

OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE KNIGHTLINE



OCTOBER 2026

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

14 — Midterm

20 — Science Labs Open House, 4-6 p.m.

20 — Spring Registration Opens

20 — Southeastern Illinois Concert Association presents Cellovoci, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

24 — Waffle Breakfast Fund-raiser, OCC Theater Lobby, 8:30-11:45 a.m.

NOVEMBER

3 — Campus Closed, Election Day

7-13 — National Radiologic Technologists Week

9 — SPIN Night, OCC Gym, 5:30-7 p.m.

11 — Campus Closed, Veterans Day

College Visits

Tables will be located in the hallway outside Student Services.

Oct. 15 — Western Illinois University Representative Kassie Daly, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Oct. 28 — Eastern Illinois University Representative Mackenzie Taylor, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.



A student works at one of two new fume hoods in OCC's newly renovated chemistry lab. Four science labs were remodeled over the summer as part of a \$2 million project. The community is invited to tour the updated facilities during an Open House from 4 to 6 p.m. on October 20.

Open House will showcase renovations to science labs

Olney Central College will unveil its newly renovated science labs during an Open House from 4 to 6 p.m. on October 20 in Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall.

"We are excited to showcase the state-of-the-art science labs and celebrate what they will mean for our students and our faculty," said OCC President Chris Simpson. "It is my hope that community members, alumni, and future students will attend this open house to see firsthand how these updated lab facilities will enhance teaching and learning at Olney Central College."

The extensive \$2 million project is the first major update to the third-floor facilities since OCC's main classroom building opened in 1974. The renovations have transformed the physics, chemistry and two biology labs into modern, high-tech learning environments.

"The transformation of these science labs reflects Illinois Eastern Community College's

ongoing commitment to student success and delivering exceptional education to benefit our students," Simpson added.

Assistant Professor of Chemistry Dr. Aaron Lineberry says with the upgrades, OCC's laboratory spaces now reflect the quality that has long existed within its science programs.

"We've always had amazing instrumentation and equipment at least from the chemistry perspective. I have equipment that I know none of the other colleges in the area have access to," Dr. Lineberry said. "Now, I have the facilities to match that equipment. With the updates, we're hoping we can get more students to come in, take a look at us, and consider OCC for their first couple of years. When you compare our new labs to those of other community colleges, they are right on par."

The renovations began in April and continued throughout the summer as all existing furnishings were removed and new flooring, cabinetry and equipment installed. The labs opened for student use in mid-September.

"It is such a huge leap forward for us," Assistant Professor of Life Sciences Nick Short said. "The former labs weren't just old, they were obsolete. For the first time since I've been here, we've had all four labs with classes going on at the same time. We couldn't have done that in the past. These improvements will ensure we are giving our students a very good experience."

Assistant Professor of Life Sciences Chris Mathews has seen the difference firsthand as his classes have transitioned from a second-floor classroom into a newly renovated laboratory, which includes a dedicated space for OCC's cadaver. Previously, the cadaver was housed in a separate room.

"This lab gives us flexibility that we didn't have before," Mathews explained. "With the new technology and the way the lab is set up, with everything in one open space, we'll be able to conduct activities much more efficiently."

Mathews said the new laboratory configuration also will better support both teaching and student learning.

"It's just nice to be in a modern space for anatomy and physiology," he said. "Students are going to be able to take notes a lot easier in class and the formation they're sitting in is more conducive to working in groups."



Renovations to OCC's science labs began in April and continued throughout the summer. The top photo showcases one of the two newly renovated biology labs, while the bottom photo shows the space before construction, highlighting the transformation.



Students conduct experiments in the remodeled chemistry lab. Assistant Professor of Chemistry Dr. Aaron Lineberry says the recent upgrades bring the laboratory spaces in line with the quality of instruction and resources that have long been a strength of OCC's science programs.

Simpson said the renovation project received extensive financial support from the OCC Foundation through the purchase of new equipment including a \$10,000 water purification system. The organization awarded faculty an additional \$18,200 in mini grants to procure needed laboratory items such as a vortex mixer, fluorometer, digital scales and refrigerators and freezers.

The Foundation's support also is creating new opportunities for students to participate in undergraduate research.

"As a community college graduate myself, I believe that community colleges can match the rigor of a university," said Associate Professor of Life Sciences Dr. Sarah Bergbower. "It has always been my personal mission that my courses thoroughly prepare students for transfer in the sciences. That's why this semester, thanks to gracious support from the OCC Foundation, I'm proud and excited to offer a microbiome sequencing undergraduate research project for our pre-med students."

The microbiome sequencing project is one example of how the OCC Foundation's support helps expand educational opportunities for students while strengthening OCC's science programs.

"We are deeply grateful to the OCC Foundation and its donors for their support of this project," Simpson said. "Their investment in these renovated science labs is an investment in our students, our faculty, and our community."

He added, "Every donor that contributes to the OCC Foundation played a role in making this project a reality. We are fortunate to live in a community that values education and supports it financially."

Together, IECC and the OCC Foundation are creating new opportunities for students.

"We now have two fully functioning chemistry hoods in the back of the chemistry lab and there are different things we can do especially for our organic chemistry students," Dr. Lineberry added. "A lot of the chemicals that we work with in organic chemistry are 'skull and crossbones' so now we have a place dedicated where we can go and work and do it safely. We can do reactions that are a little more on the risky side because we have the safety of the hoods. It will allow us to do a lot of things that we wouldn't have been able to do before."



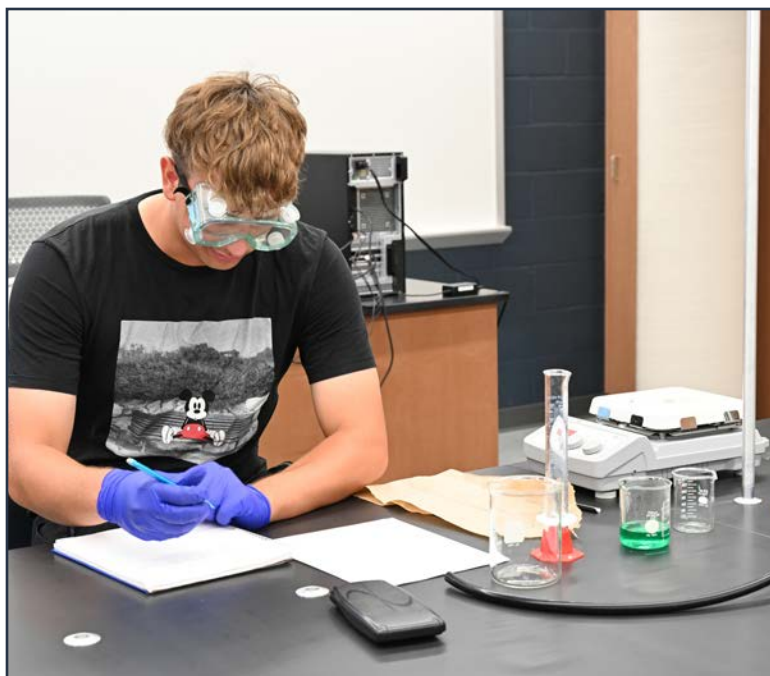
Assistant Professor of Life Sciences Chris Mathews says the renovations have created a modern and welcoming environment for OCC students.

Dr. Lineberry said the renovations also addressed infrastructure issues that have emerged over the years due to Wattleworth Hall's age.

"Now we don't have to worry about power outages and leaking pipes," he added. "Students can focus on the chemistry and it's going to make a world of difference. We now have the facilities to match the equipment and everything else that we have here."

As Athletic Director and Softball Coach, Short is heavily involved in recruiting at OCC and said the new facilities will have a significant impact on those efforts.

"Anything that shows investment in facilities and improvements is awesome and presents the campus in a positive light for prospective students," he added. "I want to thank the administration, district and the OCC Foundation, which provided new equipment, some of which hasn't even arrived yet. This has made a huge difference for our students."



The OCC Foundation contributed more than \$28,000 to assist with scientific equipment needs for the labs.



The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has established a video recording studio on the second floor of Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall. The studio features equipment available for faculty and staff to create professional video content.

Video Recording Studio now available

A new video recording studio is available for faculty and staff as a service of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Originally housed at Frontier Community College as part of the Title III grant, the equipment has been moved to OCC, providing a more centralized and accessible location for faculty within Illinois Eastern Community Colleges.

Located on the second floor of Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall near the CETL office, the facility is equipped with professional video, computer and audio equipment that faculty can use to create high-quality instructional and introductory videos.

CETL Director Mike Conn encourages IECC faculty to take advantage of these valuable tools to enhance online learning and increase student engagement in their courses. Along with camera and mics, the studio includes video editing software, a teleprompter to assist with the recording process and access to the entire Adobe Creative Cloud suite.

"Research shows that integrating introductory and instructional videos significantly increases online student engagement, information retention and learning performance," Conn added. "If you want to increase the quality of online courses in Canvas, the studio can help with creating that short, polished content."

With the recording studio in place, Conn said now is a great time for faculty to refresh existing content or create those short videos that can introduce topics and help to personalize the student experience.

"The videos don't have to be long," he emphasized. "You can put together a short video and then take a deeper dive with reading and YouTube links."

Faculty also can use the studio to record professional quality voice overs for existing PowerPoints.

The studio even offers a portable camera for faculty use.

"I can put a pack together for them and they can take it out for field trips and other classroom activities," he added.

Conn is available to assist users with both the recording and editing process. To reserve a time in the studio, email cetl@iecc.edu.

Marsha Foshee joins OCC as math instructor

Marsha Foshee has joined Olney Central College as a math instructor.

A former OCC student, Foshee attended the college for two semesters before transferring to Eastern Illinois University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1999. She later completed a master's degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Foshee spent 22 years with the Wabash Community Unit School District 348, including 18 years teaching at Mt. Carmel High School. She also taught dual-credit courses through Wabash Valley College.

Foshee enjoys working with the students at OCC.

"It's nice to be around the students. They want to be here and are motivated to move forward," she said. "It's different going from seeing and working with students daily to being with them only two or three times a week."

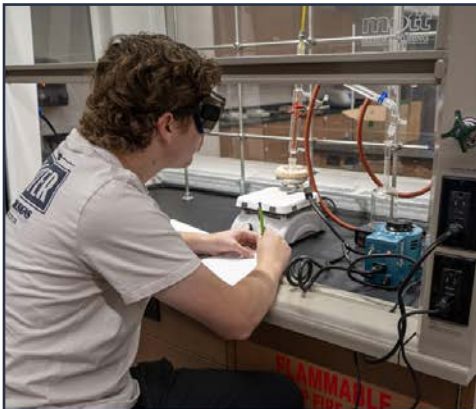
Originally from Neoga, Foshee lives in Mt. Carmel with her husband, David, a retired high school science teacher. The couple has been married for 24 years and has three children and six grandchildren.

Foshee has participated in musical theater productions at Wabash Valley College, taking on roles as both an actor and director. She also has assisted with hair and makeup for theatrical productions at Mt. Carmel High School.

In her free time, Foshee enjoys completing multi-piece jigsaw puzzles, with her largest to date containing 6,000 pieces. She also likes reading and often listens to audiobooks during her commute to OCC.



MARSHA FOSHEE



*Spring
Registration*

OPENS OCTOBER 20
MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR ADVISOR

OCC welcomes 280 students to campus for Blue Preview

Olney Central College's annual Blue Preview gives area students a chance to explore career pathways and programs while discovering what makes OCC truly unique.

On September 30, OCC welcomed 150 high school seniors and 130 eighth graders to campus. Students represented Newton Community, Richland County and Clay City schools along with ROE 12 Assist.

"This was another great event and we had a great turnout," said Curtis Miller, Director of Enrollment and Community Outreach. "Students talked with our advisors and financial aid departments, getting their questions answered."

Students also had the opportunity to interact with current students and faculty.



OCC Greenhouse accepting ferns and tropical plant donations

Olney Central College is preparing for its spring greenhouse sale and is inviting the community to donate ferns and other tropical plants that might otherwise be discarded at the end of the summer season.

Associate Professor of Life Sciences Dr. Sarah Bergbower said the greenhouse will overwinter the donated plants and offer them for resale in the spring.

The initiative provides an opportunity to give plants a second life while helping OCC prepare for another successful greenhouse sale.

"The plant donation program offers a practical alternative to discarding ferns and tropical plants as the weather turns colder," Dr. Bergbower said.

Those interested can donate plants by contacting Dr. Bergbower at 618-395-7777, ext. 2228, or they can send an email to bergbowers@iecc.edu.

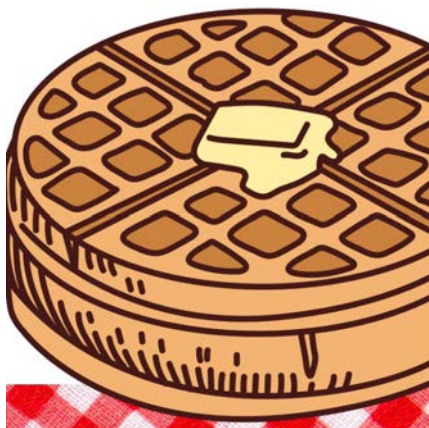
Waffle Breakfast Fund-raiser to help students attend conference

A fund-raiser will be held October 24 to help seven students attend a history conference in November. The event will take place from 8:30 to 11:45 a.m. in the Olney Central College Theater Lobby.

Free-will donations will be accepted, with all proceeds going toward the students' trip to Dallas, Texas, for the JFK Assassination: Why It Still Matters: Pursuing Justice and Historical Truths event. The students will be accompanied by Professor David Denton and Wain Davis, Director of TRIO Student Support Services.

While attending the conference, students will participate in lectures, visit historical sites and write papers reflecting on their experiences.

Denton said the opportunity will allow students to explore an important event in American history and gain a deeper understanding of the historical questions and pursuit of truth surrounding President John F. Kennedy's assassination.



OCC Book Club underway

The OCC Bring Your Own Book Club held its first meetings on September 15 and 29 in the Learning Commons. Participants shared favorite books and current reads.

During October, readers are invited to share a favorite spooky season read, a current read, or a recent finish.

The next meeting is at noon on October 27.



Sports Schedule

Women's Basketball

October 18 — vs. Parkland, 3 p.m. at home

October 30 — at Northwest Florida State, 5 p.m.

October 31 — vs. Gulf Coast State at Northwest Florida State, 2:30 p.m.

November 7 — at Lake Land, 6 p.m.

November 11 — at Kaskaskia, 5 p.m.

November 13 — vs. Milwaukee Area Technical College at Lincoln Land, 7:30 p.m.

November 14 — vs. College of Lake County, at Lincoln Land, 3 p.m.

November 18 — vs. Lewis & Clark, 5:30 p.m. at home

Men's Basketball

October 30 — vs. Marshalltown, 3 p.m. at home

October 31 — at Southeastern Community, 5 p.m.

November 3 — vs. Marian University Plymouth, 6 p.m. at home

November 6 — vs. Danville Area, 7 p.m. at home

November 11 — vs. Western Kentucky Community Technical, 7 p.m. at home

November 14 — at State Fair Community, 3 p.m.

November 18 — vs. Greenville, 7 p.m. at home