KCC



FALL 2026

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS IN-SERVICE

AUGUST 12 & 13

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, August 12

8:00	All School Breakfast - College Center
8:45	President's All College Address - Auditorium
9:30	Break
9:45	Can We Narrow the Achievement Gap By Developing College Students' Skills for Success? Dr. Sarah Grison - Iroquois Room
10:45	Break
11:00	How Mental Health Impacts Learning and Strategies to Meet the Needs of Our Students Jessica Oladapo - Iroquois Room
12:00	Lunch and Award Recognitions Potato Bar
1:00	Breakout 1
1:45	Break/Travel
2:00	Breakout 2
2:45	Break/Travel
3:00	Breakout 3
3:45	Break/Travel
4:00	Breakout 4



Dr. Sarah Grison is a Professor of Psychology at Parkland College with a Ph.D. in cognitive neuroscience. She conducts classroom research on attention, memory, learning, and study skills, and helps faculty implement evidence-based teaching practices through Parkland's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Sarah is an author and frequent presenter on the cognitive science of teaching and learning, sharing practical strategies that help students succeed.

Jessica Oladapo, LCPC, is a licensed clinical professional counselor, educator, and founder of Diversity to Inclusion, Inc. She has worked with schools and organizations across the country on belonging, psychological safety, and organizational culture, and is the author of *Making Sense in Crooked Rooms*. At KCC, she teaches Sociology and Psychology and coordinates the Mental Health Tech Certificate Program.



BREAKOUT 1

One Class, Many Paths, Unlocking HyFlex Success - Adult Ed - D212
Learn practical strategies for building a successful HyFlex classroom using the technology already available on campus. We'll share tips from the classroom for effectively engaging and supporting both in-person and remote students and addressing common challenges. We will also discuss how HyFlex can help remove barriers to participation, and how to set clear expectations to support student success.

Practical Options for Reducing Textbook Costs - Tracy Conner & Rory Parilac - D214
Textbook costs are a significant barrier for many of our students. This session will share student feedback on affordability and explore practical solutions, including OER, library-licensed materials, and the library's NEW textbook lending program. Join us to discuss some simple ways to make course materials more accessible and affordable.

From Outcomes to Impact: Understanding Student Success After College - Rylee Mann & Dr. Lesley Cooper - L101
Explore student success beyond the classroom and graduation through outcome trends and institutional data. This session will highlight outcome trends and institutional data, followed by group discussion on how we can use these insights to inform planning, teaching, and student success efforts across campus.

BREAKOUT 2

Reaching Our ELL Students - Amy Porter - D214
This session will highlight best practices for supporting ELL students and provide strategies faculty and staff can use to better understand and respond to the needs of a diverse student population.

Boosting Student Motivation: Strategies for Community College Faculty - Joe Phillips - D212
Join us to learn about strategies that will help students to be engaged along with open discussion about your challenges with engagement in the classroom.

Open Forum Chat - Jenny Pecora Kettley - L344
Join a group discussion on topics chosen by attendees at the start of the session.

BREAKOUT 3

Student Supports & Alerts - A Quick Dive into the Student Side - Tishauna Thigpen - D123
Learn about how students connect with the student support services that are available on campus, the common student challenges that the different offices and programs may be able to help with, and the ways Student Affairs and Academic Affairs can continue to support each other in our students' success. This session will also explore the alert process, follow-up procedures, and how Navigators partner with students to help them be successful.

AI Faculty Forum: What We're Seeing, Hearing, and Building Together - Craig Keigher & Faculty on the AI Committee - L101
Join members of the KCC AI Committee for a brief update on the college's AI guidelines and faculty survey results. Most of the session will focus on a guided discussion about AI in teaching, learning, and assessment, with participants leaving with AI professional development resources and opportunities for continued learning.

Break the Ice, Build the Team - Melvina Calvin, Sarah Gowler, & Jessica Friedericks - L120
Discover practical strategies that help students move beyond introductions to build meaningful connections. This hands-on session will share adaptable activities that foster conversation, teamwork, and a stronger sense of community in the classroom.

BREAKOUT 4

Active Threat - Deputy Chief Michael Stoltz - L140
Participants will recieve instruction and practical training for responding to active threat scenarios.

Designing Meaningful Labs with AI - James Stafford & Kris Salmons - D122
This session explores how artificial intelligence can help faculty quickly create engaging lab activities, troubleshooting exercises, and real-world, hands-on assignments. Participants will learn effective prompting strategies and techniques for refining AI-generated content. They will leave with practical examples they can immediately apply in their own courses.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading - Yasmine Mohammad & Melany Villagomez - L101
Using the Illinois State Board of Education's Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading (CRTL) Standards as a guide, this workshop explores how personal values and experiences shape teaching practices. Through reflection and discussion, participants will examine strategies for creating more inclusive learning environments that respond to the diverse strengths and needs of students.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, August 13

8:00	Faculty Association Meeting - D140
9:00	Break
9:15	Looking Ahead: Preparing for the Fall Semester Dr. Quincy Rose Sewell - Iroquois Room
9:45	Division Meetings BTHS - L101 HC - M117 LAS - L344
10:45	Break
11:00	Faculty Assessment Workshop - L366 and L372 Ruth Fabbro and Lesley Cooper
12:00	Lunch - Iroquois Room Taco Bar
12:00	Refresh and Recharge - L101 Discover activities that support your mind, body, and well-being, including Tai Chi, art, reading, plants, and more!
1:00	Outside the Syllabus: The Continuing Education Advantage Cesar Avalos and Joni Jarnagin Learn about the results of KCC's summer internship pilot program and how Continuing Education and Business Partnerships supports the college's mission. The session will also highlight opportunities to collaborate, develop new course offerings, and participate in continuing education programs using professional development funds.
1:45	Planning Time Use this dedicated work time to prepare for the semester by updating course materials, syllabi, and assessment plans, developing your professional development plan, or collaborating with colleagues on planning and course-related projects.
4:30	FYE Kick Off - College Center Join us in the College Center to welcome our newest students to campus!

2026 OUTSTANDING FACULTY RECOGNITION

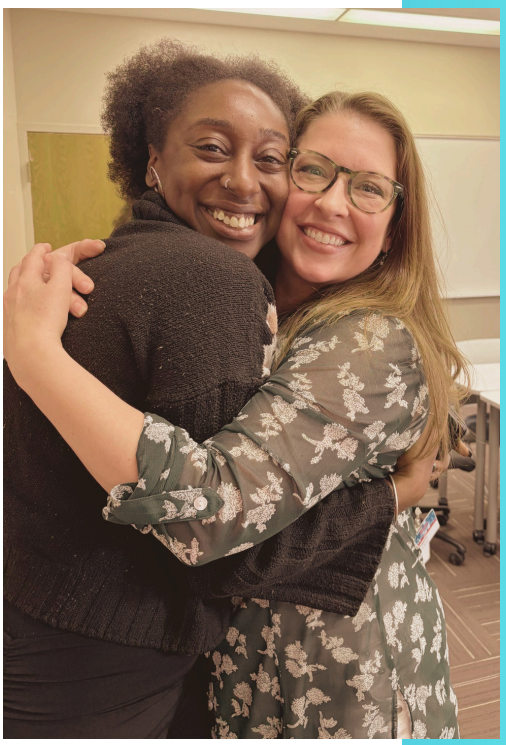
DR. CARI STEVENSON, Professor of Psychology within Liberal Arts & Sciences, is the recipient of the 2026 Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Award.

A full-time faculty member at KCC since 2012, Stevenson is being recognized for the transformative, student-centered work that shapes her teaching and mentorship. This is the second time she has earned the honor, having also received KCC's Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Award in 2014.

In her classroom, Stevenson emphasizes that education is a transformative process and that every student brings unique experiences and strengths. She incorporates service-learning, action-based activities, and participatory research to help students apply knowledge in meaningful, real-world ways. As a Community Psychologist, she takes a holistic approach to student success, supporting learners inside and outside the classroom while fostering critical thinking, empathy, and a deeper understanding of the human experience.

Stevenson also supports colleagues across the college through her work as a Faculty Development Champion at KCC's Teaching and Learning Center, where she shares her knowledge and passion to strengthen teaching and learning.

She has also received the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues Teaching and Mentoring Excellence Award (2023).



TISHAUNA THIGPEN, instructor for Foundations for Student Success, is the recipient of the 2026 Outstanding Part-Time Faculty Award.

Thigpen has served KCC as adjunct faculty and staff for nearly two years, building strong relationships with students and contributing to collaborations focused on student success. She says she is most proud of the connections she has made at KCC, the partnerships she has been part of on behalf of students, and her development as an instructor. She was also recently promoted to Assistant Director of Retention Services.

In and beyond the classroom, Thigpen focuses on helping students continuously expand their toolkit academically, professionally, and personally. She helps students connect what they learn to their goals, emphasizing how skills can be adapted to strengthen academics, careers, and everyday life. Recognizing that students learn in different ways, shaped by their backgrounds and experiences, she prioritizes meeting students where they are and working alongside them to find new paths toward their goals.

"I thoroughly enjoy teaching," Tishauna shared, "but I enjoy learning from our students just as much."

WELCOME TO ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

New full-time employees since our last in-service event:

MEGAN COX
CEJA Workforce Development Coordinator

RHONDA GRAY
Assistant Professor, History & Political Science

CHEREE HARWELL
CEJA Placement Counselor

JESSICA JAENICKE
Assistant Professor, English

JONI JARNAGIN
Assistant Director, Work-Based Learning

RORY PARILAC
Reference & Instruction Librarian

JAMES QUIGLEY
Assistant Professor, EV Fast Track Training

GABE SOJKA
Assistant Professor, Physical Science

CORA THOMAS
Assistant Professor, Nursing (CNA/PN)

TINA VARVEL
Assistant Professor, Nursing Programs

SARAH WESTFALL
Assistant Professor/Clinical Coordinator, Radiography





SAVE THE DATE

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT FAIR
Monday, August 24, 11 am - 1 pm, College Center

CAMPUS RESOURCE FAIR
Tuesday, August 25, 10 am - 1 pm, College Center

COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR
Wednesday, September 9, 10 am - 1 pm, College Center

CAREER & INTERNSHIP FAIR
Wednesday, October 7, 10 am - 1 pm, College Center

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS TOWN HALL
Thursday, November 5, 3 - 4 pm, Iroquois Room

NAP - NIGHT AGAINST PROCRASTINATION
Wednesday, November 18, 5 - 9 pm, Library

SPRING IN-SERVICE
Thursday, January 6