

# NEWS + UPDATES

## September 2025 Newsletter

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# Note from the FC President...

Dear Colleagues,

I hope everyone's semester is off to a good start. I cannot believe it is almost October. Soon, my 6-year-old daughter will be gearing up to plunder our neighborhood for all its candy. As the season begins to change, I wanted to call on faculty to be aware and be colleagues to each other.

At our September 19 Faculty Council meeting, Dr. Matkin joined us to discuss, among other things, the current political climate. By now, we are all familiar with his request that Collin College be "Switzerland," remaining neutral and steering clear of controversy. Across the country, faculty have become targets of individuals who disagree with what is taught in our classrooms or shared in professional and personal spaces. These efforts often mischaracterize our work, intimidate faculty, and erode trust in higher education. We as faculty need to keep our focus on students and the quality of the education we provide while navigating increased scrutiny and pressure from outside groups. At the FC meeting, Dr. Matkin pledged to support faculty who are maligned by misrepresentation. He also encouraged us to foster safe, respectful environments and not to operate in fear, reminding us that Collin College maintains strong security measures. At the same time, he emphasized vigilance, focus on learning objectives, and the avoidance of personal agendas in the classroom.

I echoed that message in my remarks to Faculty Council: we must be mindful that our words, whether in class, online, or in meetings, can be taken out of context and used against us. Awareness is not self-censorship; it is simply recognizing the climate in which we work. But I also emphasized that we don't have to face these challenges alone. We need to support each other. We need to bring our teaching community together and extend its sphere. We need to set for ourselves clear expectations and define professional standards together. But we can only do this by engaging with each other, comparing notes, and developing a consensus on how best to navigate these troubled times.

As such, I ask that faculty converse with your colleagues more frequently. Sit and visit with them. Build communities. I think by renewing our commitment to each other as colleagues, we can chart a path forward together that avoids controversy and discomfort. Let not these trying times distract us from the great task before us. Let us focus on ensuring our students receive the education they deserve so they can, hopefully, go make this world a better place.

– MH

# Support the Sunshine Fund today...

The Sunshine Fund, maintained by Faculty Council's Committee for the Common Good (CCG), is one way we come together to support one another. These funds allow Faculty Council to send flowers or other gestures of sympathy during times of loss, provide encouragement during hardship, and celebrate colleagues with mementos at retirement. The Sunshine Fund depends entirely on contributions from faculty, and right now the balance is running low. Without additional support, these meaningful efforts will not be possible. Every donation, large or small, makes a difference.

If you would like to contribute, please reach out to a member of the Common Good Committee, your Faculty Council representative, or any member of the FC Executive Committee. Contact information for all members is available on the [\*\*Faculty Council website\*\*](#).

To let the CCG know when a colleague could use some “sunshine,” please use the [\*\*Condolence & Support Request Form\*\*](#), which is also available via the QR code on the Common Good Committee page and the Faculty Council homepage.

## Have news?

This newsletter is created by faculty, for faculty, with the goal of keeping everyone “in the know.” If you have a topic or question you’d like to see included, please send it [\*\*fc@collin.edu\*\*](mailto:fc@collin.edu). To recognize a colleague with an accolade or shout-out, email our FC Secretary [\*\*Krystal Humphreys\*\*](#). Please limit each submission to one recognition per colleague so we can feature as many faculty as possible.

We’ll also highlight upcoming student support opportunities. While this list won’t be comprehensive (see the Master Calendar for that), it will spotlight key campus-wide events. To have an event or accolade featured, please email [\*\*Krystal Humphreys\*\*](#) by the third week of the month. Newsletters are typically shared during the third or fourth week of each month.

# Cougar Book Bundle...

Last week, Dr. Abe Johnson (SVPCO) emailed all faculty to announce the launch of the Cougar Book Bundle, a new course materials model that lowers costs for students and ensures they have all recommended textbook materials before the first day of class. Instead of purchasing items separately, students will pay a flat fee of \$23 per credit hour. Physical books will be packaged through the bookstore, and digital materials will be delivered directly via Canvas.

Students may opt out of the program each semester, but if they do so, they are responsible for purchasing their own materials. On average, students who participate save 35 to 50 percent compared to traditional textbook costs.

Faculty retain full academic freedom to select course materials in any format, from any publisher. But faculty are encouraged to adopt a digital version of their preferred book, when possible, while still giving students the option to request a print copy. Many students prefer digital materials and adopting them as the default helps ensure resources are available on the first day of class through the Cougar Book Bundle system.

The only requirement is that adoptions are submitted by specific deadlines.

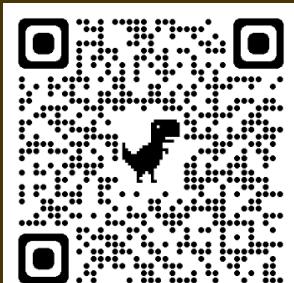
For Spring 2026 please submit your course material adoptions through the [\*\*Adoptions and Insights Platform\*\*](#) by **Wednesday, October 1, 2025**, so materials are ready for students on day one. For questions or concerns about book adoptions, please contact Jessica Flores at [\*\*JEFlores@collin.edu\*\*](mailto:JEFlores@collin.edu) or your campus bookstore manager

For more details, refer to the [\*\*Cougar Book Bundle FAQ\*\*](#) on what is included or excluded, opt-out rules, and accessibility. If you have any general questions or concerns about Cougar Book Bundle, please email [\*\*fc@collin.edu\*\*](mailto:fc@collin.edu).

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# Important updates for faculty

## Honor Council Updates

The Honor Council is beginning to take shape! The Honor Council's role is to adjudicate repeat cases of scholastic dishonesty, ensuring fairness, consistency, and due process for all students while upholding academic integrity. Currently, twenty-eight faculty have committed to serve on the Honor Council for the 2025/2026 academic year. The structure includes one Honor Council Chairperson, six faculty Panel Chairs, and nineteen Honor Council Representatives. For each case, the Chairperson will assign a Panel Chair to lead a hearing with 1-2 additional faculty members, a Dean of Students staff member, and, when possible, a student representative. This structure allows for up to six panels to operate at the same time, helping to manage the workload more efficiently.

Additionally, a work group of faculty, administrators, DOS leadership, and the SGA President are currently drafting a procedures manual to guide the Honor Council's business. This manual is expected by the end of the semester.

Thank you to all faculty members and DOS staff involved in the establishment of the Honor Council!

If you are interested in joining the Honor Council as a representative or, if eligible, as a future Panel Chair, please email [\*\*fc@collin.edu\*\*](mailto:fc@collin.edu).

## Study Grant Applications Open Now

Applications are currently being accepted for the Faculty Study Grant program, which provides up to five full-time faculty members the opportunity to undertake intensive studying and/or research relevant to their own or related disciplines for intellectual and pedagogical enrichment. The stipend for the Faculty Study Grant Award will be \$4,000.

The program process, deadlines, and application are available on the [\*\*Faculty Study Grant webpage\*\*](#). Applications are due Friday, October 24, 2025, so don't wait. Apply today!

## Teaching Assignment Preference (TAP)

Last spring, faculty were asked to use a Microsoft Office form to indicate their scheduling preferences. Based on that experience and the feedback we received, a group of faculty, administrators, and DOSI team members have been developing a new online platform called Teaching Assignment Preference, or TAP.

This new system will be more comprehensive than the Microsoft Office form and will allow faculty to share a wider range of preferences regarding the days and times they prefer to teach during the academic year. To be clear, TAP is designed to capture faculty preferences only and is not an assignment tool.

Each semester, faculty will be asked to submit their preferences for future terms using this new system. For Spring/Wintermester 2026, preferences have already been collected through the Microsoft Office form. Starting Fall 2026, TAP will be utilized to collect preferences.

The new TAP system will be piloted by Associate Deans and Directors this academic year as part of district-wide scheduling. Below are the dates when TAP will be available for faculty to input their preferences:

- Fall 2026 preferences - first week of November through November 25, 2025
- Spring/Wintermester 2027 preferences - April 1-22, 2026
- Maymester/Summer 2027 preferences - September 1-22, 2026

Additionally, a survey will be distributed to faculty later this academic year to gather feedback on how to improve the process before broader implementation.

## This Year's Faculty Council Meeting Schedule

DAY	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
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

# Did you know..."

## Scholars Active in Learning (SAIL)

Did you know Collin College offers an engaging lifelong learning program for adults 55 and up called SAIL (Scholars Active in Learning)? This program is near and dear to my heart. Before stepping into my current role as Faculty Council President, I regularly taught a SAIL course each academic year (sometimes one each semester) on topics connected to my research, interests, and favorite eras of American history. For me, SAIL was not only an excellent audience for teasing out new lecture topics or refining current ones, but also a deeply rewarding and meaningful experience of service and community outreach.

I encourage faculty to consider teaching a SAIL course. Not only is the program flexible to faculty's individual preferences (i.e. number of sessions, days and times of course, modality, etc.) but it is a unique opportunity to connect with an eager, engaged audience, share your expertise in a supportive setting, and expand your teaching beyond the traditional classroom. If you have a passion project, a lecture idea you've always wanted to try, or just enjoy engaging with lifelong learners, SAIL is the perfect venue. Not to mention, teaching a SAIL course is considered college service and is accepted as a Faculty Ranks criteria.

SAIL course proposals for Spring 2026 are currently being accepted through the end of October. For those interested, please contact SAIL Director, Sherry Scamardo at [\*\*sscamardo@collin.edu\*\*](mailto:sscamardo@collin.edu).

## Book-in-Common

Did you know Book-in-Common is celebrating 20 years?! Classes across the district are reading Hua Hsu's Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir, Stay True. This memoir is both a poignant coming-of-age story and a powerful meditation on friendship and grief. Set in the 1990s, the author reflects on college life, zine culture, and mixtapes—highlighting how personal and cultural memory intertwine. The interdisciplinary Teaching Guide will be available in October. Hua Hsu visits Collin College on March 4 and 5, 2026. If interested in using the book in your classroom, please email [\*\*Ryan Fletcher\*\*](mailto:Ryan.Fletcher@collin.edu) or [\*\*David Boozer\*\*](mailto:David.Boozer@collin.edu).

## Have a question for Human Resources?

Faculty and staff can use a single email address, [\*\*HR@Collin.edu\*\*](mailto:HR@Collin.edu), for any Human Resources questions. Messages sent to this address go to the entire HR team, and the person best able to answer will respond. If you prefer, you can send a general question (such as 401K, vacation time, or other benefits) without including personal details. This “catchall” HR address is intended to work much like the Helpdesk or DOS contact lines, making it easier for employees to get quick answers and support.

## Need to submit a grade change?

The grade change form is no longer available. Until a new form is created, faculty should email [\*\*Registrar@collin.edu\*\*](mailto:Registrar@collin.edu) to request a grade change. Be sure to include the following in your email:

- Course and section (ex: ENGL 1301-022)
- Student name and CWID
- Current/posted grade (with numeric score if dual credit)
- New grade (with numeric score if dual credit)
- Optional: brief explanation (ex: calculation error, data entry error, DOS case resolution)

The Registrar's Office typically processes grade changes the same day.

## Need to Give a Make-up Exam?

Submitting exams through RegisterBlast makes the process easier for both faculty and students. Exams can be uploaded any time, even when the Testing Center is closed, and students can schedule their appointments as soon as the exam is submitted. Faculty no longer need to make multiple trips to the Testing Center and will receive email confirmations when the exam is submitted, updated, and completed.

When submitting exams, keep in mind:

- Include each student's CWID.
- Match exam length to what was given in class unless the student has an ACCESS accommodation.
- Submit ACCESS students separately with the correct time per their accommodation.
- Provide clear instructions (scantrons, calculators, blue books, etc.), since the Testing Center does not supply these items.
- Add special notes (passwords, breaks, notes allowed, etc.) as needed.
- Allow at least two days for students to test.
- To add students after submission, email your campus's testing center.
- Do not include answer keys with exams.

# 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.

# Adjunct Faculty Corner

## A Bright Start to the Year!

The fall semester is officially underway, and we're so glad to be back together as a community of educators! Our first Adjunct Faculty Committee meeting of the year was a wonderful start, filled with thoughtful discussion and collaboration. We've already begun shaping a few exciting initiatives that we believe will make a meaningful impact, and we look forward to sharing updates with you as they develop.

In the meantime, we hope your semester has been both smooth and inspiring. The energy, dedication, and creativity that adjunct faculty bring to the classroom each day truly shape the student experience, and we are deeply grateful for all that you do!

We're excited about the path ahead and the opportunities this year will bring. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to strengthen and celebrate our adjunct faculty community. Stay tuned for more updates as our work continues. We look forward to sharing progress with you throughout the year!

## Faculty Accolades...

- **Professor Jim Mergerson (Developmental Math, Plano)** recently had a proposal accepted to present on “Engaging Students from Day One: Replacing the Syllabus Lecture with Active Learning” for the 2025 CASP (College of Academic Support Programs) conference.
- **Dr. Bilal Abu Bakr (Cybersecurity, Frisco)** has been awarded a \$10,000 NITIC Mini-Grant for his proposal, “Securing Autonomous AI-to-AI Communication through a Zero-Trust Framework.” His project was recognized for its vision, creativity, and potential to advance IT Technician Level Education. The grant will support the project over the contract period of September 1, 2025, through August 31, 2026, with outcomes contributing to the NITIC clearinghouse and broader educational impact. In addition, Dr. Abu Bakr earned a Core Objective Assessment Team (COAT) Certificate of Participation for Summer 2025, further demonstrating his commitment to academic excellence and student success.
- **Lishan “Teddy” Desta (Economics, McKinney)** had his citizenship oath ceremony on Thursday, August 28th. Congratulations!
- **Professor Betsy Brody (Political Science, iCollin)** was invited by the Dallas Police Department to present “Digging In Dallas,” an oral history project, at the Dallas College Mountainview Campus in August. Additionally, the City of Dallas Arts and Culture office included Professor Brody in their “Dallas Reunited” initiative which celebrates the rich history, vibrant cultures, and powerful stories of Dallas communities. Professor Brody was part of a video which accompanies the Almost Free traveling mural exhibition that honors the legacy of Freedman Towns, communities built by formerly enslaved Black Americans across the United States.
- **Professor Sukanya Subramanian (Biology, iCollin)** was accepted into the Community Leadership Program: Leadership Frisco.

## Upcoming Events...

**Spotlight Lunch and Learn Series:** Wednesdays, 12:15-12:45 p.m. September 10-November 19. Each week will highlight a different presenter and topic related to teaching. Speakers will spotlight a strategy, class activity, conference takeaway, resource, teaching or technology tool, or other ideas during the first half of the session. The second half of the session is open for conversation, discussion, and questions. Reach out to [TrainingAndDevelopment@Collin.edu](mailto:TrainingAndDevelopment@Collin.edu) with any questions you may have.

**Rockin' the Ridge at the Frisco Campus** is on Wednesday, October 1, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This annual event is a great opportunity for faculty and staff to connect with students outside the classroom. The day will feature food, music, mechanical bull-riding, fitness challenges, and plenty of other exciting activities. Volunteers are needed to help make the event a success. If you are interested, please sign up for one or more shifts [here](#).

**The Dignity Initiative** is offering multiple workshops this month that are open to the public.

- Creating Safe Spaces, Inside and Out Part One, October 9, 2025, from 3:00-4:30 pm at the Plano Campus Art Gallery
- Mental Health is Not a Weakness! October 9, 2025, from 5:30-6:30 pm at the Celina Campus, Room 110
- 

**The Auteur Film Series** will present: *Dark City* (1998) at the Frisco Campus Conference Center, October 14, 2025 at 7:00 pm.