

A PUBLICATION OF ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Impact

July 2020

Volume 26 Issue 4



## STARING DOWN COVID-19

COMING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY



Elgin  
Community  
College



#### MISSION

The mission of Elgin Community College is to improve people's lives through learning.

#### SHARED VALUES

Excellence  
Freedom of Inquiry  
Equity  
Diversity  
Ethical Practices  
Accountability  
Collaboration

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The Community College District 509 Board of Trustees meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, unless otherwise posted on the board's web page. All meetings are held in: Building E, Room E125 Seigle Auditorium Elgin Community College 1700 Spartan Drive Elgin, IL 60123

You can access board agendas, minutes, instructions for addressing the board, and board contact information at [elgin.edu/boardoftrustees](http://elgin.edu/boardoftrustees).

For additional information, contact the Office of the President at 847 214 7374 or [dkerruish@elgin.edu](mailto:dkerruish@elgin.edu).

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# LEADING THE WAY

## A message from the ECC President and Board Chair

Dear ECC Community,

When we entered this new decade, we never imagined that our lives would be transformed by a worldwide outcry for social justice and the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a global crisis that has touched every industry, including higher education.

As the state of Illinois implemented its stay-at-home order in March to help limit the spread of the novel coronavirus, our faculty, staff, and administrators worked expeditiously to transition more than 900 courses to alternative formats of learning and provided critical support services remotely to continue business operations.

While we must contend with a great deal of uncertainty at this time, we are marching forward fully acknowledging that this is a chapter in ECC's history that is still being written. Although we are not the authors of this story, we recognize that we all have leading roles to play. This includes doing our part to address social inequities as we carry out our

mission to improve people's lives through learning.

As you will read in the coming pages, the Elgin Community College spirit is demonstrated by our commitment to care for our students and communities. Whether it is providing access to technology or food or donating personal protective equipment to health care workers, we remain united in this time of crisis.

Even in the midst of turmoil, we are resilient, steadfast, and persistent as we pursue innovative ways to help our students achieve their dreams.

We also want to express our gratitude for how you have likewise risen to the occasion. Because of your financial contributions to the ECC Foundation's Emergency Student Relief Fund, we exceeded our goal of raising \$50,000 to further meet the direct needs of our students.

Although it is too soon to predict when our campus will reopen to the public at full capacity, we continue to foster an exceptional academic environment where learning never stops.

We appreciate your partnership as we move forward together. Be well and stay connected.

**David Sam,**  
PhD, JD, LL.M.  
President



**Donna Redmer,**  
EdD, '76  
Chair, Board  
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Source for median wage and employment growth data:  
Illinois Department of Employment Security

5966/ES/20200701



### ON THE COVER:

Juan Fernandez, ECC's gallery curator. Read about an ECC-connected trio who shifted from making art to making personal protective equipment. **Page 6**

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# Serving the community during COVID-19 crisis

## ECC donates \$15,000 in personal protective equipment (PPE) to Advocate Sherman Hospital

When Advocate Sherman Hospital contacted Elgin Community College for help with obtaining protective supplies for its health care providers serving on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, a team of ECC employees jumped into action. Craig Campbell, Kim Plate, Donna Boyce, Renee Skrabacz, and Wendy Miller delivered three carloads full of supplies, including gloves, gowns, and masks, from ECC's health professions and emergency services programs.



## ECC Foundation partners with Food for Greater Elgin pantry to provide necessities to students

The Elgin Community College Foundation partnered with Food for Greater Elgin to ensure that ECC students had seamless access to food and toiletries while the college's Spartan Food Pantry was closed due to the state's stay-at-home order. Uber® rides and mobile delivery were also made available for students without transportation.



## Wi-Fi hot spots delivered to students with tech needs

Elgin Community College remains committed to providing students with tools and resources to continue their studies. To assist students without internet access at home, ECC provided Wi-Fi hot spots in time for them to complete the spring semester without interruption. Additionally, the ECC Foundation purchased Wi-Fi plans for students who lacked Wi-Fi/cell access at home.

## Northern Illinois Food Bank partnership brings ECC and community together

Elgin Community College partnered with the Northern Illinois Food Bank on two occasions to host a "pop-up market" for those in need. During the first event, more than 100 ECC and community volunteers wearing protective gear distributed more than 100,000 pounds of food on site at the Spartan Drive campus. The no-contact event served approximately 2,700 vehicles, which were each loaded with an average of 55 pounds of food. The second pop-up market was also well-received and served more than 2,000 vehicles.



## Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) ready to serve

The Illinois Small Business Development Center (Illinois SBDC)

at Elgin Community College recently reopened to begin serving area businesses virtually during this time of crisis. From start-ups to established businesses, the Illinois SBDC at ECC helps clients build business plans, research financing, develop sales processes, and create exit plans. Clients receive one-on-one attention from a business analyst, as well as invitations to workshops and training sessions. The Illinois SBDC at ECC has provided no-cost business advising to existing and prospective business owners in the community for more than 30 years. Visit [elgin.edu/sbdc](http://elgin.edu/sbdc) for more information on available free assistance and other services.



# DEGREE OF HONOR



Cecil Smith

## Sanford police chief credits ECC with opportunity and success

During his 25-year career with the Elgin Police Department (EPD), Cecil Smith rose through the ranks from patrol officer to commander of the Special Investigations Division. Smith's dream of leading a police department inspired him to enroll at Elgin Community College to help advance his career.

"After 18 years with the EPD, I realized it was time to complete my higher education," said Smith. "I had many friends and colleagues who attended ECC...and I knew it was a great institution. ECC's faculty were all experienced in law enforcement and dedicated to the success of their students," he said.

From 2006 to 2008, Smith dedicated his time to earn both an associate degree from ECC and a bachelor's degree through the Columbia College of Missouri-Elgin program on the ECC campus. Working full time as a police commander, taking classes, and raising four kids would be daunting to most, but Smith recognized ECC as his opportunity to fulfill his educational and career goals. "I was motivated by the idea that with greater education comes greater success," he reflected.

In 2008, Smith was inspired to apply to the Federal Bureau of

### ► POLICE AND SHERIFF'S PATROL OFFICERS

■ Median Annual Wage: **\$85,071**

■ Employment change projection (2016 to 2026): ▲ **4%**

Investigation's National Training Academy, a program in which less than one percent of all law enforcement officers are selected for admission. Upon graduating from the FBI Academy, he became the first African American appointed to the role of deputy chief of police for the EPD.

Smith achieved his ultimate goal of leading his own department in 2013, when he was appointed chief of police for the Sanford Police Department in Sanford, Florida, where he still serves today.

While Smith recognizes that the COVID-19 crisis has impacted the way that he and his officers do their jobs, he affirms that their ultimate mission remains the same. "Our roles are forever changing, but the primary focus will always be on ensuring that the community is safe and feels protected, essential services are provided, and that we provide education to assist the community in protecting themselves," he said.

Smith also has advice for anyone considering going back to school: "Just do it. Time waits for no one, and the sooner you take that step, the greater your accomplishment will be." 🏆





Bridget Mooney

## Rising culinary star tackles tough challenges

**C**hef Bridget Mooney has united people from all over the world through major sporting events such as the Super Bowl, Final Four, Masters Tournament, and the U.S. Open.

"I never imagined I would be working in a stadium," said Mooney. "I am so thrilled I ended up where I did."

Growing up with a single mom and three siblings, Mooney and her sister took over most of the cooking duties. She soon realized cooking was her passion. Mooney's uncle, who graduated from Elgin Community College's culinary arts program, encouraged her to pursue that passion.

"I was very nervous about actually enrolling in a culinary program," Mooney said. "When I came to campus, I discovered a comfortable environment, and I knew I had found a place where I could grow into the chef I wanted to be."

Mooney went on to graduate from ECC's Culinary Arts & Hospitality Program. She attributes the college with setting her up for success and opening her up to new adventures—including an internship

### ► CHEFS AND HEAD COOKS

■ Median Annual Wage: **\$53,218**

■ Employment change projection (2016 to 2026): **▲ 13%**

at historic Soldier Field, home to the Chicago Bears, where she now works as an executive sous chef overseeing concessions and premium clubs.

Experience working in ECC's on-campus Spartan Terrace Restaurant and industry field trips with culinary arts professor Patrick Stewart prepared Mooney to excel in the high-pressure environment of the banquet kitchens at Soldier Field.

Although the food and beverage industry is currently facing extraordinary challenges, Mooney is optimistic the industry will bounce back stronger than ever. She believes the current COVID-19 crisis will unite culinary workers even more.

"We will come back and be stronger than ever," she said. "What is very unique about the virus hitting the food industry is the coming together it has stirred. Whether you work for a restaurant, big venue, or bar, we are a big hospitality family and we do our best to take care of each other." 🌱

# MASK MAKERS

**A**s the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered schools and businesses across the country, Elgin Community College began to look for innovative ways to support essential workers. A trio of ECC faculty, staff, and alumni found a way to do their part with a little ingenuity and a lot of creativity.

ECC Gallery Curator Juan Fernandez (on the cover) put his artistic endeavors on hold to produce much-needed masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) on a 3D printer. "My role at ECC is to coordinate art experiences for our community. I am also a practicing teacher and artist; in these trying times, I have found this to be a fortunate combination," Fernandez said. To help meet the needs of those on the front lines of COVID-19, Fernandez partnered with two ECC colleagues to coordinate the production and distribution of PPE and medical supplies to emergency workers.

ECC adjunct art instructor Eric Fuertes, who is also the manager of the Columbus Digital Fabrication Studio at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, worked with Fernandez to streamline the production of N95 filter masks and face shield brackets.

Eric Fuertes



# Combining art with safety, ECC trio creates face masks to mitigate spread of COVID-19

Additionally, ECC alumnus Nate Mathews, a Northeastern Illinois University professor of art, joined forces with his colleagues at NEIU and his seventeen-year-old nephew, Joey Mathews, to help the effort.



**Joey Mathews**

Using 3D printer designs approved by the National Institutes of Health, the team printed and assembled masks that can be sanitized and have replaceable breathing filters.

In between working, teaching, and caring for their families, the team has dedicated time to print and distribute the gear to first responders, health care personnel, and other essential workers, including members of the ECC

Police Department. All items were donated free of charge.

The trio funded most of the production, along with donations from ECC and the community. So far, they have printed and donated over 5,765 different PPE items. 🧰



**Nate Mathews**



Linda Deering Dean

# LEADING WITH HEART

## Inspiring alumna leaves legacy at Sherman Hospital

**L**inda Deering Dean never imagined herself as the president of a regional hospital. When she enrolled at Elgin Community College to continue her education, she was working full time as a registered nurse and raising a family. She appreciated having an affordable option in the community to help her achieve her goal of advancing to a high-level clinical nursing position.

"There is no reason to go into debt at a four-year college when you can get your start at ECC," said Deering Dean.

Deering Dean attended ECC part time, taking only a class or two each semester. After earning an associate degree, she transferred to Northern Illinois University to complete bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing.

As she pursued her education and accepted new career opportunities, Deering Dean found a passion for leadership as much as nursing. That passion led her to the role of president at Advocate Sherman Hospital in Elgin, where she recently retired after five years at the helm.

Known in the hospital industry as a change agent, Deering Dean's leadership at Sherman resulted in an increase in patient and

### ► REGISTERED NURSES

■ Median Annual Wage: **\$71,621**

■ Employment change projection (2016 to 2026): ▲ **15%**

employee satisfaction.

Deering Dean, who will receive the ECC 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award, makes time to give back to the "outstanding" institution where she started. In 2017, Deering Dean became a member of Purses with Purpose, the ECC Foundation's women's leadership group, and joined the ECC Foundation Board of Directors in 2019. Most recently, she established a full-ride scholarship program for nursing students of color.

Reflecting on the current global pandemic, Deering Dean notes that nurses are playing a critical role during the COVID-19 crisis. "Nurses are on the front lines every day helping their communities," she said, adding that the selflessness of these workers is an exemplary illustration of the nursing profession. 🌟





# BATTLING COVID-19

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

## Distinguished alumnus seeks cure at National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

For years, Dean Follmann's work has been focused on the study of infectious diseases and clinical trials that evaluate therapies. Most recently, it has put him on the front lines in the quest to find a cure for the virus that causes COVID-19.

Follmann grew up in Uдина, Illinois, on the outskirts of Elgin, and graduated from Elgin Community College in 1977 with an associate degree in psychology. He transferred to Northern Illinois University, earning Bachelor of Science degrees in mathematics and psychology and a Master of Science degree in statistics. Later, Follmann earned a PhD in statistics from Carnegie Mellon University, in Pennsylvania.



Dean Follmann, PhD

Follmann's career started at the Center for Naval Analyses, a think tank for the U.S. Navy, where he worked on weapons systems reliability, logistics, and manpower planning. At the National Institutes of Health, he studied cardiovascular disease and led an infectious diseases and immunology group.

### ► MATHEMATICAL SCIENCE OCCUPATIONS

■ Median Annual Wage: **\$99,197**

■ Employment change projection (2016 to 2026): **▲ 28%**

"With a degree in statistics you can work in a wide variety of areas," Follmann said. "I was drawn to the field of health because I liked science and found infectious diseases and immunology fascinating."

Follmann specializes in the design and analysis of clinical trials that improve human health as the assistant director for biostatistics at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), where Anthony Fauci, MD, serves as the director. Follmann and his team have been involved in efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, including early treatments, preventative drugs, and trials for antiviral medicines and vaccines.

From studying in a classroom at a community college to researching one of the most peculiar infectious diseases in world history, Follmann is grateful for the education he received at ECC.

"ECC had a large impact on my career and life. ECC opened me up to the idea that I could continue on with learning and see how far it would take me—and it took me very far."

As the ECC Foundation's 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, Follmann believes in the value of education. "I think a good education is the best insurance policy for uncertain times as it provides you an advantage and opportunities, no matter what the future brings," he said. ✨



Tim Slater

# DRIVEN TO SUCCESS

ECC ignited a career path and paved the way to business ownership

**D**on't expect to know what you want to do after high school. Go try stuff. Take a variety of courses and explore different industries."

This is the advice Tim Slater, owner and operator of Centurion Performance & Engines, in Hampshire, would offer high school students today because this is exactly what he did 17 years ago.

As a senior at Hampshire High School, Slater wasn't sure about his future. He completed the requirements for his high school diploma, simultaneously taking trade classes, such as welding, at ECC. After graduating, he took courses in industrial manufacturing technology and computer-aided design.

"I knew I liked working with my hands, but I didn't see what I could do with that skill until coming to ECC," said Slater. "The faculty were all supportive of students and really helped us hone our skills and discover where our passions truly lay."

Slater went into aviation maintenance after attending ECC, but felt he could achieve more. In 2009, he opened up his own business, which evolved from automotive maintenance to custom builds and engines.

## ► COMPUTER NUMERICALLY CONTROLLED (CNC) MACHINE TOOL PROGRAMMERS, METAL AND PLASTIC

■ Median Annual Wage: **\$54,385**

■ Employment change projection (2016 to 2026): ▲ **18%**

"There is no shame working in the trades, and there is something to be said about coming home exhausted from working with your hands and producing high-quality mechanical products," said Slater.

Especially during these uncertain times, Slater strongly believes in the value of the trades, which many career and technical education students pursue after starting at ECC.

Slater encourages students to try new things before deciding on a career path.

"A sliver of experience from a course in high school to trying out a new trade at ECC can be the spark that ignites enthusiasm that leads to passion, and passion leads to success." ✨



# ECC Foundation unites donors to combat pandemic's financial toll

Shortly after the implementation of Illinois' stay-at-home order in March, the Elgin Community College Foundation established the Emergency Student Relief Fund to help students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Just one month later, more than 100 donors had pitched in to help reach the goal of raising over \$50,000.

"We are dedicated to ensuring that all students who are committed to their educations can continue, regardless of their financial situations," said David Davin, ECC Foundation executive director. "It's inspiring that the community has stepped up to support our students. I'm proud to live in a community of people who know that a gift to our students now is an investment in our community's future health and prosperity."

The fund, which aimed to support students in need of technology or were otherwise struggling financially due to the crisis, began with a generous donation of over \$12,000 by the ECC Foundation Board of Directors. The community and ECC employees also donated to the cause.

In a short timeframe, ECC faculty helped transition nearly 9,000 ECC students to alternative online learning formats. The college also provided technology support, such as free loaner Chromebooks™, to students. With the pandemic financially impacting every industry,

**Octavia Tate, 2020 Associate in Arts graduate and a beneficiary of the Emergency Student Relief Fund.**



students are also dealing with unemployment and even tighter budgets. The Emergency Student Relief Fund offers a flexible funding source for ECC to meet the many needs students have during this unusual crisis.

While there are a variety of funding sources available to colleges and universities, Davin explained that funds provided to the relief fund offer the foundation the most flexibility in how it helps ECC students. For example, ECC also received funding through the federal CARES Act, however, over 50 percent of ECC students are ineligible to receive funding from that source.

"The Emergency Student Relief Fund ensures we are not leaving any student behind," said Davin.

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