



HIGHLIGHTS



Lincoln Trail College celebrates Career and Technical Education Month



A new virtual reality simulator will help students improve welding skills



Kearsty Nielson set to continue her soccer and academic career at Air Force

LTC CELEBRATES ALUMNI LOVE STORIES

In celebration of Valentine's Day, Lincoln Trail College looked for alumni who wanted to share their love stories. The Leap Into Love series asked alumni about how LTC served as a backdrop for how they met and fell in love.

Justin and Tessa Hancock

Athletics brought us together...

Coach Killinger made my basketball team scrimmage against the baseball pitchers. We got smoked and all ended up running. Little did I know the guy who was dunking on us would be my husband one day!

We just saw each other around campus before and after class. We didn't get too many date nights due



to our busy sports schedules but if study tables got over in time you could catch me at the baseball field cheering him on. He was also great at supporting our team! I knew our connection was special when he came to visit me and meet my family over Christmas break. After LTC we got married and got to travel the country and even live in Japan for his baseball career. We also have two precious daughters! Ivy Grace and Emy Raelynn! We would have never met if it wasn't for LTC.



Daniel and Jennifer Boatman

The theater is a special place for us...

I went to see Smoky Joe's Cafe before I was a student and thought that curly-haired man with the suspenders was cute but didn't meet him then. Then, when I was a student the following semester, I wanted to be involved with theater. I went to Dan Bruneau's office, but he was on the phone, so I waited outside. Here comes that curly-haired man, wearing a trench coat, carrying a briefcase, and he just walked right into Dan's office and announced to him (while Dan was still on the phone) that someone was waiting to see him. I got signed up for the stage crew for Annie Get Your Gun, and "Boatman" showed me around the theater.

During Annie Get Your Gun we used a projector to put an image on a set piece for me to paint. I was on the ladder tracing the image, when I realized "Boatman" and a couple of other crew members just watching and chuckling. Come to find out the file name in the corner "Annie Get Your Gun" was projected right across my butt. That is something I will never forget, and we still laugh about it today.

The Theater and Performing Arts played a big role in our relationship. We were also in Statesmen Singers together.

We got engaged on a cruise that the Statesmen Singers performed on. We loved that cruise so much that we took a cruise for our honeymoon with the same cruise line.

Here we are, nineteen years later, set designing the Children's Summer Theater shows that our three children will be a part of.

Tori Linnenkamp and Hayden Hill

I felt like a little kid meeting Santa for the first time...

Move-in day was in August and all the girls on the softball team said that the soccer team also lived at the dorms, and I was ready to meet new people. I walked down there to see that they were all outside playing soccer



UPCOMING MARCH EVENTS

- 4-8 NO CLASSES - Spring Break**
- 5 Celebrate Art! Day**
9-11 a.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 6 Twin Rivers Career Day**
9-12:30, Campus-wide
- 7 Young Women LEAD**
8:30-2, Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 8 Advisors Council Meeting**
8-2, Lincoln Room
- 14 Adult Education Area Planning Council Meeting**
9-11 a.m., Lincoln Room
- Eclipse Seminar**
7 p.m., DeMent Auditorium
- 20 Phi Theta Kappa Induction Ceremony**
6 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 28 LTC Foundation Meeting**
12 p.m., Lincoln Room
- 29 COLLEGE CLOSED - Spring Holiday**

and I made eye contact with Hayden, and it was game over. When we made eye contact, I felt like a little kid meeting Santa for the first time.

Lincoln Trail College helped us cross paths because he lived in Texas, and I never would have met him otherwise.

We live together now and are happy to spend the rest of our days with each other.



James and Ariel Gibson

We never would have met without LTC...

I was on the softball team and James was on the golf team. My best friend since elementary school was on the volleyball team. The volleyball team and golf team would hang out since their houses were close. He came across a picture of me at her house and asked about me. He asked her to put in a good word, but she actually just told me that he had asked her to do so. He started messaging me on social media and finally gave me his number (that's right, gave me his number instead of asking for mine). I made excuse after excuse to not go on a date on him, but finally gave in.

I knew I was only going to LTC for a year, so I did not want to waste my time on getting in a serious relationship when I was just going to move back home at the end of the semester. However, he made me feel so special and important, I knew this was going to turn into something more than just a guy I had a crush on.

I never would have met James if I didn't go to LTC. I had offers to other schools, but LTC was close to home and I knew other girls on my team. I ultimately decided it was the best school for me. I met a lot of great people at LTC, as did James. We have some forever friends from LTC! We still get together with some of them from time to time.

We met in 2017 at LTC. We got married in April 2022 on our dating anniversary. Last year, we welcomed a beautiful baby girl.

Kolin and Lyndsey Conner

Our son's initials are LTC...

My husband played baseball at LTC, and I played softball. We both lived in the dorm room as we are both from Indianapolis area. Kolin grew up on Northside and I grew up on Southside so our paths might have crossed when our high school teams played each other but we didn't officially meet till LTC. Our freshman year we did not really talk or get along but sophomore year we started to. We when graduated we were going to go our separate ways but that did not last long. I ended up following Kolin to Saint Joseph College. Then after he graduated Saint Joseph College, we moved to Chicago so he could coach baseball at Concordia University. I ended up graduating from Concordia University. We now have two kids and are still in Chicago.

Our son's initials are LTC (Leo Tate Conner) to always remind us of where we started! We met in Illinois, our kids were born in Illinois, and we currently live in Illinois. Robinson, Illinois, and Lincoln Trail will always have a special place in our heart. We still talk to our roommates and teammates. We made friends that have turned into family. The whole LTC experience bought us closer together.



LTC CELEBRATES CTE MONTH



February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, and Lincoln Trail College along with community colleges all over will be celebrating and recognizing their CTE programs that successfully prepare students as they enter the workforce.

CTE programs often differentiate themselves from others by providing a more hands-on opportunity for students as they learn and gain experience before joining their respective industries.

IECC Chief Academic Officer Paul Bruinsma shared that CTE programs often offer unique flexibility that is not provided by most other programs.

"These programs allow students to gain the knowledge and experience necessary in a short amount of time to be able to begin their career. They can continue their education, of course, but these programs prepare them to meet all the qualifications necessary to be employed after completion," said Bruinsma.

As CTE programs thrive, state funding continues to help sustain and build upon that success, as over \$50 million in Perkins Grant Award money was provided to Illinois CTE programs in FY23, according to the Association for Career and Technical Education.

Dr. Jared Gullett is the lead instructor for Lincoln Trail College's Health Careers Program. He says the Certified Medical Assistant program provides students with a good mix of classes, which offers students a lot of flexibility.

"We have a good mixture of online and face-to-face courses in the program. So, if you're working, if you have children and you know your schedule doesn't allow you to come to school every day during the day, we have options that can really get you through. We also offer a lot of hands-on learning in our face-to-face classes."

The hands-on learning is one of the things that attracted Abigail Ramsey to LTC's welding program.

"I love the projects, but I also really like the things we learn," said Ramsey, who is planning to pursue mechanical engineering. "I love getting to learn hands-on stuff and I like being able to do stuff that's

not like a normal classroom where it's just a pencil and paper. I love having a little bit of creative liberty with what I'm doing. I also love math and I get to interpret math into what I'm doing."

Kylar Wortsell, who like Ramsey is a fourth-generation welder, says the instructors are very attentive and give students like her lots of one-on-one attention.

"If you have any questions, they're always there for you. If you're working on projects, they're right next to you. If you have any questions you want to talk about, even if it is not school-related, they're going to be there for you. They always listen and you never have to worry if you don't understand something because they're going to help you understand it."

The Department of Education reported that eight years after their expected graduation date, students who focused on CTE courses had higher median annual earnings than the students who did not.

According to the National Skills Coalition, two-thirds of jobs in the U.S. economy are middle-skill jobs that require education beyond high school but not a four-year college degree. Many of these jobs are in CTE fields such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and IT which are among the fastest-growing occupations projected through 2029 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

CTE programs at Illinois community colleges offer a cost-effective way for individuals to pursue their career goals by costing a fraction of the tuition at four-year institutions, making it a more accessible option for many students.

"Illinois community colleges have a long history of working with local businesses and industries to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's workforce," said Brian Durham, Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Board. "CTE programs at community colleges are an essential part of our state's workforce development strategy, and we are proud to be a part of preparing the next generation of workers."



BASIC CAKE DECORATING

WEDNESDAYS • MARCH 13-APRIL 3
6-8 PM
INSTRUCTOR: GLENDA DUNLAP
\$55
REGISTER BY: MARCH 6

Dive into the world of cake decorating with our hands-on workshop! Discover essential skills like expert tips, borders, and edible flowers. Perfect for beginners and enthusiasts, this immersive experience blends creativity with skill development. Join us for a frosting-filled adventure and elevate your baking game. Every swirl and petal is a celebration of your newfound decorating prowess!

TO REGISTER, CALL:
618-544-8657




PREPARE FOR THE
SOLAR ECLIPSE
MARCH 14 • 7 PM • DEMENT AUDITORIUM
LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE

WTWO'S JESSE WALKER WILL HELP YOU GET READY TO ENJOY THE APRIL 8TH TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

TO REGISTER, CALL:
618-544-8657

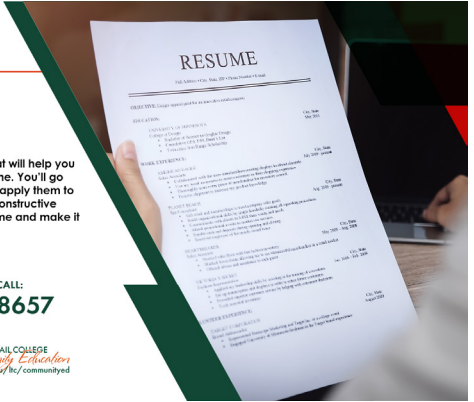



AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE 2

THURSDAYS • APRIL 4-25
6-8 PM
INSTRUCTOR: TONY AUSTIN
\$45
REGISTER BY: APRIL 1

Take a deeper dive into sign language with American Sign Language 2. You'll review basic words and phrases learned in Basic Sign Language and build off of those so you can immerse yourself more into ASL. The class will help you gain confidence in the vibrant world of sign language communication.

TO REGISTER, CALL:
618-544-8657





RESUME 101

THURSDAYS • APRIL 11, 18, 25
6-8 PM
INSTRUCTOR: AMIE MAYHALL
\$35
REGISTER BY: APRIL 4

Resume 101 is a three-week course that will help you craft a professional and effective resume. You'll go over the basics of a good resume and apply them to your own resume. You'll also receive constructive feedback to help you polish your resume and make it stand out from the crowd.

TO REGISTER, CALL:
618-544-8657



SIMULATOR ALLOWS FOR VIRTUAL WELDING EXPERIENCE



Welding students at Lincoln Trail College have a new tool that will help them learn how to weld. LTC added Lincoln Electric's VRTEX 360 virtual welding trainer to the program. The simulator aims to make welding training smarter, faster, and more efficient.

The simulator includes a variety of welding tools, an adjustable welding pole, and a touchscreen monitor. Students wear virtual reality goggles to use the simulator. It allows students to practice different kinds of welds and gives the students instant feedback and scoring of key welding parameters.

"They get a score and it gives you areas they may need to work on," said Welding Specialist Jackson Hemrich. "It's very important because it actually lets us see every aspect that we usually want to work on with somebody. We see one aspect that we're watching for and now we can go through step-by-step to fix it."

Gracie Groves is a student in LTC's welding program. She says while there are some differences between welding virtually and welding for real, the simulation still feels very real.

"It's honestly such a cool experience that the school even had the opportunity to get this. I feel like it's a once-in-a-lifetime thing. I'm not going to go out in the world and get a VR set just for welding, so to have this is a huge opportunity for us.

Hemrich says the VRTEX 360 offers several benefits to the program. "One of the big advantages is saving the cost of materials like rods and other consumables. There's also the safety aspect where a student can try something without having to worry about something happening."

Hemrich and Groves both agree that the unit could also help the program grow.

"I feel like it would make students more excited to try the program," said Groves. "Everything in our life right now is on our phones, on a screen, and having this, I feel like it would just have everyone more willing to do it."

"It'll definitely help," said Hemrich. "It'll draw a whole lot of kids in to try it and it's a little bit easier to talk about because somebody will come up to you. With welding you have the stuff to show them, but without actually doing it, it's hard to explain the true process and this will help with that."

Overall, Hemrich is excited about the VRTEX 360 because he believes it will be a great teaching tool and help students improve their welding skills.

"It's easier to watch every aspect while a student is trying something for the first time. You don't have all of the smoke and the sparks and you can closely follow the student's progress. You don't have to worry about paying attention to all of the other stuff and it makes it a lot easier to help the student improve."



CAST ANNOUNCED FOR LTC PRODUCTION OF A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD



Lincoln Trail College Theater Director Taylor Dahlberg announced the cast for The Arts at Lincoln Trail College's production of A Year With Frog and Toad.

A Year With Frog and Toad follows upbeat Frog and grumpy Toad, two best friends who are waking up from hibernation and beginning their year in the Spring. We watch as Frog and Toad go throughout the four seasons, going on adventures, learning to garden, going for a swim, and playing in the Fall leaves before settling back down again in the winter. Throughout the year we meet several friends of Frog and Toad's like three Birds, Turtle, Mouse, and Snail who has a very important task to accomplish. Frog and Toad both learn important life lessons and celebrate their unique friendship in this jazzy upbeat musical.

The role of Frog will be played by Brennan Seth Tracy while Rowan Gray will play Toad. Makenzi Carlen will play the role of Snail. Becca Geffs will play Bird 1, Turtle, and Mother Frog. Al Crosley plays the roles of Bird 2, Mouse, and Father Frog. Anna Bales plays Bird 3 and Lizard. Ashtyn Reid will play Young Frog while Michael Johnston will play the role of Great and Terrible Frog. The cast is rounded out by Moles and Dancers Anna Osborn, Kinley Bradbury, and Reid.

Performances of A Year With Frog and Toad are April 12, 13, 19, and 20 at 7 p.m. and April 14 and 21 at 2 p.m. Tickets go on sale to the public on April 1.



MARCH ATHLETIC EVENTS

Baseball

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | vs. Glen Oaks CC (at Vincennes) | 2:00 |
| 2 | vs. Kellogg CC (at Vincennes) | 12:00 |
| | at Vincennes University | 2:30 |
| 3 | Glen Oaks CC | 12:30 |
| 7 | Southeastern Illinois College | 3:00 |
| 9 | at Southeastern Illinois College (DH) | 12:00 |
| 14 | at John A. Logan College | 3:00 |
| 16 | John A. Logan College (DH) | 12:00 |
| 21 | Southwestern Illinois College | 3:00 |
| 23 | at Southwestern Illinois College (DH) | 12:00 |
| 26 | at Lake Land College | 3:00 |
| 28 | at Shawnee Community College | 3:00 |
| 30 | Shawnee Community College (DH) | 12:00 |

Men's Basketball

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|------|
| 2 | at Lake Land College | 3:00 |
| 5 | Shawnee Community College | 7:00 |

Softball

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|----|---|-------|
| 4 | Bay College (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 10:00 |
| | Marian University-Ancilla | 2:00 |
| 5 | Harford CC (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 8:00 |
| | Glen Oaks CC (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 10:00 |
| 6 | Lackawanna College (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 2:00 |
| | Henry Ford College (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 4:00 |
| 7 | Delta College (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 10:00 |
| | Schoolcraft College (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 2:00 |
| 8 | USC Sumter (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 2:00 |
| | Kankakee CC (at Myrtle Beach, SC) | 4:00 |
| 11 | John A. Logan College (DH) | 2:00 |
| 12 | at Southeastern Illinois College (DH) | 2:00 |
| 16 | at Rend Lake College (DH) | 12:00 |
| 17 | at Olney Central College (DH) | 12:00 |
| 21 | Lake Land College (DH) | 2:00 |
| 23 | at Southwestern Illinois College (DH) | 12:00 |
| 24 | Kaskaskia College (DH) | 12:00 |
| 26 | Shawnee Community College (DH) | 2:00 |
| 28 | Wabash Valley College (DH) | 2:00 |
| 29 | at Frontier Community College (DH) | 12:00 |

Women's Basketball

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|------|
| 5 | Shawnee Community College | 5:00 |
|---|---------------------------|------|

NIELSON COMMITS TO AIR FORCE ACADEMY



"Since day one, Kearsty was a special piece of the Lincoln Trail College Women's Soccer program. With her attending a program that was starting up helped her take a leadership role that came with a lot of playing time, this definitely helped her get that experience needed to be ready to face a new challenge in her new program." Former Statesmen Coach Javier Milla said. "Kiki is the perfect example of someone who works hard day and night in order to achieve an objective. It was a pleasure being able to coach her for her two seasons here."

Reflecting on her time at Lincoln Trail College, Kearsty Nielson expressed profound gratitude for the opportunities and support she received. "Lincoln Trail has been amazing to me," she remarked. "The teacher-to-student class ratio was one of the biggest pros to coming here. Coach Javi and Alex are both coaches who are very demanding and have high expectations, and because of that, it's easy to see what an amazing team there is and how well I play, as I'm always developing and there's always a way I can be better."

With her eyes set on the Air Force Academy, Nielson highlighted her decision as one driven by both career aspirations and athletic ambitions. "I chose the Air Force Academy in terms of career orientation and not only that but their soccer program," she stated. "It seems like stability in the coaching staff, which is something everyone's been struggling with, but there is no reason not to expect the best. I'm also a part of a legacy, so I feel like I'm honoring that, and it's been my dream since being a little girl."

Milla, who played a pivotal role in shaping development at Lincoln Trail College, pointed out her contributions to the team both on and off the field. "She was definitely a player that made an impact on and off the field,"

Milla remarked. "She helped create a hardworking and

dedicated 'culture' for the program. On the field, she was a game-changer, being our goal scorer and always supporting her teammates. We really appreciate her time at Lincoln Trail. She will bring an outstanding work-rate, which is always needed in college sports," he stated. "She will bring energy and discipline to the program. On the field, she will bring high IQ, teamwork, and I am sure goals."

Her advice to any upcoming Statesman is "Doubting yourself is normal, letting it stop you is a choice. You're here for a limited amount of time so take advantage of it."

During her time at Lincoln Trail, Nielson had 34 shots, 22 goals and 7 assists.

PITTMAN COMMITS TO MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE



Lincoln Trail College left-handed pitcher Jackson Pittman will continue his college career at Mississippi College after graduating from LTC. He announced his commitment on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Extremely excited to announce that I'll be continuing my athletic and academic career at Mississippi College. Thank ya Lord."

Statesmen coach Collin Maynard believes that Pittman will make an immediate impact not just on the field, but as a leader.

"Jackson has been an impact pitcher for us since the day he stepped on campus. He competes every time he gets on the mound and attacks hitters consistently. His best pitch is his curveball which consistently gets swings and misses from any hitter he faces. Jackson is not only an outstanding player but also an incredible human

being. He is always willing to give back to the community and put the team before himself. He has been a leader on our team this year and constantly leads by example."

Maynard says that Pittman has seen improvements in all aspects of pitching while at LTC. He says Pittman improves his command every day and the velocity of his fastball continues to climb.

He expects Pittman to be a strong contributor to the Statesmen this spring. "He has shown the ability to pitch in the biggest moments of a game. Last Spring, he pitched in one of the biggest moments of the season which resulted in a 9th inning save in the region tournament to keep our season alive."

As a freshman, Pittman appeared in 14 games for the Statesmen and struck out 21 batters in 24.1 innings of work.

HORNEMAN COMMITS TO EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Lincoln Trail College catcher Colin Horneman has officially committed to continue his academic and athletic journey at Eastern Illinois University.

Horneman announced his commitment saying, "I am excited to announce my commitment to continue my academic and athletic career at Eastern Illinois University! I want to thank my family, coaches, and anyone else that has helped me along the way"

Statesmen Head Coach Maynard stated, "I believe that Colin's time at LTC has prepared him for the next level extremely well. He has been able to perform against some very high talent over the last couple of years and will be ready to shine when he arrives at Eastern Illinois."

Maynard highlighted Horneman's versatility, stating, "He is an extremely talented catcher who also has the ability to hit for a high average. I expect him to find himself in the lineup often, contributing significantly to our team."

"I am extremely proud of Colin and his commitment to Eastern Illinois University," said Maynard. "He has worked tirelessly during his time here, and it undoubtedly shows. EIU is gaining a great defensive catcher with a high baseball IQ."

As a freshman, Horneman appeared in 29 games and was at bat 76 times. He averaged at .316 for the 2022-2023 season.



LTC IN PICTURES



Students and community members worked on how to ace the monologue in a masterclass led by Broadway performer Julio Agustin.



Students and community members painted penguins at a Paint Night event put on by LTC's Student Senate.



Families admired artwork during an artist reception for LTC's Children's Art Show.



The Children's Art Show featured 86 pieces from local students.



Onlookers watch an intense ping pong game during LTC's Doubles Tournament



Junsie Cotten prepares to serve in LTC's Doubles Ping Pong Tournament, which featured more than two dozen teams.



Student Senate members help load up a food donation for Upper Room Street Ministries.



LTC Financial Aid Coordinator Erica Arnold helps a family during the College's FAFSA Night.