

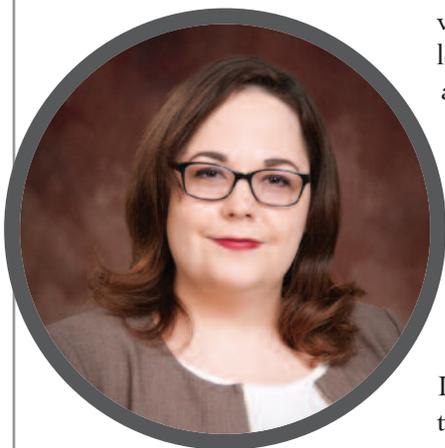
Alumni & Friends

CONNEXIONS

Spring 2017

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Dr. Lori Cortez



In recent years, the economy has been severely stressed, requiring community colleges to dramatically increase their student aid expenditures. College Foundations are now on the front lines of this fight to ensure that families have access to the financial resources vital to the pursuit of our students' educational goals. In light of these trying times, the College is placing a new emphasis on securing additional revenue sources.

In October of 2016, I humbly accepted the role of Dean of Foundation, Grants, and Government Relations at Sauk Valley Community College. Many have asked me if I knew what I was signing up for when I took on this new role. That question allows me the opportunity to share with them my story.

Like 80% of Sauk students, I was a first generation college student from a low-income home. Nationally, 89% of low-income first-generation students leave college within six years without a degree. More than 25% of us drop out after our first year — four times the dropout rate of higher-income second-generation students (NCES, 2013). The path laid out before me and other Sauk students is difficult, but the path without our community college would have been even more difficult.

If not for my local community college, volunteering, service learning, and philanthropy would not have been embedded in me so early on. My faculty and my student service staff cared about me as an individual; they invested in me.

With their encouragement, I went on to accomplish not only the impossible task of an Associate's degree, but my Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate degrees. My education propels me to pay it forward by helping other community college students.

Having Directed Sauk's TRIO Student Support Services since 2014, I was deeply moved by the high level of volunteerism Sauk students demonstrate on campus and in our community. Our students are the first to volunteer, first to show up, and last to leave. Their initiative invigorates me and inspires me to do more...much more.

Doing more includes taking on the difficult task of securing additional revenue sources for our students, our College, and our community. I will not fail all of you who have inspired me, and placed a high level of faith in me. I have conquered many challenges in my life, and this challenge is yet another that I will conquer for us.

I will work to develop the Sauk Foundation's strategic plan to address how to grow and steward our resources; continue to work with our committed volunteer board members whose advice and leadership is invaluable to Sauk's success. We will continue to engage our alumni and friends and nurture a culture of philanthropy that will improve the lives of our students, throughout the Sauk Valley area.

I would relish the opportunity to hear your story as a Sauk Alum. Please contact me anytime to share your connection to Sauk.

Yours Ever, Lori

PLEASE UPDATE
YOUR INFORMATION

Contact Lori Cortez:
lori.a.cortez@svcc.edu
[facebook.com/SVCCalumni](https://www.facebook.com/SVCCalumni)

 **Sauk Valley**
Community College

173 IL Route 2
Dixon, IL 61021
svcc.edu/alumni



Dear Skyhawk alumni,

The success of Sauk Valley Community College is measured by our alumni. I see Sauk Successes everywhere I go and take great pride that every community in the Sauk Valley area is a better place to live and work because of the College's alumni.

I want to assure everyone who holds Sauk near and dear to their hearts that we are doing everything we can at Sauk (even with all the craziness in Springfield) to build on your tradition of success. Most importantly, perhaps, we are excited to have Dr. Lori Cortez working with us, and all alumni, as the leader of the Foundation, Grants, and Government Relations. As the Director of the TRIO Program, Lori helped create many Sauk Successes and is committed to helping the College meet the needs of alumni and grow alternative revenues.

I would love to talk with you about your *Sauk Success* and to learn from you what we need to do to help ensure that current and future students experience success like yours. Please call 815.994.1143, email david.m.hellmich@svcc.edu, or stop by my office to share your wisdom.

Go Skyhawks!

Dr. David Hellmich, President

Here are a few of the other accomplishments we are proud of at Sauk:

- Completing the first-floor remodel and opening the Sauk YMCA
- Creating a new Agriculture Program and the new Dual Credit Academy
- Enrolling the first class of the Multicraft Extended Internship Program
- Launching the Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program
- Offering over \$74,000 in Foundation scholarships
- Receiving \$100,000 for Juanita Prescott scholarships
- Receiving state Small Business Development Center funding
- Placing 6th in Volleyball Nationals with two 1st-team All-Americans
- Teaching, challenging, and supporting 2,519 students

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Call for 2017 Outstanding Alumni Award Nominations

You are cordially invited to nominate an outstanding alumni for the 32nd Outstanding Alumni Award. The award will be presented at the May 12, 2017 SVCC Commencement Ceremony. An SVCC alum is defined as someone who has completed a degree, certificate, or a minimum of 24 semester hours at SVCC before June 2012 and is not currently pursuing a degree or certificate at Sauk. Anyone nominated last year will be considered again this year. The selection is based on career achievement and community service.

If you would like to nominate someone for this prestigious award, visit Sauk's website, click on the black "Alumni" button at the top of the home page and then click "nominate an outstanding alum" to complete and submit a nomination.

Deadline for the 2017 nominations is Friday, April 7.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

March 13 - April 15

Sauk Art Gallery
Confessions of Digestion:
Artist: William Butler
Reception • Tuesday,
April 4, 4-6pm
Exhibit & reception
are free and open to
the public.

April 2 • 4pm
Spring Concert Choir
Concert,
Sacred Spring
Saint Luke's Episcopal
Church, Dixon

April 7
Deadline for Outstanding
Alumni Nominations

April 20 • 11am-3pm
SVCC Careers/Job Fair &
Public Safety Day

April 22 • 9am-12pm
SVCC Malls
33rd Annual Child Fair,
Under the Sea

April 28-29 • 7pm
SVCC Mathis Theatre
Spring Play
Agnes of God

May 12
SVCC Gymnasium
Commencement

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

SVCC Open Scholarship

Did you know 72% of Sauk students are considered low income? In spite of this, SVCC's graduation rate is above the national community college average. Need-based scholarships help reduce the often overwhelming financial burden many lower income students experience when trying to pay for college...that's why the Sauk Foundation offers the SVCC Open Scholarship. The Open Scholarship is open to any student who resides within the Sauk Valley Community College district.

This scholarship can be used to support tuition, fees, or books. We have made the process easy. Students must submit a one-page application and a short essay about how this scholarship will help them attend Sauk.

To learn how you can support our students, contact Lori Cortez, Dean of Foundation, Grants, and Government Relations at 815.835.6260.

CAMPUS UPGRADES

Walk into the West Mall of campus and you will find many new updates.

The Student Services Center now houses all student services offices in one area of the College. The Center focuses on streamlining financial assistance, registration, adding/dropping classes, academic advising, disability support, student activities, business and career development, admissions, community education, transcript requests, and TRIO Student Support Services.

The Follett bookstore is located adjacent to the Student Services Center. Students can buy or rent textbooks, purchase supplies, get the latest Sauk apparel, and take advantage of the new coffee bar.

The SaukYMCA is open with state-of-the-art equipment. Join the Sauk Y and gain unlimited access to the Dixon and Sterling/Rock Falls YMCAs. It's easy to join and a family-fun way to stay in shape.

New renovations also include a brand new Testing Center and high tech classrooms that accommodate more students and better meet the needs of faculty.

If you haven't been to campus in a while, now is the time to check out campus upgrades. For a tour, contact the Foundation Office at 815.835.6329.

