

OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE KNIGHTLINE



APRIL 2025

CALENDAR

APRIL

17 — Last Day to Withdraw from 16-week Spring Semester Classes

18 — Spring Holiday, College Closed

21 — Art Club Upcycling Fund-raiser, Student Union, 1 p.m.

23 — OCC Music Department Concert, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

26 — OCC Spring Showcase, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

30 — Grad Fest, OCC Bookstore, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

MAY

1 — Grad Fest, OCC Bookstore, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

5-8 — Final Exams

5-8 — Intersession & Summer Textbook Sales Begin

6-12 — National Nurses Week

9 — Last Day of Spring Semester Classes

9 — Commencement, OCC Gymnasium, 7 p.m.

Jorri VanDyke reflects on service as IECC Student Trustee

The Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Board of Trustees recognized Jorri VanDyke for her outstanding service as Student Trustee during its March 18 meeting at Olney Central College.

The OCC sophomore was sworn-in last April after being elected by fellow students to serve as their representative to IECC's governing body.

"The experience has definitely been eye-opening," said VanDyke. "It has been a valuable experience that has enabled me to utilize the leadership skills I learned in high school and take them to a more professional level."

For VanDyke, one of the most exciting aspects of serving as Student Trustee has been helping to create and lead the IECC Student Advisory Board.

The ISAB brings together student representatives from Frontier, Lincoln Trail, Olney Central and Wabash Valley colleges and serves as a liaison between students and the IECC Board of Trustees, administration and faculty to enhance the learning environment and ensure quality programs. ISAB provides a student voice in shaping higher education, promotes positive relationships between students and college leadership, advises the Dean of Students on student-related matters and helps inform students about new and existing educational opportunities.

"It's been great to get students involved on all four campuses to bridge the divide," VanDyke said. "Getting the students working together reflects the shift that has been happening within IECC."

ISAB meets monthly with the Student Trustee serving as its President. Since its formation last fall, members have been facilitating a reorganization of college clubs while promoting activities on the campuses and helping allocate funding for student-led events. VanDyke also is working with each college's Student Senate.

ISAB brings together a diverse population including honors students, ambassadors and student athletes. VanDyke especially enjoys those interactions and chatting with fellow students about



Outgoing Student Trustee Jorri VanDyke attends her final meeting of the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Board of Trustees on March 18.

how their classes are going or discussing their learning styles.

"It's great to see everyone coming together and sharing and providing input to enhance campus life," she added. "With students coming together from all areas, you get a better, broader aspect of campus life. We've had the chance to talk with other students who care about IECC as a whole. We share and dump ideas. We've learned what works well at another campus and we've taken those ideas to see how they play out somewhere else. Working together to reach a common goal has been the best thing about the Student Trustee experience."

As VanDyke leaves her position, she is confident newly elected Student Trustee Mireya Rose will continue the work she began.

"I have talked to the new Student Trustee," VanDyke said. "She is a Wabash Valley student and a softball player. She will do good things for the students and represent them well."

During her term, VanDyke has enjoyed attending the Board of Trustees' monthly meetings and witnessing the inner workings of IECC firsthand while providing a student's perspective.

"As a day-to-day student, you have no idea what items are being discussed," she said. "As a student trustee, you see how much time and effort it takes to operate the colleges. You see people coming together to make that happen."

VanDyke is also grateful for the opportunity this experience provided, allowing her to refine and enhance her communication skills.

"It was nice to practice speaking in front of an audience," she said. "Talking to a large group made me think about how I was speaking and presenting ideas and that is a good thing for anybody."

VanDyke would encourage others to serve as Student Trustee.

"I would highly recommend it to anyone who wants to," she said. "It's a unique opportunity and one I've enjoyed."

While attending OCC, VanDyke also participated in the Science Club and served as manager of the Women's Basketball team. She even played in a game for the Lady Knights this season.

"I'm so thankful to Coach (Clint) Burris for allowing me to put on a uniform," she said. "He has been a big supporter of mine since I was little. I'm glad he gave me a chance to be involved with the team. OCC created a second family for me, which is really special."

After graduating in May, VanDyke plans to transfer to Southern Illinois University where she will double major in Animal Science and Ag Production as she prepares for a veterinary career.

VanDyke added, "I want to thank my parents and teachers from elementary school to now. They helped build my character and instilled in me a good work ethic and I will forever be grateful for that."



Above, Jorri VanDyke is pictured with the IECC Board of Trustees. Below, the Board of Trustees recognized VanDyke for her service and presented her with a gift including OCC apparel.





Olney Central College is celebrating Community College Month. According to the Illinois Community College Board, more than 600,000 students are enrolled in one of the state's 48 community colleges each year.

OCC Celebrates Community College Month

Olney Central College is proud to celebrate Community College Month this April, joining institutions across the nation in recognizing the important role community colleges play in providing accessible, affordable and high-quality education.

Since its founding in 1963, OCC has continued to evolve, providing career and technical training for in-demand and high-paying careers while assisting students of all ages in obtaining transfer degrees.

"Olney Central College is a source of pride for our community," said OCC President Chris Simpson. "It not only provides an affordable option for students as they transition out of high school, but it also provides nontraditional learners with an opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills to advance their careers."

He added, "Olney Central College has been improving the lives of students and serving the community for more than 60 years. Many of the leaders in our region and beyond are graduates of OCC. I am very proud of this legacy."

OCC Dean of Instruction Amy Tarr says these efforts are reflected in OCC's commitment to student success, workforce preparation and community engagement.

"OCC is imperative to producing quality, well-educated, workforce-ready employees. The programs we offer coupled with our superior faculty are second to none," she added.

Nationwide, community colleges serve nearly 40 percent of all undergraduate students, according to the American Association of Community Colleges. The Illinois Community College Board reports more than 600,000 students are enrolled in one of the state's 48 community colleges each year.

Among those students is OCC freshman Mahayla Bryant, who is currently pursuing an Associate in Science and Arts Degree with a focus in psychology.

"I chose to attend a community college because I was unsure specifically what I wanted to do and I was unsure if I even wanted to attend a university in the first place," she said.

Through student-focused programs like TRIO and personalized academic advising, Bryant has been able to clarify her goals and plan for a future that includes a college degree.

“OCC is helping me achieve these goals by assisting me in figuring out my next steps, and the TRIO program helped me figure out what I wanted to do long-term,” she added.

Bryant believes community colleges offer critical opportunities for students like herself who are still contemplating their career paths or seeking a more approachable introduction to college life.

“I feel that community colleges are important because there are some students, if not most, who do not know what they want to do long-term,” she said. “I also believe they are important because students can complete generalized classes that help with their career goals without the extra stress of giant classrooms or the high expense of university classes.”

For Simpson, experiences like Bryant’s highlight the power of community colleges and help disprove common misconceptions.

“I think community colleges may be seen as settling for something less,” he said. “In reality, community colleges are not settling. They are a way to get on a pathway to success that may benefit you by not saddling you with large amounts of debt, not having to leave home, and learning real-world skills that you can take directly into the workplace.”

That real-world preparation is a key focus of OCC’s programs and community partnerships.

“Many of the programs at Olney Central College lead directly into the local workforce,” Simpson said. “Through partnerships with local employers, instructors know exactly what skills are necessary, and they can build courses and programs around these needs.”

Tarr noted that OCC’s influence goes beyond academics, playing a central role in the heart of the community.

“Especially when living in a small town, your schools are your everything — education hub, safe haven, source of entertainment and beacon of hope,” she said. “Simply put, in small town USA, places like OCC are such a bright spot in the community. At OCC, we know this and own this responsibility to our community proudly.”

Bryant praised the support and sense of belonging she’s found at OCC.

“I would encourage students to attend OCC because it offers a variety of courses and programs, clubs and organizations where students can meet new people and develop new skills,” she said. “The faculty are kind, understanding, and very interpersonal. I enjoy my time here and appreciate the faculty and instructors.”

Looking ahead, Simpson is enthusiastic about OCC’s future.

“I am very excited about the Applied Technology Center that is being built at Olney Central College,” he said. “This facility will be a significant boost to our Allied Health program by providing a state-of-the-art facility for the college’s nursing and radiography programs.”

When asked why students should consider OCC as their next step, Simpson replied, “The decision to attend Olney Central College can set a student on a path to success, just as it has for thousands of students for the past 60 years. Students will find small class sizes, a variety of academic and extracurricular opportunities, and a commitment to student success.”

Tarr agrees, encouraging students to make OCC their first choice and best decision ever.

“When trying to decide where to go to college and you think about OCC, don’t ask yourself why, ask yourself why not? Who wouldn’t want to go to college somewhere that offers exceptional customer service, superior academics, affordable tuition and a fun college experience close to home? Really — think about it — OCC just makes sense.”



OCC President Chris Simpson is excited about investments in the college’s future, including the new Applied Technology Center, which will house the nursing and radiography programs.

Phi Theta Kappa Inducts New Members

Olney Central College's Phi Theta Kappa held an induction ceremony for new members on March 13.

Those inducted into the Alpha Theta Eta chapter are Raley Inskeep, Emery Spieth, Athena Spieth, Cali Wingert, Summer Marks, Brayden Beard, Matthew Bare, Brandy Cochran, Jacob Elder, Natalie Ellison, Briley Ferguson, Aliyah Finn, Emma Gill, Morgan Kehl, Ashtyn Mayes, Tabitha Rhodes, Jaden Schwarzlose, Colleen Spieth, Maria Ward, Maria Whitehead, Adam Zumbahlen and Emily Czerwonka.



Olney Central College's Phi Theta Kappa Alpha Theta Eta chapter hosted a new-member induction ceremony on March 13. New members attending are, from left, Summer Marks, Cali Wingert, Emery Spieth, Athena Spieth and Raley Inskeep.

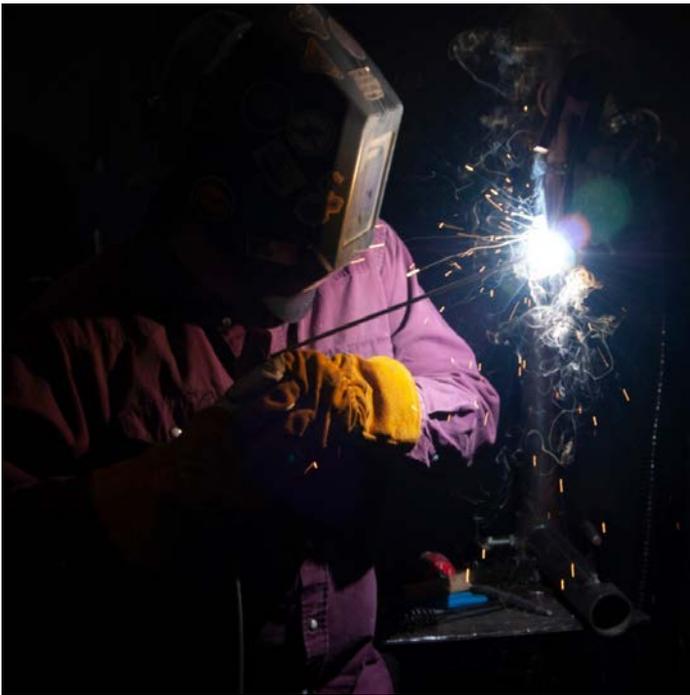
Phi Theta Kappa is an international honorary society for students attending two-year colleges. Members must have a GPA of 3.5 or higher.



Spring Fling

OCC held its annual Spring Fling on March 19. Sponsored by the OCC Student Senate, the event featured games, prizes and a free lunch. ISAB and the OCC Foundation provided funding for the event.





Build welding skills with evening class

Olney Central College will offer WEL 1206: Special Projects in TIG Welding in May.

Whether you're a beginning welder needing TIG training for employment or a hobbyist eager to learn more, this hands-on evening course is perfect for building your existing skills.

The class will meet from 5 to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, May 12-30 at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center in Noble. OCC Instructor and welding alum Maverick Fisher will lead the course. He says successful completers will feel confident in welding steel, stainless and aluminum in the flat and horizontal positions.

Spots are limited. Call 618-395-7777 to register today.

Upcycling Fund-raiser April 21

Learn how to transform old materials into exciting new crafts during the Olney Central College Art Club's Upcycling Fund-raiser on April 21 in the Student Union.

During the event, Art Club members will teach participants step-by-step how to crochet and sew enabling them to create DIY fabric brooches and crocheted items from old T-shirts. The public is invited to attend beginning crochet at 1 p.m. and introductory sewing at 2 p.m.

The cost is \$3 per class or \$5 for both. All materials will be provided. The event, which precedes Earth Day on April 22, highlights the benefits of Upcycling as a means of re-purposing materials for artistic and environmental benefits.

The club is seeking donations of T-shirts, jeans, beads, buttons, safety pins, needle thread and thread glue. Items may be left in the provided box.



WHAT IS IT?

ISAB is comprised of students from each of the IECC campuses. The ISAB serves as a liaison between the collective student body and the IECC's Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty in order to maintain the best learning environment for all students and ensure productive and quality programs and activities within the IECC. Members meet monthly (in-person or virtually).

This is a great opportunity for students to have a voice, get involved, and make a difference on campus!

- ✓ Apply by completing the application in the Student Services Office on your campus.
- ✓ Represent your campus!
- ✓ Collaborate with students from other IECC campuses!



Music Department Concert April 23

The Olney Central College Music Department will showcase student and guest performers during its annual Spring Concert at 7 p.m. on April 23 in the Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center.

This evening of outstanding live music will feature the OCC Jazz Combo, Big Band and Commercial Music Ensembles along with the Concert/Community Band. Admission is free, with donations accepted to support the program.

The Jazz Combo will perform genre standards including *Triste* by Antonio Carlos Jobim, *Blues for Duane* by Freddie Hubbard, *Sugar* by Stanley Turrentine and *The Chicken* by Jaco Pastorius.

The Big Band will present *That's All* and *Flight of the Foo Bird* by Dave Barduhn, *Girl from Ipanema* by Antonio Carlos Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes, *Woody Creek* arranged by John La Barbera and *Synonymic Bossa* and *See If I Don't*, both by Staff Sgt. Paul White.

Guest artist that evening will be Monte Skelton. The University of Evansville alum is a music educator at Evansville Music Academy and a former adjunct faculty member at OCC. He has performed with the legendary group The Temptations and jazz vocalist Sherrie Bias.

"He is one of the top call artists around," said OCC Director of Bands Wade Baker.

Also, joining the OCC Big Band for the concert will be Amy Hamm, current adjunct woodwind faculty member at OCC, on bari saxophone and George Fischer on bass trombone.

The Commercial Music Ensembles will feature two separate bands under the direction of Baker and adjunct faculty member and OCC graduate Josh Moats. Moats' students will perform *Kilby Girl* by The Backseat Lovers, *Fly Away* by Lenny Kravitz, *That's Alright Mama* by Elvis Presley and *The Rudie of Breathing* by Jeff Rosenstock. Baker's ensemble will present three original compositions by band members.

The OCC Music Department also will welcome guest composer Rodney Grimes for the world premiere of his piece *Midnight* performed by the OCC Community/Concert Band. A former student of Baker, Grimes is currently attending Purdue University at Fort Wayne, Ind., where he composed the song for a music project there. The concert is being dedicated in memory of Grimes' mother, Lucy, who passed away in February.

Other selections will include *Folk Dances* by Dmitri Shostakovich, **The Thunderer** by John Phillip Sousa, *A Scottish Rhapsody* by Clare Grundman, *Ammerland* by Jacob de Haan and *Resting in the Peace of His Hands* by John Gibson. The evening also will feature chamber music by flute, clarinet and brass ensembles.

Baker encourages the community to come out and enjoy the opportunity to hear live music and celebrate the hard work put in by his students.

"The concert features a wide variety of music and there is something for everyone to enjoy," he added.

Reflecting on the past year, Baker is pleased with the continued growth of the program.

"We did have a student, Brayden Garland, who was accepted into the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, which is one of the most prestigious music programs in the world," Baker said. "It's pretty awesome to have someone achieve that."

He continued, "The progress we have made has been nice. We are fighting back after COVID and we are moving forward and rebounding. We just need to get more bodies."

Baker stressed Music Department Tuition Waivers are still available for 2025-2026. The scholarships are awarded to qualifying students who participate in one or more of the OCC bands and choirs. Students need not be music majors to qualify.

"Students who are interested can reach out to me and we will set up an audition date as soon as possible," Baker said.

For more information regarding performance or tuition waiver opportunities, contact Baker at 618-395-7777, ext. 2251, or email bakerw@iecc.edu.



OCC Spring Showcase April 26

The Olney Central College Music Department will present its Spring Musical Theater Showcase at 7 p.m. on April 26 in the Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center.

Director of Choral Activities Dr. Andrew Pittman said the annual performance has become a highly anticipated tradition, offering students the opportunity to take on leading roles and to gain valuable performance experience.

"The students really prefer the musical theater pieces to traditional choral works," he said. "It's fun for them, and for me too. I'm excited about this show and encourage the community to enjoy an evening of music while supporting our students. This is another great group of kids. We've become like a family. They're always looking out for each other, and they've been wonderful to work with."

This year's show will feature three numbers from the 1975 award-winning musical *Chicago*. Set in the jazz age and based on real events, this satirical show follows performers Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly, who find fame not just for their talent, but for their ties to sensationalized murders. Selections will include *We Both Reached for the Gun* with the Billy Flynn solo performed by Nathaniel Garrison, *Roxie* featuring a solo by Genesis Cadwell and *Mr. Cellophane*, a solo performed by Dyllan Williams.

Other selections will include the disco-inspired *Lady in the Long Black Dress* from *Sister Act*, *I'm a Big Girl Now* from the Tony-award winning *Hairspray* and *A Policeman's Lot Is Not a Happy One* from Gilbert and Sullivan's 1879 comic opera the *Pirates of Penzance*.

Sophomore Kylie Rauch will sing the arias *Steal Me Sweet Thief* from *The Old Maid and The Thief*, a 1939 English-language radio opera by composer Gian Carlo Menotti, and *Deh Vieni Non Tardar* from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Nathan Blackwell will perform *There But for You Go I* from the 1947 musical *Brigadoon* and *If Ever I Would Leave You* from *Camelot*.

Admission is free, and donations will be accepted at the door.

Pittman stressed Music Department Tuition Waivers are still available for 2025-2026. He encourages both current and incoming students to contact him about opportunities within the program at pittmana@iecc.edu, or 618-395-7777, ext. 2252.



SNA members deliver gift baskets
Olney Central College Student Nurses Association members Sydney Warren, far left, and Victoria Sturm, far right, delivered baskets of goodies to Carle RMH OB Department nurses Jillian Peavler and Rachel Shan to thank them for their work with students during clinicals.



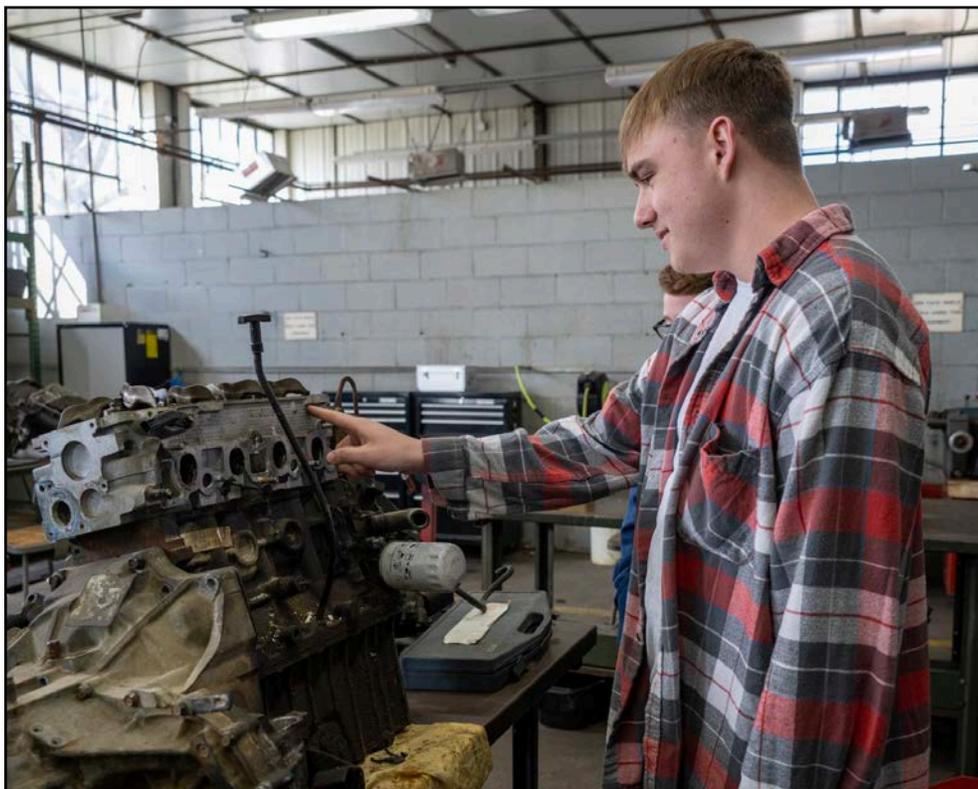
Sports Schedule

Baseball

April 10 — at Kaskaskia, 3 p.m.
April 12 — vs. Kaskaskia, noon & 3 p.m. at home
April 15 — vs. Southeastern Illinois, 2 p.m. at home
April 17 — vs. John A. Logan, 3 p.m. at home
April 18 — at John A. Logan, 1 p.m. & 3:30 p.m.
April 21 — at Vincennes, 2 p.m.
April 22 — at Southeastern Illinois, 2 p.m.
April 24 — at Southwestern Illinois, 2 p.m.
April 26 — vs. Southwestern Illinois, noon & 3 p.m. at home
April 29 — vs. Lincoln Trail, noon & 3 p.m. at home
May 1 — vs. Lake Land, 3 p.m. at home

Softball

April 9 — at Kaskaskia, 2 & 4 p.m.
April 10 — at Southeastern Illinois, 2 & 4 p.m.
April 11 — vs. Rend Lake, 2 & 4 p.m. at home
April 12 — vs. Spoon River, noon & 2 p.m. at home
April 13 — at Southwestern Illinois, 1 & 3 p.m.
April 15 — vs. Kaskaskia, 2 & 4 p.m. at home
April 16 — vs. Shawnee, 2 & 4 p.m. at home
April 18 — at Frontier, noon & 2 p.m.
April 19 — vs. Lake Land, 2 & 4 p.m. at home
April 23 — vs. John A. Logan, 2 & 4 p.m. at home
April 24 — vs. Lincoln Trail, 2 & 4 p.m. at home
April 26 — vs. Wabash Valley, noon & 2 p.m. at home
April 27 — vs. Southeastern Illinois, 1 & 3 p.m. at home



CTE Showcase

OCC welcomed 70 juniors and seniors from North Clay, Clay City, Robinson and Newton Community high schools — along with home school groups — to the annual CTE Showcase on March 26. Students got to interact with faculty while exploring OCC's Automotive, Industrial Maintenance, HVAC and Welding programs. They also toured the Manufacturing Skills Lab at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center in Noble.



OCC Theater presents Disney's Tarzan

The OCC Theater continued its 50th anniversary celebration last month with its production of *Disney's Tarzan*.

The show featured guest director Josh Strickland, the original Tarzan of *Disney's Tarzan* on Broadway, and in the title role Ethan Hardy Benson, who most recently performed in the 50th-anniversary national tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, where he played the role of Jesus.

