



RVC Bridge

SUMMER 2022

Connecting the campus to the community



WHAT'S INSIDE:

NEW RVC LOCATION

opens in Belvidere

SIX TIPS

to Reduce Stress

FROM STUDENT

to CEO

HOME OF THE CHAMPIONS

Year in Review

A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Theresa Paulette Gilbert



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FUTURE.

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FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

This fall marks my second anniversary as President of Rock Valley College. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the stateline community in this way. In addition to our rich history of providing exceptional general education and transfer opportunities, RVC strives to meet the demands of local business and industry needs. Through career and technical education certificate and degree programs as well as customized training, RVC supports regional workforce and economic development. This year, we opened our long-awaited Advanced Technology Center in Belvidere, a regional hub for advanced manufacturing and customized training. The College district encompasses all of Winnebago and Boone counties. We are excited to finally bring a brick-and-mortar facility to the eastern region of our district.

Our mission is to empower our community through lifelong learning. From Whiz Kids offerings to Center for Learning in Retirement classes and trips (and everything in between), we continue to offer something for everyone. We are proud to offer award-winning fine arts, such as our community music ensembles and the renowned productions at our Starlight Theatre. We hope you will turn to us wherever you are in your journey. We are the community's college, and we are strong because our community is strong. Together, we are RVC Strong.


Dr. Howard Spearman
President, Rock Valley College



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LEGACY OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Rock Valley College Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) honored students, faculty, staff, and community partners at the inaugural Eagle Awards of Excellence. Honorees were recognized for their commitment and dedication to promoting a campus community that embodies trust, equity, and a sense of belonging. In total, 60 individuals were nominated by students, faculty, and staff, culminating in recognizing these award categories: outstanding student(s), outstanding faculty, outstanding staff, community partner, and distinguished service.

There may not have been a dry eye in the house when Dr. Mathew Oakes presented Professor Theresa Paulette Gilbert (Paulette) with the Distinguished Service Award for her lifelong work on diversity, equity, and inclusion at RVC and in our community.

Mat stated, “She is setting an impossibly high standard for anyone else to follow, and we may need to present the award and then immediately retire it. But the more I thought about it, the more I started to reflect on that African proverb that says, ‘if you want to go fast, go alone; and if you want to go far, go together.’ Paulette is someone who repeatedly chooses to go far and has consistently invited us along for this journey.”

“It did not seem enough only to give her the inaugural Distinguished Service Award for Peace and Justice,” continued Mat. “Her service to this college is too deep and too rich and too long to stop there. She has and will continue to call all of us into a more equitable future. And so, from today onward,



Paulette Gilbert (left) with Dr. Mathew Oakes and Keith Barnes at the award ceremony

all those who follow in her footsteps will be presented with this award in her name.”

In her acceptance, Paulette said, “I try to live open, to hear the voice of justice and peace and love and compassion and goodness that I believe we are all capable of still speak to me. So, if there is a walk that I can invite you to join me on now, it is that walk that we continue to move to build a world that is an equitable, just, and peaceful one, but it is also a loving world; a world in which we love one another with all that we know is possible and necessary for all of us.”

RVC’s Vice President of Equity and Inclusion, Keith Barnes stated, “Paulette is a wealth of information. Not only does she know the history of DEI efforts at RVC, but she has been a part of the history of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion and the creation of our Promoting an Inclusive Community committee. She has done great things for students throughout her decades of service to the college. I can think of no one more deserving of the Distinguished Service Award.”

Mat shared this perspective. “There’s a perspective in many religious traditions, particularly in the black church, that helps contextualize why Paulette is so deserving of this award. In religious contexts, we make space for the role of the prophet. I’ve long thought that when we reach for adequate descriptions of Paulette’s 30 years of service here, this is the only one that captured it all. Paulette is a working prophet. She is the one who says what needs to be said because she sees what there is to see. Here at RVC, Paulette has been calling us to the winning side for over 30 years. No matter the obstacles. She knows that injustice and inequity do not win because they are at odds with the very stuff that holds the universe together. With compassion, intellect, determination, and foresight, Paulette has always clearly seen the path forward, and it’s a path she continues to call us to walk with her. If you’re in a meeting with Paulette, and she prefaces her comments with her trademark chuckle, know that she’s about to knock something down and light a brush fire to clear the way forward. I know no one quite like her. I’m honored to call her my colleague, teacher, mentor, and friend. I can think of no one more deserving of this inaugural award.”

Mat hugs Paulette, his mentor, after presenting her recognition



EAGLE AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

OUTSTANDING STUDENT

Felipe Gelacio – According to Keith Barnes, RVC Vice President of Equity and Inclusion, “Felipe is always ready to help students stand up for their rights, and he is vocal when he sees issues that treat students unjustly. His background and experiences have lit a fire in him that drives him to work towards positive changes in himself and our campus community. During his time at RVC, he has helped make the campus community more inclusive and equitable.”

OUTSTANDING STUDENT

Laura Kane – Her nomination read, “After a personal tragedy, she became a published author of a book called *Lost to Darkness; Enlightened by Grace*. She then formed a local nonprofit called Marshmallow’s Hope to mentor kids in our local community. Laura has taken the greatest loss imaginable and uses her pain to encourage others to live out their purpose. She helps save lives daily and is a model of diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

OUTSTANDING FACULTY

Dr. Mathew Oakes, Faculty of Composition and Literature/Chair of Promoting an Inclusive Community (PAIC) Committee – One nomination of Dr. Oakes read, “This recipient lives and breathes equity work in many facets of his life – in his classes, his yoga instruction, his leadership with PAIC, and his daily interactions with students and other RVC employees. I consider him a mentor in my journey to become an effective social justice change agent, and I know he’s positively touched the lives of countless others.”

OUTSTANDING STAFF

Mary Foreman, newly retired, International Student Coordinator – With over 30 years of commitment to RVC, one student nomination stated, “For her, being an international student coordinator is more than just a job. It is helping young students to create a space where they feel comfortable. I don’t know if I would have done what I have done without her help and support.”

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER

The Workforce Connection – From their nomination, “This organization incorporates DEI within their mission and practices. They have a proven track record of partnering with RVC to identify barriers and create access and opportunities for all students. They are a key partner as we look at connecting with other organizations to spread the word about access and opportunity at RVC.”

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER

YWCA of Northwestern Illinois – As Professor Paulette Gilbert introduced the award, she stated, “When as a young African American Girl, I could not learn to swim in a swimming pool in my city, because segregation prevented that as a place for me to learn. This organization opened its doors to me and taught me not just how to swim or dive off the high board, but also about leadership development and character as well. Last year, they honored me with an award for racial justice. So it is fitting that today, I have the opportunity to present this award to them.”



Front row: RVC DEI staff Icidora Medrano, Keith Barnes, Tek Curry, Lien Vu
Second row: Award recipients Felipe Gelacio, Mary Foreman, Kris Machajewski (YWCA), Paulette Gilbert, Jessica Story (The Workforce Connection), Dr. Mathew Oakes, Laura Kane



RVCSTRONG

We are strong because our community is strong.

In July of 2021, the Rock Valley College Foundation launched the RVC Strong Campaign for Student Success and Scholarships.

"If you spend any amount of time with Dr. Spearman, it is obvious that student success is at the forefront of his mind, administration, and heart," said Brittany Freiberg, RVC Foundation's Chief Development Officer. "We developed a student-focused campaign with a goal of raising 1 million dollars in student scholarship funds for our region's high-priority occupations."

In just nine months, Brittany Freiberg, RVC President Dr. Howard Spearman, and campaign co-chairs John Wolf and Barry Kramer have met this million-dollar goal thanks to the generosity of over 80 donors.

Lead campaign donors include Robert and Norma J. Trojan, Advanced Machine & Engineering (AME), Comcast, Hennig, Rockford Ministers Fellowship, and Woodward Charitable Trust.

"Comcast is proud to support the RVC Strong Campaign and its students as they continue their educational journeys," said Joan Sage, Comcast's Regional Manager of Community Relations. "Investing in students' futures through education helps to prepare them for the jobs of today and tomorrow, advance economic mobility, and grow our local economies."

Through this campaign, the RVC Foundation has been able to create the following new funds: the RVC Strong Advanced Technology Scholarship, RVC Strong Health Career Scholarship, and the RVC Strong Fund for Student Success, which is the new emergency relief fund for students facing a financial crisis. Not only are students' tuitions being covered, but financial barriers to their education are being removed.

Even before the goal was met, students began to benefit from the RVC Strong Scholarship. Fourteen students have been kept enrolled already this academic year thanks to the emergency relief funds.

"One of the first recipients of the RVC Strong Fund for Student Success is a current student worker. Although they have many odds stacked against them and zero family support, they continued to persist and remain strong with a 3.391 GPA," explained Brittany Freiberg. "Through teamwork across our campus, we were able to help cover their current tuition, connect them with the Eagle's Nest Food Pantry, and our athletic department had offered to allow this student access to their laundry facility. The RVC Strong Fund for Student Success is a powerful tool for the College to care for the whole student and not just their academic needs."

Success resources can range from the fees or tools associated with particular classes to textbooks to bus passes. One student even received new eyeglasses so that they could walk into their scheduled interview as a recent Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) graduate and feel more confident knowing they could see and read any forms that were handed to them.

Education wouldn't be possible for many of our students without the support of the RVC Foundation. Some need help, not only to cover the cost of tuition, but to assist with resources that many may take for granted. These resources have the power to change lives.

"Scholarships at RVC truly are a catalyst for generational change for our local families for decades to come," said Brittany Freiberg.

Just because the goal has been met doesn't mean the campaign is complete. The RVC Foundation is going to continue raising money for the RVC Strong campaign to continue being a catalyst for change in as many student's lives as possible.

There are many "whys" behind why people give to this campaign. Robert Trojan, RVC Board Member, shared why he and his wife, Norma, gave. "When Norma and I learned one of the focus areas of the RVC Strong Campaign included scholarships for students attending the Advanced Technology Center, we wanted to be a part of this program," said Robert Trojan. "Having our donation directed at scholarships is our way of helping our community and RVC students that can lead to employment opportunities for them."

If you are interested in supporting the RVC Strong campaign to create access and opportunity for a student, please visit RockValleyCollege.edu/Give.

**ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CENTER
NAMED ROOM DONORS**
Advanced Machine & Engineering Co.
Comcast
Hennig, Inc.
Robert and Norma Trojan
Woodward Charitable Trust

*RVC Strong donors pose with Arvee
at the ATC Ribbon Cutting*



***Access and scholarships can make all things possible.
Thank you for investing in the future for our
students, our workforce, and our community.***



Brittany Freiberg officially announces that RVC Strong has met its goal of \$1 million

***To speak with a member of the Rock Valley College
Foundation staff, please call 1 (815) 921-4500.***

**If you would like to support Rock Valley College
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REDUCE STRESS THROUGH TIME MANAGEMENT

It is no secret that effective time management can lead to greater classroom and job success. Time management can also help minimize stress and anxiety. According to the Stress Management Society, symptoms of stress due to poor time management can include mood swings, fatigue, inability to focus, depression, and forgetfulness. Time is one of the most valuable resources that we can't ever get back. So, by understanding how to manage time effectively, we can accomplish tasks more efficiently and have more free time to spend on things we enjoy. Here are six tips for better time management from RVC's First Year Experience Office.



1. USE A PLANNER OR CALENDAR

Whether you prefer a paper or a digital planner, this important tool can help you see what's coming. When you use a calendar or planner, you can see your day, week, or even month at a glance. With this tool, you don't have to worry about forgetting anything. You can see all your upcoming events and tasks in one place.

4. DON'T MULTITASK

A lot of us cannot multitask even though we think we can. So, it is important to pick one item to focus on at a time. Turn off those distractions. Turn off your phone, turn off your TV, and let people around you know you will be working. Ideally, try to finish a task before moving on to something else. Allotting a specific amount of time and setting a timer can also help us focus on a particular task.

2. TRACK YOUR TIME

Writing down what you spend your time on can help you identify time wasters. For example, you sit down to watch one episode of your favorite series, and one episode turns into eight. Or, you were playing a game on your cell phone, and next thing you know, an hour has passed. How did that happen?! By reflecting on how you spend your time, you can begin to reclaim it. That doesn't mean you can't have fun too. Give yourself a boost of motivation by using a favorite TV show or game as a reward for a job well done.

5. CREATE A ROUTINE & TAKE BREAKS

A routine can be extremely beneficial if you are working from home or doing online classes with limited in-person supervision or assistance. You should work around the time that works best for you. For example, some are morning people, while others are night owls. When creating a routine, think about other commitments you might have at home or work and when those require your time and attention. Maintain that daily routine, including going to bed at the same time, getting the recommended nightly amount of sleep, and waking at the same time to start your morning routine. Don't overdo it; schedule breaks for yourself so that you don't become mentally and physically exhausted.

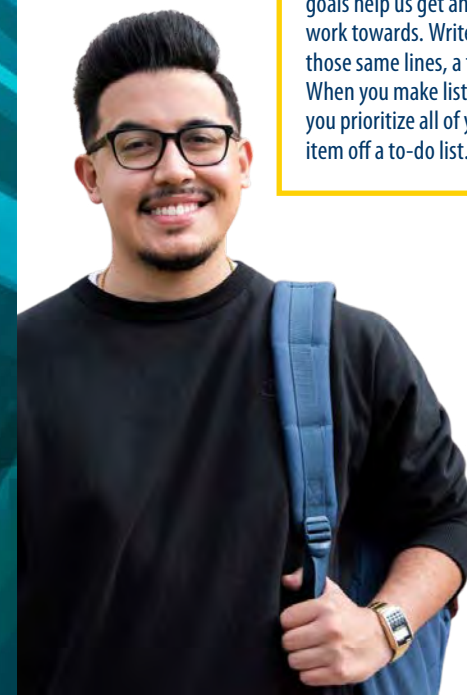
3. SET GOALS & MAKE LISTS

Goals are important. You can increase your motivation by identifying and writing down what you want to accomplish. Identify goals for the day, week, month, and semester. Short and long-term goals help us get and stay motivated by giving us something to work towards. Write down your goals and review them often. Along those same lines, a to-do list can also serve as a visual reminder. When you make lists, you can identify due dates, which will help you prioritize all of your tasks. There's also nothing like crossing an item off a to-do list. It's so satisfying!

6. REWARD YOURSELF

Positive incentives can be a great way to keep you motivated. Create a reward system for yourself that's realistic and will motivate you. Maybe you finish a paper, and you get to watch an episode of your favorite show. Perhaps you complete your assignments for the week and treat yourself to a venti latte. It doesn't have to be food, and it doesn't always have to be something costly. Create a system that works for you to keep yourself motivated.

Take some time to reflect on some steps that will help you manage your time effectively. Don't procrastinate — today is a great day to start something new. These strategies can help all of us manage our time better and reduce stress. The RVC First Year Experience Office offers a variety of Student Success Workshops each semester to help students succeed in and out of the classroom. Learn more at **RockValleyCollege.edu/FYE**



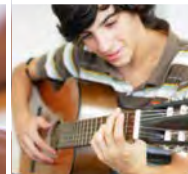
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FUEL-INJECTED THE SPIAN

When Rock Valley College automotive student Timmy Schneeberg was in high school, music and theatre provided a much-needed outlet and a sense of belonging. After high school, Timmy explored community theatre options around his hometown of West Allis, Wisconsin but was never able to find one that fit. So, when he got the offer to relocate to Rockford with his best friend, he jumped at the opportunity.

"After a long heartfelt goodbye," described Timmy, "I took my things, hit the road, and moved to Rockford. I worked at some box store jobs and started looking around at colleges and possible career paths."

While his heart was in the arts, Timmy knew that a degree in automotive service technology was his ultimate goal, but he struggled to find the right college option. That was a process that would take Timmy nearly three years. But, when he finally found RVC, he said, "it honestly was the best move I've ever made."

"I initially chose RVC because of the reasonable tuition and the ease of getting to campus," said Timmy. He stays at RVC for "the amazing teachers who are always willing to help."

According to RVC automotive faculty John Skupien, "Timmy is very positive, and it's almost infectious. He takes on whatever challenge we give him while maintaining his usual positive attitude." That positive outlook comes in handy for Timmy. "In my journey, there have been some challenges because

I don't know everything like I'd like to think. There's always a new or different way of doing something to a vehicle. I've learned how my professors would go about doing something, and I have truly learned from them," he explained.

He just completed his first year of automotive studies and was seen onstage in three Starlight productions this summer. Not only has Timmy become a member of Starlight Theatre's day crew, but he was also seen in *The Little Mermaid*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *How I Became a Pirate*. Timmy has found that he can combine his passions for automotive and the arts at RVC. Picking one over the other wasn't a choice he had to make here.

"I would just like to say the Starlight experience has been amazing, and now I'm hooked and do not want to give this up," said Timmy.

"RVC has helped me in many ways. Right out of high school, I always assumed I'd never be good enough for college or have what it takes. My drive for automotive has always been so strong — I have been doing it since I could walk and turn a wrench with my uncle. I always wanted to get my degree, one to help me in this big world, and two to be the first of eight kids to get their degree," continued Timmy.

After finishing his degree at RVC, Timmy plans to find employment in an auto shop in Rockford. And, he plans to stay involved at Starlight Theatre. He is, after all, hooked.



Timmy getting ready to take the stage in *The Little Mermaid* at Starlight Theatre

Timmy has this advice for students considering RVC.

"If I could say one thing, it would be, come along and begin your journey here. The welcoming and energizing atmosphere is so strong, and there's always help right around the corner."

To learn more, visit RockValleyCollege.edu/Automotive and RVCStarlight.com



The Comedy of Errors

September 22-25, 29 & October 1

Performed rain or shine under the stars on the lawn at Starlight Theatre — just as Shakespeare intended.

Fall
Productions
at
Starlight
Theatre



The Rocky Horror Show

October 20-22, 27-29 at 7:30 p.m.

October 31 at midnight

Performances will be held on the Starlight Stage.

ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CENTER OPENS IN BELVIDERE



Many people experience several job changes in their lifetime. In fact, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Americans hold an average of 12 jobs in their lifetime. And with increased availability of courses, training opportunities, and enhanced technology – it's becoming easier, and more common, for people in our community to advance their careers.

This is true for Erica Turner, a welding graduate of Rock Valley College. After graduating high school, Erica enrolled in college to pursue Sports Management. She was a three-sport athlete in soccer, basketball, and softball. However, in her second college semester, she unexpectedly had to stop playing sports and ultimately decided to drop out of college.

Erica worked many jobs before finding her true passion – welding. Working as a Powder Coat Painter, she was fascinated by the work of the welding team, who were right across from her workstation. "I've always loved making things and getting my hands dirty, but I never really thought about how I could make that into a career until now," shared Erica. This spark inspired Erica to advance her career in welding.

"I chose to attend Rock Valley College because it was close to home, and I knew it was a great

school," said Erica. "And I honestly couldn't have done it without my wife, my support system." Erica's wife supported her career change and helped make the transition back to college as smooth as possible by helping Erica find a class schedule to fit around her work schedule.

Erica is proud to be part of the ATC's history as a member of the first class of students. "It was jaw-dropping," Erica recalled the first day she and her classmates stepped inside the ATC, "It humbled us to come to the new facility with all of the new technology."

The ATC advanced education and hands-on training with dedicated program spaces, classrooms, labs, and new equipment. Erica added, "We can see what the instructor is doing from our booths, through the mounted TVs." During her time at the ATC, Erica worked as a student worker alongside George Bane, RVC Welding Instructor. She added, "George is an absolute genius. He knows so much about welding and brings over 30 years of experience." As a student worker, Erica assisted with prep work – like cutting pieces for other classes – and continued to expand her knowledge in the trades.

THE SPARK THAT INSPIRED ERICA TO ADVANCE HER CAREER IN WELDING

Erica credited her success to the positive connections made with faculty, including her Welding Instructors – Bill Isham and Jeffrey Petty. "One of my favorite things about Rock Valley is the camaraderie between the faculty and students," said Erica. "In my experience, the instructors have felt more like friends or mentors than teachers. They don't just teach you how to weld; they truly enjoy what they do, which rubs off on us as students and allows us to have fun while we learn."

And her success extended beyond the classroom.

This spring, Erica was invited to become a member of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society. To be formally inducted into PTK, students must have completed at least 12 credit hours and have a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA. "Being inducted into this prestigious group was definitely a highlight of my life," shared Erica, "and I could not have done it without the support of all of my family and the staff here at the ATC." Erica completed her degree in May 2022. She plans to advance her stick welding skills and hopes to make time for traveling.

For others considering Rock Valley College, Erica advised, "I definitely think it is worth it. Not only will you get a great education, but you will also meet great friends, instructors, and professors that will stick with you for life."



After nearly a decade of discussion and planning, Rock Valley College officially opened its Advanced Technology Center (ATC) at a formal ribbon-cutting event on March 30, 2022.

The new 77,000 square-foot facility is located off Business 20 in Belvidere, IL and houses many of RVC's manufacturing, technology, and industrial-based programs. The ATC will offer credit and non-credit programs, including certificate programs and stackable credential models, to help students advance faster.

"The ATC will be a regional training hub that will address the workforce pipeline in some of our area's most needed fields like manufacturing, transportation, and logistics," said RVC President Dr. Howard Spearman. "We will do this through existing programs and customized training designed to address the specific and unique needs of our industry partners."

The following programs are currently offered at the ATC: welding, mechatronics, CNC machining, forklift training, English as a Second Language (ESL), and traffic safety. The Belvidere, IL facility offers innovative, hands-on learning opportunities to help both RVC students and currently-employed workers advance their futures toward high-demand jobs with local manufacturers.

For more information about the ATC, visit RockValleyCollege.edu/ATC

**Free
Tuition
for ATC
Programs**





Illinois Community College Trustees Association Awards

Ann Kerwitz, RVC Assistant to the President, was awarded the **Professional Board Staff Member Award**, which recognizes exemplary performance in support of an Illinois community college board of trustees.



Evelyn Molina, RVC Running Start Class of 2022 and 2021-22 Student Trustee, was presented the **Gigi Campbell Student Trustee Excellence Scholarship**, which recognizes exemplary leadership among peers.



New Student Trustee Announced

Ryan Russell, a 2020 graduate of Byron High School, was sworn in as the **2022-23 Rock Valley College Board of Trustees Student Trustee**. RVC student trustees serve as a liaison between the Student Government Association and the Board of Trustees.



RVC PTK Earns Regional Awards

Rock Valley College's honor society, **Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)**, attended its Illinois Regional Convention and Honors Institute in June. They **received seven awards** at the annual Regional Hallmark Awards Ceremony including the highest level of achievement, the **Five Star Chapter Award**.

RVC Employee Recognition Awards

Faculty of the Year
John Skupien
Automotive Associate Professor



Employee of the Year
Terrica Huntley
Dean of Students



Leader of the Year
Janet Taylor
Executive Director of Plant Operations and Maintenance



Rookie of the Year
Craig Baker
Truck Driver Training Specialist



RVC Athletics: Home of Champions

RVC Women's Bowling
Claims First NJCAA National Championship

RVC Men's Bowling
Claims Second NJCAA National Championship

RVC Softball
Captures Eighth Straight NJCAA DIII Softball National Championship



RVC Coaches Recognized with Awards

The Illinois Basketball Coaches Association (ICBA) nominated **Darryl Watkins** (women's basketball head coach) and **Tyler Bredehoeft** (men's basketball head coach) as **NJCAA Co-Coach of the Year** recipients.



RVC co-head coaches **Darin Monroe** and **Vivi Marquez** were named **Coach of the Tournament** for the eighth straight year after guiding the Golden Eagles to their eighth national championship since 2011.

RVC Hall of Fame Class of 2022

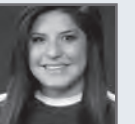
Misty Opat (2009-18, women's basketball)

Craig Doty (2012-16, men's basketball)

Laterrion Davis (2015-17, men's basketball)

Viviana Marquez (2013-15, softball)

Natalie Olsen (2009-10, volleyball)



NJCAA Region IV Hall of Fame Class of 2022

Kristy Bourquin (2008-09, volleyball)

Cierra Morris (2009-11, women's basketball)

Laterrion Davis (2013-14 and 2015-16, men's basketball), and

RVC Softball (2018, National Championship Team)



REMOVING BARRIERS FOR **SUCCESS**

"There were times that I needed to have gas in my vehicle, and I didn't have money, and the program helped provide gas cards for that," said Titania Smith through tear-filled eyes as she stood at the podium on graduation day. "I would like to say I'm really thankful for Rock Valley College having a program like this because there are people out there that do want to go back to school, and it is a struggle financially. And this program was very helpful for that. I'm very grateful for the WEI program, all of its life coaches, and just being able to make it through it."

Launched in 2020 by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) is a grant-funded program currently found on 18 community college campuses across Illinois, including Rock Valley College. The program addresses obstacles to student success for minority students and students from at-risk communities. Through free tuition, financial assistance for transportation and childcare, and career and life coaching, WEI at Rock Valley College helps program participants earn credentials, start new careers, and increase earnings.

"The Workforce Equity Initiative grant allows community colleges to continue removing barriers to completing a credential for adults of poverty and African Americans from distressed communities," said RVC President Dr. Howard J. Spearman. "When adults earn credentials that lead to jobs offering higher wages, it not only changes the trajectory of their lives but also the lives of their families; while strengthening the community, growing the workforce, expanding businesses, and creating a more vibrant regional economy."

In December 2021, ICCB announced third-year WEI funding and awarded \$18.7 million to 18 participating community colleges throughout Illinois. With support from Governor JB Pritzker, Speaker Pro Tempore Jehan Gordon-Booth, the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, and local legislator Rep. Maurice West, funding of WEI allows participating colleges to develop or enhance training and career pathway programs in high-demand employment sectors experiencing workforce gaps. These areas include healthcare, manufacturing, construction, transportation, information technology, and emergency services.

The end goal of WEI is to help participants secure full-time employment in jobs paying at least 30 percent above the regional living wage. To date, the program has awarded 148 credentials, and WEI graduates earn an average hourly wage of \$20.15.

For more information about the statewide initiative, visit IllinoisWEI.org. For local information on WEI at Rock Valley College, visit RockValleyCollege.edu/WEI.

Participants in this initiative will be provided short-term educational opportunities that will lead to employment specifically in the sectors of:



**DENTAL
ASSISTANT**



**TRUCK DRIVER
TRAINING**



**CNC
OPERATION**



**MEDICAL
BILLING &
CODING**



MECHATRONICS



WELDING

TUITION FULLY COVERED

The RVC-WEI initiative will provide you with stipends to cover the cost of tuition, fees, and materials for courses required to complete the identified short-term certificate. You will also be provided with wrap-around support services, such as life and career coaching and financial support for transportation and child care, addressing your individual needs to be successful in completing educational requirements and securing post-completion employment.

ICAPS: ONLY THE **BEGINNING**

"Obtaining my GED and ICAPS certificate is not the culmination of a goal. It is only the beginning," explained José Bañuelos.

José recently earned his IT Network Technician Certification through Rock Valley College's ICAPS (Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) Program. ICAPS is an academic support program for students pursuing college certifications in high-demand occupations.

José owns two successful businesses, a garage door repair and installation company, and a construction company. Working full-time and managing multiple companies can be challenging while in school, but the ICAPS Program provided José with the support he needed to complete his certification to help him continue growing his businesses and further his education.

"There's a lot of support for all of the classes," shared José. "In a way, it makes it very easy for us to accomplish our goals, and I'm very grateful for that level of support."

José moved to the United States from Mexico City when he was eighteen. At that time, he began his education by taking RVC's English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Once he reached a certain level, he realized it was in his best interest to keep going. "Then I got my GED to take college classes. I took some classes and then started working full-time," explained José. After many years, he decided it was time to go back to school.

"As the years passed, I realized that I was falling behind because I had not had updated computer training," said José.

"Everything keeps changing, so I decided I needed to continue my education."



José with Jenny Morgan, the RVC Transitions and ICAPS Coordinator

José now has his IT Network Certification and is about to start classes for his certificate in Industrial Welding through the ICAPS Program. And he doesn't plan on stopping there.

José provides the student address at the GED and ICAPS graduation ceremony

"To me, it's kind of a big deal because my background was limited," said José. "I don't have a degree yet, and I have the highest level of education in my family. So for me to earn an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or eventually something higher will be an incentive for my younger nephews and cousins to follow. I can show my younger relatives that they can also do it. They are not limited to just high school."

"José is such an inspiration. He has had many challenges in his life, but he did not let them discourage him from his goals," said Jenny Morgan, RVC Transitions and ICAPS Coordinator. "He approaches challenges with creativity and with determination. Now that José has completed the IT ICAPS program, he plans to take welding classes. He is always looking to add one more tool to his tool belt for his small business. I believe that with his newfound momentum, he will go far!"

José's advice for someone considering a return to school. "Once you're there, you'll find the time and find a way," said José. "Even for someone working full-time and taking one class each semester, that's sufficient. It might take a little longer, but it's better than not doing it at all."

To learn more about the ICAPS Program at RVC, visit RockValleyCollege.edu/ICAPS.

FY 2022

DONOR IMPACT

AT A GLANCE

\$1.75M

DOLLARS WERE GIVEN TO RVC THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF OUR DONORS. EACH DOLLAR DONATED IS AN INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY AND THE DREAMS OF OUR STUDENTS.



\$400,000

WERE AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO

269 DESERVING STUDENTS

\$407,321

DOLLARS WERE GENEROUSLY DONATED TO SUPPORT SPECIFIC PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT RVC



EMERGENCY RELIEF AWARDS ALLOWED

14 students

TO CONTINUE ON THEIR EDUCATIONAL PATH BY REMOVING FINANCIAL BARRIERS THAT MAY HAVE OTHERWISE CAUSED THEM TO DROP OUT

13

NEW ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS WERE CREATED TO AWARD



\$139,000

MORE IN STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

\$1M

DOLLARS WERE RAISED THROUGH THE RVC STRONG CAMPAIGN FOR STUDENT SUCCESS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

RVCSTRONG



WE NEED YOUR VOICE

If you are a graduate of Rock Valley College, you are in a unique position to deliver important feedback as we assess how to better connect with you. We invite you to participate in an electronic survey so that we may tailor our communications to your preferences. The survey will only take you a few minutes to complete, but will provide us crucial information as we work toward improving our ever-growing Alumni Network.

To complete the survey, open the camera on your smartphone, and hover over the QR Code to open the link. If you have any questions regarding the survey, how to get involved (for free) in the Alumni Network, or the resources available to you as an alumnus of Rock Valley College, contact:

Rachel St. John
Director of Development and Alumni Relations
R.St.John@RockValleyCollege.edu
(815) 921-4503



FROM STUDENT TO CEO

Dietmar Goellner (class of 1976), RVC's latest Distinguished Alumnus, is no stranger to hard work, perseverance, and grit. As a student at Auburn High School, Dietmar faced many challenges in high school, including a low ACT score. That score resulted in his high school guidance counselor advising him that he had only a 3% chance of obtaining an Engineering Degree from the University of Illinois. She suggested he refocus his efforts and secure a factory job working for his father's company.

Instead of heeding that advice, Dietmar held steadfastly and told her, "I will get my Engineering Degree from the University of Illinois." And, defying all odds, he did just that. After high school, Dietmar enrolled in RVC where he worked hard and benefited from a very positive experience.

"The professor-to-student ratio was perfect for me. I could not imagine sitting as a freshman in a large university auditorium being lectured by a teaching assistant with 500 other students," explained Dietmar.

After his time at RVC, he applied to the College of Industrial Engineering at the University of Illinois, and to his delight, he was accepted as a junior. "I subsequently received both a bachelor's and a master's from one of the finest engineering colleges in the country," Dietmar said proudly. "A few years later, I received a Master's in Business Administration from Rockford University." Dietmar held true to his words to his guidance counselor who doubted him.

"Rock Valley College paved the way for me to fulfill a lifelong dream. I now serve as Chairman and CEO of Goellner, Inc. as well as Advanced Machine & Engineering, and Hennig, Inc. We are a \$150 Million global manufacturing company headquartered in Rockford. I will always be grateful for my community college education at Rock Valley for paving the way for me," he said.

Nominated for the coveted RVC Distinguished Alumnus Award by retired RVC professor of Engineering Eugene Pocs, RVC inducted Dietmar at a luncheon surrounded by colleagues, family, RVC Foundation donors, and current RVC Foundation scholarship recipients. Professor Pocs' nomination emphasized Dietmar's professionalism, servant leadership, and commitment to our community. Dietmar's proud former professor shared, "Dietmar has distinction in our community thanks to his generosity of resources, time, and talent."

As a leader within our regional manufacturing industry, Dietmar now serves as a champion for our students who will follow in his manufacturing footsteps. Whether offering internship opportunities for our students or investing in scholarships through the RVC Foundation, Dietmar is committed to empowering our future workforce.

Dietmar is a shining example of the boundless opportunities available at Rock Valley College to our region's residents. Student today, CEO tomorrow.



Dietmar with RVC President Dr. Howard J. Spearman after receiving his Alumni of the Year Medallion

A YEAR IN REVIEW: RVC ATHLETICS

Rock Valley College has been approved to transition to NJCAA DII starting Fall 2022. At the Division II level, RVC will be allowed to provide student-athletes with athletic scholarships to cover tuition and fees. This will allow RVC to attract quality student-athletes and provide them with financial support to pursue academic success. "The best of RVC athletics is still to come", said Darin Monroe, RVC Athletic Director. Dr. Spearman, RVC President, added, "Our Board recognizes that RVC has a long history of producing scholars and athletes. With 23 national titles and the most recent being, Softball's 8th in a row, our athletes have shown they are ready for increased competition." 2021-2022 will be the final year for RVC to compete at the NJCAA DIII level.



TEAM AWARDS

- **RVC Women's Volleyball** DIII National Runner-Up
- **RVC Men's Soccer** Competed in Region IV Semifinals
- **RVC Women's Soccer** Competed in Region IV Semifinals
- **RVC Men's Basketball** Third in NJCAA DIII National Tournament
- **RVC Women's Basketball** Competed in NJCAA DIII National Tournament
- **RVC Baseball** Competed in Region IV Tournament

NJCAA REGION IV DIII

- **First Team All-Region:** 19, **Second Team All-Region:** 15, and **All-Tournament Team:** 13
- **Player of the Year:** Aleksa Markovic (men's basketball), Camron Blank (women's basketball), Hannah Hockerman (softball), Addison Metts (volleyball)
- **Tournament MVP:** Chris Burnell (men's basketball), Camron Blank (women's basketball)
- **Coach of the Year:** Tyler Bredehoeft (men's basketball), Darryl Watkins (women's basketball), Darin Monroe (softball), Kristy Pierce (volleyball)
- **Team Champion:** RVC Men's Basketball, RVC Women's Basketball, RVC Softball, RVC Volleyball

NORTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONFERENCE (N4C)

- **First Team All-Conference:** 17, **Second Team All-Conference:** 14
- **Most Valuable Player:** Poe Reh (men's soccer), Addison Metts (volleyball), Camron Blank (women's basketball), Hannah Hockerman (softball)
- **Coach of the Year:** Darin Monroe and Vivi Marquez (softball), Darryl Watkins (women's basketball), Kristy Pierce (volleyball)
- **Team Champion:** RVC Women's Basketball, RVC Softball, RVC Volleyball

ILLINOIS ALPHA CHAPTER OF THETA CHI ALPHA STUDENT-ATHLETES

Reese Weber (volleyball), Holland Smits (volleyball), Iskandar Graf (volleyball), Samantha Ingram (volleyball), Alexis Trank (women's soccer), Makayla Haight (women's soccer), Rachel Rittmeyer (women's soccer/women's basketball), Kaycia Zimmerman (women's basketball), Kayla Freiberg (softball), Hannah Hockerman (softball), Scout Kram (softball), Evy Polsfuss (softball), Kelli Riordan (softball), Sebastian Centeno (men's soccer), James Akers (baseball), Reese Gaber (baseball), David Galassi (baseball), Seth Greve (baseball), Nate Tepp (men's bowling), Teagan Peterson (women's bowling), and Joana Araujo (women's bowling).

NJCAA DIII FIRST TEAM ALL-AMERICAN

- **Women's Bowling:** Jocelynn Eggert, Tegan Peterson, Olivia Watton
- **Men's Bowling:** Zach Joiner, James Stewart
- **Women's Basketball:** Camron Blank
- **Volleyball:** Samantha Ingram, Addison Metts
- **Softball:** Hannah Hockerman, Evy Polsfuss, Kelli Riordan

NJCAA DIII SECOND TEAM ALL-AMERICAN

- **Women's Basketball:** Ashanti Brown
- **Men's Basketball:** Aleksa Markovic
- **Men's Soccer:** Poe Reh
- **Volleyball:** Madisen Perry
- **Softball:** Kaitlin Stefek

2021-2022 NJCAA ALL-ACADEMIC TEAMS

RVC Women's Bowling (3.4 Team GPA), **RVC Softball** (3.3 Team GPA), and **RVC Volleyball** (3.0 Team GPA).

2021-2022 NJCAA ALL-ACADEMIC STUDENT-ATHLETES

Kaycia Zimmerman (women's basketball), Rachel Rittmeyer (women's basketball/women's soccer), Jade Newson (women's basketball), Samantha Ingram (volleyball), Izandra Graf (volleyball), Holland Smits (volleyball), Hayley Starkey (volleyball), Madison Koelker (volleyball), Lexi Trank (women's soccer), Julia Theien (women's soccer), Tegan Peterson (women's bowling), Joanna Mae Araujo (women's bowling), Nate Tepp (men's bowling), Madison Carlson (softball), Kayla Freiberg (softball), and Allison Rataczak (softball).

DII starts this fall! Visit RVCsports.com for season schedules, statistics, and more!

A RUNNING START TO BLEND LOVE OF **TECH AND ART**

Lucy Njaramba graduated with her high school diploma from Harlem High School and her associate's degree from Rock Valley College this spring. This accomplishment is possible because they are a second-year Running Start student, which means they get to earn high school and college credits while taking classes at RVC.

Running Start allows high school students to explore areas of study beyond the standard offerings at their high schools. At RVC, Lucy has been able to begin studying computer animation, allowing her to bring together her artsy and technical sides.

"I've always had an interest in film and TV, more specifically cartoons. I've been drawing ever since I could hold a crayon, so getting into how movies are made has been something I'm interested in." Lucy has started to gain the skills to bring her drawings to life. She compares animation to being a puppeteer with a computer.

"A big factor that plays into the kind of stories I want to tell is entertaining ones, like comedies because I know everyone needs to relax and laugh every now and again. I know I do with how our world is currently. So hopefully, what I make can help make people smile more."

One of Lucy's favorite animated movies is Disney Pixar's Inside Out. "I saw that and thought, oh, you're able to tell these deep stories that you can show to kids, and that's something cool that I'd like to do." In addition to telling stories that make people laugh, Lucy wants to help tell stories that haven't always been mainstream, like the stories of LGBTQ+, Black, and indigenous people.

Lucy is now at DePaul University studying animation. They dream of one day working at Pixar, even if that means delivering coffee. We have a feeling she will be doing much more than that based on their success at RVC.

We asked Lucy what advice they would give a high school student considering the Running Start program, and she stressed the importance of being active and reaching out if you need help.



"Being in a college environment for the first time, you may be a little worried about talking to your peers in class, teachers, or advisors, but do that as much you can," shared Lucy.

If you're a student apprehensive about applying for Running Start, Lucy said, "Do it anyway because sometimes we shoot ourselves in the foot before we even give ourselves a chance. It's a good opportunity you may not get in the future, and experiencing the freedom college gives you is worth it."

To learn more about RVC Early College options, visit RockValleyCollege.edu/EarlyCollege



Lucy addresses a full house at the Annual Sankofa Ceremony honoring African American graduates at RVC

FLY LIKE AN EAGLE

Ten Rock Valley College Aviation Maintenance Technology students were recently named as AAR CORP Fellows. The AAR EAGLE Fellowship Program, part of AAR's Eagle Career Pathway Program, provides recipients tuition assistance and the opportunity to work at AAR's Rockford MRO facility while completing the Airframe and Powerplant program at Rock Valley College. The students recognized include:

Class of 2022

Blayden Colwell, South Beloit, IL
Ruben Salinas, Jr., Rockford, IL
James Scribner, Genoa, IL
Jeffrey Penny, Aurora, IL

Class of 2023

Alex Kern, Rockford, IL
Alex McCraney-King, Rockford, IL
Aaron Olvera, Rockford, IL
Christian Roggensack, Loves Park, IL
Quentin Shimmins, Rockford, IL
Joel Todd, Rockford, IL

Rock Valley College students were excited to be honored during a small private ceremony. Jeffrey Penny (pictured) was one of the students in attendance. "This fellowship with AAR is an amazing opportunity and I am very grateful to have been chosen," Jeffrey said. "The fact that I will be graduating with no debt and have a job lined up has relieved a lot of stress, allowing me to focus more on my education. I look forward to furthering my knowledge and experience through my career at AAR."

The partnership between RVC and AAR has flourished this year. "Our partnership is truly an example for others to follow. AAR kept coming back to the table time and again as we explored mutually beneficial ways to grow our organizations. We are so grateful for this opportunity that they have created for our students," said RVC President Dr. Howard J. Spearman.

"We are the largest aircraft maintenance provider in the U.S., and we are number three in the world. When you step into AAR, you're not just stepping into Rockford, but you're stepping into the ocean of opportunities to grow; to make your career within a large company with approximately 5,000 employees," said Dany Kleiman, AAR Group Vice President for Repair & Engineering.

For more information about RVC's Aviation Technology program, visit RockValleyCollege.edu/Aviation



AREAS OF STUDY

Rock Valley College offers courses in a wide-variety of areas. Whether you are looking to train for a career and move directly into the workforce or to transfer to a four-year college or university, RVC has the courses and programs you need to succeed. * Offered as A.A.S. Degree

ALLIED HEALTH

Dental Hygiene*
Nursing*
Respiratory Care*
Phlebotomy Technician
Surgical Technology

APPRENTICESHIPS/INDUSTRIAL

Automotive Services Technology*
Aviation Maintenance Technology*
Electrician Apprenticeship*
Tool & Die Precision Machinist Apprenticeship
Welding

ARTS & HUMANITIES

Art
Graphic Arts Technology*
Humanities
Modern Language (French, German, Spanish)
Music
Philosophy
Theater

BUSINESS

Accounting*
Business Administration*
Office Professional*

COMMUNICATION

Composition and Literature
English
Mass Communication
Speech

COMPUTERS & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Computers and Information Systems*
Cisco Networking*
Data Assurance & IT Security*
Web Programming & Design*

EDUCATION & PUBLIC SERVICE

Criminal Justice*
Early Childhood Education*
Education
Fire Science*
Fitness, Wellness and Sport*

ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

Electronic Engineering Technology*
Engineering
Manufacturing Engineering Technology*
NIU Engineering@RVC*

LIFE SCIENCES

Biology

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Astronomy
Atmospheric Science
Chemistry
Geology
Physical Geography
Physics

RVC BRIDGE | SUMMER 2022

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Anthropology
Economics
History
Political Science
Psychology
Sociology

CERTIFICATES

Career education certificate programs are developed and offered in areas where job entry training and educational requirements usually can be met in less than two years. A number of certificates are offered either as part of career education degree programs or stand-alone certificates.

ACCOUNTING

Accounting/Income Tax Fundamentals
Professional Bookkeeping

ALLIED HEALTH

Nursing Aide (CNA)
Phlebotomy Technician
Surgical Technology

AUTOMOTIVE

Automotive Heating and Air Conditioning
Automotive Electrical
Automotive Engine
Automotive Engine Performance
Automotive Suspension and Brakes
Automotive Technician
Automotive Transmission

AVIATION MAINTENANCE

Airframe Technician
Aviation Maintenance
Powerplant Technician

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Business Fundamentals
Entrepreneurship
Management
Marketing

COMPUTERS & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

C/C++ Programming
Mobile Application Development
Visual Basic

CISCO NETWORKING

Cisco Advanced Networking
Cisco Networking
Microsoft Server Administration
Network Technician

DATA ASSURANCE & IT SECURITY

Cisco CCNA
Cisco CCNP
Voice Over IP

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early Childhood Educator
Early Childhood Educator Assistant

ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Basic Electronics
Electronics

FIRE SCIENCE

Basic Operations Firefighter
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
Foundation of the Fire Service

FITNESS, WELLNESS & SPORT

Coaching Education
Personal Training

GRAPHIC ARTS TECHNOLOGY

Prepress

MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Basic Quality
CAD
CNC
Certified Manufacturing Associate

MASS COMMUNICATION

Media Production Specialist
Multimedia Journalism

MECHATRONICS

Advanced Mechatronics
Fundamentals of Mechatronics

NURSING

Nursing Aide (CNA)

OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

Administrative Assistant
Medical Coding
MOS/Word
MOS/Excel
MOS/PowerPoint
MOS/Access

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Fundamentals of Supply Chain Management

WEB PROGRAMMING & DESIGN

Web Design
Web Development

WELDING

Advanced Welder
Industrial Welder

Transfer Degrees

Save money by completing two years at RVC and transfer to the college or university of your choice. Upon completion of credit coursework at RVC, students may earn one of the following transfer degrees:

Associate in Engineering Science (A.E.S.)

Associate in Science (A.S.)

Associate of Arts

RockValleyCollege

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