

THE REPORT



THE REPORT

2025-2026

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we reflect on another outstanding year at Itawamba Community College, I am grateful for the students, employees, alumni, donors, trustees and community, state and federal partners whose support, dedication and investment continue to make our success possible.

This year's theme, *The Power of One: The Big Picture Begins With You*, served as a reminder that every achievement begins with an individual commitment to excellence. The many accomplishments, accolades and celebrations featured throughout this report are a testament to the collective impact of people working together to advance our mission and serve our communities.

From student success and workforce development to national recognition and campus growth, ICC continues to build upon a strong tradition while preparing for the future. As we celebrate the past year, we also look ahead with excitement and confidence in the opportunities that lie before us.

Thank you for your continued support of Itawamba Community College. Together, we are making a lasting difference in the lives of our students and the communities we serve.


JAY ALLEN, PH.D.





ICC EARNS FIRST-EVER BELLWETHER AWARD FINALIST RECOGNITION

Itawamba Community College was named one of 30 finalists nationwide to compete for the prestigious Bellwether Award at the 32nd Annual Community College Futures Assembly (CCFA). The recognition marked the first time ICC had been selected as a finalist for the nationally recognized honor, which celebrates outstanding and innovative programs in U.S. community colleges.

The Bellwether Award highlights excellence across three categories:

- Instructional Programs and Services – recognizing programs that foster student success and teaching innovation.
- Workforce Development – highlighting strategic partnerships between colleges and workforce entities that address regional labor market needs.
- Planning, Governance and Finance – celebrating creative approaches to planning, management and resource optimization.

“We broke last year’s record with a total of 114 submissions from 91 community colleges across 30 states,” said **Dr. Rose Martinez**, director of the Bellwether College Consortium. “The large number of competitive entries reflects the impactful work community colleges are doing nationwide—and the academic and economic boost they provide to their local communities.”

A Bellwether finalist represented a community college program that earned one of the highest scores in the

first round of the national competition and was invited to present in the final round in San Antonio, TX in February.

“The Bellwether Award is one of the most distinguished recognitions in higher education, and being selected as a finalist for our work in student success speaks volumes about the innovative spirit and commitment to excellence that define Itawamba Community College,” said **Dr. Jay Allen**, ICC President.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION PLACES ICC LEADERSHIP IN SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Jay Allen, president of Itawamba Community College, has been recognized as one of the top five community college CEOs in the nation by the American Association of Community Colleges.

Allen was honored during the AACC annual convention, held April 11-14 in Seattle, where he was named a finalist for the organization’s CEO of the Year award. The recognition places him among the nation’s most distinguished community college leaders.

The AACC Awards of Excellence program recognizes exemplary leaders who demonstrate outstanding commitment to student success, workforce development and community impact. Finalists for CEO of the Year are selected from institutions across the country based on leadership, innovation and measurable outcomes.

Allen has served as president of ICC since 2017 and remains actively involved in statewide and national initiatives focused on advancing community college education.



“This recognition is a reflection of the collective efforts of our entire ICC family,” Allen said. “I am grateful to serve alongside a dedicated team of faculty, staff and administrators who remain committed to putting students first and advancing our mission each day.”



ICC NAMED IN ASPEN TOP 200

The Aspen Institute named Itawamba Community College as one of the 200 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's premier recognition of high achievement and performance among two-year colleges. The 200 colleges were selected based on their student outcomes data, including retention, completion, transfer and bachelor's attainment rates. Started in 2010, this was the ninth cycle of the Aspen Prize.

ICC was one of only four Mississippi community colleges selected that year, and the smallest of the four, to be named eligible to compete for this prestigious recognition.

"Being named among the top 200 community colleges in the nation by the Aspen Institute is both an honor and a testament to the dedication of our faculty, staff and students," said **Dr. Jay Allen**, president of Itawamba Community College. "This recognition affirms the excellence of our work and affords us the opportunity to compete for the Aspen Prize, one of the highest distinctions in higher education. It's a reflection of who we are at ICC: a community committed to student success and continuous improvement."

ICC was selected as a top community college in 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2025 and as a top 25 semifinalist in 2023.

Together, the 200 colleges represented the breadth and diversity of the community college sector. They were located in urban, rural and suburban areas across the country and served anywhere from a few hundred students to tens of thousands. Some of these colleges focused primarily on workforce programs, while others focused on transfer and bachelor's attainment or a combination of the two.

"The Aspen Prize rewards colleges that achieve the kind of outcomes that actually matter to students—completing college degree programs that, in turn, lead to lifelong success," said **Josh Wyner**, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence

Program. "Aspen Prize winners offer a powerful message: Community colleges can deliver the kind of life-changing education that makes the American Dream real."

Community colleges educate nearly six million students nationwide, yet community college student outcomes fall short in both the rate at which students graduate and the percentage of students who achieve success after graduation. The Aspen Prize process identifies and celebrates community colleges that demonstrate that achieving stronger outcomes is possible, providing a roadmap of effective practices and strategies for other colleges to follow.

The 200 eligible colleges were invited to submit an application and participate in a rigorous review process that culminated in the naming of the Aspen Prize winner in spring 2027. Throughout the review process, colleges were assessed based on (1) student outcomes data, ranging from student transfer and completion rates to employment and wages after graduation and (2) whether they had engaged in scaled practices that led to high and improving student outcomes.

"Among these 200 colleges are some really special places that deliver strong and improving outcomes for students across the board," Wyner said. "Our job over the coming 20 months is to gather a lot more data and work with a deep bench of field experts to assess which of these 200 stand out so we can not only honor them with a monetary award, but drive attention to the most effective field practices that other colleges can replicate."

This marked the first time since the inception of the Aspen Prize that 200 colleges were eligible to apply, an increase from 150. In addition to publicly available federal data, more than 600 colleges authorized the use of National Student Clearinghouse data on their institution's degree completion, transfer and bachelor's attainment rates for full- and part-time students.





DR. ANNA MORGAN 2026 MISSISSIPPI HUMANITIES TEACHER AWARD NOMINEE

Itawamba Community College has selected **Dr. Anna Morgan**, piano instructor, as its nominee for the 2026 Mississippi Humanities Teacher Award. Morgan was recognized at the Mississippi Humanities Council Public Humanities Awards Ceremony on March 20, 2026, in Jackson. The annual event honors exceptional faculty in traditional humanities disciplines across Mississippi's colleges and universities.

Morgan, a Mantachie resident, joined ICC in 2017. Before returning to Mississippi, she taught PreK through fifth grade elementary music in Tennessee, laying an early foundation for young students' musical development.

She holds a doctorate in music education from William Carey University and a master's degree in piano

performance from Middle Tennessee State University.

In addition to her teaching role, Morgan serves as pianist for the ICC Choir, supporting student musicians and contributing to the College's longstanding choral tradition. She also remains active in the regional arts community as manager of the North Mississippi Youth Orchestra and pianist and organist at Baldwin First Baptist Church. Her service beyond the arts includes previous work as a board member for the Tupelo-Lee Humane Society.

Morgan was featured alongside honorees from each of Mississippi's higher education institutions during the March ceremony.

MASHA LANEY 2026 WILLIAM WINTER SCHOLAR



Masha Laney of Nettleton, a history instructor at Itawamba Community College, has been selected as the college's William Winter Scholar for 2026.

Laney was among educators from across the state recognized at the 37th Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration on February 26-28, 2026.

Laney has served as a history instructor at ICC since fall 2022, bringing nearly three decades of classroom experience to the college. Prior to joining ICC, she taught at Amory High School for 24 years, where she earned a reputation for academic rigor, student engagement and exceptional outcomes in history instruction.

Her professional recognitions include National Board Certification in social studies from 2006-2016 and again from 2016-2026, multiple selections as Amory High School Teacher of the Year and Amory School District Teacher of the Year, and designation as Mississippi's

Outstanding Teacher of American History by the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 2019, her students achieved the highest proficiency scores on the U.S. History state assessment.

In addition to her classroom work, Laney has contributed at the state level, serving on the Mississippi Teacher Council from 2017-2022 and collaborating with the Mississippi Department of Education on the development of social studies standards.

Laney earned her associate degree from Itawamba Community College, a Bachelor of Science in secondary education with an emphasis in social studies from Mississippi State University in 1998 and a Master of Arts in history from Mississippi State University in 2005.

She and her husband, Neal, have two children and reside in Nettleton.



GORE NAMED MACCC SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR



Itawamba Community College Sports Information Director and Director of Media Relations **Adam Gore** was named the 2026 Sports Information Director of the Year by the Mississippi Association of Community Colleges Conference (MACCC).

The award recognizes outstanding leadership and service in athletic communications among Mississippi's community colleges.

Gore joined ICC in 2010 and has led the college's athletic communications efforts since 2014. During his career, he has earned more than 170 state and national communications awards, including recognition as the Two-Year Sports Information Directors of America (2ySIDA) Sports Information Director of the Month in March 2026.

Gore is a graduate of Itawamba Community College and the University of West Alabama and resides in Fulton.

RESPIRATORY CARE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Itawamba Community College's Respiratory Care Technology program has been recognized for the second consecutive year by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care with the Distinguished RRT Credentialing Success Award, a national honor that highlights programs demonstrating exceptional student achievement and outcomes.

The award is part of CoARC's ongoing effort to emphasize the Registered Respiratory Therapist credential as a benchmark of professional excellence. From an accreditation and outcomes perspective, the organization views RRT credential attainment as a key indicator of a program's ability to prepare graduates for success and encourage them to reach their highest professional aspirations.

Programs selected for this recognition must meet rigorous, objective criteria based on data reported in the 2025 Annual Report of Current Status. To qualify, programs must have at least

three years of outcomes data, maintain full accreditation without the need for a progress report, achieve an RRT credentialing success rate of 90% or higher and meet or exceed established benchmarks for high cut scores on the Therapist Multiple-Choice exam and student retention.

"This recognition speaks to the consistency, quality and commitment of our faculty and students within the Respiratory Care Technology program," said **Dr. Jay Allen**, ICC president. "To be recognized nationally two years in a row reflects the strength of our instruction, the dedication of our students and the critical role this program plays in preparing highly skilled healthcare professionals for our region and beyond."

The program is led by **Adam Denton**, program director, and **Victoria Gray**, clinical coordinator, whose leadership and guidance continue to support student achievement and program excellence.



SKILLS THAT PAY

AWARDS \$1,000 BONUSES TO 12 NORTHEAST MS STUDENTS

Twelve students from across Northeast Mississippi were recognized at Itawamba Community College as recipients of the Skills That Pay “Signing Bonus,” earning \$1,000 each as they take the next step into high-demand skilled careers.

The regional signing ceremony celebrated students who have committed to entering the workforce in fields such as welding, construction, utilities, and manufacturing. The event was hosted by Skills That Pay, a campaign of the Skills Foundation of Mississippi, and sponsored by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

“These students are choosing careers that are essential to Mississippi’s future,” said **Clifton Carroll**, Executive Director of the Skills Foundation of Mississippi. “They’re stepping into opportunities

that offer stability, strong wages, and long-term growth, and we’re proud to support them as they take that next step.”

“TVA is proud to support the Skills That Pay campaign because it recognizes students who are choosing career paths that strengthen our communities and grow our region’s economy,” said **Amy Tate**, TVA’s Southwest Region Executive. “We know that when students pursue skilled careers, it benefits not only their families, but also the local businesses and industries that rely on this talent pipeline.”

Students applied for the signing bonus through a video submission process, sharing their career goals and how the funds would help them begin their journey. The program aims to highlight the value of skilled trades and encourage more students

to consider these pathways.

“At Itawamba Community College, we see every day the value of hands-on training and career-focused education,” said **Dr. Jay Allen**, President of Itawamba Community College. “These students are making smart decisions that will serve them well for years to come.”

The campaign also included a Content Creator Challenge, encouraging students to use social media to showcase skilled career pathways. **Matthew Davis** received a \$2,000 cash award for his winning submission.

Mississippi continues to face a shortage of workers in key industries, including advanced manufacturing, energy, transportation and logistics, healthcare, information technology, and construction. These careers offer competitive salaries without requiring a four-year degree.



A man with grey hair, wearing a blue suit, is shown from the chest up, turned slightly to his right but looking back over his left shoulder. He has a warm, smiling expression. The background is dark and out of focus, showing silhouettes of people and what appears to be a stage or podium area. The lighting is soft, highlighting the man's face and suit.

**EVERY
GRADUATION
CAP HOLDS
A STORY.**

**NOAH NEWTON, CLASS OF 2026
HSE GRADUATE, PICTURED
WITH DR. JAY ALLEN.**





EVERY GRADUATION CAP HOLDS A STORY

As commencement season arrived, campuses across the country filled with familiar traditions: caps and gowns, proud families and friends, applause and celebration. Those moments certainly mattered, but behind every graduate crossing the stage was something even more meaningful: a story.

Some journeys were straightforward. Others were marked by obstacles, setbacks, second chances and perseverance that often went unseen.

For 19-year-old **Noah Newton** of Lee County, this graduation season represented something he once was not sure would ever be possible.

Noah was unable to graduate high school through the traditional path. Like many students facing life challenges, the road forward felt uncertain. But through the Bloom Academy at Itawamba Community College, Noah found a new opportunity, a support system and a place where success could look different while still being deeply meaningful.

After completing his first year in the program, Noah earned his High School Equivalency diploma through ICC. For Noah and his family, the accomplishment was more than a credential. It was proof that progress did not always follow the same timeline or pathway for every student.

Programs like Bloom Academy were designed to support neurodivergent students by helping them build academic, social and workforce skills while also creating a sense of belonging and independence. For students

like Noah, it became more than a program. It became a bridge to confidence and possibility.

And during graduation season, stories like his deserved just as much applause.

It was easy to view commencement strictly through the lens of degrees, honors and accolades, but the true spirit of graduation was found in resilience. It was found in the student who worked nights to support a family while attending class during the day. It was found in the parent returning to school after years away from the classroom. It was found in the first-generation college student stepping into unfamiliar territory with determination and hope.

And it was found in students like Noah, whose success may not have mirrored someone else's journey but was every bit as important.

At ICC, graduation season served as a reminder that achievement was not one-size-fits-all. Milestones looked different for different people, and success should never have been measured solely by how quickly or traditionally someone reached a goal. What mattered was the courage to keep moving forward.

As graduates walked across the stage this spring at all levels of education, the applause celebrated academic accomplishments, but it also honored perseverance, growth and the quiet determination that carried each student to that moment.

Because every cap in the crowd held a story. And every story deserved to be celebrated.

CLASS OF 2026

Itawamba Community College celebrated the achievements, perseverance and promise of the Class of 2026 during Commencement exercises Friday, May 15, at the Davis Event Center on the Fulton Campus.

Addressing roughly 900 graduates during the ceremonies, ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen** reminded students that “the big picture begins with you,” echoing the college’s yearlong theme, “The Power of One,” while encouraging graduates to recognize the impact one person can make through service, leadership and determination.

“The road to this moment has looked different for every graduate seated before us today,” Allen said. “Some balanced jobs and family responsibilities, some overcame obstacles that once seemed impossible, and others discovered new purpose and direction along the way. Yet each story represents the power of perseverance and the value of opportunity.”

ICC awarded Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Science degrees to graduates representing communities across Northeast Mississippi and beyond.



More than 100 area students participated in the 2026 Adult Education graduation ceremony at Itawamba Community College, May 14, at the Davis Event Center on the Fulton Campus.

VIRTUAL CONSTRUCTION LAB



VIRTUAL CONSTRUCTION LAB OPENS WITH EUTAW CONSTRUCTION DONATION

Itawamba Community College celebrated the ribbon cutting of its new Virtual Construction Lab, located in the John Crubaugh Education Building on the Fulton Campus, with local construction partners, industry leaders, students and ICC leadership in attendance on Tuesday, November 11.

The innovative lab will serve students in the Construction Management Technology program, offering immersive, hands-on learning experiences that mirror real-world conditions even when weather or other factors limit access to traditional jobsites. The space features a Caterpillar Excavation Simulator, generously donated by Eutaw Construction, along with Oculus virtual reality headsets and Interplay learning software that provide cutting-edge training opportunities for students.

"This new lab is a prime example of how ICC continues to advance workforce education in ways that meet both

student and industry needs," said ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen**. "By combining traditional skills with emerging technology, we're preparing students for the future of construction management and helping meet the demand for skilled professionals across our region."

Scott Emison, program director for Construction Management Technology, said the addition of the Virtual Construction Lab marks a significant step forward for the program. "The ability to practice excavation and equipment operation in a virtual environment adds tremendous value to our students' training," Emison said. "They gain experience in a safe, controlled setting that reinforces classroom concepts and builds confidence before stepping onto a jobsite."

The Construction Management Technology program at ICC is a selective-admission program, with applications accepted each year from November 1 through May 1 for the following fall semester.

UPSKILL MID-SOUTH OFFERS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FOUR SHORT-TERM TRAINING PROGRAMS

Students who enroll in four short-term training programs at Itawamba Community College could have the opportunity for financial assistance through Upskill Mid-South, which is a collaboration with the Three Rivers Planning and Development District and the University of Memphis.

The programs include Electrician Assistant, Welding and Cutting, Commercial Truck Driving and Google IT Support, according to **Josh Gammill**, director of Continuing Education and Career Services.

“Upskill Mid-South introduced the initiative to provide targeted training programs aimed at supporting unemployed and underemployed individuals across a 42-county tristate region,” Gammill noted. The program is designed to address critical workforce needs.

Among the Mississippi counties include Alcorn, Benton, DeSoto, Lafayette, Lee, Marshall, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Tunica and Union.

“The Itawamba Community College, the University of Memphis and UpSkill Mid-South Partnership offers accelerated job training and education programs to people in the community as well as help finding a job,” said **Diane Pabich**, director, University of Memphis, Upskill Mid-South program. “Our programs help individuals develop and refine skills that are highly valued in today’s workplace. All are completely sponsored.”

To be eligible for Upskill Mid-South training sponsorship, individuals must be 18 years of age or older, U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen with authorization to work in the U.S. and comply with the Military Selective Service Act registration provisions. They must be either unemployed or underemployed (working fewer than 30 hours a week or pay rate less than \$20 per hour), a legal permanent resident and currently living in the 42-county tri-state service area. In order to document the eligibility information, participants will be required to upload documentation to demonstrate eligibility for sponsorship before beginning a skills training program, Gammill said. Included are age and identification verification, region verification (proof of residency in counties covered) and unemployment or underemployment verification.





METALLICA SCHOLARS INITIATIVE WORKFORCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

All Within My Hands, the nonprofit, philanthropic organization created by the members and management of Metallica, recently announced its Year 7 of its Metallica Scholars Initiative with its largest grant to date, totaling approximately \$3 million. Itawamba Community College was among those whose grants were renewed for the third time. MSI now has a presence in 75 colleges across all 50 United States and the territory of Guam and is expected to reach approximately 10,000 students. Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is the state's other representative.

"It is a tremendous honor for Itawamba Community College to be selected as one of the continuing recipients of the prestigious All Within My Hands grant, which will significantly impact our career education programs and the lives of those who will receive scholarships to pursue a pathway and their best start," said ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen**. "It is another indication of the success of the College, reinforcement of the mission that students and their success are our top priority. We express our heartfelt gratitude to AWMH for their continuing investment in the lives of students, many of them with limited resources, to provide better lives and better futures."

"I could not be any prouder of our Metallica Scholars," said **Robert Trujillo**, Metallica band member. "We know that our country needs millions of skilled tradespeople, and it warms my heart to know that our Foundation's efforts are making a positive impact and putting hard-working people on the path to careers in the trades. Whether it's a school visit or a meet and greet before a show, there is no better feeling than meeting our Metallica Scholars in person and hearing their stories of grit and determination firsthand, along with their pride and commitment. It is truly inspiring. To think we started with a few schools and a couple hundred students, and we're now in 75 schools nationwide, about to reach 10,000 students. It's just incredible."

Launched in 2019 by All Within My Hands in partnership with the American Association of Community Colleges, MSI began with 10 colleges focused primarily on Manufacturing programs. The workforce initiative has since expanded to offer opportunities in diverse fields for students interested in gaining the skills and training necessary to establish meaningful careers that provide family-sustaining wages.

To evaluate the program's efficacy, the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy

independently researched and quantified MSI's impact on the skilled trades and the return on investment earlier this year. The research into all Year 6 community colleges, covering more than 350 fields of study at these institutions, measuring the cost of completion and anticipated salaries post-graduation. The key observation is that the ROI – the ratio of a program's cost to anticipated median wage – across all MSI-supported programs is a very high and cost-efficient 8.3X. This means that on average, MSI graduates can expect to earn 8.3X the upfront cost of their program during their first year in the workforce.

"2025 is a watershed moment for the Metallica Scholars initiative," said **Peter Delgrosso**, Executive Director, All Within My Hands. "With the addition of 15 new schools this fall and USC's independent research articulating the strength of our results, we are eager to tackle the quantifiable shortage of skilled labor our nation faces. If we extrapolate these ROI numbers over a career, it demonstrates how effective and profitable learning a trade can be for the individual, and how society as a whole also benefits from community college graduates. This insight will profoundly affect MSI going forward, impacting how people view careers in the trades, encouraging more corporate and individual sponsorship and driving its advancement across the country. We're thrilled to incorporate these findings into this year's planning and expansion."

It takes a village to achieve these results, including the continued support from many long-time corporate

partners of AWMH, notably workwear manufacturers Carhartt, Wolverine and CNH, a global leader in agricultural and construction equipment. The aforementioned along with the extended family of Metallica Family of Fans have staunchly supported AWMH from day one and worked tirelessly to advance its mission.

ONLINE GOOGLE CAREER CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE THROUGH CONTINUING EDUCATION

Itawamba Community College is expanding its workforce training portfolio by launching a suite of online career certificate programs through its Continuing Education division, offered in partnership with Google.

ICC now offers the following Google Career Certificates: Google IT Support, Google Cybersecurity Certificate, Google Data Analytics, Google Project Management, Google UX Design and Google Digital Marketing and E-Commerce.

"These certificates are a practical on-ramp into high-demand careers," said Josh Gammill, director of continuing education and career services at ICC. "They allow individuals to gain marketable skills quickly, on their own schedule, and without the time or financial commitment of a traditional degree program."

The certificate opportunities are designed to provide job-ready training in high-demand fields in under six months, with no prior experience required. They are widely recognized by employers and have gained popularity for their flexibility, affordability and relevance in today's workforce.

All programs are 100 percent online and self-paced, making them accessible to working adults, career switchers, and individuals seeking to upskill or reskill. The curriculum is developed by Google experts and emphasizes practical, hands-on experience aligned with real-world job expectations in fast-growing industries.





ICC CONNECTED COMMUNITY WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES THROUGH SMALL BUSINESS SHOWCASE SERIES

From fresh sourdough to handcrafted floral arrangements and locally made mead, Itawamba Community College brought hands-on experiences directly to the community through its Small Business Showcase series.

Designed to connect consumers, small business owners and community members, the Small Business Showcase series provided opportunities to learn new skills, explore locally made products and build lasting relationships. The initiative also reinforced ICC's commitment to strengthening its role as a community partner across the region.

The first showcase featured Blue Magnolia Bread Company on April 8 in Saltillo. Participants learned the art of sourdough bread making, including how to fold bread, prepare dough and create their own loaf to take home.

The second showcase was held April 27 in Tupelo and featured a collaborative experience with Queen's Reward and 7 Acres Flowers. Attendees enjoyed a drink or slushie, learned the process of making mead and created a small, honey-inspired floral arrangement.

"These showcases are about more than highlighting local businesses," said **Maggie Caldwell**, marketing specialist at ICC. "They gave people the opportunity to connect with business owners, learn something new and experience firsthand the value of supporting entrepreneurs in the communities we serve."

The series reflected ICC's ongoing commitment to supporting local businesses while providing meaningful, engaging experiences for the communities across its service area.



SIGNING ON F



FOR SUCCESS



For students in Itawamba Community College's Construction Management Technology program, Signing Day represented more than a ceremony. It marked the beginning of careers, university transfer opportunities and long-awaited next steps into an industry helping shape communities across the region.

Held prior to commencement exercises on May 15, the Construction Management Technology Signing Day celebrated graduating sophomores as they announced employment commitments, transfer plans and continued pathways into the construction workforce. The event was hosted in partnership with North MS FORGE, a regional network of construction industry employers dedicated to strengthening workforce development and promoting careers within the skilled trades.

Industry leaders, faculty members and family supporters gathered as students signed letters of intent and were recognized for the opportunities awaiting them after graduation.

Special presentations during the ceremony were provided by **Angie Davis**, **Melinda Lowe** and **Scott Emison**.



"The construction industry continues to offer tremendous opportunities for skilled and dedicated individuals, and this ceremony was a meaningful way to recognize the accomplishments and future plans of our students," Emison said.

"We appreciate the support of our industry partners and organizations like FORGE that continue investing in workforce development and helping students connect directly with career pathways."



Students recognized during the event represented a wide range of career goals and opportunities. Several committed directly to employers throughout the region, while others announced plans to continue their education at four-year universities. Others simply affirmed their commitment to entering and advancing within the construction industry workforce.

Participating students included **Jorge Avina**, Avina Construction family business; Austin Blake, MasterCraft Builders; **Balin Bishop**, Century Construction and online transfer to the University of Southern Mississippi; **Eli Burciaga**, Worsham Brothers; **Aubrey Cox**, Cook and Son Construction; **Colby Craig**, FLCrane and transfer to Mississippi State University; **Hayden Denley**, Liberty Electric; **Lawson Glover**, commitment to the construction industry; **John Hanna**, Hanna Construction; Reece Kentner, Mississippi Pavement Solutions; **Daniel Lira**, Brasfield & Gorrie; **Danesia McGaughy**, Worsham Brothers and transfer to Mississippi University for Women; **Joseph Marroquin**, Brasfield & Gorrie and transfer to Mississippi State University; Andrew Mayo, commitment to the construction industry; **Paul Miller**, transfer to Mississippi State University; **Rylee Oswalt**, commitment to the construction industry; **Shyam Patel**, transfer to Mississippi State University; **Tyler Peters**, McCarty King Construction; **Jamal Pulliam**, Mississippi Department of Transportation Aberdeen Office; **Cayden Rogers**, ICM Construction; **Mary Carrson "MC" Sandlin**, Lee's Precast Concrete; **Alex Tovar**, Brasfield & Gorrie; and **Jasmine Wigginton**, commitment to the construction industry.



The event also served as a visible reminder of the growing demand for skilled professionals across the construction and trades industries. Through partnerships with employers and organizations like FORGE, ICC continues working to connect students with meaningful workforce opportunities while helping meet regional labor needs.

For many students, the ceremony symbolized the transition from classroom projects and hands-on training to careers already waiting just beyond graduation day.



ICC CDL PROGRAM OFFERS FAST TRACK FOR TRUCKING CAREERS

A career on the open road can begin in just four weeks through Itawamba Community College's Commercial Truck Driving Program, which continues to train Class A commercial drivers and will soon expand to include public Class B and Hazmat Endorsement courses.

The Commercial Truck Driving Program prepares individuals to operate Class A trucks and other commercial vehicles through hands-on, industry-focused instruction. Training covers operating diesel-powered vehicles, loading and unloading cargo, reporting delays or accidents, verifying loads against shipping records and maintaining required documentation. Students gain a comprehensive understanding of log books, trip records and motor carrier safety regulations set by the United States Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

The Class A Commercial Driver's License course is a four-week program totaling 160 hours. Classes meet Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The cost is \$3,200, and financial assistance is available for qualified applicants.

To further support workforce needs across the region, ICC will soon offer a public Class B CDL course for \$1,000, along with a Hazmat Endorsement course for \$300.





MEETING STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

At Itawamba Community College, recruitment is more than handing students a brochure and hoping they enroll. Today's students want experiences. They want connection. They want to see themselves on campus before they ever fill out an application.

That is why ICC continues to invest in specialized programming designed to meet students where they are while encouraging them to visit one of ICC's locations.

"Once students visit one of our locations, they begin to see themselves here," said **Michael Holloway**, director of Recruitment and Orientation at ICC. "The goal is not just to recruit students. It's to create experiences that

help them feel welcomed, valued and connected before they ever attend their first class."

Events such as the Emerging Scholars Luncheon, Fall Preview Day and Spring Preview Day give prospective students and their families opportunities to connect directly with ICC faculty, staff, current students and college leadership. These events introduce students to academic pathways, scholarships, student life, athletics, fine arts and career programs in a way that feels personal and approachable.

ICC has also expanded targeted programming with academic divisions to connect students with specific

career interests. Through partnerships with the college's health sciences team, events such as Code Blue and Code Red allow students to explore high-demand healthcare fields through hands-on demonstrations, emergency response simulations and direct interaction with instructors.

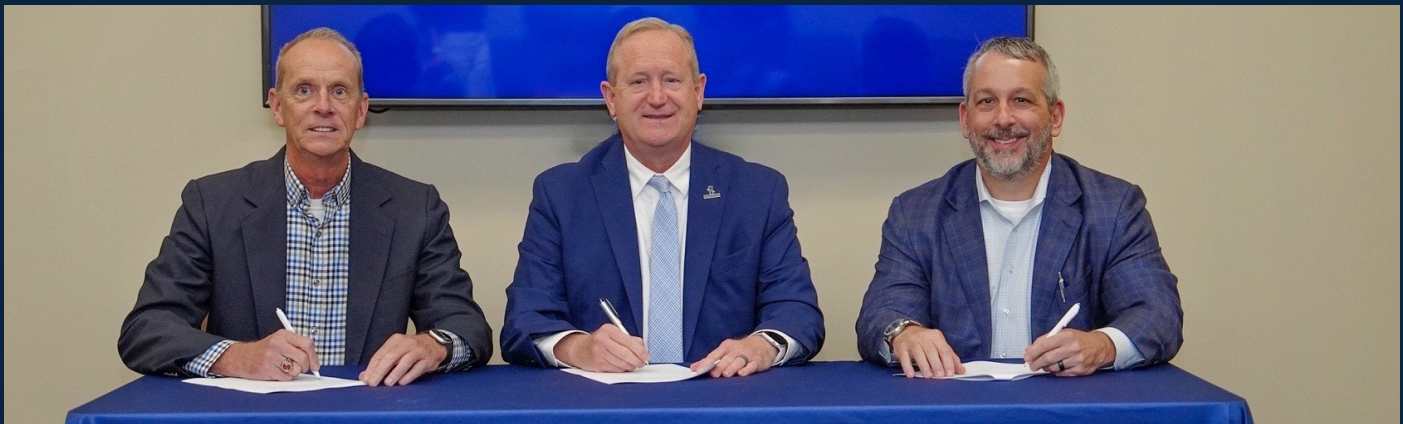
"These events allow students to experience programs instead of just hearing about them," Holloway said. "That hands-on exposure matters because many students may not fully understand what a career field looks like until they physically see it in action."

ICC is also strengthening these efforts through EAB Navigate360, a platform that helps the college better manage student communication, recruitment outreach and engagement. By using data-informed messaging and coordinated campaigns, ICC can better understand where prospective students are in the enrollment process and provide timely, personalized communication without overwhelming them.

The strategy reflects a broader philosophy that recruitment is not one-size-fits-all. Some students connect through honors opportunities. Others are drawn to career training, healthcare, athletics, music or campus life. ICC's approach is to create multiple entry points that help students discover where they belong. The college has also continued to modernize spaces that support those first impressions.

For ICC leaders, the investment in recruitment programming and technology is ultimately about access and opportunity. Not every student arrives at college with the same confidence or certainty about the future. Sometimes, one visit, one conversation or one meaningful experience is what helps a student realize college is possible.

As higher education continues to evolve, ICC's approach remains grounded in a simple but powerful idea: if students can see themselves at ICC, they are far more likely to believe in what their future can become.



ICC C.O.R.E. PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Itawamba Community College has realigned its C.O.R.E. (Candidates on Rapid Entry) Program and announced its first formal partnerships with the Tupelo Police Department and the Lee County Sheriff's Office following an Insight Luncheon held April 2 at the ICC Belden Center.

Originally established in 2021 in partnership with the Mississippi Highway Patrol, the C.O.R.E. Program has been restructured to strengthen the pipeline of qualified candidates for public safety careers.

The event brought together local and state agencies to learn more about the updated program, which is housed within ICC's criminal justice offerings and provides students with a structured pathway into law enforcement through academic coursework, skills development and direct engagement with agencies. Through the partnership, agencies will provide hands-on instruction and mentorship opportunities, while ICC will equip graduates with comprehensive portfolios documenting skills, credentials and career readiness.

"This is workforce development at its best, aligning education with real-world need," said ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen**. "Our goal is simple: to build a stronger, more prepared workforce pipeline that directly benefits the communities we serve."



ICC AND THE W SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Itawamba Community College and Mississippi University for Women signed a memorandum of understanding to provide educational opportunities for students pursuing careers in specific career education programs with a desire to eventually earn a bachelor's degree. The agreement establishes a pathway by which students earning an appropriate Associate of Applied Science degree from ICC may complete a baccalaureate degree at The W.

According to the agreement, both institutions will work together to enroll students in degree completion programs for ICC's career education graduates. Both colleges will advise and encourage ICC students, alumni and constituents to promote these programs to each institution's stakeholders and throughout the local community college district.

The pathways will provide for students in certain degree areas to transfer up to 90 credit hours to The W after graduating from ICC. Included are computer networking and cybersecurity, computer programming, business and marketing management, hospitality management, paralegal and construction management.

According to **Dylan Baldwin**, dean of Career Education at ICC, "This partnership with Mississippi University for Women creates a remarkable pathway for our students. By completing three years of coursework at ICC before transferring, they can save significantly on the cost of

a bachelor's degree while still receiving a high-quality education. It's an incredible opportunity that makes higher education more accessible, affordable and achievable for our career education students."

"For decades, ICC and The W have shared a strong partnership, and today's agreement is a natural extension of that longstanding relationship. Through this pathway, students in career and technical education programs can earn both an AAS and an AA from ICC in just three years, then complete a BAS at The W in only one additional year without sacrificing their technical credits," said **Dr. Scott Tollison**, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at The W. "Beyond that, they can finish an MBA with us in just one more year. It's a 3+1+1 model that accelerates opportunity while emphasizing quality."

"This agreement will allow our students to now have an opportunity to transfer their credits and work toward a bachelor's degree at MUW in a discipline in which they are truly passionate," said ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen**. "This degree opportunity recognizes the value of career education degrees offered at Mississippi's community colleges and the impact they are making on Mississippi's workforce. This allows our previous, current and future career education majors a natural progression for post-ICC educational endeavors while transferring academic credits."



ICC RANKS AMONG LEADERS IN STATE ENROLLMENT INCREASE

Itawamba Community College ranked among the state leaders in enrollment after recording a 2 percent increase in headcount and a 3.5 percent increase in full-time enrollment from fall 2024 to fall 2025, according to the Mississippi Community College Board. The college also posted a 14 percent enrollment increase since fall 2021, marking four consecutive years of growth, and remained the fifth-largest community college in Mississippi with more than 5,300 credit students enrolled.

College leaders attributed the continued growth to expanded student housing, enhanced student engagement opportunities and the transition to the Schools of model, which grouped similar majors

into cohorts to strengthen student connections and success. Even with the addition of Magnolia Hall and the reopening of Sheffield and Monroe Halls, residence hall demand continued to exceed available space.

“This very exciting news demonstrates a collaborative effort between all areas of the college to allow for continued enrollment growth,” **Dr. Jay Allen** said. “The increase in the number of students that ICC is serving is significant because we have additional opportunities to provide a solid educational foundation and the best start for those in our five-county district and beyond.”

Allen also highlighted ICC’s affordability, national recognition and strong student outcomes, noting

that transfer students consistently earned bachelor's degrees at one of the highest rates in Mississippi while maintaining strong academic performance after transferring to the state's universities. He credited the college's faculty, staff, Board of Trustees and enrollment teams for making the continued growth possible.

"We are always excited to hear that more students have chosen to become members of our ICC family, and an

enrollment increase is tremendous news," said **Michael Holloway**, director of Recruitment and Orientation. "Students tell me every day that ICC is something special and a place that they quickly call home once they start here. I truly believe that ICC provides the best instruction in academic transfer, career education and health sciences programs, including those that are online."



TVA DONATES \$30,000 FOR TUPELO CAMPUS STEM LOUNGE

Tennessee Valley Authority has presented \$30,000 to Itawamba Community College to continue to advance STEM-related programming. The funds will be used to establish a dedicated STEM Lounge on ICC's Tupelo Campus, creating a collaborative space for learning, innovation and engagement.

"TVA's generous support helps us build a dynamic environment where students can explore, collaborate and grow in STEM disciplines," said **Dr. Jay Allen**, ICC President. "This lounge will become a central hub for hands-on projects, peer mentoring and faculty-student interaction, strengthening our mission to prepare students for high-demand careers."

Since 2018, TVA has donated more than \$69,000 to ICC for various projects in coordination with Tombigbee Electric Power Association. These investments reflect TVA's ongoing commitment to supporting regional education and workforce readiness.

"TVA is proud to invest in institutions like ICC that are preparing students for the jobs of tomorrow," said **Amy Tate**, Senior State Director, Government and Community Relations at TVA. "This project highlights our commitment to ensuring local students in higher education have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed."



ICC WELCOMES FIRST CHICK-FIL-A IN FULTON IN NEW CONNECTION CENTER



Itawamba Community College marked a major milestone on February 2, 2026 with the grand opening of the Connection Center on the Fulton Campus, a new student- and community-focused facility that includes a Chick-fil-A, the first location in Fulton and the first Chick-fil-A along Interstate 22 when entering Mississippi from Alabama.

More than 150 people attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony, which featured remarks from Michael Taylor of PryorMorrow Architects, **Steven Staub** of JESCO Construction and Paul Butler of Sodexo.

The Connection Center includes approximately 10,000 square feet of flexible, technology-equipped meeting space that can be configured as one large venue or divided into two smaller spaces. The remaining 3,000 square feet houses Chick-fil-A, operated through Sodexo, ICC's food service provider. The restaurant is open to students, employees and the public and operates Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. It is closed on Sundays.

ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen** said the opening represents another significant step in the College's ongoing growth and community engagement. "This facility is exactly what we envisioned, a place that connects our students, our employees and our communities," Allen said. "Chick-fil-A adds a premier new dining option that many in our area have long requested."

Construction of the Connection Center was supported through a combination of local and state funds along with a more than \$1.2 million investment by Sodexo. JESCO Construction, based in Fulton and Itawamba County, served as the project contractor with PryorMorrow Architects providing architectural design.

Allen noted that the Connection Center is designed to serve the College well into the future. "This building will be a staple of the ICC experience for years to come," he said. "It strengthens our campus, enhances our partnerships and reinforces our role as a gathering place for this region."

MACCC TITLE RETURNS TO ICC AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE



After more than a decade, the men's MACCC championship returned to Itawamba Community College.

ICC defeated Mississippi Delta, 84-67, and officially clinched the 2025-26 MACCC championship and the No. 1 seed in the NJCAA Region 23 Tournament when Pearl River defeated Jones. The title marked the program's first conference championship since the 2013-14 season and the first for head coach **Darrian Wilson**.

The Indians earned a first-round bye in the regional tournament before defeating Southern-Shreveport, 82-66, and Hinds, 83-68, to advance to the Region 23 championship game for the first time since the 2009-10 season. The Indians came up just short in the title game as Jones earned a 102-96 overtime victory, despite 36 points from **Damarion Winston**.

Winston was named MACCC Men's Basketball Player of the Year and earned All-Conference, All-Region and NJCAA All-American status while being selected to the NJCAA All-Star game. Wilson was named MACCC Men's Basketball Coach of the Year.

The Indians finished 24-7 overall and 13-1 in conference play.



ICC AND DELTA STATE FORMALIZE TRANSFER PATHWAYS AND STUDENT SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP

Itawamba Community College and Delta State University signed two memorandums of understanding expanding academic pathways and strengthening support for students transitioning between the institutions.

ICC President **Jay Allen** and DSU President **Daniel Ennis** formalized the agreements during an official campus visit.

One agreement creates a structured transfer pathway for ICC students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education at DSU. The partnership aligns key coursework and outlines advising and transfer expectations for students who meet admission requirements.

The second agreement establishes a transition partnership for ICC's Bloom Connect Program, supporting neurodivergent students as they transfer to DSU. The collaboration includes coordinated campus visits, designated points of contact and the sharing of transition documentation with student consent to ensure continuity of support services.

"These agreements reflect our commitment to creating clear, intentional pathways for students while ensuring they are supported every step of the way," Allen said.

Ennis said the partnership builds on a shared focus on student success. "By aligning our programs and services, we are providing more opportunities for students to continue their education and reach their goals," Ennis said.

Both agreements take effect immediately and may continue for up to five years, reinforcing collaboration between the two institutions and expanding opportunities for students across the region.



SENIOR COLLEGE



ICC's Senior College is a unique program intended for, but not limited to, individuals living in retirement who have a passion for lifelong learning. The program offers an excellent opportunity for participants to remain engaged in community activities. Each semester provides a chance to explore diverse topics designed to attract a wide range of interests—while having fun along the way. Senior College meets monthly and is offered for only \$30 per semester, with the first session free to encourage accessibility and participation. The Senior College Program represents a strategic and creative public relations partnership between our educational institution, key community stakeholders and local business leaders. Designed to strengthen community engagement while reinforcing lifelong learning, this initiative brings together institutional leadership, local organizations and community advocates in a unified campaign to expand access, visibility and participation.



FIVE ALUMNI HONORED DURING HOMECOMING

Itawamba Community College honored its 2025 Alumnus of the Year, Athletic Hall of Fame inductees, Distinguished Service and Young Alumnus of the Year award recipients during Homecoming activities, Oct. 9, at the Fulton Campus.

They include **Mitch Waycaster** of Tupelo, Alumnus of the Year; **Mike Sullivan** of Spanish Fort, Ala. and **Jameika Hoskins** of Cula Vista,

Calif., Athletic Hall of Fame; **Randy Kelley** of Tupelo, Distinguished Service; and **Phillip Faulkner** of Amory, Young Alumnus of the Year.

Mitch Waycaster, who is executive vice president of both Renasant Corporation and Renasant Bank, attended Itawamba Junior College in Fulton from fall 1976 to May 1978, where he commuted daily while working after graduating from Shannon High School. He attended Mississippi State University and earned the bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Mississippi. He is a graduate of the University of Delaware Stonier Graduate School of Banking and the National Compliance School at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Colorado as well as the Mid-South School of Banking at the University of Memphis and the Tennessee Commercial Lending School at Vanderbilt University. Waycaster currently serves as a member of multiple boards, including North Mississippi Health Services, Natchez Trace

Boy Scouts of America, University of Mississippi Banking and Finance Advisory, Japan-American Society of Mississippi, Mississippi Economic Council and the Board of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Among his honors are Julius G. Berry Award from the United Way of Northeast Mississippi, Distinguished Finance Executive Award from the Ole Miss Business School, and Honorary Consul of Japan in Tupelo. In addition, Waycaster serves on the board and is retiring past chairman of the Mississippi Bankers Association. He and his wife, Christy, have raised three children and have three grandchildren. They are active members of First Baptist Church.

Mike Sullivan, the head coach of the ICC men's soccer team for 20 seasons and the program's all-time winningest coach, retired in 2022. He completed his career at ICC with a record of 215-208-32. He also served as women's head coach for eight seasons (2007-14). Sullivan led the men's soccer program to five North Division titles (2011, 2013,



Jill Waycaster West joined us to accept the award on behalf of her father, **Mitch Waycaster**.



Mike Sullivan, Athletic Hall of Fame, with ICC's men's soccer team and Head Coach, **Caryl Vogel**.

2017, 2018, 2021) and made 10 playoff appearances. He helped guide the Lady Indians to their only North Division championship (2007) while qualifying for the playoffs five times. He coached the MACJC All-Star game in 2015. During Sullivan's time at ICC, 200 of his players earned conference and national academic honors, more than 50 named All-State and 20 All Region, three NJCAA Region 23 Players of the Year and one NJCAA All-American. His 2013 and 2014 squads earned NJCAA Men's Soccer Academic Team of the Year honors. Additional highlights of his career include the first person to play and coach in the Mississippi High School Athletic Association Soccer All-Star game and was a player for the Mississippi State club soccer team. He earned the bachelor's degree in teaching and coaching/education and master's degree in sports administration, both from Mississippi State University. He and his wife, Tammy, have four children, Shannon Gillentine and Brittany Sullivan and Hayden and Ty Wilkerson.

During her sophomore season at ICC where she attended from 2010-12, **Jameika Hoskins**, a native of Aberdeen, led the Lady Indians to a 26-3 record and runner-up in the NJCAA Region 23 tournament. Ranked 21st in the nation in rebounding, she signed with Southeastern Louisiana University and later went on to earn her bachelor's degree. Highlights of her career include NJCAA All-American; led ICC to North Division and MACJC State championships; averaged 14.9 points and 10.3 rebounds; ranked first in single-season rebounds, eighth in single-season points and sixth in single-season blocks; first-team All-State and All-Region and played in the MACJC All-Star game. Hoskins' ICC jersey was hung in the NJCAA Ring of Honor in the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tenn. during 2012-13. Currently stationed in the U.S. Navy in San Diego, Calif., she is a member of the All-Navy basketball team. Her additional honors include All-Navy Basketball Team silver

medalist (2016); Team USA, Armed Forces, silver medalist; 2017 All-Navy gold medalist; 2019 All-Navy silver medalist; 2022/2023 All-Navy bronze; and 2023 all-tournament team and Team USA Armed Forces selection. She and her spouse, Tara Ingram, have two children, Rameek and T'ari Ingram.

Randy Kelley became the director of Three Rivers Planning & Development District in 1976, which operates 10 corporations serving its eight-county base as well as multiple other companies including the PUL Alliance and 27-county Workforce Mississippi Partnership. He relocated from Haiti, Mo. to attend Ole Miss, where he earned the bachelor's degree in banking and finance and the master's degree in urban and regional planning. He

began his career as the regional planner for the Tennessee Valley Regional Housing Authority and for the Northeast Planning and Development District. Among his leadership roles include president of the Mississippi Planning and Development Association for multiple terms, the National Association of Development Organization and the Development District Association of Appalachia. His honors are the National J. Roy Fogle Award for Outstanding Executive Director, ARC Federal Co-chairman award, U.S. Small Business Administration Advocate of the Year award, National Association of Development Organizations President's award, selected as one of North America's Top 50 Economic Developers by Consultant



Jameika Hoskins, Athletic Hall of Fame, with her family.



Randy Kelley, Distinguished Service Award

Connect, the first recipient of the Regional Rehabilitation Center's Red Raspberry Humanitarian award, Small Business Administration Lifetime Achievement award, inducted into the University of Mississippi Alumni Hall of Fame and the Mississippi Development Authority Marsha N. Hamilton Spirit award. He and his wife, Bonnie, have two daughters, Treny Emison and Tish Kelley.

Phillip Faulkner earned the Associate of Arts degree in 2011 from ICC, where he participated in intramural basketball. After graduation, he began his professional career in the marine industry, serving as vice president of NauticStar Boats for six years. In 2019, he established Avid Boats, where he continues to serve as owner and CEO. In six years, Avid Boats has grown into one of the top 10 aluminum fishing boat manufacturers in the nation. Outside of work, Faulkner spends time hunting and fishing, supporting Mississippi State athletics and being with his family. He and his wife, the former Carly Ramsey, who also attended ICC, are the parents of a son, Major (5), and daughter, Storie (1). They are members of the Christian Chapel Church of Christ.



Phillip Faulkner, Young Alumnus of the Year



DR. IRA LINDSAY KINARD AND RACHEL STEELE COMPLETE MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Itawamba Community College's **Dr. Ira Lindsay Kinard** of Houston and **Rachel Steele** of Fulton were recognized at Mississippi State University after completing the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy as members of the 2026 class.

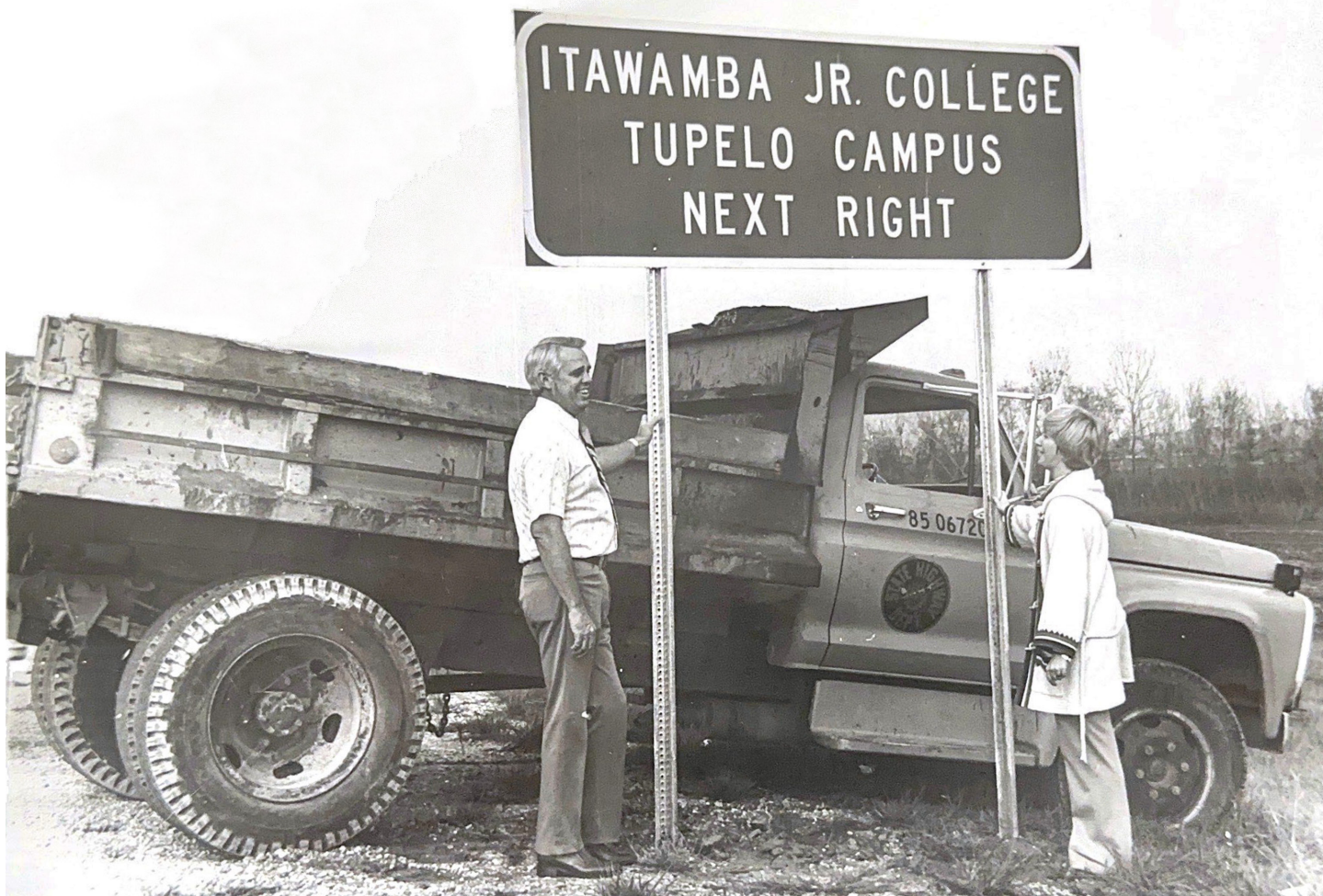
Dr. Kinard, mathematics instructor, and **Steele**, director of admissions and registrar, represented ICC in the yearlong leadership development program alongside participants from community colleges and universities across the state.

The MCCLA was developed in the spring of 2009 to address the projected need for upper-level leaders within Mississippi's community college system. The program is organized around the practical needs of future community college leaders and focuses specifically

on leadership within Mississippi's community college environment.

"Ira Lindsay and Rachel are outstanding representatives of ICC and exemplify the leadership, dedication and student-first mindset that continue to move our institution forward," said **Dr. Jay Allen**, ICC president. "Their successful completion of this respected program reflects their commitment to personal growth, professional excellence and the future of community college education in Mississippi."

Supported by Mississippi State University, the annual MCCLA program provides participants with opportunities to strengthen leadership skills, build professional relationships and gain a broader understanding of issues impacting higher education across the state.



A LEGACY THAT HELPED TELL ICC'S STORY

REMEMBERING DONNA THOMAS

For decades, the voice of Itawamba Community College was often shaped quietly behind the scenes by someone who never sought the spotlight for herself.

Whether drafting news releases late into the evening, helping prepare remarks for a special event, coordinating media coverage or simply making sure the right story was told the right way, **Donna Thomas** devoted her career to preserving and sharing the story of ICC.

Following her passing earlier this year, the ICC family continues to reflect not only on Donna's professional contributions, but also on the relationships, care and consistency she brought to the institution she loved deeply.

Donna served ICC faithfully through years of growth, change and transformation. During her time with the college, she helped communicate countless milestones: commencement ceremonies, campus expansions, student achievements, athletic accomplishments, retirements, anniversaries and moments of challenge



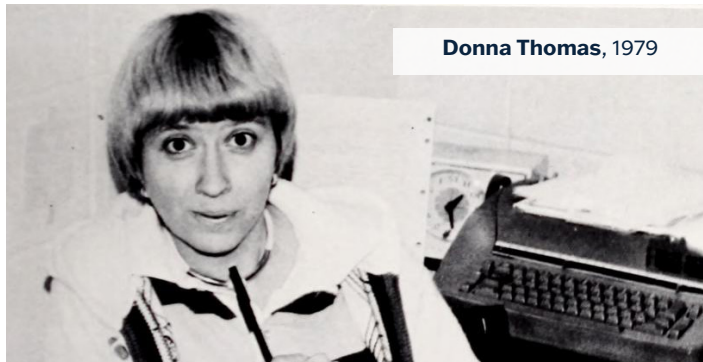
Donna Thomas explains the steps of production to yearbook staff, 1990.



that required calm leadership and thoughtful communication.

Yet those who worked alongside her knew her impact extended far beyond headlines and publications.

She was a trusted colleague, a steady presence and an institutional historian who understood the importance of people and relationships. Donna carried a deep appreciation for ICC's mission and took pride in helping students, employees and communities feel connected to the college.



Donna Thomas, 1979



Donna Thomas working on the *Chieftan*, 1990.

"Donna cared deeply about Itawamba Community College and the people who make this institution special," ICC Chief of Staff **Tyler Camp** said. "She believed our stories mattered because our people mattered. Her work helped preserve the history and spirit of ICC for future generations, and her influence will continue to be felt across this college for many years to come."

Throughout her career, Donna became known for her professionalism, attention to detail and willingness to help others. New employees often found encouragement and guidance in her office, while longtime coworkers knew they could rely on her knowledge and steady demeanor.

Her fingerprints remain across the institution in ways both visible and unseen.

From archived publications and photographs to cherished memories shared by coworkers and friends, Donna helped document generations of ICC history. More importantly, she helped shape how the college celebrated its people and communicated its purpose.

In many ways, Donna represented the heart of community college work: serving others without needing recognition in return.

As ICC continues moving forward, her legacy remains woven into the fabric of the institution she faithfully served.

The stories she helped tell will continue for generations to come. So will the impact she made on the people fortunate enough to know her.



Donna Thomas receiving the Golden Employee Award for more than 50 years of service to ICC, 2023.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS TEAM EARNS MORE THAN 20 STATEWIDE AWARDS

The Community Relations team at Itawamba Community College earned more than 20 awards during the annual conference of the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi held in Senatobia.

The conference brings together marketing and communications professionals representing Mississippi community colleges, public universities and private universities to recognize excellence in higher education communications, marketing, media relations, graphic design, photography and digital content.

In addition to multiple category awards, ICC received a Grand Award in electronic media for a documentary produced, filmed and edited by **CJ Adams**, director of marketing.

“The recognition reflects the creativity, dedication and teamwork of a group that works every day to tell the story of ICC and the people we serve,” said **Dr. Jay Allen**. “Our Community Relations team continues to elevate the college through strategic communication, innovative storytelling and meaningful engagement across our campuses and communities.”

Members of the ICC Community Relations team include **CJ Adams**, director of marketing; **Cal Brown**, athletic creative content coordinator; **Leah Caldwell**, strategic office specialist; **Maggie Caldwell**, marketing specialist; **Adam Gore**, director of sports information and media relations; **Morgan Henry**, graphic design specialist; **Raphael Henry**, video operations specialist; **Leah Pennington**, creative content specialist; and **Margaret Todd**, communications management specialist. The team operates under the Office of the President and **Tyler Camp**, chief of staff.

CAMPUS FORESTRY EFFORTS EARN NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Itawamba Community College has been named a 2026 Tree Campus Higher Education institution by the Arbor Day Foundation in recognition of its commitment to campus tree care and environmental stewardship.

The national designation honors colleges and universities that meet five core standards, including maintaining a campus tree advisory committee, implementing a tree care plan, investing dedicated funds in tree management, observing Arbor Day and engaging students in service-learning projects focused on trees.

The effort was spearheaded by **Emily Loden Jones**, Forestry Technology Program director, with assistance from **John Wayne Harris**, director of Physical Plant Operations; **Jerry Hodge**, Fulton Campus grounds supervisor; the Office of the President; **Clay Hinds**, forestry technology student; and **Michael Crab**, outreach officer for the Mississippi Forestry Commission.





HALL OF FAME HONOREES

Itawamba Community College announced the students selected for induction into the 2026 ICC Hall of Fame. The honor recognizes students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, academic achievement and service during their time at the college.

The 2026 ICC Hall of Fame honorees are **Cherish Brown, Bella Cochran, Anna Kate Crenshaw, Aleena Gregory, Anna Lauren Glasson, Brooklyn Lane, Karry Linley, Landon Long, Sydney Palmer, Molly Sansing, Shelby Sullivan** and **Hallie Tenhet**.

Cherish Brown, a biomedical sciences major from Tupelo, has been actively involved in student leadership at ICC, serving as Tupelo Student Government Association president and participating in Phi Theta Kappa, Sigma Kappa Delta and the ICC Honors College.

Bella Cochran, a political science major from Tupelo, has distinguished herself academically and in leadership roles at ICC, serving as Phi Theta Kappa president and earning placement on the Dean's List and President's List. She is a student at Tupelo High School completing her degree at ICC through Middle College.

Anna Kate Crenshaw, a communication major from Smithville, has been deeply involved in campus engagement at ICC. Her service includes editor of The

Mirror yearbook, Orientation Leader, Indian Delegation member, Fashion Tribe executive and active involvement in Phi Theta Kappa, Baptist Student Union and the Honors College.

Aleena Gregory, a business concentration-general studies major from Smithville, is a Phi Theta Kappa member, Presidential Scholarship recipient and Instructional Support Tutor. She has also been named to the President's List and received the Economics Departmental Award.

Anna Lauren Glasson, an elementary education major from New Albany, served multiple terms in Indian Delegation, including as vice president, and was selected as sophomore homecoming maid during the 2025-26 academic year.

Brooklyn Lane, a nursing major from Pontotoc, has earned multiple academic honors at ICC, including membership in Phi Theta Kappa, Alpha Delta Nu Nursing Honor Society and recognition on the President's List and Dean's List.

Karry Linley, a communication major from Aberdeen, has been active in Indian Delegation, Student Government Association and the Student Activities Board. She is a Phi Theta Kappa member, Instructional

Support Tutor and President's List scholar.

Landon Long, an aviation flight operations major from Pontotoc, has served in Indian Delegation, Student Government Association and Orientation Leaders. He is also a Phi Theta Kappa officer and has been involved with several campus organizations.

Sydney Palmer, a pre-occupational therapy major from Guntown, has been involved in Student Government Association leadership, Phi Theta Kappa, the ICC Honors College and Student Activities Board. She has also served as an Instructional Support English composition tutor.

Molly Sansing, a nursing major from Pontotoc, has been named to the President's List and is active in Phi Theta Kappa, Alpha Delta Nu and Baptist Student Union leadership, including serving as a praise band leader.

Shelby Sullivan, a business administration major from Hamilton, has served as ICC Student Body President, Indian Delegation vice president and Trading Post president. She is also a Phi Theta Kappa officer and IMPACT Scholarship recipient.

Hallie Tenhet, a general studies major from Tupelo, is active in Phi Theta Kappa and Sigma Kappa Delta and has been recognized on the President's List and Dean's List. She also serves as an English and Bloom Program tutor.

Selection to the ICC Hall of Fame represents one of the highest honors bestowed upon students at Itawamba Community College, recognizing those who exemplify leadership, scholarship and service across all ICC locations.



HOLLY GRAY AND CHRIS STEVENSON

COMPLETE
MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE
POLICY FELLOWS PROGRAM

Holly Gray of Fulton, Library director, and **Chris Stevenson** of Fulton, dean of Academic Instruction, have completed the Mississippi Community College Policy Fellows Program after being selected to represent Itawamba Community College in the 10-month long professional development opportunity.

Gray earned the associate's degree from ICC, the bachelor's degree in education from the University of Mississippi, the master's degree in instructional technology from Mississippi State University, and the master's degree in library and information science from the University of Alabama. She began her career at ICC in 2016 as librarian and currently serves as library director. Her honors include the ICC Leadership Development Institute, the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy and service on the MAGNOLIA Advisory Board. Gray is a member of Fulton United Methodist Church and serves on the ICC Wesley Foundation Board. She and her husband, Jim, reside in Fulton and are the parents of two children.

Stevenson, who began his career at ICC in 2010, previously served as history instructor and chair of the Social Science Division before being named dean of academic instruction. He earned the associate's degree from ICC, the bachelor's degree in secondary education/social studies from Mississippi State University and the master's degree in higher education/student personnel from the University of Mississippi. Stevenson's honors include William Winter Scholar and the 2018 John and Beth Cleveland Faculty Member of the Year award. He attends The Orchard in Fulton. Stevenson and his wife, Jessi, are the parents of two children.

The Mississippi Community College Policy Fellows Program, which began in 2012, has more than 130 alumni. It is sponsored by the Mississippi Community College Board in partnership with Washington, D.C.-based AdvocacyBuild. The program focuses on leadership, networking, policy and advocacy.

TEN EMPLOYEES SELECTED FOR PRESTIGIOUS LDI



Itawamba Community College announced the participants selected for the 2026 Leadership Development Institute, a one-year professional development program designed to cultivate leadership from within the ICC family.

Participants for the 2026 cohort include **Scott Emison** of Pontotoc, **Ethan Foster** of Hamilton, **Melanie Francis** of Saltillo, **Shannon Gillentine** of Fulton, **Chloe Hester** of Guntown, **Lori Little** of Fulton, **Collin Minga** of Fulton, **Riley Morgan** of Guntown, **Megan Pearson** of Belden and **Ryan Todd** of Fulton.

Emison serves as director and instructor of the Construction Management Technology program and joined ICC in 2022. Prior to his time at the College, he worked as an architectural project manager and held leadership positions in the private sector, including administrator at ArchitectureSouth and vice president of operations for The Retail Coach. A graduate of ICC, Emison earned a Bachelor of Architecture from Mississippi State University and is currently pursuing a Master of Education in higher education at Delta State University. He and his wife, Mallory, have three children.

Francis has served ICC since 2007 and currently holds the position of eLearning instructional coordinator. Her tenure includes roles as workforce information systems specialist and lead online instructor in computer technology and English. A graduate of ICC, she earned a bachelor's degree from Mississippi University for Women

and a master's degree in instructional technology from Mississippi State University. She was named a William Winter Scholar in 2018. She and her husband, Rob, have two children.

Foster joined ICC in 2023 and serves as a recruiter, representing his alma mater throughout the region. A graduate of ICC, he earned a bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University and a master's degree from Arkansas State University. Foster previously worked in broadcast journalism and earned multiple honors from the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters and the Society of Professional Journalists. He and his wife, Katelee, were married in 2025.

Gillentine serves as director of business services and began her employment at ICC in 2022. An ICC alumna, she earned her associate degree from ICC before completing both a bachelor's and master's degree in accountancy at Mississippi State University. Prior to joining the College, she worked in accounting roles, including lead staff accountant. Gillentine and her husband, Justin, have one child and expecting a second.

Hester joined ICC in 2023 and serves as a recruiter. A graduate of the community college system, she earned her associates degree from Northeast Mississippi Community College and a bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University and is currently pursuing a master's degree at the University of West Alabama. While at Mississippi State, she was recognized as a Stephen D.

Lee Scholar. Hester and her husband, Josh, welcomed their first child in 2024.

Little has been a member of the ICC family since 2008 and currently serves as director of advising. Her service to the College includes roles as an instructor in health information technology, grant coordinator and adviser. A graduate of ICC, she holds a Bachelor of Science in health informatics from the University of Mississippi Medical Center and a Master of Social Work from Union University. Little has served in numerous professional leadership roles at the state level and has been recognized as an educator and mentor of the year by professional associations. She and her husband, David, have two children.

Minga serves as assistant athletic director for compliance and joined ICC in 2022. As an ICC graduate, he earned his associate degree from the College before completing a bachelor's degree at the University of Mississippi and a master's degree from Arkansas State University. While at ICC, Minga played collegiate baseball. In his current role, he supports student-athlete success and institutional compliance within ICC Athletics. He and his wife, Carli, have two children.

Pearson has served as librarian on the Tupelo Campus since joining ICC in 2019. An ICC alumna, she earned her associate degree from the College before completing a Bachelor of Science in educational psychology from Mississippi State University. In addition to her work in the library, she serves as adviser for the Upsilon Sigma Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, supporting student scholarship and leadership development. She and her husband, Cole, have two children.

Morgan joined ICC in 2023 and serves as student experience coordinator and instructional projects manager. An ICC alumna, he earned his associate degree from the College before completing both a bachelor's degree and a Master of Public Health from the University of Mississippi. Morgan has contributed to published research addressing public health challenges in Mississippi and has presented his work at professional conferences. He is currently pursuing additional graduate study in nutrition.

Todd, a resident of Fulton, began his service to ICC in 2010 as assistant director of bands and now serves as director of bands and Fine Arts division chair. An ICC alumnus, he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in music education from the University of Mississippi and has completed work toward a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Louisiana State University. Todd has been recognized as the 2007 A.E. McLain Outstanding Young Band Director, served as 2011 past president of the Northeast Mississippi Band Directors Association, was named the 2013 Mississippi Humanities Teacher of the Year and served as 2024 past president of the Delta Chapter of Phi Beta Mu. He has one child.

The LDI, coordinated by the Office of the President, includes selected coursework, customized monthly workshops and seminars, professional presentations

and interactive sessions. The program focuses on strengthening leadership capacity while exploring the College's impact on local communities, the state and the broader region. Participants are selected by ICC Cabinet following a competitive application process.

"The Leadership Development Institute is about investing in our own," according to **Tyler Camp**, chief of staff. "We believe the future of ICC is strongest when it is built by people who understand our culture, our students and our mission. This program challenges participants to think strategically, lead intentionally and recognize the broader impact our College has across our region."



2026 MOST BEAUTIFUL

Olivia Snellings of Bruce was crowned 2026 ICC Most Beautiful during the annual pageant hosted by Itawamba Community College at the W.O. Benjamin Fine Arts Center on the Fulton Campus.

Addison Williams of Aberdeen was named first alternate, followed by **Amelia Tooley** of Belmont as second alternate, **Faith Elizabeth Dabbs** of Pontotoc as third alternate and **Mallory Blake Fleming** of Oxford as fourth alternate.

Specialty awards were also presented during the evening. **Michia Crowley** of Tupelo earned both Most Photogenic and Crowd Favorite honors. **Bri'yan Riddle** of Aberdeen received the Most Social Award, and **Alonna Snyder** of Saltillo was voted Miss Congeniality by her fellow contestants.

A sold-out crowd filled the auditorium as 44 contestants competed in one of the college's signature student engagement traditions, an event that highlights poise, presentation and campus involvement.



MR. AND MISS ICC

Itawamba Community College announced **William John-Louis “Will” Hathcote** and **Anna Kate Crenshaw**, both of Smithville, as Mr. and Miss ICC for 2026, recognizing two students who have distinguished themselves through leadership, scholarship and service on campus and in their communities.

Hathcote, a Communication major from Smithville, is the son of Heather and John Hathcote. A graduate of Hatley Attendance Center, he has been actively involved in campus leadership throughout his time at ICC. He has served as Indian Delegation president, SGA Itawamba County representative and SGA treasurer, in addition to his role as an Orientation Leader, Fashion Tribe Executive, member of the Student Activities Board and a member of Phi Theta Kappa. Additionally, he is an active member of the gameday crew as a photographer. Hathcote is a Merit Scholar and President’s List honoree. In the community, he is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Amory. Following graduation from ICC, Hathcote plans to attend the University of Mississippi and major in integrated marketing communication.

Crenshaw, a Communication major from Smithville, is the daughter of Chris and Lorie Crenshaw. She is a graduate of Hatley Attendance Center. At ICC, Crenshaw serves as editor of The Mirror yearbook and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the Honors College and Sigma Kappa Delta. She is also involved as a work-study student in Community Relations, an Orientation Leader, a BSU family group leader, a member of Indian Delegation and an executive member of Fashion Tribe. She was elected as a Sophomore Maid and has been active with the gameday crew as a photographer. Beyond campus, Crenshaw is a member of Hatley Missionary Baptist Church. After graduation, she plans to transfer to Mississippi State University to continue her studies in communication with an emphasis in public relations.

Mr. and Miss ICC selection follows the successful completion of established eligibility criteria, a formal interview process and a vote of the student body.



ICC HONORS STUDENTS AT AWARDS OF DISTINCTION CEREMONY

Itawamba Community College recognized student achievement during its annual Student Awards of Distinction program held Monday, April 27, on the Fulton Campus.

The program honored roughly 100 students for excellence in academics, leadership and service across a wide range of disciplines and campus involvement.

ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen** praised the honorees

for their dedication and achievements. "These students represent the very best of Itawamba Community College," Allen said. "Their commitment to excellence and willingness to go above and beyond demonstrate the impact one person can make."

The Student Awards of Distinction program is part of ICC's annual Celebration of Achievement, recognizing accomplishments of students, faculty and staff across the College.

2026 MERITORIOUS AWARD RECIPIENTS

Itawamba Community College recognized outstanding employees for excellence in service, leadership and instruction during its 2026 Faculty and Staff Awards of Distinction ceremony held April 27 on the Fulton Campus. The annual Meritorious Awards, ICC's highest employee honors recognize those whose contributions reflect a commitment to students and the mission of ICC.

Support Staff of the Year honors were awarded to **Chad Price**, maintenance tech/electrician in the Physical Plant, of Greenwood Springs, and **Brittnie Wildmon**, office assistant in Human Resources, of Fulton.

Professional/Administrative Professional of the Year recipients were **Jason Dickinson**, chief of police for Campus Police, of Mantachie, and **Rachel Steele**, director of admissions and registrar, of Fulton.

Faculty of the Year honors were presented to **Adam Denton**, program director and instructor of respiratory therapy, of Saltillo, and **Scott Emison**, program director and instructor of construction management technology, of Pontotoc.

Jimmy Whitehead, instructor of industrial maintenance/electrical technology, of Booneville, was recognized with the Excellence in Outstanding Faculty Member award, endowed by John Cleveland and Beth Cleveland.

Additionally, **Masha Laney**, history instructor and William Winter Scholar, of Amory, and **Dr. Anna Morgan**, piano instructor and Humanities Instructor of the Year nominee, of Mantachie, were recognized during the program. Retirees were also honored for their years of dedicated service to the College.

"These individuals represent the very best of Itawamba Community College," said Dr. Jay Allen. "Their dedication to excellence, service and student success is evident in their daily work and the impact they make across our locations."

2026 FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS OF DISTINCTION







FROM ENROLLMENT TO ENGAGEMENT: ICC'S STUDENT EXPERIENCE MOVEMENT

Student life at Itawamba Community College looks different today than it did even a decade ago and that change has been intentional.

While academics and career preparation remain at the core of ICC's mission, the college has steadily shifted toward creating a more student engagement-focused culture, one designed around connection, belonging and the full college experience. Across all campuses, ICC leaders have embraced the idea that students are more likely to succeed when they feel invested not only in the classroom, but in campus life as a whole.

"We understand today's students are looking for more than a class schedule," ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen** said. "They want experiences, relationships and opportunities to feel connected. If students feel like they belong here, they are far more likely to stay, succeed and grow."

Over the past several years, ICC has increased its focus on campus programming that brings students together outside traditional academics. Once students arrive on campus, the engagement opportunities coordinated through Student Activities are boundless through student organizations, athletics, fine arts, leadership opportunities, volunteerism, campus traditions and

community-building activities spread throughout the academic year.

Residence life has also become a growing priority. ICC has continued investing in dorm upgrades and campus living improvements aimed at creating a more welcoming and modern residential experience for students on the Fulton Campus. College leaders recognize that for many students, residence halls become more than a place to sleep, they become the center of friendships, support systems and lifelong memories.

"That sense of connection matters," Dr. Brad Boggs said. "Students who are engaged on campus are more likely to build confidence, develop leadership skills and persist through challenges. We want students to feel supported from the moment they arrive until the day they graduate."

That student-centered approach extends well beyond entertainment or activities. College officials say co-curricular engagement is closely tied to student retention, academic performance and overall well-being.

Programs across campus increasingly blend academics with hands-on experiences, leadership development and relationship building. Whether through athletics, the arts, Schools of, service projects or campus organizations, ICC has worked to create an environment where students can find their place.

The shift also reflects broader changes in higher education.

Community colleges across the nation once largely operated as transactional institutions where students attended class and returned home. Today, institutions like ICC are recognizing that engagement and connection often play just as important a role in student success as instruction itself.

At ICC, that evolution continues to shape planning, programming and future campus investments.

"We still value the traditions and foundation that built this institution," Allen said. "But we also understand we must lean into the students of today. Creating an engaged campus culture is part of preparing students not just academically, but personally and professionally for the future."



CHICKASAW NATION CULTURAL EVENTS

Itawamba Community College hosted a pair of cultural events featuring representatives of the Chickasaw Nation on both its Fulton and Tupelo campuses on November 5. The events were designed to provide students and community members with an opportunity to engage with and learn about Chickasaw culture, language and history.

On the Tupelo Campus, the Chickasaw Nation hosted a Language Learning Table followed by a traditional Chickasaw story presentation.

At the same time, on the Fulton Campus, attendees could visit a Cultural Learning Table, followed by a presentation at by local author and historian **Mitch Caver** in the Fulton Campus Library.

Caver, a retired Branch Director with the Mississippi Department of Transportation, has dedicated much of his post-retirement work to researching and preserving Chickasaw history. Trusted by local communities, he has played an instrumental role in discovering historic Chickasaw sites and artifacts across Mississippi.

His collaboration with the Chickasaw Nation has earned him two of its highest honors: the Friend of the Chickasaw Award and Honorary Chickasaw Citizenship. Caver coauthored *Piominko: Chickasaw Leader* with Dr. Thomas Cowger, the Chickasaw Nation's Endowed Chair of Native American Studies at East Central University in Oklahoma. The book has received national recognition, including the Benjamin Franklin Silver Award and the Independent Publishers Gold Medal Award.

"These events highlight the enduring connection between the Chickasaw Nation and this region," said ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen**. "We were honored to welcome the Chickasaw Nation and Mr. Caver to our campuses and to offer our students and community the opportunity to learn directly from these cultural leaders."



DINNER AND DEMO SERIES

The Dinner and Demo Series, which began in the fall of 2023 and continues, serves as a platform for ICC to engage with the community to create unique partnerships and specifically connect with local restaurants and chefs. In the spring of 2025, the “Food Truck Edition” was introduced, focusing on businesses with food trucks. The event featured two talented chefs who showcased food and drink items considered their specialties. While the chefs and their teams conducted the demonstration, guests enjoyed a signature cocktail, appetizers, a full dinner, and dessert. Attendees not only savored a delicious meal but also had the opportunity to interact with the chefs, ask questions, and gain valuable insights. In the fall of 2025, three talented chefs participated in the Dinner and Demo Series, each bringing their unique style and expertise to the event. One of the key highlights of this series is the diversity of the events, with each one offering a distinct experience for attendees. From the food and drink offerings to the atmosphere and cooking techniques, every event is carefully curated to showcase the individuality of each chef, ensuring no two events are alike. This variety not only keeps guests engaged but also highlights the creativity and culinary skills of local chefs, making each Dinner and Demo event a memorable experience.







A SEASON OF GIVING WITH LASTING IMPACT: ICC STUDENTS FIND SUPPORT AT TUPELO ACE HARDWARE

For students training for careers in the skilled trades, the path forward often begins with grit, long hours and a growing list of tools they must purchase before they ever clock in on the job. This season of giving, one Tupelo business is stepping in to make that journey a little more attainable.

Tupelo ACE Hardware is putting practical support directly into the hands of students enrolled in Career and Technical Education and Workforce training programs at Itawamba Community College. Through the generosity of owner **George Booth**, ICC students pursuing skilled trade careers are now eligible for varying discounts on tools purchased at the Tupelo ACE Hardware store on McCullough Boulevard.

The effort began when Booth offered a discount on a tool needed by a student in an ICC Workforce class. Recognizing the ongoing need, he expanded the offer to support students across multiple trade programs, easing the financial burden that often accompanies hands-on training. To receive the discount, students present a tool discount letter provided by ACE Hardware. An ICC instructor verifies the student's enrollment in an eligible CTE or Workforce program by signing the form, allowing the student to receive the appropriate discount at the Tupelo store.

"I really appreciate ACE Hardware giving me the

opportunity to help me afford the tools needed as I further my career in the industrial maintenance field," said **Justin Simmons**, an industrial maintenance student at ICC. "I also sincerely give my thanks to ICC and ACE Hardware for making this happen."

Booth said his decision reflects a broader commitment to the future of the workforce and the role local communities must play in developing it.

"The American economy, possibly more than ever, needs skilled workers and tradespeople who are ready to address some critical needs," Booth said. "To do that, we need local communities to get behind the programs that train new workers, like the programs offered at ICC. Offering an at-cost purchase in our store for program graduates is a very small way to say, 'you matter and we want to support you.'"

ICC President **Dr. Jay Allen** said partnerships like this one demonstrate how local businesses can make a tangible difference for students preparing to enter high-demand fields.

"When local employers invest in students who are learning a trade, they are investing in the long-term success of our communities," Allen said. "Support like this removes barriers, builds confidence and reinforces the dignity and value of skilled work."



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING BRINGS HOLIDAY CHEER TO ICC

Itawamba Community College ushered in the holiday season with its annual Christmas Tree Lighting on Dec. 2 at Crane Pavilion on the Fulton Campus, continuing a tradition that brought together students, employees, families and community members for a festive evening.

The outdoor celebration featured performances from the ICC Choir, Indianettes and Color Guard, along with seasonal selections by student soloists **Crissen McCoy**, **Sarah Brown** and **Siera Lochala**. The evening concluded with a visit from Santa, a flurry of snow and the lighting of the campus Christmas tree.

Additional festivities began with free hot chocolate and popcorn provided by the Student Government Association. The ICC Library helped children write letters to Santa, and every child who participated received a reply. ICC Bloom also offered Christmas cookie decorating while supplies lasted.

"This event is one way we open our campus to the community and celebrate this season of connection, tradition and a shared sense of belonging," said **Tyler Camp**, ICC Chief of Staff. "We're proud to continue this tradition and look forward to welcoming families and friends from across the region."

The annual event is free and open to the public.



EVENING OF THE ARTS



An inspiring night of music, theatre and visual art took center stage March 3, 2026 as Itawamba Community College hosts its annual Evening of the Arts, a division-wide celebration and fundraiser benefiting ICC's Fine Arts Division.

The family-friendly event highlighted the creativity and dedication of ICC students and faculty through live performances by the college's Jazz Band, Wind Ensemble, Centerstage, Chamber Singers, Percussion Ensemble and Theatre department. Guests experienced visual art displays showcasing student and faculty work, reflecting the vibrant arts community continuing to grow across the Fulton Campus.

In addition to celebrating student achievement, the evening serves as a fundraiser supporting all areas of Fine Arts. This year's featured focus is The Steinway Initiative – The Power of One, a multi-year effort to replace practice room and performance pianos with Steinway instruments as ICC works toward designation as an All-Steinway School.

The evening started with a relaxed social hour featuring light food and live music by ICC band directors, along with performances by **Taylor Burks** on marimba and **Jacob Roland** on trombone. The hour also included a live ceramics demonstration by Fine Arts instructor **Liz Owen** and an opportunity to view artwork on display in



the art gallery. Performances followed the social hour.

“Evening of the Arts is a powerful reminder of why the arts matter,” said **Brandy White**, outreach coordinator and executive assistant to the Office of the President. “Our students are not only developing their talent, they are building confidence, discipline and a deep appreciation for creative expression. This event allows our community to see that impact firsthand while investing in the future of Fine Arts at ICC.”





SALTILLO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PARTNERS WITH ICC FOR STUDENT RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

Itawamba Community College students pursuing studies in the humanities will have the opportunity to take part in hands-on historical research and preservation through a new partnership with the Saltillo Historical Society.

The agreement establishes a project-based learning collaboration designed to provide ICC students with experiential learning opportunities while supporting the Historical Society's mission to preserve and share the rich history of Saltillo and its surrounding communities.

The partnership was initiated by **Masha Laney**, ICC history instructor, who worked with leaders of the Saltillo Historical Society to create an opportunity for students to engage in meaningful, community-based historical work.

Through the collaboration, ICC students will participate in activities that may include historical research, artifact preservation, archival work and community engagement efforts tied to documenting and interpreting the region's past. Students will also gain exposure to museum operations and the responsibilities involved in preserving local heritage.

The Saltillo Historical Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enlightening, enriching and

educating the public about the arts, social, political, cultural, economic and natural history of Saltillo and surrounding areas. The organization fulfills its mission by collecting, researching, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting artifacts and historical materials that reflect the heritage of the community from its earliest days to the present.

"This partnership reflects the type of meaningful learning experiences we want for our students," said **Dr. Jay Allen**, president of ICC. "By working alongside members of the Saltillo Historical Society, our students will not only study history but actively participate in preserving it. Opportunities like this connect the classroom to the community while giving students valuable real-world experience."

Both organizations believe the collaboration will strengthen community engagement while creating valuable educational experiences for students. ICC students will benefit from working directly with Historical Society committee members who bring deep knowledge and passion for the region's history, while the organization will gain additional support in advancing its preservation and educational efforts.

DINNER THEATRE PRESENTED “MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS”

Itawamba Community College’s Dinner Theatre presented the classic mystery *Murder on the Orient Express* on March 24 and March 26 at the ICC Connection Center on the Fulton Campus.

Based on the famous Agatha Christie story, *Murder on the Orient Express* followed world-renowned detective Hercule Poirot as he investigated a murder aboard a luxurious train stranded in the snow. The production featured suspense, glamour and unexpected plot twists as Poirot worked to determine not who did it, but who didn’t.

The production, directed by **Laurie McBride**, featured ICC drama students in both cast and crew roles. Crew members included **Emily W. Alford** of Amory, props assistant; **Kylie Hargroue** of Amory, lights operator; **Ethan Shotts** of Fulton, sound operator; **Brantley Ward** of Mooreville, publicity manager; **Paula Elaine Garcia** of Tupelo, props manager; and **Lela Waites** of Moody, Alabama, Foley sound artist.

Cast members included **Alexa Andrasik** of Tremont as Greta; **Carla Moore** of Tremont as Madam Bouc; **Arabella Castleman** of Pontotoc as Daisy Armstrong, **Hetty McQueen** and stage manager; **Mason Cook** of Fulton as Head Waiter/Michel; **Kylie Long** of Winfield, Alabama, as Helen Hubbard; **Kilee Webster** of Winfield, Alabama, as Mary Debenham; **Nathaniel “Luke” Ward** of Mooreville as Hercule Poirot; **Addison Upton** of Smithville as Princess Dragomiroff; and **Isaac Ratliff** of Smithville as Samuel Ratchett and Colonel Arbuthnot.



“CAREER CURVEBALLS” FEATURING CHASE PARHAM AND JEFF ROBERSON



The Humanities Club at Itawamba Community College hosted a special event, Career Curveballs: **Chase Parham and Jeff Roberson**, October 28 on the Fulton campus for ICC students.

Parham, an ICC alumnus, works for 247Sports/CBS Sports and is co-owner of MPW Digital, Mississippi’s most downloaded podcast network. During his time at ICC, he served as Chieftain sports editor and was recognized with the 2004 Journalism Department Award.

He is also the author of *Resilient Rebels: Ole Miss Baseball’s Remarkable Path to a National Title* and co-author of *Stories From Ole Miss Baseball*, which includes a foreword by Archie Manning.

Parham and his co-author, Jeff Roberson, shared insights on their career paths, daily job responsibilities and experiences in sports media. This student-focused session offered practical advice and a real-world perspective for those interested in journalism, broadcasting and communications-related careers.

BRIDGES TO BELONGING CONFERENCE

CONNECTED SCHOOLS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES AT ICC

As the need for meaningful support systems for neurodivergent students continued to grow, Itawamba Community College's Bloom Neurodivergent Program brought educators, families and community leaders together for a shared purpose.

ICC hosted the "Bridges to Belonging: Connecting Families, Schools and Community for Student Success" conference on April 10 at the ICC Belden Center, uniting partners from across the region to strengthen pathways for student success.

The daylong conference was designed to foster collaboration among K-12 schools, higher education, families and community agencies, with a focus on helping students successfully transition from school to adulthood.

Participants included principals, administrators, educators, parents and community stakeholders committed to improving outcomes for students with diverse learning needs. The event featured a keynote presentation, breakout sessions, a panel discussion and dedicated networking opportunities.

Leading the conference as keynote speaker was **Alyece Smith**, a TEDx speaker, ADHD business coach, author and nonprofit founder from Kiln. Smith is the CEO and founder of Socially Ausome™ and executive director of Caiden's Corner, a nonprofit supporting autism families. She is also host of "The ADHD CEO Podcast" and author of two books focused on neurodivergent individuals and families. Smith's keynote centered on reframing neurodivergence as a strength and equipping educators, families and community leaders with practical tools to better support students in academic and real-world environments.

The conference schedule included two rounds of breakout sessions tailored to various audiences, a lunch and networking session, and a panel discussion focused on real-world transitions and available supports. The event concluded with a call to action encouraging continued collaboration beyond the conference.

Organizers emphasized that the guiding belief behind the event was that student success looks different for every individual and requires a unified effort across all sectors.



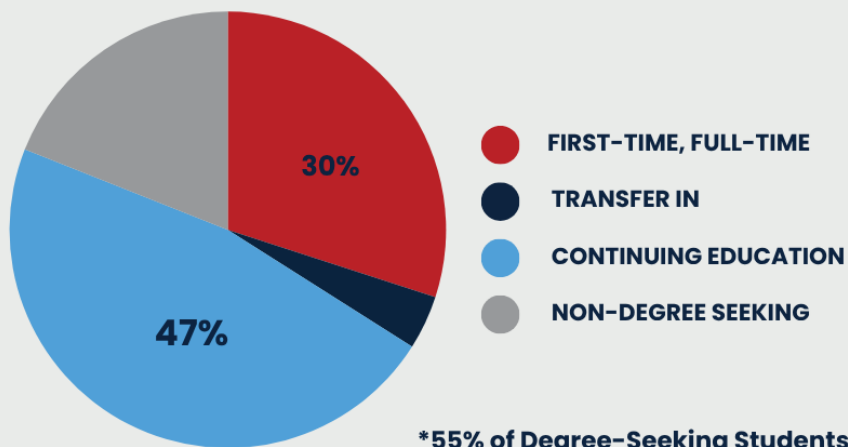
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2025 FALL
ENROLLMENT

ANNUAL DATA

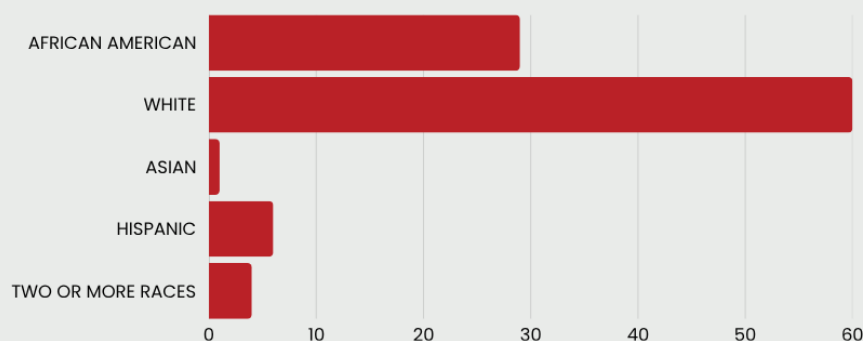
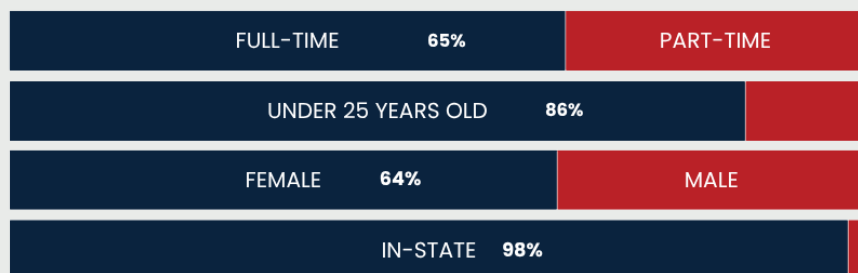
2025-2026

ENROLLMENT TYPE



***55% of Degree-Seeking Students were enrolled in at least one or more eLearning courses.**

***PERCENT OF 100**



20:1

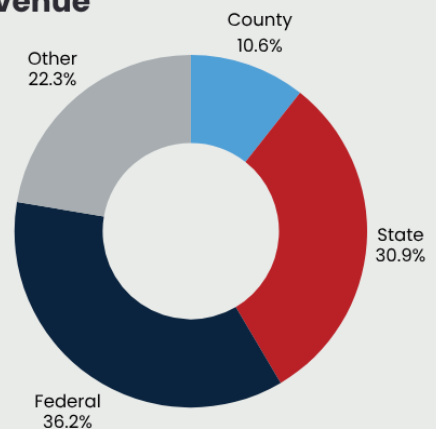
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144

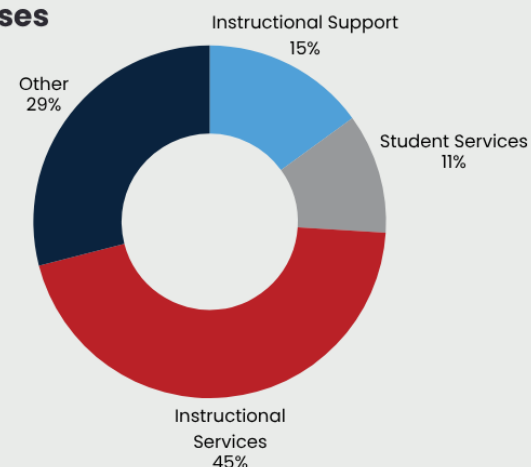
FULL-TIME INSTRUCTORS

209 PART-TIME EMPLOYEES
427 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Revenue



Expenses





CRANE PAVILION



ITAWAMBA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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SCAN TO
VIEW FULL
CALENDAR
OF EVENTS.



ITAWAMBA
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