

# NEWS + UPDATES

**August 2025 Newsletter**

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**Vice-President:** Katie Johnson, [kajohnson@collin.edu](mailto:kajohnson@collin.edu)  
**Secretary:** Krystal Humphreys, [kahumphreys@collin.edu](mailto:kahumphreys@collin.edu)  
**Treasurer:** Freddie Williams, [fjwilliams@collin.edu](mailto:fjwilliams@collin.edu)

# Note from the FC President...

Welcome back, colleagues!

I hope you all had a restful and rejuvenating summer and are feeling ready for an exciting and productive fall semester.

As your new Faculty Council President, I'd like to begin with a brief introduction. My name is Matt Hamilton, and I teach American history at the McKinney Campus. I've been in higher education for over 15 years and currently live in McKinney with my wife and young daughter. Born, raised, and educated in the DFW metroplex, I was already familiar with Collin College's strong reputation for academic excellence before joining as a full-time faculty member in 2020. After meeting and working alongside you all, I can confidently say that this reputation is well deserved.

The faculty at Collin College represents one of the most remarkable communities of talent, culture, and intellect in higher education. It is truly an honor and privilege to serve as your Faculty Council President, and I am committed to ensuring that our Faculty Council makes a meaningful impact for our faculty, students, and institution.

This newsletter is created by faculty, for faculty, with the goal of keeping everyone "in the know." I encourage you to send any potential newsletter topics or questions you think would be of interest to faculty to [fc@collin.edu](mailto:fc@collin.edu).

If you'd like to recognize a colleague with an accolade or shout-out, please email [Krystal Humphreys](mailto:Krystal.Humphreys@collin.edu). She will include as many submissions as space allows. While we know many of our colleagues have multiple accomplishments worth celebrating, please limit each submission to one recognition per colleague so we can highlight the most appropriate one in the newsletter.

To help raise awareness of student support opportunities, we'll also include a brief list of upcoming events. This list won't be comprehensive, as the [Master Calendar](#) covers that, but we hope to spotlight a variety of campus-wide opportunities. If you have an event you'd like to see included, please email [Krystal Humphreys](mailto:Krystal.Humphreys@collin.edu). Newsletters are typically produced and shared during the third week of each month, so please send event and accolade requests by the first or second week of the month.

Have a great prep week and enjoy the company of your colleagues!

– MH

# Faculty Council Executive Committee

**Vice-President: Kate Johnson** – I completed my Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology at Georgetown University. I've been teaching in higher education since 2009 and have been part of the Collin College community since 2012, beginning as an adjunct instructor. I currently teach biology and microbiology at the Frisco Campus. My husband and I are the proud parents of four boys.

**Secretary: Krystal Humphreys** – I teach history at the Wylie Campus. I am from Lubbock, TX, earned my Ph.D. from Texas Tech University, and have been in higher education for sixteen years, the last seven with Collin College. I currently live in Wylie with my husband, our two Golden Retrievers, and three cats.

**Treasurer: Freddie Williams** – I am Freddie Williams, your incoming Faculty Council Treasurer. I am based at the Frisco campus, but my office and classes are held at the Plano campus. My discipline is Business Management. I have been in higher education since 1993 and have been at Collin College since 2021.

## Faculty Council & Senate Bill 37

With the passage of Senate Bill 37, all faculty councils in Texas must comply with Education Code Section 51.3522 by September 1, 2025. While the law formally designates faculty councils as advisory, Dr. Matkin has reaffirmed his commitment to shared governance and to preserving the strong tradition we have built together. Faculty Council's legitimacy as the voice of Collin College's teaching faculty remains intact.

To ensure compliance with SB 37, the Faculty Council Policy Committee worked with Dr. Johnson this summer to draft new Board of Trustees policy recommendations, presented for a first reading on August 8 and scheduled for a second reading on August 26. At the same time, the Faculty Council Procedures & Nominations Committee is updating our internal Procedures Manual to reflect the new requirements. These changes are structural in nature and align only with what the law requires.

Faculty Council operations will continue as usual with a few procedural adjustments, and we will keep you updated throughout the process. In short, we are on track, and we are going to be just fine.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email [fc@collin.edu](mailto:fc@collin.edu).

# Have you ever wondered...

## **Interested in joining a Faculty Council district-wide committee?**

We would love to have your voice represented in Faculty Council discussions, and you do not have to be an FC representative to participate. A [Faculty Council committee survey](#) was emailed to all faculty on August 13, 2025, providing an opportunity to volunteer for a committee. The survey will close on Friday, August 29, 2025, at noon.

## **Please consider donating to the Faculty or Adjunct Scholarship fund.**

We have been doing so for 18 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.

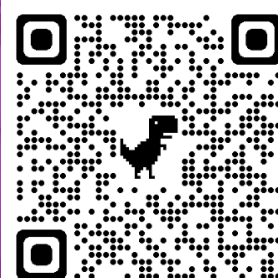
Scholarships provide encouragement to students who have demonstrated a commitment to their education and future goals, offering them the tools they need to excel. Many students who benefit from these scholarships go on to give back to their communities, creating a positive ripple effect that extends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

Your donation is tax deductible and goes directly to support Collin College students. 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 can meet the students who receive our scholarships. It is a rewarding experience getting to connect with those students who benefit from our support.

**Please donate to the  
FT Faculty  
Scholarship  
fund using  
the QR  
code to the  
right.**



**Please donate to the  
Adjunct Faculty  
Scholarship  
fund using the  
QR code to the  
right.**



# Important updates for faculty

## Faculty Ranks

The 2025–2026 Faculty Rank Letter of Intent is now live in Workday. All regular full-time faculty (excluding Temporary Full-Time) must submit the Letter of Intent by **11:00 p.m. on Monday, September 2, 2025**, even if you don't plan to apply for Faculty Rank this year.

The Portfolio Builder will be available beginning Monday, September 8, 2025. If you have your documentation and narrative already prepared, we urge you to submit your portfolios as soon as possible.

In the meantime, there will be a series of Faculty Ranks Portfolio workshops this semester designed to help you build your application portfolios. For more information on these workshops and much more concerning Faculty Ranks, please visit the [Faculty Ranks website](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [Regina Hughes](#), Director of Faculty Employment.

## A revamped Faculty Annual Appraisal?

The Faculty Annual Appraisal Revamp Committee collaborated this summer to create suggested updates to the faculty annual appraisal. The group consists of full-time faculty and administrators working to finetune the faculty appraisal for increased alignment, reflection, and support. The new appraisal provides detailed instructions, reflective questions, and examples to help faculty showcase their efforts throughout the year. This fall, the Faculty Annual Appraisal Revamp Committee will continue their efforts to finalize the appraisal before testing in Workday begins. Appraisal self-assessments are expected to launch in March, along with a schedule of training sessions. Please watch for further communication.

## New Student Survey of Instruction (SSI) launching Fall 2025

Thanks to faculty feedback, Faculty Council and Dr. Abe Johnson (SVPCO) brought together a group of faculty and associate deans to rework the Student Survey of Instruction (SSI). Over the past two years, this task force has partnered with the Institutional Research Office (IRO) and piloted a new version of the survey in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 with around 70 faculty. The updated SSI focuses on five key areas: course expectations, instructor communication, feedback, coursework, and encouragement to participate. It now uses a five-point scale with a neutral option, and students can leave comments after each question. Pilot results showed the new version is more reliable, more useful, and just plain better. Starting in Fall 2025, all course sections will use this updated SSI. The rest of the process will stay the same. If you have questions, email Faculty Council at [fc@collin.edu](mailto:fc@collin.edu).

## **Sabbatical Applications**

Now through September 12, eligible full-time employees may submit applications for sabbatical during Fall 2026 and/or Spring 2027. An informational video, application packet, and timeline are accessible on the [Sabbatical webpage](#).

## **Dependent Tuition Waiver**

The [Dependent Tuition Waiver](#) covers up to 60 Collin College credit hours of tuition only for qualified full-time employee dependents under age 24. The covers up to 60 Collin College credit hours of tuition only for qualified full-time employee dependents under age 24. Contact [TrainingAndDevelopment@Collin.edu](mailto:TrainingAndDevelopment@Collin.edu) with questions.

## **Voluntary Collin Invests 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan Update**

Over the fall months, Collin College will transition from Corebridge to TIAA as our retirement provider. We are working closely with TIAA to determine an effective date. Communication with detailed information will be provided in advance before your first deduction is placed with TIAA. This will be done automatically so no action will be required. You will have the opportunity to make any changes after your funds have been moved to TIAA. This transition will include the opportunity to invest in a Roth 403(b).

## **Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) Update**

Collin College's ORP Plan will undergo a modernization in the new fiscal year that will result in cost-saving enhancements. It will reduce the number of vendors to the Texas-mandated minimum of four which are listed below:

- Aspire-PCS (includes ISC Group and Lincoln Investment)
- Corebridge
- TIAA
- Voya

Once an effective date is determined, more detailed information will be provided to help you with your decision making for those that will be required to change providers as well as for those that may choose to make a change. All new deductions will go under the updated plans. You will not be required to move your current funds, but the cost savings will be worth considering in making this transfer.

## **New Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)**

The Faculty Council partnered with administration last year to clarify and update Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that impact faculty. Two new SOPs have recently been added to the CougarWeb widget:

- Canvas Course Visitation SOP
- SOP for Priority Order of Teaching Loads and Overloads

The SOP widget is available to all faculty, staff, and administrators. More procedures will be added soon to promote consistency and transparency across the district.

## Cell phone use in dual credit classrooms

House Bill 1481 now requires public school districts to ban or restrict cell phones and personal devices during the school day. For dual credit faculty teaching at high school campuses, this impacts the use of Canvas since students typically log in through OneLogin. Collin College IT has developed a solution that removes the need for dual credit students on ISD campuses to complete the authentication process when accessing Collin resources. This will be in place by the first day of Collin classes on August 25, 2025. If students encounter issues on the first day, contact Craig Leverette, Vice President of Academic Operations, at [cleverette@collin.edu](mailto:cleverette@collin.edu).

**Note:** Multi-Factor Authentication will still be required if students access Collin resources outside the ISD network (such as on a Collin campus) or use a VPN/proxy while on the ISD network.

## Drumroll please . . .

The 2025 Outstanding Professor Winner is  
**Paul “Levi” Bryant,**  
Professor of Philosophy, Frisco Campus

And one more big shout out to all the 2025 OP finalists:

- Brett Adams, Professor of History, Celina Campus
- Amira Albalancy, Professor of Biology, Frisco Campus
- Dan Lipscomb, Professor of Psychology, Plano Campus
- Rosalinda Valenzuela, Professor of Political Science, Plano Campus
- Paul “Levi” Bryant, Professor of Philosophy, Frisco Campus

The first Faculty Council meeting of the 2025–2026 academic year will be held on **Friday, August 22, 2025, in the Kone Conference Center on the Technical Campus** in Allen and via Zoom. Lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m., and the meeting will begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. An Outlook invitation and reminder will be sent to all faculty one week before the meeting, including the agenda and a Zoom link for those who wish to attend virtually. We hope you will join us for this important kickoff to the new academic year.

# Syllabus updates for 2025-2026 AY

## Current Political Climate and Challenges for Higher Education

A key theme from AGS meetings last spring was that higher education is facing heightened public scrutiny. This includes close examination of our work by external groups, some of which are openly critical of colleges and universities. Materials such as course syllabi, which are often publicly accessible, are among the most visible representations of our academic work and are frequently reviewed by those outside the institution.

Given this reality, faculty are encouraged to treat the syllabus as a professional document that serves as both a roadmap for student success and a public reflection of our academic integrity. This means focusing on policies and information that directly support student learning, clarify expectations, and align with institutional and legal requirements. Faculty are also advised to avoid including personal viewpoints, political statements, or ideological language that could distract from the syllabus's primary purpose of guiding students toward success in the course.

By ensuring syllabi remain clear, concise, and student focused, we can better safeguard academic freedom while also meeting our responsibility to present a professional and inclusive learning environment.

## Concourse Syllabus Template Updates

In your courses, you will find a new concourse syllabus template. It will have several new headings for you to use. Please do not delete these headings. This is an effort across the district to have all syllabi look consistent, making it easier for students.

Please do not copy your entire syllabus over from a previous course. This will delete these new headings. You can copy and paste sections into one new syllabus, then copy the new syllabus over to other sections.

- **Course Information:** These two sections will show your course information, including the dates of the term, class meeting time, and location. If your class is a hybrid or online class, it will note this under Course Description.
- **Contact Information:** Do not delete any of the red subheadings. Only delete the recommendations in light blue under email address, phone number, and office hours. Leave the note about email communications at the bottom.
- **Course Policies:** Below are the new subheadings. Keep these in this order. If a subheading does not apply to your class, we recommend adding "none."
  - o Attendance/Participation
  - o Assignment Submission Requirements
  - o Late Work/Missed Assignments & Assessments
  - o Technology Expectations

- o Classroom Civility/Netiquette
- o Accommodations (pre-populated)
- o Scholastic Dishonesty
- o Artificial Intelligence (faculty can choose from several options)

## Pregnant and Parenting Students

The Concourse syllabus template now includes an updated section on Pregnant and Parenting Students in accordance with Title IX and Texas Education Code Section 51.982. This statement outlines the college's process for providing reasonable modifications and leave of absence requests for students who are pregnant, experiencing a pregnancy-related condition, and/or parenting.

Faculty are encouraged to review the updated language in the Concourse template and direct students to the [Pregnant and Parenting Students webpage](#) or to contact the college's liaison officer at 972.599.3126 or [athroop@collin.edu](mailto:athroop@collin.edu) for assistance.

## Religious Holy Days

The Concourse syllabus template now includes updated language on Religious Holy Days in accordance with Section 51.911 of the Texas Education Code. Students observing a religious holy day may take an exam or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time, provided they submit a written request to each professor before the course census date. Faculty should direct students to the [Notification of Absence Form](#) and remind them that additional information is available through Student and Enrollment Services on any campus.

# A message from the Culture Council

The Collin College Culture Council would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the fall 2025 semester. We are a council with members throughout the district (Faculty, Staff, Administrators). *The Collin College Culture Council is committed to cultivating an intentional culture that values the rich and unique attributes of our student and employee populations. We are dedicated to enhancing and promoting a unified system that supports our core values of integrity, dignity, and respect as an institutional, cultural norm.*

We wish you success, health, and wellness!

Stay tuned for additional communications from the Collin College Culture Council throughout the semester.

CC Culture Council

Chair: Dr. Cathy Donald-Whitney

Executive Sponsor: Dr. Diana Hopes



# Adjunct Faculty Corner

Welcome back to a brand-new academic year! We hope your summer was restful and inspiring. As we head into Fall 2025, the Adjunct Faculty Committee is excited to continue the momentum we built last year and collaborate with you to make this another impactful year.

## First Meeting & Scheduling Survey

To kick things off, we're planning our first Adjunct Faculty virtual meeting, and we'd love your input on scheduling. Please take a moment to let us know your availability by completing this [form](#). Deadline to submit is August 31, 2025. Your responses will help us schedule both our initial meeting and ongoing virtual check-ins for the year.

## Ongoing Initiative: Adjunct Faculty Tab in Canvas

One exciting initiative that continues from last year is the Adjunct Faculty tab within the Faculty Starting Line Canvas Course. We're now collaborating with the Technology Committee to integrate this resource more deeply into the platform. This centralized hub will house key tools, resources, and updates—everything you need in one place. We're about two-thirds of the way through, and we're making excellent progress thanks to your feedback and support. Take a look at the current [Faculty Starting Line Canvas Course Shell](#)

## Looking Ahead: Help Shape This Year's Initiatives

We're also looking to you to help guide our work this year. What initiatives or improvements should the Adjunct Faculty Committee focus on? Your voice matters, and we'll be reviewing your suggestions at our first meeting. Submit your ideas for this year's initiatives [here](#).

Thank you for all that you do—your talent, innovation, and commitment to student success continue to elevate our college community. We're grateful for your continued contributions and look forward to working together to support and strengthen the adjunct faculty experience this year.

# Did You Know?

## Faculty Study Grants Are Back!

Faculty Study Grants returned last academic year, and they're available again for 2025–2026. If you're interested in applying, please complete this form and submit it to Training & Development by Friday, September 5, 2025. If you have any questions, feel free to contact a member of the Advisory Review Committee:

- Dr. Jason Alder (Biology, Celina)
- Dr. Millie Black (Political Science, Wylie)
- Prof. Whitney Pisani (Speech, iCollin)
- Prof. Michael Rose (Psychology, iCollin)
- Dr. Amy Bierhup (Nursing, McKinney)
- Dr. Charlene Green (English, McKinney)
- Prof. Ed Bock (Math, Plano)
- Dr. Lisa Kirby (English, Plano)
- Dr. Cheryl Wiltse (English, Technical)

**Teaching online at Collin College requires meeting three specific requirements.** Whether you're already teaching online or hoping to teach an online course in Spring 2026, be sure to review the expectations on the [Teaching Online at Collin College web page](#). The deadline to complete all requirements for Spring 2026 eligibility is September 19, 2025, so don't wait – visit the page today!

**Need to Update a Guardian Case (Incident reports)?** Faculty can upload additional documentation to an open case in Guardian by following these steps:

- Log into Guardian.
- Click the "Case Associations" tab at the top of the page.
- Find the case you want to update and click "View Case Details."
- In the left-hand menu, click "Modify Details."
- From there, you can attach files or make updates as needed.

**Substitute pay is available for ALL faculty who substitute for a colleague.** Substitute pay is calculated based on the substitute hourly pay rate times the number of actual contact hours subbed.

**Ever wonder how items make it into the Cougar Review Dr. Matkin sends out each month?** Faculty accomplishments aren't always included, sometimes because none were submitted! To be considered, send your news up through your AD/director, dean, or provost. Communications does its best to include as much good news as space allows, so don't be shy about sharing your successes.

# Faculty Accolades...

- **Prof. Larry Stern (Sociology, Plano)** – Prof. Stern has been named a Professor Emeritus of Collin College. The Professor Emeritus Program recognizes faculty members who have dedicated a substantial part of their careers to Collin College and its students, while also providing a way for the College to continue benefiting from their expertise.
- **Prof. Sofya Antonova (Mathematics, Plano)** – Prof. Antonova has been named to the Sam E. Roach Endowed Chair in Business and Engineering. Established in 2013, the chair honors long-serving Trustee Sam E. Roach for his leadership and commitment to Collin College and the community and recognizes exceptional teaching in business or engineering fields.
- **Prof. Amy Bierhup (RN Nursing)** – Prof. Bierup has been named to the Florence Marie Dickinson Endowed Chair in Nursing. Established through a gift from Richard R. Dickinson and his wife Barbara in honor of Mr. Dickinson's mother, the chair recognizes exceptional teaching in nursing.
- **Prof. Courtenay C. Jauregui (Education, iCollin)** – Prof. Jauregui has been named to the Lebrecht Endowed Chair for Scholarly and Civic Engagement. Established in 2005 through a gift from business and civic leader Royden Lebrecht, this chair recognizes outstanding contributions in scholarly and civic engagement.
- **Dr. Jason Snyder (Mathematics, McKinney)** – Dr. Snyder has been awarded the George Pólya Award from the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) for his article, "A Modern Spin on Archimedes' Quadrature of the Parabola," published in The College Mathematics Journal. The George Pólya Award is presented annually by the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) for articles of expository excellence. The award was established in 1976, and only up to two are given yearly.
- **Prof. Danielle Bramall (Mathematics, Frisco)** – Prof. Bramall was selected as a fellow in AMATYC's (American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges) Project ACCESS program, a national initiative designed to support early-career community college math faculty. She is the sixth math faculty member from Collin College to receive this distinction in 22 years. Through this fellowship, Prof. Bramall will have opportunities for research and collaboration with colleagues in math education at the national level.
- **Dr. Khimen Cooper (ENGL, Plano)** – Dr. Cooper was selected to speak at TEDxPlano 2025 held at the Robinson Fine Arts Center on June 26. Dr. Cooper's presentation was titled "To Live a Life with Intent, You Must First Learn to Think with Intent."
- **Prof. Russell Smith (Animation and Gaming, Frisco)** – Prof. Smith was selected to participate in the next Leadership Wylie Class XXII.
- **Prof. Brandy Jumper (Mathematics, McKinney)** – Prof. Jumper has been awarded the Phi Theta Kappa's Continued Excellence Award for Advisors. This award recognizes advisors who have previously received the Distinguished Advisor Award and continue to make significant contributions to their chapter and the organization.

**Do you have news, accomplishments, recognitions, awards, etc.,  
you want to share with (or about) your colleagues?**

Please email Krystal Humphreys at [kahumphreys@collin.edu](mailto:kahumphreys@collin.edu)  
so that we can include more faculty accolades in this monthly newsletter!

# Upcoming Events...

If you haven't had a chance to attend a Faculty Rank Portfolio Workshop, there are several opportunities coming up:

- Tuesday, August 19, 2025, 10:00AM-12:00PM at the Tech Campus, Kone Conference Center
- Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 1:00PM-3:00PM at the Tech Campus, Kone Conference Center
- Thursday, September 11, 2025, 3:00PM-5:00PM at the Tech Campus, Kone Conference Center
- **Collin College Women's Volleyball.** The Collin College Women's Volleyball Team will play its inaugural game against Temple College on Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at 6:00PM on the Frisco Campus. Come out and support Collin's newest athletic program!
- **Constitution Day: "Abraham Lincoln's Constitutionalism as a Lesson in Gratitude."** Join us Tuesday, September 17 from 1:00PM-2:15PM at the McKinney Conference Center for a special presentation by Dr. Andrew F. Lang (Associate Professor of History, Mississippi State University) exploring Abraham Lincoln's deep sense of gratitude and its role in shaping his constitutional vision during one of the most turbulent times in American history.
- **Collin College Auteur Film Series, 2025-26:** Allegories of the Cave. 7 p.m., Thurs., Sept. 18, 2025 - The Matrix at the McKinney Campus Conference Center
- **Plano Balloon Festival 2025.** The Plano Campus will close at 3:00PM on September 19, 2025, for the annual Plano Balloon Festival!

## This Year's Faculty Council Meeting Schedule

DAY	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Friday	Aug. 22, 2025	Kone Conference Center (Tech Campus)	1-3:30 PM
Friday	Sept. 19, 2025	Kone Conference Center (Tech Campus)	1-3:30 PM
Friday	Oct. 24, 2025	Kone Conference Center (Tech Campus)	1-3:30 PM
Friday	Dec. 5, 2025	Kone Conference Center (Tech Campus)	1-3:30 PM
Friday	Jan. 23, 2026	Kone Conference Center (Tech Campus)	1-3:30 PM
Friday	Feb. 20, 2026	Kone Conference Center (Tech Campus)	1-3:30 PM
Friday	Apr. 10, 2026	Kone Conference Center (Tech Campus)	1-3:30 PM
Friday	May 8, 2026	Kone Conference Center (Tech Campus)	1-3:30 PM