

# NETWORK



MAY 2025



## HIGHLIGHTS



Welding students compete at first IECC Welding Competition.



Lincoln Trail College gets ready to break ground on long-awaited building.



Summer kids camps feature welding, telecom, and language selections.

## LTC STUDENTS GAIN REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE AT NATIONAL PROCESS TECHNOLOGY COMPETITION

**F**our Lincoln Trail College Process Technology students recently tested their skills on a national stage, competing in the North American Process Technology Alliance's Troubleshooting Skills Competition — and gaining a firsthand look at the industry they're preparing to enter.

Students Madison Davis, Kollin Ramos, Reeve Dennis, and Garrett Winterrowd represented LTC in the event, which challenges students from across the country to solve simulated industrial problems using Distributed Control Systems (DCS), teamwork, and real-world troubleshooting.

"We were one of only 12 teams chosen," said LTC Process Technology Instructor Tina Lindley. "When you get there and you're from a little town, competing with the top 11 other colleges, you're already a winner just being there."

The competition took place at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, Texas, and included two full days of activities.



## UPCOMING JUNE EVENTS

- 2 Summer Semester Classes Begin**
- 9 Welding Camp (Grades 7-9)**  
8-11 a.m., Red McCoy Welding Center
- Welding Camp (Grades 9-12)**  
12-3 p.m., Red McCoy Welding Center
- 12 Explore a Broadband Career**  
9-3, Broadband Building
- 17 IECC Board of Trustees Meeting**  
6:15 p.m., Statesmen Grill
- 19 COLLEGE CLOSED - Juneteenth**
- 26 The Aristocats Kids**  
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 27 Midterm**
- The Aristocats Kids**  
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 28 Alice in Wonderland, Jr.**  
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 29 Alice in Wonderland, Jr.**  
2 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater

Day one was all hands-on: students suited up for simulated spills, practiced using self-contained breathing apparatuses, and climbed glycol units and distillation towers to identify components in real-life industrial setups.

"My favorite part was probably just working on the glycol unit," said Davis. "It was the most hands-on we've ever experienced. We have stuff here, but it's nothing compared to what they have down there. It was just a whole new outlook."

Ramos agreed: "We got to see a lot of stuff hands-on that maybe we haven't got to see before. They had a glycol unit, a flare skid, we got to change over some pumps. That was pretty cool to see."

Day two brought competition. The team completed three troubleshooting scenarios using DCS, a hands-on skid exercise, and a rigorous 70-question technical test — all while being scored on accuracy, communication, and composure under pressure.

"It was absolutely draining mentally," said Davis. "There were a lot of hectic noises going off."

Students also participated in mock interviews with industry professionals — an experience that gave them real-world insight beyond the classroom.

"You can do mock interviews here, but it's not the same," said Dennis. "These were people who've done exactly what you're trying to go into. Their feedback was real, and it meant something."

"It was great to get feedback from industry professionals," added Ramos. "We got advice on both our interviewing skills and our résumés."

The trip was made possible through support from Lincoln Trail College's Perkins Program, which funded travel for the team. The Perkins Program, part of the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, helps provide students with access to high-quality technical education and hands-on learning opportunities.

"This kind of experience is exactly what Perkins is meant to support," Lindley said. "Our students were able to see firsthand how what they're learning in the classroom applies directly to the workforce."

For Lindley, watching her students engage with industry professionals and compete against top schools from Texas, Oklahoma, and North Dakota was a source of deep pride.

"I am so proud of them," she said. "It shows me I must be doing something right. I've watched them grow over two years, and then they go to this — and they're really excited. If they wanted to, they could go down there right now and get a job."

Although the LTC team didn't place in the top three, the experience left a lasting impact, both technically and personally.

"Teamwork for sure set us up for success," said Winterrowd. "Learning to work as a team and succeed: that's what this was all about."

Davis, who served as team captain, said the experience also helped her grow professionally.

"It gave me more of a need to focus on different aspects — not just operating, but being a good worker in general," she said. "It gave me a better idea of what I'm actually going to be doing."

Lindley said she hopes the competition fuels future improvements at LTC, especially as the college looks toward building a new facility for its Process Technology program.

"What they have down there is amazing," she said. "They have so much more industry involvement. But our students showed they have the capability and the understanding of what's going on in this field. It proves they can do it, too."

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## ***FUTURE EDUCATORS SUMMIT WORKS TO INSPIRE TOMORROW'S TEACHERS***

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Lincoln Trail College welcomed approximately 100 high school and college students on May 1 for the 2025 Future Educators Summit, a one-day event designed to motivate, inform and prepare the next generation of teachers and education leaders.

The event opened with a powerful keynote presentation by national speaker and educator Heidi LaFleur. In her talk, "Soaring Balloons and Heavy Shackles: Helping the Most Challenged Kids Soar," LaFleur shared her personal story and explored how trauma shapes a person's experience. She offered practical strategies to help future educators recognize

how their Actions, Words and Expressions (AWE) can either weigh students down or help them rise. LaFleur challenged attendees to use their AWE to become part of the solution in every interaction.

After the keynote, students enjoyed lunch provided by Lincoln Trail College and CoCo's Café before participating in two rounds of breakout sessions. Topics included:

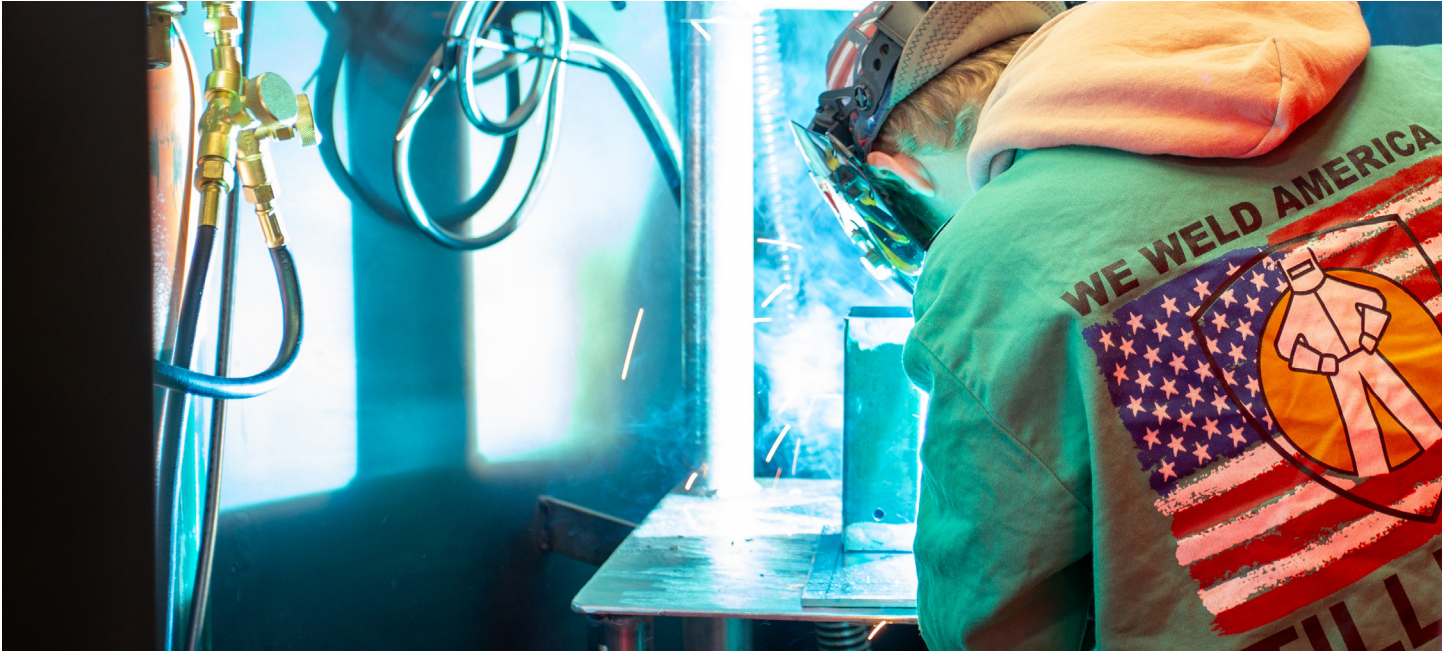
- "Salary, Stipends, & Financials, Oh My!" with Sarah Hemrich, covering financial considerations in the teaching profession
- "Navigating Extracurricular Activities" with Jamie Schultz and Andrew Flynn, focused on the value of engagement beyond the classroom
- "Introduction to Social Emotional Learning (SEL)" with Janna Surrells, emphasizing emotional intelligence in education
- "Science of Reading" and "Introduction to Specific Learning Disabilities" with Josh Quick, addressing instructional best practices and inclusivity
- "Three to a Degree" with Roger Eddy, Erin Volk and Megan Black, providing an overview of education pathways
- "Interviewing and Making a Good First Impression" with Jeremy Brush, offering practical advice for professional readiness

The day concluded with a wrap-up session that encouraged reflection and connection among attendees and presenters.

The summit, organized in partnership with the Regional Office of Education, offered students an opportunity to explore the field of education through hands-on sessions and expert-led discussions. With a focus on both the challenges and rewards of teaching, the event aimed to provide a realistic look at the profession and the paths available to enter it.



## IECC WELDING COMPETITION SHOWCASES SKILL AND CAREER READINESS



Sparks flew at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center as welding students from across Illinois Eastern Community Colleges tested their skills in a first-of-its-kind intramural welding competition. The event brought together students from Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College, and the West Richland Center for a full day of hands-on competition, collaboration, and feedback from industry professionals.

The idea for the competition had been simmering for years.

"This actually started as a dream of one of our instructors several years ago," said Amy Tarr, who supervises IECC's welding programs. "It kind of floated away and it didn't really happen, but then we were in a pre-advisory committee meeting with our Perkins coordinator, Rob Jackman, and we started talking about the fact that we needed to have some intercollegiate competition. That really was the spark that got all of this going."

Welding instructors and staff from multiple campuses came together to plan the event, and according to Tarr, it was truly a team effort.

"Our welding instructors, Rob with Perkins, and I just kind of started putting all the pieces together," she said. "That's how we got to today."

Students participated in two main events: a plate test and a fabrication challenge. Both were judged using real-world welding standards by experienced professionals from the field. The format was designed to mirror the kinds of tests students might face when applying for jobs in the trades.

"One of the goals we want to have is the ability to have competition and go head to head against another student studying the same subject so you're job ready," said Rob Jackman. "A lot of students are going to feel that they are job ready after today."

Jackman emphasized that input from industry judges is more than just a formality—it helps shape IECC's curriculum.



"Our industry stakeholders help guide the program itself—the curriculum, the sequencing, the workforce needs," he said. "Without their input, without their judging, without their discussion with us, we wouldn't be able to meet those needs."

For Reno Bemont, an instructor at Lincoln Trail College, the event revealed just how far his students had come—especially under tight constraints.

"Our kids were only there two days a week, and we didn't get a whole lot of time to practice," he said. "But one of the things that I saw today was my students really came together and were concerned about each other and helping each other out as much as they possibly could."

Bemont also noted that students grew in their independence and problem-solving. "They had to go by their own leads," he said. "Their instructors couldn't tell them what they needed to do next. And I think they understood better when it came to critical thinking."

Instructors said that beyond the technical aspects, the event helped reinforce the values of teamwork and mutual support—skills that matter on the job just as much as weld quality.



The event also gave students a chance to connect with their peers from other campuses.

"This was our first intramural welding competition," said Maverick Fisher, welding instructor at Olney Central College. "It came about as a way to just kind of push each other and kind of get to come together as three different schools. That was a good way for us to all collaborate."

Fisher explained that students were tested in a 6010 open root plate weld, a 2G 7018 plate weld, and a fabrication challenge that required precise measurements and teamwork.

"All of the tests were judged by three judges from the industry," he said. "I think everybody did really, really well. The judges were saying it was hard to find a bad one."

Fisher said the day also helped students prepare for the pressure of real-world testing environments.

"This is still a lot less pressure, but I think it gave them a little taste of what it's going to be like when they go to their first actual weld test to get hired on somewhere," he said.

Alongside college students, dual credit high school students also participated, giving younger welders an opportunity to test their skills early.

"It was really neat to be in the meeting room and to see the different schools, the different ages, the kids together," said Tarr. "We have dual credit welding, we have a one-semester certificate, a two-semester certificate, and then an Associate's Degree. Our hope for these kids is that they'll work their way all the way through and complete that Associate's Degree."

Organizers say the success of the inaugural competition has already sparked conversations about next year's event.

"I just hope that later on we get to do this again in the future," said Bemont.



## LTC READIES TO BREAK GROUND ON LONG-AWAITED TECHNOLOGY CENTER



After more than two decades of planning, Lincoln Trail College is set to break ground later this year on a state-of-the-art Technology Center that will house high-demand programs in Welding, Process Technology, and Broadband Telecommunications. The new facility will enhance technical education across the region, offering hands-on training aligned with local industry needs and statewide workforce priorities.

"This project has been more than 20 years in the making," said Tona Ambrose, President of Lincoln Trail College. "It was first submitted to the State of Illinois under former LTC President Bev Turkel, and I'm honored to be part of the team that is finally bringing it to life. It's not just a building—it's a long-overdue investment in the people and economy of Crawford County."

The Technology Center is the second Capital Development Board (CDB) project for Illinois Eastern Community Colleges. The first, currently under construction, is the Applied Technology Center at Olney Central College, which will house IECC's high-demand Nursing and Radiography programs. Together, those programs serve more than 200 students districtwide and have seen surging student demand and enrollment over the past two years. The LTC Technology Center is funded through a 75/25 split, with 75% of funding from the State of Illinois and 25% from IECC.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs in welding are expected to grow by over 42,000 positions by 2032, with median annual wages above \$48,000. Process Technology, critical in manufacturing, energy, and chemical sectors, shows regional demand for two-year degree holders earning \$55,000–\$70,000 annually. Telecommunications technician jobs is expected to grow more than 6% over the next decade, fueled by fiber optic and broadband infrastructure expansion, with average wages over \$60,000.

"This facility is going to open doors—for students, for employers, and for the region," said Dr. Ryan Gower, Chancellor of IECC. "It will give people the tools to build better careers and better lives—without ever leaving southeastern Illinois."

**Site Plan - New Work**

**Approximate Limits of Contract**

**New Technology Center (Base Bid)**

**Williams Hall**

**Practice Field**

**Gymnasium**

**Sports Center**

**Student Union / Cafeteria**

**Zeemann Arts Center**

**Visitor Parking**

**Existing Asphalt Parking Lot**

**Site Plan Legend**

- Proposed Building Footprint
- Existing Building Footprint
- Proposed Landscaping
- Existing Landscaping
- Proposed Parking
- Existing Parking
- Proposed Access
- Existing Access
- Proposed Utility
- Existing Utility
- Proposed Stormwater Management
- Existing Stormwater Management
- Proposed Security
- Existing Security
- Proposed Other
- Existing Other

The Technology Center's path to construction hasn't been easy. The project sat unfunded until 2020 after IECC sought and received successful state-level advocacy from former Senator Dale Righter, former Representative Reggie Phillips, and former Representative Chris Miller.

closely with the Capital Development Board and program faculty to redesign the facility—preserving its essential instructional features while trimming enough to bring it just barely over the original cost.



“Without the collaboration of President Ambrose, our faculty, and the leadership of Ryan Hawkins and Nick Knapp, this project could have easily stalled out,” said Gower. “But they did what

Ambrose agreed: "This wasn't easy. But the support of our Board, the dedication of our employees, and the tenacity of our partners made the difference. Now, we're moving forward with a facility that will transform how we deliver technical education at LTC." The Lincoln Trail College Technology Center is expected to break ground later in 2025.



## LTC CELEBRATES CULTURES WITH GLOBAL TREATS



Lincoln Trail College celebrated global culture, community, and conversation at the Desserts & Drinks Around the World event on April 24. Held in the Statesmen Grill, the event brought together students, faculty, staff, and Foundation Board members for an evening of international flavor and cultural exchange.

The event was organized by LTC's International Department and featured desserts and non-alcoholic drinks from around the world, prepared and served by LTC's international students. Participants had the opportunity to sample treats from 11 different countries and learn more about the students' cultural backgrounds and traditions.

"Our international students were excited to share part of their heritage with the campus community," said Rachel Greenwood, International Student Liaison. "It was a fun way to connect over food and celebrate the incredible diversity we have at LTC."

The evening also included a demonstration of the translation devices LTC (right) uses to support international students during advising appointments and other interactions. The technology helps break down language barriers and ensure students have access to the resources and support they need.

In preparation for the event, international students used the kitchen at the Oblong Children's Christian Home to cook and prep many of the dishes served at the event. Greenwood expressed her gratitude for the partnership and the community support that made the event possible.

"We're especially thankful to the Lincoln Trail College Foundation for sponsoring the event and to the Oblong Children's Home for opening up their kitchen," said Greenwood. "It truly was a team effort, and it meant a lot to our students to be able to share something meaningful with the LTC family."



Desserts & Drinks Around the World offered not just a taste of global cuisine, but also a celebration of inclusion, conversation, and community at Lincoln Trail College.



## IGNITE CURIOSITY SUMMER CAMPS RETURN

Lincoln Trail College is offering a series of engaging and educational summer camps for area youth through the 2025 Ignite Curiosity program, part of a district-wide initiative by Illinois Eastern Community Colleges.

These hands-on camps give students the opportunity to explore careers, learn new skills, and experience global culture in fun, age-appropriate ways. Four distinct offerings are available at LTC this summer.

### Welding Camp

Two sessions will be offered on June 9 at the Red McCoy Welding Center:

- 8:00–11:00 a.m. for students who have completed grades 7–9
- 12:00–3:00 p.m. for students who have completed grades 9–12

Cost: \$45 per session

Students will learn welding safety, get hands-on experience with MIG welding, and complete a small project to take home. Lunch will be provided by the Welding Department. Participants must wear jeans, a T-shirt, a long-sleeved shirt, closed-toe shoes (boots preferred), and safety glasses (if available).

### Explore a Broadband Career

- Date: June 12
- Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Location: LTC Broadband Building
- For students who have completed grades 7–12

Cost: \$45

Led by instructor Dennis York, this one-day workshop introduces students to the rapidly growing broadband industry. Activities include hands-on learning, industry exploration, and networking with professionals. Lunch is included.

### Mandarin Chinese for Beginners

Two age-based sessions will be held on July 22–23 in Williams Hall 108, led by instructor Julia Rogers:

- 9:00–11:30 a.m. for students who have completed grades 3–6
- 1:00–3:30 p.m. for students who have completed grades 7–12

Cost: \$35 per session



**IECC YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS 2025**

**OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE**

- Girls Welding Camp • June 02, 2025 • 8-12 p.m. \$45 • Grades 7-12
- Boys Welding Camp • June 03, 2025 • 8-12 p.m. \$45 • Grades 7-12
- Jazz for Young Musicians • June 06, 2025 • 9-12 p.m. \$35 • Grades 5-12
- Pathways to Healthcare • June 09, 2025 • 9-3:30 p.m. \$30 • Grades 9-12
- Plush Pals Hospital • July 10, 2025 • 9-11 a.m. \$35 • Grades 1-5
- Plush Pals Hospital • July 10, 2025 • 12-2 p.m. \$35 • Grades 1-5
- Yikes, Parasites! Grass Pathology • July 30, 2025 • 9-2 p.m. \$25 • Grades 9-12
- Welding Camp • August 07, 2025 • 8-12 p.m. \$45 • Grades 7-12

**FRONTIER COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

- Origami I • June 04, 2025 • 9-11 a.m. \$15 • Grades 2-7
- Origami II • June 04, 2025 • 1-3 p.m. \$15 • Grades 2-7
- Canvas I • June 17, 2025 • 9 a.m.-12 p.m. \$35 • Grades 4-8
- Canvas II • June 17, 2025 • 1-3 p.m. \$35 • Grades 4-8
- Sign Language • June 18, 2025 • 9-11 a.m. \$15 • Grades 1-8

**LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE**

- Welding Camp • June 09, 2025 • 8-11 a.m. \$45 • Grades 7-9
- Welding Camp • June 09, 2025 • 12-3 p.m. \$45 • Grades 9-12
- Explore a Broadband Career • June 12, 2025 • 9-3 p.m. \$45 • Grades 7-12
- Mandarin Chinese • July 22-23, 2025 • 9-11:30 a.m. \$35 • Grades 3-6
- Mandarin Chinese • July 22-23, 2025 • 1-3:30 p.m. \$35 • Grades 7-12

**WABASH VALLEY COLLEGE**

- Radio TV Media Mastery Class • June 11, 2025 • 9-12 p.m. \$25 • Grades 6-12
- Origami I • June 25, 2025 • 9-11 a.m. \$15 • Grades 2-7

**SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION**

*Let the summer adventures begin!*

**IECC.EDU/SUMMERCAMPS**

These immersive two-day camps include lessons in Mandarin language and Chinese culture, featuring calligraphy, traditional games, crafts, songs, and authentic snacks.

Families are encouraged to register early, as space in each camp is limited. Registration and additional details can be found at [iecc.edu/summercamps/ltc](http://iecc.edu/summercamps/ltc).

In addition to the offerings at Lincoln Trail College, Ignite Curiosity Summer Camps are also taking place at Frontier Community College, Olney Central College, and Wabash Valley College, providing even more opportunities for students across the region to learn and grow this summer.

A full schedule of camps at all four colleges is available at [iecc.edu/summercamps](http://iecc.edu/summercamps).

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## ***RICHARDSON COMMITS TO STETSON UNIVERSITY***

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Lincoln Trail College guard Laniya Richardson is continuing her basketball and academic career at Stetson University, an NCAA Division I program in DeLand, Florida, following a standout season with the Statesmen.

Richardson, a Division II transfer, averaged 21.5 points per game during the 2024-25 season, finishing third in the nation in scoring. She also ranked eighth nationally in total points with 601 and placed 12th in field goals made.

Richardson was an honorable mention NJCAA All-American.

Her scoring ability and aggressive playstyle helped elevate the Statesmen on the national stage and drew attention from four-year programs.



## **HILTON COMMITS TO UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA**

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Lincoln Trail College proudly announces that sophomore infielder Kevin Hilton has officially committed to continuing his academic and athletic career at the University of West Georgia.

"It means a lot," Hilton said. "It's always been a dream to play at the Division I level. Without Coach Maynard or LT, my dreams would've come up short. Coach Maynard played a huge role."

"Kevin has grown exponentially during his time at LTC," said Statesmen Coach Collin Maynard. "His bat-to-ball skills are second to none, he's an automatic defender with

the ability to play both shortstop and second base, and his high IQ allows him to take advantage of countless situations on the diamond. I believe that Kevin will be a perfect fit for the University of West Georgia. His dedication on and off the field will set him up for immediate success."

Coach Maynard also highlighted Hilton's leadership qualities and influence in the locker room. "Kevin has the intangible ability to positively influence all of his teammates. He is a calming presence on the field and has been a phenomenal role model for our other infielders with his work ethic and attitude."

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## **MOORE HEADS TO CAMPBELLVILLE UNIVERSITY**

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Lincoln Trail College is proud to announce that sophomore left-handed pitcher Evan Moore has officially committed to continue his academic and athletic career at Campbellsville University, one of the top NAIA programs in the country.

"Evan's strong competitive nature and work ethic will set him up well for success at Campbellsville University," said LTC Head Coach Collin Maynard. "He's come a long way in his time here. His secondary pitches have become a constant challenge for opposing hitters, and his mindset on the mound allows him to be ready for any situation."

Moore shared his excitement for what lies ahead, both on the field and in the classroom.



"The thing I am most excited about is the opportunity to be part of a winning program that has a real shot at the postseason," Moore said. "Campbellsville gives me the chance to compete at a high level while also working toward my Accounting degree. That balance is really important to me."

Moore explained that choosing Lincoln Trail was part of a larger plan and a key step toward reaching his goals.

"I knew coming to Lincoln Trail was an investment on my family's and my part in order to play at the next level," Moore said. "But it wasn't until Campbellsville reached out that I realized I could play for one of the best NAIA programs in the country. Coach Maynard really helped me see how competitive and respected their team is."





It was a full house at Binga Night! Students and community members packed the Statesmen Grill for a fun evening of laughs, snacks, and a shot at some great prizes.



From France to Lincoln Trail—and now on to new adventures! Louison Beaumont's International graduation party brought smiles, stories, and a table full of support.



Director Jena Combs leads the Lincoln Trail College Jazz Band in a toe-tapping performance during their spring concert.



Grayson Pinkson takes center stage with a standout saxophone solo during the Lincoln Trail College Jazz Band concert.



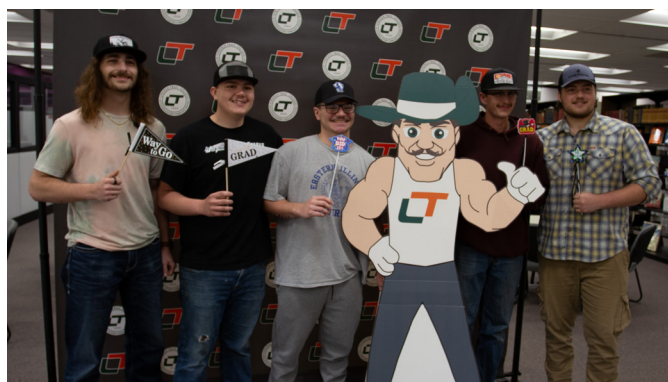
The stage came alive with sound as Dr. Andrew Pittman directed the Lincoln Trail College Concert Choir in a concert that captivated the audience.



The Singing Seniors brought heart and harmony to the stage with a joyful performance during Lincoln Trail College's spring concert.



Learning Commons Assistant Christine White hands Robert Riddle his cap and gown during Grad Fest.



Process Technology students struck a pose with the Statesman mascot during Grad Fest