

NETWORK



JUNE 2026



HIGHLIGHTS



LTC recognizes excellence with annual student awards.



Barbara Shimer reflects on her time with LTC and IECC as she retires from Board of Trustees.



Jessica Daugherty excited to take helm of volleyball team and help in enrollment.

LTC CELEBRATES CLASS OF 2026 AT 56TH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

Lincoln Trail College celebrated its Class of 2026 during the college's 56th annual commencement ceremony May 15, honoring graduates who President Tona Ambrose said had proven their ability to embrace new challenges and succeed.

Ambrose welcomed graduates, families, friends, faculty and staff to the ceremony on behalf of the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Board of Trustees and the Lincoln Trail College faculty and staff. She said commencement marked a meaningful moment not only for the graduates, but also for the people who supported them along the way.

"Graduates, we are here to celebrate you," Ambrose said. "We are here to acknowledge all of your hard work and accomplishments, and to say 'congrats, great job — you did it!'"

Ambrose asked family members, friends, faculty and staff to stand and be recognized, noting the role each



UPCOMING JULY EVENTS

- 3 **CAMPUS CLOSED: Independence Day (Observed)**
- 6 **Midterm**
- 8 **Walk-In Wednesday**
9-3, Williams Hall
- 15 **Walk-In Wednesday**
9-3, Williams Hall
- 22 **Walk-In Wednesday**
9-3, Williams Hall
- Eagleton Reading Circle**
5:30 p.m., Learning Commons
- 27 **Mandarin Chinese Camp**
8 a.m.-3 p.m., Williams Hall 108
- 28 **Mandarin Chinese Camp**
8 a.m.-3 p.m., Williams Hall 108
- 29 **Walk-In Wednesday**
9-3, Williams Hall
- 31 **Beetlejuice, JR.**
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater

played in helping students reach graduation. She said many graduates began their time at LTC facing something unfamiliar, whether they were recent high school graduates, students pursuing a second career or students returning to a dream they had put on hold.

She told graduates that their time at LTC had prepared them for whatever comes next.

“You learned, you grew, you adapted, adjusted, stepped out of your comfort zone, set and attained your goals,” Ambrose said. “You proved to yourselves that not only did you belong here, but that you could do things you never realized.”

Student speaker Rebecca Trivett reflected on her time at LTC through the lens of theatre, saying the stage taught her that every story is built through connection.

“No scene stands alone, no character grows without conflict, and no ending feels meaningful unless you understand everything that came before it,” Trivett said. “I think life at LTC has been a lot like that.”

Trivett said her education extended beyond textbooks and assignments. She said students learned resilience through setbacks, confidence through uncertainty and leadership through the people around them.

She also said her experiences in theatre taught lessons that applied far beyond performance, including collaboration, discipline, communication and trust.

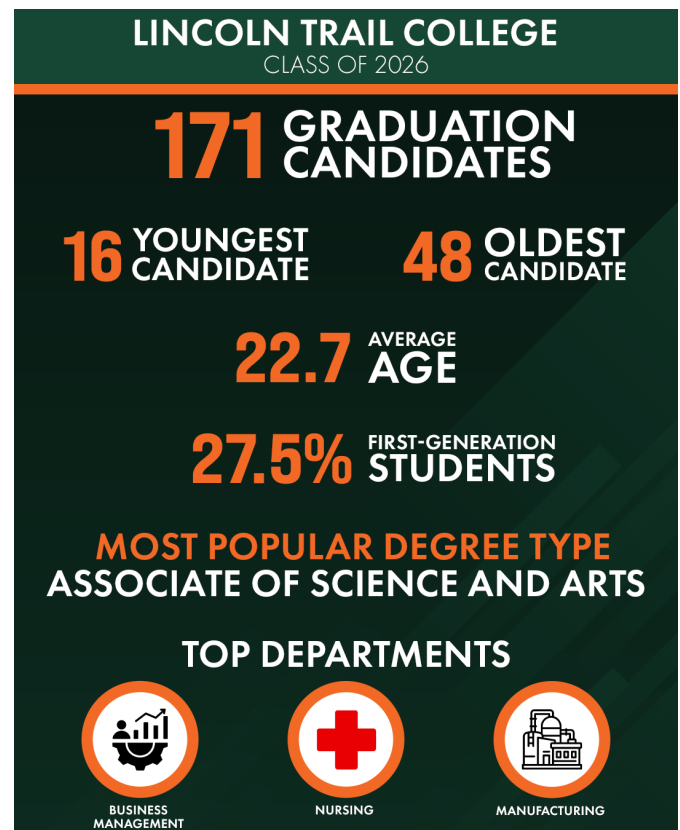
“As we graduate, I think the most important lesson we carry with us is that life is never one single act,” Trivett said. “It is a collection of experiences, people, risks, and discoveries that all work together to shape our future.”

Student speaker Josh Silva thanked his advisor, Angel Kerner, and the LTC faculty and staff members who helped students reach graduation.

“I know that all of you graduates can think of a faculty member or two that have helped get you to where you are today,” Silva said.

In his remarks, Silva offered graduates three lessons he has learned: avoid chasing happiness, be a teacher and remember that patience is powerful. He said even those who do not work in education can teach by sharing their wisdom, ideas and experiences with others.

“Teachers are the most important people in the world,” Silva said. “Even if you are not a teacher, be a teacher. Share your wisdom and ideas with people.”





Silva also encouraged graduates to be patient when life does not unfold the way they expect. He shared the story of a farmer and his son to remind graduates that it is not always immediately clear whether a moment is good or bad.

“We don’t always know if something is truly good or bad until we give it some time,” Silva said.

Dean of Instruction Cyndi Richards delivered the closing reflections, reminding graduates

that commencement belonged to them and to the perseverance that carried them to that moment.

“This night belongs to you,” Richards said. “It belongs to the late nights, the early mornings, the moments you thought about quitting, and the moments you decided not to.”

Richards said many LTC graduates did not follow a straight path. Some balanced jobs or families. Some were the first in their families to attend college. Others returned to school after years away because they decided it was time to bet on themselves.

“And tonight, that bet paid off,” Richards said.

She told graduates that what they earned was more than a degree or certificate. It was proof that they could start something difficult and finish it, adapt, grow and overcome obstacles.

Richards also emphasized the importance of LTC graduates to the region, saying they will become nurses, technicians, educators and leaders who will strengthen their communities.

“Because in rural America, when someone succeeds, it lifts more than just one person,” Richards said. “It lifts families. It lifts workplaces. It lifts entire communities.”

Ambrose encouraged graduates to carry their experiences, confidence, support and proven success into the future, whether they are beginning a new career, transferring to a university, entering the military or taking another path.

“Remember that you already know how to walk into something new, to make it your own, and to succeed,” Ambrose said.

As the Class of 2026 left LTC, Richards reminded graduates that their connection to the college would continue.

“No matter where you go next, whether it is the workforce, the military, or transferring to another college, remember this: You will always be part of Lincoln Trail College,” Richards said. “And Lincoln Trail College will always be proud of you.”

LTC RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE WITH ANNUAL STUDENT AWARDS



Lincoln Trail College student award winners Jonna Tanneur, Grayson Pinkston, and Jared Jackson

Lincoln Trail College recognized three students for their outstanding achievements in scholarship, service and leadership during its 56th Annual Commencement Ceremony on May 15.

The college presented the Joseph C. Piland Excellence in Scholarship Award to Jonna Tanneur, the J. Rod Harmon Excellence in Service Award to Grayson Pinkston and the Bev L. Turkal Excellence in Leadership Award to Jared Jackson.

The awards are among Lincoln Trail College's highest student honors and recognize individuals who have distinguished themselves through academic achievement, service to others and leadership on campus and in the community.

The Joseph C. Piland Excellence in Scholarship Award honors the first president of Lincoln Trail College and is presented to students who demonstrate outstanding academic merit and sustained excellence in the classroom.

Tanneur earned the award for her commitment to academic success while balancing the demands of full-time coursework and overnight work as a Certified Nursing Assistant. She was recognized for her dedication to learning, positive attitude and determination to succeed while managing a rigorous schedule.

In addition to her academic accomplishments, Tanneur was praised for her thoughtful approach to her studies and her commitment to continuous improvement. She plans to pursue a career in nursing, where her compassion and work ethic will serve her well.

The J. Rod Harmon Excellence in Service Award is presented annually to a student who demonstrates outstanding service to the college or community. The award honors longtime Lincoln Trail College faculty member and Lincoln Trail College Foundation Executive Director Rod Harmon.

Pinkston, a Process Technology student, was selected for his dedication to serving others and his willingness to contribute wherever needed. An active member of the Process Technology Club, he was recognized for supporting classmates, assisting with campus activities and demonstrating leadership through service.

Faculty members noted Pinkston's professionalism, positive attitude and team-oriented mindset. His commitment to helping others and strengthening the college community made him a natural choice for the award.

The Bev L. Turkal Excellence in Leadership Award recognizes students who exhibit exceptional leadership qualities and skills. The award honors the legacy of Bev Turkal, whose passion for education and commitment to helping others left a lasting impact on Lincoln Trail College and the communities it serves.

Jackson was recognized for demonstrating leadership in the classroom, on the basketball court and throughout campus life. He was praised for his perseverance, empathy and ability to encourage others while holding himself and those around him to high standards.

A member of the Statesmen basketball team, Jackson consistently demonstrated the qualities of a servant leader through his teamwork, accountability and commitment to helping others succeed. His resilience and positive influence on his peers exemplify the characteristics the Turkal Award was created to honor.

The three recipients represent the values embodied by the awards' namesakes: a commitment to academic excellence, service to others and leadership that makes a difference both on campus and in the community.

A LIFETIME OF MAKING MAGIC: BARBARA SHIMER REFLECTS ON HER TIME WITH LTC AND IECC



When Barbara Shimer talks about her time at Lincoln Trail College, she often starts with a teacher.

Elsie Floreck was a professional opera singer who came to the United States after World War II with her husband, a musician, along with a baby, a box of music and \$12.

"She was amazing," Shimer said.

For Shimer, those experiences helped define what Lincoln Trail College and Illinois Eastern Community Colleges could be. As she steps down from the IECC Board of Trustees, she said the college has shaped her life in ways that go far beyond the classroom.

"Lincoln Trail College and IECC have been the story of my life," she said.

Shimer first enrolled at Lincoln Trail College in 1972 after graduating from high school. She took classes that transferred before beginning her career, working as a travel agent and bookkeeper.

Music had always been a part of Shimer's life.

She said being cast as the lead in a high school play was a defining moment that helped shape her confidence and interest in performing. She later served as Director of Music at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church for more than 30 years, beginning in the early 1970s.

While building a career as a travel agent and bookkeeper, that interest in music never went away.

"I was working as a travel agent, and I really wanted to study voice," she said.

That decision brought her back to campus and into Floreck's classroom, where she became part of a dedicated group of singers helping build a strong performing arts presence at the college.

Shimer earned her Associate in Science from Lincoln Trail College in 1985.

Her connection to the college continued to grow when she began teaching in 1992.

"It was life-changing," she said.

Shimer worked with the Concert Choir and Children's Summer Theater, directing large groups and organizing performances that often included orchestras and joint concerts with Olney Central College.

"I really enjoyed it," she said. "I wanted to give people life experiences with our concerts."

She later spent several years teaching music and theater in Robinson schools, working with students from elementary through high school.

In 2007, she returned to Lincoln Trail College full time.

"It felt like home," she said. "I loved working with younger students, but I also loved working with people of all generations."

She served as an instructor and director until 2018, helping lead the college's theater and music programs and working closely with students in performances, classes and community productions.

In 2024, she was inducted into the Lincoln Trail College Foundation Hall of Fame.

Following her retirement from LTC, Shimer continued her work in the community with the United Way of Crawford County, helping connect residents with local services and support.

She also continues to manage financial operations for family-owned oil drilling investment companies and trusts, drawing on decades of experience in bookkeeping and business management.

Not long after retiring from teaching, Shimer was encouraged to consider another role.





"Jim Lane called me and said he was stepping off the Board of Trustees and thought I might have something to bring," she said.

Shimer said her time as a student and instructor gave her a perspective she could carry into the role.

During her time as a trustee, Shimer said she focused on the impact IECC has on students and the community.

"Lincoln Trail College and IECC have been hugely important to my life," she said. "I couldn't imagine life without them."

She said that impact is especially clear in the performing arts, where students often gain confidence that carries into other areas of their lives.

Before performances, Shimer said she would gather cast members together, have them hold hands, and share a simple message, "let's make magic."

"Being on stage means you put all of your personal stuff to the side and bring your inner gifts," she said. "You're making magic with the people you're performing with. It makes you walk taller and feel more confident."

Some of her favorite moments came from watching that growth happen in others.

"I've worked with people who are terrified when they first come on stage," she said. "Watching them become confident really makes me happy."

Shimer also pointed to efforts to bring performing arts programs together across IECC as something she is proud to have supported. She said collaboration between campuses has helped strengthen programs districtwide.

As she steps away from the Board, Shimer said she plans to remain connected by supporting the college and attending performances when she can.

"I've had so many wonderful experiences working with everyone from kids to seniors," she said. "LTC has really been the story of my life."

Shimer's term on the Board of Trustees was scheduled to run through spring 2027. The Board is seeking a qualified individual to fill the remainder of the term.

Those interested should submit a letter of interest to Board Secretary Sonja Holtz, 233 E. Chestnut St., Olney, IL 62450.

CHILDREN'S SUMMER THEATER PREPARING TWO SHOWS

Lincoln Trail College's Children's Summer Theater will bring two adventures to the stage this month, giving young performers the chance to travel from a medieval castle to a giant peach.

The season opens with Magic Tree House: The Knight at Dawn KIDS, directed by Mindy Evans and performed by students entering first through fifth grades this fall. Performances are set for 7 p.m. June 25-26.

The production is adapted from Mary Pope Osborne's Magic Tree House series, which has sold more than 100 million copies and is available in more than 100 countries. In The Knight at Dawn KIDS, siblings Jack and Annie return to the magic tree house and are swept into the Middle Ages, where they encounter knights, castle staff, enchanted suits of armor and a mysterious quest. The story follows the two as they experience a medieval feast, escape through secret tunnels and search for their way home.



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The cast features Jeffery Love III as Jack and Charlotte Tohill as Annie. Ally Smith plays the Jester, Shelby Reed plays the Black Knight, Nash Trotter plays Mustache, Parker Meskimen plays Squinty and Bridgett McCoy plays Red. The cast also includes Layla Inboden, Tegan Keen, Neka Flenniken, Izzy Fuller, Savannah Dotson, Sloane Robinson, Myah Richardson, Mavis Bantican, Eleanor Zanandrea, Karsten Kapper, Kadence Kapper, Quincy Robinson, Cassidy Barclay, Caroline Talamantes, Ella Wesley, Charlotte Wildes, Vivi Lingafelter, Brylee Smith, Stella Drennen, Amelia VanSchoyck, Clara Zanandrea, Stella Goupil, Elias Evans, Opal Walls, Ivy Carr and Myles Silverman.

The season continues with Roald Dahl's James and the Giant Peach JR., also directed by Evans, with students entering sixth through ninth grades this fall. Performances are set for 7 p.m. June 27 and 2 p.m. June 28.

Based on Dahl's story, James and the Giant Peach JR. follows James after he discovers a magic potion that grows a tremendous peach and launches an ocean journey with a group of singing insects. The musical explores courage, friendship and self-discovery as James and his new friends face hunger, sharks and plenty of disagreements along the way.

Tessa Walton stars as James. The cast also includes Allie Schmidt, Mayson Corn, Oliver Wildes, Brenna Aydt, Ariana Weaver, Carlie Harrell, Harper Gallion, Rosleigh Bardsley, Jaelyn Eller, Asher Fuller, Lainey Aydt, Lettie Robbins, Lillian Kneeland, Jaxton Hasty, Hayden Dix, Harper Palacios, Emily Tohill, Kamie Knoblett, Brielle Tonn, Eliza Carter, Claire McCoy, Allison Ayres, Mason Weck, Kora Flenniken, Aleigha Henry, Dani Stuart, Ellie Midgett, Maezie Fearday, Kendall Meskimen, Pippi Reed, Will Schutte, Owen Carr, Reagan Rich, Channing Robinson, Addie Drennen, Hadlee Henry, Maddie Carter, Wryn Medsker, Kyeslynn Barnes, Andilyn Bardsley and Jaesa Joseph.

Evans said the productions give students more than a chance to perform.

"Children's Summer Theater is such a special experience because students get to build confidence, make friends and be part of something bigger than themselves," Evans said.

"Whether they are stepping into a castle or climbing aboard a giant peach, they are learning how to tell a story together, and that is what makes these productions so much fun."

LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE SPRING ACADEMIC HONORS



Lincoln Trail College has released its academic honor lists for the Spring 2026 Semester. Three lists have been established by Illinois Eastern Community Colleges to indicate students who have achieved academic excellence. They are the Chancellor's Honors List, the President's Academic Honors List, and the Dean's Academic Honors List.

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

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

The following students have earned Spring 2026 academic honors:

CHANCELLOR'S ACADEMIC HONORS LIST

Alina Alford, James Attwood, Jocelynn Bachelor, Bryce Brabender, Jimena Brenes Mora, Jonathan Darst, Kaitlyn Didion, Matthew Fortner, Eliot Gallaher, Caleb Gehlhausen, Caleb Gephart, Anthony Gundler, Noah Hout, Gracie Inboden, Mollie Kennedy, Gavin Leloup, Joshua Morris, Cristobal Navarrete, Kabosh Okpeboloray, Peyton Osteen, Jarred Poindexter, Lyndee Pusey, Brandon Ramsey, Nathan Rich, Travis Roosevelt, Griffin Schabel, Hazel Sekhwela, Sally Shelton, Mira Sinclair, Samuel Stacy, Javen Sweitzer, Grace Taylor, Faith Tooloose, Cade Tracy, Isaac Waggener, Kalli Ware, Aidan Willis, Katie Winterrowd and Elizabeth Womble.

PRESIDENT'S ACADEMIC HONORS LIST

Sajjen Chester, Brenna Coonce, Bryce Cox, Hugo Cuesta Carrasco, Kaley Flynn, Sanaa Harrell, Khamryn Hopkins, Braxton Huddlestun, Alissa Lankston, Mothekgi Mpaketsane, Ivy Murray, Adam Newell, Jaycee Phillips, Nicholas Sedam, Gracie Weger and Kaely Weiscope.

DEAN'S ACADEMIC HONORS LIST

Addilyne Adams, Andrew Brandenburger, Facundo Casero, Kaylee Edwards, Asher Evans, Summer Gould, Kaitlyn Kendall, Caleb McNary, Maria Mero, Jarrett Nidey, Laura Nieto, Megan Parkhurst, Hannah Potts, Tommaso Romano, Sheldon Rose, Kindra Rosebery, Mersadees Sassman, Tucker Scott, Dalton Spahn, Molly Stanton, Jarett Stewart, Marjorie Weber, Caitlyn Wilson, Kline Woodward, Adam Wright and Natalie Yargus.

WEAVER BRINGS PUBLIC SAFETY EXPERIENCE TO NEW IECC ROLE

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges' new Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness Director is bringing decades of public safety experience to a role focused on strengthening safety across the district.

Chad Weaver, the retired chief of police for the City of Robinson, recently joined IECC in the new position. He said the role appealed to him because it allows him to serve students across a large geographic area.

"What drew me to this role is the opportunity to serve a large number of students over a large geographic area," Weaver said. "It looked like an opportunity to use my skills to help make it the safest possible environment for them to learn in."

Weaver spent 24 years with the Robinson Police Department, working his way from patrol officer to school resource officer and eventually chief of police. His experience included emergency response planning, school safety, active-threat training and multi-agency preparedness exercises.

That background gives Weaver a perspective he believes can help IECC continue building on its existing safety and emergency preparedness efforts.

Because IECC includes multiple colleges and locations, Weaver said one of the challenges is making emergency preparedness consistent across the district while still accounting for the needs of each campus and the emergency service agencies that serve them.

Short emergency response guides are already available in classrooms and offices throughout the district, and IECC has a more detailed emergency plan in place. Weaver said part of his work is strengthening that larger plan by adding more practical response options and making sure it can serve as a useful tool during a crisis.

"One of the biggest opportunities in building a consistent safety and preparedness plan districtwide is that some of the groundwork has already been laid and just needs pushed across the finish line," Weaver said.

Weaver said his early priorities include empowering students, faculty and staff to request emergency help quickly, strengthening IECC's districtwide emergency plan and developing a training program that is continually updated.

"In the event of an emergency incident, seconds matter," Weaver said. "The quicker the emergency services are on the way to mitigate a situation, the better the outcome will be."

Weaver said strong relationships with employees, students, law enforcement, first responders and community partners are essential to effective campus safety.

"These relationships are the foundation of good preparedness and safety," Weaver said.

As Weaver begins the new role, he said one of the most important messages he wants people to remember in any crisis or emergency is simple: Get safe.

"Getting yourself safe sets you up to where you can help other people, whether that's helping people evacuate or helping people barricade or calling 911 or providing updated information or meeting first responders," Weaver said.



FORDE TO SHARE IECC MARKETING MIXERS AT STATEWIDE MEETING

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Program Director of Marketing and Communications Chris Forde will share one of IECC's professional development initiatives with community college marketing professionals from across the state.

Forde will present at the Illinois Community College Marketing Collaborative Summer Meeting on June 16 at Illinois Central College. He was one of four presenters selected for the meeting's new "Steal My Idea" segment, which gives attendees an opportunity to share successful ideas, projects and strategies with their peers.

Forde will present on IECC's Marketing Mixer Workshops, a series created by the IECC Marketing and Communications team to help faculty and staff better understand marketing resources, strengthen communication efforts and learn practical skills they can use in their work.



"We wanted to create something that was useful, approachable and maybe even a little fun," Forde said. "Marketing and communications can touch almost every area of the college, so the Marketing Mixers give us a way to connect with employees, answer questions and provide tools that can help them promote their programs, events and services more effectively."

The workshops are conducted through Microsoft Teams once a month during the academic year. Sessions are recorded and made available online, allowing employees to view them later or revisit topics as needed.

Topics have included creating effective email signatures, using IECC's virtual tours, improving cell phone photography, accessibility, social media, branding and promoting campus events. The workshops are designed to be interactive, giving employees an opportunity to ask questions, share ideas and learn in a conversational setting.

Forde said the idea grew out of the MarCom team's desire to make marketing resources more accessible across IECC's four colleges and district locations.

"Our team works with people across a wide range of roles, and we know everyone is trying to tell their story in the best way possible," Forde said. "The Marketing Mixers help us take some of the mystery out of marketing. They give employees a place to learn what works, understand why certain standards matter and feel more confident when they are communicating with students, colleagues and the community."

The Illinois Community College Marketing Collaborative brings together marketing and communications professionals from community colleges throughout Illinois. The summer meeting provides an opportunity for members to discuss trends, share best practices and collaborate on ideas that can strengthen communication efforts at their institutions.

Forde said he is excited to highlight the work of IECC's MarCom team and to share an idea that other colleges could adapt for their own campuses.

"One of the best things about working in community college marketing is that we are all trying to solve similar challenges," Forde said. "If something we are doing at IECC can help another college build stronger connections with its faculty and staff, that is a win for everyone."

Recordings of IECC's Marketing Mixer Workshops are available at iecc.edu/iecc/academics/cetl/media/marketing-mixers.

DAUGHERTY RETURNS TO COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL AS LTC HEAD COACH

Jessica Daugherty sees her new role at Lincoln Trail College as a full-circle moment.

Daugherty has been named the new head volleyball coach at LTC and will also serve the college as enrollment management coordinator. Both roles bring her back to the college setting, where she began her career and where she says she feels she belongs.

"I am extremely excited to be here," Daugherty said. "I'm excited to be back in the college area, especially near my hometown."

Daugherty brings more than 20 years of coaching experience to Lincoln Trail. She began coaching shortly after college, serving as head volleyball coach at Lake Land College from 2004-09. She later coached at the high school level, including six seasons as head varsity volleyball coach at Casey-Westfield High School.

Returning to the college game is meaningful for Daugherty, who said she has come to understand over time that the college setting is where she feels most at home professionally.

"It's pretty special," she said. "I finally, over the years, realized where my home is." Daugherty's first goal for the Statesmen is to build a strong team culture. She said her philosophy begins with creating unity among players, both on and off the court.

"The girls have to feel as one unit," Daugherty said. "As far as a team, on and off the court, so that we can be successful on the court."

She said she is encouraged by the group she will have in her first season. Recruiting has gone well, with a roster that includes returning players, local recruits and student-athletes from outside the region.

"The team that I brought in, the team that we have returning, are a wonderful group of athletes," Daugherty said. "I look to see really positive things for this upcoming season." On the court, Daugherty said fans can expect to see a fast-paced, high-energy team.

"I run a very fast-paced offense," she said. "Defensively, you'll see them never quit. There is never a ball that they cannot go get."

That style, she said, should make for exciting volleyball, with long rallies, effort and energy from the Statesmen.

Off the court, Daugherty said her expectations are just as clear. She wants her players to remember that they are students first.

"In the classroom, respectful, attending all their classes, getting their grades that they need to have in the programs that they want, and getting them graduated is a huge portion of that so they can move on," Daugherty said.



That focus on student success fits naturally with Daugherty's second role at LTC. As enrollment management coordinator, she will support student recruitment efforts, campus visits, special events and student ambassadors. She said the role is another piece of her professional background coming full circle.

Daugherty has experience in both admissions and financial aid at Lake Land College. She served as an admission representative from 2005-14, director of adult outreach from 2014-15 and financial aid representative from 2020-22.

"It is exciting because that's what I grew up on in my professional career, recruitment, managing enrollment, all those exciting pieces of getting the kids here," Daugherty said. "Showing them how wonderful this college is."

Daugherty said her coaching and enrollment roles complement each other. When she gives campus tours to prospective student-athletes, she said the conversations come naturally because she understands what students and families need to see.

She said one of the things that stood out to her about LTC was the welcoming atmosphere.

"Our facilities are great and it's small and full of friendly faces," Daugherty said. "Everybody has really been so friendly, and it's everybody knowing each other."

That first impression is important, she said, because students are trying to imagine whether a college can become their home.

"I think when they come on this campus, that first impression is already made positively," Daugherty said. "I've heard that a lot from people, especially our student-athletes, where they come here, and they see it feels like home."

Daugherty said helping students see themselves at LTC begins with listening to them and understanding what matters most to them.

"I'm not this scary head coach or scary recruitment person," she said. "It's showing them the pieces and learning about them, what is important to them."

For students who want a smaller college, Daugherty said LTC offers smaller classes, a close campus environment and a place where students can quickly begin to recognize familiar faces.

"Walking around campus, you're not going to feel like a stranger," she said. "You're going to have close friends."

Daugherty earned a Bachelor of Science in sports management from Southeast Missouri State University and an MBA in business administration and management from the University of Phoenix. Her honors include induction into the Lake Land College Athletic Hall of Fame and recognition as Region Coach of the Year.

As she begins her first season at Lincoln Trail, Daugherty said one of the things she enjoys most about coaching is watching individual players come together as a team.

"It is so fun to watch them come in on the first day as individuals, and then watch how their personalities just connect," Daugherty said. "Seeing how strangers come together and build something beautiful is pretty special."

LTC IN PICTURES



Graduates of the Nursing Program read the Nightingale Oath at Lincoln Trail College's Nursing Pinning Ceremony.



Nursing Program graduates pose for a group picture after their Pinning Ceremony.



Students gather to take a selfie as they prepare for Lincoln Trail College's graduation ceremony.



Students march to the Sports Center in the Processional for LTC graduation ceremony.



President Tona Ambrose welcomes graduates and guests at the beginning of LTC's graduation ceremony.



Nursing student Aiden Birchfield celebrates his accomplishment as he walks across the stage as his name is read at LTC's graduation ceremony.



Say cheese! Members of LTC's softball team pose for a selfie following LTC's graduation ceremony.



A Lincoln Trail College student celebrates outside of the Sports Center following LTC's graduation ceremony.