

Alumni NEWS

September 2023

**WE ARE
BOBCATS**

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Featured Alumni Years**
Stories, photos & more!

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(April 2023)

Message from the President

SCC Strives to be National Leader

A section of Southeast Community College's Vision Statement states "the College strives to be a national leader in developing high-contact technical and academic experiences through personal and sincere relationships with engaged and invested faculty, staff, and administrators." It is vital that we are successful in creating these high-contact experiences for our students. I know our faculty and staff are highly committed to ensuring our students have the highest quality learning and personal growth experiences during their time at SCC. These efforts are anchored by our collective culture goal to "maximize a positive and engaging organizational climate by encouraging input, reflective and transparent communication, and compassion and respect toward the views and ideas of others." SCC is committed to providing our students with technical and academic skills, as well as essential life skills.



Follow me:

@IllichPaul

In recent years SCC has been robustly pursuing its vision, including the "creation of destinations and the highest quality learning climates through permanent, innovative, modern, virtually linked, sustainable, and collaborative facilities." The latest example of this pursuit was the groundbreaking for the new Sandhills Global Technology Center, located on the Lincoln Campus. The College received a \$5 million capital campaign gift from Sandhills Global to support the new 75,000 square-foot facility, which will house the Computer Information Technology, Electronic Systems Technology, Biotechnology, and Design and Drafting Technology programs. SCC also received a \$3 million award from the city of Lincoln via the American Rescue Plan Workforce Development Grants to create dedicated industry spaces within the Center.

These collaborative partnerships also are reflective of the College's vision to "work collaboratively and courageously with its higher education partners, employers and local and state officials to address Nebraska's skilled worker shortage and the need for everyone to have affordable access to the life-changing benefits of higher education." The College is in the planning and design phase of other facilities projects, including the Welding Technology Center on the Lincoln Campus; the Construction Technologies Center on the Milford Campus; and an Agriculture Career Center on the Beatrice Campus. These projects, which will help the College directly address the skilled workforce shortage in the high-demand industries associated with these new facilities, will be partially funded with the College's \$50 million Empower Capital Campaign.

As an alumnus, I thank you for choosing SCC and for your continued role in helping the College pursue its mission of empowering and transforming the diverse learners and communities of southeast Nebraska through accessible lifelong educational opportunities.

Paul Illich
President

CANNON ARETT IS LIVING HIS DREAM

For as long as **Cannon Arett** can remember, motorcycles have been a part of his life. Whether he was riding a bike or putting one together, he knew his career path would be somewhere on the motocross track. Now the Motorcycle, ATV and Personal Watercraft Technology graduate is one of 176 motocross technicians in the world for the outdoor circuit.

“It’s always been a dream of mine to watch the entire motocross series,” Arett said. “Right now, I’m getting paid to watch the entire series in seats that not everybody can just go stand in. I am literally living my childhood dream. My Dad is prouder than anything of me.”

At first, he dreamed of competing in motocross as a rider. His brother was in a bad accident when he was 10, and his parents pulled them out of racing. Arett knew he still wanted to be involved in the sport, so he changed his dream to become a technician.

“I always talked to the technicians and would get plastics and random pieces off the bikes,” he said. “I decided if I can’t be the rider then I want to be the mechanic. As a technician, I try to make sure that bike is absolutely 100% every time it hits the track.”

The Fremont native graduated from Bergan High School in 2016 and took a year off to save money for college and research the best fit for his career goals. He ultimately chose SCC over the Motorcycle Mechanics Institute because of his connection with Instructor Trevor Nebesniak on his campus visit.

“After talking to Trevor, I could tell he would be the best person to learn from,” Arett explained. “He was down to earth, and he truly wanted to make me an amazing technician. Trevor’s knowledge is insane. I would put

him up there against teachers at the prestigious schools.”

One person not surprised by Arett’s early success in the motocross field is Nebesniak. He took advantage of hands-on classroom to learn as much as he could while also connecting with his classmates.

“Cannon came to us with big dreams of being involved in the Pro Motocross world after graduation,” Nebesniak said. “We love to encourage students that dream of being on the big stage to never give up on those dreams. He was a very cooperative student and a great teammate to everyone in class. He learned as much as he could while he was here and was always willing to share his knowledge with his classmates as well.”

After graduating from SCC in 2018, Arett worked hard trying to get his name out there as a motocross technician from Nebraska. While he had luck with local riders, Arett really wanted to work with professional riders and moved to Fort Morgan, Colorado. He got a job at Greeley Harley-Davidson, and his hard work paid off. He ended up talking to Tom Willis, a race technician for 10 years who was looking to slow down and ride the supercross circuit. He connected Arett to Grant Harlan, and the rest is history.

“Tom had a couple of riders asking him if he knew any technicians my first year at Greeley Harley-Davidson,” he said. “At first, I didn’t know if I was ready to be away from my fiancé for that long or if my finances were in order. He kept asking me if I wanted to pick up a rider, and eventually I said let’s try this. He gave me Grant’s name, and I started messaging him and met him when he was in Denver for supercross. Now I’m on his team.”

Arett joined Harlan’s team in 2021.



Arett, right, and Grant Harlan, left.

Harlan is a member of the Manluk/Rock River Yamaha/Merge Racing Team where he is currently in 11th place overall with 129 points in the Motocross 450 Class as of Aug. 10. One of the things Arett likes about being a part of his team is the rush he gets during the race.

“I didn’t think I would have nerves and stuff like that,” he said. “When I see Grant make a pass, my adrenaline just shoots up. I want him to win just as badly as the team does.”

When Arett is ready to slow down and not travel so much as a technician, he is already working on his next dream. He wants to open a motocross school to train kids about this world.

“Dirt bikes have been my life, and my ultimate goal is to open a motocross school,” he said. “I want to have a place where kids can bring their bikes and I would teach them about this lifestyle. One of the stepping stones to making this happen is getting my name out there in the actual racing world. SCC really did put me in the right spot.” ❖

MARTINEZ WINS GOLD AT SKILLSUSA NATIONALS

Norfolk’s **Christian Martinez**, a student in SCC’s Powersports Technology program, won a gold medal in the Motorcycle Service Technology category at the 2023 National Leadership & Skills Conference sponsored by SkillsUSA. The event was held June 17-23 in Atlanta, Georgia. **Noah Russell**, a Manufacturing Engineering Technology student from Nebraska City, won a bronze in Technical Drafting.

Martinez and Russell, were joined in Atlanta by the following five SCC students:

- Abigail E. Adamson, Hickman: Welding Sculpture
- Elijah Hestermann, Lincoln: Mechatronics
- Coy Johnson, Anselmo: Mechatronics
- Bryce Stickley, Ogallala: CNC Turning
- Cort West, Merna: CNC Programmer

Motorcycle Service Technology



Front row, from left: High school medalists: Silver-Cooper Rhodes, Central Technology Center Drumright (Okla.); Gold-Ayden Stratz, Utah Basin Technical College (Utah); and Bronze-Carter Rodriguez, Tolles Career & Tech Center (Ohio).

Back row, from left: College/Postsecondary medalists: Silver-Aaron Golden, Alexandria Technical & Community College (Minn.); **Gold-Christian Martinez, Southeast Community College-Milford (Neb.);** and Bronze-Wayde Coffee, Iowa Lakes Community College (Iowa).

Technical Drafting



Front row, from left: High School medalists—Silver-Colton Terry, Portage Lakes JVS (Ohio); Gold-Jonathan Krueger, Oregon High School (Wis.); Bronze-Ryan Riddle, Center for Advanced Technical Studies (S.C.).

Back row, from left: College/Postsecondary medalists: Silver-William Bearson, Alexandria Technical & Community College (Minn.); Gold-Edward Rella, Southern Regional Technical College (Ga.); **Bronze-Noah Russell, Southeast Community College-Milford (Neb.).**

STATE OFFICE OF THE CIO COLLABORATES WITH SCC ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Long before workforce development was a trendy buzzword, the Office of the Chief Information Officer for the state of Nebraska worked with SCC to expand its workforce. The department began a collaboration with the Computer Information Technology program in 2015 to recruit students into an internship program which often results in full-time employment.

“Our partnership with SCC has allowed us to remain staffed with a quality technical workforce, something that is very difficult for other states,” said Ed Toner, Nebraska’s chief information officer. “Those we employ as interns often stay with the state and add value with their training.”

At the start of Pete Ricketts’ first term as governor, the OCIO had staffing issues as they had small candidate pools to replace long-time employees who reached retirement. The agency struggled hiring employees largely due to IT students not understanding the variety of opportunities for career growth

available at the state.

Several OCIO hiring managers graduated from SCC’s CIT program. As active alumni, they have served on the program’s workforce leadership team and attended events like capstone student presentations, as well as meet-and-greet sessions. They approached Career Services and the program chair to schedule separate recruiting visits each quarter, now semester, for the OCIO to talk with students about their internship program and the benefits of working for the state.

“It is very important to build relationships in every area,” Toner explained. “We are able to provide advice on what skills we are looking for in SCC graduates, which in turn ensures we understand what SCC needs from us. This makes all the difference between a successful organization and one that is simply business as usual.”

The OCIO’s experience is once an intern starts with the state, they are more likely to be hired full-time upon

graduation. Since 2015, the OCIO hired 90 interns, with most of them coming from SCC. Of those interns, 67 were hired into full-time positions. As of the summer of 2023, the OCIO internship program has a 65% retention rate of those moving into full-time employment with the state.

Each intern is assigned a mentor to teach them business operations and answer any questions. The starting wage for the interns is the same hourly wage as full-time employees. Once an intern is hired full-time with the OCIO they are typically promoted to a senior-level position within two to four years based on performance.

Stacey Warner is a former intern who graduated from the SCC CIT program in December 2020 and moved into a full-time position as a senior Java application developer on the web team. She knows first-hand the benefits of the internship program.

“In our pursuit of hiring interns, we seek individuals who demonstrate a keenness to learn and collaborate alongside our team,” Warner said.

“Our internship program serves as an excellent platform for acquiring practical, on-the-job training and fostering familiarity with our team dynamics and applications, effectively preparing them for full-time employment within the state.” ❖

From left: Ed Toner, Jonathan Walrath, Stacey Warner, and Dave Hattan.



The internship program at the Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer started in 2015 with several SCC students taking advantage of the experience.

Stacey Warner graduated from SCC’s Computer Information Technology program in December 2020 with a focus in PC and web design. She started as an intern with the state and is currently a senior Java application developer. She felt SCC prepared her for her internship with the state.

“Through my educational journey at SCC, I was equipped with a strong programming foundation, particularly in the areas of database management and back-end frameworks,” Warner said. “While I did not know everything, the solid groundwork laid by SCC has empowered me to quickly acquire any necessary skills and knowledge I may need throughout my career.”

The web team at the state currently has five interns, and Warner is in a unique position as a recent intern

SCC INTERNS WITH THE STATE OCIO

who is now a team leader. She knows the value of the internship in shaping a full-time employee.

“The OCIO has cultivated a long-standing partnership with SCC, having collaborated closely for many years,” Warner explained. “It is worth noting that a significant portion of our current workforce are SCC alumni. This first-hand experience has enabled us to recognize the exceptional quality of SCC’s curriculum, which equips their students with the essential groundwork necessary for a prosperous journey within our organization.”

Jonathan Walrath joined the state as an intern in December 2022, working with the Finance team. He is part of a four-member team working on the Communication Billing System. He is set to graduate in the spring of 2024 and plans to continue working for the state.

“I am honestly learning something new every day, and cementing

previously learned knowledge double as much,” Walrath said. “One non-programming tidbit I learned from this experience is how important it is to not only be able to program well, but also pick up and understand business environments and projects.”

Because he sees the benefits of his internship, Walrath encourages other students to take advantage of their opportunities as well. He was worried his skills were not polished enough to be a productive team member. He quickly realized this was not the case.

“It’s important to remember that interns are not expected to be experts in the field, but students,” he said. “You are not required to pull up from memory incredibly specific information about some programming language oddity. You are expected to use the resources that are available to find an appropriate answer. Further, you will have many incredible teammates who will help you when you need it.” ❖



DORN MAKES GLOBAL IMPACT

Sometimes your proudest moments come from the least likely place or time. **Andy Dorn** enrolled in SCC's Agriculture Business & Management Technology program in 2006 with a different vision for his future. That all changed after taking a sales/marketing course with Dennis Toalson.

"He had a hard-core teaching style that at first I didn't like," Dorn said. "But, as I grew in my development, I came to appreciate and deeply respect his style. Eventually, I was one of a few students to receive an A+ in his sales/marketing course. I was and still am very proud of that achievement."

Dorn is from Minden, Nebraska, and graduated from Wilcox High School. He figured he would graduate from SCC and return to the area to pursue a career in livestock production on a ranch or feedlot. Taking advantage of an internship opportunity changed his career trajectory.

"When I started college, I definitely did not see myself doing what I do today," he explained. "Because of the excellent intern program at SCC, I was afforded an opportunity to intern with Allflex (currently owned by Merck Animal Health). Through that internship, I found a great deal of passion and fulfillment in helping producers be more efficient and profitable through technology."

After graduating from SCC in 2009, Dorn started working for Merck/Allflex and has held positions in sales, marketing and product management. Today he is the Global Director for Beef Technology at Merck Animal Health. All of this would not have

been possible if not for the hands-on education he received at SCC.

"The most influential way I was prepared was through my internship experience," he said. "But the hands-on learning that was offered in many of my courses likely had a large contribution as well. Getting into the actual hands-on portion of classes like breeding was very helpful in developing the skills and knowledge I still use today."

Dorn is based in Nebraska and also keeps up with cattle production. He and his wife Hannah built a cow-calf operation from scratch in central Nebraska. When he is not working, he spends his spare time in the summer at their property in the Sandhills and the winter in Minden. They also enjoy golfing, traveling and spending time with their Australian shepherd, Mae.

One piece of advice Dorn has for prospective students is to build relationships with their instructors and learn from their advice. In addition to Toalson, Dorn appreciates the guidance he received from instructor Lynn Schlake, former instructor Mark Goes and others at SCC. He is certain he would not be where he is today without their help.

"The experience I had at SCC set me on a path for a great deal of fulfillment," Dorn said. "I am sure if you asked Mark, Dennis or Lynn, they would likely tell you they had their



work cut out for them when I walked through the door. I want to say thank you to them and others at SCC for taking the time to help me along the way. You can't expect things to be done for you, but you can allow people to help you. This will allow you to do whatever you set out to do."

He also encourages others to follow their dreams, never settle and don't sweat the small stuff.

"When I stepped on the SCC campus, I couldn't have dreamed about the people I would meet, the places I would see and the opportunities I would be afforded," he said. "I have traveled the world and met wonderful people with a similar goal of raising a sustainable, efficient protein for our growing world. The agriculture family is a magical place full of opportunity. If you're able to set goals, be determined and don't let the little things get in your way, you can literally do anything." ❖

Featured Year: 1953



During the early 1950s, the Nebraska State Trade School property was not within the Milford city limits. Since the trade school was not annexed to the town of Milford, it needed its own fire department. Pictured are students who volunteered as firefighters in 1953.

Front row, from left: R. Ward, L. Scoville, C. Galusha, L. Albert, J. Chase.

Back row, from left: M. Gentert, L. Erickson, M. Croypley, M. Miller, T. Beattie, W. Tefft, K. Muhlback.



HUSKER HARVEST DAYS®

Attention Alumni!

If you are heading to Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island Sept. 12-14, stop by the **SCC booth (#249)** to pick up an alumni gift. Hope to see you there!

Royalty at SCC



Becky Gausman of Chester and Bryan Leach of Chicago were crowned Homecoming king and queen at the Fairbury Campus annual observance.

Photo by Theresa Juhl.

Featured Year: 1986

BOBCATS



With athletics moving to all three Southeast Community College campuses, the time is right to retire the Storm and rollout a new mascot. On Aug. 1, SCC officially became the Bobcats.

The process to create a new mascot started in September 2022 when the College hired Unanimous, a Lincoln-based branding agency, to tackle this project. Known for collaborative partnerships, Unanimous prides

itself on rhyme, reason and results when creating a brand. Scott Claypool, vice president for creative, took the lead on the project and directed a team to conduct research before landing on the Bobcats and designing a logo.

“This project is personal for me as my son starts on the Milford Campus in August,” Claypool said. “We approached this project wanting to know what we could do to make

SCC unique, stand out and capture the moment. We want every student, every faculty and the community to be living the brand.”

The Unanimous team worked with four groups of SCC stakeholders to find out their perceptions about SCC and the current mascot, create brand awareness, discover their expectations for a mascot, learn the history of past mascots, and ask for mascot preferences. Unanimous tapped four groups to interview which included students, faculty, coaches and the community. They also sent a survey to 6,500 alumni and did focus groups with current students. This process garnered more than 300 mascot ideas.

“This is an exciting time at SCC as you have an opportunity to unify your campuses with a new mascot,” said Tina Joyce, senior marketing strategist for Unanimous. “You should always do things with purpose and intentionality. What we found is you want your mascot to represent strength, pride, perseverance, unity and be representative. Our research found a majority of the participants were in favor of changing the mascot.”

The image put forth by SCC is what the world sees. In the end, Bobcats was the top choice. Members of the Unanimous team who worked on the Bobcat project included three SCC graduates. Senior Graphic Designers Branden Bopp and Cameron O’Brien and Graphic Designer Sierra Bornschlegl graduated from the Graphic Design and Media Arts program and were instrumental in coming up with the final logo and mark.

“Our mindset is to make those close to SCC take notice,” said Bopp. “Let’s generate enormous buzz, and pave the way for the introduction of new, different and better things. ❖

Cheer on your favorite Bobcat athletic team at one of our campus locations.

BEATRICE

- Baseball
- Esports (coed)
- Golf
- Rodeo (coed)
- Shooting Sports (men’s and women’s)
- Soccer (men’s and women’s)
- Softball
- Volleyball
- Wrestling (men’s and women’s)

LINCOLN

- Basketball (men’s and women’s)
- Cross Country (men’s and women’s)
- Esports (coed)
- Track & Field (men’s and women’s)

MILFORD

- Esports (coed)

Bobcats are representative of the region and known for their speed, agility and stealthiness. They are hunters who can adapt to changing environments, representing the SCC culture and its adaptability. Bobcats also show great determination and resilience, like the students, programs, and athletic teams at SCC.

**WE ARE SCC.
WE ARE THE BOBCATS.**



SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STORM
CLEARANCE ALERT!

Pick up your vintage SCC Storm gear from the Beatrice Campus Store before it is gone!

Celebrating 50 Years!

1973

The Southeast Community College system was established on July 1 when a statewide community college system was implemented by the Nebraska Legislature. SCC serves a 15-county region and was comprised of merging the Nebraska Technical College in Milford and Fairbury Junior College. Dr. Robert Eicher is named president of the newly formed college.

1975

SCC acquires the John J. Pershing College in Beatrice and begins remodeling the campus.

1979

The first building on the Lincoln Campus at 8800 O St. is built.

1983

SCC is accredited as a single entity by the Higher Learning Commission.

1986

SCC merges the Fairbury and Beatrice campuses; the Fairbury campus is closed.

1992

Dr. J. Neil Admire is hired to succeed Dr. Robert Eicher, who retired.

1993

SCC's accreditation is continued with a progress report required. The progress report is accepted in 1994.

1994

Dr. Jack Huck is named the interim chancellor and is selected for the permanent leadership position in 1995. The title was changed to president in 1997.

1995

SCC purchases the ground floor of Energy Square at 1111 O St. in downtown Lincoln.

1998

HLC completes a Focused Visit to check on the progress and implementation of a clear area-wide comprehensive plan.

2003

Continued accreditation and a Focused Visit is scheduled for 2005-06.

SCC purchases the Continuing Education Center at 301 S. 68th St. Place in Lincoln.

2006

SCC purchases the Entrepreneurship Center at 285 S. 68th St. Place in Lincoln.

Focused Visit on general education in A.A.S. programs and struggles with the dual calendar system is completed.

2011

SCC purchases second floor at 1111 O St.

2013

Continued accreditation from the HLC.

The Energy Square building is renamed Education Square.

2014

Jack J. Huck retires after 20 years as president; the Jack J. Huck Continuing Education Center is named after him by the Board of Governors.

Dr. Paul Illich is hired as SCC's fourth president.

2015

The College completes its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan.

The Career Academy is built on the Lincoln Campus and is a joint venture between SCC and Lincoln Public Schools.

2016

Clark & Enersen Partners of Lincoln works with SCC on a 10-year Facilities Master Plan.

The first of six Learning Centers opens in York. Learning Centers in Falls City, Plattsmouth and Nebraska City open later in the year.

2017

The Board of Governors votes to change the College's academic calendar from quarters to semesters to take effect in Aug. 2019.

The Learning Centers in Hebron and Wahoo open.

2018

The \$4.2 million Great Plains Culinary Institute and Course Restaurant opens on the Lincoln Campus. The renovated space includes state-of-the-art classrooms, labs, bakery, and restaurant.

Agriculture Hall is purchased and renovated on the Beatrice Campus. The 9,600 sq. ft. building is near SCC's farm and will be used for classrooms.

2019

The College begins a semester academic calendar, transitioning from quarters. New residence halls opened in Beatrice and Milford. Homestead Hall (Beatrice) and Prairie Hall (Milford) are three-story residence halls which house 152 students each. The Storm Center Dining Hall also opened on the Beatrice Campus.

2020

The Health Science Building opens on the Lincoln Campus. The \$32 million project houses all of the health programs in an 81,000 sq. ft. building which includes general purpose classrooms, specialized teaching spaces and labs and a simulation center.

The Academic Excellence Center opens on the Beatrice Campus. This award-winning building is a 60,000 sq. ft. general purpose classroom building for Academic Transfer, Agriculture, Business, Criminal Justice, Nursing, and Continuing Education.

The 60,000 sq. ft. Crete Carrier Diesel Technology & Welding Center opens on the Milford Campus.

2021

Meadow Hall, a three-story, 152-bed residence hall, opens on SCC's Milford Campus in time for the Fall Semester.

2022

SCC breaks ground for the first residence hall to be built on the Lincoln Campus. Woodhaven Hall is a 250-bed unit and will open in January 2024.

2023

Construction begins on the Sandhills Global Technology Center on the Lincoln Campus. The Center will include specialized lab spaces and room for program growth for SCC's CIT program.

The Student and Academic Support project on the Lincoln Campus involved construction of a 25,672 sq. ft., two-story addition and renovation of 80,038 sq. ft. of internal spaces and an additional 5,055 sq. ft. of mechanical mezzanine in the original building.

HLC reaffirms SCC's accreditation for another 10 years.

RETIREES

Gerrine Schreck Kirby



Gerrine Schreck Kirby was hired in September 1987 to write curriculum for SCC's Culinary program. She eventually became an instructor until she retired in May 2023. Leaving SCC will be tough because she loved working with people striving to achieve a similar goal of making SCC the best college in the area.

"What makes SCC so great is the leadership at the top, which starts with the Board of

Governors and the administration," Schreck Kirby said. "We also have excellent faculty, staff and students. In order to make all of this successful, everyone at all levels has to work hard and be dedicated."

Schreck Kirby graduated from the Institute of Culinary Arts at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny, Iowa. In addition, she earned a bachelor's degree in communication and a master's degree in management from Doane University. She worked in many areas of the kitchen in three private clubs. Before joining the faculty at SCC, she was the executive chef at the University Club. Because of her experience, Schreck Kirby knew the type of impact SCC culinary students have in the community.

"Our students are everywhere. You cannot go out to eat in this town and not see one," she said. "They are in private clubs, hospitals, assisted living, restaurants, fast food, grocery stores, food purveyors, and food trucks, just to name a few."

She looks forward to having time to play in retirement. That said, the people of SCC have a special place in Schreck Kirby's heart.

"I will miss the great co-workers and friends I have made at this fine institution. I am grateful to all of you and the many people who make this such a great place to work."

Randy Walbridge



Randy Walbridge graduated from SCC in 1981 with an A.A.S. in Nondestructive Testing Technology. In May, he retired after 34 years as an instructor, with the last 24 as NDT program director.

"I really enjoyed working with the faculty and staff at SCC," Walbridge said. "I appreciate all the support I had over the years and comradery, especially with those in my program."

Before returning to SCC as an instructor, Walbridge worked as an NDT technician for nine years in the aerospace and defense industry at Brunswick Aerospace/Defense McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Co. and Rockwell International. Because of this experience, he knew the type of technician the industry was looking for. He looked for students with a natural curiosity for how things work.

"NDT students play a vital role in the safety and integrity of materials, components and structures, not only in Nebraska, but nationally and globally as well," he said. "I constantly told my students to be a sponge and apply themselves. If you do, the field will pay you back with a successful career."

Walbridge will not be slowing down in retirement; he will just be shifting

his priorities to spending more time with his family and other hobbies.

"I have lots of projects to do around our homes, and I am going to start restoring an old Ford pickup as well as spending more time with my Mustang," Walbridge explained. "My wife and I like to go camping and boating, and we plan to do some traveling. We also want to spend more time with our family and grandkids. Of course, I will play some golf as well."

Jose Soto



Jose Soto spent more than 41 years affiliated with SCC. He started as an adjunct instructor in 1982 before joining the College as the vice chancellor for affirmative action and equity in 1992. Throughout his tenure, Soto has seen many changes in the area of affirmative action and diversity.

"The focus moved away from affirmative action to monitoring and implementing programming focused on access, equity and diversity," Soto explained. "This change limited opportunities to make our workforce more diverse, but increased opportunities to make SCC a more inclusive and

welcoming environment."

Soto's diverse professional experience helped him shape his role at SCC. He was in the U.S. Air Force from 1968-72. He then attended college and received undergraduate, graduate and law degrees. His professional experience included stints as a mental health consultant/educator at the Lincoln/Lancaster County Mental Health Center; program director at the Nebraska Department of Public Institutions; and education program director at the Lincoln Action Program. Soto is proud of his ability to help others make their lives better.

"Throughout my career, I have engaged with students and employees to solve problems," he explained. "I also enjoyed the opportunities to connect with our constituents, especially within communities of color."

As one can imagine, Soto has many things to be proud of during his tenure at SCC. Working with the Board of Governors and senior administrators to develop, implement, monitor, and sustain SCC's Diversity Education program is just one. He also worked with Lincoln Public Schools and University of Nebraska-Lincoln administrators to present the annual MLK Jr. Breakfast for more than 25 years.

"It's been a challenging, but satisfying, opportunity to help our students, employees and constituents better understand and more fully embrace the rich and growing diversity that surrounds us," Soto said. "I truly have enjoyed working with so many talented and dedicated individuals, from administrators to support staff, the latter of whom I consider to be the backbone of our collective endeavors." ❖

Retirements

Vicki Coffin

Nursing Assistant Instructor

Tobbie Campbell

Custodian II

Nancy Hagler-Vujovic

Art Instructor

Reynaldo Huamanca

Custodian II

Theresa Parker

Long Term Care Administration
Instructor

Doug Reznicek

John Deere Tech Instructor

Lynn Saffer

Adult Education Assistant Director

Michele Saucier

College Advisor

Loran Stara

Building Construction Tech Instructor,
The Career Academy

1973 GRADUATES

Robert Maury and **Dave Hattan** were students at the Nebraska Technical College in Milford when it merged with other colleges in southeast Nebraska to form the Southeast Community College system. Both were members of the first graduating class of SCC and have been successful alumni who advocate for a hands-on education.

Robert Maury



Maury graduated from the Automotive Technology program and retired in Hesston, Kansas, after a successful career as a mechanic. He was always interested in cars, which led to many good things in his life. A hands-on learner, he felt well prepared for his career.

“I left SCC with much wisdom and confidence to face the world. I took classes in subjects that pertained to my career. I was able to support my family in a good and honest way,” he said.

An avid reader, Maury keeps up on all the new technologies utilized in cars today. This helped him adapt with the industry over the length of his career. It was a habit he started while at SCC and continued when he got his bachelor’s degree from Peru State College.

“I was able to concentrate on the subjects I needed to know to apply my interests,” Maury said. “I think all students need to know a specific area that will help them in their future. After SCC, I continued at Peru State and showed my children the importance of education.”

After graduation, Maury continued to live in Milford, his wife’s hometown. For 50 years, Milford was home and a wonderful place to raise his family. It was also where his children learned

how to make an impact in the lives of others.

“Being a part of the Milford community helped me tremendously,” he said. “We raised our children in Milford. My son is now the Dean of General Education and Professional Studies at WSU Tech (Wichita State University’s Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology). His life touches many students today, and he encourages each student to find a spot they can learn more about and apply it to their life.”

Dave Hattan

After graduating in 1973 with a degree in Computer Programming, Hattan has spent nearly 50 years working for the state of Nebraska. He joined the Department of Administrative Services (now the Office of the Chief Information Officer) in 1975. He has worked his way up from programmer to analyst to lead to an IT manager. Currently a member of the leadership team, he plans to retire in 2025 after 50 years of service in a totally different industry.

“There have been significant changes from 1973-2023,” he said. “My initial training was using what was termed ‘accounting machines’ that included sorters, keypunch, and the accounting machine itself. The first PCs from IBM for large-scale usage was the PS/2 in the late 80s. Then



from desktop PCs to laptops. From a language standpoint it was assembler to Cobol to client server language to mainstream internet languages of Java and .Net.”

In a fast-changing industry, it is important to know the basics and keep up on new technologies. It is what drew Hattan back to SCC in 2002 to update his skills. He was able to build relationships with current SCC instructors, which has benefited the OCIO.

“I started taking all the computer classes from the beginning to update my skills in the new technologies,” Hattan said. “Over a period of five years, I developed great relationships with the instructors at SCC Lincoln, which helped me communicate our hiring needs to them.”

Hattan was instrumental in starting the internship program the OCIO implemented eight years ago by working with the Computer Information Technology instructors (see pages 4-5).

“SCC is where we draw nearly 90% of our employees,” he said. “We find SCC prepares students to enter the workforce in a productive manner and with ample experiences to be successful on the job.”

Hattan was presented with the 2013 Distinguished Alumni Award for Milford and has been on the College’s advisory boards for computer programming since 1995. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting upland game birds with his Vizsla pointer. An avid runner, he uses his IT skills to time local races for the Lincoln Track Club, as well as regional and national races for an Omaha timing company. ❖

Phi Theta Kappa



Featured Year: 1953

Standing, from left: Pat Keen, Bill Ehrett, Joan Heidelk, Pete Karabatsos, Beverly Hand, Jerry Spencer, Natalie Schoenfeld.

Seated, from left: Pat Smith, Nancy Pickering.

Electronic Engineering Technology — June



Featured Year: 1986

Front row, from left: Greg Zager, Brett Staib, Brian Powers, Robert Foster, Roxanne (Onorato) Peterson, Scott Wright.

Second row, from left: Jim Svoboda, Gary Hanken, Darrell Lisec, Rich Kamphaus, Mike Kinney, Ron Weber, Scott Kasper.

Back row, from left: Gary Schelm, Albert Simacek, Craig Ross, Tim Zink, Alan Benes, Jay Greene, Michael Flanigan, Dennis Wilcox.

Not pictured: David Krenk, Todd Messman, Charles Mathes.

We Love to Hear from Our Graduates!

“My five children all graduated from Fairbury Junior College.”

*Marjorie Prellwitz Gregory,
Elementary Education, Fairbury, 1952*

“Seventy-four years young and not even thinking of retiring. I enjoy what I am doing.”

*Edward Schoof,
Ag Business Management, Fairbury, 1968*

“Worked in psych for years before returning to school for nursing. Spent the rest of my career as a Psych RN at KU Hospital. I retired after a femur fracture kept me out.”

*Jeanne Stevens Fair,
Business/Secretarial, Fairbury, 1969*

“After graduation, I went to work for Vanice Pontiac-Cadillac in Lincoln, Nebraska. I graduated in January 1971, got married in February 1971 and then got a draft notice from Uncle Sam in March 1971. I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in May 1971. I was sent to Tucson, Arizona, and one year later I was in Vietnam. After my four years of active duty, I got back into auto body repair and worked 30 years. Due to health issues, I got out of the auto business. I then worked at a casino as a slot machine repair technician for 20 years. I am now retired and living happily in Phoenix, Arizona.”

*Daniel Abbink,
Auto Body Technology, 1971*

“Retired from teaching on Oct. 14, 2022, after 41 years of teaching at SCC Milford Campus.”

*Thomas Hohman,
Pre-Agriculture, Fairbury, 1972*

“Have been in the insurance industry for the past 19 years. Married 25 years and have two boys. SCC set me up for success in life!”

*Joel Dorfmeier,
Business Administration, 1995*

“My electronics degree has paid off very well. I began working for Cassling a few weeks after graduating from SCC Lincoln Campus. I have now been with Cassling for 26.5 years. I am very happy in my career path and the choices I made to go to SCC out of high school.”

*Ryan Banzhaf,
Electronic Systems Technology, 1996*

“After nursing I went back to SCC for accounting classes and I transferred and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from the College of St. Mary Lincoln in 2009.”

*Tamra Kuhlmann D’Andrea,
Practical Nursing & Accounting, 1997*

“I love my profession. Thanks SCC!”

*Brenda Deaver,
Surgical Technology, 2000*

“Retired January of 2022. Spend summers in Alaska and winters traveling the southern states in a motorhome. It’s a wonderful life.”

*Roger Frisby,
Electronic Systems Technology, 2000*

“I have been with Fluor for 15 years. The first 11 years I spent working internationally in Europe, Asia and Australia. In 2020, I relocated back to the United States for my family and am now currently the Director of Welding & NDE Services at Fluor.”

*Ryan Nichols,
Welding Technology, 2004*

“I am finishing up my doctorate in education. I enjoy teaching students of all ages!”

*Amanda Powell,
Practical Nursing, 2006*

“SCC has provided me the knowledge to make a great living welding pipe for 15 years now.”

*Austin Gerdes,
Welding Technology, 2008*

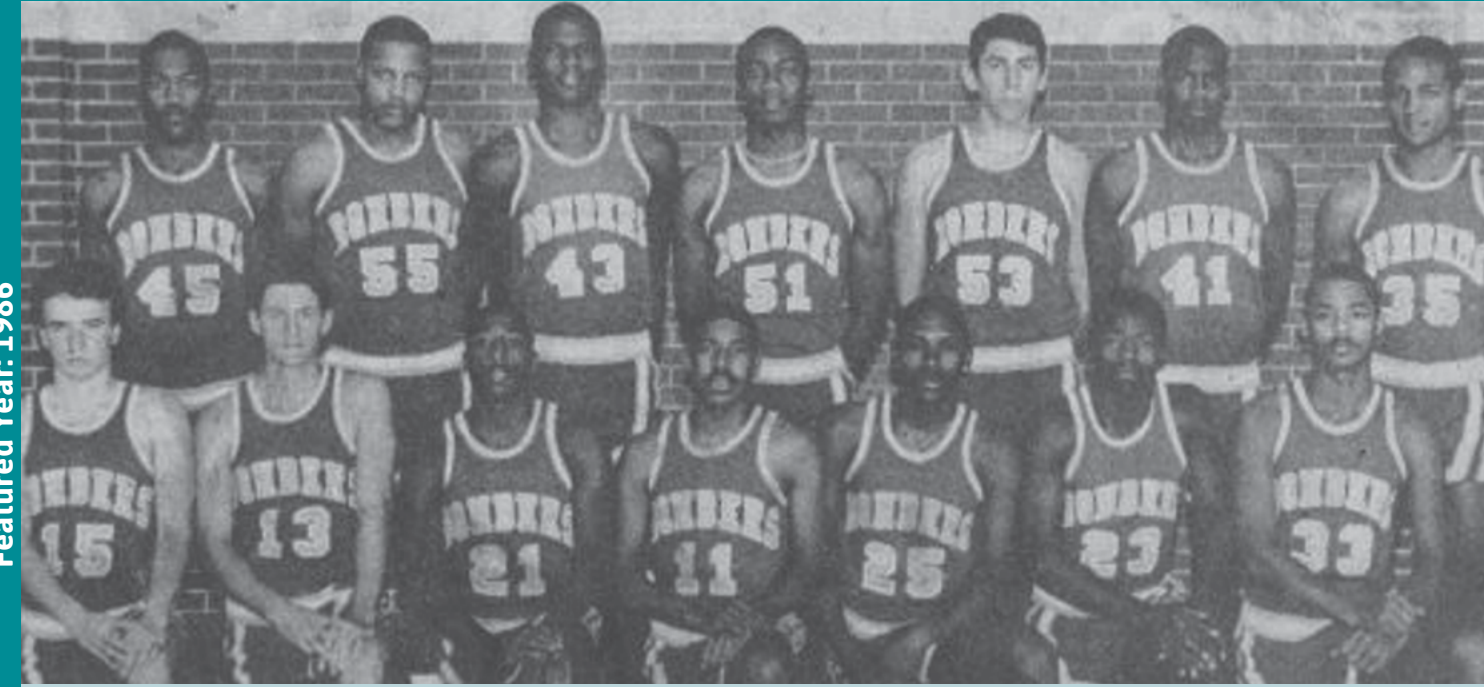
“Just got married last July 2022!”

*Avis Koca Brandt,
Livestock Management & Production, 2021*

“I just passed the CPSGT exam in April 2023 and started this new job at Missouri University Healthcare as a sleep tech. I hope to gain experience and pass the higher RPSGT exam within two years. Thank you, Kelly Cummins, for giving me such a good foundation of knowledge in your classes.”

*Adam White,
Polysomnographic Technology, 2022*

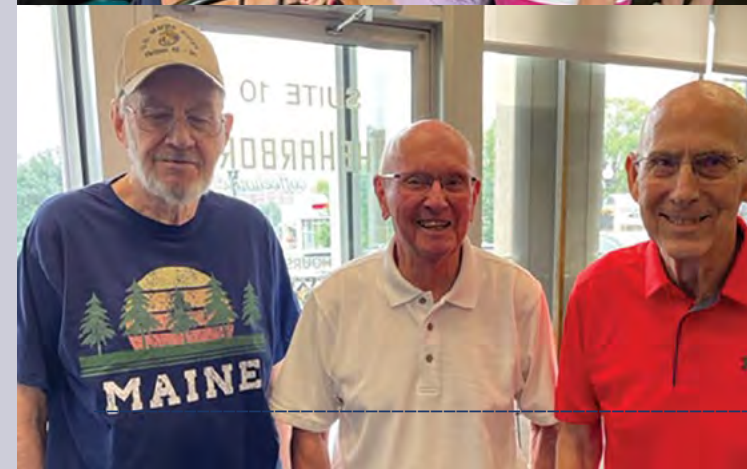
Southeast Bombers



Featured Year: 1986

Front row, from left: David Bahe, Shickley, Mike Horky, Fairbury, LeRoy Harris, Lincoln High, Bryan Leach, Chicago, IL, Sam McCullum, Chicago, IL, Dana Jenkins, Omaha Burke, Tom Prince, Omaha Northwest.

Back row, from left: Tim Nunn, Flint, MI, John Jones, Omaha Northwest, Bertrand Turnbo, Omaha Central, David Muse, Chicago, IL, John Kellogg, Ashland-Greenwood, Bryan Burton, Lincoln, Kevin McElway, Flint, MI.



All SCC Lincoln Campus Retirees Invited

**Thursday, Oct. 12
10:30 a.m.**

Harbor Coffeehouse
1265 S. Cotner Blvd., Lincoln

This is an opportunity for retirees to visit and catch up with friends.

Committee members are Alicia Baillie, Karen Bonczynski, Pat Frakes, Jerry Gruber, Nancy Krumland, Charlotte Pasco, Ron Snyder, Jo Taylor, Carol Wells, Lynn Willey, and Iris Winkelhake.

COLLEGE EARNS ACCREDITATION FROM HLC

The Higher Learning Commission granted reaffirmation of accreditation to SCC for a 10-year period expiring in July 2033. SCC hosted a team of six trained peer reviewers April 24-25, 2023, who evaluated the College's efforts to maintain the standards set by the HLC.

"The Reaffirmation of Accreditation through HLC demonstrates the tremendous commitment, effort and openness of our collective pursuit of SCC's mission, vision and strategic goals and objectives," said Dr. Paul Illich, SCC president. "I thank everyone for their willingness to be a vital part of each of our transformative journeys. It's quite evident that the visiting team recognized and appreciated our commitment to creating the highest quality student experiences through personal and sincere relationships with engaged and invested faculty, staff and administrators."

Shawna Herwick, administrative director for accreditation, institutional assessment, and planning, led the accreditation process for SCC. She guided a team of 20 SCC administrators, faculty and staff in



developing data-driven responses for how SCC met the Criteria for Accreditation. Overall, the team educated the College about the process through Passport Challenges, a quarterly newsletter, and hosting Zoom sessions to discuss the criteria focused on by the peer reviewers.

"Thank you to the hundreds of SCC employees who were engaged in the accreditation review through providing evidence, reviewing drafts of the report, and attending open listening sessions," Herwick said. "Peer reviewers noted the College community's pride for SCC and its commitment to the open-access mission, and we are positioned to continue the College's transformation through implementation of the College's strategic goals."

Accreditation in higher education is a process of external quality review to ensure a college or university meets established standards. In the U.S., accreditation is required in order for students to gain access to federal funds including student grants and loans. Non-accredited institutions are not eligible for federal financial aid. ❖

Members of SCC's Accreditation Steering Committee were:

- Shawna Herwick, Administrative Director, Accreditation, Institutional Assessment, and Planning (*pictured*)
- Amanda Baron, Associate Dean
- Rebecca Carr, Project Coordinator
- Linda Hartman, Program Co-Director, Business Administration
- Sara Pegram, Business Intelligence Developer/Programmer
- Karie Jobman, Administrative Director of Student Accounts
- Amy Jorgens, Vice President, Administrative Services
- Kat Kreikemeier, Administrative Director, Admissions
- Toni Landenberger, Assistant Campus Director, Dean of Students
- Joel Michaelis, Vice President, Instruction
- Robin Moore, Administrative Director, Institutional Research
- Katy Novak, Liaison to the President, Special Projects Coordinator
- Mike Pegram, Dean, Student Enrollment
- Rod Rhodes, Director of Assessment
- Carolee Ritter, Dean, Arts & Sciences
- Nick Salestrom, English Instructor
- David Schmitter, Physics Instructor
- Amanda Skuban, Dental Assisting Instructor
- Rachel Sommerer, Associate Director, Financial Aid
- Stefanie Svoboda, Associate Dean, Virtual Learning
- Jill Wightman, Institutional Outcomes Assessment Coordinator

In Memory of...

Beatrice / Fairbury

Brenda Abbott
(Practical Nursing, 2000)

Cameron Gray
(Practical Nursing, 2018)

Kevin D. Lee (Ag Business & Management, 2009)

Gerald Poppe
(Academic Transfer, 1957)

Lincoln

Dawn Borges
(Dental Assisting, 1992)

Brian Botsford (Professional Truck Driver Training, 2002)

William Chadwell (Professional Truck Driver Training, 2005)

Philip Deschane (Computer Information Tech, 2013)

JoAnn Frazell (Retired, Office Professional Program Chair)

Marcia Greve
(Office Technology, 2002)

Michael Haskell (Professional Truck Driver Training, 1999)

Dawna Jewett
(Practical Nursing, 1977)

Bill Leach (Fire Protection, 2007)

Dave A. Lunz (Motorcycle, ATV, Watercraft Tech, 1984)

James Sanks (GIST, 2021)

Deborah K Stephenson (LPN, 1973)

Daniel Vculek
(Business Administration, 2009)

Larcy Walbridge
(Practical Nursing, 1984)

Jay Winter
(Associate Degree Nursing, 2002)

Joan Wolf (Practical Nursing, 1977)

Milford

Alfred Andrews (Electrical, 1960)

Alfred Benes (Automotive, 1958)

Darrel Blunck (Commercial Art, 1977)

Ryan W. Bradley (Diesel Truck, 1995; Diesel Construction, 1995)

Bill Burkey
(Building Construction, 1973)

John Casey (Electronics, 1971)

Ivan Coonrod (Drafting, 1968)

Tracy Deminski
(Commercial Art, 1975)

Darrell Doescher
(Air Conditioning, 1959)

Richard A. Eggeling
(Electronics, 1970)

Duane Ellison (Automotive, 1999)

Kenneth M. Gilson
(Air Conditioning, 1957)

Darrin Grewek (Automotive, 1989)

Wayne E. Hahn (Electrical, 1960)

Franklin Halada (Automotive, 1960; Retired Diesel Instructor)

Lester Hampton (Electronics, 1961)

Adam Helmerichs
(Diesel Truck, 2001)

Rodger Henke (Electrical, 1964)

Leonard Hollmann
(Building Construction, 1972)

Jerald Jonas (Diesel, 1968)

Jeffrey L. Klesath
(Building Construction, 1987)

Mary J. Lauer
(Computer Programming, 1985)

Billy L. Lorenzen (Automotive, 1964)

Weldon Manley Jr.
(Computer Programming, 1991)

David "Harpo" Mason
(Machine Tool, 1988)

Gerald C. Newman
(Electronics, 1968)

Kevin L. Olson (Diesel, 1973)

Shawn Othmer (Parts Marketing & Management, 1993)

John Pickar (Automotive, 1985)

Randy Pilakowski (GM ASEP, 1993)

Roger W. Salie (Diesel, 1977)

Douglas Schroedter (Parts Marketing & Management, 1991)

James Shald
(Building Construction, 1973)

Allen Strom (Auto Body, 1963)

Galen C. Stuhr (Machine Tool, 1981)

Richard R. Turner (Electrical, 1986)

William Zillig (Electronics, 1974)

We want to stay in touch with our grads!

Email information to alumni@southeast.edu or
call Beatrice, 800-233-5027, ext. 1216; Lincoln, 800-642-4075, ext. 2622; or Milford, 800-933-7223, ext. 8242.

Can You Help Us Locate the Following 1953 Graduates?

Beatrice Campus

Clarence E. Brown	Bill H. Hewitt	Margery J. Morey	Joan M. Sulenic
Patricia A. Fangmeyer	William M. Hofarce	Lona E. Nelson	Weldon Zenger
Marjorie Hanson	Jesus M. Medina	Nancy C. Salome	

Milford Campus

Joseph B Jardee	Warren E. Sprague
Carl E. Scholotzhauer	Henry Strickland

Can You Help Us Locate the Following 1986 Graduates?

Beatrice Campus

Mahmud F. Abdul-Samat	Scott R. Heusman	Cindy L. Reinke	Kevin Benes
Laurinda L. Baumann	Jackie R. Johnson	Jamie K. Roberts	Gary Chmura
Julie K. Beethe	Lesa P. Kechley	Sekou K. Saho	David Clark
Christine J. Catherall	Judy Kujath	Julie A. Shea	Thomas Craig
Mohammed O. El-Salita	Mitzi A. Marsh	Nasok Sigvanich	William Dill
Roberta S. Flanagan	Michael K. McMurray	Teresa M. Sleigh	Jonathan Hahn
Pamela A. Herrmann	Stacie L. Nietfeld	Mary C. Smith	Gary Hofeling
	Tajudeen A. Ogundipe	Heidi Stahmer	Cynthia Holbrock
	Stacey L. Olson	Christy J. Stevens	Janice James
	Bruce J. Pedersen	Diane M. Stuck	
		Vivien Suksom	
		Ann M. Veatch	

Milford Campus

Michael Kinney	Peter Rosas
Michael Ladd	Roger Schade
Kenneth Lambert	Gary Schelm
Paul Luthy	Michael Snyder
Danny McMurray	Patrick Sterling
Ronald Milke	Brian Tague
Scott Peterson	Chris Trout
Stephen Richardson	David Wantee

Lincoln Campus

Robert C. Aitkenhead	Janet L. Dieckgrafe	Rick G. Hubbard	Lois Mort	Jo A. Slama	Jamie Tonniges
Robert A. Bauer	Kimberly Dlouhy	Lisa K. Hudgens	Wendell B. Moul	Ronald Slaughter	Rhonzla Towle
Sharon D. Burritt	Helen V. Goff	Gilbert Karr	Steven D. Ruhl	Dwayne Snyder	Jill R. Vandusen
Thomas J. Campbell	Jamie Gress	Brenda L. Kaufman	Joni L. Sailors	Jay D. Sterns	Terri A. Weverstad
Mary A. Carson	Colleen Hamer	David Lacey	Kelly M. Scott	Brenda L. Stuefer	Mary K. York
Kathryn Colgan	Catherine M. Hornig	Julee K. Lubken	Keith Seegebarth	Tom W. Thorndike	Shari Zimmer
		Gale Mattarocci	David J. Shannon	Paul A. Tomasek	

Do you know a prospective student?

Start them on their path to possible and tell them to register for one of our Fall Discovery Days!

Beatrice	Monday, Oct. 9 or Monday, Nov. 6
Lincoln	Friday, Sept. 29 or Friday, Nov. 17
Milford	Friday, Oct. 9 or Friday, Nov. 3

southeast.edu/visitscc



FY21-22 Annual Report
The SCC Educational Foundation's Annual Report is available online. If you would like a copy mailed to you, contact the SCC Educational Foundation office at 402-323-3411 or mbirkel@southeast.edu.

A Note from Michelle Birkel

As I sit down to write this, students are preparing to fill our classrooms again. I hope you had a wonderful summer and spent quality time with your family.



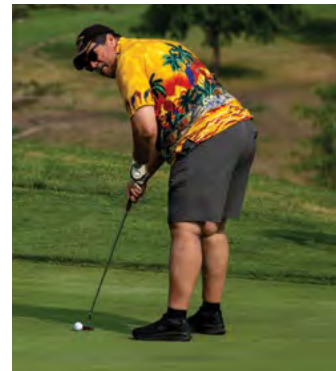
Summer started off with a bang with the 12th Annual Give to Lincoln Day on May 24. Coordinated by the Lincoln Community Foundation, this 24-hour event mobilizes giving for local non-profits, and this year did not disappoint! Thanks to the support of more than 50 donors, we raised \$24,300 for our scholarship fund, which provides financial assistance for students in need. There is something special when we all come together as a community to support our favorite causes and see the tremendous impact of our collective generosity. Thank you!

In July, SCC received a \$100,000 gift over two years from the Ameritas Charitable Foundation. Ameritas awarded \$270,500 to 10 nonprofits spanning their five community wellness areas of education, financial stability, health services, arts and culture, and sustainability.

We have been busy this summer visiting with alumni, friends and organizations. Many stop to visit our campuses in order to see all the great things happening at SCC. If you are in the area or would like to visit one of our campuses in Beatrice, Lincoln or Milford, please give the Foundation Office a call and we would love to meet over coffee and give you a tour!

As always, thank you for all you do to support the mission of SCC. Without your investment, none of this would be possible.

On June 9, golfers came from near and far for our Second Annual SCC/ SkillsUSA golf tournament held at Pioneers Golf Course. This event was a huge success as we had 23 teams help us raise more than \$16,600. These funds will help our students attend SkillsUSA competitions and provide scholarships for these students (see page 3).



Tournament results:

- 1st Place:** Sampson Construction – Lane Godfrey, Justin Hall, Tom Gress, Nick Cammack
- 2nd Place:** Jim Papik, Andy Allen, Scott Erickson, Mark Erickson
- 3rd Place:** Farris Engineering – Brett Wolf, Troy Bridgford, Ryan Richard, Chad Aldrich
- Pin Prizes:**
 - Men's Longest Drive:* Ryan Peterson (Cheever Construction)
 - Women's Longest Drive:* Jill Gurney (SCC retiree)
 - Closest 1st shot Women:* Debbie Bills (SCC)
 - Closest 1st Shot Men:* Tom Gress (Sampson Construction)
 - Shortest Drive Used:* John Trapletti (SCC)
 - Longest Putt:* Nomar Guerra (Clark & Enersen)



1

Donate online at: southeast.edu/sccd donate



Under "I Want to Support," select your designation

2

Mail check to:
Southeast Community College
Educational Foundation
301 S. 68th St. Pl. #204
Lincoln, NE 68510

On Memo line, put "Path to Possible Fund"



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**Check out our other issues
you may have missed!**
southeast.edu/alumni

SHARE YOUR SCC STORY

The Nebraska Community College System is celebrating 50 years, and Southeast Community College would like to tell its story.



**Please submit this form
if you want your story
to be included.**

Honoring Our Veterans

We thank you!

