

Sauk Valley Community College
April 27, 2026

Agenda Item 3.1.2

Topic: 2026 Faculty and Staff of the Year Recipients

College Health Metric: Human Resources – The College hires qualified employees and provides competitive benefits to attract and retain faculty and staff; departments provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

Presented By: Drs. David Hellmich and Jon Mandrell

Presentation:

The College recognizes the recipients of the 2026 Sauk Valley Community College Outstanding Awards.

Outstanding Full-time Faculty – Therese Wood, Professor, Assistant Professor

Therese demonstrates excellence in teaching through her content, instruction, connection with students, and collegiality. She prepares organized, substantive instructional materials and facilitates her classes and labs in a structured but casual way. Her students have clear directions, meaningful tasks, and significant support while they are working in labs. Therese is present and engaged on campus, working amongst her colleagues in any department and collaborating with the Learning Commons team. She maintains the supplies, inventory, and purchasing for the SVCC sciences labs, which requires her to be highly organized and constantly working to ensure the lab users, faculty, and students have what they need. She models SVCC's shared ethical values, respecting the worth and dignity of all. Therese is deserving of recognition in all aspects of her service to SVCC.

Outstanding Full-time Staff – Shaunna Zettle, Multimedia Designer

Shaunna exemplifies the very best of Sauk Valley Community College through her selflessness, positivity, creativity, and unwavering commitment to excellence. She is a rare combination of professionalism and joy; someone who not only gets the job done, but also elevates everyone and everything around her in the process. Shaunna's positive attitude is unmatched. She has an innate ability to prioritize the needs of others and readily pauses her own work to ensure colleagues and projects stay on track. Her enthusiasm is genuine and contagious; she is truly a ray of light across campus. Whether tackling a tight deadline or lending support at a moment's notice, Shaunna approaches every situation with optimism, kindness, and energy. She is constantly thinking about how to better her team and the college as a whole, and her creativity and willingness to help wherever needed are major reasons SVCC continues to shine. She elevates SVCC's work, strengthens its culture, and enhances the experience of students, staff, and the broader community. Shaunna is deeply deserving of this recognition.

Outstanding Part-time Faculty – Elisa Gatz, Adjunct Faculty, Physics

Elisa is an effective teacher who brings her creativity into the classroom and her Learning Commons tutoring. She creates a successful learning environment by helping students understand difficult concepts through practical and relatable ideas. Elisa participates in the Tutoring Center orientation and professional development programs and demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning by participating in these programs. She also contributes to training and mentoring new professional and student tutors. Elisa is wonderful in the classroom and in the tutoring center.

Outstanding Part-time Staff – Lindsay Good, Foundation Assistant

Lindsay Good has demonstrated an exceptional level of character, positivity, and selflessness from the very beginning of her time with the SVCC Foundation. She has consistently gone above and beyond what is expected, becoming not only a valued team member, but also an indispensable part of the daily operations and campus culture. Lindsay brings a welcoming, professional, and upbeat presence to the Foundation Office, creating an environment where students, staff, and visitors feel genuinely seen and supported. She is always willing to take on additional responsibilities with a calm, solution-focused attitude, whether it is assisting with office needs, supporting major Foundation events such as *Chocolate Rendezvous*, or stepping in to help with campus and community partnerships. Her steady demeanor and “we’ve got this” approach elevate the entire team and contribute directly to a positive experience for everyone who interacts with the Foundation.

Outstanding Dual Credit Instructor Award - Gina Cole, Biology

Gina demonstrates excellence in her dual-credit classroom by capturing and maintaining student attention throughout a highly engaging class. Gina's classes are organized, rich with media and hands-on materials, and meaningful as she helps students make connections between science and real life. Her commitment to teaching dual credit for SVCC and Polo High School spans 13 semesters over 10 years. Gina has reached 133 dual-credit students with opportunities to earn college credit while in high school. She is a helpful, responsive SVCC partner. She has mentored and supported other dual-credit faculty who were new to teaching dual credit science classes. Gina demonstrates a commitment to the SVCC curriculum as observed in visits to her classroom. She enhances the learning experience for her students by using hands-on learning, team-based problem solving, and student-led presentations.

Shared Team Achievement Award – Marketing

The Marketing Department members show what it means to value every single individual. They make sure all their materials are clear, accessible, and welcoming so students and community members feel like they belong here. They are very active in the community, showing up at events and representing Sauk with pride and enthusiasm. Their work helps build strong connections between the College and the Sauk Valley area. Their dedication and inclusive approach make the campus feel more supportive, connected, and encouraging for everyone. They are an amazing department that truly shows what commitment to excellence looks like.