



▶ **DEDICATION CEREMONY  
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# LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE



## LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE CELEBRATES COMMUNITY COLLEGES MONTH

April is Community College Month and Lincoln Trail College is joining other community colleges across the nation in celebrating. The primary goals of Community College Month are to improve awareness of the economic, academic, and equity advantages of attending community colleges and to bust longtime stigmas wrongly associate with public two-year colleges.

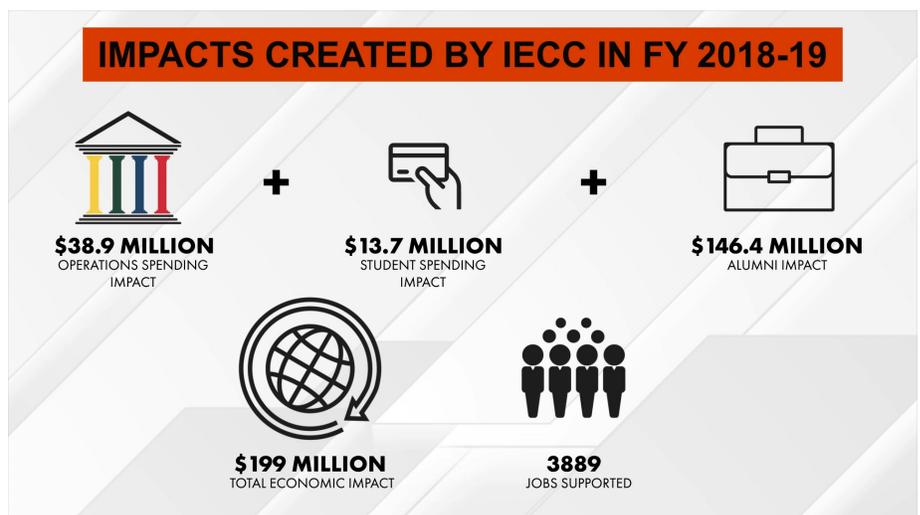
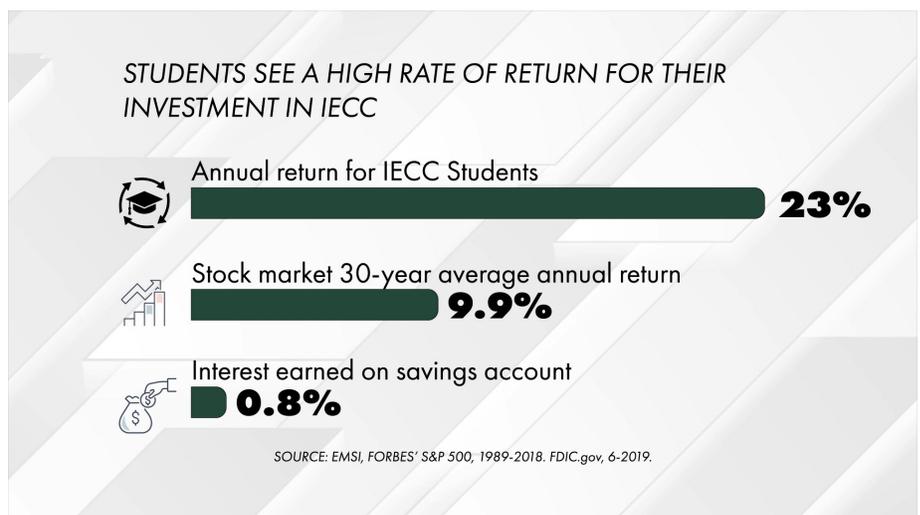
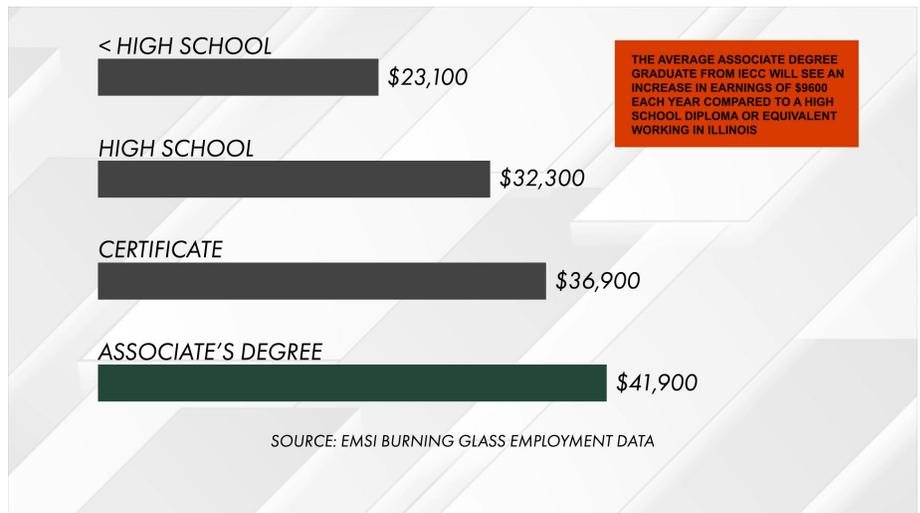
“In many ways, our colleges are the unsung heroes of transfer education, workforce development, economic development, career education, community enrichment, and the list goes on,” said Dr. Zahi Atallah, Lincoln Trail College President. “Needless to say, we serve more students than any other higher education system in this nation. We are the first step; and perhaps the only one; for millions of folks who aspire to change their lives.”

Public community colleges are a uniquely American educational model that was designed to guarantee access to affordable, high-quality higher education for all people. They are the primary educators of life-saving nursing and other healthcare professionals among many others. They also serve as an onramp to bachelor’s, master’s, and higher-level degrees for many students, and particularly for the most demographically and socioeconomically diverse students. They guarantee fair admissions for all students. They offer supports for adult students who have to work to support their families. And without community colleges, many American students would not be able to access higher education

at all.

“In rural areas, we are it for many people when it comes to higher education,” said Atallah. “So, when we talk about access and accessibility, we’re talking about people who may not have the means of going anywhere else. It can be hard for some of them to attend a residential four-year institution. Most of those are selective. We are not. We open doors for them to go to those selective places or we offer them opportunities to get trained in a flexible manner around their lifestyle and what is dictated by their circumstances whereas others expect you to fit a particular mold and expect you to be a full-time student all the time.”

One of the stigmas that community colleges carry across the nation is that the quality of education is not as good as four-year colleges. “That’s simply not true,” said Atallah. “There’s certainly a stereotype out there, but when you look at the instructors at Lincoln Trail College, you’ll see people who are experts in their fields. We have career and technical instructors that have spent decades in their respective industries. We’ve also been recognized time and again for the quality. We’re a Top 150 U.S. Community College as recognized by the Aspen Institute. Our Certified Medical Assistant program was recognized as the top program in the United States. Our online classes have been recognized as some of the best in the nation. Not only does the list go on, but I want to point out that we haven’t solicited any of these awards. These are independent agencies that have found what we do and recognized us for the quality we provide to our students every day and every year. Quality is baked into our DNA at Lincoln Trail College.”



Community colleges have a strong economic impact on both students and the economy. A recent study conducted by Emsi Burning Glass found that students at Lincoln Trail College and Illinois Eastern Community Colleges see a high rate of return for their educational investment.

“The average annual rate of return was 23 percent,” said IECC and LTC Director of Marketing Chris Forde. “That far outperforms the stock market’s 30-year average annual return of 9.9 percent and the interest earned on savings accounts of 0.8 percent.”

Forde says the average associate degree graduate from IECC will see an increase in earnings of \$9,600 each year compared to a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Illinois. The study found that the average salary for someone with an associate degree is \$41,900.

In Fiscal Year 2018-19, the study found that Illinois Eastern Community Colleges had a \$199,000,000 impact on the economy in the region. “The impact of increased earnings by alumni and the businesses they work for was 146.4 million dollars. The impact of the daily spending of IECC students attracted to or retained in the region 13.7 million dollars of added income,” said Forde.

Atallah says the Lincoln Trail College Foundation has also made education accessible to many students through its scholarships. “This year they’ve given out \$200,000 to students to help them attend LTC. That’s incredible because that makes education accessible to people that may not have been able to get any kind of education before. To me, that’s really at the heart of the mission of community colleges. We’re here to enrich lives.”



LTC’s Mallory Mundy carries the Illinois flag at the Phi Theta Kappa Catalyst Conference in Colorado



The Prince (Ryan Pinkston) and Cinderella (Becca Geffs) celebrate their marriage in The Arts at Lincoln Trail College’s production of Cinderella



## LACKEY MUSIC HALL DEDICATION CEREMONY MAY 2



Lincoln Trail College will hold a dedication ceremony for Lackey Music Hall on May 2 at 5:30 p.m. The new addition to the Zwermann Arts Center opened in the spring semester.

The dedication ceremony will feature speeches from people that helped bring the project to fruition as well as a performance of the Lincoln Trail College Alma Mater by a combined choir of the Statesmen Singers and community members.

Construction of Lackey Music Hall began in the late fall of 2020 and was completed in late 2021. The project marked the first brick-and-mortar construction on LTC's campus since the buildings on the main campus were completed in the early 1970s.

Lackey Music Hall now serves as the home for Lincoln Trail College's Music Department. There are three state-of-the-art practice rooms that are designed to isolate sound. It also features DeMent Auditorium, a mid-sized lecture hall, and choral and music space.

The dedication ceremony on May 2 begins with the program and will be followed by hors d'oeuvres and tours of the new facility. The event is free and open to the public.



*The Statesmen Singers rehearse for the May 2 dedication ceremony of Lackey Music Hall.*

## RIGGLE NAMED ILASFAA NEW PROFESSIONAL AWARD WINNER



Lincoln Trail College Coordinator of Financial Aid Krystle Riggle earned the Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators' 2022 New Professional Award. She was presented the award at their conference in Champaign.

The New Professionals Award recognizes the outstanding service of a new professional to colleagues and students in the state of Illinois.

"This was a huge shock," said Riggle. "I was totally not expecting this, and I am excited and grateful. There have been a lot of changes in the world of financial aid since COVID-19 and we've worked hard to keep up with the changes. This shows we're doing our best at IECC and locally and the state has recognized our efforts."

Riggle says she's been very fortunate to not only have a great team of people to work with at Lincoln Trail College, but also throughout the district. "We're really blessed that we can lean on each other to make sure that we're serving our students in the best way possible."

Riggle joined ILASFAA as a committee member on the New Member Committee to grow and meet other financial aid administrators throughout the state from both two-year and four-year

colleges. She's now going to co-chair the committee for next year and for professional development.

"When I took my job in financial aid, I was so unsure of my career change. Not so much of the finance part because I have worked in finance for over 10 years, but higher education financial aid rules change so quickly, and we just have to make it work for our students. I have been so blessed to be a part of the IECC Financial Aid team and work with some of the best ladies in Financial Aid and with our LTC Admissions team."

## HENSLEY HEADING TO DISNEY COLLEGE PROGRAM



Lincoln Trail College student Paige Hensley plans to continue her education in Florida this summer with the Disney College Program. Hensley will graduate in May with an Associate in Science and Arts Degree and begins the Disney College Program on July 1.

“I am super excited to start, I think overall it is going to be a life changing opportunity. Being such a tourist attraction, in my opinion it’s going to be so cool meeting people and communicating with people from all over the world.”

Hensley says her program will run into February of 2023, but she could be asked to stay longer or be promoted into a different position. She says she won’t know exactly what job she’ll be doing until about a week before she gets there, but she does plan on taking animation and graphic design classes while in Florida.

Hensley plans to attend the University of Central Florida. She’s hoping that after she graduates from there, she’ll be able to find a job with ESPN. “I know I can’t do the sports I love to do forever, but I’d love to get a chance to work with ESPN and work behind the scenes of sporting events through them.”

She says Lincoln Trail College has made a major impact on her life and helped her prepare for her upcoming opportunity with the Disney College Program.

“Without coming to Lincoln Trail, I don’t even think I would have taken the opportunity to apply. Before LT, I had no idea what I even remotely wanted to do other than graphic arts but that wasn’t offered here so I decided to major in Sport Management while I was here. Which with Professor Tyler Browning, I ultimately learned I could get my degree in that but focus on the back side of it and do all the marketing work for it. Browning has always told his students to take opportunities, to take the internship, to do whatever it is in the field you like because there are endless opportunities. While at Lincoln Trail, I have been working in the marketing office with Chris Forde which allowed me to really realize that the graphic arts are truly more of my passion than the coaching/athletic directing. I’ve also talked to Linda Ryan-Catt a lot about how I was unsure about going to the next step and thinking about all sorts of costs that would involve which overall helped me want to do something I enjoy while still taking courses.”

She says that her instructors and peers at LTC have been incredibly supportive, especially when it came to the Disney program. “It seemed like me going to the Disney College Program got out rather quickly and so many people asked me about it. The energy and support could never be matched.”

Her family has also been a major supporter of her. Hensley says two weeks after she applied to the program, she was accepted. She says she talked to her mom about whether to accept the offer and says she said, “Paige, you’re young, if this is what you want to do, take the opportunity. If you keep thinking about it, you won’t take it and you will regret not taking it.” She says she accepted the offer as soon as she got off the phone.

“Without the support of everyone around me, I would have never stepped so far out of my comfort zone. My family is my biggest support system, and I couldn’t be more grateful to have them during this huge change in my life.”

## FOUR BASKETBALL PLAYERS HONORED



Lincoln Trail College inducted its newest members into the Alpha Iota Epsilon Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. Phi Theta Kappa recognizes the academic achievement of college students and provides opportunities for its members to grow as scholars and leaders.

The induction ceremony is led by Phi Theta Kappa officers. Vice President of Leadership Paige Hensley and Vice President of Fellowship Blake Girdner handled the introduction of the ceremony. Vice President of Scholarship AB Soneye, Vice President of Service Samantha Parker, and President Mallory Mundy explained Phi Theta Kappa symbolism to new members. Hensley administered the Phi Theta Kappa Pledge and Parker led the solemnity.

New members inducted into Phi Theta Kappa were: Alex Barnfield, Jonathan Beverly, Emma Bogard, Ike Book, Abby Bradbury, Emily Bradbury, Charles Branch, Nicholas Brown, Brian Connor, Kyle Cortner, Jennifer Cox, Elizabeth Dhom, Joshua Dunser, Christopher Elledge, Halle Ellis, Ezequiel Fernandez-Carunchio, Layna Fitzmaurice, Zacheria Frasher, Kacee Fulkerson, Kylee Gibson, Blake Girdner, Grace Gray, Nicholas Harness, Rayne Held, Krista Hemrich, Shea Hendrixson, Alana Herr, Amber Hixon, Hannah Janes, Carter Jewell, Reese Johnson, Penny Jones, Samuel Kestranek, Alexis Koerner, Trista Koertge, Myles Land, Tyler Larginho, Mackenzi McIntosh, Mathew McMahan, Coleton McMichael, Callie Meadows, Hannah Meese, Brandon Miller, Colby Morse, Harlei Myers, Zachary Nehlsen, Allison Nichols, Iyanuoluwa Olalere, Mykenna Osborn, William Palmer, Drake Perry, Makisha Pesch, Jonathan Popp, Roanna Richey, Olivia Ridlen, Georg Schoettle, Samuel Seeker, Juan Solivellas-Garcia, Natasha Townsend, Alex Wilzbach, Katie Wood, Geon Yoon, Chanyoung Yun, and Ethan Zakowski.

Phi Theta Kappa has a presence on almost 1300 community college campuses in 11 nations and has been the official honor society for two-year colleges since 1929. There are approximately 250,000 active members in the nation.

Some members of Lincoln Trail College's Alpha Iota Epsilon Chapter will attend PTK Catalyst in Denver, Colorado April 7-9. The event brings together members and advisors from around the country for professional development and to celebrate the accomplishments of the Phi Theta Kappa community.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

April is Community College Month. What an appropriate time to show our gratitude to our taxpayers, students, trustees, staff, faculty, and supporters. We are in the business of changing lives by being local, affordable, open access, responsive, and supportive. But with a declining population in Crawford County, we must rethink the established model of solely focusing on fresh high school graduates. Now is the time to look at students as returning learners throughout their lives. This means that our schedules and our course/program mix must adapt. Similarly, the degrees and certificates long held as the keys to success are in competition with micro-certificates, badges, and other credentials. Today, we have Microsoft (through LinkedIn) and Google in the market of education, MOOCs (massive open online courses) through EdX, Coursera, and others supported by MIT, Harvard, Stanford, etc. They all challenge traditional educational models for students looking to continue their education in specific areas by providing easy pathways to educational content. LTC will lead by example in establishing ourselves as a quintessential player in the future of southeastern Illinois.

On Thursday, April 14 we hold our annual employees and students awards ceremony. This is an opportunity for us to recognize the hard work that goes into making LTC a second home for students and staff members. This year we are recognizing four amazing students who have exemplified our commitment to our community within and outside the institution. They have gone above and beyond to leave an indelible mark. Additionally, we are recognizing two long-term employees: Jackie Shamhart (staff) and Kim Schucker (faculty). They make LTC a supportive and welcoming institution; thus, materializing our mission of improving the lives of our students and strengthening our communities.



I am lucky to work with some of the most amazing students, faculty, and staff. The Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) annual conference took place in Denver, April 7-10. Eight students and a faculty from our Alpha Iota Epsilon chapter participated in this national event. Moreover, the chapter received an award for the action project that they conducted over the last year. PTK includes over 1,300 chapters, and our LTC chapter was also awarded a top 100 chapter award. My gratitude goes to our local PTK faculty advisors Ms. Kim Schucker and Ms. Carrie Brown.

On the front of facilities updates, the pool will be re-opened for classes in mid-June, coinciding with the start of the summer semester. Additionally, the architects from Graham & Hyde Architects shared their first draft of the \$9M facility. The proposed design includes large and advanced labs for welding, process technology, and broadband telecom. Additionally, it will include a university center that will provide LTC students with transfer support and instruction from various partnering universities.

LTC is a partner with the community, local businesses, organizations, and institutions. And we will continue to lead through innovative education and workforce development.

Dr. Zahi Atallah  
President  
Lincoln Trail College