



Faculty Council

NEWS + UPDATES

November 2024 Newsletter

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Note from the FC President...

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

I hope everyone's semester is going smoothly. As the holidays approach, please be intentional to take care of yourself and your mental health. Recently, a flier describing the many resources included in your benefits package was prepared by HR and forwarded to you by your Faculty Council Representative. When you are able, I encourage you to review it and take advantage of the free opportunities that the college provides.

This newsletter provides an update on the ORP modernization effort, security measures in place to protect your personal information and your paycheck, and other information that we hope keeps you "in the know."

This newsletter is from faculty, for faculty. If you learn about something about which you think everyone should be aware, would you please email fc@collin.edu? We are always looking for updates and concerns that should be shared with faculty in this newsletter. Likewise, if you or your colleague has an accomplishment, let us give you a shout-out in our faculty accolades section! Collin faculty are amazing, and we want to celebrate you!

Have a great Thanksgiving break and a terrific end to this Fall 2024 semester!

Best,

Rebecca

Time-saving tip: Get a list of your embedded DC students...

Many faculty teaching general population courses wonder who might be dual credit (DC) as the semester starts. This helps faculty to anticipate who will need mid-term grades and plan accordingly. Did you know that the DC office will provide you a list of all DC students in each of your sections? All you have to do is email a request to dualcredit@collin.edu.

Reminder that hackers are in our midst...

Ever sigh in frustration when you get notified of mandatory cybersecurity training? Realize that there really are hackers in our midst, trying to steal our information and our paychecks!

This summer at least two faculty had their paychecks stolen by hackers that called in and reset their Workday/CougarWeb password. This contributed to the revision of procedures that requires the Helpdesk to call and confirm requests for account resets and a new policy in the business office to verify identity for ALL direct deposit change requests.

Over the past several weeks, someone has called tech support 4 or 5 times pretending to be a faculty member and asking to have their account reset. During this time, they supplied not only the faculty member's email address, but also figured out the faculty's DOB and CWID number. If the help desk calls you (as they did these faculty members) don't freak out! The only action needed from you is to answer the phone and say "I did not call." Police, the security team, and HR are working to keep our accounts safe, and the hackers have not gained access to the affected faculty members' accounts.

Also, password resets are now sent to your personal email address. Make sure you implement best practices and don't use the same email password for both your Collin and personal email addresses.

Please do your training and be aware - it could save you so much time and frustration.

Did you know?

Faculty Study Grants are back, and although the deadline for this year just passed, it is never too early to start thinking about applying next year! If you have questions, feel free to contact any member of the Advisory Review Committee:

- McKinney - Amy Bierhup, Nursing
- Plano - Lisa Kirby, English
- Celina (Frisco) – Jason Alder, Biology
- Technical – Cheryl Wiltse, English
- Farmersville (Wylie) - Calin Scroggins, Government
- iCollin - Whitney Pisani, Speech
- iCollin - Michael E. Rose, Psychology
- Plano - Ed Bock, Math
- McKinney - Elaine Fanini, Biology

The Faculty Council is coming to you!

FC has been invited to host a Town Hall event at each campus this year. The agenda will vary, but we hope that you will join us for lunch, a general district-wide update, and time for a Q&A so that you can get your questions answered. Thank you, provosts, for inviting us!

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| • 13-Sep | Farmersville Campus |
| • 1-Nov | Celina Campus |
| • 8-Nov | Plano Campus |
| • 31-Jan | Frisco Campus |
| • 7-Feb | iCollin Virtual Campus (virtual meeting) |
| • 28-Feb | Allen Technical Campus |
| • 4-Apr | Wylie Campus |
| • 25-Apr | McKinney Campus |

Which Tech Support Department Should I Email???

So you have a tech issue...who should you contact? Help Desk? The eLC? Web Services? Or maybe just to cover your bases, you'll decide to email all three! Well good news...just pick one, and through our Fresh Service ticketing system, we will route your ticket to the appropriate department. Please do NOT email all three, as each email creates a separate ticket, and working that out can actually take us more time to resolve your issue. So just email your favorite and we'll take care of the rest!

Help Desk: helpdesk@collin.edu

eLC: elc@collin.edu

Web Services: webservices@collin.edu

Call for Sunshine Fund Donations

The Sunshine Fund is maintained by the Committee for the Common Good (CCG) and relies entirely on the contributions of faculty like you. This fund pays for the mementos that retirees receive as a parting gift from the Faculty Council at the retiree celebration. The committee also uses these funds when sending flowers on behalf of the Faculty Council to express condolences or to support faculty through difficult times or grief.

Our coffers are almost empty, and our aforementioned initiatives won't be possible unless we receive more funds. We are humbly requesting you to open your hearts once again. Every contribution, however big or small, matters. If interested in contributing, please reach out to any CCG member (listed on the [FC website](#)), your FC representative, or anyone from the FC leadership.

ORP Modernization Update from HR...

We have carefully considered the concerns raised by faculty during the recent Faculty Convocation. With the guidance of PlanPILOT, our retirement plan consultant, we are reaching out to Fidelity again to explore our options. We are also in active communication with all of our providers to determine a suitable timeline for this transition. Once a date is finalized, your provider choice will need to be made close to the “go live date” for the continuing providers. We will give you as much advance notice as possible.

We will provide employees with a complete disclosure of the cost for each of the providers. In addition, since each provider will be using a similar fund lineup, in early 2025, PlanPILOT will provide a complete performance update (1,3,5,10 year) for each of the funds in that lineup.

At this point, we are aiming for a rollout in the late first quarter of 2025. We understand the importance of this change and are committed to ensuring a smooth transition for everyone involved. To facilitate this, we will offer a variety of support options, including onsite meetings, virtual sessions, and webinars from PlanPILOT as well as designated advisors from the vendors we are using moving forward.

Reminder about December paycheck...

Given Winter Break, the college has traditionally processed payroll in the 3rd week of December. This year, with additional automated processes in place, the pay date will be December 30, 2024, which aligns with other pay cycles throughout the calendar year. If you have any specific questions, please email payrolltimesheets@collin.edu.

Future Faculty Council Meetings...

Day	Date	Location	Time
Friday	November 22	CHEC 227	1-3:30
Friday	January 24	CHEC 107	1-3:30
Friday	February 21	CHEC 107	1-3:30
Friday	March 28	CHEC 107	1-3:30
Friday	May 2	CHEC 107	1-3:30

Please donate in support of the fulltime faculty sponsored scholarship using the QR code below!



Please donate in support of the adjunct faculty sponsored scholarship using the QR code above!

Please donate in support of faculty-sponsored scholarships

Did you know that Faculty, both Full-time and Adjunct, fund multiple student scholarships annually? We have been doing so for 17 years! Donating to the Collin College Foundation Faculty/Adjunct Faculty Scholarship fund offers an opportunity to support students in their pursuit of higher education.

Scholarships can be transformative, enabling students to focus on their studies without the burden of financial stress. By contributing to the Faculty/Adjunct Faculty Scholarship fund, donors help remove barriers to education, allowing more students to access resources and opportunities that lead to academic success and future career opportunities.

Scholarships provide encouragement to students who have demonstrated a commitment to their education and future goals, offering them the tools they need to excel. Many students who benefit from these scholarships go on to give back to their communities, creating a positive ripple effect that extends far beyond the classroom.

Your donation is tax deductible and goes directly to support Collin College students. In order to continue funding scholarships annually, we need your donation. Every dollar counts! Please consider donating. Use the QR code provided for your convenience. Thank you to everyone who has donated and for those of you considering a donation. Faculty Council representatives have the opportunity to meet the students who receive our scholarships. It is a rewarding experience getting to connect with those students who benefit from our support.

Faculty Mental Health...

In addition to the seminars and information shared recently about Mental Health, did you know that a Canvas course was created to focus on Mindfulness?

The American Psychological Association defines mindfulness as being aware of the present moment (internal state and external surroundings) and accepting them without judgment. We live in the present moment by being aware, having acceptance, and attunement.

The Mindfulness committee's purpose is to "... provide and promote opportunities for students, faculty and staff to learn evidence-based techniques for better managing stress, improving focus and increasing memory." Currently, the chair of the 18-member committee is Josh Arduengo.

Besides practicing mindfulness, this Canvas course provides links and information regarding meditation, heart-math, journaling, yoga, committee events, and even relaxing sounds.

Are you ready to increase memory, manage stress, improve relationships, along with other benefits? Check out the Mindfulness course and the additional information provided to get started!

A new 12-week online self-paced course is in the works and will be modeled after a book by Kevin Page called "College Mindfulness Training."

Canvas Course Link <https://collin.instructure.com/enroll/AGAD>

Have you heard about Appreciative Education?

The Appreciative Education Committee is a district-wide committee. Our mission is to motivate leadership, faculty, and advisors to adopt an appreciative mindset that further empowers us to focus on students' strengths and holistic experiences. The committee celebrates Appreciative Education Week in October and offers workshops on the Appreciative Education Framework throughout the year. If your thoughts resonate with the committee's mission and you would like to know more about us or would like to join us, please reach out to committee chair Meena Beri at mberi@collin.edu.

Faculty Accolades...

- English **Professor Anthony Alas** had a short fiction essay “East Village Cowboy” selected for publication in ***Bookends Review***.
- Government **Professors Tyler Young** and **William Geisler** presented “Political Polarization – A Historical Review and Contemporary Analysis of America’s Political Climate” for the McKinney Campus Constitution Day event.
- **Tawnya Hillin-Smith**, Professor of INRW & ENGL at the Plano Campus successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on Oct. 4, 2024.
- **Dr. Scott Yarbrough** was a featured speaker at the Texas Association of Creative Writing at Texas Tech University on Oct. 24-26.
- **Professor Meena Beri** co-edited and published a Community College Newsletter - *Teaching Resources for Economics at Community Colleges*. This newsletter goes out nationwide to all the community college and 4-year college Economics professors. It includes teaching resources for hands-on teaching and active learning in Economics. The fall edition of the newsletter focused on Generative AI in Economics teaching.
- **Robert (Bart) McLeroy** and **William (Bill) Kukla** completed the 2025-2026 Broker Responsibility Instructor Training with the Texas Real Estate Commission. This achievement highlights their commitment to professional development and dedication to staying current in the field.
- **Professor Bart McLeroy** will deliver his first in-person real estate Continuing Education (CE) course at Truly Title in Plano. This opportunity not only marks a significant milestone in his teaching career but also brings valuable industry insights to his students.
- **Dr. Mouna Ben-Hamida** recently won a Women of Impact award from the Skyhouse Capital Firm, an organization dedicated to helping various charity organizations raise funds. This event was celebrating the various volunteer and fundraising efforts dedicated to supporting breast cancer survivors.

Do you have news or photos to share with your colleagues or questions you would like answered?

Please send potential newsletter topics and questions that you think would be of interest to the faculty to **fc@collin.edu**. This newsletter is created by faculty, for faculty. The purpose is to make sure everyone is “in the know.” If you have an accolade/shout-out for a colleague, please email **[Matt Hamilton](mailto:Matt.Hamilton@collin.edu)**. He will be including as many as space will allow. Admittedly, many of our colleagues have numerous accomplishments and accolades, but please send only one for any given faculty colleague so that we know which should be highlighted in the newsletter.

Upcoming Events...

- **Chamber Choir and Honors Voice** concert, Nov. 21 at 7 pm, John Anthony Theater
- **Jazz Lab Band, Jazz Combo Too, Jazz Combo PM concert**, Saturday, Nov. 23, 7 pm, John Anthony Theatre
- **New Music Ensemble concert**, Tuesday, Dec. 3 at 7 pm, Living Legends Conference Center
- **Solo Guitar concert**, Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 7 pm, C103
- **Theatre production: "Oedipus"**, Dec. 4-8 at 3:30 pm and 7:30 pm, Black Box Theatre
- **Dances at 7**, Dec. 5-6 at 7 pm, John Anthony Theatre
- **Fourth Annual Madrigal Feast**, December 7, at 6 pm. Living Legends Conference Center in Plano. Enjoy a five course meal and a night of singing, dancing, and beautiful music to set the stage for the holidays. The program hosted by the singers of the Opera Workshop includes guest appearances by faculty in addition to a host of wonderful student musicians. Reserve your tickets **here**.
- **Annual Student Open exhibition**, Dec. 9 – Jan. 8, The Art Gallery

Click on the event titles in yellow to reserve your tickets today!

