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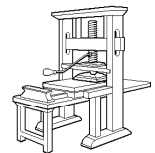
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On the cover: The newly renovated and historic Nebraska Hall on the Milford campus reopened at the beginning of the fall semester.

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Journalism courses for spring:

JOUR 1810 - Introduction to Mass Media

This class covers many areas of mass media, including music, movies, social media, books, media law, and ethics, while getting a taste of what it’s like to be a journalist for The SCC Challenge.

Pell Grant rules shift

By Georgia Mendoza

The federal student-aid system has changed this fall as the U.S. Department of Education released the 2026-2027 FASFA in October and new eligibility rules from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act take effect, altering how Pell Grants are awarded and how colleges package financial aid.

The FASFA shift marks a return to the long-standing October timeline after recent delays.

The One Big Beautiful Act, signed in July 2025, introduces new credit hour requirements for Pell Grant recipients and removes eligibility for students whose non-federal aid covers their full cost of attendance.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the 2026-2027 FASFA will include a shorter form and updated verification systems.

The department stated that the redesign features “dynamic question presentation” and simplified online navigation to assist applicants.

U.S. Acting Under Secretary of Education James Bergeron said the bill aims to stabilize programs and ensure federal support continues.



FAFSA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FEDERAL STUDENT AID

“The OBBBA delivers for student borrowers in a big way, simplifying the student-loan repayment system, funding the \$10.5 billion shortfall in Pell Grant funding left by the previous administration, supporting short-term career-focused programs and holding colleges accountable,” Bergeron said in a department release.

Changes to Pell Grants under the act include requiring students to complete 15 credit hours per semester for full-time status and extending Pell Grant eligibility to short-term workforce training programs beginning in

July 2026.

Students who receive institutional or private financial aid that covers full tuition, and expenses will not qualify for Pell.

Higher-education groups have expressed concern, and the American Council of Education reported that 700,000 students may lose Pell access because of the eligibility revisions.

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators stated that the new rules represent “a significant shift in how aid is calculated and distributed,” noting potential effects on communi-

ty-college students.

Financial-aid offices across the country will adjust award processes in response to the updated FASFA timeline and policy requirements. The FAFSA release allows institutions to begin reviewing federal data and preparing aid packages earlier than in the previous aid cycle.

Students and families will need to meet the credit-hour standards and understand how outside scholarships and employer tuition benefits interact with federal aid under the law.

The SCC Financial Aid Office recommends that students visit [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) for legislative updates and [StudentAid.gov](https://www.studentaid.gov) for official guidance on how the One Big Beautiful Bill Act affects federal student aid.

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Ag Tech Center coming to Beatrice

By Elijah Griffiee

BEATRICE — With aging buildings and technology, a new Agriculture Technology Center is the first phase of a project to replace previous agricultural buildings. This building is set to replace the Ford Hall building,

According to Toni Landenberger, associate vice president of the Beatrice Campus, the project is designed to provide more modern learning environments.

“New buildings are necessary to provide the modern equipment, hands-on learning and technology-enabled spaces that are required,” Landenberger stated.

The new 19,325-square-foot building will be constructed adjacent to the Ag Hall. Landenberger noted the building will replace one of the three buildings that offer the program and “bring students together” by having two Ag program buildings adjacent to one another.

The purpose of the building will focus on enhancing student and faculty experience.

Landenberger explained the new center will “provide flexible lab environments; support the integration of emerging technologies; enhance

student safety, accessibility, and engagement; offer faculty support spaces; and allow the program to provide employer-driven training.”

To help expand student and faculty experience, the college is well-equipping the center. These include four instructional lab spaces, an Instructional Ag mechanic shop, a covered demonstration area, six faculty offices and a simulation lab.

This center is designed to offer varying programs, including Precision Ag, Agronomy, Ag Education, Agriculture Management, Horticulture and Turf Grass Management.

“Everything has been moving forward in a very positive and collaborative manner,” Landenberger stated.

She said that the faculty has been meeting with each other, including



images contributed

The new Ag Tech Center, as imagined above, will replace Ford Hall on the Beatrice campus will offer updated lab spaces, see floor plan at bottom, and enhance student learning.

the design team, and the project control partner to ensure that the programs will be able to utilize the building once complete.

Currently, the project is meeting all scheduling deadlines. With 35 percent of the detailed architectural design process begin completed, the expectation was for 60 percent to be finished by November 11.

While the timeline for the design phase is certain, Landenberger clarified that a final set completion date for the building is currently not available.

“We are not yet to a point of setting a completion date,” she explained.

Landenberger said, “We will be into the project a bit before we can start estimating completion dates.”



Welding Technology Center now open

By Sarah Omari

LINCOLN – Southeast Community College’s new Welding Technology Center, which opened at the beginning of the fall 2025 semester, is expanding training capacity, safety and workforce partnerships in what leaders describe as the largest welding facility of its kind in the nation.

Richard Blessen, SCC’s director of advancement, said the Welding Technology Center project began with three meetings involving 32 industry partners in May of 2021 to determine the needs of a modern welding center.

When asked what the completion of the facility means for SCC and its students, Blessen reflected on the scope of the project.

“This whole building has been my favorite experience I have had in working not just at SCC, but probably in advancement,” Blessen said. “We’re looking at the nation’s largest welding technology center.”

Blessen said the previous facility held 84 welding booths (compared with the new building’s 196 booths), lacked faculty office space and did not have adequate fire suppression systems.

Blessen addressed these challenges when asked about the team’s original goals.

“We wanted to make



image contributed

The Welding Technology Center, above, the largest welding education center of its kind in the country, opened at the beginning of the fall semester.

sure we addressed student safety,” he said. “We wanted to make sure that we increased our capacity and that our faculty and students had a first-rate experience.”

Industry training was also limited in the old building.

Blessen said companies such as Burlington Northern Railroad, which sends about 100 employees per year for certification, often lacked adequate space. The new facility includes three industry partner classroom and a lab with a separate entrance, break space, and 16 welding booths reserved for workforce use.

The new building creates new opportunities for student, Blessen explained through growing employer involvement.

He said Klute Inc. of York developed a weekend shift specifically for SCC students, offering three 12-hour shifts with full benefits and wages between

\$24 and \$26. Multiple students have taken the position while continuing classes during the week.

Kawasaki, Fronius USA, Acklie Charitable Foundation, the Sherwood Foundation, and others have also supported the project through partnership or donations.

Feedback from students, faculty and industry has been overwhelmingly positive.

Blessen said Program Chair Mark Hawkins, who has led the welding program for 42 years, frequently remarks on how different the department feels in the expanded space. A recent visitor, the president of the American Welding Society, expressed disbelief that the entire building was dedicated solely to welding.

“All of our students who complete the associate degree can come out as American Welding Society certified welders,” Blessen said.

While addressing a question about long term benefits for SCC, Blessen said the new facility allows students to pursue certificates, diplomas or associate degrees with flexible re-entry options in the event they need to step away.

“The minute you’re ready to come back, that pathway is still open for you,” he said.

Program growth now depends on the number of instructors rather than available space, and enrollment currently sits at about 260 students, though the center can support expansion as staffing increases.

“The thing that is really controlling right now is our ability to grow exponentially is that there’s a cap on the student to faculty ratio we have,” Blessen explained.

The facility also includes 11,000 square feet

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Construction Tech Center coming to Milford

By Isabella Fauver

MILFORD – Southeast Community College is preparing to add a new Construction Technology Center to its Milford Campus, a project that is designed to expand the current program capacity and update facilities for several high-demand programs in Nebraska.

Construction is scheduled to begin Spring 2026 and classes are expected to start in the new building in August 2028.

Jon Kisby, the associate vice president at the Milford campus, said the plan developed from employer conversations and data gathered by the Institutional Research Department.

“The main goals from this center are to increase our capacity and our quality for meeting the needs of students in the construction technology industry,” Kisby said.

He added that industry demand first emerged during meetings of SCC’s Workforce Leadership Team, where employers described hiring needs across various construction fields.

The new center will hold space for Building Construction, Concrete Construction, HVAC and Plumbing Technology. Kisby mentioned how each program has reached a point where additional room is needed.

Plumbing, which began less than five years ago, is already at capacity. HVAC currently operates in a repurposed World War II army building and concrete students lack indoor practice space.

Kisby disclosed how the new center will create room for the plumbing program to expand from a one-year diploma to a two-year associates degree.

“Its expanded space for the plumbing program... it’s going to be expanded to coincide with this building into a second year,” he said.

HVAC students will also use upgraded equipment and workspaces, including commercial and residential systems and a dedicated virtual reality lab for air-conditioning system designs.

According to Kisby, “There’s some software that they’re able to use to practice laying out duct work...and this will allow us to have an intentional space.”

The plumbing lab will include what Kisby called a “playhouse,” which is a full multi-level structure that exposes framing for practice installations. The upper level will replicate commercial restrooms, while the lower levels will simulate residential settings.

Kisby said the expanded building will also support cross-training opportunities. Construction Tech-



image contributed

Construction on the Construction Tech Center, above, will begin this spring.

nology students currently have the option to choose between cabinetmaking and concrete to complete degree requirements, while some decide to proceed with additional training in both areas.

Overlap also exists between HVAC and electrical pathways.

“We do have students who choose to take multiple programs and that will continue to be the case,” he said.

The center will also be one of several major projects occurring across SCC campuses around the same time.

Kisby stated that Beatrice is designing an Agriculture Technology Center with construction estimated to begin in Spring 2026, and Lincoln is preparing to build a new science building near the Sandhills Global building.

Beyond the expanded labs and classrooms, Kisby revealed the Milford building will include commons and study spaces intended

to support student life.

Nebraska Hall opened this August with similar spaces, where Kisby said students quickly began to fill.

“Nebraska Hall is always full here and it’s only been open since August... this will have more of those spaces as well,” he said.

Kisby added that SCC expects the new center to draw regional interest from prospective students.

“This is an opportunity for people from around the area...it will definitely get regional attention from people who might consider coming here for school,” he explained.

In Milford, the new structure will mark the western entrance of campus and will feature exterior LED lighting which Kisby says will be easily visible to drivers.

“This will be where you know you’ve hit Southeast Community College when you see this building,” he said.

SCC students gain global perspective on Criminal Justice in Ireland

By Lance Stovall

LINCOLN – South-east Community College criminal justice students recently traveled to Ireland to study the country's criminal justice system and experience its culture firsthand. The trip gave students a chance to compare law enforcement and legal practices in Ireland with those in the United States.

During the 10-day trip, students attended daily sessions covering topics such as policing, women's rights, and the prison system. They then visited relevant locations, including courts, law enforcement agencies and cultural sites.

Chad Paavola, criminal justice instructor at SCC, said local guest speakers helped students understand differences and similarities in approaches to crime prevention.

"Crime is a universal problem around the entire world," Paavola said. "It's going to open up the eyes of students when they become practitioners themselves that they are going to be able to say, 'Hey, when I was in Ireland they did an approach this way,

can we? Should we?'"

Students also participated in cultural activities outside the classroom.

Paavola noted that, despite the busy schedule, students participated in events like surfing and local music performances.

Paavola said the trip helps students gain perspective.

"Traveling through the immigration side from both countries, seeing how practitioners interact with tourists, will allow them to be more open minded and confident in their own decisions," he said.

The trip was structured to blend education with practical experience.

Each morning included lectures, followed by field visits and guest presentations. Students got to apply what they learned from discussions to hands-on exercises, giving them insight into the daily responsibilities of criminal justice professionals in another country.

Paavola encouraged students to take advantage of study abroad opportunities at SCC.

"If you have the opportunity, SCC is really good at finding the funding," he said. "Take the opportuni-



photo contributed

Attending the Criminal Justice trip to Ireland were, from left, Rachael Gregg, instructor Chad Paavola, Jaid Gerson, and Emily Alberts.

ty if it can align with your career field. These study trips are life changing for students."

The Ireland trip is part of SCC's effort to give criminal justice students a broader perspective on

the field. Students return from the experience with a better understanding of international practices, which they can consider as they begin their own careers.

Beatrice adds new faculty

Rebekah Hayes

By Isabella Fauver

BEATRICE – Rebekah Hayes, a new English instructor at Southeast Community College Beatrice, has begun her first semester this fall, teaching Composition I and Intermediate College Reading and Writing.

Hayes began her teaching career after receiving her master's degree in English from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, where she also taught as a graduate assistant and part-time instructor.

Her inspiration to teach English came from her time as a student at UNO.

"A British literature course with Dr. Kristin

Girten inspired me to pursue English," Hayes said. "Through that process, I discovered that I liked teaching because I could share my joy for it with others."

Hayes said she chose to teach at a community college because of the important roles such institutions play in accessibility.

She stated, "Community colleges make education accessible and bring out the best in students," she said. "It felt like a familiar and meaningful community."

At SCC Beatrice, Hayes teaches a diverse group of students including athletes, agricultural majors, and "city kids." She works

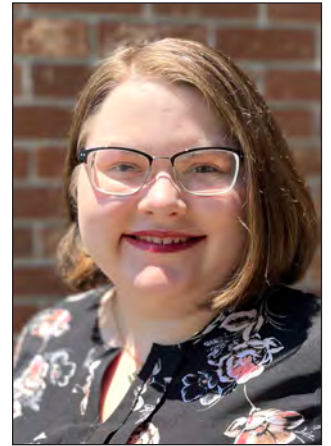
to make her lessons engaging by choosing readings and assignments that reflect their experiences.

"We've got a little bit of everything," she said. "So I like to find readings that are topical for them and interesting so that they can have a strong feeling about it."

Hayes also mentioned, "I also think it's important to mix things up... maybe one assignment looks at one audience, and the next looks at another kind."

Her outlook on teaching centers on helping students develop confidence and practical writing tools.

"They don't have to end up loving English," Hayes said. "I just hope they walk



Rebekah Hayes

away with skills that work for them in their writing process."

Hayes said she sees writing especially important in an era of artificial intelligence.

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Brian Podtburg

By Van Haneberg

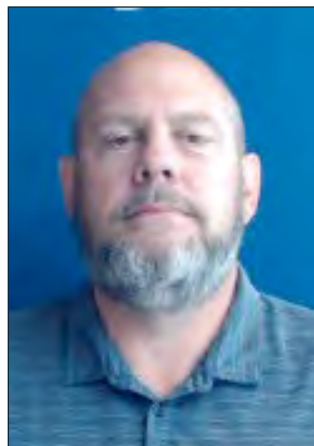
BEATRICE – Agriculture Instructor Brings Passion and Experience to SCC

Brian Podtburg, a new agriculture instructor at Southeast Community College (SCC), brings decades of farming experience and a passion for teaching to his role on the Beatrice campus this fall.

Podtburg, who grew up in Adams, Neb., has deep roots in agriculture and education. He graduated from SCC in 1991 and returned more than three decades later to teach the

next generation of farmers.

"I've been part of agriculture my whole life," Podtburg said. "I want to



Brian Podtburg

help farmers with equipment and inspire young people to get involved in the field."

At SCC, Podtburg teaches nine agriculture-related classes, including Harvesting Management, Fertilizing Techniques and Motorized Systems. In spring, he plans to teach planting methods as well. His goal is to prepare students with hands-on experience and a broad understanding of agriculture.

"There are so many different fields within ag," Podtburg said. "Students gain real knowledge and experience they can take

directly into the careers they want."

Podtburg credits his former SCC instructor, Mark Dufek, and another mentor, Ed Stitch, with encouraging him to return to the college as a teacher.

"Mark sparked my interest in becoming an instructor here," he said.

He began teaching at SCC in fall 2025 and said the transition has already changed him as a person.

"The pace of everything is different now," Podtburg said. "It's helped me grow and adjust how I do

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Eilish Hill

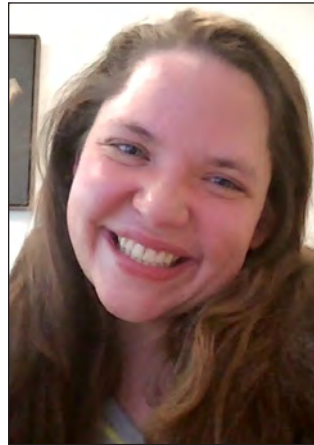
By Elijah Griffiee

BEATRICE – Eilish Hill is a new nursing instructor for the Nursing Program at SCC in Beatrice this semester.

Hill is originally from Omaha, where she served in a caretaker role and served in different positions varying from pediatric care, dialysis, mosaic, post surgical floor nursing and others.

She believes nursing is important in today's society, because "nurses are the glue on the healthcare team, which communicate with other healthcare members. Without nurses it can be chaotic."

Her original goal was



Eilish Hill

not nursing until she went to college, where she found a sense of belonging and a united goal in helping people.

Hill's mother also played a prominent role in influencing her through her own nursing career

growing up and her continuous involvement in the nursing profession through volunteer work even after retirement.

As she explained, "I am excited to be an instructor because I can have an exponential impact by helping shape future nurses who will have a significant imprint on many individuals during their own nursing careers."

She explained that while being in a nursing position can help individuals, being an instructor can help more people all at once.

"I think it's a really beautiful thing," she explained, "to be able to be around the students

because they're full of enthusiasm for the profession and that feeling is infectious."

Hill acknowledges a common challenge in students which is applying their classwork to real life situations. She helps the students by giving them continuous exposure to actual medical patients.

Also, she hopes for students to "look at the patients as individuals instead of a textbook example and treat the whole person vs a disease process."

Her hope is that with that exposure students will not just treat their patients

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Hayes, continued

continued from page 8

"One of the greatest challenges is showing people that if they create something. It will have value for them," she said.

She added that English skills are widely applicable.

"It can lead to journalism, marketing, teaching and more," Hayes said.

"It's one of the most essential degrees because it teaches critical communication skills."

Hayes said her impact goes beyond academics.

"I hope my students feel seen and know they're part

of the SCC community," she said. "Those moments when someone feels heard and a difference is made are the most meaningful."

Through her first semester at SCC, Hayes has focused on helping students see why writing still matters, even at a time where technology can do much of the work.

She referenced the evolution of writing by saying, "When students write their own stories, they not only grow as writers, but also as individuals learning to express who they are in a complex, evolving world."

Podtburg, continued

continued from page 8
things."

He chose SCC not only because of its strong agriculture program but also because of its location.

"It's close to home and family," he said. "And I went here myself."

Podtburg holds a college degree from Midland Lutheran and completed additional training in Beatrice.

Outside of work, he enjoys watching sports, hunting and teaching his kids how to play sports. In his free time, he spends time with family, works on the farm and does yard

work around the house. One fun fact his students may not know: he once played college football at Midland.

When asked what makes SCC special, Podtburg emphasized the people.

"The instructors here make it enjoyable in any field," he said. "The teachers treat students here greatly."

Podtburg hopes to continue encouraging students to pursue careers in agriculture while passing on the same support and inspiration he once received.

Nursing in Lincoln adds two instructors

Nicole Demsey

By Camila Hernandez

LINCOLN – For Nicole Dempsey, teaching nursing students at Southeast Community College feels a lot like coming home.

Twenty years ago, she walked the same halls as a student completing her prerequisites. Now, she is back on campus, this time at the front of the classroom as a nursing instructor.

“I’m a Linconite, born and raised here,” Dempsey said.

After graduating from Lincoln High in 2003, she



Nicole Demsey

went to nursing school at Bryan, where she was part of the program’s first bachelor’s graduating class

in 2009. From there, she spent 15 years as a bedside nurse, working in geriatrics, medical-surgical units and orthopedics.

While Dempsey gained experience in several areas, geriatrics became her favorite.

“I loved listening to older patients’ stories, learning about how they grew up, their values, and their perspectives,” she said.

That same passion for connecting with people is what drew her to education.

Dempsey joined SCC’s faculty two years ago and

is now working toward her master’s degree to become a strong nurse educator.

She still leads clinicals once or twice a week, guiding students through 12-hour shifts, but she has also been developing her classroom style. Her goal, she says, is to keep students engaged.

“I don’t want it to just be boring, sit-and-listen lectures,” she said. “I want to make my teaching more active, with activities that help students connect the material to real life.”

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LuAnn Mozer

By Lance Stovall

LINCOLN – LuAnn Mozer, a new nursing instructor at Southeast Community College (SCC) in Lincoln, brings decades of nursing experience, a passion for teaching and a drive to keep learning as she helps prepare the next generation of nurses.

Mozer first joined SCC as an adjunct instructor in 2018, teaching as an adjunct clinical instructor before returning to full-time nursing at CHI Health St. Elizabeth.

After working there for seven years, she received a message from SCC Nurs-

ing Program Chair Ashley, asking if she would be interested in returning to the classroom.

“She just asked me if I was interested in coming back,” Mozer said. “I’ve always wanted to go back to teach, and when she asked, I said yes.”

Her path to teaching came naturally, she said. Mozer earned her master’s degree in nursing education from Nebraska Wesleyan University and is currently pursuing another master’s degree at Clarkson College in Omaha to become a nurse practitioner.

She said she was in-

spired by her own instructors.

“Most of my instructors were nurse practitioners,” Mozer said. “They were all really knowledgeable, so I thought that would maybe help me be a better teacher.”

Mozer began her nursing career in 1986 as a licensed practical nurse before becoming a registered nurse. Over the years, she worked in wound care, urgent care and other specialties. She also served 13 years in the military as a flight medic, a period she remembers fondly.

“Being up with the pi-

lots, flying around, seeing all their maneuvers; that was really fun,” she said.

Her teaching philosophy focuses on prepar-

continued on page 11



LuAnn Mozer

Demsey, continued

continued from page 10

Having to balance from hospital work to teaching has also changed her personal life in a big way. As a mother of two, she values being home in the evenings.

“At the hospital, I worked three 12-hour shifts, which meant coming home when my kids were already heading to bed,” she explained. “Now I’m home for dinner, cooking meals and spending that time with them. The work-life balance is so much better.”

Although she is newer to the role, students are

already asking for more classes with her. For Dempsey, that encouragement reinforces her decision to teach.

“When students tell me they want me for all their classes, that’s really rewarding,” she said.

Looking ahead, Dempsey hopes to stay at SCC for the long term, continuing to grow alongside her students.

“I want to be here for a long time and become a strong educator and role model,” she said. “My career started here, so it feels meaningful to return and give back.”

Mozer, continued

continued from page 8

ing students with both confidence and hands-on experience.

“We want them to be the best nurses they can be when they get out, so they learn well and do well,” Mozer said.

She explained that small lab groups allow instructors to give close attention to students as they practice essential skills such as IV insertion and medication administration.

“You don’t want to skip over any details,” she said. “You want them to be

able to know what they’re doing.”

Outside of teaching, Mozer enjoys gardening, walking her dogs and taking on do-it-yourself home projects, a skill she picked up from her carpenter father. She also volunteers with a dog rescue alongside her husband.

Though her schedule is full with teaching, clinicals and coursework, Mozer said she enjoys helping others learn.

“Helping someone learn something new is always kind of fun,” she said. “And we need new nurses too — so badly.”

Seay is new Nebraska City Coordinator

By Olivia Jarosz

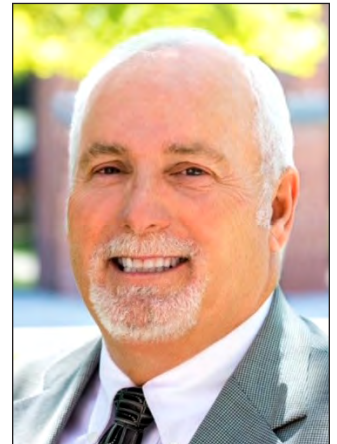
NEBRASKA CITY – Greg Seay, the Nebraska City Learning Center Coordinator, brings in years of experience in the educational field to Southeast.

Dr. Seay attended Southern Nazarene University, where earned his bachelors and masters degrees in Education. He later went on to Oklahoma State University where he earned his doctorate in Educational Administration. He later obtained his MBA from the University of Phoenix in OKC.

Before joining Southeast, Seay worked at Peru State College as the Dean of Graduate Programs and decided to retire in 2024. When the opportunity opened at Southeast, it quickly caught his attention.

On June 16, 2025, Seay began his role in Nebraska City as the Learning Center Coordinator. He says that his experience there has been “very good” with “helpful coordinators.” The staff have his best interest in mind in helping him set up for success.

In this new position, Seay organizes programs that serve the community, including English as a



Greg Seay

Second Language (ESL) courses and classes needed for those pursuing specific skills. The center also administers the Accuplacer test, which helps students qualify for college.

The Learning Center offers tutoring, English classes and computers for any students in need. Information on scholarships and financial aid are also available.

The center hosts events such as Arbor Day Farms Day and an Apple Jack Festival. The Otoe Process Management team and Sheriff Recruit skill trainings also tend to stop in.

Seay hopes to stay in this new position for a while as he “enjoys the feedback from the people and students.”

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Two new faces for Residence Life in Lincoln

Chelsea Lara

By Sara Omari

LINCOLN – Helping Southeast Community College students feel safe, supported and connected is all in a day's work for Residence Life Coordinator Chelsea Lara.

Lara, who also attends college herself, balances her afternoons between assisting students with residential needs and coordinating events led by resident assistants (RAs).

"I come in later in the day," Lara said. "Once I come in, I first just look at maintenance requests and see if any of the RAs have put in any program proposals."

If proposals are submitted, Lara prints flyers and helps prepare any materials needed for upcoming residence hall events, whether that includes food or educational supplies like planners and journals.

Much of her time is also spent resolving issues among residents.

"It's mainly just students coming in here and just telling me what they need," she said. "If they have issues with their roommates, I usually mediate those conversations."

When students experience roommate conflicts, Lara encourages them to start with their RAs.

"First, I have the RA

mediate, I give them different scenarios, and I usually just give them advice on how to handle each scenario," she explains.

While Lara's responsibilities are extensive, she said the RAs are the highlight of her role.

"I would have to say my RAs are my favorite part about this job, mainly because they make their jobs fun," Lara said. "They come into my office sometimes, and if they have any issues, I give them advice on how to handle it."

Lara previously worked at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and found her way to SCC through a friend's recommendation.

"I was looking to do more and get a higher paying job," Lara said. "One of my friends recommended that I apply for this and that it'd be a good fit."

She believes her work contributes to students' academic experience by helping them access campus resources and providing a supportive, convenient living environment.

"We are here to help them find the right resources for what they need," Lara said. "We can help them personally, or we can find them the people that can. It just builds community here."

Safety remains a top priority in the residence

halls this year. Lara said SCC has implemented additional security measures to better protect students.

"They're not allowed to go past the lobby area or even come in after 5 p.m. because they need their key card to come in," she said. "That's one of our main worries."

In addition to safety and support, Lara is working on expanding educational programming in the residence halls. One of her goals is to bring awareness to domestic and relationship violence.

"We are trying to partner with UNL and get students educated on domestic violence," she said. "Some students don't know much about that, and we're trying to get that information out there."

She hopes to launch that program either this semester or next.

The residence life team also encourages RAs to lead creative and informative events. Educational themes include life skills like budgeting, resume writing and time management.

"We're running a 'How to Life 101,'" Lara said, which covers topics such as cooking basics, how to write an email, how to buy a car and how to clean properly.

The residence life office



Chelsea Lara

is focused on building leadership skills among its student staff.

"We encourage our RAs to take initiative," Lara stated. "They get to plan their own programs, manage their budgets and lead events that have an impact on the students living here."

She added that the job helps them develop communication, problem solving and time management skills they'll use beyond SCC.

When asked what she hopes every student in the residence halls knows, Lara emphasized that support is always available.

"Our doors are always open," she said. "We live in the building. We're here 24/7. If they ever need anything, they can just come knock on our doors, and we can help them."

Ashley Ballentine



Ashley Ballentine

By Maddox Burton

LINCOLN – Ashley Ballentine, the assistant director of residence life, who has been working at SCC since May.

Working with college students from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. is not always easy, especially when living in the same dorms as some of them, but Ballentine says enjoys her job and values making an impact on the community.

Hill, continued

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like examples out of a textbook, but as real people.

She suggests that students should consider a career in nursing because they are able to use every part of themselves: mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

“Some of the tasks we

Her job brings her joy and lets her assist students with housing issues. She ensures students have what they need and helps resolve any housing concerns they bring to her.

Ballentine was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada, and then moved to Columbus, Nebraska, before her freshman year of high school. She later attended UNL, majoring in history.

When asked when she started liking school, and what made her like school, she said she was a life-long learner and always had fun in school, particularly the humanities.

Even though her job takes up a good amount of her day, when she gets home, she loves to hang out with her cats, do her own history research, collect oddities, go antiquing, and collect taxidermized Animals.

do for people are minor to us, but can bring great comfort or reassurance to a patient,” Hill said. “That is very fulfilling.”

The special moments, she said, are “the moments when you do something that impacts someone in a positive way, and they are able to share that with you.”

Ballentine’s favorite place to travel has been Michigan because she has a family that lives there. She is also a huge fan of the forest, which makes her love Michigan even more.

Of her experience with

Covid, she said that she was forced to leave her job at the time because they shut down, which left her with so much free time and not a lot of contact with the outside world. But she said it also made her grow as a person.

Seay, continued

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The connections he makes while doing his job is something unique. He says he gets to be a part of the excitement students have as he watches the “light goes on” when they find out they now can learn and are qualified to attend college.

Being able to watch students and adults overcome barriers from their past or obstacles in general is so rewarding to Seay. He enjoys sharing the success with students as their “eyes light up,” he states.

Looking ahead, Seay plans to continue growing in his position and learning ways he can help those around him. He wants to

get more involved with the community and encourage others to take advantage of Southeast’s opportunities offered.

Outside of work, Seay enjoys spending time with his wife, five children and twenty-one grandchildren. He also loves camping and playing the popular sport of pickle ball and being outdoors in general.

Seay says he is grateful to be a part of Southeast Community College, which continues to grow with 18,000 enrolled students. This number “speaks well for the college” he states as the number of students keeps on growing each year.



New instructors across programs at Lincoln

Tamara Walz

By Maria Martinez

LINCOLN – Southeast Community College welcomes a new criminal justice instructor, Tamra Walz, to the Lincoln campus going into the 2025-2026 school year.

Walz, a former Deputy Sarpy County Attorney, began her role here in August 2025. She began as a pre-medical major before switching to a German language major and studying abroad for two years.

While studying in college, Walz was given advice from a biology professor of hers to try out law school. She did so and found she had an interest



Tamara Walz

in that field.

After completing law school and working different jobs for several years, she found a passion for teaching. Walz says there

are several members in her family who teach, so she wanted to explore the same avenue, as it is the “family business.”

She said, “I got on the SCC site and I was looking for an adjunct position. Then I saw there was a full-time position and I thought, oh, that might be kind of interesting and fun.”

When asked what her favorite part of being a professor so far was, Walz explained, “Teaching is really my passion. I really enjoy working with the students, and I love watching them grow in terms of their critical thinking, their ability to analyze

issues.”

Outside of being a professor, Walz enjoys time with her corgi. She explained how teaching can be a lot between grading and being at school, so she makes sure to find time to relax and destress with her dog.

Besides her dog, Walz enjoys watching sports, mostly hockey. She is a dual citizen (Canadian) and lived in Edmonton, Canada, so she grew up a fan of the Oilers. Now living in Lincoln, she says she enjoys going to Lincoln Stars games as well.

Walz went on to describe the way she likes to

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Salena Hirschbrunner

By Cadence Kaufman

LINCOLN – Southeast Community College recently welcomed Salena Hirschbrunner as its newest full-time nutrition instructor.

Hirschbrunner brings over 20 years of experience working in hospitals and teaching. She is passionate about helping people understand the science behind what’s on their plate.

Her inspiration to enter the field came at a young age.

“My dad was diagnosed with diabetes when I was

in middle school, and we met with a dietitian,” Hirschbrunner said. “That experience made me think, I want to give this a try.”

She went on to earn both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln before working more than 15 years at Bryan Medical Center.

There, Hirschbrunner specialized in critical care and neonatal nutrition. She also taught at Bryan College of Health Sciences prior to joining SCC as an adjunct instructor in 2020.

At SCC, Hirschbrunner teaches Basic Nutrition

and Nutrition for Health Professionals. She strives to help students understand the science of food and how it affects the

body.

“Everyone comes in with a lot of information about nutrition, but it’s hard to know what’s true and what isn’t,” she said. “My goal is to help students understand what healthy eating looks like, no matter what stage of life they’re in.”

To keep her classes engaging, she incorporates real-world examples, current events and interactive discussions. She especially enjoys teaching about the link between nutrition and disease, drawing from her



Salena Hirschbrunner

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Walz, continued

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run her classes, especially when it comes to bringing in real-world examples.

She explained, “We have policy debates, so we talk about different issues. I break them up into smaller groups, and they each have to present an argument on a certain issue.”

Walz says they work with current events every week as well, trying to explore real-world issues. As a citizen of Canada, a recent topic she had in class was outlawed hate speech in Canada.

“[In Canada] hate speech is outlawed, and here, we have hate crimes, but hate speech is allowed,” Walz stated. “So we did a policy debate about what’s the better system.”

She likes to bring real examples to her classrooms to teach her students, most of which have had a positive impact on this method.

Walz left with a piece of advice for students as they finish their time in college: “You’re going to learn more about other people, cultures, history.”

She went on to say, “So I think one of the most important things when you leave and go out into the world is to know how to react and deal effectively with people from all walks of life because no two people are the same.”

Rachel Holder

By Génesis Lam

Rachel Holder, a Southeast Community College (SCC) alumnae, has made her way back to teach students in Design and Drafting at SCC.

“SCC was something really special for me,” Holder states.

Holder is from Omaha originally, but currently resides in Ashland, where she shares a home with her husband, two dogs and seven chickens. In her spare time, she loves to work on her photography skills, gardening, spending time with her husband and pets.

Holder says she has always been creative. After attending SCC, she started pursuing photography full-time and has taught a few classes here and there.

She worked for seven years at Schnackel Engineers in Omaha. For three of those seven years, she worked as an AutoCAD and Revit technician, and around 2021, she became an energy compliance consultant. Her job consisted of translating clients’ floor plans into company standard layers and doing parts of the mechanical, electrical and plumbing design.

She was in pursuit of a change of career. She enjoys the art aspect of design and drafting and has always had a passion to teach, and soon enough,

during her pursuit, she received an opportunity to teach full-time and took it.

Holder is in her second semester of teaching at SCC. There are two focuses that are taught to students which are CAD and architecture; Holder teaches the architectural focus side.

She does her best to make teaching fun and approachable for students. The key to helping students learn new skills in class is teaching them in “bite size pieces,” Holder shares.

She says her department’s motto is, “If it exists, somebody has to design it.”

With new software being developed frequently, Holder mentioned she uses “Autodesk, it is a newsletter that tells you what is coming out and what is new.”

But she also said, “Technology has advanced, but the plumbing theory or mechanical theory stays relatively the same.”

Holder’s goals this year as a professor are to “Make connections with my students and inspire them or motivate them to



Rachel Holder

know everything’s going to be okay.”

For students interested in Skills USA, she will be advising the architectural design group and the architectural design print reading.

“It’s a really cool opportunity for students,” Holder says.

Skills USA has many different areas of interest, ranging from automotive to cosmetology and also has great scholarship opportunities, she says.

And as Holder explains, quoting author Mercury Stardust, “You’re worth the time it takes to learn something new.”



Milford adds two new diesel instructors

Dylan Bernard

By Helena Dunn

MILFORD – Diesel Technology instructor Dylan Bernard knew that he wanted to come back and teach at SCC.

Bernard graduated in 2018 from the Diesel Tech program at SCC in Milford. He chose this in college so that he could fix things and provide. Shortly after that, he knew he wanted to share his knowledge with students.

This is his first year teaching. The Diesel Tech program provides students with the fundamentals of diesel trucks and the safety



Dylan Bernard

and measurements that are necessary. The class that Bernard teaches focuses on the fundamentals of diesel trucks.

Bernard states that this job is a good option because “it provides job security and we will always need people to fix our machines.”

Bernard grew up and went to high school in Gretna. He chose to go to the Milford location for teaching because he loved it when he went there himself.

Bernard said, “The most rewarding part of the job is taking people from not knowing something to knowing something.”

He gets his motivation from watching his students grow.

He also spends most of his free time at home spending time with his wife and children.

Bernard gets a lot of support from his family and his coworkers.

Bernard said, “I have a very supportive work environment.”

The diesel tech field has multiple options for degree paths. Students that are interested in the diesel tech field can contact him by looking at the SCC website.

Students can earn an A.A.S. degree or a diploma.

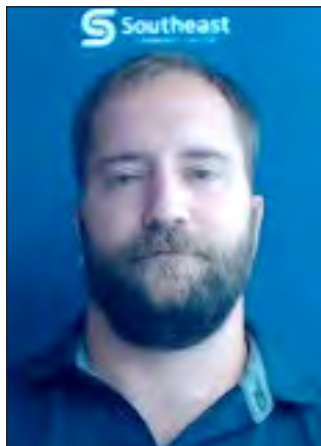
Joseph Bartu

By Anna Chancellor

MILFORD – Joseph Bartu, who previously worked at Akrs Equipment in Geneva, started at Southeast Community College in Milford as the Diesel and Agricultural Equipment Service Technology Instructor, bringing hands-on trade experience and a focus on work ethic in the classroom.

Bartu said his interest in diesel and agricultural equipment started when he grew up on the farm.

“I guess I have always been interested in how things work mechanical-



Joseph Bartu

ly,” he said.

Before teaching at SCC, Bartu worked at a John Deere dealership in Geneva. At SCC he teaches the fundamentals class,

advanced hydraulics and an introduction to power trains.

“The first class is just kind of what it’s about and how to do it safely and figuring out how to use the tools and what tools are and what we should look for and what to do,” he said.

Students work on real equipment brought to the shop, giving them direct experience with diagnosis and repair.

“People know they can bring their equipment to us, so we have the students perform all the tasks that matter to the class,” Bartu

says. “Right now, students are inspecting machines, identifying leaks and worn-out pieces, and we end up servicing them and returning them to the customers.”

Bartu described a moment about mentoring interns who needed help understanding hydraulics and how this helped shape his approach to teaching. After demonstrating how to charge accumulators, he had the interns teach other interns.

“It seemed to work well and interested me some,” he stated.

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Art & Sciences in Lincoln adds new psych instructor

Tory Robinson

By Nikko Tran

LINCOLN – Tory Robinson is one of the newest psychology instructors at Southeast Community College's Lincoln campus, starting just this August.

Born and raised in Texas, Robinson moved before his high school years to the Midwest and has been here ever since.

Robinson also holds an undergraduate degree from Northwest Missouri State University and a master's degree from Capella University. He is currently pursuing his doctorates at California Southern University.

Before arriving at SCC, Robinson started off his journey in teaching at Iowa Western University, then at University of Nebraska Omaha and Bellevue University.

His journey into teaching higher education wasn't always so straightforward, Robinson started

his career off as a strength and conditioning coach.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it shut down the in-person interactions, which disrupted his plans and steered him towards a new direction.

A close friend who worked at Iowa Western at the time invited him to come teach at the University due to his skills in teaching.

After teaching at Iowa Western, it sparked a new passion for him in teaching full-time leading to where he is today.

In the classroom, Robinson keeps his students engaged through the flipped classroom method.

"In this approach, students read the material ahead of time, take notes on key details, and then apply what they've learned into their daily lives," Robinson stated.

And by the time they

come to class, they are prepared to discuss the concepts and ask questions, he said.

"I see [technology] as a tool much like a hammer helps us build a house," he explained. "When used effectively, it can support and enhance student learning rather than hinder it."

In addition to his perspective on technology, he hopes that SCC can implement a program on campus that is mainly focused on students' mental health.

Robinson noted, "we often tend to isolate ourselves and hesitate to ask for help."

But he strongly encourages his students and others to reach out for help when in need.

He shared for example one of his students who was late to class after accidentally damaging their car by running over a curb and breaking their front axle.

Instead of the student being silent about the situation, the student explained the situation to Robinson, allowing him to reassure them that he was glad they were still able to make it to class safely and reminded them if they needed anything to not be afraid to reach out.

Later on, it led to that same student feeling comfortable enough to reach out to Robinson asking for

advice.

When asked what advice he'd give to newcomers, he states, "Come into psychology with curiosity with an open mind, ask questions often and constantly prepare to discuss."

Robinson states psychology is frequently misunderstood, and when asked what people commonly get wrong about psychology, he said, "People immediately think of disorder."

But it is much broader than most people realize, he explained, offering us an insight and understanding of one's behaviorism, motivation and personal growth.

Outside of Robinson's professional life on campus, he really enjoys scuba diving, jui-jitsu and traveling.

He gives credit mainly to his family who majorly influenced his life by pushing him beyond his limits.

"They motivated me to strive for greatness, by making me the best version of myself," Robinson said.

A quote Robinson says he learned and lives by is, "A roaring lion kills no game."

"In other words, talking loudly a lot or complaining won't get the results you have in mind," he expressed. "Real progress comes from being quiet, focused and hard working."

Welding Tech Center, continued

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of fabrication space, an area that was not possible in the previous building. Blessen said the additional space allows them to explore fabrication, robotic welding and pipeline welding.

"Students potentially

could learn, in a full two years, whether they want to become a fabricator, a robotic welder operator or get into pipeline welding," he said.

Blessen encourages students to visit the facility to fully understand its capabilities.

Milford adds new faces at admissions, Residence Life

Jonah Weyand

By Molly McLane

MILFORD – Milford’s newest Admissions Representative is Jonah Weyand, who was first introduced to the idea of admissions roles by his dad, who worked in admissions at Doane.

Weyand was interested specifically in Southeast Community College at Milford because his wife works there, they live in Milford, and he enjoys working with students and encouraging them.

Weyand graduated from Concordia University, Nebraska, in 2020, where he played football while also earning a degree in psychology and human



Johah Weyand

services. He just began with SCC in May of this year.

Weyand’s daily duties “change from season to season. During the school year, I will mostly be

recruiting and out on the road at college fairs and college events.”

He also states, “I’ll mainly be at high schools, most being in Nebraska. I’ll usually do all of this during the fall.”

Weyand thoroughly enjoys his position at SCC, particularly connecting with the students and other school counselors, the different experiences and variety from day to day, and learning new things.

Weyand was born in Sioux City, Iowa, and he moved to Crete, Nebraska, in the fourth grade.

“I am also usually away at other schools or in my office,” he said. “But I will say everyone I meet is very

nice, and there seems to be a heavy trade life here.”

Weyand mentions his favorite restaurant is Canes, and he and his wife also have a 2-year-old Labradoodle named Franklin.

He also loves everything to do with sports; football, basketball and pickle ball are some of his favorites.

He also enjoys card games and hanging out with his wife, dog, family and friends.

When asked about his favorite music, he said, “Christian music and Country. Faith is a big part of my life, so that’s usually what I’ll listen to. And Country only during the summer.”

Jalisa Winkle

By Lizzy Massey

Jalisa Winkle is the Residence Life Coordinator at the Milford Southeast Community College (SCC) campus.

According to Winkle, “My position is critical for students living on campus.”

Winkle lives on campus in the dorms with students, which allows her to always be there for emergency situations or just to help a student settle into college life.

Whether it be issues with your roommate or

simply missing home, Winkle can help. She wants to give students the opportunity to be the best they can be.

Winkle started at SCC in March of 2025. She is new to this position but previously worked in education before starting at SCC.

Winkle usually works from mid-afternoon in her office to the evening when she is available for any students.

According to Winkle, her favorite thing about her job is getting to know the students. They all

come from many different backgrounds.

However, if Winkle could change anything about her job it would be the hours. Not working a regular 9-5 job can be difficult to adjust to even five weeks into the semester.

The perfect day according to Winkle, “starts with sleeping in.”

After that, she would take her dog to the park to shoot hoops and maybe even end the day attending a good concert.

Winkles’ biggest inspiration is her mom.

She said, “My mom is

my biggest inspiration she worked hard to support

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Jalisa Winkle

New faces in IT, payroll in Lincoln

Casey Allee

By Lilyanna Cabrales

LINCOLN – Casey S. Allee is the newest member of Lincoln campuses Tech support.

Allee began working at SCC over four months ago now. With more than a decade’s worth of experience in IT doing contractual work for many companies, he decided to return to where he and his wife of 19 years began their educational journey.

“We do a little bit of everything,” he said.

A normal day of work for Allee may include



Casey Allee

finding solutions for any technological problems staff may have, fixing the many desktops that are

around campus, or helping in networking.

Growing up in Nebraska, Allee has always called Lincoln his home, and with his return to SCC, he has noticed great changes to the Lincoln campus and how inviting everyone is.

Allee explained that as a kid, his passion for tech began with gaming and fixing computers.

He believes that anyone going into IT should always stay updated with the ever-changing trends of technology and to “go for it, if it’s your passion.”

With that passion, he

went on to explain how AI could bring new changes to our world and that it was possibly great for things like health sciences.

Allee’s biggest role models were his grandparents.

“They instilled in me the old-school values and work ethic,” he explained.

Those values are something that he has carried throughout his career.

Some of his activities outside of work include watching football and the occasional gaming with his four sons.

Rachel Alloway

By Layton Oberle

LINCOLN – Rachel Alloway, a new payroll specialist at Southeast Community College in Lincoln, was raised Grand Island, but currently resides in Lincoln.

When asked about her primary responsibilities at Southeast Community College, she explains that as a Payroll and Benefits Specialist that she processes payroll three times per month.

Alloway also ensures all employees are paid on time and that the pay and benefits are correct.

More responsibili-



Rachel Alloway

ties that Alloway has in her role is to enter new employees into the system, while also processing resignations and transfers. She also submits reports to different entities that

provide benefits to SCC employees.

When asked about specific goals Alloway has at SCC, she wants to “improve my job skills” to ensure “I’m doing the best job that I can.”

Alloway picked SCC because of the people that she works with. She adds that the benefits that SCC provides to its employees as another major factor for her decision.

Alloway is a SCC graduate who received her associates degree from SCC before receiving her bachelor’s degree in marketing management from Peru State College.

The best advice that Alloway has received is to “respect everybody that you come into contact with,” explaining that everyone deserves a chance and that people make mistakes and that does not shape them as a person.

Alloway’s advice to current college students is to “go to class,” adding that listening to instructors will make schooling so much easier as compared to not going to class.

Alloway was asked how she views herself in 20 years. She says that hopefully she is retired and spending even more

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Three new coaches for SCC Bobcats

Trevor Varley - baseball

By Devon Hager

BEATRICE – Trevor Varley, a new baseball coach for the Beatrice campus, has several years of experience under his belt, with coaching and advising on several different programs.

Varley first wanted to become a high school teacher, but was eventually drawn to the collegiate level. After spending a year coaching at Peru State, he took a coaching job in Okotoks Canada.

Varley says, “It was more of an academy rather than a high school, and we were more geared to getting our guys down to the states to further their



Trevor Varley

baseball and education.”

After having his first child, he realized that being 22 hours away from family wasn’t ideal for him and his wife, so they returned to the U.S.

Once back home, Varley took a job at a junior col-

lege in Colorado and did about everything there, including running concessions, coaching, teaching and supervising the event center. He started off as just a baseball coach, but then later on became an advisor and resource for students.

Varley then started his own travel academy for high school students, which then led to him being noticed by the coaches as SCC.

He states, “I started here as just a baseball coach, and then got bumped into a part-time advisor position. Later on, I was put into the full-time advisor and coach role.”

Varley was up for the

role of being an advisor, as he enjoys helping students get to where they want to go.

When it comes to coaching, Varley says he does everything he can to put the athlete first.

“The whole goal is to move them onto a bigger program after they leave here,” he said.

He says, “We have a pretty special school here. I’ve been at other two and four-year schools where they don’t have the resources that SCC has to offer.”

What drew Varley towards SCC was “Their ability to provide an op-

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Christian Watters - cross country, track & field

By Maddox Burton

LINCOLN – Christian Watters, the new head coach of the SCC Track and Field team and the head coach of the Cross Country team, was not a big kid growing up.

When he was younger, in the spring, when the choices were running laps around the track or playing football, he steered towards running.

He had started with cross country, so by default, he ended up in track



Christian Watters

too. But what began as something he was “basically forced into” became

something more meaningful.

He remembers what it felt like to have a good coach and a bad one. Everyone does, he says. Somewhere along the way, he realized he wanted to become the kind of coach who made a difference.

He loved running; it felt natural to him, and he wanted to pass that feeling on to the next generation. Now, leading the team he, as he says he feels grateful to be that person, the one who guides, supports,

and hopefully inspires.

When he was asked about his favorite event to coach, he did not hesitate. The 3k, 5k, and 10k are the same events he ran in college. He says he knows exactly what it takes to compete at that level, the grit required, the strategy and the patience.

Speaking of memories, he says his first recruit will always stand out, not because of time or medals, but because of trust.

“It is a big deal for

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Saundra Proctor - women's basketball

By Lozan Hayder

LINCOLN – Saundra Proctor, a college advisor and basketball coach at Southeast Community College (SCC) in Lincoln, said she wants to help students do well in school and in basketball.

Proctor, who began at SCC in May, said she has been coaching basketball for over ten years, including five years in college.

“One thing I’ve seen is that there are some students that kind of get swept under the rug a little bit, especially from the JUCO level,” she said.

“A lot of kids are looking to transfer, so making sure my athletes and other athletes are taking the right steps to be able to move forward,” she added.

She said her coaching career began with inspiration from her own experiences as a player.

“I had some really good coaches that I played for, both college and high school,” she explained. “What started as a passion for wanting to be involved quickly developed into realizing I could actually make a career out of this.”

Proctor continued, “I coach, my younger sister coaches and my big brother coaches—it’s something we’ve all done and will continue with.”

Balancing her advising and coaching responsibilities is challenging, she said, but manageable because many of her players



Saundra Proctor

are also on her advising list.

“I get in early, get things done, touch base with my advising list,” Proctor said.

Proctor said she enjoys learning about her students’ backgrounds and sharing her own experiences.

“I’m not from Nebraska, so being able to learn from kids that have been here for 18–19 years, but also being able to share my experience about being a junior-year college athlete—it’s fun getting to know them and see how different life was for me at 18 in Colorado versus a 19-year-old here in Nebraska,” she said.

Proctor said she emphasizes honesty with students, especially about the realities of athletic careers.

“Very few are going to be professional athletes,” she explained. “Everything you’re doing with classes, you have to take seriously. I explain my

story—I’ve been a coach for 12 years, and I wanted to be in criminal justice, then moved to coaching—so they understand yes, it’s hard, it’s tough, but it gets easier and better as you progress.”

She encourages students who are undecided about their major or career path to explore different courses.

“Don’t feel like you have to make a decision right now,” she advised. “I started in computer science and that didn’t last at all. Fill some things out, take different classes, know what you have a feel for. I slowly shifted to criminal justice.”

Proctor said she wants her basketball players to understand their purpose and build from there.

“Everybody wants to play college sports, but what is the reason for you to play?” she asked. “My reason may not be the same as my players. I want them to get the best out of the season and move onto the four-year level.”

Her approach to recruiting and motivating students varies depending

on the individual.

“For each kid, it’s different,” she explained. “Some I have to be the hype man, some a little more gentle, some tougher. I’m big on social media, I joke around a lot to break the ice and make them comfortable.”

Proctor cited her proudest moments as coaching her first players to college-level basketball and helping students navigate life challenges.

“Last year, I had the chance to win a championship as head coach,” she recalled. “I just found out one of my students will be a dad. He’s kind of head all over the place. I talked to him, saying it’s okay, we’ll figure it out.”

Proctor said she stays motivated in both roles by remembering the impact she can make.

“Basketball side is understanding the full-circle moment from me playing in JUCO,” Proctor explained. “The advisor side is making sure they take the classes they need, stay out of situations they shouldn’t be in, and stay up to date,” she said.



SCC Volleyball moves from D2 to D1

By Olivia Jarosz

LINCOLN – This year was a huge change for the Southeast Community College Volleyball team and their coach Carolyn Campbell. It was their first season competing in Division 1 from previously competing in Division 2.

The level of play was faster and a little tougher than what they had been used to previously. The team focused on improving and finding success in ways that weren't associated with whether they won or lost the game.

Coach Carolyn Campbell has worked on building an encouraging environment from the start of her coaching at Southeast.

College can be such an adjustment; therefore, she wanted to help players improve on and off the court. She strives to be the person players can go to when they're asking themselves, "Who do I call when I need...?"

The captains played a huge role in guiding everyone this season. Freshman libero Chloe Vice was very vocal and communicative on the court.

Sophomore Audrey Boban brought what Campbell described as an "intense but calming presence." She was constantly smiling and encouraging others, Campbell observed.

Ellie Rine a sophomore came in on day one ready to go and was "very welcoming" to everyone around her.

The most difficult part of this season was adjusting to Division I play, Campbell said.

The speed of the game and intensity is higher compared to Division 2. Campbell put emphasis on "building a program to be one step better," as it'll take time for this adjustment.

The team's win over Cloud County from Kansas was a big success the team had this season; it had been 13 years since SCC beat Cloud country.

Earlier in the season, SCC took a loss to Cloud Country, but later came back to take the win. Campbell said she didn't realize the losing streak until after the match, which made the win even more exciting.

The team all knew they were "working on getting better," which they had to remind themselves when taking any tough losses throughout the season.

The team did some bonding activities including tie-dyeing shirts, a car scavenger hunt, and a murder mystery night. They even had to guess random facts that parents secretly sent in about the players.

Assistant Coach Wyatt



photo by Chad Greene

During a sweep of Southwestern Community College on Aug. 19, Freshmen Trinity Geiser of Syracuse and Sophomore Audrey Boban of Glenwood, Iowa, make a play on defense.

Hubbard handled stats and social media while the athletic trainer Katie Fletcher worked with any injured players. Monica Feldhausen also helped by working with live stats at home games and made sure the PA system and music were properly working.

During the off-season, players get time to rest and take a break as most get jobs or pick up more hours. The holiday months can be busy the way they are, so this gives them time with family and a little reset before the spring season.

"Sports teach a lot

about life," Campbell said.

She believes volleyball teaches players how to manage their time, work hard, while being able to consistently show up as good friends and family members.

These skills, she said, help athletes handle "everything life may throw" at them.

Campbell's goal for the team is to first make the regional tournament and then the national tournament following that. She believes this team will continue to improve with everyone putting in hard work every day.

SCC Golf builds on national finish

By Devon Hager

BEATRICE – Fresh from a top-10 national result, the SCC's men's golf team will kick off this spring full of energy, this time facing even bigger goals.

After last year's unexpected run, the Bobcats shook up the junior college scene by landing ninth at the NJCAA Nationals among 96 squads.

"With 96 teams in NJCAA golf, anytime you finish in the top 10 from a northern state, you're doing pretty well," said

Calvin Freeman, SCC Men's Golf Head Coach and Social Science Instructor/Program Chair.

"We exceeded expectations last year and we're trying to build on that," he said.

Southeast kicked off autumn by smashing their own 54-hole score mark, snagging consecutive wins, like the one at Doane's Blue River meet. Still, once that blazing run ended, things slowed down a notch

"Whether it was complacency or burnout, we didn't finish the fall how

we wanted," Freeman said. "The start is what we want to recreate, the end is what we want to learn from."

Freeman emphasizes two major keys to improvement, short game and mental toughness.

"You can always improve putting and short game," he said. "And eliminating penalty strokes, not letting one bad hole spiral, golf is so mental. One shot at a time."

The practice that the players put in during rounds reflects on their mindset, Freeman said.

To begin practice, the

players begin with four required drills provided by Coach Freeman. The drills consist of two full-swing drills, one chipping and one putting.

What Freeman prioritizes the most is on-course competition, stating that "At this level, players need freedom inside structure," and "Golf is still an individual sport. I coach the individual for the good of the team."

Backed by a solid second-year crew, the aim is straightforward: make it to nationals again while

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Women's golf makes early progress

By Isabella Fauver

BEATRICE – The Southeast Community College women's golf team has ended its fall season with steady progress, new personal-best scores, and what Head Coach Ross Eickhoff has described as "an important step for a program still in its early stages."

Eickhoff stated that this 2025 fall season has marked the team's first full roster since the program began last year.

"This is kind of the first year where we've had a full

team," he said.

He said the season has allowed players and coaches to get to know each other's strengths, tendencies and approach to competition.

"The amount of improvement we saw in the fall was really cool," Eickhoff said. "As far as a fall season and what we expect out of that, it was a very successful one."

SCC's schedule brought a diverse mix of competition settings, including one-day tournaments, multi-course events and two-day competitions on

the same course(s).

Eickhoff mentioned that the team's most consistent theme has been improvement. He said that the group finished strong at the Nebraska Intercollegiate in Fremont after a series of tournaments tested them in different ways.

North Platte offered the first major challenge, where the team began to struggle on a tight, tree-lined course before returning the next day with a stronger performance on a lengthier layout.

"We significantly improved our team score

from day one to day two on what is typically a more difficult golf course," he said.

The two-day event in Nebraska City followed a similar pattern of improvement, where the final tournament in Fremont opened with rainy and cold weather as its own obstacle.

"It was basically pouring rain right up until tee off," Eickhoff said, stating how the team responded well to the conditions and "learned what they were made of" while persever-

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Women's golf, continued

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ing.

Players this season recorded personal-best rounds, including marks that surpassed their high-school scores despite the longer distances within collegiate courses. The season also included two top-10 finishes.

"For them to come out here and...shoot personal bests is a pretty big deal," Eickhoff said.

He mentioned how leadership has emerged from all six golfers in different ways. Elayna Urbanec, the program's first recruit, brought a strong presence.

"She has been nothing but wanting this program to build into something that every single player is going to want to be a part of," Eickhoff said. "She's always coming up with team-building ideas, wanting to get everyone involved."

Additionally, first-year player Kendall Consbruck contributed through her preparation and work habits.

"She led the team hands down in time out on the golf course outside of tournament play," Eickhoff said.

Moreover, performance leader Charlie Sievers set the program's lowest 18 and 36-hole scores.

Eickhoff stated, "She's a

very quiet individual, but when it comes to getting on the course and just locking in and going to work, she's going to do that."

Eickhoff also highlighted contributions from Olivia Barta "Liv" of Wausau, who played on a boys team in high school; Grace Ley of New Zealand, who originally came to SCC to play basketball; and Kiera Hestigan, who uses a "very different setup and approach" that continues to develop according to Eickhoff.

"Honestly, all six of them bring their own set of skills," he said. "Everyone is kind of fulfilling a different role."

As the team moves to the upcoming off-season, Eickhoff mentioned how conditioning and flexibility will help players prepare for the spring.

He said short-game improvement remains a central goal because it can "help save yourself some shots" on any course.

Eickhoff said his long-term vision is to build a roster that supports one another while also embracing challenges.

"I want girls that are wanting to come in and do things the right way and want to have a good time," he said. "I want this program to be a little bit like a family that changes

each other."

He said the most meaningful part of coaching remains the opportunity to be a part of the athletes' development and watching players grow during their time at SCC.

Men's golf, continued

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aiming high for a spot in the top five.

Yet the real issue, according to Freeman, lies in managing what people expect.

"Expectations should be high, but process-oriented, not result-oriented," he said.

"If we focus on preparation, course management, and emotional control, results take care of themselves," Freeman explained.

Freeman looks first at how well a player can golf, most high schoolers shoot about 77 or lower, while top recruits are closer to 74. Then, he checks their history in tournaments.

"Summer tournament participation is non-negotiable," he said. "I want guys who compete."

Southeast brings in bright students, some hitting all A's, while others participated in National Honor Society, he said.

"The junior-college

"I want them to look back on the time that was spent with me and this program as something that is unique to them," he said. "Stories that they're going to be able to tell for the rest of their lives."

stigma is going away," Freeman said. "We're getting great students who want to see how good they can get."

Freeman is familiar with SCC, as he was a student years ago. These days, he works there every day, something he says actually changes things.

"Being here all day makes me a better coach," he said. "I can help players with classes, resources, whatever they need."

Freeman wants his players to care less about winning, more about truly enjoying golf while growing their own curiosity and smarts.

"I promise recruits they'll love golf more when they leave than when they arrived," he said.

"And I want them to learn curiosity," he said. "If you don't know something, go find the answer. Self-discovery and resourcefulness carry into golf, into school, and into life."

Bobcats baseball wraps up successful fall

By Layton Oberle

LINCOLN— After the fall training games, SCC Head Baseball Coach Dion Parks, sees successes to build on and fundamentals to develop and team looks to begin its season in February.

The fall baseball season for most collegiate teams is a chance for players to get game-like situations against other teams to try and prepare for the 2026 regular season.

Coach Parks describes the fall season as “Spring Training”; Spring Training being the preseason period in Major League Baseball.

Many of these fall games do not have official scorekeepers or umpires. Schools are just trying to provide opportunities for their players to get better before the regular season, which starts in February.

When asked about some of the key things that he wanted to work on this fall, Parks said that “trying to figure out who can do what and when.”

He added that they can use this time to see “what a roster looks like.”

Coach Parks was able to take advantage of these games against other collegiate opponents to “put a lot of guys on the field. We’re trying to build a ros-

ter on the pitching side of it and the position player side of it.”

To build offensive, defensive and pitching depth, coaches try to get athletes as many reps as they can, and if possible, against other teams in game-like situations.

Coach Parks said that “we had 20 plus players get 25 plus at-bats” over the course of the fall season.

He also commented that “we had pitchers go out there and throw 17, 18 pitchers, 20 pitches in a weekend where we play two different games.”

Head Coach Parks and the remainder of the coaching staff is trying to use these games as opportunities for athletes to potentially get noticed by Division I baseball scouts.

One of the main reasons that athletes come to Southeast Community College is to improve their game at the collegiate level without using any years of NCAA eligibility.

Coach Parks acknowledges this and with these

fall baseball events tries to get “players in front of the four-year schools so they can take a good look at your players.”

He adds that “the main reason people come here is to try and go to the next level.”

As part of a successful fall season, Coach Parks commented on some of the things that went well over the course of the 12 fall games.

One of the things he liked was “we had a lot of guys that showed they had the potential to help us.”

Coach Parks also added that “I thought we had a lot of guys impress four-year schools, in front of four-year schools.”

Not only was this fall season beneficial to develop the team, but the athletes individually to try and help them get to the next level.

Many players stood out to Coach Parks this fall.

He says that the fall “gives you an idea for what you’re looking at in wintertime when you come back.”

The fall season was able to provide a good measuring stick for many athletes.

The main thing that Coach Parks wants to work on before the start of the regular season next February is being more fundamentally sound. He listed base running and defense as the main things fundamentally to keep improving on in the offseason.

He said, “I thought defensively, most of the time we’re good. I think we need to keep improving on that.”

There were some uncharacteristic type mistakes this fall, like basic fielding and throwing errors, but after repetitive work in the offseason. Many of those kinds of mistakes do not happen often in the spring.

Some of the goals that Coach Parks listed for the 2026 season are getting to the NJCAA World Series in Grand Junction, Colo. He also listed winning the regular season and conference tournament as other goals leading up to the ultimate goal, Grand Junction, Colo., and the World Series.

The Bobcats start practice for the 2026 season on Saturday, Jan. 10, and the regular season starts in February.



Review

Regretting You: regret, grief, and... affairs?

By Cadence Kaufman

I was sitting in the movie theater, waiting for the lights to dim and chatter to dissipate. I was going to see *Regretting You*, a movie based on the novel by Colleen Hoover, whose works are mediocre at best.

After having watched *It Ends With Us* starring Justin Baldoni and Blake Lively, I didn't have high expectations for this movie. That being said, this article contains spoilers

Regretting You is the story of Morgan and her teenage daughter Clara. Chris, Morgan's husband and Clara's dad, gets into a car accident where it is then uncovered that he was having an affair with Morgan's sister and Clara's aunt, Jenny.

Morgan and Clara's relationship becomes more strained as the movie progresses while secrets are revealed and love blooms. Clara grows closer with a boy named Miller, while Morgan grows closer with Jenny's husband Jonah.

The movie was, in retrospect, meant to examine and showcase the grief and regret that follows death and betrayal by those closest to you.

In concept, the movie should've had potential given the supposed topics it was meant to handle.

In execution, however, the movie failed to explore those topics miserably and had various plot holes and illogical scenes, behavior and overall poor taste.

The first illogical scene was during the introduction of Clara and Miller.

As she drove down the road, she spotted Miller moving a city limit sign down the road. When Clara asked Miller why he was doing that, Miller reasoned that it was because his grandpa lived out of city limits and couldn't get deliveries from his favorite pizza shop.

In response, he resorted to moving the city limits sign a little bit down the road each day to "fool" the shop. Unfortunately for Miller, city limits do not work that way and admitted to committing vandalism on a daily basis.

I was hoping that a movie that was meant to explore dealing with heavy topics such as betrayal and grief would explore those with care and portray them well but leave it to Hoover to contort serious topics into lighthearted fun.



image contributed

Mckenna Grace and Mason Thames star in *Regretting You*.

This is, unfortunately, a common occurrence in Hoover's works which reveals her own standing on these topics. Throughout her various works, she romanticizes abuse, domestic violence, toxic relationships, and so on.

Implied incest is a reoccurring topic in her works as well and appeared in *Regretting You*.

In *Ugly Love*, two characters are dating only for their parents to coincidentally start dating right after. The two characters never made their relationship known to the parents, and the parents get married. As step-siblings, the two characters have a baby together and remain together for quite some time until a tragedy hits, separating the two.

This is only one of Hoover's various works that contain incestuous themes.

I immediately noticed the implied incest when the main character, Clara, is visiting Miller at the movie theater where he works. He instructs Clara to pretend to be his sister on the basis that "only family can get in for free." Immediately after, he kisses Clara and lets her go watch a movie.

Some time skips and we see Clara texting Miller "best brother ever" after they interacted romantically right before once again.

The problem I have with that scene is that Hoover did not have to imply that they'd have to be siblings to

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Regretting You, continued

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let Clara into the movie auditorium because she walked in with ease.

It was completely unnecessary to say and to drag it out with Clara's text. I found it concerning and a tad gross.

Chris and Jenny were in the same car when they got into the accident and died, allowing Morgan and Jonah to piece together the puzzle. They refused to tell Clara about the affair not to ruin Clara's memory of her father or aunt, but like any cliché, she found out.

There are various instances of each main character cheating in some way, shape, or form. Chris and Jenny were the first cheaters introduced. Miller has an on-and-off relationship with his unnamed girlfriend while he is pursuing Clara at the same time.

It's a continual plot point of him and Clara hanging out, where his girlfriend then calls him and he either ignores the call or lies to her when on the phone.

At the end of the movie when a homemade film is being made, Miller is recording himself saying that his unnamed girlfriend was always the second option and Clara was first.

He recorded that right before the scene where Clara and him were introduced in the beginning; he was together with his girlfriend at the time.

Morgan and Jonah have their own emotional cheating. A flashback occurred where Morgan, Jonah, Chris and Jenny were in high school and in Chris's backyard with a pool.

When Chris and Jenny went inside, Jonah and Morgan shared an intimate moment where Jonah was holding Morgan's hand and they interlocked their legs under the water.

Jonah had a moment of confession, similar to Miller's, where he believed he got together with the wrong person and it was always Morgan. Then the flashback ends and it went back to present day, where they were reminiscing on their relationships with Chris and Jenny.

There are various other instances where grief is portrayed badly, regret is not shown well, and so on.

Regretting You had potential to explore these serious topics and show how families navigate those issues, yet tragically failed to do so.

Review

God Does Like Ugly hits the mark

By Alexiah Anderson

Late in the summer, August 8, 2025, Atlanta rapper JID, released his fourth studio album "God Does Like Ugly" under Dreamville and Interscope Records.

The album debuted No. 11 on the Billboard 200, his highest peaking album to date, and contains songs with themes such as religion, fatherhood and Black American's struggle in America.

With an album that contains such heavy and important themes, it's not possible to retain and understand everything with one listen. This was one of those albums that you learn something new from with each listen whether it's about the artist or yourself.

I had the pleasure of being able to hear JID live at the last Dreamville Festival in April of 2025. From this, I observed JID style as a performer is very animated, energetic and lively, so I expected as much from his album as well.

I was pleasantly surprised to hear the energy mixed with the soft side of JID, the quieter R&B-leaning sound of JID that we hadn't seen in while with



tracks such as "No Boo," "Of Blue," and "Wholeheartedly." This could and was partially seen in a bad light for straying away from what is considered normal for JID, but it was refreshing.

Something that stood out to me was the second track "Glory." It is the only track that was fully clean. Although religion is talked about all throughout the album, "Glory's" focus is not only religion but also the battle his oldest brother had with the law and being incarcerated and how that affected his family.

JID used the sample from a Memphis, Tenn., choir, who prayed over him as they approved the use of the sample. They first denied it but after looking into him they allowed it as long as he decided to keep the song clean. The song itself and

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Exploring Social Sciences: SCC's Psych Soc Club

By Cadence Kaufman

LINCOLN — At Southeast Community College, students interested in psychology and sociology don't have to study alone.

The Psych Soc Club, co-advised by Psychology instructor Nicole Trevena Flores and Sociology instructor Lyndie Christensen Nader, provides students with opportunities to explore social sciences, engage in leadership, and connect with their community.

The club was founded with the help of Trevena Flores and later joined by Christensen Nader in 2017. It aims to give students hands-on experience in social science topics while building skills in leadership, public speaking, and critical thinking.

"Our goal is to make social sciences fun and accessible," Christensen Nader said.

The club meets weekly on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 12:50 p.m. in the Student

Center on campus. During meetings, members discuss projects, plan events, and explore topics ranging from pop culture to behavioral research.

Throughout the year, the club hosts a variety of activities including trips to local museums, colleges, film analyses, service activities including hygiene and student pantry drives and co-sponsored campus events like Indigenous People's Heritage Week and International Education Week.

Seasonal events, such as Halloween celebrations, Valentine's Day activities and finals week stress-relief sessions, keep students engaged and connected to both the school and their peers.

Leadership roles in the club include president, vice president, secretary, and activity coordinator. Although people might be intimidated at the thought of adding more responsibility to their plates, these duties are manageable



image contributed

One of the Psych Soc Club event for fall included a Halloween celebration.

thanks to the guidance of Trevena Flores and Christensen Nader.

These leadership roles are beneficial because they give students the opportunity to gain real experience in organizing events, coordinating with campus departments, and promoting community engagement.

Christensen Nader encourages students to join the club no matter what their program is, although it is heavily encouraged for those interested in Sociology and Psychology to join. Students from different backgrounds joining allows to build a diverse group interested in exploring social science topics in a supportive environment.

For students, the club offers more than just social interaction. Members develop leadership skills, network with peers and faculty, and gain experiences that can strengthen

transfer applications, resumés, and future career opportunities.

Getting students to join the club and maintaining consistent engagement is challenging, Christensen Nader found, but the advisors and active members work together to keep the club lively and inclusive.

The Psych Soc Club continues to plan events for the coming months, including finals week activities in December and a Valentine's Day-themed event in February.

Interested students can contact Nicole Trevena Flores or Lyndie Christensen Nader, visit the SCC student hub, or follow the club's social media pages for updates.

"Joining the club is a great way to connect, learn and have fun," Christensen Nader said. "It's all about building community while exploring fascinating social science topics."

Winkle, continued

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me and my sister."

Growing up, Winkles wanted to be an astronaut.

"I had space-themed everything," she said.

However, her motion sickness put a damper on that dream.

Winkles' favorite events

at SCC are during student appreciation week, and she said helping at the events and participating was a great time.

A close second favorite event was the Milford campus employees vs. students sand volleyball match.

Supporting student wellness: inside SCC's CAPS

By Nikko Tran

SCC's Counseling Assistance Program for Students (CAPS) continues to grow and connect students with the resources they need to be successful.

CAPS was founded and established in 2017 as a part of SCC's well-being and engagement initiative.

It began as a small idea amongst staff who wanted to give students more access to mental health support.

Once it launched students quickly began taking advantage of the program and its services it had to provide.

The CAPS has reportedly been growing rapidly as of last year with a 100 percent growth rate, and what started off with only three interns back in 2019 has grown and expanded to a whopping twelve interns as of recently.

The program offers a variety of services, including individual counseling, group sessions, family or roommate counseling.

CAPS also offers workshops and outreach events aimed at raising mental health awareness and supporting student well-being.

CAPS typically reaches students primarily through word of mouth, classroom visits, and online advertising on the SCC webpage.

CAPS emphasizes

accessibility by maintaining a low wait times and providing no additional cost to students.

"We provide confidential spaces where students can feel safe to open up," says CAPS Director Kalika B. Jantzen, a licensed mental health practitioner.

"Our services are accessible, and we work to normalize help-seeking," she added. "We strive to be a nonjudgmental environment where students can talk openly about what's going on in their lives."

To help reduce any stigma around mental health and make it easier for individuals to talk freely and safely, CAPS encourages open conversations amongst students and staff and promotes awareness through faculty involvement.

"We collect data and surveys to measure our impact," Jantzen explained, "and so far we've seen about a 90 percent positive response rate."

"We also review individual cases to understand how our services help students, and we're working to gather even more data to show the growing number of people reaching out for CAPS support," she added.

While staffing is the one challenge that the CAPS deals with currently, Jantzen gives credit to the

many interns who volunteer to help meet demand and provide support to the many students.

Jantzen says she's been encouraged by the success she's seen.

"We've watched someone go from believing they'd never ask for help to finally reaching out, sticking with it and growing through the process," she said. "They graduated more equipped, with stronger communication skills, greater confidence, and a sense of comfort in both work and relationships."

As for the future, Jant-

zen hopes to see the program expand into broader wellness initiatives and add more full-time staff to focus on prevention and outreach.

Jantzen continues to encourage students and community members to keep spreading awareness and help normalize seeking support for mental health when in need.

Her message to anyone who may be struggling is thorough and heartfelt.

"You don't have to do it alone," she said. "There are people and places waiting to help you."

God Does Like Ugly, continued

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the story behind the song is simply beautiful and one of my favorites.

While "Glory" is one of my favorite tracks, the most popular and listened to song is "Community" which features Clipse, Pusha T and Malice, who also dropped an album this year for the first time since 2009 called *Let God Sort Em Out* that goes over some of the same themes. The song talks about life in the streets and how they were making ends meet before they became rappers and includes topics like death of friends, drug distribution and murder.

While I can't deny the song is good, it impress-

es me that this is the fan favorite among so many other tracks. I believe it could be because of the Clipse feature, whose album also did fairly well for being the first album the duo dropped in over a decade.

This was such an amazing album that I believe deserved more recognition. It was one that I could resonate with, and I feel a lot of people could say the same thing. JID is renowned for being one of the best lyricists of this generation, and this album is proof of that. He has such a way of world building through his rhymes; it is an impressive feat that not a lot of rappers can pull off successfully.

Watters, continued

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someone to commit to you and the school,” he says. “It is something you never forget.”

His coaching style has shifted over time.

When he first started, he defaulted to everything he had learned as an athlete: the responses, the habits, the structure, but coaching, he discov-

ered, is not about coaching what you were taught; it is about learning about your team.

“You blend what you know with what they need,” he says. “You start with the foundation you came from, but the further you go, the more you develop your own style.”

That evolution, he explains, is what keeps

him growing, just like his athletes.

Teamwork is a huge part of his philosophy, even in a sport people often treat as individual, for him, track and cross country only work when athletes invest in each other. Practice is where relationships are built.

“In a race, you might be competing with your teammate,” he says, “but you are also competing for them.”

When athletes focus on how they can make the team better, individual success follows naturally.

That mindset even shapes how he recruits.

While some coaches chase results, he says he looks deeper. He wants to know a student’s grades, their work ethic, and their character, because eligibility matters, but so does attitude.

“Learning who they are as people tells me more than their time ever will,” he says.

He says he looks for students who will fit the program, not just fill a spot on a roster.

Academics come first for him. He encourages tutoring, tells athletes to bring homework on road trips, and helps them build schedules that work. He knows practice consumes

time, but he also reminds them that sports are supposed to be fun.

“If life gets in the way sometimes,” he says, “we can move things around. It is okay.”

There’s no hesitation when he’s asked what the most rewarding part of coaching is: “Seeing athletes succeed,” he says with a smile. That success is no just in races, though those moments are special, but in the little breakthroughs, the light bulb moments, he says, the instant when something finally clicks.

If he could give one piece of advice to every athlete, it would be simple: to show up on the good days, the bad days, the tiring days, and the days when the last thing you want to do is run.

“Being there is the most important part,” he says. “If you are there, you are putting in time.”

During hard seasons, he stays motivated because he wants the best for his athletes. He wants them to become lifelong runners, healthy and confident in their ability to push themselves.

Coaching is not just a job for him; it is teaching people how to carry something they love for the rest of their lives.

Bartu, continued

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He emphasized characters just as much as technical skill.

“The number one skill is having a good work ethic,” Bartu said. “If you don’t have one, nobody wants to hire you. So it wouldn’t matter if you knew everything about everything; they wouldn’t want you there.”

Preparing students for a changing industry was also discussed.

Bartu noted advances in electrical systems and the development of battery-powered and self-driving equipment. According to Bartu, these new trends will create new challenges and safety concerns.

“There’s talk of all-electric equipment and also talk about self-driving equipment, so a lot more safety issues could come

up, and a lot more chances for possible dangers of being shocked or electrocuted or run over,” he said.

Bartu urges students to get summer experience before they begin their studies.

“Definitely spend your summer working at a dealership or an independent shop or something where you kind of get to look at the outside view of what a career looks like to see if it is something you would want to do,” he states.

Outside of the classroom, Bartu enjoys hunting, fishing, traveling with his wife and attending car shows.

When asked what he looks forward to, Bartu said, “For the day when students come back and they remember me teaching them, or they remember something I taught them when they come back.”

Varley, continued

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portunity to the students” and “what our program is about.”

Varley says he enjoys working with the freshmen and students coming right out of high school, saying that it “Overwhelmed him dramatically.”

He says he knows and understands what it’s like to go into the world not knowing what to do and wants to provide students with resources that he didn’t have.

What means the most to him is being there for students when they need help the most, and nothing means more to him than seeing a young adult succeed.

One of the most crucial parts of having a dual role at the collegiate level, he feels, is balancing time between roles.

Varley states, “When it comes to balancing the two, I have a really good support system; advising and coaching are two different families that provide support.”

Varley does a similar case of separating home and work life, but in this case, the advising and coaching life.

Varley wants all of his students and athletes to know that they can come to his office at any point, and it will always be a

safe space for them to talk about whatever they may need. His players know that when they’re in the office talking about academics, it’s academic time, and baseball stays on the field.

When it comes to preparing for school and coming into a new environment, Varley says that, “There are people here that want to see you succeed, there’s always help, you just need to be willing to ask for that help.”

Varley said he was the student who didn’t ask for help and wanted to do everything on his own, but once he realized how crucial it is to ask for help, it became a major focal point

for all his students.

Whether it comes to tutoring or through CAPS, there are multiple opportunities to thrive.

“You have to almost do nothing to not be successful,” he said.

With all of Varley’s different experiences in coaching and teaching, he always has the same favorite memory each and every year.

He says, “I get the opportunity every year to see somebody that didn’t get the opportunity they thought they deserved, and go see them achieve a goal that nobody thought they would.”

Varley loves the col-

legiate level of baseball because of how he sees players improve every single year and wants to be there with them along their journey.

When it comes to being remembered at SCC, Varley wants everyone to know that he cared. “I hope people see how much I cared about this school and the success of our students, whether it be with handling stress or learning how to throw a certain pitch.”

Varley knows and understands that his priority here is to serve and provide for the students, and give them the mindset that no problem is too small.

Hirschbrunner, continued

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experience in hospitals.

Hirschbrunner shares practical advice for students trying to eat well on busy schedules.

“You’re going to feel better if you don’t skip meals,” Hirschbrunner said.

She recommends simple, affordable snack ideas including an apple with peanut butter, string cheese or even a peanut butter sandwich on whole wheat bread.

Still, she admits she has her own guilty pleasure

snack.

“Peanut M&M’s are probably my favorite go-to,” she said.

Hirschbrunner emphasized why students should care about nutrition, saying the choices they make now can affect their long-term health.

“Food is fuel, and your choices now really do affect your health later on,” she said. “Nutrition can also play a key role in managing stress and supporting busy schedules.”

Outside the classroom, she enjoys reading historical fiction, attending

sporting events, and golfing with her husband and two sons. This year, her family celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

For Hirschbrunner, teaching is about more than a profession. It’s an opportunity to guide students towards healthier choices.

“I chose this profession to help people,” Hirschbrunner said. “Now I get to share my experience with students and help them make healthier choices for themselves and others.”

Student Senate key to campus life

By Kianna Isom

LINCOLN – The Student Senate at SCC is an organization that represents the student body, advocating for student needs, planning campus events, supporting clubs, and working with college leadership to help improve student life.

“Our goal is to help create a positive, welcoming, and engaging campus environment for all students,” said Benjamin Cruickshank, the Activities Coordinator for the Student Senate.

As Activities Coordinator, Cruickshank’s job is to administer and oversee Student Activity Operations and Areas/Events, including providing leadership for Senate members assigned to Student Activities.

Additionally, he supervises, trains, and evaluates staff assigned to the Student Activity unit.

Cruickshank just stepped into his role in August, and already, he’s doing his utmost best to help empower students to run the Student Senate and provide assistance and support for the student body.

Equally, he’s still trying to find his footing when it comes to balance Senate work with everything else,



stating, “I am doing my best to be as organized as I possibly can, setting aside time to work on the different parts of this job.”

“I am also trying to be as communicative as I can be with everyone I work with to help keep everyone on the same page and informed about what is going on,” he added.

Currently, the Student Senate has 23 members who work closely and communicate with each other on projects, planning and events.

“I think the students in Senate genuinely get along with each other and a lot of them hang out outside of meetings,” Cruickshank explained.

The Student Senate often plans and hosts social gatherings and fun outings for students to have a chance to socialize, unwind, and take a break from the non-stop work of classes.

Cruickshank elaborated, “We just hosted funfest this past week and had a bingo day the week before that.”

The planning process behind hosting events can be lengthy. The Senate brainstorms ideas and strides to choose an event that students will enjoy. Then they divide responsibilities amongst themselves, things like reserving spaces, organizing supplies, promoting the

event, and coordinating with staff members.

And when they’re finished with the difficult, stressful planning process, they get to step back and watch with pride as students enjoy themselves and build new relationships with one another.

For Cruickshank, being able to be a part of this process and be a leading hand for both the Senate and student body is a point of pride and happiness.

He hopes he can continue to successfully be a leader and supportive figure for those he works with and for as he becomes more comfortable and familiar in his role in the Student Senate.

Alloway, continued

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time with her family. Alloway also enjoys traveling and wants to incorporate more traveling when she’s retired, particularly the “beautiful scenery and buildings” of Italy.

Another one of Alloway’s goals before retirement is to hope she has “made a good impression on someone’s life.”

When Alloway is not at work she likes to watch lots of sporting events, both her children and amateur and profession-

al sports on TV as well. Alloway says she really likes to watch any Nebraska events as well as the Boston Celtics.

Alloway describes her children as very involved and busy. She has one pet, a black lab named Marley who is very friendly and loving.

Asked to describe herself in one word, she chose to describe her personality was “friendly.”

She says she really looks up to “my mom and dad,” who are “very influential” and “good people.”

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