



Sauk Valley  
Community  
College



2020 - 2021 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



## Letter from the President

*Sauk Valley Community College* is proud to be your community college. SVCC's faculty and staff – be it on campus, in the community, or via virtual technologies – are dedicated to improving the lives of our students and enriching our communities. SVCC provides quality academic environments for professional and personal growth, and we believe opportunities for growth should be accessible to everyone with the desire to pursue them.

Here are just a few examples of how SVCC continues to meet the needs of the communities we serve:

- Established pathways with K-12, increasing access to careers in education and manufacturing;
- Had multiple teams and individual athletes make history, including 5th place national volleyball finish;
- Hosted First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden;
- Implemented COVID procedures, including self-screening and SHIELD testing;
- Implemented online and synchronous delivery of classes;
- Provided Adult Education courses exclusively at SVCC and in hybrid format;
- Provided mental health services virtually; and
- Showed resiliency and proactive response to the pandemic shutdown.

As you learn more about the last year in the pages of this Report to the Community, we hope you share our appreciation for the many efforts of our students, faculty, staff, and community partners who made this another incredible year. We are always looking for additional opportunities to expand and improve our partnerships. Just give us a shout, and we will respond!

Sincerely,  
Dr. David Hellmich, President



## Letter from the Chair

### *Dear Friends of Sauk Valley Community College,*

Sauk Valley Community College's annual commencement ceremony returned to an in-person event in 2021, after the 2020 ceremony was virtual due to the pandemic. Our Board of Trustees and I treasure commencement as we are filled with anticipation and elation for our new graduates.

Our anticipation comes from wanting our graduates' unknown futures to be as bright as they have dreamed. These graduates define success at Sauk Valley Community College. They embody our story and our legacy.

Their accomplishments are considerable, and their preparation for the future is secured. When we look back years from now, we will celebrate this most special graduating class for helping us achieve our institutional goals of serving our community in all aspects of education – life skills, four-year college transfer, workplace training, and life enrichment in general.

Our Board is grateful to SVCC's faculty and staff who assisted and challenged our students as they worked toward graduation. Our faculty and staff are not just here pursuing a career; they are dedicated to our students' success.

The Board thanks our graduates' parents, grandparents, family, and friends for their support. We reserve special thanks for our graduates – our most sincere appreciation that they cared enough about themselves and their families to take this great step toward enriching their lives.

***Thank you. You are always welcome here at SVCC!***

Sincerely,  
Bob Thompson  
Chair, SVCC Board of Trustees



# Board of Trustees 2020 – 2021

Bob Thompson, Dixon, *Chair*

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Abril Vazquez-Tapia, *Student Trustee*





**A Visit from First Lady,  
Dr. Jill Biden**

On Monday, April 19, First Lady Dr. Jill Biden visited Sauk Valley Community College. She was joined by Education Secretary Dr. Miguel Cardona, Governor J.B. Pritzker, Congresswoman Cheri Bustos, and a myriad of other special guests.

A tour of campus and a small gathering were on the docket for Dr. Biden's visit. The tour of the campus included demonstrations of SVCC's Manufacturing and Health Professions. SVCC's newest initiative, the SVCC Impact Program, was also a highlight in the campus informational session. The visit concluded with SVCC's very own Student Trustee, Abril Vazquez-Tapia, joining Dr. Biden and Dr. Cardona in addressing a small crowd in the gym.

Dr. Biden showed genuine appreciation for SVCC's impact on students' lives. "I met a woman today," said Dr. Biden, "a single mom. She became a welder, and now she's providing a really good income for her family."

In the words of Dr. David Hellmich, "Folks wonder why the White House reached out to SVCC for this visit. It's because Dr. Martha Kanter recommended SVCC. Martha leads College Promise, a national, non-partisan, initiative to increase college access. Dr. Lori Cortez and I had met Martha three years ago at a conference in Chicago. Lori and Martha developed a strong professional bond, publishing and presenting together.

Martha was SVCC's commencement speaker in 2019 when she saw firsthand the great work of SVCC's faculty, staff, and trustees. If Lori and I had not met Martha three years ago, if Lori had not nurtured their professional relationship, if Martha had not been impressed with what she saw at SVCC, the April 19 visit from Dr. Biden would have never occurred. *Good things come from good things.*"



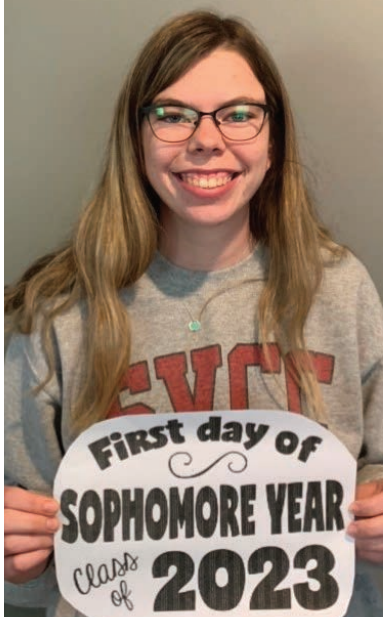
In June of 2021, the Sauk Valley College Foundation received a \$1 million gift to support the SVCC Impact Program. The anonymous donor hails from the Whiteside county town of Fulton, Illinois, which is included in SVCC's six-county service area. This is the largest one-time gift from an individual in SVCC's 56-year history and will fund pilot programs in the Fulton and Prophetstown school districts beginning in the Fall of 2025.

In 2018, SVCC, the Sauk Valley College Foundation Board of Directors, and external community leaders began work to develop and customize an earned-tuition program that would open doors of access to higher education for thousands of prospective students. Based on national promise program models, but unique to the Sauk Valley, the college and foundation designed the Impact Program with specific regional needs in mind.

College President, Dr. David Hellmich, praised the generosity and vision of the gift: "On behalf of the students whose lives will be impacted, I am incredibly grateful for this transformational gift. This act of philanthropic leadership will transform lives and help propel the region into a period of increased growth and stability."

Through this gift, the anonymous donor hopes to inspire and motivate others to give to the program that college and regional leaders anticipate will help reverse regional declines in population, workforce participation, community involvement, and college completion rates.

**A Lasting Impact**



**TRIO Looks  
to the Future**

TRIO Student Support Services has been a staple for SVCC students for almost two decades. It is a federally funded, student-oriented program that offers supportive services to help its participants achieve success. Thanks to a \$1.5 million grant renewal in 2020, TRIO will continue its work at the college over the next five years.

The program is funded through the Department of Education to assist students who are first generation (parents without a bachelor's degree or higher), students who show a financial need, and/or students who have a documented disability. Each TRIO participant is assigned an academic advisor who offers students the kind of support necessary to take them from enrollment through graduation/transfer. Advisors are dedicated to providing individualized assistance that enhances the academic, professional, and personal potential of TRIO students.

*TRIO student, Alexzandra Ryan:*

***“I am very thankful for everything that TRIO has to offer and all of their services that they provide their members. In my opinion, the student-to-staff ratio for TRIO is outstanding. This ensures one-on-one time and that meeting with your advisor is something special. I enjoy meeting with my advisor because she really walks me through things and lets me get a better understanding of what college is really about and how to better my education.”***





### Growing the 815: Simply Hair

2020 proved to be one of the busiest years for the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Sauk Valley Community College. The Center was awarded a COVID-relief grant through the Cares, Act and those dollars enabled the Center to hire another advisor to further provide assistance to businesses throughout the district.

In March 2020, the staff quickly moved all services virtual and added additional hours in the evenings and weekends to help meet business owners needs. The staff assisted businesses in applying for numerous COVID-relief programs locally, statewide, and nationally. In addition to COVID-relief work, the Center spent nearly 2,000 hours advising over 400 clients throughout the year. Other Center statistics include the start of 29 new businesses, 54 new jobs, 40 jobs retained, 22 formal investor pitches, 33 training workshops, and 10 success stories. Staff also aided clients in obtaining more than \$1.7 million in debt equity funds.





The staff at the Illinois Small Business Development Center continues to operate in a hybrid mode with most advising taking place virtually, as it allows more flexibility in scheduling appointments. Whether you need assistance applying for COVID-relief programs or are interested in starting a new business, growing an existing one, or even reviewing an existing plan to help streamline expenses or find new revenue streams, the staff is ready to assist. Reach out today by calling 815.835.6244 or email [sbdc@svcc.edu](mailto:sbdc@svcc.edu) to schedule an appointment as we continue to help build the 815 area.

**Growing the 815:  
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**Sauk Valley**  
**Community College**

*Sauk Valley Community College is dedicated to teaching and scholarship while engaging the community in lifelong learning, public service, and economic development.*

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