Student Services and Development

Annual Report 2024-2025

Elgin Community College

Student Services and Development

Contents

SSD Org Chart 3

Introduction 4

At a Glance 5

Student Demographics 5

Academic Advising 6

Admissions, First Stop, Registration and Records 8

Athletics and Wellness 12

Career Development Services 15

Center for Global Engagement 17

Financial Aid and Scholarships 21

Recruitment and Outreach Services 24

Student Access and Disability Services 28

Student Experience and Engagement Center 31

Student Success Coaching 36

Testing Services 39

Transfer Services 43

TRiO SSS and ESL 47

Veterans Services 51

Wellness Services 54

SSD Org Chart

AVP of Student Services and Development
John H. Long

Office Coordinator
Kassi Medina

Dean of Students
Vinny Cascio
Since April 2025

- ADA, Student Access & Disability Services
- Career Development Services
- Wellness Services
- Veterans Services
- Student Conduct

Assoc Dean of Student Success
Natalie Leisering

- Transfer Services
- Academic Advising
- Student Success Coaches
- TRiO Student Support Services

Director of Athletics
Kent Payne

- Athletic Coordinators
- Sports Information and Academic Specialist
- Athletics/Fitness Centers

Assistant Dean of the Student Experience and Engagement
Amybeth Maurer

- First Year Experience
- Student Life

Dean of Enrollment and Student Financial Svcs
Amy Perrin

- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- First Stop and Registration
- Admissions and Records
- Recruitment and Outreach
- Center for Global Engagement
- Testing Services

Introduction

Dear Board of Trustees, Dr. Heinrich, Colleagues, and the ECC Community,

It is my privilege to present the 2024–2025 Annual Report for the Student Services & Development (SSD) Division at Elgin Community College. This year's report reflects the unwavering dedication of our team to advancing student success, expanding access, and enriching the ECC experience for all.

Throughout the past year, we have embraced new opportunities, responded to evolving student needs, and strengthened our ability to remove barriers to achievement. From implementing innovative student support strategies to expanding community partnerships, SSD has remained at the heart of ECC's mission—helping students not only persist, but to thrive as they take action to improve their lives through learning.

Within these pages, you will find a comprehensive look at the measurable impact of our programs, the outcomes of new and continuing initiatives, and the voices of our students, whose experiences and successes define the purpose of our work. The data, stories, and highlights presented here are the result of collaboration across the College and the dedication of colleagues who approach their work with care, creativity, optimism, and a commitment to equity.

As we celebrate the achievements of this year, we also look ahead with a shared resolve to continuously improve the student experience, adapt to changing needs, and ensure that every ECC student has the resources, support, and encouragement they need to reach their goals.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my colleagues in Student Services & Development, whose dedication and passion inspire me daily, and to Kassi Medina, whose exceptional talents and commitment were instrumental in bringing this report to life.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in making ECC a place where every student's potential can be realized.

Sincerely,

John H. Long
Associate Vice President of Student Services & Development
Elgin Community College
August 2025

At a Glance

17,161
Students Enrolled

17,780
Academic Advising Sessions

7,483
Spartan Food Pantry Visits

1,028
Success Coach appointments

129
Study Abroad participants

821
Career Dev. Appointments

4,049
MyECC app downloads

650+
Participants at Experience ECC

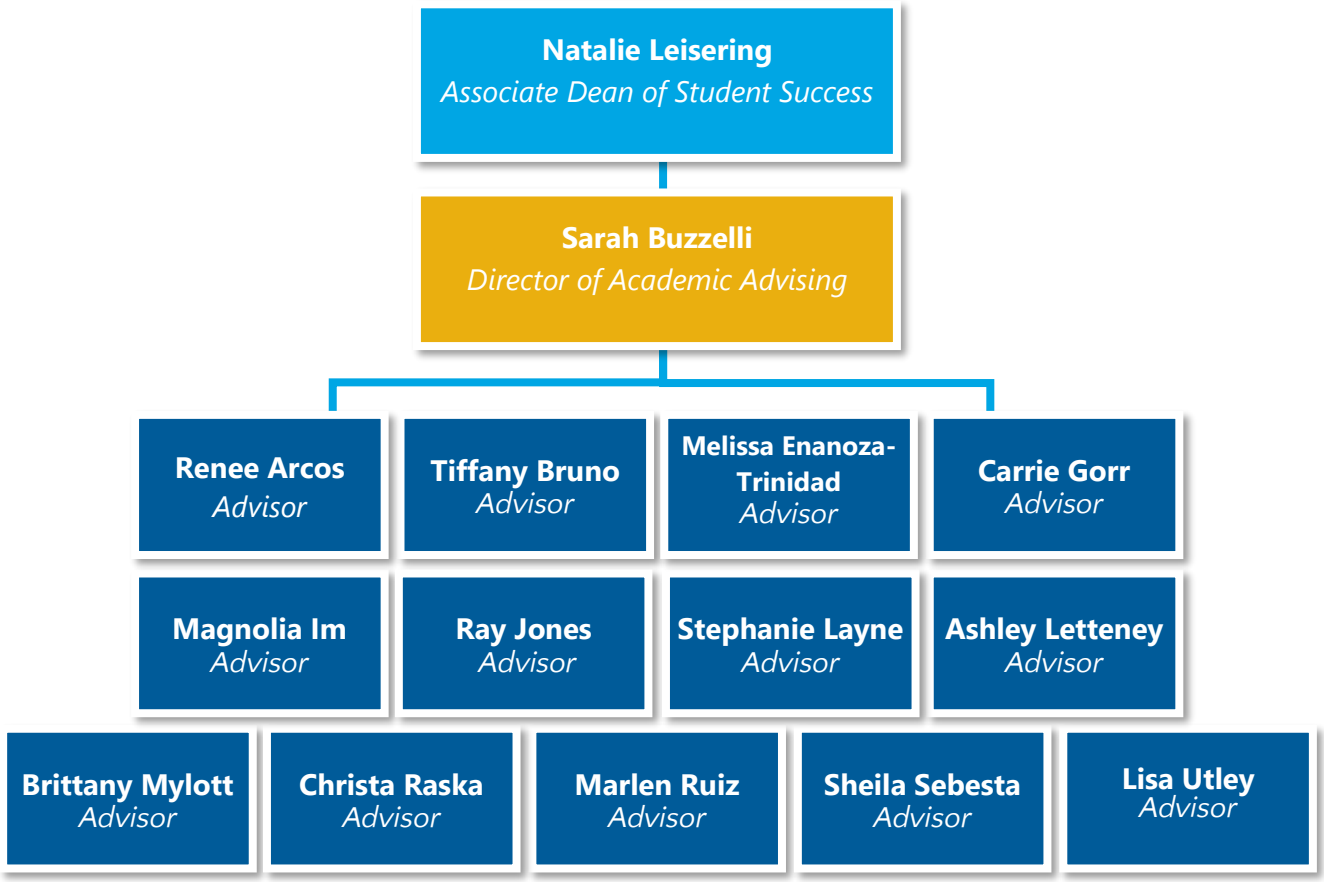
Student Demographics

- **52%** Hispanic or Latino
- **30%** White
- **6%** Asian
- **4%** Black or African American
- **3%** Two or More Races
- **3%** Unknown
- **1%** US Nonresident

Academic Advising

The Academic Advising Department is responsible for guiding and supporting students in their academic journey. Our advisors assist students in selecting courses, creating an academic plan, and ensuring they meet graduation requirements. We help students succeed academically and, ultimately, professionally.

Our Team



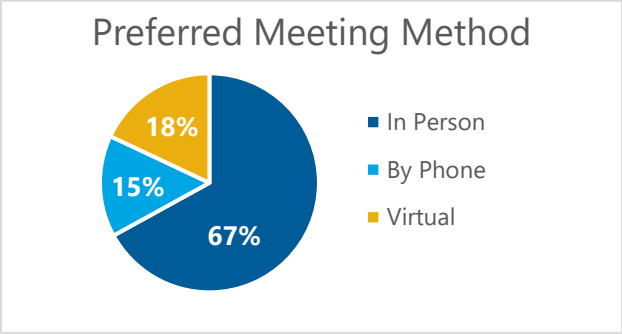
Academic Advising Sessions

17,780
Sessions

Students are able to meet with an advisor in-person, virtually, or over the phone. Students can also come in during walk-in hours as well as email advisors to ask questions or share their academic concerns.

Students' preferred channels of meeting with advisors

Of all the appointments made over the past academic year, in-person and virtual appointments both increased, and phone appointments decreased. In-person appointments reached 67%, increasing by 4% from last year. Virtual appointments were 18%, which is an increase of 4%. Just 15% of academic advising appointments were over the phone, which is a decrase of 9% from the previous year.



Belongingness Series and Professional Development

Academic Advisors participated in various professional development opportunities this academic year, including a home-grown series focused on Belongingness at ECC. Advisors researched special student populations and presented research-focused findings to the Advising group so that all advisors can feel better equipped to promote a sense of belonging for each and every student. Two advisors presented about the Belongingness Series at the Region 5 National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) conference and received great feedback from other institutions about the value of this type of programming within advising spaces. Advisors also had an opportunity to attend conferences and trainings for NACADA, The Illinois Academic Advising Association (ILACADA), Achieving the Dream, and Sharing the Dream.

Just One More Campaign

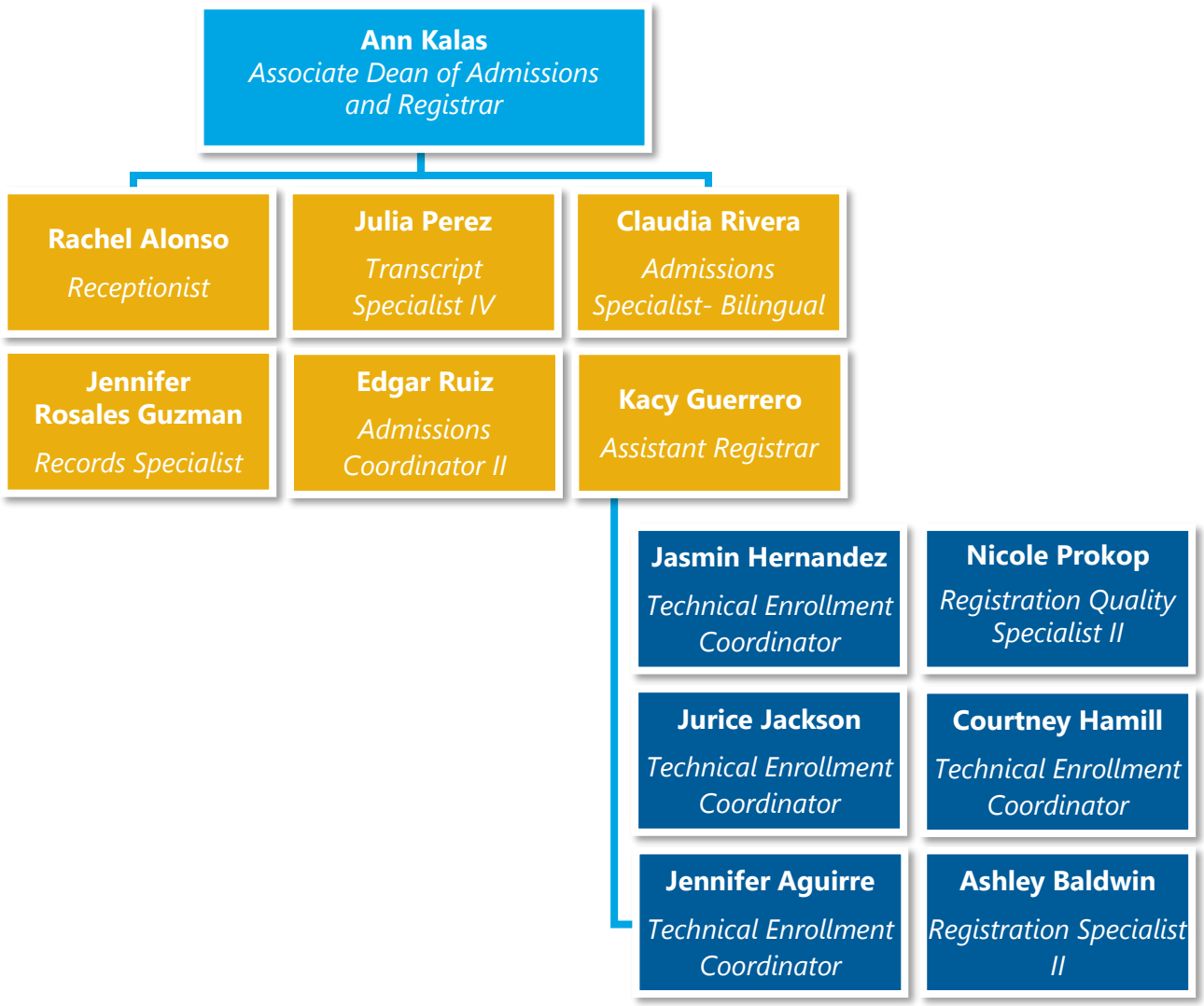
In Fall 2022, the Advising team launched the "Just One More" campaign, encouraging well-positioned students to enroll in one additional class per semester to support timely degree completion and overall academic success.

Building on the success of the pilot, data revealed that students who met with an advisor increased their average credit enrollment from 10 to 11 credits between Fall 2022 and Fall 2023. For Fall 2024, enhancements were made to better identify and monitor participating students, with a focus on both credit accumulation and academic performance. Notably, students who enrolled full time continued to achieve strong academic outcomes, maintaining an average cumulative GPA of 2.92. These results underscore the positive impact of the "Just One More" campaign in supporting student progress toward timely degree completion.

Admissions, First Stop, Registration and Records

Admissions, First Stop, Registration and Records provide critical services to applicants and students from their first steps to apply, complete orientation, register, graduate and then move onto employment or additional education. Some of our services are face to face, and many are behind the scenes. All are critical to the student's experience in moving through the enrollment pipeline and the student experience, through graduation and beyond.

Our Team



Highlights and Accomplishments

By The Numbers		
8,254 Incoming Transcripts Imported	**12,782** Applications Imported	**233** Student Inquiries Imported
14,576 Outgoing Transcripts Fulfilled	**1,726** College Transcripts Evaluated for Transfer Credit	**115** Duplicate Records Resolved

Live Chat

First Stop and Registration continued to engage with students and community members through our live chat platform. From answering questions about enrollment and payment options, to helping navigate key deadlines and resources, live chat has become an essential tool in delivering timely, accessible, and personalized service.

5,688
Live Chat sessions

- 2024SU- 994
- 2024FA- 1,520
- 2025SP- 3,174

This data reflects a 20% increase in overall chats and an 89% increase between spring 2024 and spring 2025- demonstrating both the growing demand for immediate support and our team's commitment to meeting that need effectively.

Graduation

From application to graduation, our teams are proud to serve students every step of the way. Being part of commencement allows us to witness the successes of those we've supported, making it a truly meaningful and rewarding experience. This year, 805 students attended commencement and we conferred 3,016 degrees, certificates, and credentials. Compare these to the previous year's numbers:

805
Students attended commencement

Total number of degrees and certificates conferred:

- May 2024- 1,636

- August 2024- 363
- December 2024- 1,017

Ceremony attendance:

- May 2024- 527
- December 2024- 278

The first graduation ceremony held in the Spartan Events Center (J Building) was Fall 2005 with 139 graduates in attendance. The Spring 2025 graduation hosted 545 graduates between 2 ceremonies. In the 20 years between December 2005 and Spring 2025, the Spartan Events Center has hosted 11,303 graduates in 42 ceremonies.

This number only includes the number of students who participated in the graduation ceremonies. It is not the total number of graduates.

This number does not include the 74 graduates we celebrated at the college's only virtual graduation ceremony of Spring 2020 which took place in the Blizzard Theater and was live streamed.

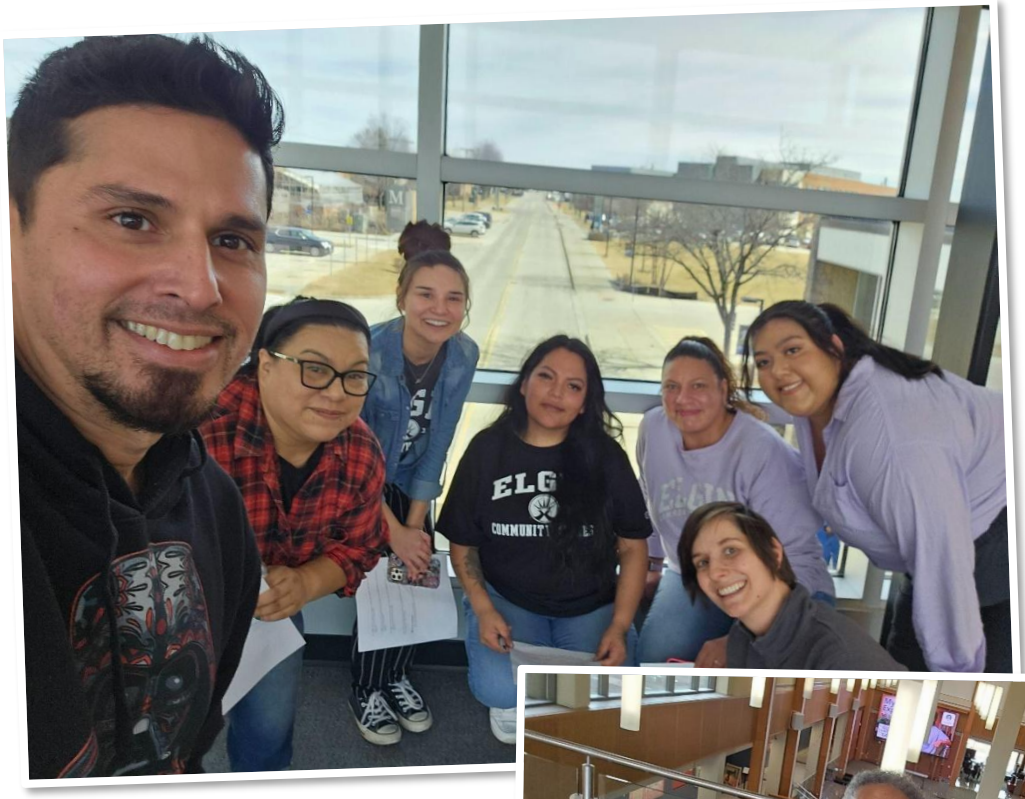
3,016

Degrees, certificates, and credentials conferred

Inaugural Staff Retreat

This year marked our inaugural staff retreat- a half- day event dedicated to team building, professional development, and fun. Held on February 28, the retreat featured interactive workshops on collaboration, FERPA, customer service, and de-escalation strategies featuring Migdalia Perez, Wellness Professional.

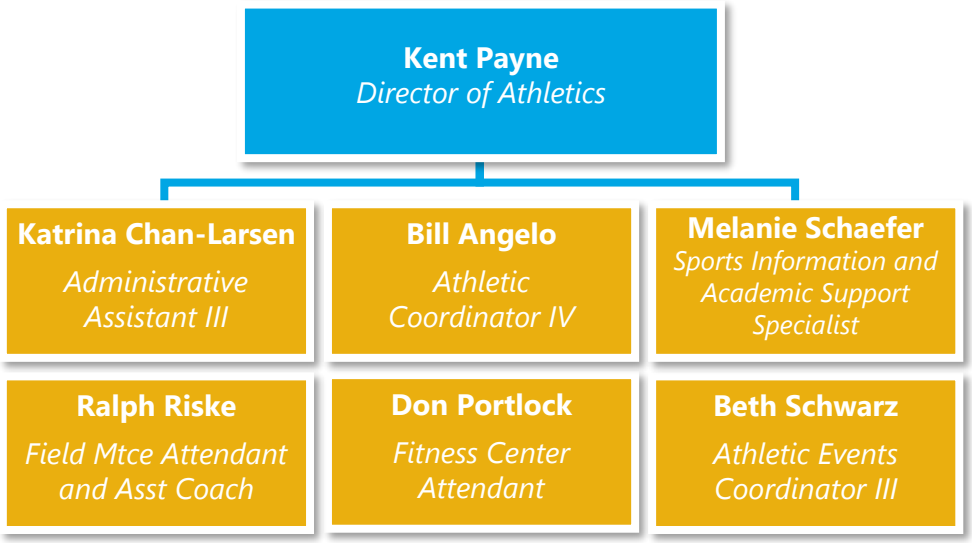
Highlights included a campus-wide scavenger hunt and a shared lunch, fostering stronger connections and deeper appreciation of each other's roles. The retreat not only energized our team but also reinforced our shared commitment to supporting students with excellence.



Athletics and Wellness

Our Athletic Department is a vital component of Elgin Community College. Our team comprises coaches, trainers, administrative staff and departments across campus. We all work together to develop and help athletes excel in both their chosen sports and academics. The Athletic Department also plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with athletic regulations and managing recruitment processes.

Our Team



Athletic Awards

All-Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference.

Our students earned a total of 25 awards. *This represents a 67% increase from last year.*

- **6** Men's Soccer
- **4** Women's Soccer
- **3** Men's Golf
- **3** Men's Basketball
- **2** Women's Basketball
- **7** Baseball

All-Region

Our students earned 10 All-Region awards. *This represents a 100% increase from last year.*

4 Men's Soccer	**2** Women's Soccer
1 Men's Basketball	**3** Baseball

All-American

Three student-athletes earned All-American accolades. The most recent ECC All-American was awarded in the 2021-22 school year.

1 Men's Basketball	**2** Baseball

Academic Awards

(% changes from last year to this year.)

Fall 2024	Spring 2025
31 Honors List +41%	**33** Honors List +57%
18 Dean's List +13%	**17** Dean's List +21%
9 President's List +200%	**16** President's List +100%

Academic All-Conference

34 First-Year Awards

12 Dick Durrant Awards

Student-Athlete GPA Assessment

Students work closely with the Athletics Academic Support Specialist to discuss academic concerns to ensure that they are successful with academic goals. We are happy to report that the average grade point average increased from 2.49 in the 2023-24 academic year to 2.69 in 2024-25. The Spring 2025 GPA (2.86) is the highest recorded semester average in at least four academic years. Approximately 50 student-athletes are continuing their college careers at four-year institutions. Currently, 19 are also continuing their athletic careers.

Board of Trustees Athletic Scholarship

There were 103 scholarships awarded in the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters totaling $261,670.

Also, two students were each awarded a $1700 scholarship from the **Elgin Sports Hall of Fame Foundation** for being outstanding student-athletes at ECC.

Successful Social Media

Each platform (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) continues to grow its audience every academic year.

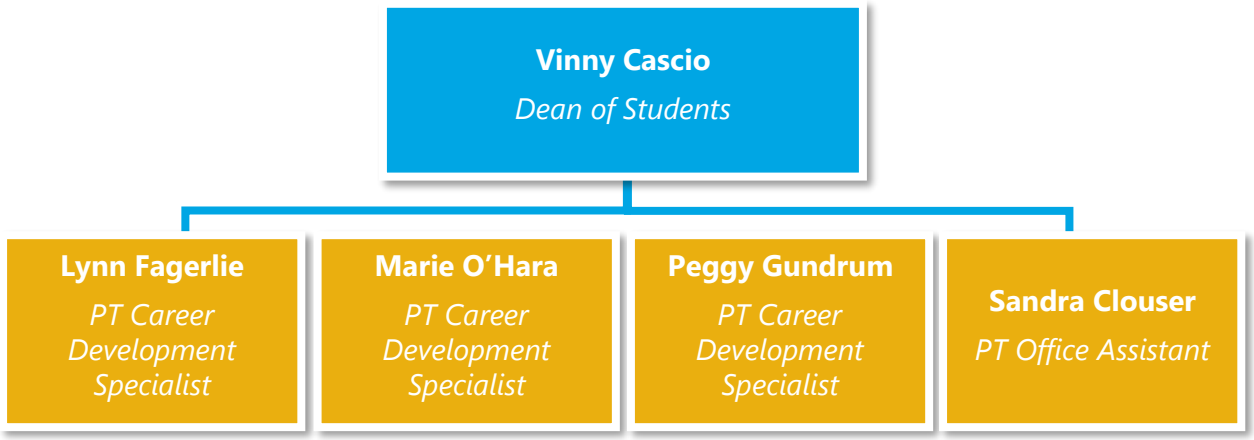
Facebook +19%

Instagram +27%

Twitter +27%

Career Development Services

Career Development Services (CDS) offers a variety of in-person and virtual services to help students choose a major, explore career options, define professional goals, help them with employment search and employability skills.



Our Team

Our team consistently evaluates our programs and services. We are committed to providing students with the support and resources needed to ensure they are on track toward achieving their academic and professional goals.

Our results

One-on-One Appointments

821 students were served through one-on-one appointments with a Career Development Specialist (CDS).

821
Students Served

Choosing a Major and Career Exploration

518
Appointments

Career Development Specialists (CDS) provides each student a personalized 50-minute appointment. Students identify where they are in the career development process, discover opportunities and barriers and locate resources and sources of career information. The specialist works with the student in determining next steps and a plan to achieve their goals.

Career Assessment Package (CAP)

226
CAP sessions

Unique to ECC is the offering of two career assessments utilized in career counseling. The Myers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI) and Strong Interest Inventory (SII) are offered, along with career counseling, in a CAP session. The interpretation of both career assessments is typically completed in 2-4 appointments. Students leave with a good understanding of their personalities and interests and how they align with a career/major choice, and are invited to attend additional career counseling after the CAP interpretation sessions.

The cost of the MBTI and SII is considerably lower than other community colleges in the area. Also unique to ECC, the CAP is offered to District 509 high school juniors and seniors.

Employability Skills

Career Development Specialists work with students on building a winning resume, mastering the interview and finding the job that's a good fit for them.

172
Appointments

Classrooms Presentations

During the academic year, the number of classroom presentations delivered by the Career Development Team decreased due to limited staffing capacity. For the majority of the year, only two part-time Career Development Specialists were available to meet student and faculty requests. A third specialist was not hired until later in the academic year, which impacted the team's ability to conduct outreach and provide in-class presentations at previous levels. Despite these limitations, the team remained committed to supporting students' career readiness through individual appointments, workshops, and resource development.

34 Classroom Presentations

10 Resumes	**3 Career Exploration**	**6 Intro to Career Development**

Center for Global Engagement

The Center for Global Engagement is committed to fostering and promoting international education experiences for ECC students, faculty, and staff, and the District 509 community. The Center for Global Engagement welcomes international students, offers educational abroad programs aimed at fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting global citizenship within our diverse campus community. Complementing these efforts is a full-time International Student Homestay Program, which endeavors to cultivate cultural appreciation, enhance global awareness, and celebrate diversity.

Our Team

Highlights and Accomplishments

The Center for Global Engagement comprises three distinct operating units:

1. International Student and Scholar Services
2. International Student Homestay Program
3. Education Abroad

All units work collaboratively to provide internationally focused educational experiences that prepare students in Community College District 509 to thrive in a global society.

International Student and Scholar Services

35
Countries represented

In June 2024, International Student Services and Study Abroad (ISSS) welcomed Amy Stringwell as the new International Admissions Coordinator/International Recruiter. Her previous experience as a Designated School Official brings valuable expertise to the department. As the field of international student recruitment continues to evolve, ISSS continues to enhance outreach strategies through sustained innovation and strong market engagement. The department maintains a visible presence in key regions through consistent participation in both virtual and in-person recruitment fairs, as well as through strategic partnerships with international recruitment organizations.

In 2024–2025, the Center for Global Engagement participated in 21 international recruitment fairs—12 virtual fairs representing 32 countries and 9 in-person fairs across 7 countries. The team also conducted more than 42 in-person visits to international high schools to further support outreach and relationship-building efforts. These initiatives generated 426 applications and resulted in 182 I-20s issued for prospective F-1 students. Over the academic year, 166 F-1 international students (duplicated count) from 35 countries enrolled at the college. Total unduplicated international student enrollment—including students on all non-immigrant visa types—reached 160, marking a 72% increase from 2023-2024.

International students enrolled in an average of 25 cumulative credit hours during the academic year and maintained an average cumulative GPA of 2.98. Notably, two international students—Marco Adrianzen Ruiz and Grace Sakabunda—were honored as student speakers at the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 commencement ceremonies, respectively.

In Spring 2025, the department organized three cultural engagement activities designed to help international students connect with their peers and immerse themselves in aspects of American culture. The first event, an employment visa webinar, was hosted in collaboration with a licensed immigration attorney who provided an overview of immigration pathways available to students after graduation. Additional activities included "Paint, Plant, and Connect," which offered a creative and social space for students to decorate pots and plant flowers, and "Cookies & Cram," a finals-week event focused on promoting mental well-being. A total of 27 students participated in these three events.

International Student Homestay Program

13
Host families

The International Student Homestay Program is committed to providing safe, affordable, and culturally enriching housing options for international students within the local community. By connecting students with carefully vetted host families, the program offers not only a cost-effective place to live but also meaningful opportunities for cultural exchange, relationship-building, and personalized support during the transition to life in a new country. This welcoming environment plays a critical role in enhancing the overall international student experience.

Because ECC does not offer residential housing, the Homestay Program serves as a vital housing solution for international students, providing safe, affordable accommodations within the local community. In 2024–2025, 13 host families participated in the program, generously opening their homes to international students from South Africa, Japan, Greece, Brazil, Uganda, Honduras, and Ghana. Their presence enriched both the campus and local community, fostering deeper cross-cultural understanding and engagement.

Interest in the Homestay Program continues to grow. In Spring 2025, the department laund a targeted recruitment campaign to expand the host family network. Outreach efforts included mailing 14,715 postcards to households in Elgin and to high school juniors and seniors, distributing flyers to 18 local businesses in Algonquin and St. Charles, and tabling at a community event at an elementary school in Carpentersville. As a result, several families expressed interest, and applications were received from individuals to become host families. The Homestay Program remains one of the most effective ways to address the housing needs of international students while building meaningful connections between the college and the broader community.

In addition to the Homestay Program, the department supports students in navigating the process of securing rental housing near campus. Staff assist with understanding lease agreements, locating available apartments, and addressing questions about local laws and customs—services that are particularly valuable to students unfamiliar with U.S. housing practices. Through these efforts, the department fosters a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment that enhances the overall experience of international students.

Education Abroad

129

Education abroad participants

Education Abroad continues to provide diverse and engaging international experiences for students, faculty, and staff. In the 2024-2025 academic year, a total of 129 participants engaged in Education Abroad programs at ECC, including both in-person study abroad across six countries—Costa Rica, France, Ireland, Italy, and Spain—and virtual programs in partnership with EduAfrica. Specifically, 45 students and employees participated in on-the-ground study abroad opportunities, while virtual study abroad remained robust, with 84 students involved in courses spanning international literature, communications, and Adult Basic Education/ESL. This blend of in-person and virtual programming underscores ECC's commitment to expanding global learning access for its community.

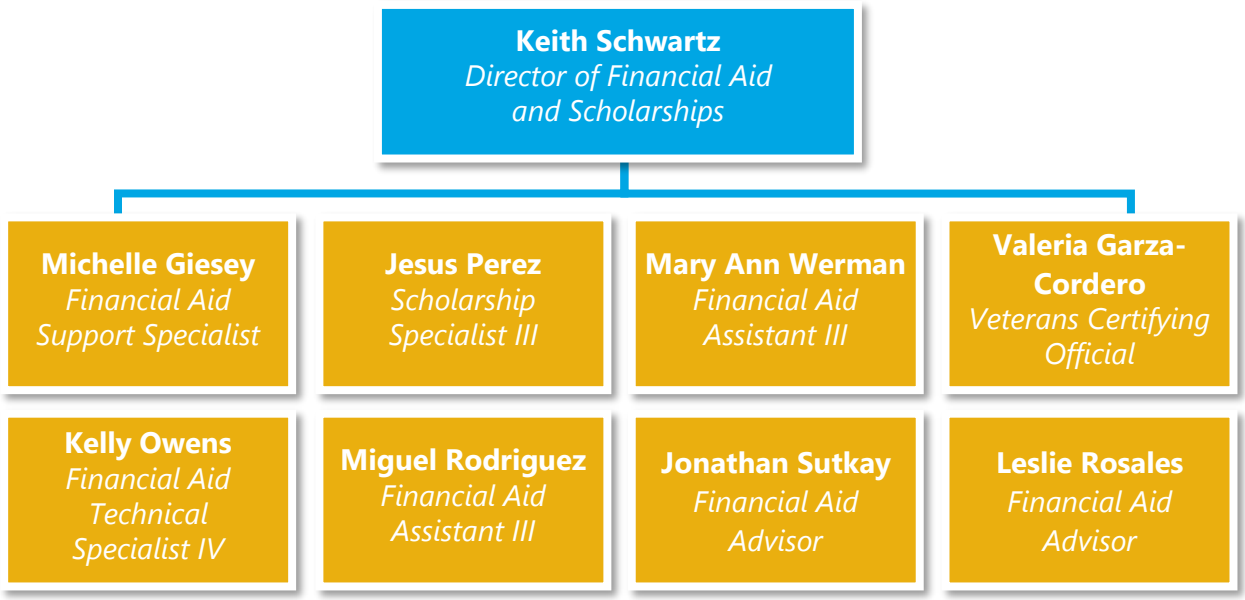
In Summer 2024, ECC launched a pilot of *Beyond Borders: Global Engagement and Professional Development Program*, a new short-term international training opportunity for eligible faculty and administrators. The inaugural program took place in Urbania, Italy, with seven participants. This innovative cost-sharing initiative is designed to broaden participants' global awareness and intercultural competence by immersing them in the culture, traditions, and educational landscape of a foreign country. Throughout the program, participants engage with the host partner organization and visit various educational institutions, gaining firsthand insight into the international education system. Additionally, cultural excursions to sites of local and historical significance enrich the experience. Upon completion, participants return equipped with enhanced global perspectives and intercultural skills that inform their professional practice.

Finally, as the coordinating college for the Carlow, Ireland program through the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP), the department facilitated a site visit to Carlow College, St. Patrick's, hosting 18 faculty and staff from 10 community colleges across Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan. This immersive visit provided an invaluable opportunity for participants to engage directly with the host institution's leadership and faculty, explore academic programs, and experience the campus environment firsthand. During the visit, participants attended presentations on curriculum and student support services, toured campus facilities, and discussed opportunities for further collaboration. These activities not only deepened participants' understanding of the program's offerings and operational framework but also inspired new ideas for international collaboration within their own institutions. By strengthening these partnerships, the site visit ultimately supports the growth and sustainability of shared international education initiatives across the region.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Our Financial Aid Department provides financial assistance to students. The department aims to ensure that all students have access to the necessary resources and funding to pursue their academic goals. We understand that the cost of education can be a barrier for many students. Therefore, we strive to provide opportunities for scholarships that can help alleviate the financial burden. Our goal is to empower students to succeed by offering comprehensive financial aid options and personalized guidance throughout the process.

Our Team



Highlights and Accomplishments

We provided parents and students with information regarding state and federal grants, scholarships, student loans and student employment. Students also receive assistance completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the Retention of Illinois Students and Equity (RISE) Application which allows eligible undocumented students to apply for state financial aid, as well as how to apply for scholarships.

Student Loans

Students interested in borrowing a student loan must meet with a financial aid advisor to help them understand the rights and responsibilities associated with borrowing, such as repayment terms, interest rates, and loan limits. We are happy to help students make informed decisions about their financial future.

Since implementing mandatory individual loan counseling in 2010 we have:

- Decreased the number of students borrowing student loans by 84%.
- Decreased the total amount borrowed by 80%.; and
- Decreased the cohort default rate from over 20% to 2.5%.

The U.S. Department of Education publishes cohort default rates based on the percentage of school's borrowers who default within a specified period-of-time after entering repayment. Colleges with high CDRs may lose future eligibility for federal grants and loans.

ECC's cohort default rate has gone from as high as 20.5% in award year 2011 to 2.5% in award year 2019.

- Note: The ECC's federal student loan default rate has decreased to 0.0% as of the most recently published data from the Department of Education on September 23, 2024 for award year 2021. This rate has been impacted by the pause on federal student loan payments that began in March 2020. At present the national student loan default rate is also 0.0%.

Financial Aid Awareness and Financial Literacy programs

Attendance
+27%

The Financial Aid Office hosts financial aid awareness programs for ECC students and the community. Also, presentations and FAFSA workshops are conducted at high school financial aid nights. During the last year members of the financial aid team presented at 38 events to over 1,900 individuals attending these events. This was an increase of 27% in attendance from the prior year. The Game of Life is also held at ECC during the fall semester and upon request. The program is designed to teach students budgeting concepts and how to make sound financial decisions.

Scholarships

- The Financial Aid Office processed $19,798,685.54 to 4,132 students during the 2024-2025 award year.
    - During the 2024-2025 award year $921,688 was awarded in scholarship funding:
    - ECC Scholarships and Waivers were awarded to 395 students at a total of $387,840
    - Foundation Scholarship funds awarded in award year 2024-2025 totaled over $377,616 and distributed to 304 students.
- Private Scholarships were awarded to 94 students at a total of $156,232
- The Board of Trustees Athletic Scholarship impacted student athletes through a total of $260,800 awarded to 106 students.

- The Financial Aid Office had 33,701 contacts with students between May 1, 2024-April 30, 2025:
    - 3,911 walked into our office and received assistance in person
    - 13,720 phone calls to our office for assistance
    - 16,070 emails received
- Individual loan counseling has successfully reduced both the number of students borrowing loans and the total dollar amount borrowed. The number of students borrowing loans has decreased by 84%, from 1,870 students in 2010-11 to 300 students in award year 2024-2025. The total dollar amount borrowed has decreased by 80% from $6,669,966 in 2010-11 to $1,306,333 in award year 2024-25.
    - Financial Aid Advisors between May 1, 2024-April 30, 2025 conducted 314 loan counseling sessions.

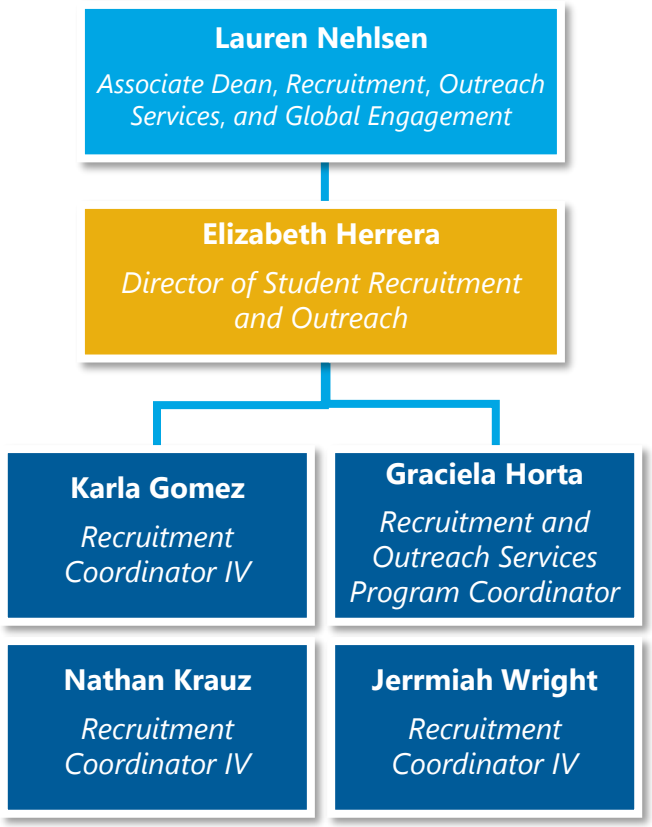
Recruitment and Outreach Services

The Recruitment and Outreach Services department plays a critical role in connecting new and prospective students with Elgin Community College by promoting access to higher education and guiding individuals through the enrollment process. As part of the Office of Admissions and Recruitment, the team develops and implements strategic initiatives aimed at attracting and supporting a diverse student population.

The department cultivates strong partnerships with high schools, community organizations, and other key stakeholders to raise awareness of ECC's academic programs, student support services, and educational pathways. Efforts are centered on providing clear, comprehensive information about college opportunities, ensuring seamless access to enrollment resources, and supporting a smooth transition into college—particularly for students who may be the first in their families to pursue higher education.

Serving as the first point of contact for many future students, the Recruitment and Outreach Services team is committed to delivering personalized support and fostering a welcoming, informed, and encouraging introduction to the ECC community.

Our Team



Highlights and Accomplishments

9,510+
Students served in person

In 2024–2025, the Recruitment and Outreach Department expanded its outreach and engagement efforts to more effectively meet the diverse needs of the community and prospective students. As a result, the team directly engaged with over 9,100 individuals at both on-campus and off-campus events—an increase of 1,656 compared to the previous year.

As the college's front line for many new students and community members, the department also fielded 18,811 phone calls over the year, highlighting the essential role the team plays in providing timely, accurate, and welcoming support to those exploring opportunities at ECC.

Beyond broadening its reach, the department continues to prioritize intentional, early engagement by introducing the concept of college to younger students and their families. By "planting the seed" early, the department aims to cultivate a college-going mindset and strengthen the pipeline of future ECC students.

18,811+
calls received

Experience ECC

650+
Participants

ECC hosted its annual Experience ECC Open House with renewed energy and enthusiasm—and the results reflected that excitement. Attendance more than doubled compared to the previous year, demonstrating strong community interest and engagement.

The event featured participation from over 50 academic programs and student service departments, providing prospective students and their families with a dynamic opportunity to:

- Engage directly with faculty to learn about academic programs of interest.
- Explore available student support services and campus resources.
- Receive personalized guidance on the application and enrollment process.

To further enhance students' experience, the event offered

13 themed campus tours highlighting key areas of the college, including Health Professions, Math and Science, Culinary Arts, Career and Technical Education, Visual and Performing Arts, and a Spanish-language general tour—ensuring a welcoming and informative experience for all attendees.

College Night

As the host site for the annual Illinois Regional College Fair, ECC welcomed 150 colleges and universities from across the country to connect with students and families in the local community at College Night. The event drew an estimated 600+ attendees—an 82% increase from the prior year.

600+
Attendees

College Night offers students a valuable opportunity to explore a wide range of postsecondary options just minutes from home. Throughout the event, hundreds of representatives from four-year institutions engaged with prospective students to support them in their educational journeys. ECC ranked #6 in attendee scans among participating institutions, outperforming several major universities, including Bradley University (#7), the University of Illinois Chicago (#8), Purdue University (#9), and the University of Florida (#10).

Kinder to College

In Spring 2025, the Kinder to College initiative was launched to introduce the concept of higher education to kindergarten-aged children in a fun, engaging, and age-appropriate way. The goal of the program is to plant the seed of college early, fostering a positive association with higher education while strengthening partnerships between the college, local schools, and families. The initiative also aimed to support long-term engagement and recruitment efforts by creating early pathways to college awareness.

85+

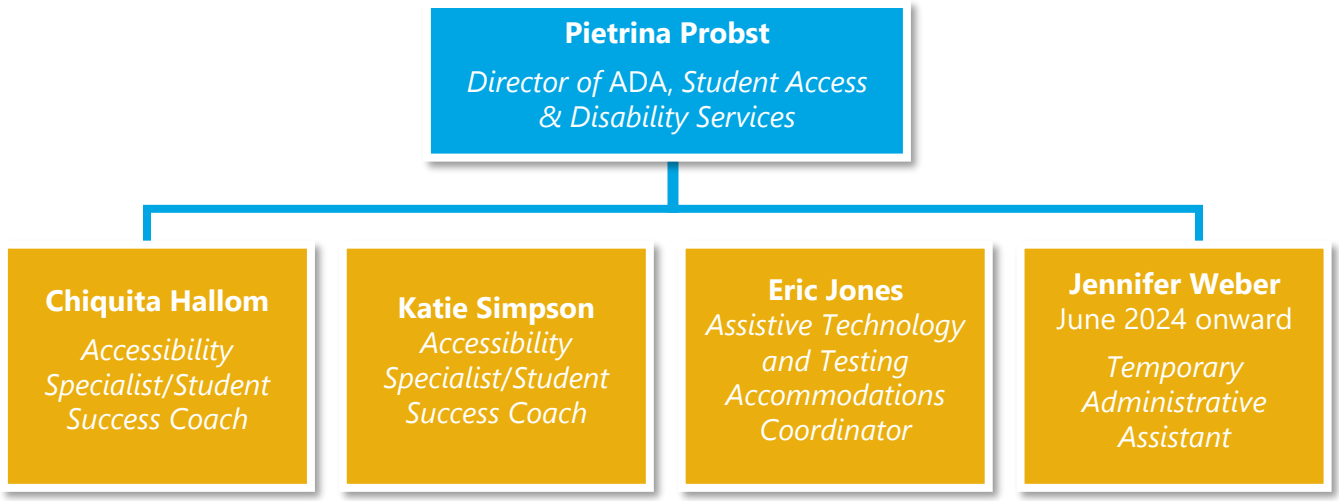
Participants in the Kinder to College Program

In its inaugural year, the program reached 62 kindergarten students from Fox Meadow Elementary and 13 preschoolers from ECC's Early Childhood Lab School. Students were introduced to the idea of continuing their education beyond elementary school and learned about various careers through a themed storybook. Students then expressed their career interests through a career-themed craft activity, making the experience both educational and memorable. Many students left feeling inspired and excited about the idea of college and the future possibilities ahead.

Student Access and Disability Services

Our department aims to provide support and accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure equal access to education. We collaborate with students, staff, and faculty to identify and implement appropriate accommodations that meet the individual needs of each student. The goal is to create an inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive academically and personally.

Our Team



Increase in Student Support

Our Student Access & Disability Services staff have met with students with disabilities for 1,351 appointments and 274 drop-in sessions, which represents a 30% increase from the last academic year.

Expansion of Resources for Students, Services, Staff, and Assistive Technology

- Through a $313,000 ICCB Innovative Bridge grant, our Student Access & Disability Services office achieved the following goals:
- Hired a second full-time Accessibility Specialist/Student Success Coach, who has been supporting students by providing them with accommodations, addressing their accessibility needs, and teaching them college success skills (e.g., time management, study skills, etc.);
- Hired a full-time Assistive Technology and Testing Accommodations Coordinator, who has been training students in using assistive technology, arranging for specialized testing accommodations, and creating/obtaining accessible textbooks;

- Referred 20 students who experienced financial barriers with obtaining disability documentation for their accommodation eligibility to a community-based counseling center for a neuropsychological evaluation;
- Completed an external evaluation and consultation services through a well-known consultant in the field of disability services in higher education;
- Purchased 12 laptops and 3 tablets with assistive technology which were loaned to students with disabilities.
- Purchased 45 Chromebooks to be used for accessibility purposes, including live captioning of the graduation ceremonies in May 2025;
- Purchased a wheelchair-accessible van for the College to use to transport students, who use wheelchairs, on ECC-sponsored trips in which ECC provided transportation;
- Purchased automatic door operators which were installed on additional doors around campus to increase accessibility; and
- In collaboration with the Distance Learning office, purchased YuJa software, which is an accessibility tool embedded in ECC's Learning Management System called Desire2Learn (D2L) to allow students the ability to access course content in alternate formats and enable faculty the ability to assess and remediate their course content for accessibility purposes.

Faculty Support

In collaboration with Dr. Diane Kondratowicz, Humanities Adjunct Faculty, our Student Access & Disability Services staff co-presented on "A Deep Dive on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities" for the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, Assessment, & Learning's (CETAL's) Neurodiversity Workshop Series for faculty, staff, and administrators in November 2024.

Construction of New Office

The Student Access & Disability Services staff has collaborated with the Operations & Maintenance department and an architectural firm to design the new Student Access & Disability Services office for all six staff to be co-located. Architects explored designs that are inclusive and welcoming to individuals with disabilities. The new office is expected to be completed by Fall 2025.

Disability Awareness on Campus

For Disability Awareness Month in April 2025, the Student Access & Disability Services office, ADAPT Club, and other student clubs:

- Organized the Neurodiversity Panel, in which a student, faculty member, administrator, and support staff member shared their personal experiences as an individual who is neurodivergent;
- Showed a movie with a character who has a disability; and

- Encouraged students to post inspiring messages around campus about disability awareness.

Accessibility and Neurodiversity Initiatives

To execute ECC's commitment to inclusivity, as described in ECC's Accessibility Statement and Neurodiversity Statement, the Student Access & Disability Services staff have led various initiatives and committees, which are composed of faculty, staff, and administrators.

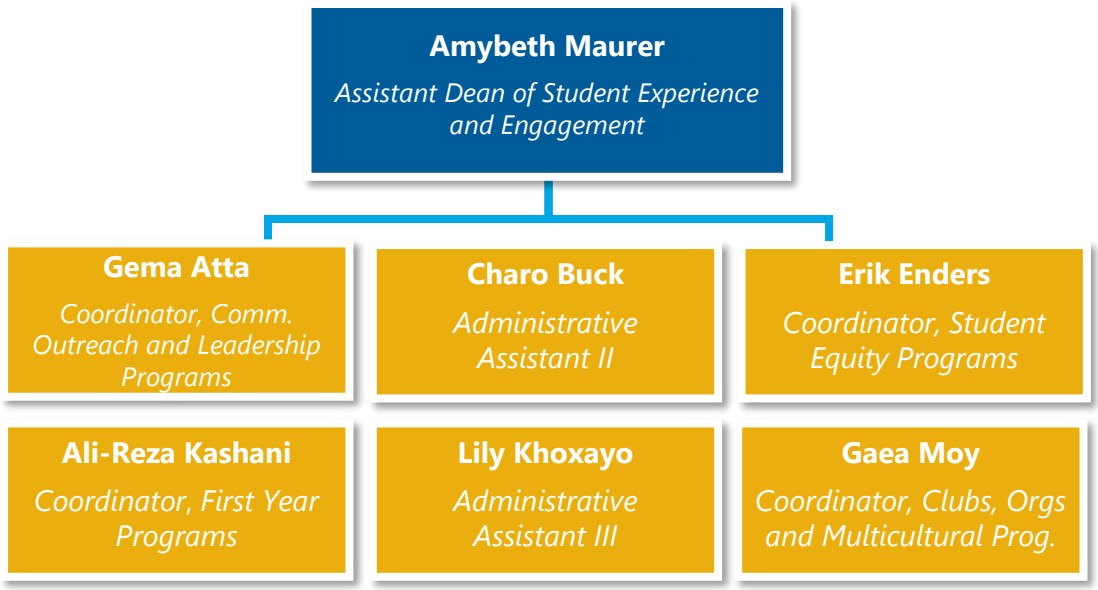
- The Accessibility Committee spearheaded the implementation of YuJa software to support both students and faculty, advocated for accessibility devices (i.e., in-person captions on Chromebooks, assistive listening devices/personal amplification devices, and Spanish translation kits) to foster an accessible experience for attendees at the graduation ceremonies, arranged for open-access American Sign Language (ASL) interpreted theater performances through the Performing Arts Center, and created content on event accessibility which was posted on ECC's public-facing website.
- The Physical Campus Accessibility Committee reported and addressed accessibility barriers on campus, resulting in the installation of additional automatic push buttons on select doors by the Operations & Maintenance department.
- The Accessibility Training Subcommittee organized professional development workshops to support faculty in developing accessible course content using YuJa and other tools, a webinar to educate student-facing staff about the availability of YuJa's accessibility features that students may utilize, tabling events to instruct students about YuJa's built-in accessibility features, and a workshop about assistive technology for ECC's TeachECC conference for faculty, staff, and administrators.
- The Accessibility Policy Subcommittee has been finalizing ECC's Accessibility Policy and 5-Year Accessibility Plan.
- The Neurodiversity Strategy Team has been developing content to be posted on CETAL's webpage regarding tips and resources to support students who identify as neurodivergent.
- Student Access & Disability Services was honored to collaborate with Web Services, the President's Office, the Board of Trustees, Operations & Maintenance, and the 2024–2025 ECC Student Trustee to ensure an inclusive and accessible experience throughout the Student Trustee's tenure. This partnership not only supported her individual accessibility needs, but also advanced broader awareness of disability-related issues and championed ongoing improvements to campus accessibility.

Student Experience and Engagement Center

The Student Experience and Engagement Center supports student success by offering a comprehensive co-curriculum while complementing classroom instruction. The Center comprises the Office of Student Life and First Year Programs, which offer and organize hundreds of events annually to bring students together and foster a sense of belonging. Students connect with like-minded individuals who share similar interests and passions. Overall, Student Life and First Year Programs strive to create a supportive and engaging environment where students feel connected, develop leadership skills, and actively participate in the community around them.

During this fiscal year, 70,227 students have entered and received general assistance from the Student Experience and Engagement Center. **Source: door tracker*

Our Team



Student Testimony

"I have been extremely involved and feel like with every day I have improved more and more. I have held many leadership positions, such as the Secretary of Spartan Christian Fellowship, Treasurer of United Students of All Cultures, President of United Students of All Cultures, and my final role as President of Student Government. These roles were crucial in my growth and improvement in my leadership skills."

- Seth Hernandez, 2024-2025 Student Body President

Student Life

Our Results

24,777

Total Event Attendance

Our team consistently seeks qualitative and quantitative feedback from students to ensure our programming meets their needs. We measure satisfaction, attendance, and how outcomes are being met. We are committed to student success via the co-curriculum and use student feedback to inform our activities and how to improve.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, there were 24,777 student interactions within the Student Experience and Engagement Center.

Our impact

520 Events hosted by Student Life and First Year Programs

20% of student interactions are through Online Orientation

16% Participated in a Multicultural Activity

**The number of participants may reflect a duplicated head count.*

Student Clubs and Organizations

76%

Increase since FY2022

One of the most impactful engagements on campus is through joining an ECC club or organization. Joining a club or organization provides students an opportunity to gain leadership and service experience while connecting with compatible peers.

Student leaders excel academically both in the number of credit hours completed and cumulative GPA when compared to the general student population. Student leaders completed 45% more credit hours and about 5% higher GPA than non-student leaders in FY2025. Additionally, student leaders who serve for two semesters had about 5% higher GPA and completed 26% more credit hours than one-semester student leaders.

In the past year, active student clubs on campus have stayed relatively consistent from FY2024 with new clubs forming, clubs reactivating, and clubs becoming inactive. ECC offered about 29 student clubs and organizations during FY2025, including:

- **ADAPT**
- **Anime Club**
- **Art & Design Club**
- **Asian Filipino Club**
- **Associated Nursing Students**
- **Black Student Achievers**
- **Dual-Credit Connections Club**
- **ECC Observer**
- **Educators Rising**
- **Engineering Tech Club**
- **Fiber Arts Club**
- **Film Club**
- **Health Occupation Students of America**
- **Human Services & Recovery of All Kinds Club**
- **Mu Alpha Theta**
- **National Adult Education Honor Society**
- **Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS)**
- **Performing Arts Club**
- **Phi Theta Kappa**
- **Social Dance Club**
- **Spartan Christian Fellowship**
- **Spartan Project**
- **Strength and Wellness Club**
- **Student Government**
- **Students Who are Not Silent (SWANS)**
- **United Students of All Cultures**
- **We Rise ECC**

TRIUMPH

TRIUMPH is a mentorship program designed to increase the retention and persistence of men of color through mentorship, workshops that develop soft skills, social events, company visits, and community service. Nine new members joined in FY2025, and 55% of our scholars persisted from spring 2024 to spring 2025.

TRIUMPH continued to provide consistent and impactful programming throughout the year, maintaining strong connections with campus partners including SPEL, Student Success Coaches, Wellness Services, and faculty collaborators. A group of scholars packed meals at Feed My Starving Children, and mentored U-46 elementary and middle school students through the Brothers Rise Up mentorship program. Three TRIUMPH scholars graduated this Spring.

Building Konnections

Building Konnections are events that specifically cater to the students in Building K to get them more involved and active on campus. This fiscal year, 8 events were hosted with 1,424 students participating.

Fall 2024 event attendance: 828

- **Ice Cream Social – 154**
- **Coffee and Donuts – 282**
- **Halloween Crafts and Treats – 178**
- **Hot Chocolate Bar – 214**

Spring 2025 event attendance: 596

- **Ice Cream Social - 213**
- **Coffee and Donuts – 139**
- **Pop Up Pantry – 244**
- **Valentine's Day Craft event cancelled due to college closure*

Spartan Pantry

The Spartan Pantry continues to be a resource for students to utilize whether they need a snack or food for the week. The Spartan Pantry's strong relationships with Northern Illinois Food Bank have helped provide fresh produce for the pantry and its patrons. This fiscal year, the pantry saw a 26% increase in visits.

7,483
Visits

MyECC Experience Mobile Application

4,049
Total users

To engage more students and serve their interests better, Student Life and First Year programs launched the MyECC Experience mobile application in July 2023. The team spent a good portion of FY2025 promoting and enhancing the mobile application.

MyECC Experience is Elgin Community College's official mobile app. Connect to all things ECC anytime, anywhere! This app is designed to enrich a student's education and provide them with a personalized experience that provides access to student activities, events, and resources used most often. In our first year, there were 4,049 users or 13% of students who downloaded and utilized the app.

First Year Programs

New Student Online Orientation (OLO)

New Student Online Orientation is required for all first-time college students, returning/transfer students, International and Dual Credit students. Online Orientation is a comprehensive program for students providing valuable information on Programs of Study, Advising, Registration and Payment, and College Resources & Services.

5,005 Completed Online Orientation

219 Students attended New Student Days

332 Students attended New Student Convocation

Online Orientation Survey Results

At the end of the online orientation, students are asked to rate their experience on a survey. Students are asked to rate their experience from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

4.23/5 Overall online orientation experience

4.40/5 As a result of this online orientation, how prepared do you feel for your academic advising appointment?

New Student Connections

New Student Connections are imperative for new students as they help them network and build long-lasting relationships at ECC. This fiscal year four events were hosted with 106 students participating.

Fall 2024 event attendance: 98

- **Inspiration Boards – 21**
- **Halloween Spooky Brunch – 77**

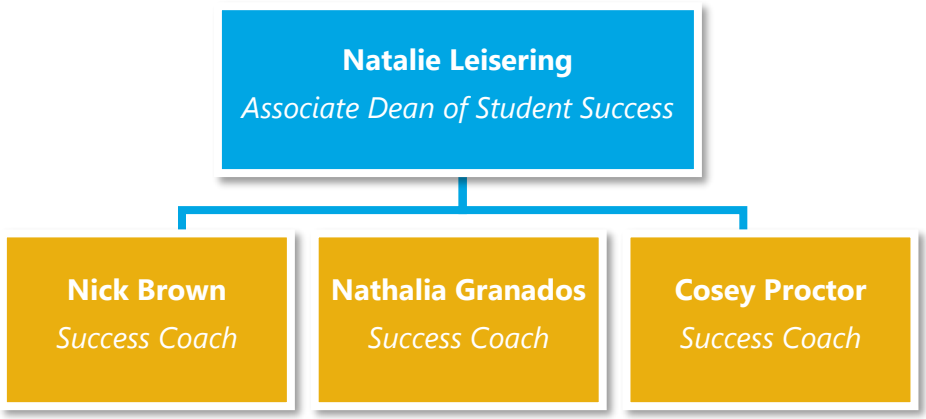
Spring 2025 event attendance: 8

- **Let the Games Begin – 3**
- **Ultimate Scavenger Hunt Adventure – 5**

Student Success Coaching

ECC Student Success Coaches serve as dedicated support specialists, offering personalized, proactive, and comprehensive support to students. Their primary goal is to enhance student persistence and retention rates by nurturing supportive relationships aimed at guiding students towards the attainment of their educational goals. Success Coaches play a crucial role in addressing equity gaps.

Our Team



Our Highlights

Appointments

One-on-one appointments with Success Coaches help students set goals, develop effective study and time management skills, and stay motivated throughout the semester. These meetings provide personalized support, early intervention, and connections to campus resources when challenges arise. Ultimately, coaching improves student engagement, persistence, and overall academic success.

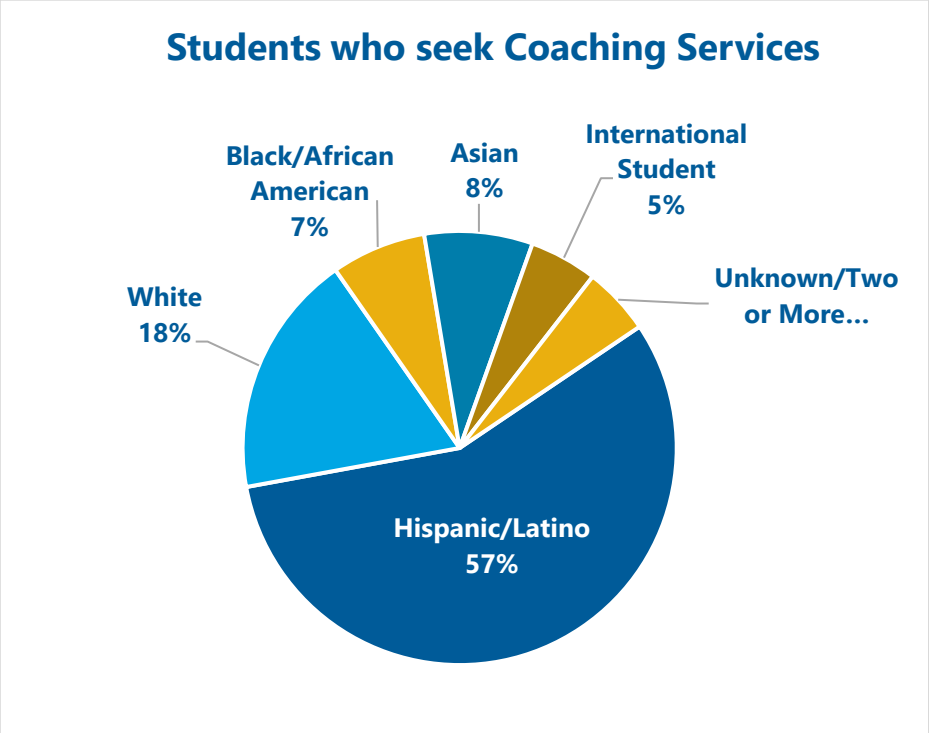
1,028 Appointments

In-person: 85%, Virtual 8%, Phone 7%

Student Success Coaches helped students most often with...

Academic Skill Development	Identifying and Leveraging Resources	Time Management

Who did Success Coaches meet with?



Gender

Female 60%
Male 37%
Non-binary 2%

Age Range

17-22 69%
23-29 19%
30+ 12%

Workshops and Classroom presentations

40
Classroom presentations

Workshops and presentations by Success Coaches provide faculty and students with practical strategies to support academic performance, personal development, and effective communication. These sessions offer tools to improve time management, executive functioning, self-awareness, and resilience—key skills for student success inside and outside the classroom. For faculty, they also offer opportunities to reinforce learning strategies and promote a growth mindset among students. In the spring 2025 semester, success coaches offered 7 workshops and 40 classroom presentations.

Embedded Classroom Support - LTC 099 and MTH 090

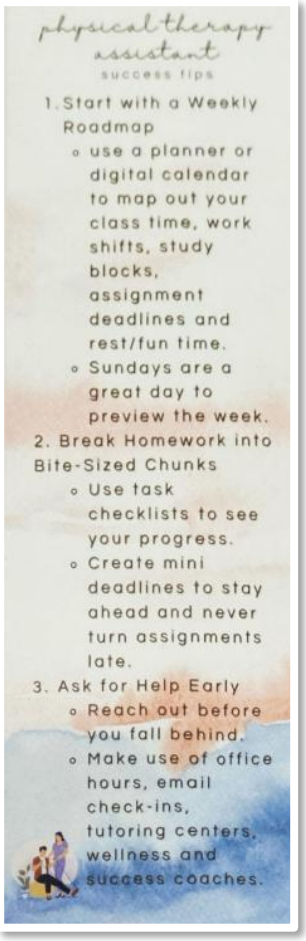
In the spring and fall semesters, Success Coaches continued to be infused into LTC099 classes to engage with students in and outside of the classroom, integrating support and resources through classroom presentations and individualized and group support. Faculty

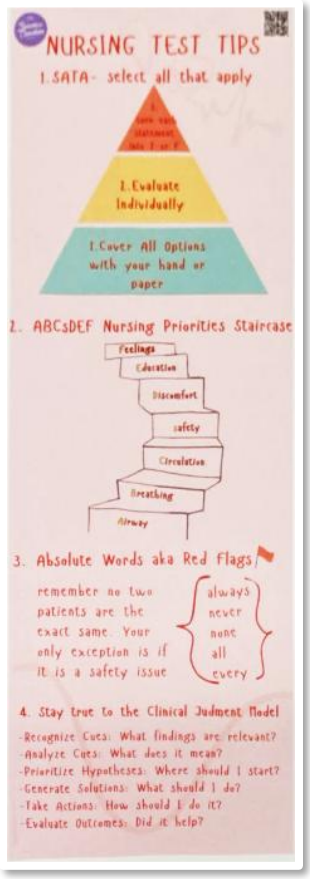
The initiative for LTC 099 has continued and expanded to pilot a section of MTH 090 in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025.

Data supports that students in sections with an embedded Success Coach have a higher rate of scheduling 1:1 appointments, resulting in higher rates of course success and retention.

Health Professions Support

During the Spring semester, Success Coach Nathalia Granados thoughtfully designed individualized study materials for Nursing and Physical Therapy students, including custom bookmarks that featured test-taking strategies and tips for success within their rigorous programs. She also delivered a tailored classroom presentation for the new cohort of Respiratory Care students, focusing on three key areas: *Keys to Academic Success*, *Effective Study Techniques*, and *Managing Test Anxiety*. The session covered practical tools for overcoming procrastination and self-sabotage, prioritizing tasks, managing time effectively, and creating a productive study environment for students in their program. When addressing test anxiety, she guided students through techniques like box breathing, visualization, positive self-talk, and grounding exercises. She also provided fidget items to help manage stress and gently reminded students to steer clear of negative group talk, fostering a more supportive and empowering academic atmosphere.





On-the-Go Coaching: Encouraging Success Through Quick Connections

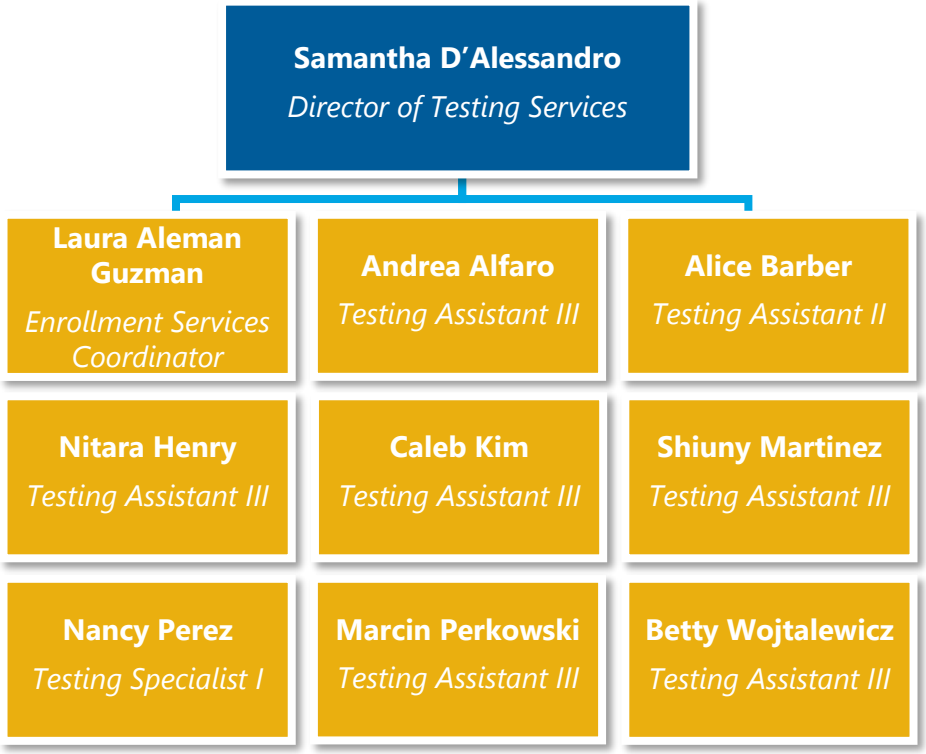
During the fall and spring terms, Success Coaches hosted tabling events in Buildings A and B to connect with students and promote academic resources. Expanding their outreach, the team also launched the "Positivity Train," a mobile initiative that traveled through campus hallways during midterms. Stopping at popular study spots, the Positivity Train offered study tips, snacks, fidgets, stickers, and words of encouragement to support students during a high-stress time.

Hallway table engagements and the Positivity Train promote course success by creating informal, accessible opportunities for students to connect with support services. These interactions raise awareness of key academic skills—like time management, study strategies, and resource utilization—through quick tips, handouts, and real-time conversations. They also foster a sense of approachability and belonging, encouraging students to seek help early and engage more actively in their learning.

Testing Services

The Testing Center manages and supervises a range of assessments for both new and current students. It also provides a variety of certification exams that are open to the community. The Testing Center plays a vital role in maintaining fair and accurate evaluation processes for all test candidates.

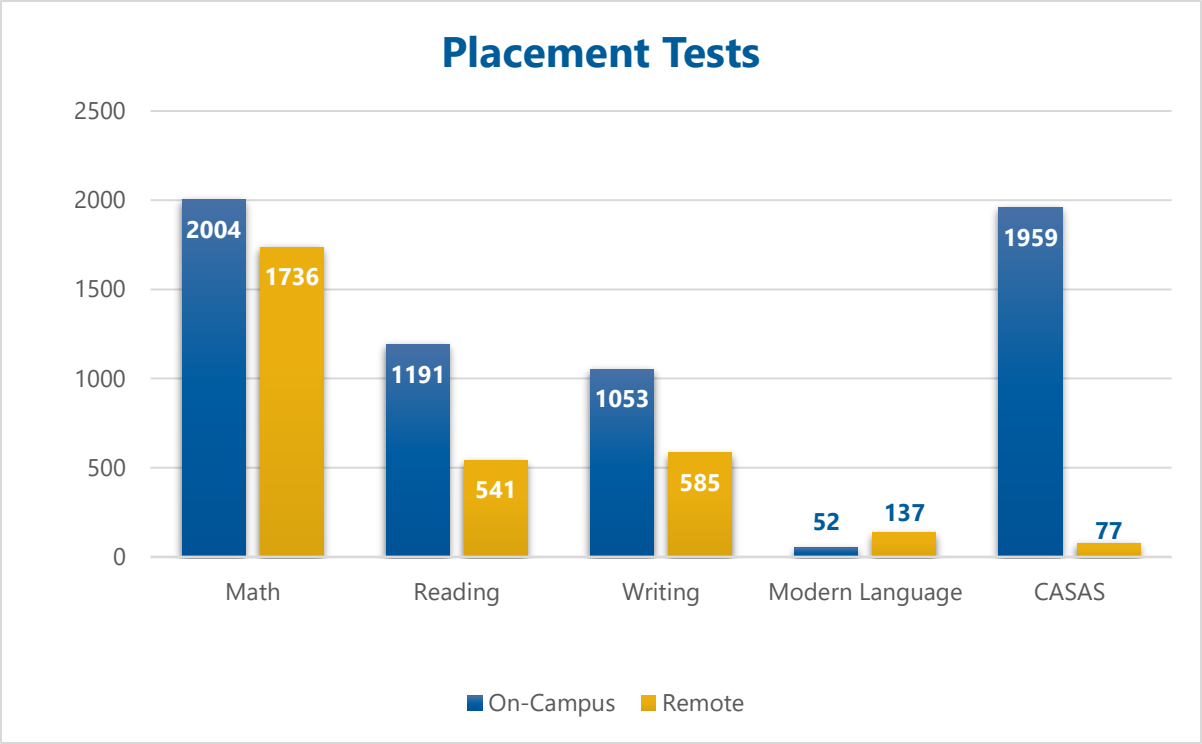
Our Team

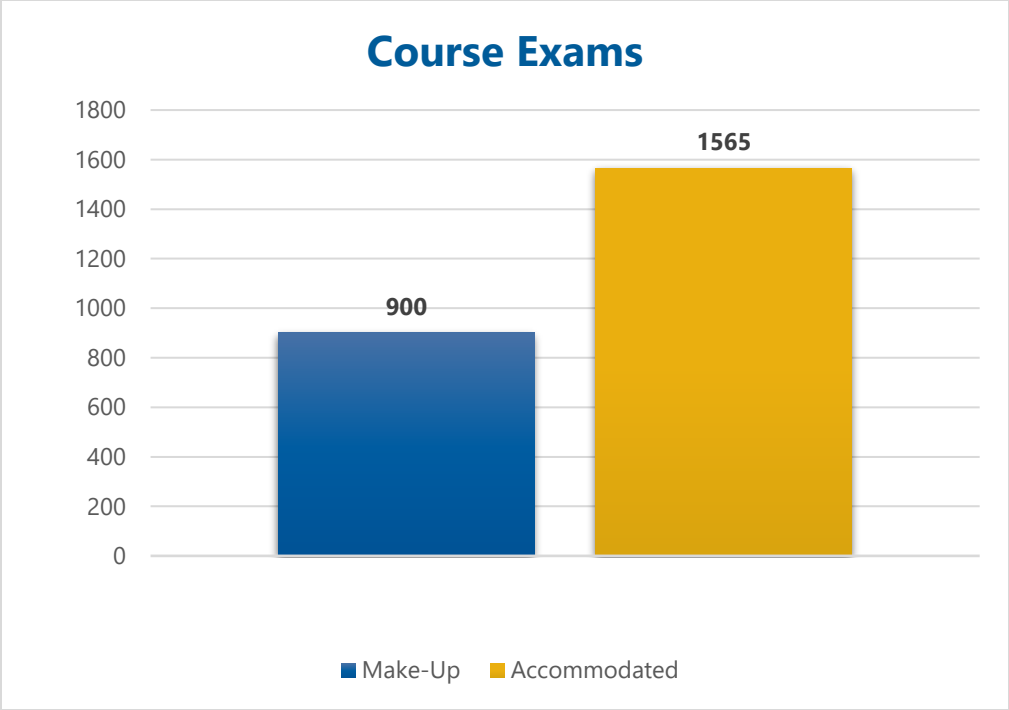


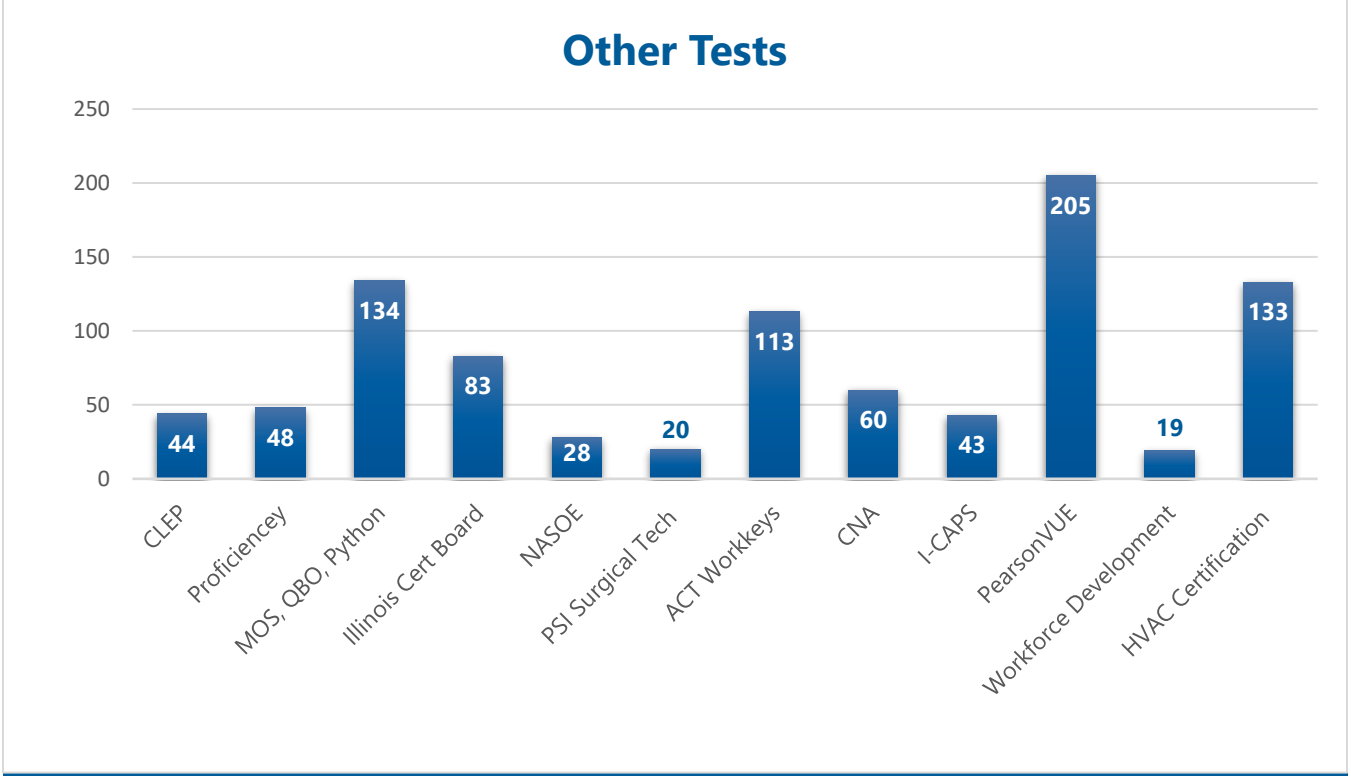
Tests Offered in 2024-2025

- Testing Services provides a variety of tests for students and community members, including:
- Placement Testing for degree and certificate program admission
- CASAS Testing, for ABEC, I-CAPS and WIOA programs
- Course Exams
    - The office provides proctoring for ECC student course exams for students who are unable to take their exams during class time and for those that have accommodation needs. These exams are administered as paper-based and/or computer-based exams
- PearsonVUE GED and other subjects of certification

- Certification and Proficiency
    - The Testing Center offers a variety of certification exams for both students and the public as well as proficiency examinations for college credit. This includes the proctoring and score maintenance for the CLEP exam.







Changes and Initiatives in 2024–2025

- The Testing Center began administering two new types of exams during the 2024-2025 academic year: Python IT Exam and Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal Certification Exam (PearsonVUE).
- The Testing Center has utilized temporary staff workers during peak enrollment periods to increase the number of appointments offered and reduce the length of time for reporting remote placement test scores.
- High School partnerships were strengthened by offering placement test field trips for multiple school districts so that interested students could begin the admission process before graduating.
- Due to high demand, the Testing Center increased its partnership with the Illinois Certification Board to offer more exams for those pursuing credentials in Certified Recovery Support and Certified Peer Recovery.

Innovative Enhancements

- The Testing Center added a new position for a Full-Time Testing Assistant and the role was filled in October 2024.
- The Desmos phone app was added to the Testing Center mobile device to allow students that use this feature on classroom exams to receive the same testing experience without risking exam security.

- The exam appointment registration process for course exams was updated to collect information that allows for more accurate exam tracking and a quicker check-in experience for the student.
- Several computer-based exams were updated to include Secure Exam Browsers; these function to update upon each use, resulting in less technical troubleshooting and increased exam security.

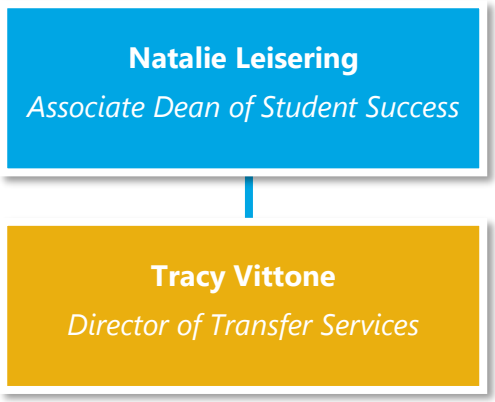
Cross-Departmental Collaborations

- The Testing Center collaborated with the Math Department coordinators to streamline the Placement Test Appeal process for some students who alter their math pathway during the course of their education.
- The Adult Basic Education Center's high demand for placement testing led to an increased number of appointments offered in these areas. Later time slots were added to meet the needs of the testing population.
- At the request of the Adult Basic Education Center, the Testing Center adopted and began administering the listening placement test for ESL in the summer of 2024 to allow their program to most accurately place students in ESL courses.
- The Testing Center partnered with the Medical Assisting program to facilitate group scheduling and testing for the Registered Medical Assisting Exam (PearsonVUE).
- In order to provide the most efficient process possible, the Testing Center worked with the Nursing Department to become certified proctors for the HESI exam; having direct access in partnership with faculty afforded students with accommodations drastically reduced wait times on this nursing certification exam.
- The Math Department developed a paper-based faculty-graded exam for students enrolled in Math-090 for the purpose of remediating and retesting students for course placement. The Testing Center created an office procedure to facilitate the paper-based exam in the weeks prior to the start of each term and collaborates with the Math Department Developmental Coordinator and other Student Services offices to assist students with transitioning to a new course.
- The Testing Center and Office of Access and Disability Services (ADS) have worked closely on the accessibility of a newly integrated placement exam that the Testing Center will continue to develop in the 2025-2026 academic year.

Transfer Services

Transfer Services offers support and resources for students planning to continue their education beyond an associate's degree. This includes building partnerships with baccalaureate institutions, hosting transfer events on campus, and coordinating campus visits to many of ECC's top transfer destinations.

Our Team



New Partnerships

ECC partnered with University of Maryland Global Campus, a national leader in offering workforce-relevant online academic programs, to offer students a transfer path towards a bachelor's degree. Students who complete their associate degree can now transfer up to 70 credit hours when they enroll in UMGC bachelor's degree programs in complementary fields of study. Additional benefits to the partnership include guaranteed admission and a 25% tuition discount.

In collaboration with the Illinois Institute of Technology, ECC established a Guaranteed Admission Program. Benefits of the partnership include a $25,000 annual transfer scholarship, program-specific advising and transfer support, and the opportunity to take discounted non-degree courses prior to transferring.

New University Transfer degree partnerships were established for students transferring in the areas of Biomedical Engineering (Southern Illinois University Carbondale), Computer Engineering (Southern Illinois University Carbondale), Electrical Engineering (Southern Illinois University Carbondale), and Engineering Physics (Elmhurst University).

ECC formed new Career & Technical degree partnerships with Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University. These partnerships enable ECC students who earn an Associate of Applied Science degree in the areas of Automotive Service Technology, Business Supply Chain Management, Criminal Justice, and Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration to seamlessly transition into bachelor's degree programs.

Continuing Partnerships

Northern Illinois University: PLEDGE

In 2025, the Partnering to Lead and Empower District-Grown Educators (PLEDGE) program had a total of 33 graduates: 10 completing their bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education with ESL or Bilingual endorsement with Special Education approval and 23 completing their bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with an ESL or Bilingual endorsement.

Since 2021, a total of 117 students have successfully completed the same teacher-licensure program offered on NIU's main campus at ECC. Additionally, after five years, Elementary Education continues to maintain a retention rate of 100%.

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign: Engineering Pathways

Seven ECC students completed the Guaranteed Transfer Admission program to the Grainger College of Engineering and will be transferring to University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in Fall 2025. In order to be eligible, students must complete a prescribed Engineering Program of Study at ECC, earning a 3.5 cumulative GPA and all A's and B's in required technical courses.

Campus Events

Fall Semester

In October, Transfer Services hosted the annual State Universities of Illinois Transfer Day. Representatives from all 12 public Illinois Universities set up information tables in Building B to engage with students about their transfer options after ECC.

In November, Transfer Services partnered with Student Recruitment and Outreach to host Transfer Exploration Night in collaboration with the University of Illinois System. The event invited high school students to explore transfer opportunities from ECC to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois Chicago, and University of Illinois Springfield. Along with presentations from ECC and representatives from each university, the 112 attendees had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session and a College Fair.

Spring Semester

In February, Transfer Services hosted the first UIC Transfer Day at ECC. The event was designed to support students interested in transferring to University of Illinois Chicago. Representatives from UIC's Office of Admissions and various academic programs were available to speak with students regarding admissions criteria, academic opportunities, and answer transfer-related questions.

In March, Transfer Services hosted the annual Private Illinois Colleges & Universities (PICU) Transfer Fair. To encourage student participation, Transfer Services and TRiO Student Support Services/ESL developed PICU Bingo. More than 45 students participated, each receiving college apparel donated by the over 30 Illinois colleges and universities in attendance.

Campus Visits

Fall Semester

In collaboration with TRiO Student Support Services/ESL, Transfer Services arranged campus visits to two Hispanic Serving baccalaureate institutions: Aurora University and Northeastern Illinois University. A total of 20 students participated in the Fall campus visits. Each campus visit was structured to inform students about transfer agreements, financial aid options, real student experiences, and scholarship

opportunities, fostering their ability to envision transferring to a four-year institution as an achievable goal.

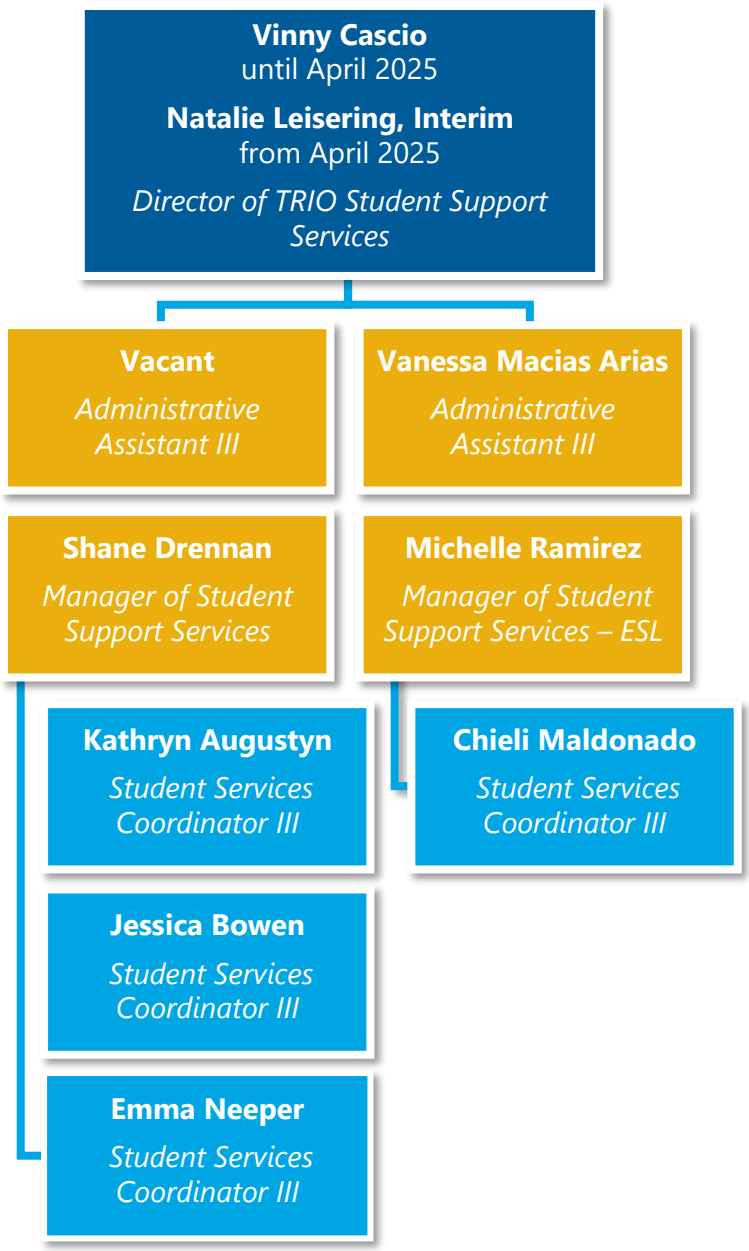
Spring Semester

Transfer Services and TRiO Student Support Services/ESL organized campus visits to ECC's top transfer universities: Northern Illinois University and University of Illinois Chicago. A total of 68 students participated in the Spring campus visits. Each campus visit included a presentation from the Admissions office, a student-led walking tour of campus, and lunch on-campus. Chaperones included volunteers from Academic Advising, Success Coaches, Transfer Services, and TRiO Student Support Services/ESL.

TRiO SSS and ESL

TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded program that helps economically disadvantaged, first-generation, and college students with disabilities succeed. It offers tutoring, academic coaching, financial literacy education, career counseling, and personal development support to improve retention and graduation rates. TRiO SSS/ESL also supports eligible students whose second language is English.

Our Team



Participant Highlights

TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) & English Second Language (ESL) has achieved notable successes, including a significant increase in student recruitment and enrollment into both grant programs. Student engagement has also improved, with more students attending one-on-one meetings with TRiO Coordinators. Furthermore, TRiO students have seen an increase in academic and professional scholarships awarded, which contributes to reducing a student's debt burden. These achievements highlight the program's effectiveness in supporting economically disadvantaged, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities in their educational and professional pursuits.

Student Support Services (SSS) Participants
150 Continuing
184 New Participants

SSS-ESL Participants
81 Continuing
61 New Participants

TRiO Workshops

TRiO Student Support Services partnered with Wellness Services, Tutoring, Financial Aid, Career Services, Student Success Coaches, KCT Credit Union, and various student support services areas to offer over fifty workshops per semester.

This past year, TRiO collaborated with Student Success Coaches to provide workshops on topics such as Mastering Your Time, Staying Motivated, and Learning Styles. These unique partnerships have significantly boosted student engagement.

These sessions equip students with essential academic and personal development strategies, helping them build confidence, improve their time management skills, and discover learning techniques that align with their strengths. As a result, students are better prepared to succeed both in and outside of the classroom.

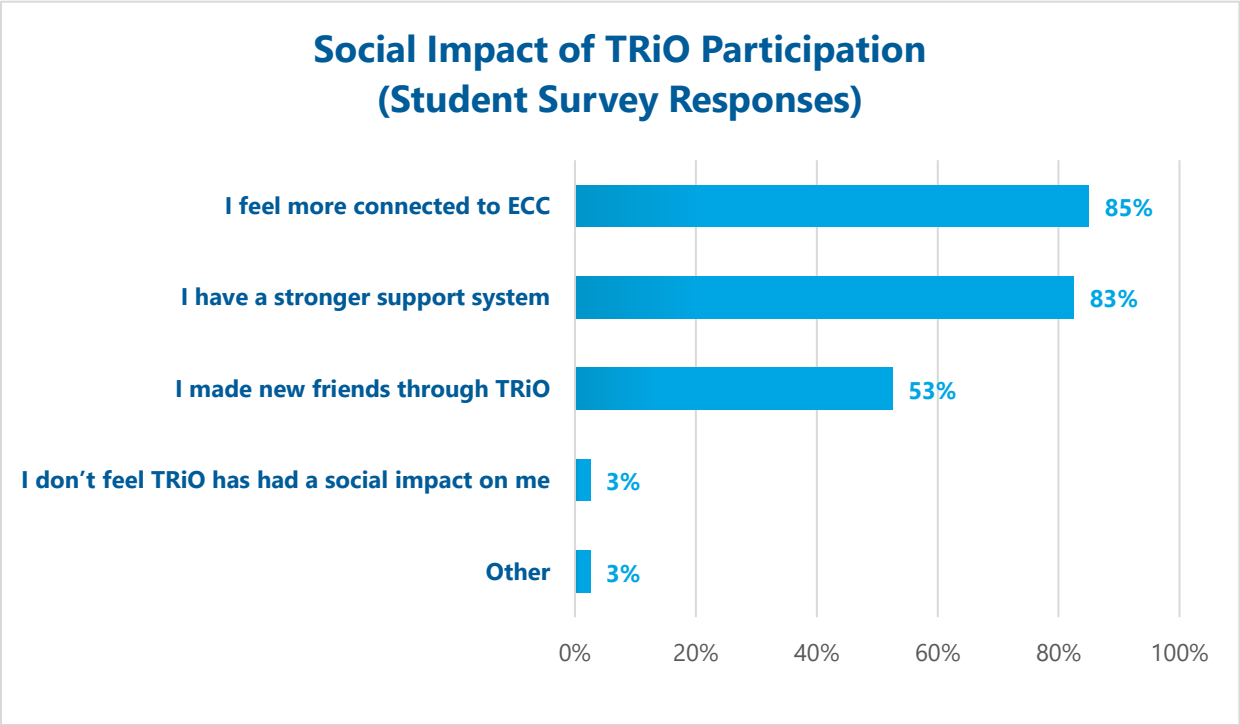
TRiO Student Experience Feedback

The TRiO Student Support Services Experience Survey gathers student feedback on how the program supports their academic journey, sense of belonging, and personal development. Below are anecdotal responses from TRiO students.

> *"I feel lucky to have this support by bilingual person. It is so helpful to go through College successfully as a student!"*

> *"I've made many connections through TRiO and learned many things regarding finance and universities via TRiO workshops."*

> *"Some of the best have been the campus tours, since it gave me a new opportunity to explore different new areas I've never been to before and it's been amazing going with trio!"*



TRIO SSS & ESL and Transfer Services

2024-2025 academic year

During the 2024–2025 academic year, TRiO Student Support Services and Transfer Services partnered to offer transfer tours that supported students' transitions to four-year institutions. Visits to Northeastern Illinois University, Aurora University, Northern Illinois University, and University of Illinois Chicago were open to all ECC students, providing direct access to admissions staff, academic departments, and current students.

In the spring, TRiO hosted a tour to Columbia College and Roosevelt University for TRiO/ESL participants, focusing on private university pathways and building student confidence. These tours offered valuable insight into the transfer process, academic opportunities, and campus life.

This initiative reflects TRiO's commitment to equity and college access, giving first-generation and underrepresented students the tools and exposure needed to pursue their academic goals.

Student Participant Data:

- Northeastern Illinois University: 10 Students
- NIU: 28 Students
- UIC: 40 Students
- Aurora University: 10 Students
- Roosevelt University: 29 Students
- Columbia College: 11 students

Note: Each of the institutions visited are designated Hispanic Serving Institutions and among ECC's top Transfer institutions for students.

Veterans Services

ECC is proud to serve students who serve or served our country. Our Veteran Services Department is designed for military-connected students, providing relevant academic support and social connection. Our department provides personalized guidance to ensure military-connected students are successful in their academic journey. Our goal is to create a supportive community where military-connected students are successful, enjoy a sense of belonging, and feel part of the college community. In addition, our staff connects students with veteran community care services.

Our Team

Vinny Cascio
Dean of Students

Anitra King
Career and Veteran Specialist V

Service Highlights

Military Friendly Recognition

In the 2024–2025 academic year, Veterans Services proudly achieved an upgraded gold designation as a Military Friendly® School, reflecting the college's ongoing commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for student veterans. This elevated status highlights continued improvements in veteran-centered resources, support services, and student success outcomes. In addition, the college maintained its designation as a Military Friendly® Spouse School, recognizing our sustained efforts to serve military families with flexibility, access, and comprehensive support.

S.A.L.U.T.E. Veteran Honor Society

S.A.L.U.T.E. is a national honor society that recognizes student veterans who exemplify the core values of military service while pursuing their academic goals. In Fall 2024, the Veteran Services Department proudly inducted two new members into the society, followed by the induction of one additional member in Spring 2025. Each inductee received S.A.L.U.T.E. graduation cords and pins to wear at Elgin Community College's commencement ceremony. Since the chapter's establishment in 2014, a total of 39 student veterans have been inducted into S.A.L.U.T.E. at ECC.

The Quilts of Valor

During the 2024–2025 academic year, Veteran Services proudly hosted a series of Quilts of Valor ceremonies to recognize and honor the service and sacrifice of our student veterans and military-connected community members. In partnership with the Quilts of Valor Foundation, we presented a total of eight handmade quilts across three heartfelt events.

In November 2024, during our Veterans Day celebration, we awarded three quilts. ECC Board of Trustees: Sergio Rodriguez & Patrick Parks were honored in January 2025 at the start of the spring semester, and an additional three students were presented in May 2025, coinciding with graduation and Military Appreciation Month. Each ceremony served as a powerful reminder of our commitment to celebrating the courage, strength, and dedication of those who have served. These events continue to build a sense of community, gratitude, and recognition on campus.

The Veterans Resource Center (VRC)

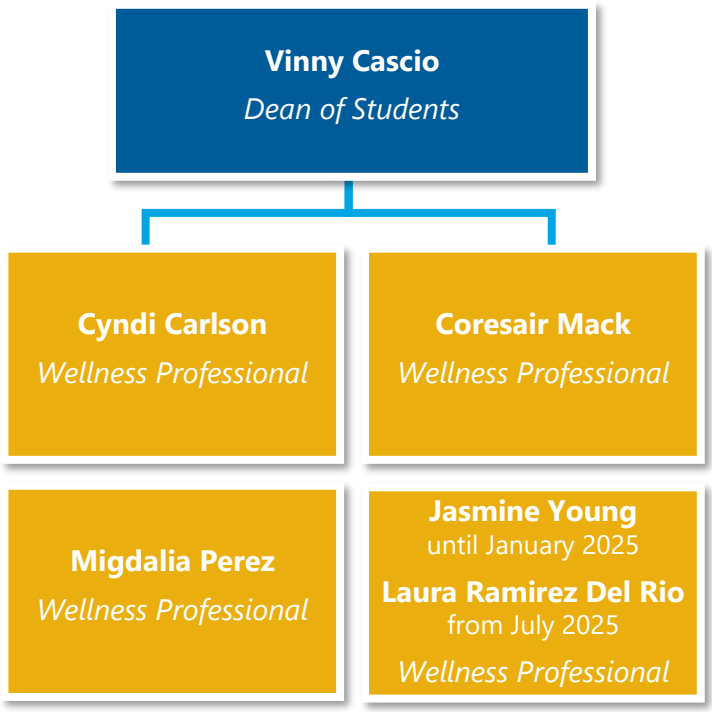
The Veterans Resource Center (VRC) at Elgin Community College is a dedicated and welcoming space designed specifically for our student veterans. In Spring 2025 alone, the VRC recorded over 250 visits, highlighting its importance as a hub for veteran engagement and support. The center provides a unique environment where veterans can connect with fellow service members, work on class assignments, study, and stay informed about events and opportunities both on campus and in the broader community.

Veterans have direct access to a dedicated Veteran Success Specialist, Academic Advisor, and Financial Aid/Veteran School Certifying Official on campus—all available to assist with academic planning, accessing military education benefits, and connecting to supportive resources. Whether students are seeking guidance, building community, or simply a quiet space to focus, the Veterans Resource Center remains a vital part of their academic and personal journey.

Wellness Services

Wellness Services supports students' learning and academic success by providing services that promote healthy attitudes and behaviors focusing on the eight dimensions of wellness: Environmental, emotional, financial, intellectual, occupational/academic, physical, social, and spiritual

Our Team



Wellness Student Appointments

430
Students Served in-person or virtual (through DOXY telehealth) and via phone

2093
Appointments

Students sought assistance from a Wellness Professional for...
(Ranking 1-5, 1 the most frequent concern)

1	2	3	4	5
Anxiety	Relationships	Stress	Academic Difficulties	Depression

Mental Health Screenings Available to Students

Accessible to students 24/7 via elgin.edu, Mindwise provides students access to confidential and clinically-validated screenings for a diverse array of behavioral health concerns. Upon completing an online assessment, students are guided towards tailored mental health support resources. *(% changes from last year to this year.)*

291
Screenings

Student Demographics & Usage of Services

Wellness Services supported a diverse range of students throughout the academic year. The majority of students who accessed services identified as female (68%), while male students made up 32% of service users.

Racial and ethnic data indicate that nearly half of students identified as Hispanic/Latinx (49.9%), followed by White students at 24.5%. Asian students accounted for 9.1%, while 6.4% identified as two or more races. Black or African American students represented 5.4% of service users. A smaller portion of students identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native (.45%), and 1% did not report a racial or ethnic identity.

These demographics reflect a strong presence of students from historically underserved backgrounds engaging with our services. This affirms our commitment to providing culturally responsive wellness support and emphasizes the importance of continued outreach to ensure equitable access for all students.

Raising Mental Health Awareness on Campus

Wellness Presentations

113
Presentations

To address the prevalence of mental health concerns among college-age students, Wellness Services encourages faculty to arrange classroom presentations aimed at informing students about the wide range of resources available, including free one-on-one therapeutic support from a licensed mental health therapist on campus. During the academic year, Wellness Professionals conducted a total of 62 classroom presentations in the fall and 51 in the spring, highlighting the benefits and perks of Wellness Services and how students can access support.

Faculty also have the option to share a video presentation on their D2L page as an alternative or supplement to an in-person visit.

Annual Highlights

Telehealth Services via Doxy: Expanding Access to Care

In an ongoing effort to remove barriers and increase accessibility to mental health care, Wellness Services continued to offer telehealth counseling sessions through the secure Doxy platform. This virtual option allowed students to receive support from licensed mental health professionals from the comfort and privacy of their own space—whether on campus or offsite.

During the reporting period, a total of 78 telehealth sessions were conducted through Doxy, accounting for 3,487 total minutes of therapeutic care. With an average session length of approximately 45 minutes, these virtual sessions provided students with consistent, timely, and meaningful support. Telehealth remains a vital tool in our commitment to ensuring that all students, regardless of location or schedule constraints, have equitable access to essential mental health services.

Mental Health First Aid Training

This year, nearly 70 ECC employees participated in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, a nationally recognized, evidence-based program designed to build skills in recognizing and responding to mental health and substance use challenges. Wellness Services hosted six workshops throughout the academic year, with plans to add more sessions before the fiscal year ends.

By expanding MHFA training across campus, we are fostering a more responsive and supportive environment for students and colleagues facing mental health concerns.

Uwill Mental Health Support

To meet the growing demand for accessible mental health support, Wellness Services partnered with Uwill in January 2024 to provide ECC students with 24/7/365 access to licensed mental health clinicians. This service ensures students can receive immediate non-emergency or crisis support anytime—regardless of college hours, closures, or location.

Since its launch, over 10 students have utilized Uwill's services, demonstrating the importance of flexible, around-the-clock care. Uwill's platform also supports care coordination and offers ECC Wellness Professionals real-time data, analytics, and customized reporting to inform ongoing student support and referral efforts.

Peer Support Program

In preparation for its official launch in Fall 2025, Wellness Services spent the year developing an enhanced Peer Educator Program aimed at fostering student connection and promoting mental wellness. Beginning with 1–2 trained Peer Educators in Summer 2025, the program will offer peer

mentorship, mental health support, resource referrals, and emergency response procedures to create a more inclusive and supportive campus community.

Collaborative Programming Across Student Services

Throughout the year, Wellness Services partnered with departments across the Student Services Division to deliver impactful, student-centered programming. Collaborations with TRiO included workshops on self-talk, values, family expectations, college stress, mindfulness, and art-based wellness. Joint efforts with Student Life brought events like the *Black Professionals Panel: Trailblazers at Work*, while additional partnerships supported HIV awareness for Latinx students, the Relaxation Zone, TRIUMPH's mental wellness talk, *Spring Break 101*, *Relationships 101*, and Bystander Intervention Training. These programs reflect our collective commitment to student wellness, identity, and success.

The Elgin Community College Student Services & Development division embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to working together, and with our college and community partners, to address barriers to student success and to promote a culture of inclusivity, compassion, and mutual respect.

The design choices in this report were made to align with international accessibility standards.

Elgin Community College

Student Services and Development