

**Sauk Valley Community College  
June 30, 2025**

**Action Item 4.6**

**Topic:** Faculty Appointment – Communication and Speech

**College Health Metric:** Academics – The College provides quality, contemporary, and relevant educational opportunities to the community.

**Presented By:** Drs. David Hellmich and Jon Mandrell

**Presentation:**

The administration has been in the process of hiring a Communication and Speech Faculty. The position was advertised online on Sauk Valley Community College's website, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *HigherEdJobs.com*. The College received twenty-seven applicants. Three candidates were invited for an on-campus interview. A committee was composed of Dr. Paul Edleman, Dr. Patricia Fulfs, and Jim Grot. Dr. Patrice Hess, Dean of Transfer Programs and Academic Support Services, served as Chair.

*Academic Background:* Kieran Benson earned her Master's in Communication Studies at Northern Illinois University and a certification in Women and Gender Studies. She also earned her Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies at Luther College.

*Professional Background:* Kieran has worked as an adjunct instructor for Sauk Valley Community College since January of 2025. In 2021, she was a graduate teaching assistant for Northern Illinois University.

**Recommendation:**

The administration recommends the Board approve the appointment of Kieran Benson as an Assistant Professor I of Communication and Speech beginning August 8, 2025, at an annual base salary of \$49,838.01.

Kieran Benson



February 23, 2025

Dear Sauk Valley Community College,

I have spent much of my time in classrooms, newsrooms, and lecture halls; and that has allowed me to appreciate and contribute to the field of education. With that being said, I am excited to apply for the open position of full-time faculty in Communications at Sauk Valley Community College.

In my studies at Luther College, I worked to take in the most literature, media, and art possible as I studied communication and writing. I have taken core classes surrounding writing, literature, and rhetoric, as well as electives in the study of television, film, and journalism. Most of my undergraduate career was spent serving the collegiate newspaper. However, when I first graduated high school, I did not know what I wanted to do. I was originally a history major, and after a semester I had decided that it wasn't for me. So, I was at a loss: what should my major be; what career should I pursue? And then I took a speech class at my local community college. This class guided me to my major and career path, which was Communications and English Writing. I truly understand the impact that a course at a school like Sauk Valley can have on one's life and that belief has made me want to be involved in education since I was a student.

After graduating from Luther, I went on to continue my education at Northern Illinois University, where I not only studied communications, but I also taught it. While working on my graduate degree, I served as a graduate teaching assistant and speech instructor for two years, teaching eight three-credit speech classes. My experience teaching for those two years has allowed me to learn so much from my mentors, my peers, and my students about what it means to be an educator. The discussion, discourse, and guidance that I experienced from the student-teacher alliance, as a student and as a teacher, is one that I value. I believe that as much guidance I can give to students can also be taught to me tenfold, whether from those students or from colleagues.

Moreover, for the past several weeks I've been teaching speech at Sauk as an adjunct instructor. This experience has been a great joy; not only because I love teaching but also because the atmosphere at Sauk is so welcoming and has helped me to thrive in the classroom. In a short amount of time, I believe that SVCC has made me a better teacher by allowing me the space, time, and resources to hone the teaching craft. It would be an honor to continue that work as full-time Communications faculty at Sauk Valley.

Sincerely,  
Kieran Benson

# Kieran Benson

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Skilled communicator with experience in researching, writing, and editing. Seeking to make an impact, accomplish goals, and work with compassionate and dedicated individuals.

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## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Jan 2025 – Present	Adjunct Faculty (Speech Instructor), Sauk Valley Community College	Dixon, IL
Nov 2023 – Present	Café Assistant, IMEG Corp.	Rock Island, IL
Aug 2021 – May 2023	Graduate Teaching Assistant, Northern Illinois University Department of Communications	DeKalb, IL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Instructed students in public speaking to craft a safe extemporaneous speaking environment, resulting in improved student grades and ease in public speaking.</li><li>Developed lesson plans that incorporated a variety of teaching methods, resulting in improved student learning outcomes.</li><li>Collaborated with colleagues to develop innovative approaches to teaching.</li></ul>	
Jun 2022 – Aug 2022	Production Intern, 13 WREX News	Rockford, IL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Created memorable television moments by picking, writing, and editing news stories and video to deliver a high-quality newscast with my colleagues on time and within budget.</li><li>Edited and proofread content for accuracy and clarity, ensuring all published content meets journalistic and channel standards.</li></ul>	
May 2021 – Aug 2021	Server, Chili's Bar & Grill	Davenport, IA
Oct 2020 – May 2021	Features Editor and Web Content Manager, Luther College Chips Newspaper	Decorah, IA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Edited and proofread a large body of text within a short timeframe, resulting in an error-free final product.</li><li>Revised and updated existing copy to meet AP standards and Features angle.</li><li>Collaborated with editors and writers to develop creative angles and story ideas for new issues.</li><li>Drafted and edited creative and engaging web content that drove website traffic.</li><li>Adapted content for different formats and platforms, including print, web, and mobile.</li><li>Utilized web technologies to create dynamic content that increased user engagement and satisfaction.</li></ul>	
Feb 2021 – May 2021	Writing Intern, Study Breaks Magazine	Remote
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Researched and wrote articles on a variety of topics, including lifestyle, music, movies, and television.</li><li>Collaborated with other writers and editors to ensure quality and accuracy of content.</li><li>Wrote and published over 10 articles for an online publication.</li></ul>	
Oct 2019 – Mar 2020	Staff Writer, Luther College Chips Newspaper	Decorah, IA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Researched and wrote stories that generated public awareness and discussion on important social issues.</li><li>Developed relationships with public relations officers and other professionals to stay informed on the latest news.</li><li>Drafted stories with accurate facts and clear language to ensure accuracy and public understanding.</li><li>Conducted multiple interviews, with differing and strong voices, allowing for holistic reporting on current events.</li></ul>	
May 2019 – Aug 2019	Web Intern, Iowa 80 Group	Walcott, IA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developed a presentation outlining key findings in a project, leading to a successful completion.</li><li>Developed a social media account content calendar, boosting online presence and increasing customer engagement.</li><li>Developed and implemented content strategies to increase traffic and engagement on social media channels.</li><li>Drafted and edited copy for digital campaigns.</li></ul>	

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## EDUCATION

Aug 2021 – May 2023	Master of Arts in Communication Studies, Northern Illinois University	DeKalb, IL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Graduated with a 4.0 GPA</li><li>Secretary of Graduate Communication Student Advisory Council (2022-2023)</li><li>Member of curriculum committee and COMS 100 committee</li><li>Awarded the Paul Crawford Award for Excellence in Graduate Study</li></ul>	
Aug 2021 – May 2023	Graduate Certificate in Women and Gender, Northern Illinois University	DeKalb, IL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Graduated with a 4.0 GPA</li><li>Presented feminist rhetorical research the Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality's Research &amp; Artistry Symposium (2022)</li></ul>	
Aug 2019 – May 2021	Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies, Luther College	Decorah, IA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Graduated Magna Cum Laude with a 3.7 GPA</li><li>Attended Midwest College Journalism Convention (2020)</li><li>Dean's list for Spring 2020, Fall 2021, and Spring 2021</li><li>Member of Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity</li></ul>	