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SIC Fights Against COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered the appearance of day-to-day life around the world as well as on Southeastern Illinois College's campus. Southeastern Illinois College has always put the students' and staff's health and safety first. Since December 2020, we have had vaccines readily available to help guard individuals and lessen the symptoms of COVID-19. SIC has previously hosted vaccination clinics to help boost our overall vaccination rate. SIC administered the Moderna variant of the vaccine, effective at safeguarding the recipient against the deadly coronavirus. Turnout for these clinics may not have been huge, but lives were potentially saved by these vaccine recipients. The CDC states that these vaccines are safe and effective against COVID-19. In an effort to help boost our low vaccination rates at Southeastern Illinois College and the region of Southern Illinois as a whole, SIC has offered some rewarding incentives. One of the incentives involved the issuance of a \$100 gift card to students who were vaccinated. This card can be used both in the Cafeteria and Coffee Shop on SIC's campus. The other incentive was that if SIC reached a campus-wide 70% vaccination rate by November 1, 2021, for staff and students combined, SIC will provide a full week off for students during Thanksgiving Break! Southeastern Illinois College is on board with ensuring campus life can return to a state of normalcy. The staff at Southeastern Illinois College has over a 70% vaccination rate. The vaccination rate among students as of October 29, 2021, was approximately 35%. It appears we will sadly fall short of the percentage needed for the extra two days off for Thanksgiving Break. Again, health and safety have been a focal point for this college's administration, and they continue to do what is best for both students and staff. Unfortunately, once the deadline date of November 1, 2021, was reached, Southeastern Illinois College notified the student body that this incentive could not be offered as the vaccination rate failed to meet the designated goal.

Article by Jacob Lemon

SIC Students Share Christmas Plans

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed holiday plans for many over the past couple of years, but 2021's Christmas Break may just be the pivotal year for students here at Southeastern Illinois College. After asking students about their plans for Christmas break this year, the most common answer was spending time with family. In the previous two holiday seasons, the answer involved making virtual zoom calls with family or simply staying at home, to help prevent the spread of the deadly virus. This year, students are getting back on their feet and traveling for the holiday break. Things are looking

much brighter than previously. For example, current student, Ian Meshew, says he has an annual Christmas party with his friends each year, but last year he had to have a virtual zoom party in order to uphold their special tradition. This year, as of now, he said they are planning to have a party in person with food, games, and good company. His story is like those of many other families last year, who were masked, calling each other virtually via zoom or canceling their plans altogether. Another student, namely Kellen Colson, unfortunately, had a similar case. Her Christmas plans were canceled altogether last year. Kellen stated that her family usually has a huge dinner with all of her cousins, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, but because of last year's pandemic, they, unfortunately, had to cancel. Thankfully, this year, she said that her family has planned to follow through with their tradition by having a big family holiday meal on Christmas day. She said that they have not seen some of their family members in a couple of years because of COVID-19, but are excited to change that this holiday season.

COVID-19 has changed a lot for all of us, whether it be school, holidays, grocery shopping, or other meaningful events in our day-to-day lives. With the vaccine readily available nationwide and people feeling safer around family members, the change that we have all been waiting for is finally becoming a reality once again. The long-awaited unmasked Christmases and seeing family members in person, rather than through a screen, are going to be some of the best presents students receive this holiday season. The students interviewed on campus at Southeastern Illinois College sound optimistic and excited for a change this holiday season. A change that will allow them to return to a state of normalcy, despite an ongoing pandemic. Most importantly, they are thrilled to have a holiday break, filled with family and friends, to look forward to. We wish these students safe travel. This holiday season will be one to remember for the whole family. Happy Holidays!

Article by Haley Rice



SIC Student, Ian Meshew



SIC Student, Kellen Colson

SIC Faculty Shares Music Preferences

Southeastern Illinois College, as well as any other college, remains a stressful environment for both professors and students, given the pandemic. Despite this stress, SIC Student Government seeks to answer one of many questions students have about faculty here at SIC. Specifically, a question that relates to us in a special way. What music do our professors and faculty members like to listen to in their free time? The following faculty members were eager to inform the students of SIC about their music preferences. The faculty members include Nursing Instructors Amy Murphy, Brenda Knight, and Sabrina Stout. Professor Paul Cummins and Diesel and Powersports Technology Instructor, Ralph Boots, are featured in this entry as well. We hope you have fun with this reading.

First, we asked several faculty members about their favorite music genres. Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight, listed several of her favorite genres. These genres included contemporary religious music, and music from the '70s and '80s, specifically, the decades' top hits. When asked the same question, Professor Paul Cummins stated his favorite genre of music includes 80's one-hit wonders. When asked, Amy Murphy replied she had no favorite music genre, however, there is music she does not favor. Nursing Instructor, Sabrina Stout, listed hip-hop as her favorite music genre as she frequently dances to it. Instructor, Ralph Boots, listed several genres that are his favorite. They are rock, classic rock, and praise and worship.

Another question that was asked centered around the streaming service Spotify. Do our faculty members utilize this music streaming service? Let's find out! Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight, revealed she does not use Spotify. Professor Paul Cummins told us that he enjoys using Spotify. While he is using Spotify, you can expect him to be listening to a playlist consisting of '80s music, '90s alternative, and Stevie Wonder. When asked, Nursing Instructor, Amy Murphy, indicated she does not use Spotify, however, she does use Pandora! When she is using Pandora, she is streaming songs, not limited to, by Ed Sheeran, Adam Levine of Maroon 5, Etta James, John Legend, Hozier, Leonard Cohen, Motown, and Herbie Hancock. Nursing Instructor, Sabrina Stout, indicated that she enjoys listening to Spotify. Her playlist consists of a mixed selection featuring rap, hip-hop, pop, and old rock. Instructor, Ralph Boots, stated he does not listen to Spotify.

We even took a step further by asking these faculty members about their favorite concerts. Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight, mentioned her favorite concert was performed by The Eagles. Professor Paul Cummins said his favorite concerts were performed by Elton John and Billy Joel. Nursing Instructor, Amy Murphy, stated her favorite concert was performed by Styx. Nursing Instructor, Sabrina Stout, provided that her favorite concerts were performed by Lil Wayne and Lady Gaga. Instructor, Ralph Boots, listed several concerts that he really enjoyed. These concerts were performed by Joe Bonamassa and RUSH.

They were then asked about a concert they wish they could attend. Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight, highlighted either the Casting Crowns or Duran Duran. Professor Paul Cummins stated Madonna. His reason for this is as he states, "She's an icon. The only reason she isn't immediately seen as one of the most influential trailblazers is because she is still alive." Nursing Instructor, Amy

Murphy, mentioned Elton John, because, she stated, "I would love to feel the in-person energy from his talent."

We then asked them about their favorite musicals. Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight has several musicals that she likes, but no favorite. These musicals, but are not limited to, Wicked, Oklahoma, Music Man, and The Lion King. Professor Paul Cummins noted that his favorite musical was Les Misérables. When asked, Nursing Instructor, Amy Murphy, she does not have a favorite, but after seeing Come From Away years ago, she was moved. Instructor, Ralph Boots, enjoys several musicals. They are Chicago and Grease.

We then asked them about how they prefer to play/listen to their music. Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight, uses Sirius XM in her vehicle, and CDs at home when listening to music. Professor Paul Cummins emphasized the magic of listening to a jukebox, but he is a popular streamer of music. Nursing Instructor, Amy Murphy, listed CDs as her go-to. Nursing Instructor, Sabrina Stout, utilizes her iPhone to listen to music on the go. Similarly, Instructor, Ralph Boots, enjoys listening to music on his iPad.

We then narrowed it down to what their favorite song is. Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight, had difficulty listing one at first, but her favorite song as of now is "Scars in Heaven" by Casting Crowns. Professor Paul Cummins stated songs performed by The Smashing Pumpkins. Nursing Instructor, Sabrina Stout listed "Shivers" by Ed Sheeran. Instructor, Ralph Boots, stated, "I don't have a favorite... Right now."

On the contrary, we asked these faculty members what songs they cannot stand. Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight said, "Anything rap or Nicki Minaj." Professor Paul Cummins mentioned, "Any song by guys named Toby or Hank." Nursing Instructor, Amy Murphy listed "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Nursing Instructor, Sabrina Stout, said, "Anything country!" Instructor, Ralph Boots, mentioned songs performed by Toby Keith or George Thorogood. Also, we asked these faculty members if they have a wedding song. Professor Paul Cummins said, "If the reception has an open bar, they can play whatever they want." Nursing Instructor, Amy Murphy, does not have one. Nursing Instructor, Sabrina Stout, sadly, did not have one. On a high note, Instructor, Ralph Boots, said "Marry Me" by Train.

We then asked about a song that lifts their spirits. Nursing Instructor, Brenda Knight, mentioned "Babe" by Styx or music by Kool and the Gang. Professor Paul Cummins mentioned "Come on Eileen" by Dexy's Midnight Runners. Nursing Instructor, Amy Murphy, listed "I Heard it Through the Grapevine". Nursing Instructor, Sabrina Stout, had many to ponder. The songs she considered were '80s pop and rock, as they reminded her of her childhood, and pop and hip-hop as she listens to this with her friends. She also likes to hear her daughters sing. Instructor, Ralph Boots, referenced "What You Give" by Tesla.

Southeastern Illinois College has a learning environment where students can connect with professors, in a multitude of ways, both in and out of the classroom. We would like to thank these faculty members for providing us with insight into their personal music preferences to share with students here at SIC for that very purpose.

Article by Sydney Hancock

BRIGHT STAR

Brightstar the Musical is Postponed

With the current pandemic altering our day-to-day lives, it is evident that students are not engaging in normal schedules or activities. Not to forget the gut-wrenching hardships placed on those worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately caused many students to miss out on opportunities present in previous years that have attracted many by providing life-long memories. Southeastern Illinois College strives to provide students the chance to live out these meaningful experiences. Despite their efforts, sadly, normalcy has been significantly diminished.

The cast and crew of Brightstar at SIC were struck with sadness when they found out that their production would be postponed due to the pandemic. When the school year started, students in the Arts were thrilled to finally be underneath the stage lights once again after being in the dark for so long. Originally, the show was set to take place on October 1st and 2nd, 2021. However, the cast had a COVID-19 outbreak unfold less than two weeks before the production's opening night. When the news was given to the cast that the show could not continue at that given time, they were devastated. They would be waiting in the wings until further notice. But as any theatre buff knows, the show must go on!

Brightstar The Musical is now set to take the stage in February of 2022. The cast will illuminate the stage in the George T. Dennis Visual Arts Center on February 12th at 7:00 p.m. and February 13th at 2:00 p.m. The cast is ready to start rehearsing again. They cannot wait to show everyone what they have been working so hard towards.

When speaking with a current cast member, Paxton Griffith, about the show being postponed, he said, "Even though we are having to wait a few extra months to put it on, I think everyone will enjoy this show and I'm so happy that we get to perform."

Even though COVID-19 has taken a hold of the production's cast in the Fall of 2021, they are now beginning to rise from the ashes, more excited than ever to be performing for a live audience. Everyone, make sure to mark your calendars and come watch the SIC theatre students bring theatre back to life this upcoming February!

Article by Ravyn Gauch

SIC Forensic Falcons

It's no secret that Southeastern Illinois College has one of the best Forensic Teams in the area. With the Forensic Falcons boasting more achievements than any other college in Illinois, it is hard to claim otherwise. This includes, but is not limited to, finishing in the top five nationally for almost 40 years, being undefeated as an Illinois community college at nationals for over 20 years, and winning internationals over an Ivy-League University, namely, Yale, and a top-tier institution, Vanderbilt, in 2021.

It is not uncommon to hear about the dizzying success of the Forensic Falcons year in and year out. However, the inner workings of competitive speech may be a mystery to those that do not compete themselves, myself included. I was recruited by the speech team this spring, but before then, I had no idea what that entailed, besides verbal charisma.

So, in its most basic form, Forensics has three categories. These categories are public address, limited prep, and interpretation. Public addresses include types of events where the competitors are given weeks to prepare a ten-minute speech, whether this be to inform or to simply entertain. Limited prep, as you may have guessed, includes events where the competitors are given a small window of time to prepare a speech based on a given topic. Interpretation is an event where competitors choose a story or topic to give a dramatic interpretation over.

After all the years of hearing about SIC's success, I was unaware of how these competitive events differed. Upon learning about these individual events, it is safe to say that the Forensic Falcons Competitive Speech Team's respect is well-deserved. It is not just about charisma, as assumed by many, but it is specifically about hard work and creativity. The success alone does not belong to the talented competitors. This plethora of accomplishments has been consistent for many years. The exceptional coaches Jenny Billman, Paul Cummins, and John Corum, have been the magic behind the Forensic Falcons Competitive Speech Team at SIC and can be expected to keep this history of success alive. With this in mind, what can we learn from this year's team?

Well, as I am sure we are all fully aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused all sorts of unexpected problems from decreased school attendance to toilet paper shortages. Several unexpected problems remain true for the Falcon Forensics Competitive Speech Team. Last year, the team had to compete in an entirely virtual format via zoom, offering new challenges to the team. Now, the competitors had to learn to perform differently while being hit with a wave of technological errors.

So, I went to Mrs. Billman to find out what this year's speech season will look like. When asked if competing virtually was better or not, she had this to say "It affords us new opportunities and different competition, which is valuable. Last year we competed against schools like Yale, Vanderbilt, and the Air Force Academy for the first time. On the other hand, traveling with the team has been one of my favorite parts of forensics. So, I'm looking forward to traveling again."

Now, with the coaches' thoughts in mind, I went to the only returning member of last year's speech team, Haley Rice, an international competitor. Haley had to say "I've seen great teams before and I definitely see the potential for this one as well. I'm excited to compete face to face and see what this team can do". So, as virtual tournaments do change the competition, this year's team is ready for anything. From the coaches to the competitors, we are sure our Forensic Falcons are going to have yet again, another great season!

Article by Isaiah Francis



SIC Forensic Falcons



*SIC Golf Coach,
Shain Miller*

Golf Returns to SIC

After being silent for nearly twenty years, the Falcons will return to the fairways. Opportunities for involvement are everywhere here at Southeastern Illinois College. On campus, there are thirteen student clubs, seven competitive teams, and four athletic programs. While other institutions are cutting programs and student opportunities so that they can reduce their operating costs; Southeastern is doing the opposite. The Falcons' golf program has returned after its hiatus of nearly twenty years.

Golf at the college level is unlike any other sport. A typical golf match consists of two to three days. Each of these days they will play either eighteen, twenty-seven, or even thirty-six holes. This makes for a long and tiring weekend, but it is nothing that the Falcons are not prepared for. Just like any new program, the first few matches will be a learning experience, but success is sure to follow.

After all, the ball has just started rolling for the Falcons' golfers. In April of this year, SIC announced that Shain Miller of Carrier Mills was selected to be the head coach of the golf team. Miller is excited for this opportunity to coach the Falcons. Currently, the Falcons' golf team consists of three players, but they are still actively recruiting. Coach Miller said, "The college has been very generous toward our team. We have four full-time and four part-time scholarships available." Miller went on to say that he plans to have eight golfers on the roster. He plans to recruit primarily in-district students. "There are many talented golfers within SIC's district and I hope this team will give them an opportunity to continue their career."

Each match, six golfers will travel as a unified team. The top five scores from each day will contribute to the overall team score. "One of the things I look for is commitment. I try and work on my game nearly every day and I expect my players to do the exact same thing. This time of the year when the weather is not the best condition, we will be in the gym preparing ourselves for the next season."

Coach Miller also made it apparent that his player's academic performance in the classroom was equally as important to him as their performance on the course. In the future, the golf program plans to not only recruit a larger number of players each year, but they intend on starting a women's golf team as well. As time goes on, the golf program will prove itself to be competitive and this will lead to more opportunities within the sport.

"Our first year, we may only play in five or six matches," said Miller, "But we plan to travel as a team and play other area courses to prepare us for what lies ahead in our future."

The excitement about the new team is prevalent around campus. The college is very fortunate to have this athletic program and it is clear to see that people are excited for what it may bring.

President, Dr. Jonah Rice supports the new program and says that "We are excited to bring back golf and offer more options for students in and around our region."

This new addition is sure to attract more students to SIC for years to come. Athletic Director Jeremy Irlbeck, says that he is "Very excited that we are adding men's golf to the athletic teams here at SIC. The

interest level of golf in our area continues to grow every day and is a great addition to the Falcons' Athletic Department and the overall SIC community."

Coach Miller invited all interested current or future to contact him about recruitment. Additional information can be found on the college's website. Do not miss your opportunity to contribute to the new Falcons' golf program!

Article by Alex O'Daniel

Volleyball Returns to SIC

Southeastern Illinois College currently features four NJCAA Division I Competitive Teams and one of the newest additions at SIC is its very own Women's Volleyball Competitive Team. It is with great excitement and anticipation that SIC Athletics has brought back the Women's Volleyball Competitive Team after a two-decade hiatus. The importance of bringing back the long-awaited Women's Competitive Volleyball Team revolved around opportunity, specifically, by featuring more local and regional athletes that would be interested in sharpening their athletic skills at the collegiate level. Veteran Coach, Jonathan Watts, is the new Head Coach for the Falcons' Women's Volleyball Competitive Team. Coach Watts comes to Southeastern Illinois College with years of coaching experience and an impressive list of accomplishments.

Previously, Coach Watts served as a Varsity Coach at Crab Orchard High School from 2005- 2017. After this, he coached at Johnston City High School for a couple of years. Between these two positions, his teams have won over 300 high school games! His experience does not stop here, however. He also coached club volleyball for six years. When asked what his overall thoughts on the season were, Watts stated, "We were competitive through most games despite being a young team. We won our first game against Shawnee, went on to win five more, and several sets after that. A challenge for our new team was not having the same experience as other schools since we were starting with a young team of freshman." Watts also expressed that he enjoyed watching the girls grow through the season. A quote that he used quite frequently during practices and games was, "I am not asking you to be as good as everyone else. I am asking you to be better than yesterday. That is what we strive for." As far as next year, Watts expressed that he is looking forward to the upcoming season and having more experienced volleyball players teaching the ropes to the incoming volleyball players. Southeastern Illinois College is paving the pathway for students to grow and develop both on and off the court. The establishment of the long-awaited Women's Volleyball Competitive Team serves as an exemplar of this tradition.

Article by Reagan Lees

*SIC's Women's
Volleyball Team*



**The Falcon Flyer is brought to you by
the SIC Student Government.**

SIC Falcons Faction of Gamers Esports Team



SIC Introduces Esports Team

Are you by any chance interested in taking your gaming skills to the next level? The brand-new Southeastern Illinois College Falcons' Faction of Gamers competitive esports team is a great addition to SIC's vast array of selections that provide students with long-term academic benefits.

The newly formed competitive esports team was put into place by SIC's President, Dr. Jonah Rice. The idea originated in the Fall of 2020 before being put into place in the Fall of 2021, making SIC the only collegiate institution in Southern Illinois to feature a competitive esports team.

The SIC Falcons' Faction of Gamers provides eligible students with partial scholarships covering eight credit hours of tuition per semester! Students seeking to become a part of the Falcons' Faction of Gamers are not required to have any competitive gaming experience, however, it is expected that they are familiar with the basics.

The competitive esports team, led by Coach Fitzgerald, practices on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, in the gaming arena across from the cafeteria. On Tuesdays, the entire competitive esports team practices together. If the entire competitive esports team is present, the Falcons' Faction of Gamers engages in scrimms. If not, they practice in public online matches. These competitors are given the opportunity to utilize the gaming arena at any time to practice. There are several competitive lineups, given the multitude of games showcased in competition. The Falcons' Faction of Gamers' competitive season takes place during both the Fall and spring semesters. Matches take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, by default. There are separate games featured on separate days. The Falcons' Faction of Gamers competes in tournaments hosted by The National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE). The NACE features three leagues for competitors.

There is the open league, a casual/less competitive division, the challenger league, a competitive division, and the varsity league, consisting of the best competitors. The NACE tournament currently has more than 200 members from around the nation and Canada, enrolled in the esports tournament. These members include public universities, community colleges, and private institutions. The NACE uses anti-cheating software, namely, Mainline, that allows team captains to flag suspicious players. Admins then investigate competitors accused of cheating. This helps to ensure fair play.

Students who are interested in watching these matches have two options. The student can enter the gaming arena and watch the match unfold in person, or they can view the online live stream through Twitch. Currently, the SIC Falcons' Faction of Gamers is on the lookout for one more competitor to join the competitive esports team to make a total of ten.

Current and future students that are interested in joining will need to fill out an application for evaluation. In the future, SIC Falcons' Faction of Gamers will potentially host tryouts for students seeking to join.

The Falcons' Faction of Gamers' Head Coach, Fitzgerald, stated, "SIC Falcons' Faction of Gamers offers students a chance to be a part of a team while having a reason to do so, other than being a hobby. Many gamers have not had this opportunity."

Coach Fitzgerald is enthused with the competitive esports team's growth, not just in terms of performance, but also in their forming of a bond. These competitors have a selection of games to choose from including Call of Duty: Cold War, Overwatch, Valorant, Counter-Strike Global Offensive, Rocket League, Fortnite, Super Smash Brothers Ultimate, Madden, FIFA, and Hearthstone.

The Falcons' Faction of Gamers' first official competitive team member, Jaxson Berry, a freshman at SIC, said, "Being a part of the competitive esports team has been a great experience." Jaxson is a part of the Fortnite and Call of Duty: Cold War competitive lineups. Jaxson highlighted his favorite part about being included on the competitive esports team by emphasizing, "You have teammates that are around you and the interactions involved are fun." As the world is constantly shaping, Southeastern Illinois College has once again taken a crucial step in ensuring students can flourish in any given environment. The establishment of SIC Falcons' Faction of Gamers competitive esports team serves as a game-changer for student life here on campus.

Article by Joshua Baker



Falcons Faction of Gamers Head Coach, Jason Fitzgerald



Falcons Faction of Gamers Gaming Arena