

KNIGHTLINE

Olney Central College



November 2020

Upcoming Events

November

11 College Closed –
Veterans Day

12-14 OCC Theatre,
presents 'Love Letters,'
7 p.m.

15 OCC Theatre Presents
'Love Letters,' 2 p.m.

25 Last Day to Withdraw
from Fall Semester Classes

26-27 College Closed –
Thanksgiving Break

December

11 Last Day of Fall
Semester Classes

14-17 Final Exams

14 Spring Textbooks
Available

18 Last Day of Fall
Semester

22 College Closed for
Winter Break

College Visits

OCC is hosting virtual college visits for students who plan to transfer after completing their associate's degree. For additional information and links to register, visit www.iecc.edu/advisingtours.

Nov. 10 Millikin University,
10 a.m.-noon

Nov. 14-15 Columbia
College Chicago, Virtual
Open House

Conn appointed to Illinois Arts Council

Olney Central College Dean of Instruction Michael Conn has been appointed by Gov. J.B. Pritzker to serve a four-year term on the Illinois Arts Council.

"I am happy to be involved in the administration of the arts community on a larger, statewide scale," Conn said. "It is an interesting opportunity and it is good to have representation from our area. I hope to provide a voice for Southern Illinois to the current state of arts in Illinois and add value to this long-standing council."

The Illinois Arts Council promotes artistic endeavors throughout the state while providing financial and technical assistance to artists, art organizations and community organizations with arts programming.

"All arts funding in Illinois funnels through the council," Conn added.

The group is comprised of 21 private citizens selected for their demonstrated commitment to the arts. All candidates participate in a three-person interview process and undergo a gubernatorial review before their appointments.

Members meet three times a year to develop the state's public arts policy, fostering quality, culturally diverse programs and approving grant expenditures. Business is typically conducted at the Thompson Center in Chicago, but the pandemic has forced meetings to be held virtually.

Recently the council has been disseminating Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds to assist the hard-hit arts community. Those benefitting include artists who have been unemployed due to the pandemic.

Conn brings a wide range of experience to the council as both an artist and educator. He earned a bachelor's degree in education from Grand Valley State University with a certification in elementary and art education. He has a master's degree in art and humanities from New York University and holds an Ed.D. in Learning Design and Leadership from the University of Illinois.

Conn joined OCC as an art instructor in 2008 and has served as Dean of Instruction since June 2017.



Michael Conn



Register now for spring classes

Spring semester registration is ongoing. If you haven't met with your advisor, schedule an appointment before Thanksgiving Break.

Spring semester schedules are available at www.iecc.edu/occ.

OCC will offer several spring community education classes. Visit www.iecc.edu/occ/communityed for a complete listing.



Above, OCC President Rodney Ranes examines the Olney Daily Mail's bound volumes in the Anderson Library. Top right, from left, Rodney Ranes, Scott Correll, Greg Eyer, Tim Bower, Dave Hostetter and Jeff Skelton assisted in relocating the books from the Daily Mail's office to the college.



OCC to house Daily Mail bound volumes

For decades, Olney Central College enjoyed the support of the men and women who worked at the Olney Daily Mail. OCC is now proud to house the newspaper's bound volumes in the Anderson Library Archives and to maintain these historical records for the community.

The earliest editions date back to 1916, with the majority spanning the decades of the 1960s through the 1990s. A few volumes from Jasper County are included.

The items are currently being inventoried and are not available to the public at this time, but will be in the future.

OCC Theatre to present 'Love Letters' Nov. 12-15

Tickets are now on sale for the Olney Central College Theatre's production of "Love Letters."

A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, "Love Letters" is a beautiful and moving play where the two characters are a man and a woman who exchange letters, but not marriage vows, in a warm and complicated friendship spanning 50 years.

Each performance will feature a different cast.

- Thursday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m. — Mandy Ginder and Adam Wyatt
- Friday, Nov. 13 at 7 p.m. — Sherry Brauer and Greg Eyer
- Saturday, Nov. 14 at 7 p.m. — Emily Ferguson and Warren Weitkamp

• Sunday, Nov. 15 at 2 p.m. — Bea Gardner and Sam Benson

Contactless ticket sales only are available for this production.

Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased online at www.iecc.edu/occtheater or by phone at 618-395-7777, ext. 2408.

Tickets are general admission with seating assigned at the door. Only 45 tickets will be available for each performance.

Masks are required and social distancing should be observed. The show is rated PG-13.

Love Letters
by Olney Central College Theatre

OCC grad opens doors for students at UIUC

As an associate professor at the University of Illinois, Dr. Paul Davidson is engaging students in projects that take them from Urbana-Champaign to the coast of South Africa, where the lessons gained in the classroom are put into practice.

The Olney Central College alum said the trips give students experience working in the field with the added challenge of conducting an engineering project in a foreign country.

“My role as faculty advisor is to stay out of the students’ way,” said Davidson, who has taught in UIUC’s Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering for nearly seven years. “They learn by doing the work and I help them stay on track. It’s a really good learning process. One of the challenges is often finding low-tech applications for areas where electricity is limited to generators, or where they may not have tractors and have to rely on human power.”

Past projects included creating a hydroponics system to grow lettuce, developing machines to better clean grain, using soil moisture sensors to more efficiently irrigate crops, and developing a method of cutting mushrooms uniformly.

“One dealt with better ways to plant and harvest sugar cane, which is one of South Africa’s top products. It’s abundance in South Africa is sort of like corn in the Midwest,” Davidson added. “However, it is a very labor-intensive crop for them that is mostly harvested by hand.”

Davidson’s students work in partnership with students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. They work virtually to design a project, which has agricultural applications for the African nation.

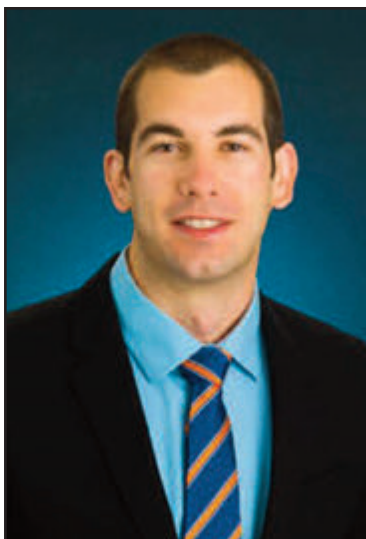
“We then travel there and physically build a prototype,” Davidson said. “Monday through Friday we are working several hours a day and on the weekends we take excursions to explore and appreciate many amazing South African attractions. We go to game parks and see elephants, giraffes, lions and crocodiles. We sleep in safari tents. We go hiking in the Drakensberg Mountains. In the mountains, there is no Internet or cell signal, so the students learn to relax without them. Students visit the beach on the Indian Ocean and go zip lining from the top of a small mountain.”

The students visit cultural and historic locations including the Nelson Mandela Capture Site in Howick. They also make lasting connections with UKZN faculty and students through a variety of social events.

“It’s a lot all crammed into a month,” Davidson said. “We try to do as much as we can while we are there.”

Davidson has also partnered with Michelle Green, a wildlife biologist at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, to develop a unique fellowship opportunity focusing on under-represented minority students.

The pair received USDA funding to establish WE CAN



Dr. Paul Davidson

(Wildlife Engineers Co-managing Agriculture and Nature), which bridges the gap between engineering and biology, bringing the two disciplines together. Students are recruited from Tuskegee University, Northeastern Illinois University, Parkland College and the University of Illinois to participate in the two-year summer program.

“During the first summer, students come to the University of Illinois for six weeks and then spend four weeks in South Africa,” Davidson said. “They come back to U of I and spend a second full summer of research and are paired with a faculty member who shares similar interests.”

Since its implementation four years ago, 16 students have participated in the program.

Davidson’s innovation in the classroom recently earned him U of I’s Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences. He also received the 2020 A.W. Farrall Young Educator Award from the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers.

“It is nice to be recognized, but I always think others are more deserving,” Davidson said. “It’s nice to reflect on what I’ve done and see what I can do better in the future.”

Davidson’s own journey from student to professor began at Olney Central College.

“I started college at OCC thinking I would go into Pre-med,” he said. “The second semester I realized I was more drawn to the engineering and physics side. I was focused on chemical engineering at first. But, I grew up on a farm and combining engineering with agriculture made sense to me.”

After graduating in 2003, Davidson transferred to the University of Illinois where he earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agricultural engineering. He received his Ph.D. in agricultural and biological engineering from the U of I in 2010.

“I finished my Ph.D. and wanted to go into academics, but the recession was going on and most universities had instated a hiring freeze and there were no faculty positions,” he said. “I had interned at an environmental consulting firm and after earning my Ph.D., they offered me a position.”

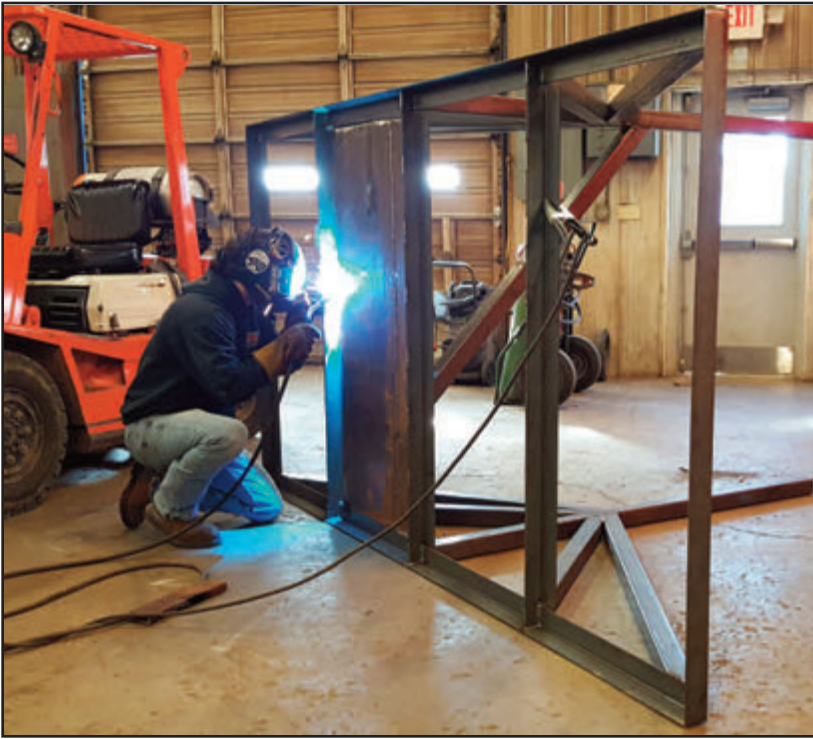
The Newton native worked four years as a consultant researching various contaminants in surface water. When a faculty position opened in agricultural and biological engineering at UIUC in January 2014, he applied and was hired. He received tenure this year.

“When I was a consultant, I really enjoyed the research, but I missed the student engagement,” Davidson said. “I really enjoy the student interaction involved in teaching.”

Davidson said his decision to attend OCC was an easy one.

“My mom and three older siblings all attended OCC,” he said. “I had always grown up with a good opinion of OCC. For me, it

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Projects give OCC welding students added experience

Students in the OCC Welding Program are putting their skills to the test on several projects this semester including an outdoor ping-pong table.

“I saw a similar table when I was traveling and I thought it would be a neat idea for us to make one,” said Instructor Curtis Marshall.

The project is ideal as it gives students both welding and fabrication experience.

Once completed, Marshall hopes to place the table between the Welding and Industrial Maintenance Technology buildings where it would be available for student use.

Students also have been working to repair a skid steer attachment for a local farmer.

At left, Adam Cecil finishes a weld on the new outdoor ping-pong table. Below, Parker Eaton repairs the skid steer attachment.

Bookstore hours and orders

The OCC Bookstore will be open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., now through the end of the semester. This includes Finals Week.

Orders can be placed now for Spring Semester books, but they will not be available until Dec. 14.

Students are asked to place their orders through the online system at <http://occbookstore.iecc.edu/SelectTermDept>.

Students can request books be mailed or they can choose in-store pickup. The Bookstore will call students requesting in-person pickup with additional details. Please do not come to the Bookstore until you receive this call.

The Bookstore will close for Winter Break at the end of business on Dec. 21.

Fall buyback will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Jan. 5-8 in the Bookstore.



Celebrating Halloween

OCC Student Services dressed up for Halloween. Pictured, from left, are Andi Pampe, Sheri Gray, Bobbi Hart-Walka, Jill Ginder-Wilson, Brandi Rich-Beard, Jodi Schneider and Kim Wilson.



OCC alumni tackle Colorado mountains

Welding Instructor Curtis Marshall traveled to Colorado with fellow OCC graduates Phillip Britton and Marty Hustad for a five-day hiking and camping trip in the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.

The trio climbed to the summit of two 13,000-foot mountains, the South Arapaho Peak and Mt. Flora. They also hiked several trails including St. Mary's Glacier, Lost Lake and Chicago Lake Trail.

"This was my first time in Colorado and the scenery was beautiful," Marshall said. "Everywhere you went you would see wilderness that was untouched by man and for an outdoorsman, like myself, that is very humbling. I am very grateful that our government has protected that land so future generations can go and enjoy the beauty of the Mother Earth."

Hiking through the mountains was a challenge. Marshall averaged 38,000 steps and walked between 17 and 19 miles a day.

"That may not sound like too much around here, but a majority of that was uphill, with a pack and all of our gear, at a higher altitude. There were some points when it was a challenge, but I am so glad I did it. Also, to have an experience like this with one of my lifelong friends, Phillip Britton, those are memories I will treasure for the rest of my life. If anyone has the chance to go, I highly recommend it. If you are looking for an easier afternoon hike, I would head to Lost Lake Trail."



OCC Welding Instructor Curtis Marshall and fellow OCC graduates Phillip Britton and Marty Hustad stand at the summit of Mt. Flora in Colorado. The trio spent five days hiking and camping in the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.



Nursing application deadline Feb. 16

Olney Central College is currently accepting applications for Fall 2021 entry into the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges/OCC Nursing Program.

Applicants must attend one of four informational meetings scheduled for 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 20, Wednesday, Jan. 27, Thursday, Feb. 4 and Tuesday, Feb. 9. The meetings will be held in Wattleworth Hall Room 217.

Prospective students, who have already submitted their applications, should have received a letter regarding the mandatory meetings. Applicants who have not should contact Nursing Advisor Linda Horn. Individuals wishing to apply should contact Horn at 618-395-7777, ext. 2246, as soon as possible. The deadline to apply is Feb. 16.

Applicants also must take and pass the TEAS Test with a Proficient Level of 58.7 percent or higher to be ranked for admission into the program. For additional information, visit www.iecc.edu/nursing.

Free tutoring is available in the ASC

Are you struggling with a class and need some extra help before the end of the semester?

Free tutoring is available to OCC students through the Academic Success Center.

If you are having difficulties, first talk with your instructor and then contact the ASC.

The ASC offers a math lab for OCC students.

All Math Lab tutors also serve as instructors at OCC.

Online tutors are available to assist you with writing assignments.

The ASC is located in the back of the Anderson Library.

If you have trouble locating it, just stop by the library desk and the staff can direct you.

Lock Vehicles

Students utilizing the OCC parking lots are advised to keep their vehicles locked when unattended.

Lost and Found

If you have lost an item, please check with Student Services.

Grad *Continued from Page 3*

was a good transition from high school to college. I had friends from high school who were there and I met new friends. We were a close-knit group. OCC has a small feel. I grew up going to a small high school and I was able to jump right in at OCC."

National Radiologic Technology Week Nov. 8-14



OCC Radiography Program second-year students, who will graduate in May, are Kodie Gosnell, Sissy Hedden, Chelsea Smith, Johnna Roberts, Alyssa Harminson, Taylor Wyman, Alycia Eagleson, Tyler Hughes, Rachel Byrns, Ali Bierman and Liz Mathews.



First-year Radiography students at OCC include Hallie Troester, Karlie Berberich, Kaleb Foster, Destiny Walker, Bailey Springmeyer, Destiny Gonzalez, Casey Fleetwood, Korie Tucker, Shane Strait, Lauren Highs, Briley Burgener, Adrianna Bergbower, Emma Weidner and Tayler Wilson.

At OCC, Davidson found top-notch faculty like math professor Laurel Cutright, physics professor Rob Mason and Lisa Benson, who continues to serve as an adjunct math instructor after retiring.

"The education at OCC was fantastic," Davidson said. "All of the professors I had were wonderful. I never felt behind at the

University of Illinois. OCC prepared me well for one of the top engineering schools in the world. I never regretted my decision to start at OCC. Even now when I talk to potential students at the University of Illinois, I advocate for community colleges. For many students, it is just the right choice."