

OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE KNIGHTLINE



SEPTEMBER 2026

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

7 — Campus Closed, Labor Day

17 — Constitution Observance Day, Classes in Session

20 — Auditions for Madagascar A Musical Adventure, OCC Theater, 2 p.m.

21 — Auditions for Madagascar A Musical Adventure, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

30 — Blue Preview

OCTOBER

3 — Health Fest Gym, 7:30-11 a.m.

9 — District Faculty/Staff Professional Development Day, No Classes

12 — Campus Closed, Columbus Day

College Visits

Tables will be located in the hallway outside Student Services.

Sept. 14 — Franklin University, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Sept. 15 — Eastern Illinois University Representative Mackenzie Taylor, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Sept. 16 — Southern Illinois University Representative Jason Nugent, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.



Dr. Sarah Bergbower displays the 2026 Scientific Research and Voices Under 40 awards she received from the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science.

Dr. Sarah Bergbower selected recipient of ASCLS 2026 Scientific Research Award

Associate Professor of Life Sciences Dr. Sarah Bergbower's commitment to excellence in clinical laboratory science is earning national recognition, including the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science's prestigious 2026 Scientific Research Award.

Dr. Bergbower received the honors during the Joint Annual Meeting of the ASCLS, the Association of Genetic Technologists (AGT) and the Society of American Federal Medical Laboratory Scientists (SAFMLS).

The ASCLS Scientific Research Award recognizes and encourages the development of scientific research in the field of medical laboratory science within the past two years. Awards are based on specific criteria including the research's benefit to the profession, originality,



Dr. Sarah Bergbower, left, works with a student in the Science Lab.

relevance to current laboratory medicine and impact on the organization's body of knowledge or scope of practice.

The Joint Annual Meeting brings together laboratory professionals from around the globe, showcasing a broad spectrum of scientific knowledge and leadership expertise. The event features educational programs, abstracts, posters and industry engagement. This year's conference was held in St. Louis, Mo.

Dr. Bergbower's award-winning work involved implementing an algorithm designed to improve testing, diagnosis and antibiotic stewardship for asymptomatic bacteriuria (ASB) in pregnancy, which was the focus of her doctoral research. Dr. Bergbower collaborated with Antonio F. Saad, Natalie M. Williams-Boyer and Rajkumar Rajendran on the research, which was published in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM.

"It's very humbling," Dr. Bergbower said of her selection. "Being from a rural area, opportunities like this can feel out of reach — which makes it even more meaningful."

Dr. Bergbower's research examined how a dipstick urinalysis test is often used as a diagnostic tool rather than as an initial screening test for asymptomatic bacteriuria (ASB) in obstetric patients.

"Often, the screening test will lead a provider to believe the patient has ASB because it is normal to find leukocyte esterase in a pregnant woman's urine," Dr. Bergbower said.

This can lead to antibiotics being prescribed to a patient unnecessarily.

Through the algorithm, Dr. Bergbower recommended a positive dipstick screening test should be followed by a urine culture to confirm the results before antibiotics are given.

When implemented and evaluated at various clinic locations within the health care system, the algorithm resulted in a 43 percent reduction in urine culture underutilization, along with a nearly 60 percent decrease in diagnosed ASB prevalence.

"The approach achieved a 50 percent reduction in unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions without increasing adverse patient outcomes," Dr. Bergbower said. "We were able to reduce the false positive interpretations by follow up with

culture and antibiotics were not overprescribed in a vulnerable population, as they can be harmful not only to the mother, but the developing fetus.”

Dr. Bergbower engaged in poster sessions regarding her research and tied for second place at the national JAM Meeting in Providence, R.I. in 2023.

The ASCLS also honored Dr. Bergbower with its Voices Under 40 and Omicron Sigma awards. Dr. Bergbower was one of seven recipients from across the United States selected for the Voices Under 40 Award, which recognizes emerging leadership skills. Honorees are selected through an application process and will be featured in the society’s newsletter.

The Omicron Sigma Award is the ASCLS President’s Honor Roll for Outstanding Service. It recognizes dedicated members who volunteer their personal resources, time and energy to support the organization.

Dr. Bergbower has held numerous leadership positions within ASCLS. She recently was elected Forum Councilor for the Clinical Laboratory Educators Forum (CLEF) and serves on the PACE (Continuing Education) Committee. She is Past Chair of the Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Sciences Advancement Committee and serves as chair of its Repository Subcommittee. She also previously served on the ASCLS Nominations Committee as an elected member.

Staying engaged and current in the clinical laboratory field is important to Dr. Bergbower, both to maintain her professional knowledge and to ensure she is sharing the most up-to-date information with her students.

Her involvement in professional organizations also provides valuable opportunities to build relationships and expand her professional network.

“Academics are expected to retain their expertise and remain experts,” she said. “Science and healthcare are constantly changing. When educating, we must be aware of these updates. Professional development and being part of these organizations makes that possible.”

As the first person from Illinois to earn a Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science degree, Dr. Bergbower brings a level of specialized expertise that is unique to a rural community college. She earned her degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch and shares that experience and knowledge with her students.

Dr. Bergbower’s involvement in professional organizations also has opened doors to speaking engagements, networking opportunities, webinars and podcasts, as well as additional opportunities for professional recognition. She said she is grateful for the opportunities her professional involvement has provided.

Earlier this year, Dr. Bergbower served as a session speaker at the ASCLS-Wisconsin State Meeting and the Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference in Bellevue, Wash.

Dr. Bergbower, who joined Illinois Eastern Community Colleges in 2015, said the district has been instrumental in helping her build and strengthen professional relationships.

“Over the past four years, IECC has provided professional development funds to support my participation in these opportunities,” she said. “I wouldn’t be where I am professionally without it.”



Dr. Sarah Bergbower is the first person from Illinois to earn a Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science Degree. She has served as a life science professor at OCC since 2015.

IECC Chancellor Dr. Timothy Taylor visits OCC



Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Chancellor Dr. Timothy Taylor visited Olney Central College on September 3, touring campus and connecting with students, faculty and staff.

While at OCC, Dr. Taylor explored the newly renovated science labs in Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall and the Health Professions Center, which houses the Nursing and Radiography Programs.

Dr. Taylor also met with the OCC Leadership Team and conversed with faculty, staff and students while enjoying an ice cream sundae bar.

Dr. Taylor was named IECC Chancellor in June and has served in the position since August 15.

He was President of Shawnee Community College prior to returning to IECC, where he previously served as President of Frontier Community College.



Help name the OCC Blue Knight

Olney Central College's Blue Knight mascot made his debut during Weeks of Welcome and while he has the armor and plenty of spirit, OCC is asking the community to help select his name.

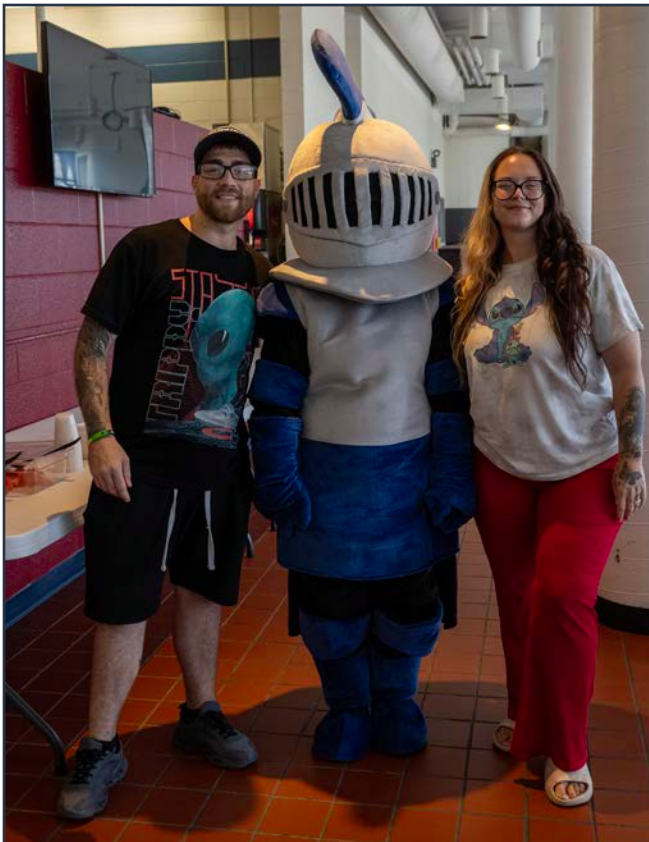
"The Blue Knight is a great addition to OCC and we're excited to have him at athletic and campus activities throughout the year," said Director of Enrollment and Community Outreach Curtis Miller. "We're looking for an identity that reflects the spirit and traditions of OCC."

Participants are encouraged to submit names that are creative, memorable and reflective of Olney Central College.

Submit entries at [Name the OCC Knight Mascot](#) and fill out the form.

The person whose name is selected will receive a \$25 gift certificate to the OCC Campus Store.

The contest is open to OCC students, faculty and staff, as well as alumni and community members.





Weeks of Welcome give students plenty of opportunities to connect, get involved and have fun on campus. Bingo Night was one of the most popular events of the two-week celebration.

WOW brings OCC students together

Olney Central College kicked off the fall semester with two weeks of activities designed to help students connect, explore campus and have some fun.

Director of Learning Commons Chad Groves, who helps coordinate Weeks of Welcome, was especially happy with the response to this year's activities.

"Overall, I was quite pleased with Weeks of Welcome," Groves said. "The event that I was most excited about turned out to probably be the most successful event of the entire two weeks. Bingo Night brought out nearly 50 students, and it seemed like they were all having a lot of fun."

Groves said the success of Bingo Night has already sparked ideas for future student activities.

"We will certainly do it again next fall as part of our Weeks of Welcome, but we may also look into hosting another one just as a student activity later this year," he said.

Wafflepalooza also proved a popular addition, giving students a chance to grab breakfast, top their own waffles and socialize. The Lady Knights Basketball Team hosted a free Welcome Back Cookout, while the annual Duck Hunt

continued to draw interest as students searched campus for “lost ducks” and returned them to the Learning Commons for prizes.

Groves also was excited to host Dr. Tanner Miller as this year’s Alumni Spotlight speaker.

Dr. Miller is an internal medicine physician and Medical Director of Carle Richland Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Miller shared his OCC journey with students, including the time he spent exploring various career options before choosing medicine.

He encouraged students to embrace new experiences, keep learning and remain open to where their journey may lead.

More than simply a series of events, Groves said Weeks of Welcome is designed to help students feel connected to OCC and to one another as they begin a new academic year.

“I hope that the students enjoyed the opportunity to meet some new people and enjoyed the kind of varied ways that we provided for them to get involved, to explore the campus, and to have some fun,” Groves said.



Alumni Spotlight speaker Dr. Tanner Miller talks to students about his journey from OCC to a career in medicine. Dr. Miller is an internal medicine physician and Medical Director of Carle Richland Memorial Hospital.



Weeks of Welcome included a cookout sponsored by OCC Lady Knights Basketball and Wafflepalooza.

OCC Theater announces auditions for *Madagascar – A Musical Adventure*

Get ready to “Move It, Move It!” when Olney Central College Theatre brings the wild and wacky world of *Madagascar – A Musical Adventure* to the stage this fall.

Auditions for the upcoming production will be held at 2 p.m. on September 20 and 6 p.m. on September 21 in the Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center.

Auditions are open to anyone in high school or older, and those auditioning need to attend only one audition date. Callbacks will be held as needed.

Based on the blockbuster DreamWorks animated motion

picture, *Madagascar – A Musical Adventure* follows Alex the Lion, Marty the Zebra, Melman the Giraffe, Gloria the Hippo and a hilarious crew of penguins as they escape New York’s Central Park Zoo and embark on an unexpected adventure.

Alex is the king of the urban jungle and the star attraction at the Central Park Zoo. Along with his best friends Marty, Melman and Gloria, he has spent his entire life enjoying the comforts of captivity. But when Marty’s curiosity gets the better of him, he escapes with help from the mischievous penguins, setting the friends on a wild journey far beyond the zoo.

Filled with colorful characters, adventure and an upbeat musical score, the production brings the beloved story to life for audiences of all ages. The Theatre for Young Audiences version of *Madagascar* was specifically designed for a small cast of adults to perform for young audiences.

The OCC Theatre production will be presented November 20-22.

Whether you’re a seasoned performer or looking for an opportunity to step onto the stage, OCC Theatre invites high school students and adults to audition and become part of this fun-filled musical adventure.

Audition information and materials are available at www.iecc.edu/occ/theater.



Bring Your Own Book Club schedules meetings

Readers at Olney Central College are invited to bring their current reads and join the conversation at the Bring Your Own Book Club.

There are no assigned books and no required reading. Instead, participants bring whatever they’re currently reading and share their thoughts and recommendations with fellow students, faculty and staff. Whether it’s a novel, biography, mystery, nonfiction or something completely different, every title is welcome.

To accommodate as many schedules as possible, the Book Club will meet every two weeks, alternating between Tuesdays and Wednesdays at noon in the OCC Learning Commons. The first meetings are scheduled for September 16 and September 29.

The Bring Your Own Book Club offers a relaxed opportunity to connect with other readers, discover new titles and share recommendations.