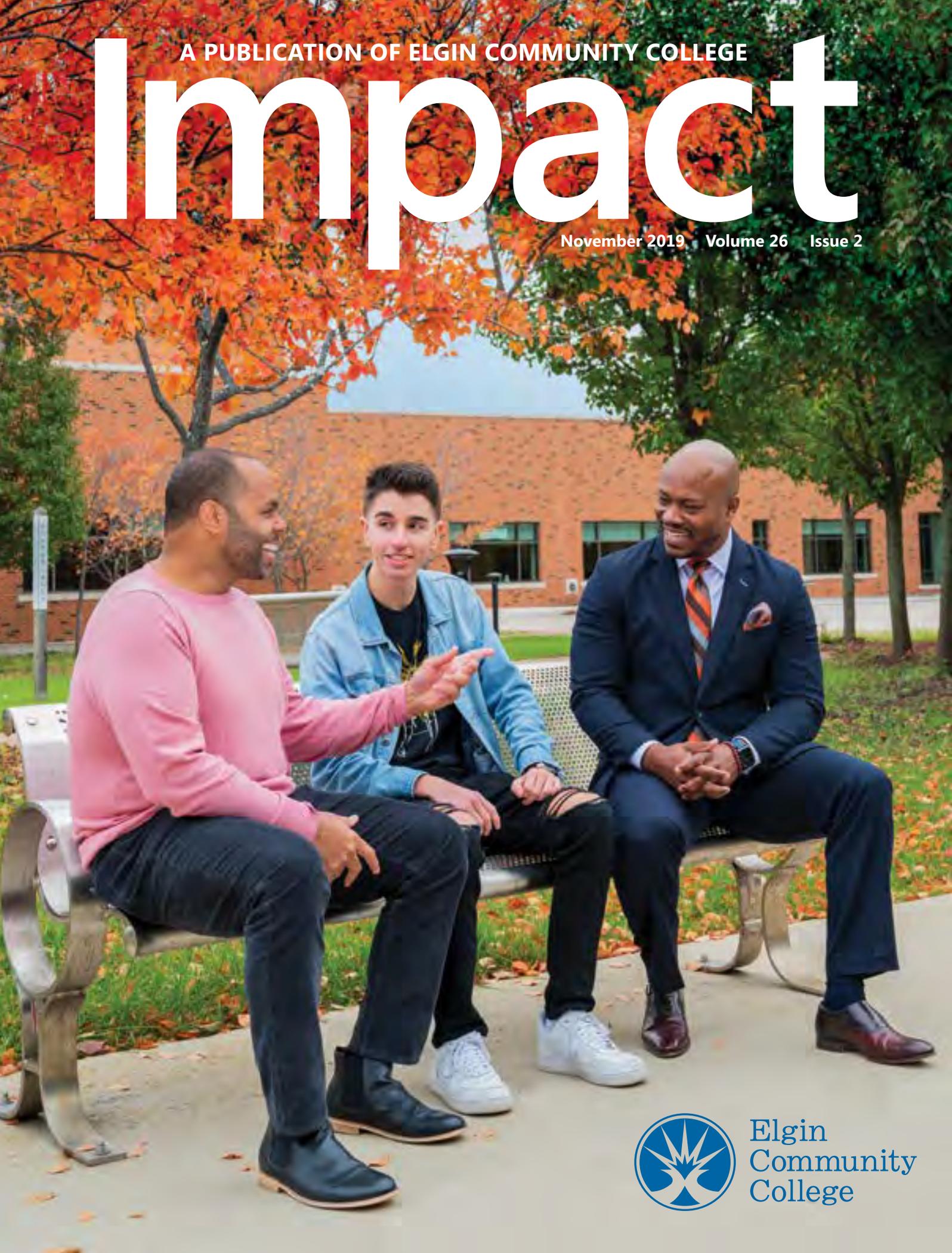


A PUBLICATION OF ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Impact

November 2019 | Volume 26 | Issue 2



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.

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LEADING THE WAY

A message from the ECC President and Board Chair

Dear ECC Community,

It was more than 70 years ago when Elgin Community College began offering classes from inside the cafeteria of Elgin High School. In fact, ECC originated and remained within School District U-46 until the passage of the Public Community College Act of 1965. Even then, we made the distinction that we were not a junior college, but a community college.

What's the difference? Back then, junior colleges focused on providing students with two years of education before transferring to four-year institutions to earn baccalaureate degrees. In contrast, a community college at that time provided students with career and technical skills to meet the needs of business and industry.

Today, ECC offers the best of both worlds and more. In addition to scores of valued partnerships with four-year transfer institutions, we pride ourselves on the relationships we have sustained with local businesses through internships, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities for our students. We also serve the community by offering classes that include adult and basic education, high school equivalency, English as a second language (ESL), and continuing education.

Not only is community our middle name, it is interwoven into the very fabric of who we are—from what we do to how we do it. From celebrating the 25th anniversary of the ECC Arts Center as the cultural gem of the Fox Valley to recognizing volunteers who step up to mentor students, we dedicate this edition of *Impact* to you, the members of our area communities who help us fulfill our mission.

Since 1949, we have proudly played an integral role in shaping the lives of community members who serve in District 509 and beyond as nurses, teachers, public safety officers, welders, and other professionals. It is no surprise that many of our students graduate and remain connected to the college through the ECC Foundation or as college employees. This is an example of how we—as a community college—continue to impact our communities in such a profound way.

As you enjoy the holiday season with family and friends, we thank you for your support and strongly believe that there would be no community in Elgin Community College without you.

Sincerely,

David Sam, PhD, JD, LLM
President

Donna Redmer, EdD, '76
Chair, Board of Trustees



Photo by Pat Dorgan



ON THE COVER:

Left to right: ECC coordinator for targeted populations Erik Enders, student Hasan Hadzisalihovic, and community leader Frank London discuss mentoring opportunities together. Read more about ECC's mentoring programs on page 3.

FEATURED STORIES

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Information in this publication is subject to change.



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Ali-Reza Kashani, first year programs coordinator, listens as Moses Lartey, student and TRIUMPH scholar, describes his experiences at ECC.



MENTOR A STUDENT BUILD A COMMUNITY

If you take a moment to consider where you are in life and how you got here, your first thought will likely be the mentors who provided guidance at a time when you needed it most. At Elgin Community College, mentoring is key to building stronger students.

Through mentoring, community members and students build a support bridge that enhances each other's lives. Two established ECC mentoring programs include *Purses with Purpose* and the Transition Academy. An ECC Foundation affinity group, *Purses with Purpose* focuses on scholarships and mentoring for women. Transition Academy pairs mentors with high school students to ensure they stay on track for future college or career training.

This fall, ECC launched a third mentoring program, TRIUMPH—Transforming and Impacting Undergraduate Men Pursuing

Higher Education—focused on increasing the number of men of color graduating college. TRIUMPH helps students realize their potential and equips them with tools to succeed in their academic, personal, and future professional lives by pairing them with carefully chosen mentors. For community leader Frank London, the decision to become a mentor was based on his own experience.

"As a young professional, I did not have anyone to mentor me. After several years in the workforce, a manager took time to invest in me, which impacted my career," said London, who believes in the essence of TRIUMPH. "In other communities, certain skills are taught, [but] in the minority community, the same skills and development are not given consideration. Mentors are an important part of the process so young adults get the necessary coaching for their futures."

The success of the TRIUMPH program, and ultimately the success of all ECC students, relies on community members stepping up to help. Erik Enders, student life coordinator for targeted populations, is recruiting mentors for this program.

"As a mentor, you can guide and support a student as he navigates both his academic and personal life. Mentors also learn the challenges and barriers students face today. It is a dialogue and relationship that impacts two people's lives," said Enders. "By building up a student, you are building a stronger community."

TRIUMPH's goal is 100 mentors matched to students by spring 2020. If you have the desire to change a life, please consider becoming a mentor. To learn more or to sign up as a mentor, visit elgin.edu/triumph or contact Erik Enders at eenders@elgin.edu.



Cultural Gem *of the* Fox Valley

The nature of art, in all its forms, is to widen perspectives and help people connect with one another. Twenty-five years ago, leaders at Elgin Community College made a bold move to create a visual and performing arts center that would become a creative hub for the region and bring people together.

“Elgin Community College really is the cultural gem of the Fox Valley,” said Mary Hatch, dean of liberal, visual, and performing arts. “Over the years we’ve sought to diversify our offerings and engage those who weren’t necessarily involved in the arts.”

By offering robust visual and performing arts educational programs, including musical theatre, plays, sculpture, printmaking, painting, photography, and music ensembles, in addition to establishing strong relationships with the larger arts community, the college serves as a conduit for artistic expression.

Community groups, such as Ballet Folklórico Huehucoyotl (now BFH), a Mexican folkloric dance group; and Hamilton Wings, which promotes leadership development and academic

readiness for children through access to the arts; have found a welcoming stage at the ECC Arts Center. The Elgin Symphony Orchestra (ESO) and the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (EYSO), both community-based, nonprofit organizations, originated as ECC music classes.

In addition to classes, rehearsals, and art exhibits, an average of 270 performance events take place in the college’s three theatre spaces each year. As many as 35,000 patrons visit from 300 different ZIP codes and 20 states drawing attention and financially contributing to both the college and the community.

“Thousands of performers have cut their teeth right here in Elgin, and if you plotted their locations now on a map, they would show up all over the country,” said Steve Duchrow, senior director of performing arts since 2006. “People enjoy the ECC Arts Center and come to us from throughout the region.”

Just in time for its silver anniversary, the Arts Center underwent extensive remodeling, from new seating and carpeting to energy-efficient lighting—all to enhance the experience for guests. An October 2019 ribbon cutting introduced the renovated space to the

public and honored people who have supported its growth.

Duchrow sees the arts as a transformative experience. Performers succeed and fail together, all in front of an audience. “You are all part of the same team,” Duchrow said. “The audience provides feedback during a performance through their reactions and can spur performers on to success.” In the process, everyone learns more about themselves and, hopefully, it makes them better citizens.

Many familiar faces fill the theatre seats each season. Among them are people such as John Duffy, current and longest-serving ECC trustee; Peter Akemann, community leader; Polly Nash, former ECC dean; and Paul Dawson, former employee; who were part of the Arts Center’s planning and construction—a bold and visionary act, according to Duchrow, who notes that these four visionaries are still among the first in line for tickets.

“Art is meaningless without community,” said Duchrow. It’s this sense of community that helps the Arts Center stay innovative and makes ECC a cultural destination for the region.



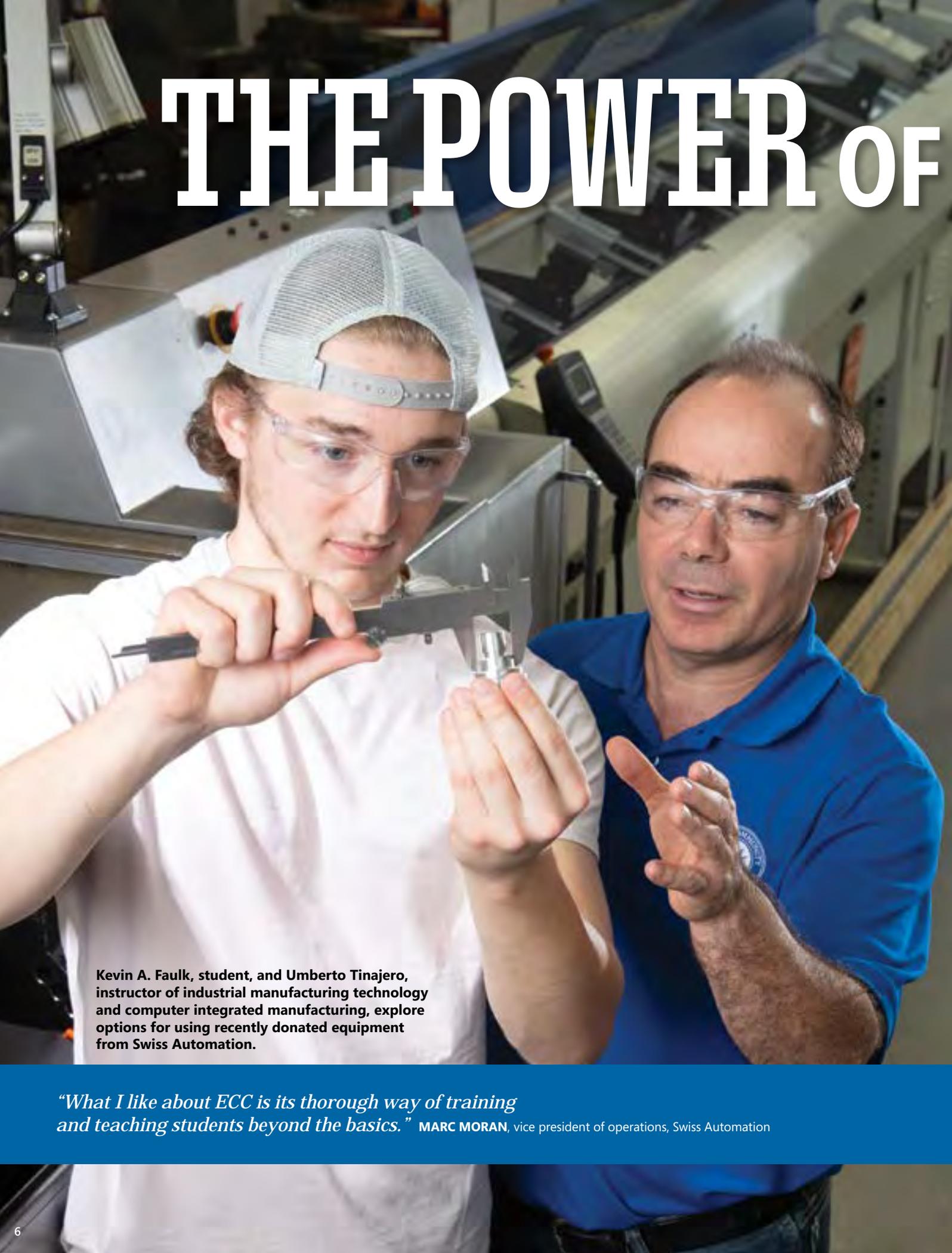
The ECC Arts Center kicked off its 25th anniversary season in October 2019.

Harry and Phyllis Blizzard: A Gift to ECC

Twenty-five years ago, Harry and Phyllis Blizzard’s significant gift to Elgin Community College helped fund the construction of the Blizzard Theatre—and far more beyond that. Their donation resulted in the Harry and Phyllis Blizzard Endowed Fund for the Arts that has continued to ensure top-notch facilities and equipment for years to come, including a recently restored Steinway grand piano.



THE POWER OF



Kevin A. Faulk, student, and Umberto Tinajero, instructor of industrial manufacturing technology and computer integrated manufacturing, explore options for using recently donated equipment from Swiss Automation.

“What I like about ECC is its thorough way of training and teaching students beyond the basics.” MARC MORAN, vice president of operations, Swiss Automation

PARTNERSHIPS

Fueling student success for a stronger community

Coming out of high school, Kevin Reissenweber wasn't interested in pursuing a traditional college experience, so he enrolled at ECC and secured an apprenticeship at SG360, a marketing and print production company.

"I knew I liked working with my hands and that a traditional four-year degree wasn't what I wanted," said Reissenweber. "In my apprenticeship, I get to combine school with hands-on help from employees who know all the tricks for speed and efficiency."

While apprenticeships provide valuable work experience, they also demonstrate the benefits of ECC's classroom training to employers.

"Our apprentices are being exposed to issues they might not otherwise see for years in a job setting, and they're better prepared to solve a problem quickly," said Greg Dvorak of Rana Meal Solutions in Bartlett.

Strong ties to the business community and community leaders have long been an ECC hallmark, and the ECC Foundation serves as a strategic partner in building those relationships. The resulting partnerships often lead to financial gifts, grants, or even donated equipment, all of which support students' education and the community's future.

For example, the college's partnership with Swiss Automation led the Barrington-based

manufacturer to donate \$1.3 million worth of equipment, software, and training to ECC. The gift will enable ECC to offer advanced certification programming and create new pathways to jobs.

"Other colleges have solid manufacturing programs. What I like about ECC is its thorough way of training and teaching students beyond the basics," said Marc Moran, vice president of operations at Swiss Automation. "ECC is willing to understand what we need and help students get to the next level."

For Cathy Taylor, dean of sustainability, business, and career technologies, a successful collaboration starts with listening to employers and learning about their needs.

"It's essential that we adapt to the fast pace of change in industry," she said. "Raising the level of engagement is what our students deserve, and it's what our business partners need."

When it comes to revising programs and launching new ones, the college also gathers feedback from employers and advisory boards including program graduates, business leaders, and college representatives. Using this framework, ECC introduced or expanded six new program offerings in the past year in high-demand fields, such as computer support specialist, supply chain management, computer numerical control programmer, and surgical technology.

From creating new programs to developing the skills of ECC graduates, business partnerships are essential to the success of students—and to the region's economy.

As observed by Taylor, "Everything we do needs to further the best interest of the student and add value for employers. After all, once employed, students become members of a wider economic and social community."

Joe Lazowski, apprenticeship program manager for BBS Automation, and Adam Aubry, student, sign an apprenticeship agreement in August 2019.



Our roots run deep

Keeping ECC in the family

Since its founding in 1949, more than 42,000 alumni have graduated from and thousands more have attended ECC.

Among these District 509 residents are generations of families whose roots run deep within the college and the community.

Alumna Sharon Fisher-Larson counts four Spartans among her family, including her husband (Eric), daughter, and two granddaughters. With each generation, the feeling that drew her to ECC has deepened. First as a student, then as a faculty member, and now as chair of the ECC Foundation's *Purses with Purpose* affinity group, Fisher-Larson has 55 years invested in ECC.

"As a student, instructors saw something in me I did not see," said Fisher-Larson, who values the support she found at the college. "Any time I recommend ECC, I talk about how caring the faculty are here."

Fisher-Larson's husband, Eric Larson, is a former ECC dean and serves as vice chair of the ECC Foundation board. Their daughter, Shannon Hernandez, graduated in 1989 and was a member of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) honor society. And now, granddaughter Isabella Hernandez is involved with PTK, student government, and serves as the Illinois Community College Board's statewide student representative. Even the youngest granddaughter, Mari, attends ECC's Kids' College.

"I knew it was my best choice," said Isabella Hernandez, who never questioned that she would attend ECC. "Those who go here have wonderful



Sharon Fisher-Larson (left), with granddaughter Mari, daughter Shannon, and granddaughter Isabella.

experiences, and they pass that narrative down to their family members."

Fisher-Larson agrees. "ECC is still the best place to be. I continue to work with the college because it makes a difference for so many individuals. ECC has given me so much over the years; I just want to give back," she said.

One of Fisher-Larson's students, Diane Kerruish, can still be found on campus today. Kerruish, senior executive assistant to the president, even met her husband while playing intramural softball. In all, Kerruish's family counts 12 ECC alumni, including two sons, one of whom has returned to earn a culinary arts degree.

"There are so many different paths to take after high school, and ECC has something for everyone," said Kerruish, whose family members have attended the college for nursing, dental assisting, office administration, drafting, culinary arts, and general education programs. "I'm proud to work for the institution that

has touched so many lives in my family and the entire community."

The record for most alumni in one family, though, might go to the Dumoulin family. Pat Dumoulin started teaching at the college in 1970, and counting her late husband Bill, three children, their spouses, and 12 grandchildren, a total of 20 family members have walked ECC's halls so far. Half of them played on the women's basketball team, and all 12 grandchildren received scholarships from the ECC Foundation.

When the family received ECC's Lasting Impact Award in 2018, Pat Dumoulin expressed pride in her family's choice to make ECC their college. In addition to one family member on campus this fall, the family tree will likely have a few more Spartans, as several grandchildren are still in high school.

Elgin Community College's roots have made it possible for thousands of families across District 509 to establish strong foundations and build bright futures.



To serve and protect begins at ECC

Elgin Police Department policy change opens door for ECC graduates

Dressed casually, the teacher for Thursday night's criminal justice class at Elgin Community College is more than she appears. She is Chief Ana Lalley, a 24-year veteran of the Elgin Police Department (EPD) and a 12-year instructor at the college.

Through teaching, Lalley gets to know her students and have an impact on what they are learning. This is important to a police chief who sees value in recruiting officers from the community.

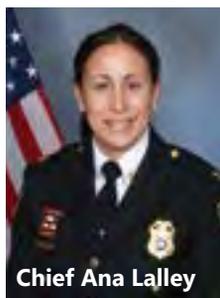
"When you're in the classroom, seeing someone for three or four months, there's a personal relationship," said Lalley. "Because the students come from surrounding communities, they're in tune with what's going on in Elgin policing—our philosophy, our community engagement."

Lalley's ability to teach law enforcement procedures, community engagement practices, and the use of modern technology in police work makes ECC an ideal training ground for future EPD officers. However, until this summer, working for the EPD meant having a four-year degree, military service, or a job with the city to qualify for the entrance exam.

When ECC criminal justice instructional coordinator Todd Ramljak, a 20-year veteran officer, proposed a policy change that would permit ECC students to test with a two-year degree, Lalley strongly endorsed the idea.

"Changing the requirement is the perfect opportunity to allow students to take the exam, especially students who we know are excited to become police officers," said Lalley. "For me, it is the perfect fit."

Ramljak notes recruiting ECC students has other advantages. ECC instructors have decades of experience in the field. The curriculum covers critical topics, such as community-based policing, crisis and conflict mediation, report writing, stress management, and forensic science. But what truly sets ECC's program apart is the training with local law enforcement that is woven into the curriculum. As a result, ECC criminal justice graduates already have firsthand knowledge of EPD's operations.



Chief Ana Lalley

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

"Recruiting locally means having officers who know the area, the neighborhoods, and the values of the community. This knowledge can shape an officer's interactions. When you live here, you also live with the effects of your actions," said Ramljak, who spearheaded the policy change request that was approved unanimously by the Elgin City Council in July 2019. Another benefit to Elgin is the opportunity to increase the diversity of its applicant pool with ECC's 54 percent female and 45 percent Latinx enrollment.

Important to Lalley is the ability to interest students in becoming part of law enforcement, especially at EPD. "We encourage innovation. We encourage people to think differently and to not be afraid to say I have this great concept that I want to try," said Lalley. "[The students] see opportunity and they see a department that embraces diversity, embraces inclusion."

By working in partnership, ECC and EPD are creating opportunities for well-educated and well-prepared recruits to serve the community they call home.

Working together to get back to work

"I didn't know ECC did this" is a common phrase heard in the Workforce Development Office. "This" refers to the free resources available to any community member who asks for job search assistance at Elgin Community College.

Résumé writing, basic computer classes, networking and personal marketing workshops, and one-on-one coaching are offered at no cost to the job seeker. Employment Transitions Coordinator Linda Brubaker believes individual coaching is the biggest key to finding success.

"My job is to identify someone's transferable skills, strengths, and interests. Then I point them in the right direction," said Brubaker. "Sometimes, it is a new direction."

In addition to assessing a client's current skills, Brubaker pinpoints any skill deficits that can hinder job placement. The client is connected with resources to address these gaps, which may include a course or certificate at ECC or tapping into free resources in the community or online.

For Donna De La Fuente, being laid off after 30 years in the telecommunications industry meant the opportunity to take her project management skills to the healthcare industry. "A job search or career change when you are middle-aged is tough," said De La Fuente. "And the infrastructure around looking for a job is new and intimidating."

De La Fuente received help navigating the online application process, practicing for video interviews, and framing her résumé for her new goal. Brubaker also suggested taking online classes to get familiar with medical terminology and HIPAA



regulations, as well as volunteering at a hospital to gain exposure to the environment.

When Ric Hansen lost his job in marketing and communications after 25 years, he followed a friend to ECC's Workforce Development Office. Hansen was both "surprised and impressed" by the support. That the services are free was a welcome revelation.

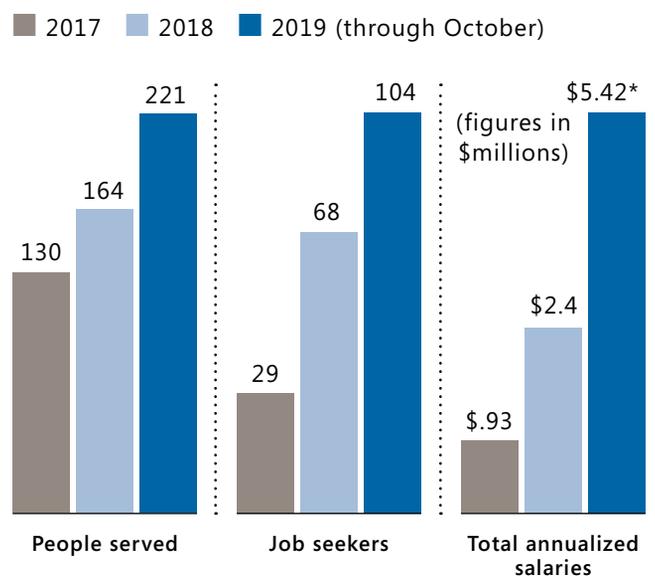
Hansen met with Brubaker and began attending weekly lunchtime sessions with others in the same situation. Now re-employed in the marketing field, Hansen encourages other job seekers to take advantage of the workforce development program.

"I found it very helpful to meet with people in a similar position," said Hansen. "It's the best [service] in the area. Why go it alone when you can reach out to others who can help you?"

By assisting career changers and job seekers, Elgin Community College supports the economic health of our district. In 2018, 68 people found employment with the help of workforce development, which translated to \$2.4 million in annualized salaries. As of October 2019, 104 individuals found jobs, putting over \$5.42 million in earnings into the community.

By the numbers

Employment Transitions helps people get back to work and supports the area economy.



*Includes 6 individuals hired at over \$120,000/year.

Anyone who is a resident of District 509 and seeking career help is welcome to visit the Workforce Development Office. To learn more about workforce development, visit elgin.edu/workforcedevelopment or call 847-214-6901.

ing students reach the finish line



Jennifer McClure,
managing director of
enrollment services and
campaign participant.

Deshaun Dorsey was a few classes shy of an associate degree when she took time off to help her husband through heart surgery. She was thinking about going back to school when she got a call from Elgin Community College encouraging her to re-enroll.

"Sometimes when you stop going, you get comfortable—and then you don't reach your goals," said Dorsey. "That phone call gave me the boost I needed to get back to class."

More than a dozen college employees and ECC Foundation volunteers spent three days in April 2019 calling 921 "near completers"—students who are within 15 credit hours of completing a degree or certificate, but not currently enrolled. Twenty percent of the students who spoke with a caller enrolled for either

summer or fall 2019 classes, along with 15 percent of students who received a voicemail.

"The great thing about a calling campaign is that volunteers connect directly with students," said David Davin of the ECC Foundation, who proposed the campaign. "They want our students to know the community is behind them."

The initiative expanded on ECC's current practice of notifying students by email. Callers provided both encouragement and assistance. Financial aid and student advising staff were on hand, so students could speak to the appropriate departments. Foundation board member Tom Youngren, a volunteer, agreed that the phone calls were powerful.

"The most common reaction was surprise that ECC cared enough to

call and check in," Youngren said. He added that it was gratifying for the volunteers to listen to the students' stories and help them take their next steps.

Thanks to efforts like these, ECC had a 3 percent increase in enrollment for fall 2019. The calling campaign was the first in a series of efforts to help near completers reach the finish line.

As for Dorsey, she's back in class, earning straight A's, and planning to graduate next year. "You can get so focused on obstacles that you don't deal with your goals," she said. "Getting that phone call encouraged me to move forward."

If you would like to help,
please contact the ECC
Foundation at 847-214-7377.

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A new way to celebrate our community college

The 22nd Annual Elgin Community College Founders' Day

October 17, 2020 Q Center, St. Charles



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Bright Choice. Bright Future.

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ECC Calendar

DECEMBER 14, 2019
FALL COMMENCEMENT

JANUARY 6, 2020
**TUITION PAYMENT
DUE DATE**

JANUARY 13
**SPRING 2020
SEMESTER BEGINS**

APRIL 7
**HEALTH PROFESSIONS
JOB FAIR**
elgin.edu/jobfair
EXPERIENCE ECC
elgin.edu/experienceecc

APRIL 13
**OPEN REGISTRATION
BEGINS FOR SUMMER
AND FALL 2020**

MAY 16
SPRING COMMENCEMENT

JUNE 1
SUMMER CLASSES BEGIN

JUNE 22
**ECC FOUNDATION
GOLF CLASSIC**
elgin.edu/golfclassic

Information is subject to change.



Hispanic
Serving
Institution



**WHERE YOUR
DREAMS
BECOME YOUR
SUCCESSSES.**

Spring classes begin Monday, January 13.

GET STARTED TODAY. elgin.edu/go

*"ECC is the reason
why I have my life path."*
**MARIEL WEBER,
SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY
STUDENT**

