

OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE KNIGHTLINE



AUGUST 2026

CALENDAR

AUGUST

13 — OCC Faculty/Staff Workshop

13 — Last Day to Enroll Fall 2026 Tuition Payment (4) Plan

17 — New Student Orientation, Student Union, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

18 — Investiture Reception Honoring IECC Chancellor Dr. Timothy L. Taylor, OCC Banquet Room, 4-6 p.m.

19 — Fall Semester Classes Begin

20 — Ping Pong Tourney, Student Union, noon

21 — Free Cookout, Student Union, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

24 — Club Rush, Wattleworth Hall Hallway, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

25 — Donut Stress with TRIO SSS, Wattleworth Hall, 7:30-10 a.m.

26 — Alumni Spotlight with Dr. Tanner Miller, Learning Commons, 1 p.m.

27 — Bingo, Student Union, 6:30 p.m.

28 — Wafflepalooza, Student Union, 10 a.m.-noon



Associate Professor of Speech and Communication Jessica McDonald shares the story of a Holocaust survivor. McDonald was one of 14 educators who participated in the Alan Cornell U.S. Campus Faculty Seminar at Yad Vashem, Israel's World Holocaust Remembrance Center.

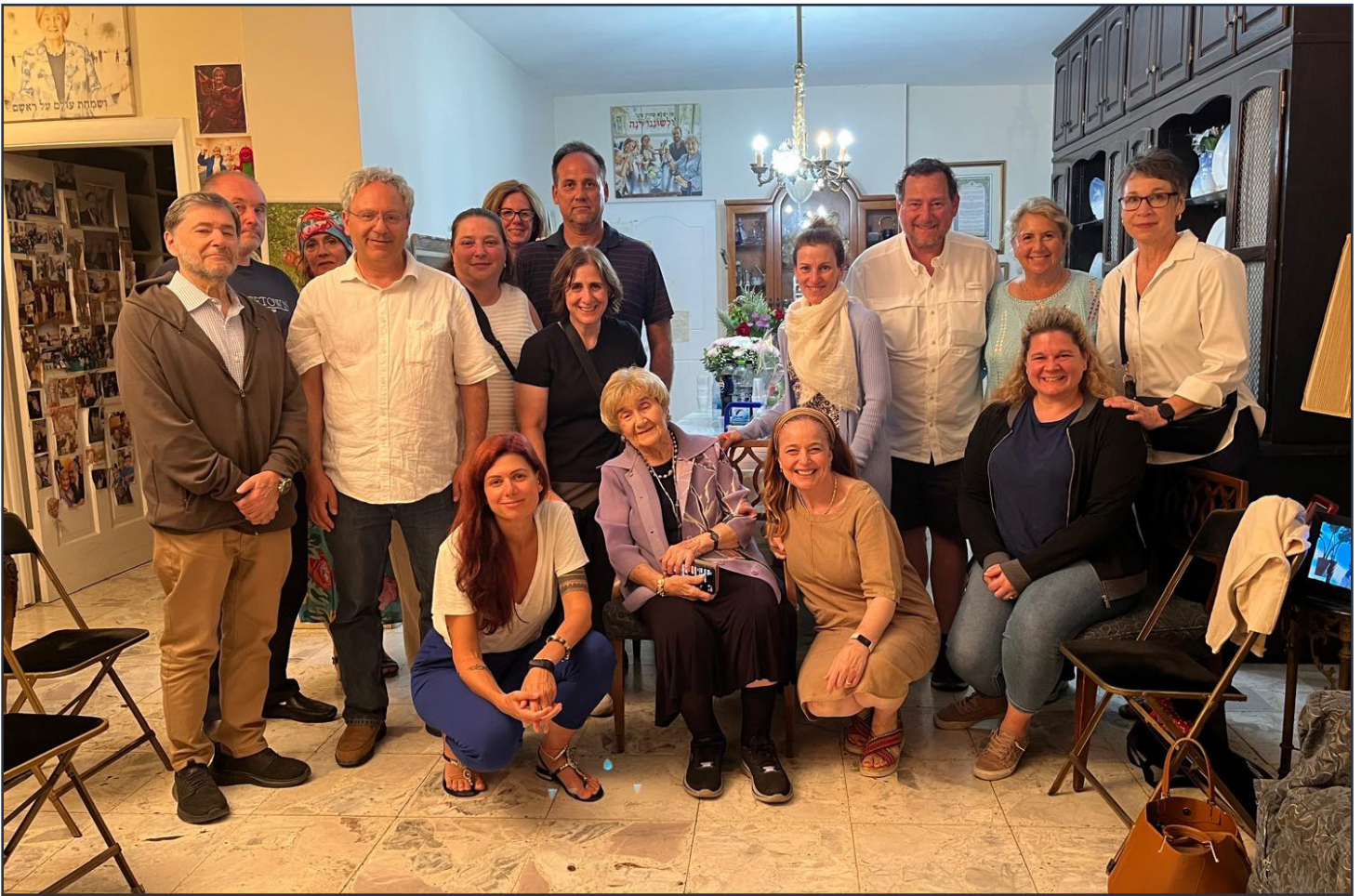
McDonald Participates in International Holocaust Education Seminar in Israel

One of just 14 educators selected from colleges and universities across the United States, Associate Professor of Speech and Communication Jessica McDonald recently participated in the Alan Cornell U.S. Campus Faculty Seminar at Yad Vashem, Israel's World Holocaust Remembrance Center.

The fully funded intensive 10-day professional development experience focused on Holocaust history, research, memory, testimony, pedagogy and contemporary antisemitism. The seminar was established through the generosity of the Cornell family to equip U.S. faculty with the knowledge and resources to strengthen Holocaust education on college campuses.

Throughout the seminar, participants learned from internationally recognized historians, researchers, museum professionals, and educators while engaging in discussions with colleagues representing a wide range of academic disciplines and professional backgrounds.

McDonald said the diversity of both the participants and the speakers, combined with the



Jessica McDonald and fellow seminar participants visit with Holocaust survivor Rena Quint in her home.

remarkable depth of expertise they brought to every session, was one of the most impactful aspects of the experience.

"The seminar reinforced that meaningful Holocaust education isn't the responsibility of just one discipline," McDonald said. "Whether you teach communication, history, theater, religion, or early childhood education, each perspective helps students understand this history in a deeper and more meaningful way."

Participants explored Yad Vashem's expansive campus, museums, memorials, archives, and educational facilities while examining approaches to Holocaust remembrance and education. One of the seminar's most memorable experiences was visiting Holocaust survivor Rena Quint in her home to hear her personal testimony, which provided a powerful reminder of the importance of preserving survivor voices for future generations.

For McDonald, the seminar's impact extends well beyond her own professional development.

"I returned home with new knowledge, practical teaching strategies, great educational resources, and a network of colleagues that I can reach out to for advice and collaboration," she said. "I'm excited to bring what I learned back to our students and community and help expand access to Holocaust education in Southeastern Illinois."

The seminar also directly supports McDonald's continued work developing Holocaust education opportunities at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges. In Summer 2027, she will teach *Communication During the Holocaust*, a new course that is open to students, community members, and IECC faculty and staff, that will examine the Holocaust through the lens of communication and give participants the opportunity to go on an international study experience in Germany and Poland. The knowledge, resources, and professional relationships developed through the Yad Vashem seminar will help enrich both the course and the travel experience for participating students.

Reflecting on the experience, McDonald described the seminar as one of the most meaningful and impactful professional development opportunities of her career.

"I've attended many conferences and seminars throughout my career, but this was one of the very best," she said. "It exceeded my expectations in every way and reinforced the importance of expanding access to accurate Holocaust education in communities where those opportunities are often limited."



Students enjoy the free cookout during last year's Weeks of Welcome. Hosted by OCC Lady Knights Basketball, this year's event will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on August 21.

WOW! Kicks off fall semester at OCC

Whether students are stepping onto campus for the first time or returning for another semester, Olney Central College's Weeks of Welcome (WOW!) offer plenty of opportunities to jump into college life.

Beginning with New Student Orientation on August 17 and continuing through August 31, WOW! encourages students to connect with classmates and embrace the full OCC experience.

"Weeks of Welcome help students build meaningful connections with peers, faculty and staff while introducing them to campus resources that support their academic and personal success," said Chad Groves, Director of the OCC Learning Commons. "Students who feel connected to their college community are more likely to remain enrolled and persist toward their goals. Ultimately, WOW! helps students begin the year with momentum."

Since their implementation, Groves said, the Weeks of Welcome activities have been well received by students and have become an integral part of the orientation process.

"Our WOW! events have evolved over the past few years, with successively increasing student engagement," he added. "I'm confident this year will be no different."



OCC's annual Club Rush gives students a chance to learn more about campus organizations, connect with fellow students, and find opportunities to get involved beyond the classroom. This year's event will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on August 24.

Among the most popular traditions is the annual Duck Hunt, where students search campus for hidden ducks and return them to the Learning Commons in exchange for prizes. New additions this year include an evening of Bingo at 6:30 p.m. on August 27 and Wafflepalooza from 10 a.m. to noon on August 28. Both activities will be held in the Student Union.

Former Student Ambassador Jacob Maguire said WOW! is the best way for students to begin a successful journey at OCC.

"I would encourage students to become involved and take advantage of the WOW! activities," he said. "Not only are they enjoyable, but they also offer networking opportunities with faculty and staff. One of my favorite parts was all the free food and OCC merch. More importantly than that, however, I was able to meet some of my classmates and form a sense of community early on. That really helped calm my nerves about college."

Students looking to get involved on campus will want to stop by Club Rush. Scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on August 24, various organizations will have information tables set up in the Wattleworth Hall hallway. The event gives students an opportunity to learn more about the many campus organizations, chat with current members and find their place on campus.

"Joining clubs and participating in events is an easy way to gain friends outside of the classroom," Maguire said. "I was able to learn skills and meet people that I wouldn't have if I hadn't decided to participate in campus life. I had friends to study, eat lunch, and hang out with. I also got to do things I enjoy, like play in band and participate in Esports events. I know that if I never got involved, my college experience would have been much different. Instead, I had an amazing year at OCC and will never forget it."



WEEKS OF WELCOME!



AUGUST 17-31, 2026

17 MONDAY	18 TUESDAY	19 WEDNESDAY	20 THURSDAY	21 FRIDAY
 9-1, OCC Theater		First Day of Classes  WOW Duck Hunt, Find and return lost ducks to the Learning Commons in exchange for prizes. Chalk Art, OCC Courtyard Free Popcorn, Learning Commons	 12 - Ping Pong Tourney, OCC Student Union Show off your skills, cheer on your friends and battle for campus bragging rights and prizes.	 11-1, Student Union Grab a free lunch at our cookout hosted by OCC Lady Knights Basketball.
CLUB RUSH 11-1, Wattleworth Hall Hallway Explore campus life! Discover clubs, meet new friends and get involved at OCC. Free Popcorn, Learning Commons	 7:30-10, Wattleworth Hall Donut Stress with TRIO SSS Find out about TRIO and if you qualify.	 1 - Alumni Spotlight, Learning Commons Dr. Tanner Miller will share his experiences at OCC and beyond.	 6:30 - Student Union Grab a snack, mark your card and join the fun.	 10-12, Student Union Join us for WafflePalooza! Build your ultimate waffle creation with your favorite toppings. Enjoy a delicious treat and recharge with friends.
31 MONDAY  1 - Student Union Level up your day! Grab a controller and challenge your friends to a game with the Esports Club. 10-Day Survey, Learning Commons Complete your survey, sign up for giveaways and enjoy free popcorn.				



QUESTIONS?

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OCC Learning Commons Specialist Kaitlyn Weger showcases some of the new book selections available for checkout. The Learning Commons is hosting a new book club this fall.

Learning Commons launching new Book Club

The Learning Commons is inviting Olney Central College students, faculty and staff to connect over a shared love of reading with the launch of a new book club this fall.

Unlike a traditional book club, participants won't all read the same title. Instead, members will share what they're currently reading — whether it's a novel, biography, mystery, memoir or another favorite genre.

"We want to create a community of readers on campus and give people an opportunity to come together over something they enjoy," Learning Commons Specialist Kaitlyn Weger explained.

Whether you're an avid reader or occasional page turner, the Book Club offers a welcoming space to connect with others, exchange ideas and discover your next great read.

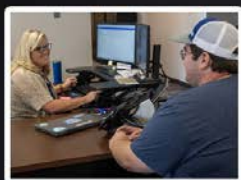
"It's very low stress," Weger said. "You don't have to finish a book by a certain date or do any extra work. Just bring what you're reading and talk about it. If you're not comfortable sharing, you're welcome to come, listen and see what others are reading."

To help determine the best day and time for monthly meetings, Weger plans to post a survey on the Learning Commons website. The survey will allow interested participants to share their availability. She hopes to hold the first meeting in September.

Those interested in participating are encouraged to watch the campus TVs, the Learning Commons website and OCC social media channels for upcoming meeting dates and times.

For more information, contact Weger at wegerk@iecc.edu or stop by the Learning Commons circulation desk.





WE'RE STAYING OPEN LATE FOR MOONLIGHT MONDAYS

ADMISSIONS • ADVISING • BUSINESS OFFICE • ENROLLMENT • FINANCIAL AID • HELP DESK • LEARNING COMMONS • RECORDS

AUGUST 3, 10, 24

4-7 PM

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT OR JUST WALK IN

OCC student-athletes earn NJCAA academic honors

Academic excellence continues to define Olney Central College Athletics as 30 student-athletes earned National Junior College Athletic Association All-Academic honors for the 2025-26 academic year, while each of the college's four athletic teams received NJCAA Academic Team of the Year recognition.

OCC Athletic Director and Softball Coach Nick Short said the achievements reflect not only the hard work and dedication of OCC's student-athletes, but also a collaborative campus-wide effort to help students succeed both in the classroom and in competition.

"We had another outstanding year in the classroom, and there are many people who had a hand in it," Short stressed. "First of all, our student-athletes bought in to the importance of attendance, accountability and effort in the classroom. Our coaches did a great job in monitoring grades and stressing their importance. Our front office staff including our advisors, business office, financial aid, registrar, all help tremendously in putting our athletes in a position to be successful. We can't thank them enough."

Student-athletes on the NJCAA All-Academic First Team achieved a perfect 4.00 GPA. Second Team honorees earned GPAs between 3.80 and 3.99, and Third Team honorees posted GPAs between 3.60 and 3.79.

First Team selections are Alli Downes (softball), Rivers Freckelton (baseball), Bailee Frichtl (softball), Ian Hall (baseball), Renn Harper (baseball) Bradey Moad (baseball), Brittney Niemerg (softball), Kasym Nash (men's basketball), Molly Schwartz (softball) and Taegan Webster (softball).

Second Team honorees are Elizabeth Bahl (women's basketball), Dalton Jones (baseball), Kennedy Odum (softball), Samantha Secrest (women's basketball), Landon Smelt (baseball), Logan Swaney (baseball), Kyra Swift (softball) and Melaina Zedalis (women's basketball).

Third Team selections are Andrew Bober (baseball), Aidan Capone (baseball), Josh Cool (baseball), Emily Czerwonka (softball), Gwyn Hardimon (softball), Baron Odam (baseball), Chyann Padgett (women's basketball), Shelby Seay (women's basketball and softball), Caleb Seibers (baseball), Mia Strickland (softball), AJ Tindell (baseball) and Logan Webb (men's basketball).

Together the OCC Athletic Department posted a 3.25 GPA. Individual team GPAs were Softball 3.55, Women's Basketball 3.29, Baseball 3.16 and Men's Basketball 3.11.

"This is what we expect our student athletes to do, and they have done well for as long as I can remember," Short said. "We look forward to continuing this level of success."

OCC IN PICTURES



Dual Credit Orientation
OCC welcomed dual credit students and their families to campus on August 6 for an orientation designed to help them start the semester strong. Students learned about campus resources, met members of the OCC team and received helpful information to prepare for a successful experience.

