

KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

currents

Fall 2022

TYLER COOKSLEY

Building for the Future



A PUBLICATION OF THE **Kirkwood**
FOUNDATION



currents FALL 2022

President's Letter **3**

STUDENT CENTER FEATURE:
The Wait is Over! **4**

STUDENT FEATURE:
Grace Miller **6**

ALUMNUS FEATURE:
Tyler Cooksley **8**

From the Desk of Jody Donaldson **11**

MAKE A GIFT

You're only a Kirkwood student for a couple years, but you're a Kirkwood alumna or alumnus forever.

5
DECADES

3
GENERATIONS

200,000+
ALUMNI

Visit www.kirkwood.edu/foundation/give to make a positive impact on the next generation of Kirkwood alumni.

Gifts at every level have a direct impact on Kirkwood students and enable us the opportunity to provide an exceptional learning experience.



Stay in touch with other alums, Kirkwood faculty and staff, and be in the loop regarding special events. Update your contact information, and tell us what you've been doing since graduation: www.kirkwood.edu/alumni.



Dear friends,

On a college campus, fall is the season of new beginnings. For faculty and staff, it signifies the start of a new term. In the case of returning students, they take new classes and learn from different instructors. For incoming students, a whole new world of higher education opens up to them for the first time. It's truly very exciting, and it has always been one of my favorite moments each year.

But this fall at Kirkwood, the term "new beginning" means even more.

That's because after a successful bond measure and two years of construction, Kirkwood's brand-new, modern Student Center is open for all to enjoy. I can't overstate how excited we are about this new facility on our main campus.

Located in Iowa Hall, the new Student Center looks incredible. In fact, it has no equal at any other community college in the state of Iowa. Everything today's student needs to feel at home and succeed in their academic career is under one roof. When they enter the building, they'll find centralized student services, study and leisure areas, larger meeting spaces, a new campus store, a coffee bar, and a stunning new café — among many other outstanding features.

The opening of the new Student Center is a significant moment in the over 50-year history of Kirkwood, and it couldn't have happened without community support. In 2017, voters in our seven-county service area went to the polls and overwhelmingly passed a \$60 million bond measure that would not only make this incredible building possible, but also funded much-needed updates to our facilities as well. That happened because the people we serve know how important Kirkwood is to the region and its economy.

This college has always been strongly supported by the community, and when it comes to our students, that need for support has never been greater. College students typically don't have a lot of money, and with inflation increasing the cost of everything, they are feeling major financial pain as they pursue a degree. Some have to make the tough decision of whether to pay their bills or get an education. This unfortunate reality shows us why scholarships are so important. While Kirkwood has a wide variety of financial support available, there are still too many students who need help during these tough times.

I want to thank all of you for your continued dedication to Kirkwood and its students. While there's still work to be done, your efforts have helped so many achieve their academic dreams. With your support, we can assist so many more.

Please enjoy the latest issue of Currents magazine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Sundberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Lori Sundberg
President





“This is really the primary spot for students on campus to claim as their own. It’s our goal that any student on campus can find their home within this space.”

*– Director of Student Life and the Student Center
Seth Vander Tuig*

STUDENT FEATURE



GRACE MILLER

KIRKWOOD STUDENT ENJOYS EXPLORING A VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES

Grace Miller has some advice for high school graduates unsure of their next step: Enroll at Kirkwood because Kirkwood gives you a chance to explore all your options before you choose your path.

A 2021 Cedar Rapids Prairie High School graduate, Miller is a Liberal Arts major at Kirkwood, a cheerleader, in two jazz choirs — thanks to a Kirkwood music scholarship — and is discovering a plethora of possibilities at Kirkwood.

Before she started at Kirkwood, Miller considered going right to a 4-year college. But it was Kirkwood's affordability, proximity to home, and easy transfer process after earning her A.A. degree that helped her choose.

"It makes sense to go to Kirkwood. You can get your general education

classes, and it's a good transition from high school to becoming an adult, independent," she explained.

Miller's first year went well.

"I like the small classes and how easy it is to get to know my professors," she added. "They're very willing to help. I feel supported. And there are lots of free events, the recreation center, and lots of things to do on campus."

Miller enjoys stretching her boundaries.

"Every class has given me a skill," she said. "I've learned a lot more about other things, like taking Introduction to Play Analysis. It's interesting, even though I'm not a Theatre major."

Miller has already decided she's not going to rush her Kirkwood experience.

"I want time to have good grades but also have time for other things," Miller explained. "This is that one time in your life to have the opportunity to do that. Four classes a semester is enough for me. We should be looking toward the future but enjoying the moment too."

Miller enjoys cheerleading at basketball games and competitions. She liked being a Student Ambassador for one semester, helping students and their families consider Kirkwood.

Miller's choir involvement has been especially rewarding, she said. She is in Jazz Express and Jazz Transit choirs. Her Kirkwood scholarship covers her music courses and voice lessons with a music professor.

"I really like it and want to keep doing it but not necessarily for a major," Miller said. "It's another path to explore."

Her strongest advice for students undecided on their future?

"Don't be intimidated by not knowing your major or what you want to do," Miller stressed. "It's OK to not know! Give yourself time. It's important to give yourself opportunities. You'll figure it out, eventually. And you'll learn your values along the way."

Did you know the Kirkwood Foundation offers a Kirkwood Alumni Scholarship? This scholarship is awarded annually to a student whose parent(s) received a degree from Kirkwood Community College.

Please consider a gift to support the next generation:
www.kirkwood.edu/givenow





*“I like the small classes
and how easy it is to get
to know my professors.
They’re very willing to help.
I feel supported.”*

ALUMNUS FEATURE

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

KIRKWOOD CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT GRADUATE LED STUDENT CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT



This summer, Tyler Cooksley looked at the astonishing, renovated Kirkwood Student Center — now an open, clean space with huge windows and a view of the sky looking north — and shook his head.

He was standing where he'd been a Kirkwood student in Construction Management 10 years ago and was viewing the completion of a two-year-plus major renovation he led as project superintendent for Larson Construction.

"For me, with this phenomenal project, I've truly come full circle," he said.

Growing up in Independence, Iowa, Cooksley was shaped by those around him: his grandpa in his basement woodshop and his uncle in his residential construction work.

"I learn by watching — a lot," Cooksley explained.

After high school, Cooksley worked in residential construction with his uncle, made a good living, and, in

the process, discovered he loved it. From there, he didn't know if he wanted to study design, architecture, or engineering in college, or explore on-site management.

"I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but Kirkwood is a great place to figure that out," he said.

During orientation, Cooksley found that Kirkwood's Construction Management program gave him everything he was seeking.

"It had all aspects — design, engineering, and construction management — to put it all together," he said. "Out in the field, managing on-site, I knew that was my calling."

The program required an internship with hands-on work.

"It was an awesome experience," Cooksley said. "Kirkwood professors really try to help you figure out if this is what you want to do. I worked with Steve Gee Construction in Independence."

During his second year at Kirkwood, Cooksley focused more on commercial construction and leadership.

"Kirkwood's faculty — all of them — were phenomenal," Cooksley said. "They all had their own businesses, so they offered real-life experience and knowledge. You get that one-on-one with them. They're here to challenge you, to see what your skill sets are."

Graduating with his A.A. in 2012, Cooksley planned to work summers and transfer to the University of Northern Iowa for a 4-year degree. He had the knowledge to begin testing

his skills. He worked with Steve Gee Construction again that spring. By summer, he needed more work; Larson hired him and he never looked back.

The first three years Cooksley was learning from other superintendents on commercial projects. Since 2015, he's been a superintendent on building sites all over the state. He led several big school projects, including a new sports complex in North Liberty in 2018 and assisting in a three-year, \$120-million project to build a high school in Waukee in 2019.

"I absolutely loved it," he said. "I had expected to get a bachelor's degree, but Larson gave me the experience I needed to excel in the industry."

Cooksley loves that the Student Center has created a more open, welcoming gathering space for students, which is what Kirkwood is all about, he noted.

Next up for Cooksley is a Larson project building an FBO hangar for private charters at the Eastern Iowa Airport. He said he's still learning and enjoys the terrific support and great co-workers at Larson. "It's a family-owned business that respects and cares about its employees," Cooksley said.

Cooksley's success started with choosing Kirkwood.

"No matter what you want to do, Kirkwood offers you the chance to pursue your dreams, explore yourself, learn what you want to do, and see what's out there."



YOU'RE INVITED

Student Center Reception and Ribbon-Cutting

Tuesday, Sept. 13
4 - 6 p.m.
Iowa Hall

Join us in the new Student Center
located within Iowa Hall for
networking, spirits, hors d'oeuvres,
and a tour of the building.

RSVP by Sept. 5 at
www.kirkwood.edu/foundation/studentcenter

SAVE THE DATE

Alumni Veterans Dinner
Nov. 9, 2022

Kirkwood Athletics
Hall of Fame

Feb. 2 - 3, 2023

Celebration of Success
March 30, 2023

NEWS FROM AROUND CAMPUS

Kirkwood partners with local hospitals to set students up for success

Kirkwood has partnered with UnityPoint Health – St. Luke’s Hospital, Mercy Medical Center, and Mercy Iowa City to help students who are about to enter one of the most in-demand career fields. The (St. Luke’s) Senior Student Promise Program, Mercy Earn + Learn, and Mercy Iowa City JumpStart programs provide benefits for nursing students, including financial assistance and employment after graduation. Each program and its benefits are unique, giving students the opportunity to select the program that best suits their needs.

Collaboration leads to new symphony orchestra offering

In addition to partnering with local hospitals, Kirkwood is partnering with the Cedar Rapids Community Orchestra (CRCO) to offer symphony orchestra to music students. Students will now receive college credit for being in orchestra and have the option to perform alongside experienced CRCO members. The collaboration also provides new recruitment opportunities for the college and marks the first time in its history that orchestra will be offered.

The Hotel at Kirkwood Center recognized for hospitality and facility excellence

The Hotel at Kirkwood Center was named the 2022 Best Banquet/Event Facility by the Corridor Business Journal (CBJ) as part of the publication’s annual Best of the Corridor survey. Selected by CBJ readers, this marks the sixth time The Hotel has achieved this recognition. In addition, the facility recently received the AAA Four Diamond Award, making it the only AAA Four Diamond-rated hotel in Cedar Rapids and one of only four hotels in the state with this distinction. This is the 11th consecutive year the organization has received the AAA Four Diamond Award.

Each month, Kirkwood Alumni Lifetime of Learning offers three to four, free one-hour webinars in areas such as career advancement, personal and professional development, and health and family.

View a complete list of upcoming events at www.alumlc.org/kirkwood



Kirkwood Eagles baseball, softball advance to World Series

The Kirkwood Eagles baseball and softball teams advanced to their respective World Series this past May. The softball team was named the North Plains B District Champions and went on to clinch third at the NJCAA Division II World Series. The women finished their season with a 49-18 record. The baseball team was named North Plains District Champions but were eliminated from the NJCAA Division II World Series.

SEEDS Club contributes to local pantries

Founded in 2016, the Kirkwood SEEDS Club (Sustainable Garden Club) consists of farmers and gardeners of all experience levels working to help students develop healthy and sustainable lifestyles. SEEDS Club provides a stress-free outlet for students to engage in a nonacademic activity and enjoy the fruits of their labor. While participants take some of the produce home, each year the organization donates approximately 100 pounds of onions, kale, peppers, and more from the Iowa Sustainability Village to campus and community food pantries.



We are full of energy here at the alumni office! Over the past few months, we have celebrated our 2022 graduates, watched with excitement as the final touches were added to the new Student Center, chatted with hundreds of Kirkwood alums at the Iowa State Fair and Jazz Under the Stars, and had a blast planning the fall Alumni Social that will take place Tuesday, Sept. 13. The Alumni Social is free and all are welcome! This year our social is in conjunction with the Student Center Open House and Ribbon-Cutting. Yes! We are fueled by the friendship and affinity of our alums.

Do you remember the slogan “Start Here, Go Anywhere”? Kirkwood alums are doing amazing work around the world! We want to continue hearing from you. Update your contact information or share your success story with us. Let’s connect at www.kirkwood.edu/alumni. You can also find us sharing college news on LinkedIn and Facebook. Here’s a shout-out to some alums we’ve recently heard from across the states: Elizabeth ('90), publisher of Modern Luxury Media; Drew ('80), president of Madison Transfer & Storage; Mary Jo ('17), owner of Hair of the Dog Spaw; Sherry ('81), ceramist at Oral Arts Dental Lab, National Dentex; and Chad ('81), operations manager at TJX Companies Inc. Hello from all of us on the Kirkwood campus!

Celebrations come in many shapes, sizes, and frequencies. One of our favorites is Celebration of Success! Help us recognize alumni who have achieved success in their career and community. Nominations are being accepted at www.kirkwood.edu/nomination. Save the date for the 10th annual event, March 30, 2023.

Last but not least, our staff is growing! I am happy to introduce Ashley Moore, our alumni and marketing specialist. Ashley joined us in the spring and has been very busy updating our website, social media, newsletters, and planning alumni events. If you have an idea or suggestion for how we can best connect with alums, please drop Ashley a line at Foundation@kirkwood.edu.

Ashley Moore, Alumni and Marketing Specialist

Cheers to all,
Jody Donaldson
Director of Advancement



KIRKWOOD ALUMNI LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

- Elizabeth Buch '18
City of Cedar Rapids
- Shelby Crist '13
American Heart Association
- Jacki Delaney '09
Kirkwood Community College
- Jeff Driscoll '86, '92
Corridor Property Services
- Holly Feldmann '11
Kirkwood Community College
- Shawn Gallagher (Past Chair) '86
The Waldinger Corporation
- Teri Gibson '80
TrueNorth Companies
- Lisa Huggins '92
Neighbor Insurance
- Carissa Johnson (Chair) '10
Entrepreneur
- Nathan Johnson '12
Spotix
- Tina Kubovec '16
UnityPoint Health
- Pete Larson '69
Retired
- Kristin McVay '05
UnityPoint Health
- Mike Parenteau '94
Pipe Pro, Inc
- Jason Pasker '01
Ohnward Bank & Trust
- Andy Petersen '03
iHeartMedia
- Raphael Robertson '04
Robertson Marketing & Branding
- Nancy Roth '85
Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust
- Tim Ruth '77, '93
McCreedy-Ruth Construction LLC
- Rick Seger '80
Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust
- Brian Stoll '18
Illuminate Digital
- Kasi Tenborg (Chair-Elect) '06
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center
- Don Tyne '76
Retired, Linn County Veterans Affairs
- Ashlee Vander Hoek '08
U.S. Bank
- Carissa Votroubek '07
Scooter's Coffee
- Kayla Waller '07
CityVet Companies

Kirkwood Community College
FOUNDATION

6301 Kirkwood Blvd. SW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cedar Rapids, IA
Permit No. 94

KIRKWOOD FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Anne Parmley, President
Steve Caves, Vice President

Paul Morf, Secretary
Deborah J.L. Gertsen, Treasurer

Edmund Abodeely	Teri Gibson	Roger Klouda	Pat Sauter
Barbara Allen	Barry G. Goettsch	Lori Kramer	Kent Statler
Anthony Arrington	George Grask	Ruthina Malone	Charles Stroo
Arbe Bareis-Moyyad	Elaine Harrington	Chad Meyers	Gene Wehrheim
Tom Cilek	G. Richard Johnson	James Mollenhauer	Stephen West
Jodi Cobb	Dennis Jordan	Dr. Clayton Parks	
Richard L. Ferguson	David Kehoe	Dr. Vincent Reid	

KIRKWOOD LEADERSHIP

Dr. Lori Sundberg
President

FOUNDATION STAFF

Jody Pellerin, CFRE Vice President of Advancement, Executive Director of Foundation	Tresa Wandrey Advancement Services Officer	Alison Robinson Scholarship & Department Coordinator
Jody Donaldson Director of Advancement	Eric Weiler, CFRE Major Gifts Officer	Ashley Moore Alumni & Marketing Specialist

Kirkwood
FOUNDATION

PHONE **319-398-5442** · FAX **319-398-7106**

WWW.KIRKWOOD.EDU/FOUNDATION