



CONNECTION

Frisco and Plano students get GPA boost with **DUAL CREDIT COURSES**



Frisco and Plano Independent School Districts (ISDs) recently took a significant step to bolster their dual credit programs.

Actions by both districts positively impact dual credit courses in the weighted GPA system, incentivizing more students to earn college credit before graduating high school. Starting with the graduating class of 2028 in Plano and 2030 in Frisco, dual credit, advanced placement (AP), and international baccalaureate (IB) classes will carry the same weight in GPA calculations. For Frisco ISD, the dual credit courses will rise to the 6.0 scale.

“The updated GPA scale for dual credit will strengthen our partnership with Collin College,” said Frisco ISD Superintendent Dr. Mike Waldrip. “[This will encourage] more students to pursue advanced academic challenges and earn college credits in high school.”

Dual credit programs are rapidly growing in popularity. High school students can earn college credit for courses that apply toward both their high school diploma and a college degree. Students who successfully complete the courses earn credit directly applicable to their college pathway, potentially enhancing applications for competitive programs.

District officials cited student, parent, and community requests, alongside the rising cost of college, as key factors in the new GPA weighting scale.

“The decision to equalize dual credit GPA reflects our commitment to enabling students to explore diverse academic pathways without concern for GPA disparities,” said Plano ISD Superintendent Dr. Theresa Williams. “By aligning our dual credit GPA with other advanced academic options, we’re empowering students to make choices based on their interests, career aspirations, and learning styles.”

Previously, the ISDs’ GPA scales offered a lower weighting for dual credit courses compared to AP and IB options. Under their new policies, all three programs will be positioned at the top tier of the districts’ weighted GPA scale. This incentivizes students to explore a wider range

of rigorous academic pathways while ensuring a fair and consistent impact on their GPA.

“This recognition by Frisco and Plano ISDs validates the quality and rigor of our dual credit program, giving our students a significant advantage of earning even more credits before entering universities,” said Collin College District President Dr. Neil Matkin. He applauded superintendents Waldrip and Williams, along with their board members, for this student-centered decision. Dr. Matkin stressed that there is not a competition between dual credit, advanced placement, or international baccalaureate options – all programs to achieve college credit while completing high school. “My wife and I raised three sons. During their high school experience, we had a mixture of dual credit, AP, and IB courses. One is not superior to another – it is all about student success, and all three of these programs are tools to help students succeed.”

Craig Leverette, Collin College vice president of P-12 Partnerships and districtwide scheduling, sees a growing trend in simplifying the process of earning college credit through dual credit.

“Dual credit offers a clear path to college credit,” Leverette explained. “Many districts are already reaping the benefits of GPA equalization for dual credit, and others are exploring its potential. Given its popularity and positive impact, GPA equalization presents a valuable option for more school districts to consider. We are thankful to all our dual credit partners for their continued efforts to provide this option to their students.”

Partnerships between Collin College and the ISDs that create a streamlined path to academic success are opening doors for students. By recognizing the academic value of dual credit and working together to ensure a smooth transition between high school and college, this collaboration paves the way for a more accessible and cost-effective path to higher education for students across the region.

For additional information about dual credit courses or GPA weighting, students should consult with their high school counselors. To learn more about Collin College dual credit, visit www.collin.edu/infodualcredit.html.



Dr. Mike Waldrip
Frisco ISD
Superintendent



Dr. Theresa Williams
Plano ISD
Superintendent

A tribute to Dr. Bob Collins: Honoring a founding trustee

Collin College wouldn't be what it is today without Dr. J. Robert Collins. This distinguished Board of Trustees member created a new legacy for the Collin County community on April 6, 1985 — the day of the college’s inception — and the same day he took up the mantle to serve at its helm as a founding Board of Trustees member.

“It takes a visionary to create a pathway for success from day one through four decades into the future,” said Dr. Neil Matkin, Collin College district president. “That is why it is simply not possible to talk about the history of Collin College without mentioning Dr. Collins’ guiding influence and countless hours of unwavering dedication.”

A resident of Farmersville, Dr. Collins has served the college on numerous committees and in officer roles, including Board of Trustees chair. He was elected to Place 8 and is chair of the Organization, Education, and Policy Committee. He worked at a Fortune 500 defense electronics company for more than 30 years. His rise through the company culminated in his role as a vice president and officer of the company. He transitioned to higher education when he joined Texas A&M University as a faculty member and

served in several roles. Dr. Collins’ dedication to his community has been evident for many years, most notably as city council member and mayor pro tem of the City of Plano. He has also served on several boards, won numerous awards, and has been honored by many organizations.

“We knew there was going to be growth in the county,” Dr. Collins said. “One characteristic of our Board is that we try to stay ahead of the trends, particularly of population growth. Probably the smartest thing we did was to get organized quickly and to identify the fact that we would have major campuses in Plano, McKinney, and Frisco.”

When Dr. Collins thinks about the history of the college, 10 locations in Allen, Celina, Farmersville, Frisco, McKinney, Plano, and Wylie, plus the iCollin Virtual Campus, and more than 200 degrees, certificates, and transfer programs flash through his mind. But it isn’t long before he reflects on the behind-the-scenes activity, its leaders, its robust partnerships, and the many lives which the college has transformed.

“We have good relationships between our administration and economic leaders here in the county,” said Dr. Collins. “We focus our offerings



Founding Board of Trustees member Dr. Collins proudly congratulating a student at graduation, an event in which he has participated for decades.

on the needs of the county. Businesses recognize that we’re beneficial to them, and they support us very nicely. We also have good support in the educational community.”

According to Dr. Collins, many people may not realize the college’s in-district tuition is only \$67 per credit hour, including fees, and that they can earn certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor’s degrees at this low tuition rate.

“We are working to keep one of the lowest tax rates in the state,” Dr. Collins said. “We’ve been able to save families a ton of money. To me, that’s probably one of the most important things we’ve done.” *continued on page 7*

Beyond Collin College: Dental Hygiene program provides free dental health services for human trafficking survivors



In its simplicity, a smile has the extraordinary capacity to be more than a universal expression of happiness. Kandice Swarthout, a Collin College Dental Hygiene professor, knows all too well that a healthy smile is the intersection of happiness meeting optimal dental health. This crossroads marked the opportunity to help a vulnerable group of women who have endured unimaginable hardships as human trafficking survivors.

Swarthout's effort to connect to the local community and offer dental care quickly transformed into an unwavering determination to make a difference. With the help of her students and colleagues, Swarthout set out to make a difference in these women's lives.

“We have this amazing space at our McKinney Campus that is fully equipped as a dental office. We have trained students and faculty; we really have it all right here!”

Kandice Swarthout

“The imperative need of oral health is often overlooked,” Swarthout said. “We wanted to find a way to help this community in a dignified way.”

As both a dental hygienist and licensed professional counselor, Swarthout helps mentor health providers to identify potential human trafficking victims while in a healthcare setting. Her expertise played a major role in planning this effort.

“The reality is that most victims of trafficking do see a healthcare provider at some point while in captivity,” Swarthout said. “Training to spot those indicators can quite literally save a life.”

Just down the road, Plano-based organization Reclaim 6-1-1 also provide tools to assist survivors but on a greater scale. Identifying as an ally to fight human trafficking, it wasn't long before Swarthout reached out to collaborate.

“As I learned more about the needs of survivors through my work, it became clear that dental care was almost always on that list,” Swarthout said. “As dental care providers, we cannot only help identify victims, but we can help victims regain a healthy life by providing oral care.”

Swarthout knew all the resources were in place to create a real impact.

“We have this amazing space at our McKinney Campus that is fully equipped as a dental office,” Swarthout said. “We have trained students and faculty; we really have it all right here!”

This was especially true after the Dental Hygiene program increased student admission to 24 annual students as of Fall 2022, increasing the number of students who were able to apply and get into the program. This was a direct result of the recent expansion of the Dental Hygiene program learning space, including the addition of more operatories and newly renovated laboratory spaces. For Swarthout, getting everyone on board to volunteer was the easier task. Once the idea was solidified, the support spread far and wide.

“We had this army of people ready to get to work,” Swarthout said. “It was inspiring to say the least and speaks volumes about our dedicated folks.”

From the advisory board to local area dentists to eager students, everyone was ready to lend their time and skills. Reclaim 6-1-1 helped Swarthout connect to a group of 15 women, all recently rescued from human trafficking and ready to receive dental care.

After weeks of planning, the dental clinic opened its doors last year, providing free dental healthcare to each of the women.

“We had about 60 volunteers show up,” Swarthout said. “It was amazing to see all 12 of our clinic chairs used to provide exams, oral cancer screenings, x-rays, deep cleanings, and fluoride treatments.”

Survivors who needed higher levels of care such as teeth fillings or extractions were attended to by local Collin County private dentists who volunteered to ensure all needs were met.

“Survivors often find themselves accustomed to experiencing disrespect, judgment, or feelings of shame,” Swarthout said. “Our goal for all of this was for them to receive care but also feel loved, cared for, and treated with respect and dignity. We accomplished this with everyone's help.”

Extra supplies and materials were donated to the Dental Hygiene program by Ivoclar, a dental supply company, alleviating any additional costs to the program.

“Leadership from Kandice, alongside program faculty members like Emily Henderson, truly positioned our program's event for success,” said Christine McClellan, the Dental Hygiene program

director. “This is a testament to what it's all about — helping our underserved communities.”

With the continued support of everyone involved, the Dental Hygiene program hopes to make this project their annual “give back” event. Students are already signing up to return next year to volunteer.

“I truly feel like we made a positive impact on this group of survivors,” said Adalyn Crabtree, Dental Hygiene student and volunteer. “Being able to help make this effort a reality filled me with so much pride for the work and career I'm pursuing. I can't wait to return and be a part of this again.”

Swarthout said this event has the capability of growing and reaching more survivors, a goal she's keeping in mind. With industry-standard equipment at hand and the dedicated students who use state-of-the-art learning spaces, the Dental Hygiene program is set to make a difference.

“We all reflected as we finished the day,” Swarthout said. “We're really learning the power we have to influence change by brightening both someone's future and smile.”

Collin College faculty highlight: Kandice Swarthout



Kandice Swarthout brings a wealth of experience to Collin College as a dedicated professor in the Dental Hygiene program.

With 28 years as a dental hygienist and a decade as a full-time faculty member, Swarthout's academic journey is rooted in excellence. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene and a Master's degree in Counseling from Texas Woman's University, complemented by her licensure as a professional counselor.

Initially intending to transition away from dental hygiene upon completing her graduate studies, Swarthout's career path took a turn when she was offered an adjunct faculty position at Collin College. Recognizing the alignment with her passion for teaching and counseling, she embraced the opportunity to merge her expertise.

“Joining Collin College was the perfect fit for me,” Swarthout said. “It allowed me to pursue my teaching aspirations while also preparing me to establish my counseling practice.”

Drawing on her counseling background, Swarthout integrates her expertise into the classroom, focusing on critical topics such as identifying and reporting human trafficking and providing trauma-informed care within dental healthcare settings.

“It's immensely fulfilling to contribute to this dual capacity,” she said, reflecting on her unexpected but rewarding career trajectory.

Beyond her instructional role, Swarthout finds profound satisfaction in mentoring students, guiding them toward professional confidence and competence.

“Witnessing their growth, particularly overcoming initial anxieties, is incredibly rewarding,” she shared, highlighting the transformative impact of education on her students.

Recognizing the challenges students face, Swarthout emphasizes the importance of self-care and resilience.

“In this demanding field, it's crucial to prioritize self-compassion and strive for personal bests each day,” she advised, encouraging a supportive approach to professional development.

In her free time, Swarthout indulges her passion for strength training. Introduced to weightlifting at a young age by her father, she finds fulfillment in the physical and mental benefits of the practice. As a certified kettlebell and barbell instructor, she extends her passion by training others, promoting physical health and wellness.

“For me, fitness is not just about strength; it's about improving self-care,” she said, underscoring the importance of balancing personal well-being with professional responsibilities.

Swarthout's dedication to education, combined with her multifaceted expertise, exemplifies Collin College's commitment to fostering excellence in dental hygiene and beyond.

The College Tour features Collin College, streams on Amazon Prime this fall

Lights, camera, action! The spotlight is focused on Collin College, as 10 all-star students take center stage on The College Tour to tell you what Collin College is all about. Through each unique story, viewers will hear students share their personal experiences with Collin College's affordable programs, top-notch facilities, dedicated faculty and staff, accessible resources, and so much more.

The College Tour series travels around the globe highlighting higher education institutions via student stories. Their stop at Collin College marked the first community college in Texas to be featured on the series.

The 30-minute-long episode is composed of 10 student-driven segments that express truly one-of-a-kind perspectives.

As cameras made their way through multiple Collin College campuses, The College Tour was able to capture the talent and determination of students, showcasing this amazing college community.

You'll soon be able to stream The College Tour on Amazon Prime and watch the full Collin College episode! As we prepare for the official Amazon Prime release on Oct. 15, let's get a sneak peek at the stars of the show and what they had to say about Collin College in front of the cameras!

Meet The Cast Members:



Maxwell Bales

Major: Veterinary Technology • Year: Freshman
Hometown: Wylie

"I'm able to take the knowledge that I've learned at Collin College back to my career and community and offer gold-standard medical care. This is thanks to our team of passionate professors who strive to make Veterinary Technology students successful!"



Marylasis Hernandez

Major: Criminal Justice • Year: Sophomore
Hometown: Plano

"Whatever major you choose, you won't just learn about it at Collin College, you'll get hands-on experience and guidance throughout the entire process. From first-year academic coaches to job offers after graduation, they've got your back!"



Temiloluwa Ogunleye

Major: Computer Science • Year: Junior
Hometown: Akure, Nigeria

"From counseling to transfer and career guidance, Collin College has provided me with the necessary resources that will be crucial to my professional and personal growth moving forward."



Alisha Nunley

Major: Kinesiology • Year: Freshman
Hometown: Bedford

"Collin College has been a blessing for my journey and has truly impacted me as a person. Being a student athlete is such an important, unique, and exciting opportunity!"



Daniel Stewart

Major: Education • Year: Sophomore
Hometown: McKinney

"Collin College is such an impressive place for education right here in my hometown. There are many campuses throughout the county, which makes education accessible for everyone looking to continue their education, no matter how busy your lifestyle."



Caleb Smith

Major: Business Administration • Year: Freshman
Hometown: Frisco

"When it came time for me to transfer, Collin College made the process so smooth. They helped me enroll in classes that would easily transfer over to my future university. My time at Collin prepared me to take the next steps in furthering my education."



Jordan Rourke

Major: Nursing • Year: Alumna
Hometown: McKinney

"I knew I wanted to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing, and it was a no-brainer when I found out I could continue at Collin College to achieve that. With low-cost tuition, flexibility, and on-campus support, the decision was easy."



Giovanni Delgadillo

Major: Respiratory Care • Year: Freshman
Hometown: Plano

"Collin College has been serving its communities for more than 30 years and has allowed countless students, like me, to achieve their academic goals without having to compromise their living."



Amrita Singh

Major: Business • Year: Sophomore
Hometown: Allen

"Wherever my future academic journey takes me, I know that I can thank Collin College for giving me a jump start and a wonderful experience as a Cougar."



Brooklyn Higa

Major: Welding Technology • Year: Freshman
Hometown: Oceanside, California

"Being able to operate welding machinery and perform uniform welds are my two interests combined in one. I am so grateful for the hands-on experience and education I'm getting at Collin College."



Collin College and State Farm: Nurturing community and education through partnership

For the past eight years, State Farm has been a strategic partner with the Collin College Foundation to enhance educational access and community engagement throughout Collin County. State Farm's decision to collaborate with Collin College stemmed from a shared belief in the transformative power of education.

"At State Farm, our mission is to help people," Corporate Responsibility Analyst Princella McNair said. "We believe everyone deserves an education that empowers them to reach their greatest potential."

This foundational belief underpins State Farm's multifaceted partnership with Collin

College, which focuses on creating opportunities for education and career development.

The partnership itself was strategically established to leverage Collin College's proximity to State Farm's corporate offices and hubs, facilitating collaborations that benefit both entities and the broader community.

"These relationships go beyond financial support," she added. "They are about increasing engagement and making a sustainable impact."

Over nearly a decade, Collin College has played a crucial role in various State Farm initiatives. One standout program is the Community College Tuition Program, which

provides financial assistance to State Farm employees pursuing higher education at community colleges. This initiative not only supports professional growth but also underscores the commitment to removing financial barriers to education. This includes a childcare program for individuals who need that service while seeking higher education.

The partnership with Collin College holds significance for State Farm.

"Building community and impacting lives is our common goal," McNair said.

Through initiatives such as the Science Under the Stars STEM Festival, which State Farm sponsored and at which nearly 100 State Farm employees volunteered, the partnership enriches the community by inspiring future generations in science and education.

Looking ahead, State Farm envisions higher education evolving to meet changing

continued on page 8

Focus on alumni: Where

As Collin College looks back on 40 years of education, we hear from some of the amazing alumni who have walked our halls.



Aaron Sims

Welder, Dynacraft

Collin College, Associate of Applied Science in Welding, 2023

"It was a good experience at Collin, and I got to learn a lot of welding skills and techniques that are essential for my career. All the professors were very educated and knowledgeable about the welding industry and gave me tips to succeed, not only as a welder, but also in life."



Alexa Acosta

Marketing Director, Clarity Benefit Solutions

- First-generation Latina graduate
- Southern Methodist University, Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing, 2016
- Collin College, Associate of Arts, 2014

"Attending Collin College was a transformative experience for me as a first-generation Latina graduate. Returning to the states after years abroad, I had no real guidance before enrolling at Collin. There, I mastered English, learned to communicate effectively, and gained essential leadership skills that I still practice today. Collin provided the perfect environment for self-discovery, helping me clarify my career path and prepare for a four-year university. The exceptional education and unwavering support were crucial to my success. I am forever indebted to Collin College for its profound impact on my life and career, and I highly recommend it to anyone."



Mente Bezuneh

Award-winning Filmmaker, Mentopia Productions

Collin College, Associate of Applied Science in Video Production, 2020

"For me, I was discouraged from doing what I wanted to do and told that I was never going to be good enough. But I knew this was my passion, and it didn't matter whether I made money or not; I was going to pursue it. Being at Collin gave me the knowledge, the friendships, and the confidence I needed to pursue my passion. And I can't put a price on that."



Jonathan Boyd

Fire Chief, City of Allen since 2018

- University of North Texas, Master's in Public Administration
- Collin College Fire Academy graduate, 1992; Academy Class No. 3

"My time at Collin College was transformative, offering a robust educational foundation that exceeded my expectations. At Collin, the Fire Academy taught me not only the technical skills necessary for firefighting, but also critical thinking and team leadership skills I use daily. I recommended Collin to others because of its commitment to excellence and community service. It is truly rewarding to see how the Fire Academy has grown and evolved since my participation in the third cohort."



Tigre Randle

Plumber, Neu Plumbing

Collin College, Associate of Applied Science in Construction Technology – Plumbing, 2022

"At Collin College, when the professors see you want to learn, they're there to help you. There were times when I stayed after class to ask questions, and they would take the time to answer them and that's important to me. I felt like I could thrive at Collin College. I didn't feel like they were just clocking in for a job. They were there to make a difference."

If you are a Collin College alum and would like to share your story, email collincollegealumni@collin.edu.

Dual Credit

Save time and money! Students can earn high school credit AND college credit through dual credit classes.

Learn more: www.collin.edu/express/dualcredit/

are they now?

Jaret Von Rosenberg

Head Basketball Coach,
Texas A&M University-Commerce

- Abilene Christian University, Master of Education, 2015
- University of Hartford, Bachelor of Science in Marketing, 2009
- Attended Collin College 2005-06, studied business, played for Collin College Cougars

"I really matured in my time at Collin College and living in the apartments on campus. Our team was a close-knit group. I still talk to a lot of them today. If I hadn't gone to Collin College, I don't think I would have ever played Division I basketball or be a coach right now. I broke my wrist in a car accident shortly after signing a contract to play basketball in Germany. Coach Jim Sigona let me volunteer as an assistant while I recovered. Two or three weeks into coaching, I fell in love with it. Collin affected me, not only as a student athlete but also as a coach. It changed the course of my life."

"One of the things I think about a lot is that during the summers, NBA players would come play pick-up games – Daron Williams, Chris Bosh, Bracey Wright. The pick-up games at 'Quad C' were kind of legendary in the Dallas Metroplex area. I got to guard Daron Williams. You don't get to do that just anywhere. Everyone just knows Collin and Sigona because of his longevity there, the success he's had, and the players he's helped."



Roderick C. Hunter Jr., D.P.M., MS

Foot and Ankle Specialist,
Podiatrist, and Founder of
Hunter Foot and Ankle
Associates, PLLC in Plano

- The University of Texas at Dallas, Masters of Science in Healthcare Leadership, 2021
- Kingwood Medical Center, Podiatry Residency, 2012
- New York College of Podiatric Medicine, D.P.M., 2009
- The University of Texas at Dallas, Bachelor of Arts in Biology, 2004
- The University of Texas at Dallas Redman Scholar
- Collin College, Associate of Science, 2001

"What amazed me about Collin College was that I wasn't just a number. I was an individual, and you don't find that at a lot of places. My professors took an active interest in my success. I felt like they really cared and had a vested interest in me being successful."

"One of my favorite memories is when I found out that I was invited to be a member of Phi Theta Kappa. When I started at Collin College, I didn't have the confidence to know that I could maintain a high GPA. With hard work and support from my professors, I realized that they had instilled in me the tools I needed to not only be successful at Collin College, but also to be successful in life."



Guillermo Ameer, Ph.D.

Professor of Biomedical
Engineering and Surgery,
Northwestern University

- First in family to attend college
- Founder and President of ProSorp BioTech, Inc. and VesselTek BioMedical, LLC
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ph.D., Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, 1999
- The University of Texas at Austin, Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering, 1993
- Collin College, Associate of Science, Magna Cum Laude, 1990

"Collin College serves the community. It is an excellent school. I felt prepared to go on to a university. All of my professors were exceptional. Attending Collin College worked for me. The price I paid for my education could have been 30 times as expensive."

"I had so many great times at Collin College. I remember working as a lab assistant in the brand-new computer lab and playing basketball in the new gym at the Plano Campus. I organized the first international student organization. It was fun meeting people with different backgrounds. My chemistry, physics, and math professors made essential contributions in my academic journey."



Simon McNeny

Co-Founder and Vice President
of the Nonprofit
Window to the Wild, 2014

- Texas A&M University, Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries, 2009
- Collin College, Associate of Science, 2007

"Collin College is an excellent institution. It has quality classes, amazing professors, and you can get a much more hands-on approach and the one-on-one attention that you're not going to necessarily receive at a university. I had some of the best professors in my college career there."

"I took a biology class that included a one-week trip to Big Bend National Park. That was one of the coolest classes I have ever taken. We stayed in the Chisos Mountains, and I learned about animals, plants, rocks, underground waterways and rivers, and the natural history of Texas. I am not a fan of dull, quiet classes. The atmosphere at this school is different. I walk in and I still feel the spirit, the vibrancy in the school."



College fields first-ever golf team



Collin College plans to hit a hole-in-one with its latest

sports offering. The college is fielding its first-ever golf team this fall, adding to its nationally recognized tennis and basketball programs.

"Golf is known for its focus on strategy, precision, and mental discipline, qualities that align well with the academic rigor and personal growth goals of Collin College students," said Dr. Albert Tezeno, athletic director and vice president of Student and Enrollment Services. "It provides opportunities for networking, leadership, and lifelong recreation, making it a valuable addition to the college's athletic offerings."

Golf Coach Cooper Schoolcraft echoed Dr. Tezeno's statements, pointing out that golfers are playing against two opponents every time they step up to the tee.

"You are playing against the course, and you are playing against yourself," Schoolcraft said. "For me, that challenge is what I love about it."

Schoolcraft has coached golf at Midland Christian School, Fort Worth Christian School, and Houston's Northland Christian School, in addition to coaching for a short stint with GOLFTEC, a training company with sports science at its core. He has coached several athletes who have moved up to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) level.

"As a coach, to be able to step in and build a program at an incredible school like Collin is a tremendous opportunity that I could not ignore," Schoolcraft said.

Schoolcraft spent the summer building Collin's inaugural team, which draws from recent high school graduates, current Collin students who have played competitively, and transfer students from other college and university programs.

Brodey Deacon, a transfer from Eastern Wyoming College, was the first golfer to sign on to the inaugural team.

"Being one of the first golfers in the program is pretty exciting," Deacon said. "I look forward to working hard with Coach Schoolcraft to improve my game and representing Collin in Region V."

Deacon said he appreciates having the chance to play golf year-round. He could only play seven months of the year in Wyoming because of the weather.

NJCAA golf is split into two seasons, with fall golf serving as a tune-up for the longer spring season, which runs from late January through May.

"We happen to be in one of the most competitive regions in the nation," Schoolcraft said. "That is good news for us because we are able to compete with the best. Being in Collin County, we are surrounded by great golf and extremely talented golfers. We are in an excellent location to build something special here at Collin College."

Administrators believe the addition of golf and e-sports this year and volleyball in the 2025-26 academic year will provide more opportunities for student engagement, helping to create an even more vibrant college culture.

"Athletics can attract prospective students, boost campus morale, and create a sense of pride and identity within the college community," Dr. Tezeno said. "They contribute significantly to vibrant campus life and the holistic development at Collin College."

For the players themselves, athletics provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, teamwork, and discipline, which are essential for success both in academic and professional pursuits.

Visit <https://athletics.collin.edu> for the latest news about Cougar Golf and other Collin College athletics.



**BRODEY DEACON,
COACH COOPER SCHOOLCRAFT**

Brodey Deacon (left) shakes hands with Coach Cooper Schoolcraft after signing to play on Collin College's inaugural golf team. Deacon was the first player to sign with the new team.

Workforce profile: Computer Networking

Students seeking swift entry into the workforce, skill enhancement, or a career change can choose from Collin College's diverse array of in-demand workforce programs. Spanning from animation to welding, these programs equip graduates with the technical skills and knowledge actively sought by employers. This ensures graduates are job-ready and prepared for success.

The ever-expanding digital world relies on a skilled workforce to keep everything connected. This program prepares graduates for rewarding careers in network design, installation, maintenance, and security.

"Our program goes beyond theory," said Patrick Evans, discipline lead of the Computer Networking program at Collin College. "We offer a blend of classroom instruction and hands-on labs, simulating real-world scenarios that students will encounter in the workforce. This practical approach, combined with industry-recognized certifications, gives our graduates a competitive edge in the job market."

The college program cultivates students' abilities to design, install, and maintain secure network systems, to ensure they align perfectly with client requirements. Through hands-on activities and simulations, students develop essential teamwork and critical-thinking skills to prepare them for success in various industries. Furthermore, the program equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue industry-recognized certifications from CompTIA, Cisco, and Microsoft, granting them a competitive advantage upon entering the workforce.



DEBBIE GOMEZ

Debbie Gomez, a recent Collin College graduate, said the Computer Networking program set her up for success, landing her a job in the field right after graduation.

"I started in Cybersecurity, but as I progressed in my studies, I realized I truly loved the technical aspects of computer networking," Gomez said. "I decided to make a big change and switch my major to Computer Networking. Through the program, I gained foundational knowledge and the opportunity to create a club that empowers other students."

"The college's growth in CCNA Certifications and the chance to meet industry leaders solidified my decision. Now, working as a network analyst at Citibank, I'm grateful for the journey and the chance to give back."

Collin College's Computer Networking program is designed to prepare students for immediate success in the workforce. If you're looking for a career with excellent growth potential and a chance to be at the forefront of technology, this program is for you. Contact Collin College today to learn more and take the first step toward a rewarding career in computer networking.

COMPUTER NETWORK ARCHITECT

Average Starting Salary: \$87,700

Average Salary: \$137,900

Job Growth: 24.3%

* Data for Collin County obtained from JobsEQ and O*Net. Average salary is as of 2024, and job growth is projected from 2023-30.

Continuing Education

Take your career to the next level via Continuing Education classes.
Learn more: www.collin.edu/ce/

Collin College Scholars Active in Learning (SAIL): Making waves since 1996

Collin College Founding President Dr. John Anthony believed in lifelong learning.

His belief that “we need to educate all ages of students” inspired the birth of Collin College Continuing Education’s Scholars Active in Learning (SAIL) program.

The SAIL program, for individuals 55 and older, started in 1996 as a club that rented space at Collin College. During this time, members were able to participate in 12 classes. Since 1996, the program has become a part of the college and has grown to approximately 60 face-to-face and online classes per semester with more than 500 dedicated students.

“The best thing that happened to the SAIL program is when it became part of the college because then it had the college’s support,” said Sherry Scamardo, program director of SAIL. “The program has stayed true to the classes that were offered in the beginning – history, literature, science, and current events – and we have added AI courses. Every semester we offer all new courses, face-to-face and online.”



Sherry Scamardo

Scamardo has been a part of Collin College for 10 years and with SAIL for eight years. She discovered later in life that her place was in higher education, and her love for learning is her connection to this student population. She believes the program provides a wonderful learning opportunity and a chance for students to get involved with the college.

“It’s important that we keep the classes fresh and in the eyes of the community to attract new students,” Scamardo said. “We really look at SAIL as a community service. How can we keep our community involved in learning? Students come from all backgrounds and educations.

“I had a student who never got to go to college. She was 82 years old and because of the war during her youth, she said, ‘I stayed home to raise my kids. And now, I’m so happy to tell my great grandkids that I am in college.’”

The oldest SAIL student, Ann Stephens, is 94 years old and has been a part of the program for 15 years. Sally Roberts was one of the first students in the program in 1996 and continues to participate in SAIL classes.

SAIL is also known for its notable instructors which have included a retired secret service agent, a brigadier general, and many of Collin College’s very own noteworthy professors.

“SAIL and Collin College think it is important to encourage students to be part of the Collin family, whether it is to take lifelong learning classes, Continuing Education classes, or credit courses to finish a degree,” Scamardo said. “We want our scholars to know that ‘we see you and that we want to educate you.’ Collin College is an education space. Whether you’re 18 or you’re 94, you’re important to us. I truly believe that because I’m going to be one of those students.”

To learn more about this affordable program, visit www.collin.edu/sail or call 972.985.3788.



CHECK OUT the Collin College Continuing Education offerings for Fall 2024.



Scan the QR code, or visit www.collin.edu/ce.

Honoring a founding trustee

continued from page 1

Dual credit students earning associate degrees before their high school graduations is also high on his list of the college’s achievements. But Dr. Collins cannot describe this higher education institution without mentioning the employees.

“What I love the most are the people that we have at the college,” Dr. Collins said. “We’ve never had a problem hiring high-quality presidents. We’ve only had three presidents in our history, and we have the greatest group of people you’ve ever seen in terms of dedicated faculty, staff, and administrators. Collin College is really an amazing place where we transform lives. I am so proud of how far this college has come over the last 40 years, and I cannot wait to see what is coming next.”



Transforming lives for generations

Students like Jamee Cook can attest to Collin College’s transformative power.

Cook earned an associate degree in Health Information Management and is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Clinical Operations Management. Her eldest son, Kyler, earned a Cybersecurity associate degree. Her middle son, Tristan, took dual credit classes, earned an HVAC associate degree, and is now working in the HVAC field. Her youngest son, Kannon, will likely follow in Tristan’s footsteps.

“The whole experience at Collin College is really good, and I am not just talking about the financial aspect and the fact that we are debt free,” Cook said. “The professors are great; they really want you to succeed. Most of my classes have been online. The flexibility is important because I work a full-time job and my oldest son also worked full time and took night classes. I’ve really enjoyed watching the expansion of the programs and how many options there are. I love everything the college is doing in our school district. We have a motivated family now. Collin College gave me the capability to create a new direction in my life.”



Jamee Cook

Collin College awarded \$2.1 million grant to expand adult education programs



Collin College has been awarded a \$2.1 million grant annually for the next two years from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to expand adult education and literacy programs across Collin and Rockwall counties. The grant will provide a variety of free services to adults seeking career advancement or who want to improve their basic skills.

“This grant is a tremendous opportunity for Collin College to serve a critical need in our community,” said Dr. Neil Matkin, Collin College district president. “By providing literacy education, workforce training, and other essential services, we can help adults achieve their educational and career goals.”

The grant will focus on five key areas: literacy education, workforce preparation and training, English as a Second Language (ESL) preparation and civics instruction, high school equivalency preparation, and career advancement services. All services will be offered at no cost to participants.



“This grant will support education attainment for persons who are in need of language or literacy skills to enter college or to advance their careers,” said Natalie Greenwell, executive director of Grants Management at Collin College.

“Many adults may have put their education on hold due to life circumstances, and this grant will provide them with a valuable opportunity to catch up and gain the skills they need to succeed.”

The grant funding will cover administrative costs, faculty salaries, instructional materials, exam preparation resources, training programs, and some contractual expenses. Notably, the grant will allow Collin College to launch a new training program specifically designed for justice-involved individuals at the Collin County Jail. This program aims to equip participants with the skills and knowledge they need to re-enter the workforce upon release.

The grant funded nine positions to support the program with an additional eight ESL faculty members. These new hires will fulfill a crucial role in ensuring the program’s success by providing personalized instruction and support to participants.

Both Collin College and the TWC are committed to ensuring the success of the program. Retention and program completion will be a key focus, with the TWC expecting Collin College to serve more than 1,500 unique students in the coming year.

For more information on Adult Education and Literacy at Collin College, email ael@collin.edu.

Did you know?

1985-87

Then and Now

2024



13
1987



of graduates



61,272



0*
1985


square footage (college footprint)



3,039,952



25
1987



of degrees, certificates, and pathways



200+



THE EXPRESS


Mascot



COLLIN COUGAR

* Collin College's first classes were held in five area high schools. The college purchased the Osmond Plaza, the first building of the McKinney Campus, on Sept. 19, 1985. On Jan. 20, 1986, the first classes were held at the McKinney Campus.

CONNECTED | UNEXPECTED | EXCEPTIONAL

Collin College and State Farm

continued from page 3

needs, particularly in response to technological advancements and global shifts such as the pandemic. By working together with industry partners, higher education can adapt quickly so lifelong learning remains accessible and effective. In fact, one program encourages people to earn the college degree they started but did not finish.

“State Farm assists students who have attended Collin College in the past but haven’t attended in over a semester and are six hours or less away from graduation,” said Dr. Bill Horstman, associate dean of Student and Enrollment Services at Collin College. “For these students, a Collin College degree is within reach because the program allows them to complete their degree with tuition and fees covered.”

McNair expresses her gratitude for the ongoing collaboration with the Collin College Foundation and Collin College, noting how it has become an important relationship that benefits students, employees, and the community at large.

“I am an advocate for higher education,” she said, “and State Farm’s support makes it seamless for employees to pursue their educational goals.”

State Farm deserves commendation for being a champion for education and community impact.

Former students who believe they may qualify for a State Farm degree completion scholarship at Collin College or who would like more information about the State Farm partnership, are encouraged to contact Dr. Horstman at bhorstman@collin.edu or 972.377.1077.

inside this issue

- Frisco and Plano students get GPA boost with dual credit courses 1
- A tribute to Dr. Bob Collins: Honoring a founding trustee 1
- Beyond Collin College: Dental Hygiene program provides free dental health services for human trafficking survivors 2
- Collin College faculty highlight: Kandice Swarthout 2
- The College Tour features Collin College, streams on Amazon Prime this fall 3
- Collin College and State Farm: Nurturing community and education through partnership 3
- Focus on alumni: Where are they now? 4-5
- College fields first-ever golf team 6
- Workforce profile: Computer Networking 6
- Collin College Scholars Active in Learning (SAIL): Making waves since 1996 7
- Collin College awarded \$2.1 million grant to expand adult education programs 7
- 40th Anniversary: Transforming lives for generations 7
- Did you know? 8

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