



2024-2025 Issue No. 14

# achieve.

REACH. EXCEED. **ACHIEVE.**



**VASHAUN BROWN'S** **page 4**  
**'SWFT' CAREER TUNE-UP**



# Fiscally Strong, Community- Supported

## A Message from CFO Chris Randles

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

People often ask how Parkland College has weathered such major financial storms of the past decade as double-digit enrollment dives, long-term lapses in state funding, and a global pandemic. My answer: by having 1) trustees and presidents who confidently support our fiscal management decisions, 2) hard-working, dedicated, and responsible Business Office employees, and 3) YOU.



It's help from District 505 residents, businesses, and community organizations that has created stability for Parkland and enabled us to focus on quality instruction and student success for 57 years. And you do this with more than just property tax dollars. You go above and beyond, donating for student scholarships and academic program support, partnering with us for workforce training opportunities, giving back with endowments, and much more.

I thank you for bringing quality education to thousands of lives every year through your continued financial support for Parkland College. Enjoy a great summer.



Vice President for Administration/CFO  
Parkland College

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**Achieve** is an annual publication for the residents of Parkland College District 505.

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**THE MISSION OF PARKLAND COLLEGE IS TO  
ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN LEARNING.**

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## WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

# Veterinary Technology

## U of I, Parkland partner to advance training

Like Saira Cruz and Mercedes Saavedra, not every student earning a bachelor's degree in animal sciences from the University of Illinois wishes to attend veterinary school afterward to become a veterinarian. Today, a partnership between the U of I and Parkland College gives them new opportunities.

Students in the new University of Illinois-Parkland College Veterinary Tech Partnership can complete their bachelor's degree at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign while taking Parkland Veterinary Technology degree classes in one five-year program, shortening what would normally take six years to complete, according to Amy Fischer-Brown, a teaching associate professor in animal sciences.

"Students were getting their bachelor's with us and then getting a separate veterinary technician degree," she says. "This program gives them more paths to consider while still in college."


Parkland College Vet Tech Program Director Dr. Laura Sutter says Parkland will continue accepting students

into its traditional two-year Vet Tech associate-degree program. In Parkland's program, students receive hands-on training as a veterinary nurse, radiologic technician, anesthetist, surgical assistant, phlebotomist, lab technician, and dental hygienist for animals.

Completing the bachelor's/vet tech-degree series a year earlier allows students to move more quickly toward

their dream of working with animals, which they can do immediately after the program. Cruz, now completing her second semester of vet tech curriculum with Parkland, says the partnership program has provided valuable hands-on experience. "I didn't have any

prior experience in animal clinics, and I was completely new to everything."

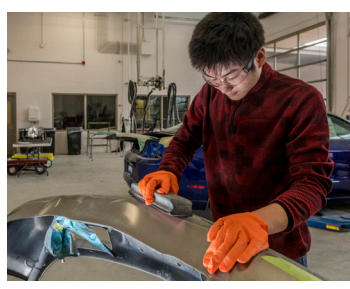
Saavedra also appreciates the partnership program benefits. "If you are not sure about attending veterinary school but still want to be involved in the medical field for animals, the vet tech program is definitely something to look into." 



## New Partners Expand CTE Training

**Newly funded training for industrial maintenance, EV, collision repair industries**

Parkland College received funding for new career apprenticeships and training opportunities in 2023–2024. For more on apprenticeships, visit [parkland.edu/apprenticeships](https://parkland.edu/apprenticeships).



- **AFSI Industrial Maintenance Technician** training, in partnership with Advanced Filtration Systems, Inc., leads to a Machinery Maintenance certificate from Parkland and a journey worker certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).
- A **Rev Up EV! Community College Initiative** grant from the Illinois Community College Board will allow Parkland to expand its electric vehicle industry training; its Ford ASSET program students currently train on a Mustang Mach-E.
- **Sullivan-Parkhill Automotive, Inc.**, with funding support from **Collision Engineering**, offers a new **Collision Repair Technician** apprenticeship at Parkland leading to a DOL journey worker certificate and an AAS degree.



## HANDS-ON CAREERS

# Automotive

### SWFT pays off for Vashaun Brown, '22

“A struggling father with four kids trying to make ends meet” is how Champaign native Vashaun Brown summed up his life before Parkland College Automotive training and the Support for Workforce Training program (SWFT).

These days, having earned his Certificate in Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair, he uses a new descriptor: “Now, I’m a certified diesel technician at MTD.”

A Parkland SWFT commercial led Vashaun to the program. In it, he recognized a former high school classmate whom he thought would never go to college but who had just earned his commercial truck driver’s license. “To see that he had changed his life over by completing the CDL program and going into a career of his own just blew me away,” Vashaun says. “I was like, ‘if he could do it, I could do it.’”

**“My outlook on life has totally changed because of this program.”**

Backed by an Illinois Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) grant, SWFT offers free certificate training and supportive services to underserved populations in Parkland’s district. SWFT has served more than 400 students, with many acquiring jobs in career fields with life-supporting wages.

While signing up for SWFT was no challenge for Vashaun, staying focused on his Automotive classes were. His biggest hurdles were balancing family and school and getting his homework done. At times, he even wanted to quit, but SWFT’s staff and resources and his classmates helped him over the hurdles.


“I could always go in and talk to my counselors,” he explains. “I didn’t have to worry about a laptop or my books or if I needed a study space. The SWFT stipend greatly helped when it came down to expenses. A SWFT class [Employment Skills] taught me ‘grit’ and focus.

Through SWFT, I did not have to worry and be stressed about what I needed to make sure I was successful.”

Having Automotive certification has paid huge dividends for Vashaun, the first child in his family to complete a college credential. While he was taking classes, he was able to begin entry-level work at a local dealership; with his certificate, he advanced his career to work at Champaign-Urbana MTD, earning \$3200 more monthly. These days, he owns things he never dreamed he could have, such as a house and a car. He



tells friends they can have these things too, with a little help from Parkland and SWFT.

“My outlook on life has totally changed because of this program,” he says. “They’re willing to help you every step of the way, to a level where you can be financially stable for your life. All it takes is to step through the door or call the office.” For more information on SWFT program training, visit [parkland.edu/swft](https://parkland.edu/swft). 





# Gen Ed Core Curriculum

## Transfer package a boost for student

This May, student Amina Alamin is both wrapping up high school and planning to enter as a junior to an Illinois university, thanks to a Parkland College program that is helping her do so.

“I highly recommend the GECC to fellow students,” Amina says about the General Education Core Curriculum, a selection of courses accepted by all Illinois public (and many private) four-year colleges and universities. Because Amina enrolled in Parkland’s Early College program at age 15, she has been completing her high school homeschool transcript and preparing for advanced university transfer simultaneously.

From English and communication to the arts and sciences, general education courses help college students understand a range of disciplines that offer foundational insight into the world in which they live. Completing the GECC sequence earns a student the Gen Ed Certificate, a low-cost option for transfer with opportunities to move quickly into core courses in their chosen field upon transfer.

Through GECC classes, Amina has refined her public speaking skills and improved her writing. “This has been beneficial to my life even outside of school,” she remarks. “Additionally, making connections with fellow students enrolled in GECC has provided a place of mutual support and encouragement, making my journey all the more meaningful.”

To learn more about the GECC program, visit

[parkland.edu/GECC](http://parkland.edu/GECC). 

# Parkland Goes To Washington

## White House spotlights college in Spring '24

- In January, Parkland College’s program manager for workforce partnerships, Aimee Densmore, was a featured panelist on the **White House’s Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Sprint: ([parkland.edu/WHsprint](http://parkland.edu/WHsprint))**.
- Parkland’s new registered apprenticeship program with AGCO Corporation featured in a January **White House Fact Sheet** on equitable workforce development in advanced manufacturing: ([parkland.edu/WorkforceFacts](http://parkland.edu/WorkforceFacts)).
- In February, President Pam Lau attended a convening at the White House for community college presidents and provosts, along with Harper College President Dr. Avis Proctor and Richland Community College President Dr. Cris Valdez from Illinois.
- Also in February, Parkland administrators and trustees met with Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski and Congresswoman Mary Miller as part of the Association of Community College Trustees Annual National **Legislative Summit: ([parkland.edu/WHSummit](http://parkland.edu/WHSummit))**.





## GIVING

## Reed-Richardson Room

### *Parkland pioneers honored for Athletics leadership*


Parkland College Athletics' newly renovated multipurpose Reed-Richardson Room, reopened during the fall semester, honors former employees Jim Reed and Connie Richardson. The two were instrumental in building Parkland Athletics during the move to the current campus in 1974, establishing new programs and a winning culture at Parkland, and overseeing the construction of the first Cobras athletic facilities.

The classroom renovation was made possible thanks to a generous donation on Reed's and Richardson's behalf from Parkland Athletics Hall of Fame Member Tim Wulf. "Jim and Connie are Parkland pioneers," he said. "They grew with Parkland College, and Parkland College grew because of them."

Reed, from Catlin, Illinois, came to Parkland College in 1969 as a physical education teacher, then served as the head baseball coach from 1971 to 1982 and as director of the area learning center from 1982 to 1988. He served as athletic director from 1988 until his retirement in 2000. Richardson, from New York, also



came to Parkland in 1969 to teach physical education. She developed foundational curricula and taught a wide range of courses, including health, first aid, dance, and aerobatics. She also served as an assistant coach for women's basketball and track and field before retiring in 2004.

Parkland College Athletic Director Brendan McHale called Reed and Richardson consummate professionals who treated people with respect. "It was impressive to see how Jim and Connie interacted with students, staff, and our community." 

## Planetarium Tickets Available Online

Tickets to the planetarium's public programs are now available through [tickets.parkland.edu](https://tickets.parkland.edu). Users will be required to set up an account in order to make a purchase. Tickets will still be available in the lobby before each show, and visitors may pay with cash, card, or mobile payment options. Prices will remain the same through the online ticketing platform: \$8 for adults; \$7 for children under 12, seniors, Parkland students; \$4 per person for groups of 20+; \$12 for light and laser shows (all ages); and \$2 for James B. Kaler Science Lectures.

WILLIAM M. STAERKEL  
PLANETARIUM





## GIVING

# Supporting Parkland from its Beginnings

## Parkland College's first employee remains a loyal donor

Rachel Schroeder began working in October 1966 in a three-room office in Urbana, where she reported to the inaugural Board of Trustees of Community College District #505. After the arrival of the first president, Dr. William M. Staerkel, in January 1967, the college began to evolve. In 1969 the Parkland College Foundation was established. Throughout the years, Rachel has continued to be a donor to the Foundation. In 2006 in memory of her late husband, she established a scholarship endowment in nursing and soon after a scholarship endowment in agriculture. A critical need exists for nurses in hospitals and clinics. The field of agriculture includes so many different facets. She and her late husband grew up on farms.



“Scholarships provide financial assistance to help students achieve their goals,” Rachel says. “It is heartwarming to help students who may be the first in their families to attend college, working to pay for their own education while enrolled, and those who are returning full-time to complete their degree or certificate. I care deeply about seeing people succeed in life, especially those who are trying so hard and need a little assistance to get over the hump or get started. I encourage others to help make a difference in someone’s life through financial giving.”



### HELP MORE STUDENTS: **how to give**



Supporting students is easy through the Parkland Foundation. Visit [parkland.edu/foundation](https://parkland.edu/foundation) to donate today. A scholarship

gift of just \$180 can cover tuition and fees for one credit hour class or purchase a course textbook. If you are interested in establishing an endowment contact the Parkland College Foundation at [foundation@parkland.edu](mailto:foundation@parkland.edu).

### **parkland** **foundation facts\***

- **527 scholarships awarded**
- **301 students received scholarships**
- **\$567,510 in scholarship support given**
- **>20% of students receive scholarship support**

*\*For AY 2023-2024*







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## plan ahead FOR THESE SUMMER AND FALL EVENTS

### **STAERKEL PLANETARIUM** [parkland.edu/planetarium](http://parkland.edu/planetarium)

#### **Summer Matineés**

Tuesday afternoons/Thursday mornings  
June 4–July 27

#### **Sensory-Friendly Matineés**

May 18, July 13, September 21

#### **Prairie Skies** Fridays

#### **Cosmic Mashups**

Fridays and Saturdays, May 3–June 1

#### **Did an Asteroid Really Kill the Dinosaurs?**

Saturdays, May 4–June 1

#### **Spirits from the Sky, Thunder on the Land** Fridays, June 7–28

#### **Experience the Aurora**

Fridays, July 12–26

#### **Phantom of the Universe**

Fridays and Saturdays, August 2–24

#### **Amazing Stargazing**

Saturdays, August 3–24

### **MUSIC ENSEMBLE CONCERTS** [parkland.edu/musicensembles](http://parkland.edu/musicensembles)

**Parkland Chamber Singers, BACH Choir, and Area High School Choirs**  
Saturday, May 4

**Parkland Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, and Concert Band** Sunday, May 5

**Parkland Guitar Ensemble Concert**  
Sunday, May 5

### **PARKLAND THEATRE** [parkland.edu/theatre](http://parkland.edu/theatre)

The Parkland Theatre's 2024–2025 theatre season will include:

**12 Angry Jurors** (October)

**Irving Berlin's White Christmas**  
(December)

**The Miser** (February)

**The Wedding Singer** (April/May)

### **GIERTZ GALLERY** [parkland.edu/gallery](http://parkland.edu/gallery)

The Giertz Gallery's 2024–2025 exhibits will include:

**Beneath a Midwestern Sky: Paintings by Douglas C. Johnson** (June/July)

**High Noon Local Artist Lectures in the Gallery** (July)

**2024 Parkland College Art and Design Faculty Exhibition** (August/September)

### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION** [parkland.edu/ceRegister](http://parkland.edu/ceRegister)

#### **College for Kids**

June 17–27 and July 8–18  
For kids 6–13

#### **DiscoverU Camps**

June 3–August 3  
Ages 8–18

**Ag Tech Academy**  
**Automotive Camp**

**First Gig Rock and Roll Camp**

Parkland College ensures equal educational opportunities are offered to all students regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, gender expression, disability, sexual orientation, veteran/Vietnam veteran era, age, or religion, and is Section 504/ADA compliant. For additional information or accommodations, call 217/351-2551.