

NEWS + UPDATES

March 2025 Newsletter

President: Rebecca Orr, rorr@collin.edu

Vice-President: Kimberly Harris, kharris@collin.edu

Secretary: Matthew Hamilton, mkhamilton@collin.edu

Treasurer: Mike Brucia, mikebrucia@collin.edu

Note from the FC President...

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

I hope that each of you had a great Spring Break and are refreshed and ready for the second half of this spring semester. I am looking forward to being outside, spring planting, and sunny days in April!

There are many opportunities to support our students coming up in the next month. Check out our "Upcoming Events" section for more information!

As you may know, the business office has been hard at work modernizing our ORP and 403(b) plans. There are also updates to the DOS and EARS reporting processes and a few mid-year updates to the Faculty Handbook. We also have a new standard operating process for how Canvas Course Visitation occurs. More information on all of this is provided in this newsletter.

Mark your calendars for Friday, March 28. The Faculty Council will host Dr. Matkin in the CHEC Boardroom at 1 pm. Bring your appetites and your questions! Lunch will be served (first come, first served) beginning at 12:15 pm.

Best,

Rebecca

Faculty Rank Process: Your Work, Your Path...

The Faculty Rank Promotion process, thoughtfully guided over many months by the Faculty Rank Task Force, including a committed group of academic and workforce faculty, provides a meaningful opportunity to advance based on strengths and contributions. It's a flexible, merit-based pathway designed to reflect the great work you are already doing—or aspire to do—in teaching, service, student support, professional development, as well as scholarly, industry, professional, or artistic works.

To support planning during this Implementation Period, all full-time faculty are asked to submit the ***Preliminary Letter of Intent*** by **5:00 PM on March 31**.

This short form is for logistical purposes and does not commit you to applying, nor does it affect your future application in any way. However, we would like all full-time faculty to submit their intention.

Look for opportunities to attend a Portfolio Builder Preview in April, with additional training and support sessions offered throughout the summer and fall to help guide you through the process. Meanwhile, stay informed of Faculty Rank process updates at the ***Human Resources Helpful Links page***, accessible via Cougar Web.

Whether you're affirming a career of meaningful impact or pursuing new milestones, this is an opportunity to reflect, grow, and continue shaping a culture of excellence at Collin College.

Faculty Council Elections...

Faculty Council Elections will be held **Tuesday, April 8 – Monday, April 14**. Please be on the lookout for a ballot in your email Tuesday morning, 4/8. All full-time faculty will receive a ballot. Ballots will include candidates for President, Vice-President, and Representative(s) for their area (if there is an opening). Adjunct faculty representatives will be elected within the Adjunct Faculty Committee in Fall, 2025.

Nominees for Executive Council:

President: ***Matthew Hamilton***, McKinney, History

Vice-President: ***Katie Johnson***, Frisco, Biology

Vice-President: ***Tonya McMillion***, Frisco, Video Production

403(b) Update...

Voluntary Collin Invests Enhanced Retirement Savings Plan:

Over the spring and summer months, Collin College will have a change in the voluntary Collin Invests Enhanced Savings Plan recordkeeper. This undertaking will provide a reduced overall cost to you in order to increase your net retirement savings. Request for Proposals were recently reviewed, resulting in the Collin Board of Trustees approving a change from Corebridge to TIAA:

- Moving to TIAA will enhance net retirement savings for employees.
- In addition to the continued high involvement of local financial consultants (TIAA's offices are in Frisco) for Collin employees, TIAA will provide additional online services and managed accounts.
- Collin is also adding the ability for employees to make Roth contributions—an after-tax contribution to the plan that allows all earnings on those contributions to grow tax-free and be used in your retirement without the need to pay taxes again on your Roth distributions. You can find more information on Roth 403(b) contributions on the [**IRS website**](#).
- All employees eligible to save in the voluntary Collin Invests Enhanced Retirement Savings Plan will receive an email with additional information within the next few months.

DOS Update...

Collin College's Guardian universal reporting system will now automatically notify faculty via Collin College email that their report was received when they submit a Student Incident Report, SOBI Care Team Referral, Mandatory Report, etc. The email notification will contain a summary of the submission, including information such as the case number, individual(s) being reported, and incident details. These notifications will enable faculty to more easily keep track of reports they have submitted and follow up on cases with the appropriate office.

Student Support at Farmersville...

The Farmersville Campus is hosting Movie Night on the Lawn on Saturday, March 29th at 8 pm. We'll be showing the movie "Twisters". This event is open to the public with free entry, popcorn, candy, and water to all attendees. Food vendors will also be available. Please bring a blanket/chair. Doors open at 7 pm. Please join us for a fun evening under the stars!

ORP Modernization Update...

In the next few months, our ORP Plan will undergo a modernization. The following enhancements will bring this important savings plan into better alignment with our voluntary Collin Invests Enhanced Retirement Savings Plan:

- Lower overall record keeper costs by up to 80%, depending on the provider
- Reduce the overall number of providers (results in lower costs and enhanced service from the remaining providers) which are listed below:
 - Aspire-PCS (includes ISC Group and Lincoln Investment)
 - Corebridge
 - TIAA
 - Voya
- Provide best-in-class funds monitored quarterly by an independent investment fiduciary

More detailed information about these changes will be provided in the next few weeks to those of you currently participating in the ORP Plan. This will include:

- onsite and virtual presentations;
- information on the available providers, their advisors, their costs;
- additional data to help those of you that must choose a new provider to make a decision as well as for those that may choose to make a change.

As of the date of implementation, future contributions will be deposited into the updated plans. You will not be required to move your current balances from your current provider, but the potential cost savings will be worth considering once the modernization is implemented.

EARS Update...

Big changes are coming soon to the Early Alert Referral System! The current system will transition to Guardian, bringing several key improvements. The new system will feature a more dynamic referral form that pulls information directly from Workday, making it faster and easier to complete. All referred students will receive timely email outreach with specific recommendations based on the type of referral, and faculty will receive an immediate follow-up. Students will also have the ability to acknowledge receipt of the referral and recommendations. Guardian will help isolate urgent referrals for additional intervention, enhance data collection and student tracking, and allow for targeted support by separating referrals for dual credit students. Stay tuned for more details on this exciting upgrade!

Future Faculty Council Meetings...

Day	Date	Location	Time
Friday	March 28	CHEC 107	1-3:30
Friday	May 2	CHEC 107	1-3:30

February 25 Faculty Handbook Edits...

The Faculty Handbook Committee meets multiple times throughout an academic year to review and update that handbook so that it provides current, accurate, and clear information for faculty. The committee is comprised of faculty who are recommended by the Faculty Council and administrators from various departments and campuses. The committee does not create the information found in the handbook; rather, it works closely with all relevant departments to ensure that the information in the handbook is as current and accurate as possible.

The committee generally puts out a revised version of the handbook every August. However, occasionally the committee will revise the handbook during the academic year when sections need to be changed to align with updated board policy. Each revision will contain a list of changes in the appendix.

On February 21st, the committee approved the following updates:

- Updated Local Travel to align with Board Policy **DEE(LOCAL)**
- Updated Academic Ethics / Scholastic Dishonesty to align with Board Policy **FLB(LOCAL)**
- Updated Emergency Resources contact information
- Fixed a broken link for the Employee Assistance Program
- Updated Farmersville Executive Dean information

The Faculty Handbook can be found on the **Faculty Resources** page inside CougarWeb.

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!

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

Join iCollin Virtual Campus Event...

- Celebrate Earth Day with the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center! From majestic eagles to stealthy owls, meet the birds of prey that play a vital role in balancing our ecosystems. Participants can attend the online celebration at the following time: Thursday, April 17, 1 pm – 2 pm. We hope to see you there!
 - All Participants: Please use the link below to RSVP with your name and email address. Upon registration, Zoom meeting information and connection instructions will be sent to the email you provide. <https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/6M5zte9QTXCTyxRITW9QCw>
- This April, team up with your community to take on the City Nature Challenge! Join us for a virtual introduction to citizen science and the iNaturalist app ahead of this worldwide Earth Day bio-blitz. Participants can attend the online celebration at the following time: Thursday, April 24, 6 pm – 7 pm. We hope to see you there!
 - All Participants: Please use the link below to RSVP with your name and email address. Upon registration, Zoom meeting information and connection instructions will be sent to the email you provide. https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Io_Gyv2RLKvicvGet5R8w

New SOP for Canvas Course Visits...

A new standard operating procedure (SOP) has been created and approved by AGS to clarify and communicate the procedural and professional expectations for Canvas course visitation across all campuses and academic divisions of Collin College. Canvas course visitation most often occurs to complete a scheduled class observation. Occasionally course visitation is needed for other reasons, and this SOP was created by faculty and administration to ensure consistency, district-wide. Look for this SOP in your Academic Affairs SOP widget in Cougarweb coming soon!

Adjunct Faculty Corner...

Exciting Updates Coming to the Faculty Starting Line Canvas Course Shell!

A huge thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts in our recent survey! We're thrilled to announce that thanks to your insightful feedback, we have completed the first phase of our project to gather information for enhancing the Faculty Starting Line Canvas course with a brand-new Adjunct Faculty widget. Your feedback has been super helpful, and we're currently diving into it further as we work on the second phase of the project to create something special just for our adjuncts!

Our goal is to have the new widget up and running by Fall 2025, and we can't wait for it to make a meaningful impact in supporting our adjunct faculty.

Stay tuned for more updates on our journey as we build this exciting new tool!



Faculty Accolades...

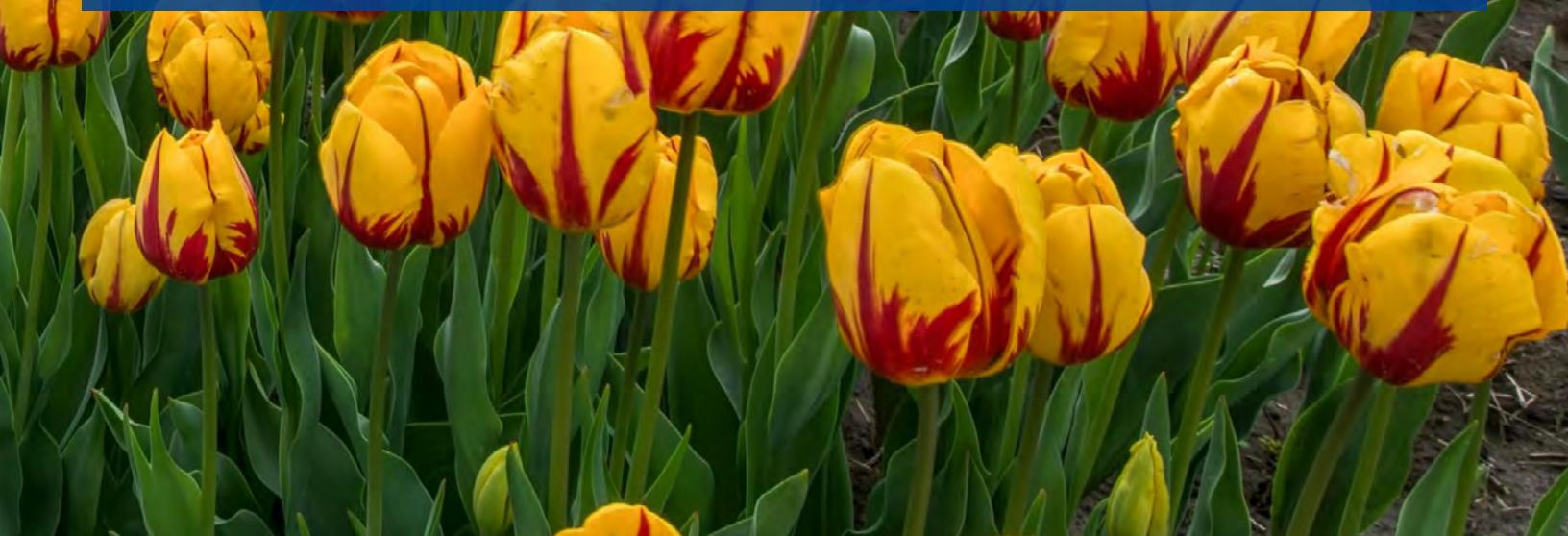
- Nursing Professor **Michelle Denny** recently earned the prestigious Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) credential from the National League for Nursing (NLN). This certification recognizes her advanced knowledge, skill, and dedication to excellence in nursing education.
- iCollin Biology Professor **Dr. Rebecca Orr** delivered a presentation titled “Building Better Assessments: Best Practices and Effective Strategies for Science Education” at the Digital Leadership Forum in San Antonio, Texas, where she shared insights on improving assessment techniques in science education.
- Computer Science Professor **Dr. Tebring Daly** has been honored with the 2025 NISOD Excellence Award in recognition of her exceptional dedication to student success at Collin College.
- Professor of History **Dr. Matthew Hamilton** has been appointed Chair of the Board of Directors for the Collin County History Museum in McKinney, Texas.
- iCollin Professor of English **Latoya Watkins** has been elected as a member of the Texas Institute of Letters, a prestigious honor society founded in 1936 to celebrate Texas literature and recognize outstanding literary achievement. In February, she was a featured speaker at the University of Maryland’s Writers’ Here and Now event and the Jiménez-Porter Writers’ House.
- iCollin Political Science Professor **Betsy Brody**’s oral history and photography exhibition, Digging In, has been selected by the City of Dallas for inclusion in the Dragon Boat Festival. The exhibit will be on display at the Bath House Cultural Center on White Rock Lake from May to June 2025.
- Several iCollin Virtual Campus faculty members were involved in community events this month. **Courtenay Jauregui** attended the Campus Improvement Meeting for Anderson Elementary with the Frisco ISD District Advisory Council. **Meena Beri** continued serving on the Site Based Improvement Committee for Wyatt Elementary School in Plano ISD as well as on the PTA Board for Wyatt Elementary School. **Sukanya Subramanian** performed experiments at Science Night at Kerr Elementary School in Allen, Texas. **Dr. Rebecca Orr** served on hearings as a member of the City of Lucas Board of Adjustments.
- iCollin Speech Professor **Whitney Pisani** presented “Maintaining Engagement and Connection in the Online Classroom” at the January Lilly Conference on Teaching for Active and Engaged Learning, where she shared strategies for fostering student interaction in virtual learning environments.
- Business Management Professor **Dr. Christine DeLaTorre** presented “Beyond the Stereotypes: Mental Health in a Multi-Generational Workplace” at the 2025 Conference on Meaningful Living and Learning in a Digital World, hosted by the University of West Georgia in February of 2025.

Faculty Accolades continued...

- Cybersecurity Professor **Ace Moore** has been selected as a Security Fellow for the Truman National Security Project, a prestigious nationwide, nonpartisan organization that unites leaders from the military, government, and policy sectors to develop and advocate for innovative national security solutions.
- Music Professor **Casey L. Carter** has been appointed to the position of International Conference Coordinating Committee Chair for the National Association of Teachers of Singing 59th Biennial Conference to be held in San Antonio, TX July 3-7, 2026.
- Prof. **Greg Carter**, Discipline Lead for Supply Chain at Collin College, co-chaired the 2024 Academic Decathlon and will now lead the event. Held February 28–March 2, the statewide competition brought 350 students and 62 coaches from across Texas to compete in academics and speech. Over \$100,000 in scholarships were awarded.
- Prof. **Tonya McMillion**, Discipline Lead for Video Production, has been awarded the Faculty Study Grant. This grant supports in-depth study and research on significant topics within or related to one's discipline for intellectual enrichment.
- Cybersecurity Professor **Dr. Bilal Abu Bakr** has co-authored six abstracts with Collin College students, which were published in The Journal of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences (Abstract), and presented at the 89th Annual Meeting at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum and Convention Center, Biloxi, Mississippi, USA, on March 20-21, 2025.

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. 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...

- **Barbie Movie Screening/Discussion** – Women's History Month event, March 26 at 6 pm, Technical Campus
- **18th Annual Health and Safety Fair**, Friday, March 28 from 9 am to 2 pm, McKinney Campus Conference Center
- **Jazz Festival Concerts**, Wylie Campus Student Center spaces, March 28-29, 7 pm
- **Movie Night on the Lawn**, Saturday, March 29 at 8 pm, Farmersville Campus
- Collin Serves will be conducting a food drive to benefit the Community Food Pantry of McKinney, April 7th through 25th, McKinney Campus
- **Community Egg Hunt on the Quad**, Saturday, April 5, 1 pm to 2:30 pm, Frisco Campus. For additional information, contact [Jenny Sideris](#) or [Ana Williams](#)
- **“Where It All Began” Music Festival**, Saturday, April 5, 2025, from 1 pm to 7 pm, McKinney Campus. This festival will feature six singers performing a variety of musical styles. Attendees are encouraged to bring folding chairs and/or a blanket
- Celina Campus Carnival, Wednesday, April 9 from 4 pm to 7 pm (rides close at 6:30 pm), Celina Campus
- **The Mask You Live** Movie Screening/Discussion, April 10 at 4 pm, Technical Campus
- **Dance InterACTION**, Plano Conference Center, April 11 and 12, 7 pm.
- **Open House & Car Meet**, April 12 at 9 am, Technical Campus
- **Jean’s Creek Clean-up**, Saturday, April 12, from 8 am to Noon, McKinney Campus
- **“Walk With Me” Shoe Drive**, a collaboration between the Culture Diversity Committee, area Rotary Clubs, the Collin College Rotaract Club, and two Rotary Interact Clubs, April 1 through April 14, McKinney Campus
- **Keyboard Ensemble Performance**, C103 Plano, Wednesday, April 16, 7:00 pm
- **Celebrate Earth Day with the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center** with iCollin Virtual Campus, Thursday, April 17, 1 pm to 2 pm, <https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/6M5zte9QTXCTyxRITW9QCw>
- **Premier Corporate Wellness cardiovascular screening**, (free with Collin insurance), April 24 & 25, 8 am to 4 pm, room H229, McKinney Campus
- **City Nature Challenge**, iCollin Virtual Campus, Thursday, April 24, 6 pm to 7 pm, https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Io_Gyv2RLKvivcGet5R8w
- **OneSound Concert**, John Anthony Theater, Friday, April 25, 7 pm
- **Jazztet Performance**, Wylie Conference Center, Saturday, April 26, 7 pm

