

NETWORK



MARCH 2026



HIGHLIGHTS



LTC and LTC Foundation preparing for first Day of Giving event on March 31.



Students from across the region gathered at LTC for the Future Educators Summit.



New nursing scholarship at LTC honors the legacy of Weber sisters.

LTC LAUNCHES AG PATHWAY FOR STUDENTS

Lincoln Trail College will soon offer agriculture courses on its campus, creating a new pathway for students interested in careers in one of the region's most important industries.

Beginning this fall, Lincoln Trail College will offer agriculture courses designed to introduce students to the field and prepare them to continue their studies through Illinois Eastern Community Colleges' agriculture programs.

LTC President Tona Ambrose said the launch reflects years of interest from students, schools and community members.

"It's so exciting to see the LTC agriculture pathway become a reality after years of interest from students, schools and community members," Ambrose said. "Agriculture plays such a significant role in our region, and launching these classes at Lincoln Trail College reflects our commitment to serving the needs of the communities around us."

Ambrose said the pathway strengthens the college's connection to the region's agricultural economy while



UPCOMING APRIL EVENTS

- 2** Prompting for AI
9 a.m., Williams Hall 111
- 3** COLLEGE CLOSED - Spring Holiday
- 7** FAFSA Night
3-6 p.m., Williams Hall 116
- 8** University of Southern Indiana Visit
10-1, Williams Hall Welcome Wall
- 9** Eastern Illinois University Visit
10-1, Williams Hall Welcome Wall
- 10** Newsies
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 11** Newsies
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 12** Newsies
2 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 17** Newsies
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 18** Newsies
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 19** Newsies
2 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 22** Eagleton Reading Circle
6 p.m., Learning Commons
- 23** Lincoln Trail College Foundation Meeting
12 p.m., Lincoln Room
- 24** Last Day to Withdraw
- 29** SIU Edwardsville Visit
10:30-12:30, Williams Hall Welcome Wall

creating new opportunities for local students.

“Agriculture is deeply connected to the economy and heritage of our region,” she said. “This program helps prepare the next generation of professionals who will support and grow our local agricultural economy.”

The agriculture courses offered at LTC will serve as the first step in a pathway that allows students to continue their studies at Wabash Valley College.

According to IECC Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Dr. Cathy Robb, the courses were intentionally designed to align with Wabash Valley College's agriculture programs.

“There are four agriculture courses that will be offered at LTC, and these courses support students completing the Associate in Applied Science in Ag Production, the Associate in Applied Science in Ag Business, or the Associate in Science in Ag Business for transfer students,” Robb said.

Students will be able to complete up to 27 credit hours at Lincoln Trail College that apply toward agriculture degrees at Wabash Valley College.

Robb said the pathway reflects the collaborative approach IECC campuses are taking to expand opportunities for students.

“This is an opportunity to collaborate between campuses to support students who might be interested in exploring an agriculture-related associate degree,” Robb said.

“IECC is working to serve our students by providing

opportunities to learn from our content-expert faculty members at more than one campus.”

Courses in the agriculture pathway will be available to both traditional LTC students and dual credit students beginning in fall 2026.

Ambrose said the program also helps remove barriers for students who want to explore agriculture while staying close to home.

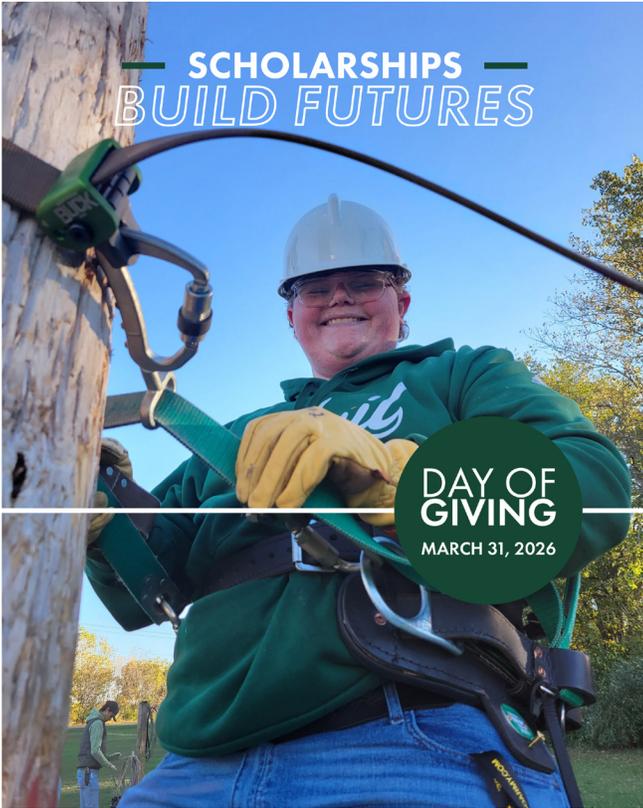
“Students can begin their studies through dual credit while still in high school or start as first-year LTC students,” Ambrose said. “They can start their studies at Lincoln Trail College and then continue at Wabash Valley College to complete their associate degree.

“It's a great example of how our colleges are intentionally working together to expand opportunities for students across the district.”

Lincoln Trail College will host Ag Exploration Night on March 19 as part of Student Parent Information Night, where students and families can learn more about the new agriculture pathway, meet instructors and connect with local agriculture professionals.

Local agriculture businesses interested in participating in Ag Exploration Night by hosting a booth can contact IECC Director of Student Engagement and Recruitment Carrie Halbert at halbertc@iecc.edu.

LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE INVITES COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT STUDENTS DURING INAUGURAL DAY OF GIVING



Lincoln Trail College is inviting alumni, community members, and supporters to come together on March 31 for the college's first-ever Day of Giving.

The 24-hour event will bring attention to the ways community support helps students succeed while strengthening the programs and opportunities available on campus. The effort is part of a coordinated Day of Giving across Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, with each campus foundation focusing on supporting its local students and priorities.

For Lincoln Trail College President Tona Ambrose, who also serves as IECC's Vice Chancellor of Institutional Outreach, the event represents an important step in strengthening connections between the college and the communities it serves.

"IECC has wanted to establish an alumni community for years," Ambrose said. "A coordinated Day of Giving gives us an opportunity to bring that support together in a fun and visible way while highlighting the many ways philanthropy helps our students and campuses thrive."

At Lincoln Trail College, the event will be led by the Lincoln Trail College Foundation, which works closely with the college to support students through scholarships, programs, and campus improvements.

Ambrose said the partnership between the college and the foundation plays a critical role in expanding opportunities for students.

"The Lincoln Trail College Foundation is such an important partner for us," she said. "The donations they raise create scholarships for students, enhance our career and technical education programs, and support improvements to facilities on campus. Every dollar raised ultimately goes toward strengthening the lives of our students."

Lincoln Trail College Foundation Executive Director Bill Sandiford said that impact can be seen across campus.

"The Lincoln Trail College Foundation is there to support the college," Sandiford said. "Scholarships are certainly a big part of what we do, but there are many other needs as well. Anything we can do to improve the experience students have while they're here is a great thing."

Sandiford said the goal is to make the time students spend at Lincoln Trail College as meaningful as possible.

"We've had students come back years later and talk about the family experience they had at Lincoln Trail," he said. "We want to continue building that. If we can make those two years even better for students, that's something worth investing in."

Community support also helps the college continue growing and improving opportunities for students. In recent years, the foundation has played a role in supporting projects such as the new Technology Center and other campus initiatives designed to enhance learning environments.

Even small gifts, Ambrose said, can make a meaningful difference.

“Sometimes a scholarship helps a student purchase textbooks, pay for a certification exam, or cover part of their tuition,” she said. “When many people come together and contribute, even small amounts, the collective impact can be powerful.”

For Sandiford, supporting the college is also about strengthening the community itself.

“We’re fortunate to have a college like Lincoln Trail here,” he said. “Giving isn’t just about writing a check and walking away. It’s about building relationships and investing in the future of our students and our community.”

Ambrose said Day of Giving is also an opportunity to reconnect with alumni and strengthen those relationships moving forward.

“We want our alumni to stay connected and engaged with the college,” she said. “Day of Giving is a moment for everyone — alumni, community partners, faculty, staff, and supporters — to come together and show their support for the students we serve.”



Sandiford hopes supporters see their contributions as an investment in the college's future.

“We want people to give with the expectation that their gift will make an impact on our students,” he said. “It’s about continuing to build that family feeling that Lincoln Trail has always been known for.”

Community members who would like to support Lincoln Trail College during Day of Giving on March 31 can make a gift online at <https://iecc.edu/ltc-day-giving>. Supporters can also help amplify the effort by visiting the Day of Giving Toolkit at <https://iecc.edu/ltc-day-giving-toolkit>, where they'll find shareable graphics and sample social media captions designed to help spread the word and encourage others to participate.

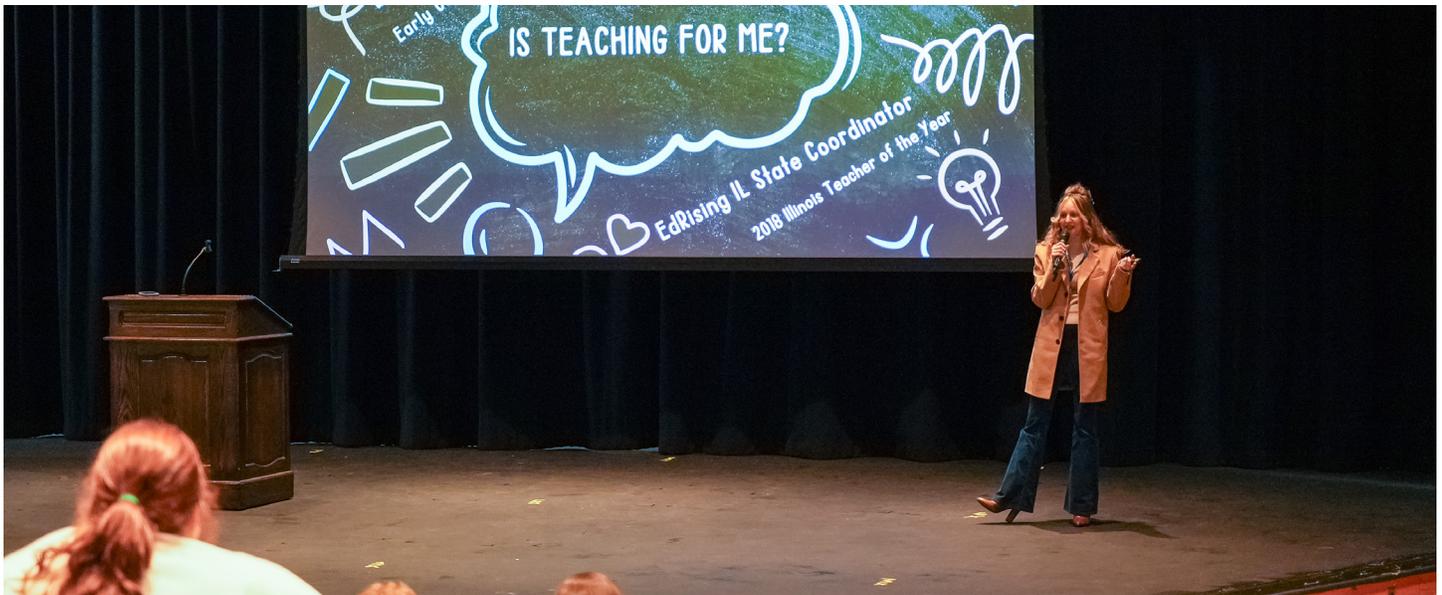


◀ TOOLKIT

DONATE ▶



LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE HOSTS EVENT FOR ASPIRING TEACHERS



More than 100 students interested in becoming teachers gathered at Lincoln Trail College on Feb. 24 for the second Future Educators Summit, an event designed to inspire the next generation of educators and provide a closer look at careers in the classroom.

The summit, organized by Regional Office of Education 12, brought together 130 students from 10 school districts for a full day of presentations, breakout sessions and discussions focused on preparing for careers in education.

The event is supported through a Career and Technical Education Pathway grant that helps five school districts offer coursework for students interested in pursuing careers as teachers.

Students began the day with a keynote address from Dr. Lindsey Jensen, director of Early Career Development and Aspiring Educators and the Illinois state coordinator for Educators Rising. Jensen, who was named the 2018 Illinois Teacher of the Year, shared insights from her career and encouraged students to explore the many opportunities available within the teaching profession.

Following the keynote, students selected two breakout sessions covering topics designed to help them better understand the path to becoming an educator and the skills needed to succeed in the classroom.

Several sessions focused on preparing students for college and teacher preparation programs. Erin Volk and Megan Black, directors of Dual Credit for Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, led sessions on the Three to a Degree program with IECC schools and strategies for being successful in college.

Other sessions gave students practical insights into the profession. Jeremy Brush, regional superintendent of schools for ROE 12, led a session on interviewing and making a strong first impression. Roselene Quick, ROE 12 student services director, discussed strategies for preparing and managing a classroom.

Students also explored key topics in modern education through sessions such as "Introduction to Social Emotional Learning," presented by ROE 12's Janna Surrells, and "The Science of Reading," led by Josh Quick of the SLD Support Project.

A panel discussion on special education, led by educators Elizabeth Froemling and Jennifer Reynolds of Southeastern Special Education, offered students a chance to hear directly from

professionals working in the field.

By bringing students together with experienced educators, the summit aimed to give participants a clearer understanding of the teaching profession while helping them begin planning their own educational journeys.

By hosting the summit, Lincoln Trail College served as a natural gathering place for students beginning to explore careers in education. For many aspiring teachers in the region, community colleges like LTC provide the first step toward a teaching degree before transferring to a four-year university.

The event gave students the chance to hear directly from educators, ask questions about the profession and learn what their path into the classroom could look like.



Carrie Halbert and Angel Kerner join Erin Volk and Megan Black during a presentation titled "How to be Successful in College."

TICKET SALES FOR NEWSIES BEGIN MARCH 28



The cast of Newsies rehearses a musical number under the direction of choreographer Callie Reid in the Zwermann Arts Center Theater as preparations continue for Lincoln Trail College's spring production.

Tickets for Lincoln Trail College's upcoming production of Disney's Newsies will go on sale Saturday, March 28.

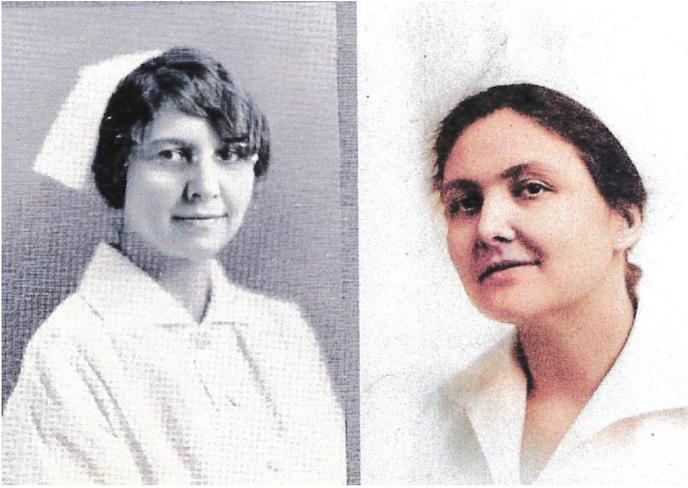
Performances of the Tony Award-winning musical will take place April 10, 11, 17 and 18 at 7 p.m., with matinee performances April 12 and 19 at 2 p.m. All performances will be held in the Zwermann Arts Center Theater on the Lincoln Trail College campus.

Based on the 1992 Disney film, Newsies tells the story of Jack Kelly and a band of young newspaper sellers who organize a historic strike in turn-of-the-century New York City. Featuring music by Alan Menken and lyrics by Jack Feldman, the show includes well-known songs such as "Carrying the Banner," "Seize the Day" and "Santa Fe."

"We're excited to welcome audiences back to the Zwermann Arts Center for Newsies," said Taylor Dahlberg, theater director at Lincoln Trail College. "This show is full of energy, powerful storytelling and incredible music, and our cast has been working hard to bring it to life."

Tickets can be purchased online beginning March 28 by visiting cur8.com.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP HONORS PIONEERS OF NURSING EDUCATION



Philomina "Minnie" Weber and Katharina Weber

More than a century ago, two sisters from southern Illinois helped lay the foundation for nursing education in the region. Today, their legacy will continue through a new scholarship supporting the next generation of nurses at Lincoln Trail College.

Beginning with the 2026–27 academic year, the Lincoln Trail College Foundation will award the Katharina and Philomina Weber Nursing Scholarship to a student enrolled in the college's Nursing program. The scholarship honors the Weber sisters' lasting contributions to nursing care and education in southeastern Illinois.

Katharina Weber and her sister Philomina Regina "Minnie" Weber played key roles in the development of the Olney Sanitarium and its Training School for Nurses during the early 20th century, helping establish a tradition of professional nursing education in the region.

Katharina Weber was born Nov. 16, 1882, the tenth child of Benedict and Eva Regina Weber. She graduated from the St. Louis Mullanphy Hospital School of Nursing, operated by the Daughters of Charity, and also received additional training in New York.

She came to the Olney Sanitarium in 1906 and soon became superintendent of nurses. In 1907, at just 25 years old, she established and directed the Sanitarium's Training School for Nurses. Katharina served as superintendent of nurses and director of the school from its founding until her retirement in 1947.

Her sister, Philomina Regina "Minnie" Weber, was born Oct. 25, 1880, the ninth of twelve children in the Weber family. She attended school in Wendelin, Illinois, before enrolling in the first nursing training class at the Sanitarium in April 1907.

Minnie graduated from the program in May 1910 and later served as assistant superintendent of nurses at the Sanitarium. She also became an instructor in obstetrical nursing at the Training School.

During World War I, Minnie volunteered as a Red Cross nurse and served in 1918 and 1919 at U.S. General Hospital No. 2 at Fort McHenry in Maryland. There she cared for wounded soldiers as well as patients suffering from the influenza pandemic that swept across the United States during that time.

Together, the Weber sisters helped guide and educate generations of nurses during a period when



An aerial photo of the Olney Sanitarium taken in May of 1925.

the profession was still developing its modern standards and educational pathways.

The Olney Sanitarium Training School for Nurses operated for more than four decades, preparing nearly 300 graduates before it closed in 1949. The program combined classroom instruction with extensive hands-on hospital training, providing opportunities for young women to pursue professional careers in health care.



A photograph from 1931 shows all of the doctors practicing at the Sanitarium at that time. Front row seated (L-R): Dr. George T. Weber, Minnie Weber RN, and Dr. James A. Weber. Back row standing: Dr. Frank J. Weber, Katharina Weber RN, Olevia Weber RN, Dr. Bernard A. Weber, Dr. J. Cornelius Weber (Neal), Dr. H.D. Fehrenbacher, Dr. Lawrence F. Weber, Dr. Frank C. Weber and Dr. Paul C. Weber.

The Weber sisters remained deeply connected to the institution throughout their lives, helping shape both the education of nurses and the care provided to patients in the region.

Today, that tradition of nursing education continues through Lincoln Trail College's Nursing program, which prepares students to serve hospitals, clinics, and communities across southeastern Illinois.

The new scholarship bearing the Weber sisters' names is designed to support students pursuing that same path of service.



A photo of the 1920 graduating class of 1920.

"Both Katharina and Minnie Weber dedicated their lives to caring for others and preparing future nurses for that responsibility," said Bill Sandiford, executive director of the Lincoln Trail College Foundation. "This scholarship allows their legacy to live on by supporting students who are following the same path of service and compassion."

The first Katharina and Philomina Weber Nursing Scholarship will be awarded to a Lincoln Trail College Nursing student for the 2026–27 academic year.

LOCAL STUDENTS EARN RUNNING START TOWARD COLLEGE AT IECC

High school seniors across southeastern Illinois who have already taken college classes or explored entrepreneurship while still in school will soon have another opportunity waiting for them after graduation.

Through Illinois Eastern Community Colleges' new Running Start program, eligible students who participated in dual credit courses or the CEO entrepreneurship program will receive a three-credit tuition waiver they can use for a class at IECC after graduating from high school. More than 750 graduating seniors across the District will be eligible for the award this year.



Members of the Crawford County CEO program visit with IECC Program Director of Marketing and Public Information Chris Forde, who spoke to them about marketing and social media.

For some students, it could mean stepping back onto campus just weeks after graduation — this time as a college student continuing the path they began while still in high school.

Vice Chancellor of Institutional Outreach and Lincoln Trail College President Tona Ambrose said the program was created to recognize the initiative students have already shown by beginning college-level coursework early.



Dual credit student AJ Gower speaks in Austin Alexander's U.S. History Since 1877 class.

"Students who complete dual credit courses or participate in CEO are already demonstrating college and career readiness," Ambrose said. "Running Start recognizes that effort and encourages them to keep their educational journey going."

Students may use the tuition waiver for any three-credit class within one year of graduating from high school, giving them an opportunity to continue their education locally while exploring academic and career interests.

Ambrose said the program builds on the success of IECC's partnerships with high schools throughout the district.

"The Running Start program extends the impact of our dual credit and CEO partnerships by creating a clear next step for students," she said. "It strengthens the pipeline from high school directly into college."

Ambrose said the goal of the program is to help students maintain the momentum they have already built through their early college and career experiences.

"Running Start sends a strong message that IECC recognizes students who take initiative in their education," she said. "Most importantly, it shows them that the work they've already done can lead directly to new opportunities."

IECC STEPS FORWARD TO SUPPORT CHAMPION LABS EMPLOYEES

When Champion Laboratories announced its sudden closure, the news created uncertainty for many families across the region.

At Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, staff have been working quickly to connect affected employees with information, training opportunities and community resources. At Lincoln Trail College, Program Director of Financial Aid Krystle Jahn and Director of Academic Advising Jamie Carman have been among those helping lead those efforts. Jahn said many workers may not realize the financial assistance that could be available if they pursue training or education.

“Programs like the Pell Grant are based on income, and when someone experiences a job loss, that can change their eligibility,” Jahn said. “Our role is to help people understand those options and walk them through the process.”

Jahn and the IECC Financial Aid team are assisting employees with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, and explaining how special circumstance reviews can account for recent changes in income. She has also helped share information about community resources that may support families during this transition.

“Losing a job can affect every part of a household,” Jahn said. “If we can help connect someone with resources while they plan their next step, that can make a real difference.”

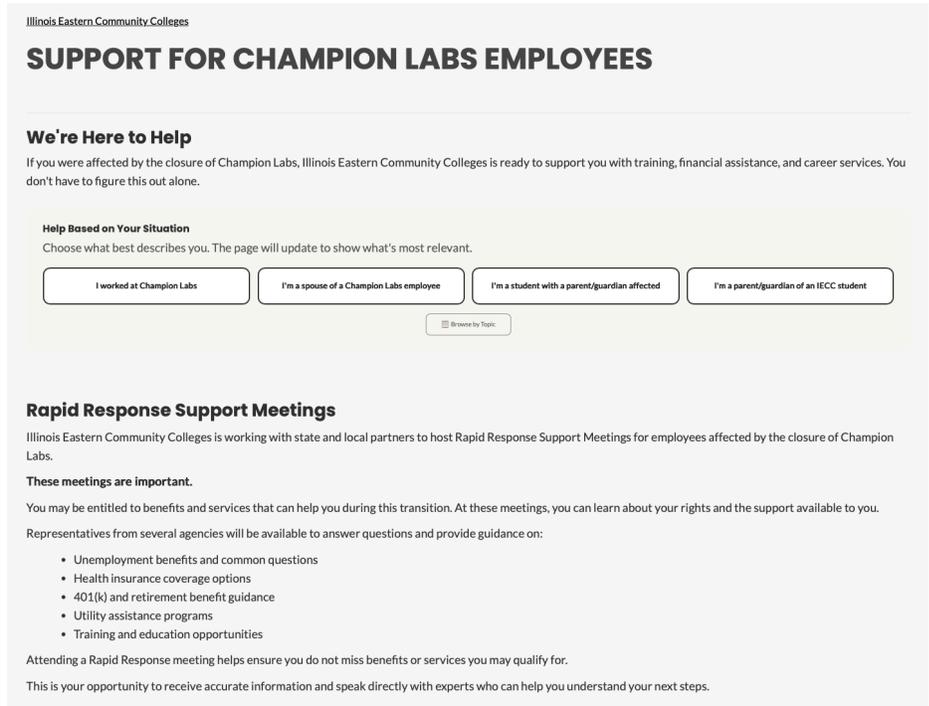
Carman and the IECC advising staff have also been meeting with displaced workers during outreach events and Rapid Response meetings to discuss training programs and education options.

“Our goal is to listen, answer questions and help people understand the options available,” Carman said. “For some, that may be short-term training. For others, it could mean working toward a certificate or degree.”

IECC’s Marketing and Communications Department has also helped ensure information reaches the community. Program Director of Marketing and Communications Chris Forde said the team created a central website with resources and has used social media and other communications to keep affected employees informed.

“One of the most important things we can do in a moment like this is make sure people know where to turn,” Forde said. “Our goal is to make it easy for employees and their families to find the support available to them.”

“Our colleges exist to serve our communities,” Carman said. “Moments like this remind us why that mission matters.”



A screenshot of the website IECC set up to support dislocated workers at Champion Labs. The site, <https://www.iecc.edu/championlabs>, features information on training opportunities, financial aid, community resources and more.



APRIL ATHLETIC EVENTS

Baseball

2	at Kaskaskia College	3:00
3	Kaskaskia College (DH)	12:00
7	at Frontier Community College	3:00
9	Lake Land College	3:00
11	at Lake Land College (DH)	12:00
14	Frontier Community College	3:00
16	Wabash Valley College	3:00
18	at Wabash Valley College (DH)	12:00
21	at Frontier Community College	3:00
23	at Shawnee Community College	3:00
25	Shawnee Community College (DH)	12:00
30	Southeastern Community College (DH)	12:00

Softball

2	Kaskaskia College (DH)	2:00
7	at Southwestern Illinois College (DH)	2:00
9	Shawnee Community College (DH)	2:00
11	Olney Central College (DH)	12:00
14	Lake Land College (DH)	2:00
16	at John A. Logan College (DH)	2:00
18	Wabash Valley College (DH)	12:00
21	at Southeastern Illinois College (DH)	2:00
23	at Rend Lake College (DH)	2:00
25	at Frontier Community College (DH)	12:00
28	at Kaskaskia College (DH)	2:00

Golf

9-10	at Blueboy Invite (Springfield, IL)	TBA
12-13	at Vincennes University Invite (Jasper, IN)	TBA
27-28	at Region 24 Championship (Normal, IL)	TBA

Women's Soccer

11	at Indiana University Columbus	9:30
19	at Georgetown College	1:00
26	at Saint Mary of the Woods	1:00

Men's Soccer

19	at Georgetown College	3:00
23	at Eastern Illinois University	2:00
26	at Saint Mary of the Woods	3:30

LTC WINS IECC PING PONG TOURNAMENT



Lincoln Trail College claimed the inaugural Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Ping Pong Tournament championship on March 2, led by the team of Kline Woodward and Isaac Waggnar.

Competing under the name "Statesmen Studs," Woodward and Waggnar posted four wins at the District-wide tournament held at Olney Central College. The event brought together teams from Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College and Wabash Valley College for a day of friendly competition.

The duo entered the tournament with momentum after successfully defending their Lincoln Trail College title earlier in the semester.



On Feb. 17, Woodward and Waggnar won the LTC Ping Pong Tournament for the second consecutive year, defeating Curtis Anibie and Jaden Kuale in the championship match.

Both teams represented Lincoln Trail College at the IECC tournament. Anibie and Kuale, competing as "LTC Wesh Wesh," also turned in a strong performance, finishing the day with three wins.

The IECC tournament builds on a growing tradition at Lincoln Trail College. This year marked the third year the college has hosted its own campus ping pong tournament, which grew out of the popularity of the ping pong table in the student lounge.

Angel Kerner, one of the original organizers of the LTC tournament, said the goal was to create a fun competition that brings the campus community together.

LTC IN PICTURES



Student musicians from area high schools perform during the IECC Jazz Fest concert at Lincoln Trail College. Selected by their directors, the students spent the day rehearsing before taking the stage.



High school musicians join members of the Lincoln Trail College Jazz Band and Olney Central College music students during the IECC Jazz Fest concert, the culminating performance of the one-day regional event.



Students relax with snacks and friendly rounds of bingo during a Student Senate Bingo Night in the Statesmen Grill.



Students share ice cream and friendly competition while playing card and board games during Student Senate's Games and Ice Cream Night.



Students explore movement and expression during an acting exercise in Taylor Dahlberg's Introduction to Theatre class.



Broadband Telecom students at Lincoln Trail College learn about summer internships and career pathways during a visit from Conxus representatives, including alumni of the program.



Lincoln Trail College's Summer Gould looks to make a move against Olney Central College during a game at the LTC Sports Center.



Jaylen Ellis throws down a dunk during Lincoln Trail College's victory over Kaskaskia College at the Sports Center.