

# The SCC Challenge

Spring 2026



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# The SCC Challenge

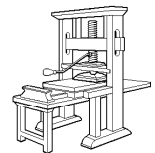
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*On the cover:* The Horticulture Program held its annual sale during the last week of April. For more pictures and information, see page 17.

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## **Write for The SCC Challenge and get class credit!**

### **Journalism courses for fall:**

#### **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.

# New Dorm Coming to Lincoln



image contributed

**The Lincoln campus will soon begin construction on a second dorm, which will also serve as a dining hall for dorm residents. Construction is expected to begin this fall, with construction taking two years.**

## By Changkouth Deng

LINCOLN – A new residence and dining hall will soon be built on the Lincoln campus, with construction expected to be a part of a broader campus expansion effort. The project aims to address student housing needs while introducing updated dining and community spaces.

“We recognize that there is need for it... given the long list of students on the waiting list for residence,” Associate Vice President Scott Maas explained.

The decision to build the residence hall was

decided with the campus master plan developed six years prior.

“They asked, ‘what would campus look like in five, ten, even fifteen years?’ and so doing that, they marked out that this location was in good relationship with Woodhaven, our current residence hall is,” Maas added.

Woodhaven residence hall currently has no dining, and students must walk to the school to eat in the cafeteria.

The new residence hall will house approximately 250 students and a dining facility that can seat about 300. Unlike the current cafeteria, the new space

will offer a more interactive style of dining, Maas informs.

“It will be more food court-esque,” Maas said. “There’s going to be comfort food and pizza... build your own sandwich... desserts – more variety overall,” Maas added.

The residence hall will be a four-story building with a mix of quad and double room styles, along with shared amenities. Each floor will feature study spaces, while additional areas such as a multipurpose room, gaming spaces and a kitchenette will be available to students.

“Every floor has a study

room... a big study room... several small study rooms and each floor has something different,” Maas explained.

“One floor is setup as a kitchenette... one floor has a TV game room... next floor has a e-sports kind of game room type thing,” he added.

Students living in the residence hall will be required to have a meal plan, and most of the food is prepared in the dining facility.

Parking for the new facility will be in the existing parking lots near the building and the capacity

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# Ground Breaks for New Ag Tech Center

By Aubree Siffring

BEATRICE – On Wednesday, April 8, at 11 a.m. ground was officially broken for at Southeast Community College, Beatrice Campus, for the new Ag Technology Center.

Toni Landenberger, Associate Vice President, Beatrice Campus, stated during the ceremony the new building will be home to “horticulture and turfgrass management, precision agriculture, agriculture education, and agriculture management and production.”

Landburger also stated, “This new facility ensures

that physical space matches the exceptional instruction that has always defined this program.”

President Dr. Paul Illich also gave remarks at the ceremony and stated, “At the heart of what we do is to provide the life-changing benefits of higher education and resulting in a skilled workforce for generation.”

Dr. Illich also remarked, “SCC is extremely grateful for the vision and support of our Board of Governors, our community partners, our design and construction teams and every donor who believes in this critical project, in this critical project



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.

before today’s first.”

The new 19,425 square foot building is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2028.

This building will contain hands-on technology and, “flexible industry wide environments that

continued on page 5



## New Dorm, continued

**continued from page 3**

should be sufficient.

“There’s plenty of parking on this side,” Maas said, noting that some areas are currently not used.

Construction is expected to break ground sometime in fall of 2026, and this will be a two-year project though the time-

lines depend on funding and scheduling.

Maas said the college is currently prioritizing other projects before fully shifting focus.

“We’re going to be kicking off three other construction projects,” Maas said, including a new life sciences center on Lincoln campus.

Maas said the project reflects ongoing efforts to improve campus life and accommodate growth.



## Ag Tech Center, continued

**continued from page 4**

support applied learning reflect employer expectations and prepare students for the evolving demands of Nebraska’s modern agriculture workflow,” Illich said.

Dr. Illich also explained the excitement for this technology center, explaining, “This is a critical moment in SCC, a transformational journey to expand, to produce a skilled workforce and to meet the needs of our center.”

Dr. Illich remarked, “groundbreaking is a statement about who we are and what a community college can be when it pursues a vision to create destinations and the highest profit learning climates for our students, employers and communities.”

images contributed

**The new dorm and dining hall for the Lincoln campus, at right and below, will be four stories tall and feature study spaces on each floor, gaming spaces and kitchenettes.**



# Old Welding Area Seeks New Purpose

By Jaci Hinrichs

LINCOLN – Southeast Community College is undergoing a strategic and quite dramatic transformation with new buildings popping up around campus every year, from the Sandhills Global Technology Center, dorms, and now the new Welding Building.

Following the relocation of the welding program to the brand-new and state-of-the-art facility in August of 2025, the old welding center was left vacant. The college has begun the process of repurposing the vacated area to help the college serve the needs of students and staff.

The former welding area is a large complex on the western side of the main campus building, divided into three distinct sections: the northern section (divided into two separate sections) and the southern section. This area of the school is not being viewed as just empty square footage; it has become the leading factor in organization and vocational growth on the campus.

Scott Maas, the campus associate vice president (AVP), stated that, “The automotive program is

one of the top growing programs on campus.”

They have been given the west quarter of the northern section in the former welding shop.

This expansion helps to limit any impediments in hands-on training. This helps to ensure that more students are gaining the necessary experience to join the workforce without the need to put students on waitlists for available equipment.

While the automotive program is settling into its new space, the other three sections of the old welding center remain in a state of transition. The south section is currently still occupied by the now unused original welding booths.

In order to clear the south section for future development, Maas mentioned plans for a public auction that is scheduled to take place later in the summer of 2026. The auction will not only feature the welding booths previously used by generations of students, but also other surplus items.

By clearing this section, Maas said the administration aims to create a blank canvas kind of effect. This provides the flexibility to plan for the next chapter of the area’s story.

The aforementioned southern portion of the former welding center is going to experience a complete overhaul after the auction. Maas stated the current plan is to convert the area into a centralized storage area for the main campus building.

While storage may seem like a utility that is less flashy than a new study or hangout spot for students, the impact of added storage will be felt across the college.

By consolidating smaller storage areas scattered around campus into one centralized location, the college will be able to utilize previously unusable square footage. The locations across the main building that will be newly free of previous clutter will be converted into needed offices and classrooms.

The college is also considering a small surplus store for the community. According to Maas, this potential store would allow the public to purchase college-owned items that are no longer in use.

Despite all this talk, the college must take a measured approach to the newly opened sections of the main building.

Maas explained, “There are a lot of conversations surrounding the old

welding center regarding further renovations and repurposing, but the path forward is complex.”

The space was, of course, originally designed for industrial welding. This means that bringing the area up to modern building codes for general use would require a large financial investment on the part of the college.

According to Maas, environmental considerations and safety requirements are top priorities in this transition of the space.

For students and even faculty, this change on campus is more of a period of behind-the-scenes progress. While there are no flashy plans or massive construction projects currently in the plans, the administration is maximizing resources available.

Southeast Community College is prioritizing the expansion of the growing automotive program and keeping campus logistics at the forefront of their minds with centralized storage. Administration is ensuring that every square foot of the campus is making sure students are set up to succeed.

# Student Senate: Student Advocate

By Jaci Hinrichs

LINCOLN - As the academic year comes to a close, the Student Senate on the Lincoln campus of Southeast Community College (SCC) is in a critical intersection of internal re-organisation and external advocacy.

While students are focused on finals and graduation, Senate leaders are currently focused on the behind-the-scenes of campus life.

They take care of things ranging from other student issues to administrative lead changes across campus. The Student Senate is in the center of it all.

Beyond the filing cabinets and spreadsheets, the Senate is grappling with a growing campus and student body. They tackle all sorts of campus-based issues, everything from the headache that is campus parking to changing the way student organizations collaborate in activities.

According to leadership, these initiatives taken are a vital part of the function of the Student Senate, though they remain largely unseen by the whole of the student body.

“We try to keep students as aware as possible,” current president Davyd Samoilenko men-

tioned.

He emphasized that the executive committee is currently deep in the process of streamlining many different operational tasks in order to better support the student body as it continues to grow in size and diversity.

If there is one topic the Senate has heard about, it is parking.

Samoilenko affirmed, “We hear complaints about the parking at the beginning of every semester, but there is only so much we can do in the short term.”

This dominates the conversation at the beginning of every semester and is the most common complaint by the student body. While not much has changed in the past few years, Samoilenko assured these frustrations did not fall on deaf ears.

This issue has successfully been brought to the attention of the college administration, which has resulted in new infrastructure being both planned and built.

There is also going to be stricter oversight of the parking, ensuring only students with parking permits are using the spaces; parking tickets will be given to anyone found in violation of the parking permits.

## A Special Visit



photo contributed

**U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen visited the Lincoln campus on Thursday, April 9. Secretary McMahon started at The Career Academy, where she machined a metal dice in SCC's precision machining lab, grabbed a fresh cookie baked by the culinary students, and met with students from the healthcare pathway. From there, she toured the nation's largest welding training facility and sat down for a roundtable conversation with college leaders, an industry partner, and one of SCC's students.**

Administration on campus has been very receptive to all concerns brought up by students.

However, Samoilenko acknowledges that changes take time: “The most resistance is met to the things that the administration itself is not capable of changing in the short term.”

While students may talk about the issue often, a physical solution be-

ing presented along with policy changes often faces a lag on the bureaucratic end.

Traditionally, the Student Senate on the Lincoln campus has been silently helping other clubs from the sidelines, often providing administrative support to other clubs or announcing independent events during meetings.

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# Beatrice campus adds two

## David Sibert

By Cody Sullivan

BEATRICE – David Sibert is a new Criminal Justice teacher for SCC that is based at the Beatrice campus.

He was born in Mesa, Ariz., and lived there with his wife and child for over 10 years before moving to Poland for 10 years and eventually coming to Lincoln around four years ago to work in corrections while finishing his master's to become a teacher.

He went to school at the University of Phoenix for his master's in criminal justice and is currently going to Walden for his Doctoral while teaching at SCC.

In 2007, Sibert and his family moved to Poland

for a better education for their child and a different way of life. In Poland, Sibert was required to have his own business, so he started his own English school and fell in love with teaching.

He was first introduced to Poland as a Mormon Missionary when he was 19 and enjoyed his time there, so he returned with his family later in life.

He was first introduced to the criminal justice field after his wife went to a job fair and by chance talked to a corrections officer recruiter who happened to have nice cologne. She ended up giving the pamphlet she got from him to her husband, and they both thought it was a great opportunity with amazing

benefits.

Sibert went on to work 12 years in corrections in different positions ranging from correctional officer to case manager.

He enjoys teaching Criminal Justice at SCC because the classes are small and he can teach the students on a more one-on-one basis.

Sibert also enjoys the fact that the other teachers in the department have worked in the field and have deep knowledge of the topic.

His philosophy when it comes to teaching Criminal Justice is that students shouldn't be stubborn; they should have an open mind and think progressively on Criminal Justice to help change the system



David Sibert

for the better.

He also noted that he wants his students to know a few things after leaving his class that aren't necessarily in the book.

He said, "It's not all that the bad guys need to be punished; it's more like

**continued on page 9**

## Todd Fangmeier

By Jaci Hinrichs

BEATRICE – Todd Fangmeier officially stepped into his role as the new Farm Manager at the Southeast Community College (SCC) Beatrice campus.

For Fangmeier, the classroom is more than just a room with four walls: it's 640 acres of tilled land, livestock barns and the unpredictability of Nebraska weather.

While "Farm Manager" may sound like an administrative title, Fangmeier's

the reality of his job is intensely hands-on. He is responsible for a fully-functioning agricultural operation.

His role is essential for students' experience in the agriculture programs.

While instructors focus on the curriculum and classroom instruction, Fangmeier works behind the scenes making sure things get done outside of class time. He manages essential operations that make the hands-on learning in Beatrice possible.

His responsibilities are

extensive and range from coordinating the planting, tilling and harvesting of crops for the agronomy department to overseeing the health and daily management of the livestock.

Fangmeier isn't without help though; he currently has six student workers he also manages and reported a new full-time helper to be possible.

The Beatrice Campus farm is no small feat. Spanning 640 acres south of the business campus; additionally, there are 160 acres in satellite locations, and the

curriculum focuses on dry land crop production and livestock.

There are 300 acres of tillable farmland, keeping Nebraska staples corn and soybeans in the spotlight. Students also grow alfalfa and grass hay for the livestock.

In Beatrice, students aren't just reading about agronomy; they are the ones doing the planting, tilling and harvesting.

The farming operations extend to livestock, including cattle, swine, sheep

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## Sibert, continued

continued from page 8

the bad guys need to be trained to be good guys.”

Sibert wants his student to have an open mind, to “have that rehabilitative mindset more than lock away and throw away the key.”

When asked what the job market for criminal justice majors looks like he said jokingly, “Criminal justice is job security because you’re always going to have criminals.”

There are over 500 jobs in the criminal justice field students can get with a SCC degree like a police officer, probation officer, parole officer, correctional officer or case worker, he said.

He says he’s learned from students while teaching that many people can be sensitive, and it takes a certain sensibility to work in criminal justice. For example, Criminal Justice majors must be able to get screamed at in a hostile situation and keep cool.

In his free time, Sibert enjoys playing video games, more specifically single-player story driven games. He is currently playing the widely celebrated newest entry in the Resident Evil series titled *Resident Evil Requiem*.

He also has a dog and two cats, but says that his wife is the real animal lover.

## Fangmeier, continued

continued from page 8

and goats, with facilities ranging from a dedicated animal health building and feed mill to complexes for each species. The farm is a comprehensive production cycle classroom, where programs get to see the entire cycle from breeding and farrowing to growing and finishing.

“The farm helps to fully equip students with the skills they need to enter the workforce,” Fangmeier says. “They graduate with hands-on experience, which makes the transition to a job or internship much easier.”

Fangmeier’s path to the Beatrice campus was paved with passion and a love for agriculture.

He grew up in Hebron, a town of less than 2,000 which is 50 miles west of the Beatrice campus, and it was there that Fangmeier learned the values of working hard, being responsible and solving problems required for dry land farming.

After high school, he studied architectural engineering at SCC’s Milford campus as a sort of “backup plan,” though his heart remained with the family farm. He eventually moved home post college to work on the family farmland.

Unfortunately, after three years of consecutive droughts, he was forced to rent out the farmland. Instead of abandoning agricultural and giving

up, Fangmeier pivoted: he brought his past knowledge and experience to the SCC student body.

Today, he and his wife raise sheep and goats on their property for local 4-H and FFA groups. They are also involved in their community church and attend every Sunday.

Fangmeier also enjoys fishing and hunting for pheasants and quail. He has been unsuccessful in completing the Nebraska Upland Slam, but he hopes to accomplish it in the future.

Now, he manages six student workers who help keep the farm operations running smoothly.

Fangmeier also works closely with faculty to ensure when a professor steps out of the classroom and onto the farm to teach, the equipment is ready, the livestock are cared for, the crops are maintained, and the background noise of working the farm is handled.

Despite being a self-described introvert who enjoys quiet afternoons at home, Fangmeier never turns down someone who needs help. He has quickly become a central figure in the campus community surrounding the farm and hopes to build a strong sense of trust between administration, professors and the students he mentors.

Building trust is one of Fangmeier’s core values.

According to him, trust

keeps everyone on the same page with similar goals in mind. With his role of keeping all operations running smoothly so instructors can focus on teaching their students, trust is crucial between Fangmeier and instructors.

The farm is, of course, at the mercy of the ever-unprecedented Nebraska weather. Fangmeier noted that these challenging times of drought, flood, heat and frost are teaching moments for the next generation of leaders in agriculture.

For the future of the farm, Fangmeier hopes to continue helping instructors create the best experience possible for agriculture students in Beatrice.

He wants their experience at SCC to encourage them to not only remain in agriculture but also to stay in Nebraska.

Looking ahead, Fangmeier mentioned the possibility of having a full-time assistant who, along with Fangmeier and the student workers, will continue to refine the farm’s operations in order to keep SCC Beatrice on the cutting edge of Nebraska Ag.

His advice for all students is: “Don’t plan your life around the first place you land out of college.”

It is a philosophy he has lived by, turning his own professional shifts into opportunities to build a strong future for Nebraska agriculture and the next generation of farmers.

# New faces in Lincoln for testing, advising

## Matt Bertrand

By Rayna Buchanan

LINCOLN – Matt Bertrand is a new test specialist in the testing center here at Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

Bertrand grew up in Minden and attended Doane University.

After 29 years of directing band and choir at both Sandy Creek Public Schools and Humphrey Public Schools, he retired and moved from Humphrey to Lincoln looking for a part-time job.

He was looking for something different, a position he hadn't worked in before. That's when he found his current position as a test specialist at SCC.

Bertrand is in charge of proctoring tests at SCC whether the tests are for college classes or life insurance or real estate tests.

At first, he didn't know much about SCC itself, but since working here, he says it's been a "welcoming place" and has been impressed.

Bertrand enjoys his job position here at SCC even though there are some challenges.

He explained that it can be "awkward to catch students cheating," but it is important that students always maintain their academic integrity.

Some students may not be happy with their results on their test, and Bertrand has conversations with



Matt Bertrand

these students and is understanding of the circum-

## Victoria Garcia

By Elizabeth Klabenes

LINCOLN – After two years with the college, Victoria Garcia is a new full-time student advisor at the Southeast Community Campus in Lincoln.

She is married and has two children and says she loves all the different aspects of her job. Garcia moved from San Diego Calif., to Nebraska several years ago.

She stated that "one of the things I'm most proud of is building a life here in Nebraska."

Garcia has a bachelor's in communication and a master's in higher education.

Her typical day changes with the seasons, but she often meets with students in person and helps them

stances.

Testing environments can be highly stressful, but tests specialists like Bertrand try to be as helpful as they can to students and understand that the students are not mad at the specialists themselves, but rather at the situation.

Bertrand makes sure that the testing center is always a "fair playing field" and makes sure students are given the same tests and it has the same "parameters" as taking tests in class.

Bertrand sees stressed students daily taking tests.

His advice to students is "to prep all that you can" for tests and do not wait until the last minute to start.

It is perfectly fine to be over prepared rather than under prepared, he says, and remember, there is "always more to be done."

Bertrand has three children with his wife, Peggy. In his free time, he enjoys playing golf as well as playing his guitar and drums.

register and helps with any academic needs they might have.

She enjoys working with college students because "college is a place to discover yourself."

She adds, "It is a transitional time, but they still need support."

Garcia says she really

"enjoys her job and when she connects personally with a student," saying this is the best part.

Garcia and her husband have two sons, 2 and 3, and the family enjoys going to either the Lincoln or Omaha Zoo.

At home, they have three dogs and seven ducks. Every day, on the way to work in Victoria calls her mom in California to chat with her and says that if she could go anywhere, she would love to go to visit her parents.

She enjoys listening to many types of music, but especially country, R&B, and gospel, and she can sometimes be found watching old episodes of *Dawson's Creek* and *One Tree Hill*.



Victoria Garcia

# SENCAP Adds New Coordinator

**By Neveah Vacha**

LINCOLN – Joe Saje-  
vic, a new full-time SEN-  
CAP coordinator at SCC,  
has been in education for  
52 years and counting,  
teaching high school biol-  
ogy, math and science for  
23 of those years.

He has worked in  
several education roles,  
including two years as an  
assistant principal and 11  
years as the principal of  
Fremont High School. He  
also spent five years as a  
student teacher supervisor  
at UNO, six years as the  
executive director of the  
Fremont Public Schools  
Foundation, and eight and  
a half years as a part-time

SENCAP coordinator  
before moving to full time  
in October.

SENCAP stands for  
Southeast Nebraska  
Career Academy Partner-  
ship, which is a program  
by Southeast Commu-  
nity College that allows  
high school sophomores,  
juniors and seniors to take  
college-level courses in dif-  
ferent career fields while  
earning both high school  
and college credit.

His primary respon-  
sibilities as a SENCAP  
coordinator are helping  
students complete applica-  
tions and then registering  
students for classes. He  
sees 500 students every  
week, so he helps them go

through their Canvas ac-  
count and tries to get them  
more familiar with college  
programs.

His weekly schedule  
stays the same from week  
to week. On Mondays, he  
spends full days at Wahoo  
Public, where he provides  
guidance and support for  
students.

Tuesday, he spends half  
a day at Malcolm Public  
Schools and the other  
half of a day at Raymond  
Central.

On Wednesday, he  
spends the morning at  
Yutan and the afternoons  
at Ashland, and then if he  
needs to go to Mead, he  
will, but Sajevic said their  
guidance counselor is very



**Joe Sajevic**

good at asking questions  
for help.

On Thursdays, he goes  
back to Wahoo Public  
Schools, and after he is  
done there, he goes to

**continued on page 29**

# Fetzer Comes to SCC to Specialize in Video Production

**By Rayna Buchanan**

LINCOLN – Logan  
Fetzer is a new addition  
to the college family as a  
video producer for South-  
east Community College in  
Lincoln.

Fetzer grew up in Hax-  
ton, Colo., before moving  
to Lincoln and graduating  
from Doane University.

In January of 2026, the  
video producer position  
opened up at SCC, and  
Fetzer, who had worked  
for Doane, said he liked  
the SCC campus and de-  
cided it could be a good fit.

Fetzer became inter-  
ested in producing videos

all the way back in junior  
high school.

He has spent almost his  
entire life working with  
video production, with a  
focus on sports.



**Logan Fetzer**

After graduating, Fetzer  
began working in official  
marketing firms for uni-  
versities, making sure to  
always represent the right  
personalities.

His main responsibility  
in his position is to “craft  
a visual identity for SCC,”  
representing all the work  
and show the public the  
many opportunities being  
presented.

Producing a video al-  
ways starts with a creative  
idea and brainstorming,  
he said. Then, scripts get  
crafted and interviews are  
conducted to figure out  
what needs to be captured.

It’s important to get

a good shot in order to  
build a story because the  
“story is the first thing that  
jumps out” in the video, he  
says.

Fetzer explains that the  
main elements needed  
to produce a video are a  
video camera, good quality  
microphones, a profes-  
sional set up, and big  
lights for good images.

The production team  
also use a Blackmagic  
Ursa, a high-end, profes-  
sional camera, and a DJI  
Ronin, a stabilized gimble  
to achieve smooth videos  
while actively moving.

He said he evaluates

**continued on page 12**

# Tilley is New Safety & Security Coordinator

By Rayna Buchanan

LINCOLN – Dylan Tilley is the new safety and security coordinator at Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

In February, the safety and security coordinator position at SCC was open, and Tilley thought it would be a perfect job opportunity with his background in emergency management and decided to apply.

Tilley is from Virginia and lived in Los Angeles, Calif., for 10 years before moving to Lincoln.

He attended undergraduate school at American University before studying emergency management in graduate school at Tulane University.

Tilley worked at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for 14 years and also worked for the Lincoln Police Department (LPD).

One of the biggest challenges Tilley described in his position is that every day is completely different and, “never predictable,” between incidents on campus, safety meetings and technology meetings where they discuss the integration of technology in maintaining the security of the campus.

SCC uses a variety of technologies to help anticipate any threats or indicators. The use of

technology helps expand Tilley’s “reach” around the campus and how quickly he can respond to an incident.

Tilley is constantly monitoring the campus, interacting with students to keep up with their needs and practicing mitigation.

He also enjoys working with the SCC staff and facilities to understand the safety needs of the campus.

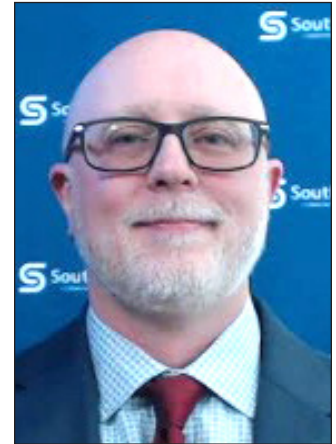
He says he builds trust in the students and facility through interaction and

showing the community that security is actually a helpful organization who wants to help others and protect their safety.

Tilley and other safety and security faculty encourage students if they, “see something, say something,” even if it doesn’t seem serious or threatening.

He says he has three daughters and two dogs that take up the majority of his free time.

Tilley says the most rewarding part about his job is helping students and



Dylan Tilley

faculty be safe and secure and “seeing the smiles” on their faces.

## Fetzer, continued

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topics based on what SCC is wants to represent or if the idea has an element that is usually engaging. Fetzer said he also asks himself if there is “motion or emotion” to decide if a story can be told through a video.

The learning process of producing videos involves creativity and being “able to imagine what you want to shoot before you do it.”

Also, being able to get a vision across and effectively communicating a story is a big part of the learning process.

Fetzer produces the majority of his videos about student stories, for commercials or digital ads on

social media platforms.

The biggest challenge in his position, he said, is having opportunities to produce videos at all three SCC campus locations while making sure everyone is equally being represented. SCC has a big community and multiple beautiful campuses which requires a lot of planning and traveling to produce videos, he says.

However, Fetzer enjoys his creative freedom in his position and having a strong, encouraging team who are “in it together.”

Something Fetzer wishes people knew more about producing videos is the amount of planning it actually takes to start shooting a video and the

number of tries it takes to get the perfect shot.

His advice to others wanting to produce videos is to “find what it is you want to share” with others in the community.

When Fetzer was younger, he didn’t have access to high quality equipment. However, he got creative with his iPhone camera and Capcut and still was able to produce videos, so he says people who are interested in production should start with the equipment they have now.

He enjoys classic films, old region films and “true human stories.” In his free time, he listens to music and reads and collects records and books.

## Peavy is New Admin. Director for Grants and Projects



**Maggie Peavy**

**By Mackenzie Tefft**

LINCOLN – As with any post-secondary education facility, community or university, there is a lot that goes into developing and supporting the various programs they have to offer.

Southeast Community College's new Administrative Director for Grants and Sponsored Projects, Maggie Peavy, works to ensure that students and staff feel supported. She does so by acquiring the proper funding to support various projects.

"The resource development here at SCC is broad and diverse," Peavy said. "We've got a lot of people who are working to make sure that SCC stays at the forefront of education."

As Director for Grants, Peavy works hard to remain aware of the funding that state and federal sources have to offer.

"We [first] get a notice of funding, or request for information (RFI)," Peavy

said. "Once that is put out, then we kind of look and see if it [fits] our mission, vision and values."

From there, Peavy analyzes each source to determine how well it supports each program. Every dollar that Peavy acquires goes towards supporting students in their respective programs.

"If it [fits] then there are parameters to follow," Peavy said. "You'd have to develop a budget, you have to develop a scope of work."

In summary, Peavy described grant writing as requiring a person to determine how they will implement their idea and how they will measure the quantifiable evidence and effectiveness of their project.

A self-proclaimed rule follower, Peavy said that she has previous work experience in grant writing and management, which led her to her current position at SCC.

"I am just getting my feet under me, I have only been here a month," Peavy said. "Basically, [my role] is monitoring all of the existing grants and looking for new funding sources."

Peavy shared that she holds a degree in Criminal Justice. She also has a history in non-profit work and was previously employed at Centerpointe in Lincoln as the Director of Housing Operations.

"I [worked at Centerpointe] for almost nine

years," Peavy said. "I just needed to utilize my skills in a different context."

Alongside ensuring that reporting and grant compliance is done on time, Peavy also utilizes her experience with non-profit work.

"I assist with the SCC Foundation, that's the non-profit side of the college," Peavy said. "The daycare can go after money from different sources that are nonprofit [through the foundation]."

Peavy added that she is currently researching grants that would assist daycare attendees and their parents with both space and needs.

"I am really excited about seeing if we can expand the child development center," Peavy said. "I would like to get them their own space so that they can reach capacity and reduce staff turnover."

SCC is also involved in a sponsored project with The Joint Budget Committee of Lincoln, which is offering \$30,000 in scholarships to reward parents whose children are enrolled in the Child Development Center.

As for funding that goes towards students, Peavy spends time searching for funding to reach the needs of students.

"We meet with the deans at the college, the professors of [a] particular class," Peavy said. "[We] figure out what their funding priorities are, and then that kind of guides where

I start looking for funding sources."

A recent example of Peavy's work was her assistance in getting the automotive students the equipment they need to expand their learning.

"The diesel technology in Milford, I just submitted a \$50,000 grant asking for a bunch of new equipment," Peavy said. "[This will] allow them to have their own equipment rather than borrow it."

Alongside this, Peavy is working on getting funding for the development of a Learning Center in York.

"It will actually be a one stop shop [for] workforce development where individuals can come and do job searches," Peavy said. "That's going to be a ten plus million dollar endeavor."

The project is currently working together with York Public Schools and the York Development Office to get the logistics squared away. In the meantime, Peavy is also assisting in the development of a SNAP Educational Assistance Program for SCC students.

"Anyone who is eligible for SNAP benefits could receive supportive services from SCC," Peavy said. "It would include case management, education to help them become self-sufficient, you know, to get their feet under them again."

Up until recently, the  
**continued on page 17**

# Lincoln Adds Four New Instructors

## Natalia Hubbard

By Sarah Omari

LINCOLN – Natalia Hubbard brings nearly 14 years of emergency medical services experience to her role teaching EMT and paramedic students at Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

Hubbard teaches both EMT and paramedic courses at SCC in Lincoln. The program includes classroom lectures and hands-on lab training designed to prepare students for work in ambulance services, hospitals and other medical settings.

“I hope that they gain great patient care techniques and really good critical thinking skills, allowing them to do what’s



Natalia Hubbard

best for our patients out in the field,” Hubbard said.

The EMT course serves as the entry level for the EMS field.

Hubbard said students learn CPR, how to respond when someone is not breathing and how to treat

trauma patients.

“So we teach them CPR, how to handle people that maybe aren’t in cardiac arrests, but they aren’t breathing, how to handle trauma patients,” she said. “So it’s kind of that entry level for the EMS world.”

The paramedic program builds on those foundations with advanced life support training, including medications and airway techniques. After lectures, students attend labs where they practice the skills they discussed in class.

Hubbard said her decision to teach at SCC was influenced by her own experience as a student in the paramedic program.

“I went to paramedic school here, so I had a

great experience from our instructors that drove me to want to come teach here because I loved what our teachers instilled me, and I just felt like maybe I can still help more patients by helping create really good providers for the field,” she said.

She said the program’s faculty and culture played a role in her return to campus.

In addition to teaching, Hubbard works in both 911 fire and EMS services and in a hospital setting. She said that experience allows her to show students the range of career options available.

Hubbard said the EMS

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## Allison Johnson

By Austin Pearson

LINCOLN - “My teaching philosophy is really based on connection,” said Biological Sciences instructor Allison M. Johnson, who recently transitioned from adjunct to full-time instructor at Southeast Community College.

Johnson said she strives to create a safe and communicative space in her classroom where students feel connected to both the material and their instructor. During her classroom

discussions, she said she tries to get every student involved.

Johnson said she is working to make her classes more active, encouraging students to take a larger role in discussions and activities.

“I’m trying to find ways for students to be the builders of knowledge and come up with more activities in class, rather than just me talking,” Johnson said.

She previously taught as an adjunct for four years, primarily leading

lab sections. She said she is excited now as full-time instructor to teach more



Allison Johnson

lectures and to interact with more students.

Johnson teaches Biology I at TCA, several physiology labs, a physiology lecture course this semester and General Biology as an online dual-credit course.

Johnson is originally from Rockford, Ill. She received her bachelor’s degree in biology at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and earned her master’s in biology and master’s in education

**continued on page 17**

## Brayden Kieborz

By Sarah Omari

LINCOLN – Instructor Brayden Kieborz helps support students through the SCC welding program and has been teaching at SCC in Lincoln for nearly a year.

Before becoming an instructor, he worked in fabrication while continuing his education and later returned to finish his degree in Lincoln.

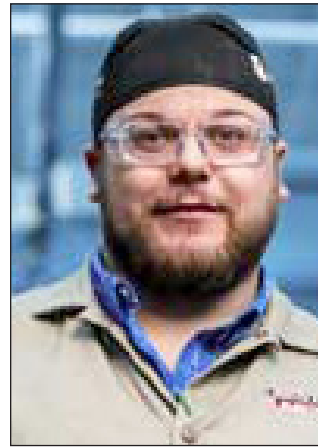
Kieborz said his background across different areas of welding allows him

to answer a wide range of student questions.

Kieborz said he appreciates the unexpected questions.

“Having experience with the inspection, consumer and the fabrication side of welding,” he said, have given him the background “to answer wild out of the blue questions,” which he enjoys.

“Watching kids learn things that they thought they’d never be able to do is also pretty cool,” Kieborz said.



**Brayden Kieborz**

The SCC welding program is structured to emphasize hands-on learning,

with about 80% of coursework taking place in a lab setting and the remaining 20% in the classroom.

Some early classes focus more on lectures to introduce safety procedures, but lab work increases as students progress through the program.

Kieborz said students enter the program with varying levels of experience.

“There were probably half of them that knew

**continued on page ??**

## Joy McManus

By Aubree Siffring

LINCOLN – Joy McManus began as an instructor at SCC Lincoln Campus as Practical Nursing instructor this spring 2026.

While her education started with her undergrad at Nebraska Methodist in Omaha and master’s in education though Northeast State, Oklahoma, McManus brings experience in the field as a labor, delivery and postpartum nurse to instruct future nurses.

McManus is a third-generation nurse, following in the footsteps of her grandma and mom who she explains was her greatest influence in life.

McManus also explains when referring to her mom as her greatest influence, “growing up she stayed home with my brother

and I so we got really close then I got to watch her transition back into work after we grew up.”

This is McManus’s first role in education. She was drawn to teaching from her experience in training new nurses on her hospital floor.

McManus also explained that “when I was

younger, I wanted to be a teacher, and as I got older, I decided to go into nursing, so I kind of ended up with both.”

One of the things McManus has enjoyed most about being an instructor is interactions with students when they feel comfortable enough to ask the questions and to have professional personal interactions.

McManus tries to connect with her students by giving real life stories about her previous experiences along with assuring students that she is a great source to feel comfortable asking questions.

McManus’s favorite class to instruct has been the lab portion of lab and theory class.

When asked about SCC’s hands on approach,

McManus explained while she is used to more formal classroom learning, she likes the hands-on approach and thinks it helps teach students in a more real-world environment.

McManus has enjoyed the community at SCC and says, “my coworkers are great resources and there is always a friendly face in whatever building you go to around campus.”

A fun hobby McManus enjoys outside of her time at SCC is that she collects mugs, amassing over 250.

When asked what she likes most about her new role McManus explains it is “when students get the aha moment and you see their face light up when they fully understand.”



**Joy McManus**

# New Welding Instructor for Beatrice

## Corey Jordan

By Sarah Omari

BEATRICE – Corey D. Jordan, a new welding instructor at Southeast Community College’s Beatrice campus, teaches students hands-on skills while emphasizing work ethic and confidence in the field.

Jordan, who began teaching after completing the same program, now works with students who are often new to welding and preparing for careers in skilled trades.

Jordan said he first became interested in teaching welding when he was in college.

“I always knew I wanted to be a welding instructor when I went to college,” Jordan said.

He enrolled in the program shortly after high school in 2016, traveling to Lincoln without a formal visit.

“I just figured I’d just stop there and just look at it,” he said. “I ended up starting school two weeks later.”

Jordan now teaches at SCC’s Beatrice campus, where the welding program is connected to agricultural studies and serves students who may not want to commute to Lincoln. He said the program is largely hands-on, with students spending

most of their time in labs rather than lectures.

“We’re hands-on learning every day,” Jordan said. “We’re learning with the equipment, like real setups, and we really focus on employability and work ethic and showing up and being here on time.”

When asked if the program is focused on teaching beginners, Jordan said many students enter the program with little to no prior experience.

He said building confidence is one of the biggest challenges for new students.

“That’s the hardest thing, getting them to believe they actually can do it,” Jordan said.

The program typically takes about two years to

complete, though timelines can vary.

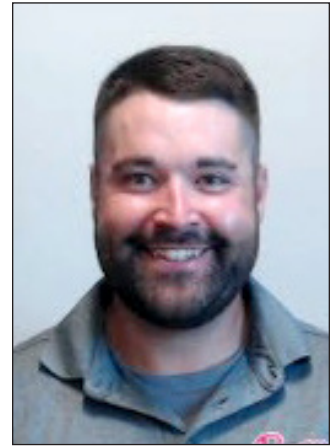
Jordan said advancements in technology have changed some aspects of the program since he was a student, particularly in online learning tools, but the hands-on nature remains the same.

He also noted that welding continues to require human skill despite advances in automation.

“There are robots that weld, but I’ve never seen AI be able to weld because there will always be a human aspect of it,” Jordan said.

Jordan said he encourages students to take the program seriously and make the most of their time learning the trade.

“If you’re going to do



Corey Jordan

something, do it to your full ability of the best as you can,” he said.

He added that welding can provide opportunities for those willing to commit to the work.

“There’s a lot of opportunity out there,” he said.

## Hubbard, continued

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field continues to change, requiring providers to remain flexible and informed.

When asked what students should expect, she said students entering the program should be prepared for a rigorous course load.

“It’s a lot of work,” Hubbard said. “It’s a heavy class, it’s a lot to learn as EMTs because you’re learning anatomy and

physiology, you’re learning about different diseases and trauma along with treatments and patient assessments.”

Despite the challenges, Hubbard said teaching allows her to continue impacting patient care beyond her own shifts.

“The most rewarding thing about being an instructor is seeing the students succeed and then now they get to go experience the things I experienced as a paramedic

out in the field,” she said. “Every semester we push out new EMTs and new paramedics to go, again, change the line and save lives.”

Hubbard encouraged students who are considering EMS to explore the field and speak with faculty.

If students are interested in reaching out, they can contact Hubbard via email located in the SCC directory.

## Peavy, continued

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program was limited to only 59 counties in Nebraska. Now, it is available to Lincoln and all remaining counties.

Peavy shared that if SCC moves forward with the process, then she will begin the grant writing process over again. From there, approval and implementation of the policies and procedures would follow.

“I think those are some great projects that we’ve got in the pipeline that will serve an expansive region,” Peavy said.

Peavy added that she is most excited for the SNAP

assistance program and the York learning center.

“Some people are very dismissive of community college, but they serve a vital purpose,” Peavy said. “We need to maintain the funding sources and [stay] on the cutting edge of educational diversity.”

Peavy shared that she views each educational project as meaningful and that she is thankful to be in a position where she is able to learn the history of grants and how they benefit students and staff.

“There is always some educational opportunity that exists if you go look for it,” Peavy said.

## Johnson, continued

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from University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Johnson said she enjoys cooking when she has the time and spending time with her husband and sister. She also has a blue heeler dog named Poppy and two gray tabby cats, Ivy and Ollie.

Johnson said one of her biggest goals is helping students to see that science is not something to fear.

“I think my biggest goal is that they learn that science is not this big scary beast,” Johnson said.

“Even if the content was difficult, or it’s not your favorite subject ... you’re still able to think critically and analyze some of the scientific things you see in

the media,” Johnson said.

Johnson said one of the most rewarding parts of teaching is staying connected with former students and seeing them grow in their careers.

“I love all the connections that I make with students,” Johnson said.

“That’s definitely the biggest reward, is staying in touch with students, seeing where they end up in their careers,” she added.

She said she enjoys hearing from former students years later when they ask for recommendation letters or share career updates.

“[Those] connections and seeing students grow is the biggest reward,” she said.

## Flower Sale



photos by Aubree Siffring

**The Horticulture Program on the Beatrice campus had another successful flower sale during the last week of April.**

The Beatrice Horticulture Program held its annual Bedding Plant Sale during the last week of April.

According to instructor Myah Vrbka, the sale “probably saw a couple hundred people.”

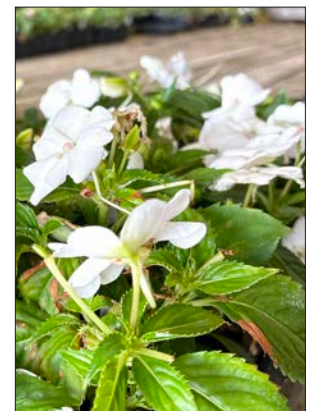
While other classes provided assistance, the sale is mainly the product of the Greenhouse Management course.

As Vrbka explained, “students are all assigned multiple plants to care for throughout the semester where they are in charge of planting, pruning, fertilizing, pest and disease ID and management.”

She added that “overall, the sale went well,”

although the weather “was a little chilly, which I think slowed sales a bit more than normal; no one wants to be outside and planting when it’s rainy and cold.”

There were some plants left over which will be planted about campus and at area retirement homes.



# PTK Revived on Lincoln Campus

By Mackenzie Tefft

This past fall, student members and faculty at Southeast Community College joined together to revive a very important student resource group, Phi Theta Kappa.

PTK is an internationally recognized honor society accessible to two-year college students. Upon induction, members are eligible for a multitude of community service opportunities that focus on building leadership and collaboration.

Prior to the 2025-26 school year, SCC's chapter, Alpha Pi Lambda, was stagnant. However, faculty member Brenda Sanchez was asked to head the revival of PTK. With previous experience as an advisor for another chapter in Kansas, stepping up to take on Alpha Pi Lambda seemed like the right choice.

"I wanted it to be an active chapter," Sanchez said. "[And] I had the experience to help."

And upon hearing of the group's renewal, Jen Eute-neuer, Becky Kramer and Allison Johnson joined the team as well.

Phi Theta Kappa offers members a plethora of opportunities for involvement. The Honors in Action and the College Project are two of the main examples, both of which



photo by Brenda Sanchez

**PTK on the Lincoln campus was revitalized as an active organization this school year. Pictured are those inducted as part of the Spring Induction Ceremony on April 1.**

supply students with helpful research and communication skills.

Currently, members are in the planning stages of their college project. They are hoping to collaborate with SCC alumni in order to raise funds for the construction of a pagoda, or outdoor learning space for students.

Alongside this, PTK is toying with ways to set up an alumni mentor program here at SCC.

"[We are trying] to connect current students with recent alumni so that they can mentor them," Sanchez said. "We [think] it would be much more worthy or useful for students to be able to talk

to someone who had just graduated."

The goal of this is so students are able to receive helpful information on how their respective fields are working out for recent graduates. Sanchez said that none of these ideas are set in stone; however, they are helpful in brainstorming.

"It's cool that [we] get to do these things for [our] college," Fellowship Officer Aubrey Wyatt said. "I think that's [why it is] really important to get involved."

As the fellowship officer, Wyatt is responsible for assisting in the coordination of events for students, as well as planning

ways that students can give back to their community.

"This is a great place to be," Wyatt said. "I really like when I can see people who are motivated to get stuff done, who want to be involved and really want to make a difference."

Wyatt has been a PTK member since last spring, but has held an officers position since the fall. Since then, it has become clear that community service is a very important thread in the fabric of PTK.

"I have been in PTK for almost a year now, [and] what I have realized is it always comes back to the community," Wyatt said.

**continued on page 26**

# Cruikshank Steps in as New Bball Coach

By Changkouth Deng

LINCOLN – New head basketball coach Ben Cruickshank brings his philosophy, influences and plans for development following his one-year assistant coach stint behind now retired head coach Joel Wooton.

From learning under experienced mentors, Cruickshank highlights his influences, experiences and values that shape how he plans to lead and develop his players.

He said his coaches journey began with opportunities under several established coaches, including Rob Nielsen at Snow College.

Cruikshank spent five years working with Nielsen, where he said he was introduced to new concepts that reshaped how he understood the game.

“He really emphasized things like passing and the types of passes you throw and how important it is to be on time and on target... and to value assists as much as you value buckets,” he said. “We would track things he called potential assists.”

During that time, Cruickshank said the team adopted a perimeter focused approach by playing fast paced.

“We shot a lot of



photo contributed

**Ben Cruickshank, center, is the new head coach for The SCC Bobcats men's basketball team, following the long tenure of Joel Wooton, left.**

threes. A lot, a lot of threes,” he said. “We led the nation in three-point attempts... I think we finished in three-point percentage as a team.”

After those experiences, He later returned to work alongside Coach Wooton, a coach he had previously played for nearly 20 years before.

“I think coach was always a player's coach,” Cruickshank said of Wooton. “He really does love his guys, and he really wants the best for them.”

He said this past season with coach Wooton reinforced the importance of building relationships

with players while maintaining structure.

“Not being too hard on guys... he's just trying to teach them,” he said.

As he transitions into the head coach role, Cruickshank said his focus will be on creating a system built around trust, communication and player development.

“It's a two-way street,” He said. “I want to be able to sit down and talk to guys... and I want the players to feel comfortable telling me... what they struggle with.”

He said he also plans to involve players in shaping team culture by allowing

them to establish core values.

“We're going to pick our team's core values,” he said. “When the team picks those values, it becomes a lot easier... to hold everyone to a standard.”

Cruikshank said these methods are designed to help players beyond the court.

“When you give guys... ownership of the program you let them become leaders,” he said. “It's preparing them for the next level and... for life outside of basketball.”

He said his overall

**continued on page 23**

## Albanese Named NJCAA Freshman of the Year



photo contributed

**Emma Albanese, above, was named The Open Mat's NJCAA Women's Wrestling Freshman of the Year.**

Emma Albanese arrived at Southeast Community College with an impressive wrestling resume.

She won four Nevada state titles, earned All-America honors multiple times in Fargo and was a champion at the Girls National High School Recruiting Showcase.

The Las Vegas native continued to add to her growing list of achievements in her first year of college wrestling, culminating with the national championship, which she won at 117 pounds.

On April 2, Albanese was named The Open Mat's NJCAA Women's Freshman of the Year.

Albanese started the season ranked No. 8 at 117 pounds by The Open Mat

but climbed the rankings quickly.

In her first college tournament of the season, Albanese defeated returning national champion Ariaiah Mervilus of Indian Hills by technical fall on her way to placing Luther Hill/Simpson College Open. That performance moved her to No. 1 at 117 pounds.

A week later, Albanese claimed a tournament title at the Waldorf University Open, winning by technical fall in the finals over Iowa Western's Hailey Medina. She defeated Mervilus a second time, by pin, in a dual meet on Nov. 19.

In December, Albanese finished runner-up at the Conner/Oppenheim Open.

She entered the 2026 NJCAA Women's Wres-

## Empress of the Mat



photo contributed

**After Emma Albanese had won her semi final match and secured her spot in the championship at 117 pounds, she rushed to give Billie Bonwell a hug after Bonwell won her semi final match at 160 pounds. During the embrace, Albanese told Bonwell, "We're going to get a National Championship together!" Sure enough, Albanese and Bonwell won their national title matches as well as the returning champ, Martha Hinneh, above, at 207. Hinneh became the first two-time Women's National Champion in school history. As a team, the Bobcats were runners-up., with 11 wrestlers earning All-American awards. The cherry on top was Head Coach Jake Hamilton being named the NWCA Junior College Women's Coach of the Year.**

ting Invitational as the No. 1 seed at 117 pounds. Albanese was unscored upon in her first four matches in Council Bluffs, Iowa, getting four 10-0 technical falls to reach the finals.

In the championship match, Albanese earned her fifth technical fall in five matches, winning 13-2 in just over a minute against Carl Albert State's Laila Mirza. She outscored her five opponents 53-2.

# Bobcat eSports Looks to Add Recruits

By Cody Sullivan

The SCC eSports team is a competitive video games team that participates in collegiate NACE tournaments and other eSports tournaments locally and around the nation.

The team belongs to the NACE (National Association of Collegiate eSports) league that has two seasons in the spring and the fall with a break in the summer.

Even though there is a break in the summer, there are many opportunities for the teams to join other tournaments going on that can bring cash prizes if they have the people to compete in them.

NACE is a national organization that has teams locally in Lincoln, Bellevue and Sioux City but also in places like California, Missouri and Texas.

There are three divisions inside NACE, The Club League, Varsity Plus and Varsity Premiere. They all compete at different competition levels in five games, Super Smash Bros., Rocket League, Valorant, Overwatch 2 and Call of Duty.

Each team will have a match a week until it has played each team in its conference, then will be seeded in the single-elimination divisional tournament based on the season record.

If the team wins its divisional playoff, it will then

go on to the Grand Championship Tournament hosted by NACE, where the team will play against the best teams in the country in a double-elimination tournament until one is crowned champion in each division for each game.

Last season, a few SCC teams had a good season with several good wins,

but after several losses were left wanting more out of the upcoming season coming in the fall.

The Super Smash Bros. team had a major setback when a team member left the squad unexpectedly for personal reasons, and with no one to replace them, the team was left to play their matches 2v3, which

is a death sentence in a game like Smash Bros.

Head Coach Trevor Reinke said, "Our CoD team went 3-5 in their Varsity Plus debut, that league is really, really tough; in fact, they finished 6 out of 10."

Reinke said this isn't where they want to be but shows they have fight and

**continued on page 26**

## Bobcat Volleyball Looks to Continue Improvements for Third Season at Lincoln

By Neveah Vacha

LINCOLN – This was the volleyball team's second season in Lincoln after a long tenure in Beatrice. Last year was another stepping stone for the SCC volleyball team.

While the team end the season with the record they wanted, head coach Carolyn Cambell said the team "fought hard during each game."

The Southeast Community College (SCC) Bobcats volleyball team had a mix of freshmen and sophomores on the 2025 roster, with several players standing out as important contributors or returning leaders.

Ellie Rine, a sophomore from Waverly, Nebraska, "provided experience, helped guide and support the freshman, and led as one of the returning players," said SCC Sports

Information (SCCSI).

Libby Kratochvil, a sophomore from Seward, added experience and depth to the lineup who "was also always such a positive influence on the whole team and always had a smile on her face," said SCCSI.

"Key hitters were Brecklyn Hammond, right side from Southern Valley, Addy Palmer from Marian, and Taryn Sheets from Tekamah Herman [and] Setter Brooklyn Buchmeier, from Johnson Brock, ran a smooth offense, keeping everyone under control," said SCCSI.

"Chloe Vice, from Johnson-Brock, and Neveah Vacha, from Logan View, played great defense and kept everyone in system," said SCCSI.

While several sophomores are leaving for this upcoming season, but there are a number

of freshmen stepping into new roles. Brecklyn Hammond, Neveah Vacha, Lillian Grimble, Alexis Ruppier and Mafe Sales will help all the new freshmen by encouraging them during practice and answering questions.

Sophomores can make the transition to college athletics easier by contributing to team chemistry and leadership by communicating well, supporting and making sure every team member feels welcome.

By doing that, the freshman will feel more confident and motivated to perform to their best abilities. This leadership helps build trust on the court, which can lead to better teamwork, stronger performance, and overall improvement for the team throughout the season.

# Illuminations, Vol. 27 Now Available

By Breanna Mayfield

Southeast Community College officially released the 27th volume of its literary magazine, *Illuminations*, on Friday, April 17.

The launch was marked by a public celebration on the Lincoln campus, featuring an open mic session and the distribution of free copies of the new edition.

The event, held from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in room 206-208, invited students, staff and the local community to experience the latest collection of prose, poetry, art and academic writing produced by the SCC community.

*Illuminations* serves as more than just a creative outlet; it is a launchpad for professional development.

A faculty editorial team, including co-editors Wendy Weitzel and Mystery Harwood, oversee the magazine, with a goal of establishing a dedicated group of student volunteers help drive the publication.

“It’s part of a newly created English certificate,” Weitzel mentions, “where students can earn credit for being on [the editorial board].”

By participating in the editorial process, students gain experience with publishing, curation and collaborative production.

The mission of the magazine is to represent as many diverse voices as

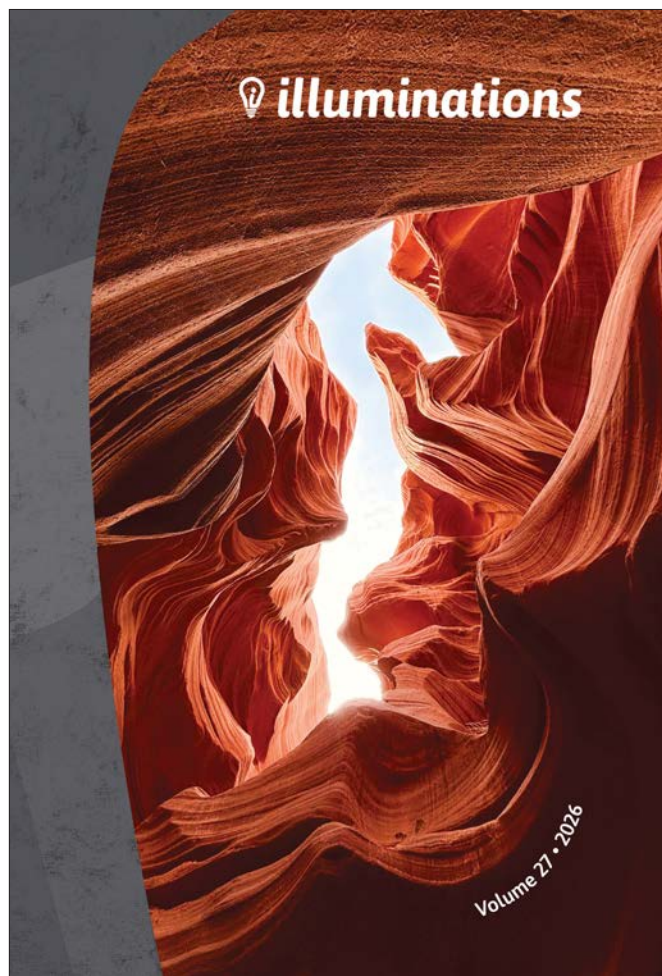
possible across the SCC campuses, including those within the UPWARD program.

By showcasing work from students, staff and faculty alike, *Illuminations* provides a comprehensive snapshot of the college’s intellectual and creative culture.

For those inspired by the latest volume, the window for future contributions remains a priority. SCC students and faculty can submit their work for next year’s edition through the school’s website.

Interested contributors can search “*Illuminations*” on the SCC website to find the official submission tab, and submissions are handled via Submittable, which requires a free account.

The upcoming deadline for the next edition is June 30.



## Review

## Styles Goes Experimental on New Album

By Mackenzie Tefft

*Kiss All The Time.*  
Disco, *Occasionally*, Harry Styles' fourth studio album, offers a daring insight into the vulnerability and boundaries that are necessary for a person at his level of stardom.

Released on March 6, 2026, the album marks an experimental shift into synth-pop and disco-esque sounds by Styles, all while keeping the introspective lyrical styles of his previous work.

The album begins on a high note with its opening track, "Aperture," which blends vulnerable lyricism with club-inspired sounds by showcasing how letting fans into details of his personal life is similar to that of a camera; he (the aperture) determines how much light is let in.

Similarly, songs like "Coming Up Roses" and "American Girls" blend the same, new-found level of vulnerability with the lyrical style and references to romantic relationships that are evident in other areas of his discography.

The album holds true to its title, with a heavy concentration on Styles' romantic relationships and the occasional burst



of disco-inspired sounds.

"Dance No More," the tenth track on the album is subjectively the most disco of the track-list, with the opening score bearing a close resemblance to "Don't Stop Til You Get Enough" by Michael Jackson.

Lyrically, Styles focuses

on connection and vulnerability; however, he keeps things broad.

He creates an experience focused on the listener by placing emphasis on the use of "you" rather than "I," which allows for listeners to gain a sense of closeness to Styles, while also allowing him to keep

a sense of ambiguity to the true meaning of his lyrics.

It is hard to determine direct references to his personal life with this album, but Styles has made it clear throughout his career that he likes to keep people guessing.

Overall, Styles did an excellent job incorporating personal experiences into his art, while also allowing himself to keep the privacy that he values.

By experimenting with sounds unlike anything he's ever released before, he lets listeners in on the changes he's experienced in the years leading up to the album.

At the same time, by keeping his lyricism consistent with his previous styles, he demonstrates to listeners that he has set a firm foundation in his career, which leaves room for more creativity in other aspects.

## Cruickshank, continued

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coaching philosophy reflects both his past experiences and future goals.

"I believe basketball is a game of skill. So I value skill in guys," Cruickshank explained. "I want guys who can shoot...

pass... dribble... and play hard."

He added that passion for the game and commitment to academics are also key priorities.

"I want guys who are invested... and I want guys who value an edu-

cation," He said. "If you check those boxes, we can make it work."

Cruickshank said he expects to implement his approach as he prepares for the 2026-2027 basketball season.

Review

# Crimson Desert Worth the Wait

By Cody Sullivan

*Crimson Desert* is one of the most highly anticipated Open World, Action/Adventure video games coming this year to PC, PlayStation and Xbox. The title had been in development by Pearl Abyss for the last 8 plus years and was released on March 19.

The first thing I feel like I need to mention is that this is not a traditional RPG. I came into this thinking this was a hard-core RPG, but that is not the case.

There is a skill tree for moves and some magical abilities, but it isn't near as deep as *Oblivion* or *Skyrim*.

It's an Action/Adventure game first and foremost, exploration is the main point of the game, not developing your character with new powers or digging deep into an involved story line. The world is vast and constantly begs you to go out and explore it.

The story begins with an attack on the GreyManes, a faction of soldiers our main character, Kliff, belongs to.

Their main camp is destroyed along with many GreyManes being killed, and Kliff barely escapes after being wounded



multiple times and left for dead.

The main story continues after that but never really picks up steam and feels unoriginal and lifeless for the most part, offset by the occasional interesting moment.

The characters' dialogue is also sparse most of the time with no real option to decide the events that take place, which I feel is a staple of most RPGs cementing it as an Action/Adventure title.

The side quests can also be interesting and fun at times but mostly lack originality as well. You'll be mainly helping the lesser lords of the region you're in but also residents of the local towns, including merchants and craftsmen.

Helping find missing people, retrieving missing belongings, or clearing bandit forts will make up most of the side content but there are plenty of unique missions to come across if you progress through quest chains.

There are three different characters that you can choose from and then play as at any time after they are unlocked. The only reason you won't be able to play as them is if you're doing content specific to a certain character or haven't met them yet.

The combat in this game is very satisfying and can be really deep. Each character has a style they are best with and a skill tree to match.

There are dozens and

dozens of moves for every fight style so each player can tailor their character to their play style including fight styles like single and two-handed weapons, dual wielding, and even basic magic.

The fighting is generally not very challenging and just an excuse to showcase your skills and have fun, until you come up against a boss.

Each boss will fight you in a different way and requires you to use strategy and skill to beat them. If you come at them guns blazing, you will most likely die many times, giving the game a decent difficulty curve.

The real meat of the game is exploring its extremely vast map to find

## Crimson Desert, continued

all the awesome places and events scattered around. If I could see a tower in the distance, I could go there, and it's very likely there was something cool to find while exploring it.

The map is one of the largest I've ever played on, and the density of content kept me in the first area of Hernand for over 30 hours alone, leaving me with hundreds more hours of content strewn across the map for me to find and enjoy.

There are many ways to get around the map like horse or fast travel. The further you get into the game, the more transportation options you will unlock like steam punk mech units and even dragons!

Flying these machines or creatures around and devastating your enemies is almost too much fun and offers very different ways to tackle obstacles and objectives.

The graphics are extremely good and have been well optimized to work on several different levels of PC power or console. This must be, in my opinion, the best-looking open world game since RDR2 with an attention to extreme detail and powerful physics that perform at a great frame rate.

*Crimson Desert* uses the BlackSpace Engine that was built by Pearl Abyss, the developer of



the game. It focuses on high-end rendering that displays gorgeous detail without sacrificing power.

One of the biggest negatives I found during my time with the game is the controls and the control scheme.

The movement is very clunky with a slight delay when moving or turning your character resulting in frustrating sticky controls that make the character feel almost drunk at times.

The button layout is also very unintuitive and ruins the flow of combat.

I accidentally shot my grapple into the ground several times by accidentally clicking the left stick, which makes you sheath your weapon and leaves you wide open to attack

which can for obvious reasons cause major setbacks.

At the end of the day, I really enjoyed my time with *Crimson Desert* despite its flaws.

I would get really frustrated at the movement and controls but would also be blown away 10x more often with amazing views, places to explore,

boss fights, flying mechs and dragons, or the endless exploration of unique and beautiful locations.

I give *Crimson Desert* an 8.5/10 and would highly recommend this to anyone that loves scouring for and discovering an exhausting number of secrets in a gorgeous massive world.

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## eSports, continued

continued from page 21

are looking to come back stronger and wiser for vengeance in the autumn.

The Rocket League Team, Reinke said, “Did pretty well but didn’t end up surviving through the full championship bracket.”

One freshman member of this team, Ethan Merrick, freshman, is a Grand Champion 2 rank on Rocket League and a top performer. Reinke says he will perform extremely well no matter how the match is going.

On the Overwatch team, Samuel Roger is a player about whom Reinke said, “He’s competitive and honestly, for my first season here, he was very, very helpful with getting everything started and helping me organize things because he kind of knew the ropes pretty well.”

Another Overwatch player, Isaac Wheeler, was a national champion last year and was also a player who Reinke said, “Definitely stands out. He was the National Champion last year but anytime I needed help he would always answer.”

Wheeler also helped fight the uphill battle with the Smash Bros. team as well as competing in Overwatch 2.

Reinke said had a lot more names he could mention but added Madline Luong as the last because she stepped down

from competing in the Rocket League division to help manage the team’s spread across the SCC campuses.

The results from last season left the team looking to improve by seeking to develop discipline and a competitive spirit.

To do this, Reinke said wants to recruit as many new players as possible to fill out the ranks of these teams and build a competitive and disciplined group of people that want to take the team to the next level.

Reinke said here were matches last year that had to be cancelled because of player availability.

Of those vacancies, Reinke said, “If you’re the starting QB, you can’t just go to work, you know what I mean? You gotta be there for your team.”

He says he wants to build a squad that will go to bat for each other no matter what.

Reinke said, “The people that know about the eSports team, they think of it more as a club, and the guys on the teams want to turn it into more of a sport feeling.”

He believes these small changes, added up, will help improve the teams overall and make them serious competitors.

There are also a lot of scholarship opportunities for students in eSports at SCC with more opportunities opening with the graduation of team members this fall. There could

also be NIL opportunities for players that are good enough to earn them.

There is currently no path to going pro formally, but doing well in NACE tournaments that are streamed live can showcase the athletes skills to top pro teams around the world that may want to add people to their organization.

The team currently has its own room on the Lincoln campus where the players can practice, socialize, and compete with other students and teams all year round.

Reinke hopes it can turn into a hub where the team’s camaraderie and competitiveness can grow and turn into more success

## PTK, continued

continued on page 18

“What are things we can do to serve?”

Alongside supporting the community, PTK also values rewarding its members.

“PTK does a really good job of making sure that they’re doing their best to get students their scholarships,” Wyatt said. “They know that they work hard for them.”

Sanchez shared that self-motivation is an integral quality for a member of PTK to hold in order to find success in their endeavors.

“Leadership [is] some-

thing for the team in the long run.

The last thing Reinke mentioned was how much wants people attending SCC to know about the eSports program and potentially get involved if they have any interest.

He says the atmosphere is a great place for people that love games and want to compete and grow in their favorite pastime while being part of a growing community that supports each other and has amazing experiences.

If any are interested in being part of the growing eSports team at SCC or stopping by the eSports Room, email Trevor Reinke at TReinke@southeast.edu.

thing that we really focus on, growing and nurturing that leadership,” Sanchez said. “[As advisors] we just give guidance.”

Plans and opportunities like these show how important groups like Phi Theta Kappa are in maintaining the integrity and innovation of a college campus, whether it be community or university.

“I think, especially with the advent of social media, we tend to isolate ourselves,” Sanchez said. “I think [it is important] that it gets students to work together and see what it’s like to be a team.”

# Student Senate, continued

**continued from page 7**

This semester, however, marks a significant change in this tradition, a fundamental pivot into a more collaborative model is happening in the Senate.

The Senate is actively working toward making more co-organized events by partnering with other student organizations on campus. The goal is designed to make a more integrated campus culture.

The Senate has been helping fellow student organizations with their events, giving them resources and improving advertising for the events.

“We, as an organization, hope Student Senate can ensure every club and organization has the platform they need to operate

and reach more people on campus, no matter how big or small the club is,” Samoilenko explained.

The Student Senate is on campus to make student life easier and better for everyone, and they are looking deeper than just attendance at meetings and events.

Samoilenko, as the president of the Student Senate, expressed that he and the advisor measure the clubs’ impact through the resolution of issues brought up by students, representation of the student body, and the success of themselves and other clubs.

“The only way for the Student Senate to represent a student better is to encourage them and peo-

ple who think like them to participate in the discussion,” he explained. “As much as we try to account for personal biases, we are not perfect.”

The student body is largely unconventional at SCC, with students balancing jobs, families, coursework and other personal issues, although not everyone on campus is a full-time, in-person student.

Student Senate is not limited to any student; everyone is able to attend meetings regardless of membership status, including evening, online and part-time students.

President Samoilenko emphasized that all are welcome to attend, and those who can’t make

meetings are able to view meeting minutes, agendas, and budget reports on The Hub.

If students feel their department issues are being overlooked or they have something they want to talk about around campus, Samoilenko encourages students to speak up.

Meetings are every Monday at 3:30 p.m. in the Student Center, and students don’t have to be a member or become one to attend. Students can also speak to officers in the Senate office when it is open, or speak to the club advisor, Ben Cruickshank, in his office located in the student center.

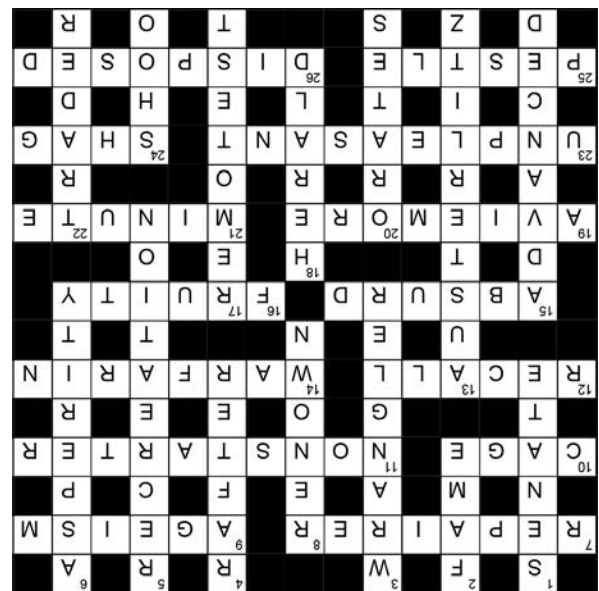
# Fun and Games Solutions

**Tricky**

6	4	5	1	7	3	9	8	2
1	9	7	8	4	2	3	6	5
3	8	2	9	5	6	7	4	1
4	2	6	3	9	8	1	5	7
9	1	8	5	2	7	6	3	4
7	5	3	4	6	1	8	2	9
2	7	1	6	3	5	4	9	8
5	3	9	7	8	4	2	1	6
8	6	4	2	1	9	5	7	3

**Fiendish**

2	8	4	7	1	6	3	5	9
7	3	5	2	4	9	8	6	1
9	1	6	8	3	5	2	7	4
1	6	2	9	5	3	7	4	8
8	4	9	6	7	1	5	2	3
3	5	7	4	8	2	9	1	6
6	9	8	5	2	4	1	3	7
4	2	1	3	9	7	6	8	5
5	7	3	1	6	8	4	9	2



# Ag Club to Host Annual Ag Olympics

By Aubree Siffring

BEATRICE – The Southeast Community College Ag Club is busy making plans to host Ag Olympics for all students to enjoy this May.

The SCC Ag Club Crystal Fangmeier, the club's advisor, explained Ag Club as "kind of like FFA without competitions, just the social portion."

Fangmeier adds that her favorite part about Ag club is "watching relationships develop between students and students and instructors."

Jamie Bruna, a Fall 2026 Ag club Officer and second year student, when asked what her favorite part of Ag Club is responded with, "My favorite part about the ag club is that it allows all the different majors in the ag program to get together and have a sense of community at college."

One of Ag Club's biggest events coming up is their annual Ag Olympics to be hosted in May.

Fangmeier explains the events as "challenges of things kids do on the farm" with the events varying year to year and as a fun social event to end the year.

This year's event will be held during the week before finals at the Ford

Shop, and Ag Club is still working on planning the exact time and competitions to take place.

Fangmeier explains that the "Ag Club officers plan everything."

When asked what she is most excited about for this year's Ag Olympics, Fangmeier explains, "it has been kind of a tough year on the ag students, so offering them a fun time to be together for a happy reason and seeing the laughter and fun time before they move on" will be valuable.

Ag Club offers not only

social events but also opportunities for student growth.

Bruna explains that "I would say that being in the ag club and being an officer on ag club definitely helped me develop better public speaking skills along with leadership skills."

"It also helped me make better connections with other students at Southeast," she added.

Fangmeier encourages those to get involved by attending "meetings every month and a meeting where we will plan this

event and decide what we are going to do."

For those thinking about joining Ag Club or attending the event, Bruna encourages students to attend, stating, "I would encourage students to join Ag Club because it allows you to make friends from the Ag program, and it's a lot of fun to join in all the activities Ag Club offers."

"It also is really nice to be able to interact with instructors outside the classroom during the activities," she added.

## Kieborz, continued

continued from page 14

how to weld and half of them that had no idea what welding even was," he said. "We just kind of gauge their knowledge at the beginning of class and go from there."

He states that instruction is adjusted so that all students reach a similar skill level by the end of their early coursework.

The program offers multiple pathways, including a two-year associate degree, a one-year diploma and a six-month certificate.

Kieborz said students who complete the associ-

ate degree also have the opportunity to earn certification through the American Welding Society.

"That certification is recognized through the AWS and throughout the entire country as a valid certification to weld at any company in America," he said.

Kieborz noted that one difference between SCC and Northeast Community College is the variety of instructor backgrounds at SCC, which exposes students to different perspectives and techniques.

He said students also have access to additional

opportunities outside of class, including continuing education courses and organizations such as SkillsUSA.

Kieborz said consistent practice plays a key role in student success.

"I think that the most valuable resource that they have put in front of them is the ability to weld all day long in such a large facility and just get practice," he said.

He said students considering the program should be prepared to dedicate time and effort to developing their skills.

## Sajevic, continued

continued from page 11

Bishop Neumann and finishes his day at Cedar Bluffs.

Finally, Fridays are his remote days, where he answers emails from students if they have any questions.

What he enjoys most when working with SEN-CAP students is getting to

know them and making connections with them.

Sajevic says he wants to help make them successful and build them up so they can have the confidence to take college courses.

He says he enjoys making connections with students because he coached basketball, football, track, and golf for many years and adds that being able

to build relationships with students again has been a great opportunity for him.

A message he said he would want SCC students and faculty to know about SENCAP is “How much money parents and students could save by going through this program. Completing general education classes in high school can save money since you

won’t need to pay double the amount in college.”

He also said he wants students to know that if high school students put in the effort, they can handle college work.

“College isn’t as hard as people make it seem,” he says. “As long as you try your best and do what’s asked of you, you can do well and be successful.”

## Donors, continued

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family, friends and organizations they care about. Their story began with a single meeting with Birkel in December 2023 and has since grown into a meaningful legacy of giving.

The Foundation currently has 433 total scholarship funds, 240 of which are endowed. An endowed scholarship allows the original gift to remain invested, with earnings used to fund scholarships year after year—creating a permanent legacy of support for future students.

“Your support makes this possible,” Birkel told the audience. “While we celebrate this progress, there is still much work to do. The number of scholarship applications continues to exceed available awards.”



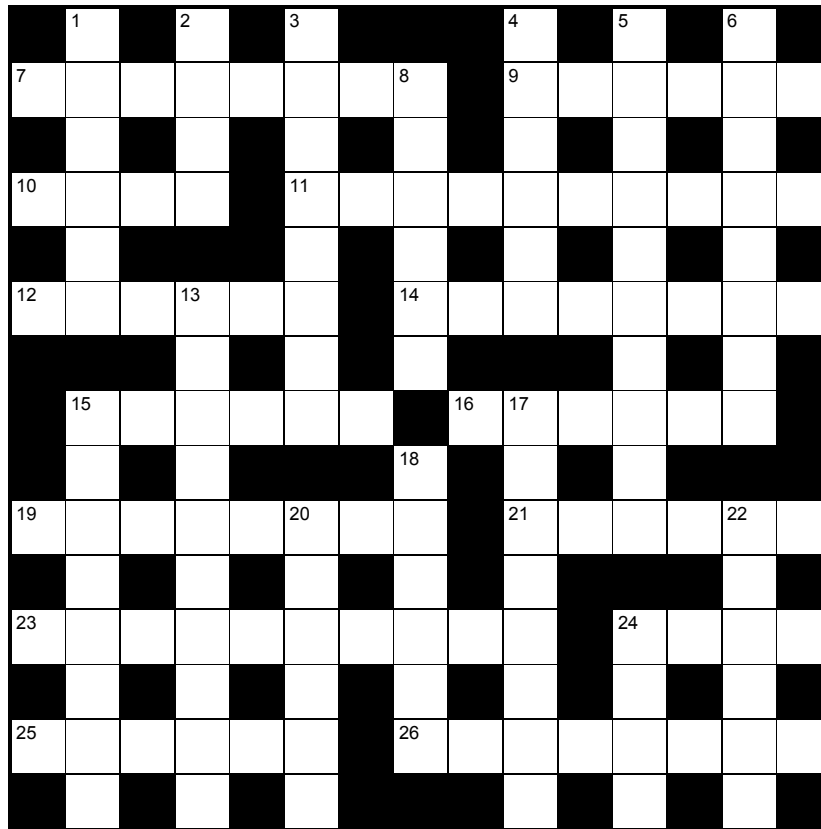
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# Fun and Games



## ACROSS

- 7 Marriage guidance counsellor? He fixes things (8)
- 9 Game is ruined by prejudice (6)
- 10 Caught, getting time in prison (4)
- 11 Time invested in errant son failed – he has no chance of success (3-7)
- 12 Remember to visit again? (6)
- 14 Drug creating endless conflict at home (8)
- 15 Jack wants us back on road – ridiculous! (6)
- 16 Saucy. tasting of apple perhaps (6)
- 19 A struggle increased in Scottish town (8)
- 21 Note very little (6)
- 23 Nasty criminal upset Alan around start of November (10)
- 24 British agents keep hold of this tobacco (4)
- 25 Remove centre from pellets and grind – using this? (6)
- 26 Woman’s worked as model, having inclination (8)

## DOWN

- 1 A teen’s represented in governing body (6)
- 2 Right away, plant evidence against celebrity (4)
- 3 Mathematician, one engaged in noisy dispute (8)
- 4 River subsequently needed for one travelling by water (6)
- 5 Changing to career in leisure activity (10)
- 6 Harshness, like compassion, the Queen embraced (8)
- 8 Owner adapts to new celebrity (6)
- 13 Uzis rattle violently in battle (10)
- 15 Lent progressed (8)
- 17 More will fail exam, being most aloof (8)
- 18 The woman’s lad upset the announcer (6)
- 20 Speaks of old values (6)
- 22 Communist art is brought back for businessman (6)
- 24 Fire gun, having no time to drive away (4)

**Tricky**

			2		9			
	3	9	7	8		2		
		1					9	
					1	8	2	
9								4
	2	6	3					
	8					7		
		7		4	2	3	6	
			1		3			

**Fiendish**

		3	1					
		1			7			5
	9	8	5	2				
			4					6
	4			7			2	
1					3			
				3	5	2	7	
7			2			8		
					6	3		

sudoku puzzles courtesy of [sudokuoftheday.com](http://sudokuoftheday.com)

For solution, see bottom of page 27

# SCC Educational Foundation Celebrates Scholarship Donors

By Jennifer Snyder

The Southeast Community College Educational Foundation held its second annual scholarship luncheon on Tuesday, April 22, at the Lincoln Campus, bringing together donors, scholarship recipients, corporate partners, and special guests to celebrate the life-changing power of educational support.

“Today, we gather to celebrate you, our generous donors and our dedicated scholarship recipients,” said Ben Kiser, president of the SCC Educational Foundation Board. “This is a time to reflect and to express our sincere gratitude for your commitment to our students and their futures.”

The numbers speak for themselves. In 2024-2025, the SCC Educational Foundation awarded 4,830 scholarships to 2,433 students at a value of more than \$3.1 million, a significant increase from the prior year. The average scholarship award per student was \$1,430. Twenty-seven new scholarships were established during the year, the highest number created in a single year.

“Scholarships do more than provide financial



support—they create opportunity, belonging, and momentum,” said Michelle Birkel, SCC Educational Foundation executive director. “Every gift, of any size, is an investment in our students and in the future workforce of our region.”

SCC President Dr. Paul Illich highlighted the broader impact scholarships have on workforce development across the region. With more than 80 career and technical programs across three campuses and six learning centers, SCC is a critical pipeline for high-demand industries. Ninety-six percent of SCC graduates who continue their education do so in Nebraska, and 87 percent of employed graduates are using the skills they gained at SCC right here in the state.

Brooklyn Ivy, a second-year Nondestructive Testing Technology student from Firth, Nebraska, received the competitive Walter Scott Jr. Career Pathway Scholarship, which covers full tuition, fees, room and board for two-year technical students. She will graduate in May and has already secured a full-time job at her internship site.

“I can’t thank the Scott Foundation enough for giving me the financial freedom that it has,” Ivy said. “I haven’t had to take out any student loans. This scholarship helped ease my financial worries before I even stepped foot on campus.”

Originally from Venezuela, Roberto Paredes enrolled at SCC through the Tallgrass Tech Scholarship, which supports

students in the Energy Generation Operations program. After a gap year working to save money, Paredes found his path at SCC and will graduate this semester as an honor student. “This scholarship has truly changed my life, motivated me, and opened opportunities I never expected.”

Sapphire Guzman already has a Welding Technology degree but is currently working on degrees in Business, Operations and Service Management, and Architecture. Her scholarships are making it possible for her to pursue big dreams.

“In all honesty, could I have done it without financial assistance? Yes—I could have,” Guzman said. “I could have worked two part-time jobs, had sleepless nights, and pushed myself past exhaustion. But I didn’t have to. Thanks to the generosity of others, I was able to live a life where I wasn’t just surviving, but actually living.”

The event also featured remarks from Tom and Kari Beckenhauer, donors who have established multiple scholarships in honor and memory of

**continued on page 29**

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