



**2026**

**Commencement Ceremony**

May 15, 2026

*34<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration*



**HEARTLAND**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HEARTLAND  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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# The Heartland Community College Mission

Heartland provides accessible, innovative learning opportunities and resources that enrich our community.

## Heartland Community College Board of Trustees

Becky Ropp, Chair  
Janet Hood, Vice-Chair  
Joshua Crockett, Secretary  
Laurie Bergner  
Mary Campbell  
Angell Howard  
Thomas Whitt  
Summer Barone, Student Trustee

Heartland Community College would like to thank former Student Trustee, Aemun Lopeyok, for his service during the 2025-2026 academic year.



2026

Prelude	Twin Cities Brass Quintet
Processional ( <i>audience, please stand</i> )	Bagpipes, Steve Riesenberg
Presentation of Colors	American Legion Carl S. Martin Post 635
National Anthem	Twin Cities Brass Quintet
Stage Party Introduction	Keith Cornille, President
Welcome	Keith Cornille, President
Student Speaker	David Helms
Outstanding Faculty	Sarah Diel-Hunt, Provost
Student Recognition	Sarah Diel-Hunt, Provost
Presentation of Graduates	Sarah Diel-Hunt, Provost
Announcers	Tom McCulley, Associate Professor, Humanities Khrystyna Sanborn, Dean, Adult Education
Concluding Remarks	Keith Cornille, President
Recessional	Twin Cities Brass Quintet Bagpipes, Steve Riesenberg
Interpreters	Shannon Morrow Shelli Zimmerman

All Heartland graduates will be professionally photographed during the ceremony.

Pictures will be available to view/purchase online Sunday, May 17 at 5pm at the following website:

**Enjoyphotos.com**  
**user name: HCC2026**  
**password: 48068**

**Photography by Kent**  
**309.454.1967**  
**photobykent@yahoo.com**



## Outstanding Full-Time Faculty

### Chris Miller



Chris Miller is a Distinguished Professor of Renewable Energy who pairs deep technical expertise with a student-first approach marked by humor, enthusiasm, and memorable storytelling. Since joining Heartland in 2000, his hands-on labs have helped students connect theory to practice, building both confidence and competence for the workforce.

Miller's contributions to his field extend well beyond the Heartland campus. At the state level, he contributes to clean-energy workforce initiatives and helps build early college and dual credit pathways with regional partners. Nationally, through his involvement with the CREATE Energy National Center, he supports two-year colleges across the country in adopting industry-aligned curriculum and faculty development. His work also reaches internationally, including certification partnerships in China, renewable energy coursework in Belize, and participation as a Fulbright-Hays recipient in East Africa. Through his work, Miller strengthens career pathways and advances the role of community colleges worldwide.

## Outstanding Part-Time Faculty

### Sonja Workman



Since joining Heartland Community College in 2021, Sonja Workman has shaped the Recovery Support Specialist Certificate program as both instructor and Program Coordinator, playing a pivotal role in developing its curriculum. Workman creates a compassionate, inclusive learning environment where every student feels supported and empowered. Her real-world experience, deep commitment to the recovery community, and unwavering encouragement inspire students to persist through challenges.

Students describe her as nonjudgmental, understanding, and a mentor who "made a major impact on my future" and "is determined to change lives." Many students credit her guidance with helping them overcome personal obstacles and stay on track academically. Workman's dedication, leadership, and transformative influence on students and the broader community demonstrate the impact she has had as a part-time faculty member.



## Student Speaker, David Helms

Helms grew up in Bloomington, and graduated from Normal Community West High School. After serving four years in the United States Navy, he returned to Heartland to further his education. During his time at Heartland, he was involved in the Student Government Association, worked in the Veterans Center, was nominated for and attended the Heartland Emerging Leaders program, and led the Student Veterans Association as Chapter President. After graduation, Helms is transferring to Illinois State University to pursue a degree in Cyber Security.

# Special Honors

## Alpha Delta Nu

*Cord: Peach*

The Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN) has established the Alpha Delta Nu Honor Society to promote scholarship and academic excellence in the profession of nursing. It recognizes nursing students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

## Honors Program

*Cord: White*

The Honors Program at Heartland follows the curricular program of Phi Theta Kappa and recognizes the importance of four hallmarks of high academic achievement: leadership, scholarship, fellowship, and service. Students new to Heartland must meet a number of criteria for admittance. Current HCC students with a GPA of 3.5 or higher are eligible to apply for admission to the program.

## Phi Theta Kappa

*Stole: Gold/Navy Blue*

To qualify for Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society of two-year colleges, students must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and receive a recommendation from Heartland faculty. Members take part in social, community, and fundraising activities. The society also gives members opportunities to participate in the organization at the national level.

## Apprenticeship Program

*Cord: Old Gold*

The Apprenticeship Program combines related classroom instruction with rigorous on-the-job training in a specific trade or profession. The Old Gold Cord recognizes students who have successfully completed the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) component of a U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program. This honor signifies a dedication to mastering specialized technical knowledge and practical skills, demonstrating readiness for professional excellence in their chosen field.

## Association of Latin American Students (ALAS)

*Cord: Lilac/Rose*

The Association of Latin American Students works to establish a sense of community at Heartland through programs celebrating Hispanic and Indigenous cultures, meaningful discussion, and advocacy for Hispanic communities.

## Athletics

*Cord: Light Blue/White*

Heartland's varsity athletics programs include baseball, cross country, Esports, golf, soccer, softball, and volleyball.

## Black Student Union (BSU)

*Stole: Kente Cloth*

Black Student Union promotes cultural awareness, student leadership, and other fundamentals on campus and throughout the community.

## Civic Engagement Program

*Cord: Navy Blue/Red*

Students complete a sequence of 13-15 credit hours to develop civic skills to become more fully engaged in local, state, national, or international civic affairs. Students develop and carry out a service/civic engagement project.

## College NOW Plus

*Cord: Navy Blue/Light Blue*

Heartland's College NOW Plus program allows students to leverage access to early college opportunities through concurrent enrollment in a District 540 high school and Heartland Community College. These students have earned all the credits required to be awarded their high school diploma and HCC degree or certificate simultaneously.

## Emerging Leaders

*Cord: Lemon*

Emerging Leaders is an 8-week leadership program where students learn about the Five Exemplary Practices of Leadership and develop a leadership style that includes diversity, community, listening, and action.

# Programs

## Adult Education

*Blue Ribbon with Medallion (HSE Honors)*

Heartland's Adult Education program provides students with opportunities to prepare for the High School Equivalency (HSE) test or other high school equivalency exams. Adult Education also offers the Academic English Language Program (AELP) which helps students improve their language skills to prepare for college-level classes.

## Alternative Spring Break (ASB)

*Cord: Teal*

Alternative Spring Break challenges students to become leaders in cultural and social awareness through education, strong direct service, and reflection.

## Alumni

*Cord: Royal blue, silver, and white*

Heartland recognizes our graduates who have already taken the first step as alumni of the College by giving their time or a financial gift in support of the College.

### **Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)**

*Cord: Gold/Royal Blue*

FBLA inspires and prepares students to become community-minded business leaders in a global society through relevant career preparation and leadership experiences.

### **Global Student Union (GSU)**

*Cord: Kelly Green*

Global Student Union organizes events and information to promote understanding of different cultures on campus. The club was established to foster greater unity within the international student community, foster ties between the international student community and American students, and to promote greater diversity and international awareness on campus.

### **Global Studies Program**

*Stole: White with Globe*

Students complete a sequence of 20-21 credit hours to develop an interdisciplinary and international understanding of the modern world.

### **Heartland Academy for Learning Opportunities (HALO)**

*Cord: Burgundy*

The HALO program promotes the next level of independence in an inclusive college experience, enhancing independent living, employability, and academic skills. The HALO Certificate requires two years of coursework emphasizing transferable life skills and core academics.

### **Heartland Activities Committee (HAC)**

*Cord: Peacock Blue*

The Heartland Activities Committee plans many fun campus events, from lunchtime bingo and concerts to speakers and weekend family movies.

### **Hunter Hawk**

*Stole: Gold with Hunter Hawk*

Heartland recognizes our students who have demonstrated their pride and spirit of the College by representing Heartland as our Hunter Hawk mascot on campus and throughout our community.

### **PRIDE**

*Cord: Lilac*

HCC's PRIDE Club is dedicated to positive reinforcement of identities and dynamic equality. PRIDE offers a safe and reflective environment where members are encouraged to express themselves, be heard, and be empowered.

### **Project RISE**

*Cord: Red*

Project RISE is a program focused on supporting students throughout their journey at Heartland Community College. These students are changing the trajectory of their lives by pursuing their educational and professional goals. They are resilient in spite of obstacles and are a prime example of what courage looks like.

### **Student Government Association (SGA)**

*Cord: Purple*

The Student Government Association sustains, promotes, and represents the interests of the student body and establishes a sound means of cooperation with the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff of Heartland Community College.

### **Student Leaders in Community Engagement (SLiCE)**

*Cord: Orange*

Student Leaders in Community Engagement is a student-run organization designed to promote service-learning and community engagement opportunities to the student body at Heartland Community College and cultivate relationships both within and beyond the surrounding community.

### **Study Abroad**

*Stole: Represents country visited*

Heartland's Study Abroad program includes study in a variety of countries for durations from two weeks to three months.

### **Veterans**

*Stole: Red*

Heartland Community College salutes and thanks our veterans for their bravery and service. Our veterans have answered the call of national service and put their life on the line for our country.

### **Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI)**

*Stole: Maize/Ming Blue*

The Workforce Equity Initiative, sponsored by the Illinois Community College Board, provides students with financial assistance and wrap-around support services at Heartland. Students in the WEI program have completed short-term certificates that have prepared them to enter the workforce in a high-demand field.

# Congratulations, 2026 Graduates!

## #HeartlandGrad



Heartland graduates who participate in the Commencement Ceremony will be listed in an online document for anyone who would like to view or print it to include in their program.

Visit [Heartland.edu/Graduation/Commencement.html](https://heartland.edu/Graduation/Commencement.html) or scan the QR code to view the list of graduates.



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