

Central Community College Op-Ed
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College President

April is National Community College month, so it's my honor to share some updates about YOUR college, Central Community College. Annually, we enroll over 21,000 students in a wide variety of college credit and noncredit programming, both in person and by internet. Our primary geographic service area includes 25 counties in Nebraska, but our student impact is statewide, nationwide and international. In addition to campuses in Columbus, Grand Island and Hastings, we operate staffed centers in Holdrege, Kearney, Lexington and Ord, and recently opened two educational hubs in Albion and Red Cloud in response to community partnerships and requests for more programming in those areas. While the vast majority of students come to CCC for a specific course, workshop or lifelong learning, we are especially proud of our graduates. Consistently, over 90 percent are working within our 25-county service area, emphasizing our ability to attract and retain valued residents in our communities. These graduates are filling essential positions in hospitals, manufacturing plants, financial institutions, agriculture operations, automotive shops, child care centers, restaurants and law enforcement facilities. We promote and support starting or owning a small business as well as regional growth priorities such as child care, housing and workforce development. Our transfer agreements with other institutions like the University of Nebraska-Kearney, Hastings College, Bellevue University, University of Nebraska Medical Center and Wayne State College allow those students to continue work and earn advanced degrees while living in central Nebraska.

With the support of the governor and Nebraska legislature, community colleges have been able to discount tuition for early college students to earn college credits while still in high school. Those students are more apt to continue on to college following high school graduation, graduate with additional credentials and be better prepared for work upon exiting high school. Our programming for elementary and middle school students includes multiple campus tours, career exploration topics and summer camps in topics from technology to bugs to fine arts to science and math. For adults, our lineups include courses on leadership, safety, licensure and customized training for employers. With one of the largest adult education programs in the state, CCC is proud of our role in teaching new residents English as a second language and providing reading, GED and citizenship courses to assist in their efforts to become new citizens like many of our ancestors. Even those post-retirement enjoy our quality-of-life programming in crafts, baking, health and wellness, all without having to leave central Nebraska.

You are invited to visit our website at www.cccneb.edu, or come to one of our campuses, centers or hubs to learn more about what is occurring at YOUR community college. I welcome your continued input and feedback on what CCC can do to implement our mission of maximizing student and community success.