC, Brewer transferred to Michigan to play baseball, where he led the Big Ten in batting average (.358). He also ranked second in slugging percentage (.637), RBIs (52), hits (69), and stolen bases (19). He helped lead the Wolverines to the College World Series finals and was named the Big Ten Player of the Year.

The Houston Astros selected him in the third round of the 2019 MLB Draft, and he has since advanced through their minor league system to the Double-A level.

Brewer has faced adversity throughout his athletic career, including multiple injuries. "Throughout my career, my body took a beating from the 16 surgeries I've undergone, but I'll tell you this—I would go through every single one of them again," he said. "Those rough patches taught me so much, and as tough as they were, they shaped me into the man I am today."

Despite these challenges, Brewer hopes his journey serves as inspiration for young Indigenous athletes. "I truly hope to inspire younger tribal athletes by showing them that anything is possible, even when it feels like the world is against you. As long as you believe in yourself, nothing can stand in your way."

He also credited the support he received along the way, especially from Lincoln Trail College. “A huge shoutout to all my teachers back at the Trail. This accomplishment is just as much yours as it is mine. I wouldn’t be where I am today without you all showing me the way.”

The North American Indigenous Athletics Hall of Fame celebrates the rich sporting heritage of Indigenous peoples across North America, honoring exceptional individuals and teams for their leadership and achievements in athletics. Representing the diverse Indigenous cultures of 27 countries, the Hall of Fame highlights inspiring stories of empowerment and excellence, aiming to motivate future generations to pursue their dreams in sports and life.

Inductees are selected annually from nominations in categories such as athlete, coach, team, builder, media, official, and trainer. Eligible nominees must be Indigenous to North America or compete within the region, with credentials demonstrating recognition at the state, national, or international level, or within collegiate or professional sports.



SLATE COMMITS TO LENOIR-RYNE



Lincoln Trail College pitcher Hayden Slate has officially committed to Lenoir-Rhyne University to continue his baseball career following his graduation in May. Slate shared his excitement about the next chapter in both his academic and athletic journey.

“Some of the key factors in my decision to transfer to Lenoir-Rhyne were, on the academic side, them carrying some of the niche majors that I was interested in,” Slate said. “I was also very blessed to earn a great athletic opportunity from Coach Skonieczki to be a part of their pitching staff. I loved the feel of the whole campus and city. Personally, it felt very homey to me from the start. The city reminded me of my hometown but in North Carolina.”

Slate highlighted the university's emphasis on player development as a major influence on his decision. “Their strategies of continuing the heavy focus on development align with my personal goals. They have extremely good facilities that will benefit both of our goals for player growth,” he explained. “Recently, they’ve been good at sending players to play professionally, and I believe they can help me reach that goal for myself as well.”

In addition to the program's professional development opportunities, Slate praised the coaching staff for their supportive and motivating approach. “From the get-go, the coaches were very easy to talk to and seemed like the kind of people I wanted to play for,” Slate said. “After talking with a couple players while I was down there, it only solidified that thought. The coaches seem like they push each player to be the best version of themselves while being able to connect with them at the same time, which I really liked.”

Reflecting on his time at Lincoln Trail College, Slate expressed gratitude for the lessons and experiences that have shaped him. “I’ve learned to do the most with whatever card you’re dealt. Leaning on my faith has been a big part of that. I believe relying on my faith is only going to help me prosper in my future, and I know Lenoir-Rhyne will support me in that as well.”

HOSMAN SIGNS WITH OAKLAND CITY UNIVERSITY



Lincoln Trail College volleyball player Kylee Hosman has announced her commitment to transfer to Oakland City University (OCU) following her graduation in May. Hosman, a standout on the court and a respected leader within the LTC community, will continue her athletic and academic journey at OCU, where she will join their volleyball program.

“Coach Dana has always pushed me to be a better player and person,” said Hosman. “She gives honest feedback to her players, which helps us improve both on and off the court. She devotes time to the team despite her many other responsibilities. Coach Dana has developed me into a better player these past two years.”

LTC Coach Dana Goodwin also noted that Hosman's leadership extends beyond volleyball. “Kylee is the ‘mother’ of the team and is always making sure everything is in order,” she said. “She’s the one the girls look to, both on and off the court. Her presence is needed on the court to keep the positive energy flowing, and that’s one of her strongest qualities.”

Hosman has made an undeniable impact during her time at Lincoln Trail College. She earned 439 kills, 439 digs, 52 aces, 46 blocks, and 23 assists, showcasing her well-rounded talent and versatility as a player. “Kylee is a strong 6-rotation player with one of the strongest arms on the team,” said Coach Dana Goodwin. “She makes smart decisions on the court and has the ability to contribute in both the front and back row, depending on what the team needs.”

Off the court, Hosman has excelled as a leader, having been voted captain of the team and selected as President of Student Senate, President of Phi Theta Kappa, and a Student Ambassador, all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. Her leadership qualities, work ethic, and commitment to her team have made her a model student-athlete.

Reflecting on her time at Lincoln Trail, Hosman shared, “I’ve learned how much a team can impact your life. The connections I’ve made with my teammates have shaped me the most as a student-athlete. I’ve also learned the importance of always giving my best effort. The experience is what you make of it, and I plan to continue creating connections at OCU while pushing myself to be better.”

As she prepares for the next step in her volleyball career, Hosman is excited to reunite with former LTC teammates Abigail Vaughn and Macy Knight at OCU. “Playing with former LTC teammates at Oakland City adds to my excitement to transfer there,” she said. “I’m looking forward to being on the court again with Abigail and Macy. It’ll be fun to compete against other former LTC teammates during conference matches.”

Hosman is confident in her ability to thrive at the next level. “I’m ready for the higher level of competition. I have been in the gym every day to prepare for this transition,” she said.

Goodwin is also confident that Hosman's leadership and experience will allow her to thrive at OCU. “I think the transition to Oakland City will be an adjustment for Kylee, but I don’t see it being a challenge. She has a strong personality and will tackle anything head-on. Lincoln Trail has been an excellent stepping stone for her, providing exposure to tough competition and academics. I have no doubt she will excel at Oakland City.”



MARCH ATHLETIC EVENTS

Baseball

1	vs. Kellogg CC (at Vincennes)	12:30
	vs. North Iowa Area CC (at Vincennes)	3:00
2	at Vincennes University Classic	TBA
6	John A. Logan College	2:00
8	at John A. Logan College (DH)	12:00
11	at Shawnee Community College	3:00
13	at Southwestern Illinois College	3:00
15	Southwestern Illinois College (DH)	12:00
18	Shawnee Community College	3:00
20	Lake Land College	3:00
22	at Lake Land College (DH)	12:00
25	at Shawnee Community College	3:00
27	at Frontier Community College	12:00
29	Frontier Community College (DH)	12:00

Men's Basketball

1	John A. Logan College	3:00
4	at Southwestern Illinois College	7:00

Softball

3	Monroe CC (at Myrtle Beach)	8:00
	Fayetteville Technical CC (at Myrtle Beach)	10:00
4	Lackawanna College (at Myrtle Beach)	12:00
	Frederick CC (at Myrtle Beach)	2:00
5	Southern Maine CC (at Myrtle Beach)	8:00
	Harford CC (at Myrtle Beach)	12:00
6	Schoolcraft College (at Myrtle Beach)	12:00
	Lackawanna College (at Myrtle Beach)	2:00
7	Delta College (at Myrtle Beach)	8:00
	Harford CC (at Myrtle Beach)	11:00
12	Olney Central College (DH)	2:00
15	Lake Land College (DH)	12:00
16	at John A. Logan College (DH)	12:00
18	at Shawnee Community College (DH)	2:00
19	Wabash Valley College (DH)	2:00
22	at Southeastern Illinois College (DH)	12:00
23	Rend Lake College (DH)	12:00
26	at Frontier Community College (DH)	2:00
29	at Kaskaskia College (DH)	12:00
30	Spoon River College (DH)	12:00

Women's Basketball

1	John A. Logan College	1:00
4	at Southwestern Illinois College	5:00

ODEN COMMITS TO IONA UNIVERSITY



AJ Oden, an infielder for the Lincoln Trail College Statesmen, has officially announced his commitment to Iona University, where he will continue his baseball career and pursue academic excellence. Oden, a Greenfield, Indiana native, finished the 2024 season with a .381 batting average, 56 hits, 36 RBIs, 12 doubles, and a .453 on-base percentage, solidifying his reputation as a well-rounded player.

"Iona University stood out to me because of its perfect balance between strong academics and a competitive baseball program," said Oden. "The coaching staff's commitment to player development both on and off the field was a major factor in my decision. I'm thrilled for the opportunity to contribute to the Gaels as a student-athlete and continue growing in both areas over the next few years."

Oden also reflected on how Lincoln Trail College has prepared him for the next level. "Competing here has been invaluable in my development. Facing top-tier talent helped me sharpen my skills, while my teammates pushed me to work harder every day. The coaching staff has been instrumental in my growth—not only as a player but also as a student. They've taught me the discipline needed to excel both on the field and in the classroom."

Balancing academics and athletics has been a cornerstone of Oden's success. "I've developed a routine that allows me to prioritize schoolwork while dedicating the focus and time necessary for baseball. I plan to bring that same structure to Iona and utilize resources like tutoring or study groups to continue excelling."

Oden's hard work and dedication have earned him the opportunity to join a Gaels baseball program known for its emphasis on both athletic and personal growth.

His advice to upcoming Statesmen is, "Work hard, trust the process, and trust your teammates and coaches. They're there to push you and help you grow!"

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – WHAT IS INSTITUTIONAL OUTREACH?

Since our recent IECC District reorganization—where each of our four college Presidents now leads a Vice Chancellor divisional role (Academic Affairs, Business Operations, Student Affairs, and Institutional Outreach), people often ask me, “What is Institutional Outreach?” If you Google it, you might get something like it's the process of reaching out to relevant external groups and building relationships to further the institution's goals, and while that is correct, as the Vice Chancellor of Institutional Outreach, a role that I absolutely “love” (I honestly do AND it's February, so pun intended), I think sometimes the best way to answer that question is to share an example.



On January 16th, 2025, area K-12 Administrators and School Counselors from Crawford and Lawrence Counties, a representative from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), the Vienna High School Superintendent, several IECC/LTC staff, and our ROE 12 Leaders came together at LTC to discuss the Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework which is a new middle/high school tool/plan that helps students progressively prepare for college and careers. We were fortunate to have Josh Stafford come and share best practices for how his Vienna school district is successfully implementing the PaCE framework and Ana Moya from ISAC led a session on PaCE updates and answered

many questions from the group (thank you to Roger Eddy for helping us make this connection).

Together, we all discussed where our local schools are currently with the PaCE framework, what next steps and goals are, how IECC can be a partner in the process, and engaged in collaborative conversations about how we can all work collectively on this initiative and be stronger together, giving our local students the best possible opportunities and outcomes. Additionally, leaders from our local Chamber of Commerce and Crawford County Development Association participated in the round table discussions to offer their help and support with upcoming business and career fairs/expos and other workforce development components of the framework. The intentional



time that everyone took to come together and collaboratively connect on how to work (air quotes) smarter not harder, to accomplish the PaCE requirements for the betterment of ALL of our area middle/high school students was valuable beyond measure. After a quick four-hour workshop that day and before leaving, we all agreed that we wanted to meet again to keep the momentum going and another workshop date was set for April. What a blessing it was and is to engage with this group of passionate educators and community leaders who share the vision and see the value in working together in our community and I'm excited to see the mission of IECC (...improve the lives of our students and strengthen our communities) fulfilled via this project.

This, my friends, is Institutional Outreach.

Tona Ambrose, M.Ed.