

Spring 2024

THE CONNECTION

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A publication for Alumni and Friends of Northwest Iowa Community College



Dear Alumni and Friends of NCC,

With immense pride and anticipation, I extend to you a warm invitation to celebrate another landmark year at Northwest Iowa Community College. This year we blend innovation with tradition, as we begin a new and exciting chapter in the progress of our Athletics Department. Our steadfast dedication to achieving excellence, both academically and athletically, is clearly evident with the recent expansion of athletic programs, the onboarding of new coaching talent, and the unveiling of a competition logo.

Embarking on a New Athletic Journey

This academic year stands out as particularly momentous as we witness the growth of our athletic portfolio. Since the inception of our Sports Shooting team in 2019, which has achieved considerable success under stellar leadership, we now eagerly anticipate the inaugural season of our soccer teams in 2024. This expansion not only broadens our athletic participation but also strengthens our community spirit and engagement.

Honoring Our Coaching Leadership

The success of our Sports Shooting program stems from the outstanding leadership of Head Sports Shooting Coach Brian Lauck and Assistant Sports Shooting Coach DJ Van't Hul, whose guidance has elevated NCC to new competitive heights. A season highlight was that 15 out of 16 sports shooting student athletes were named to the Academic All-Region Teams for the fall semester of 2023 by the Iowa Community College Athletic Conference (ICCAC).

In the realm of soccer, we are thrilled to introduce Jesse Kuehler and Tre Thomas as the pioneering Head Coaches for our Men's and Women's Soccer teams, respectively. Their expertise, passion, and vision for soccer at NCC promise a future filled with initial growth and eventual competitive success.

Revealing Our New Athletic Logo

In alignment with these significant developments, we are excited to reveal our new competition athletic logo. This redesign boldly signifies a new era for NCC, encapsulating the spirit and ambition of our community. A distinctive feature of this logo is the inclusion of a lightning bolt, a tribute to Northwest Iowa Community College's distinguished history in electrical programs and a visualization of the 'Thunder' in our mascot's name. This emblem embodies the qualities of speed, energy, and precision—traits that our athletes demonstrate in competition, representing a bridge between our proud past, our vibrant present, and our ambitious future.

Innovative Contributions to the Thunder Brand

Our innovative spirit extends to the academic arena, where Engineering Design and Design Technology students are contributing to the Thunder brand by working on a new lightning bolt staff for our mascot. This project not only enhances Thunder's presence but also deepens its connection to our community, showcasing the creative talents of our students and the integration of academic pursuits with athletic spirit. This collaboration highlights NCC's comprehensive educational philosophy, fostering an environment where students excel in their academic endeavors while actively participating in athletics.

In this edition, you will also find inspiring stories of our remarkable alumni and the progress at the Sioux Center Career Academy. These narratives not only highlight the diverse paths of success our graduates embark upon but also underscore the impact of NCC's education beyond our campus. These success stories, and your success stories, illustrate our dedication to providing cutting-edge educational opportunities, preparing students for the demands of the modern workforce, and ensuring that they are equipped to lead and innovate in their chosen fields.

Thank you for your unwavering support of NCC. Together, we are cultivating an environment of academic and athletic excellence, preparing leaders and innovators who are ready to make a meaningful difference in our world. Your continued engagement fuels our mission and empowers our students to achieve greatness.

GO THUNDER!

John Hartog III, President

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Taylor Sandy, Industrial Instrumentation & Control Grad, celebrates with her daughter



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It is the policy of Northwest Iowa Community College not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, religion, and actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.6 and 216.9, Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.), and all other applicable federal and state laws, regulations and orders. The Board of Trustees shall monitor progress on this policy through the President's appointed Affirmative Action/Equity Coordinator(s).

If you have any questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy, please contact one of the Equity Coordinators at Northwest Iowa Community College, 603 West Park Street, Sheldon, Iowa, room D403b or room A101D, email equity@nwicc.edu, phone number 712-324-5061, extension 113 or extension 137, fax 712-324-4136; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, John C. Kluczynski Federal Building, 230 S. Dearborn Street, 37th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604-7204, Telephone: (312) 730-1560, Fax: (312) 730-1576, TDD: (800) 877-8339, Email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.



The Associate of Arts program at Northwest Iowa Community College is a great option for students for a variety of reasons. It is an excellent choice for students who are undecided about a career and are aiming to explore college before selecting a specific program or major. Courses teach strong communication skills, cultural knowledge, critical thinking and problem-solving strategies, providing students with a well-rounded foundation that prepares them for success in the workforce and at other colleges.

The program is an ideal option for students who plan to transfer to a four-year college or university. NCC has a history of successful student transfers facilitated by established articulation agreements with numerous institutions, ensuring a seamless transition. The program also caters to students requiring a flexible schedule. All of the courses can be taken entirely online, or the program can be completed through a combination of online and in-person courses. The overall appeal of this program lies in the flexibility and transferability it affords.

Eddie Valdes stands as one of more than 1,000 alumni who have earned their Associate of Arts (AA) degrees from Northwest Iowa Community College. Eddie's journey to NCC began over 1,500 miles away in Florida, where he worked in production management. Seeking career advancement, he discovered limited opportunities in Florida, which led him to accept a position at Smithfield in Orange City, Iowa. He decided to move himself and his family to Iowa to begin this new venture.

Eddie eventually secured the role of Front-Line Supervisor at Tyson's Dakota City location. During this time, he continued to apply for higher positions within the company but was constantly passed up for individuals who had completed more education. Eddie decided that the time had come for him to attend college and obtain a degree.

In his forties, with a family to support and having never been to college, Eddie knew obtaining his degree would be no easy task, but he was excited for the challenge and eager to begin. Eddie researched various options in the area and was intrigued by the Associate of Arts program at NCC. He desired an affordable program that could be completed entirely online, as quickly and flexibly as possible, and that had a great reputation.

NCC students who transfer to 4-year colleges are successful!

	 NCC	Iowa Community Colleges (15)
Average GPA (first term post-transfer)	3.17	2.99
Average Credits completed (first year)	26	24
% Graduate (within 3 years of transferring)	83	55

Iowa Board of Regents—Department of Education

Eddie embarked on the Associate of Arts program in the fall of 2017. He worked exceptionally hard and graduated just one year later. Motivated by his achievements, Eddie set the additional goal of transferring to earn a bachelor's degree. Continuing his education at Fort Hayes State University, he pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Human Resources. Eddie's commitment then led him to an accelerated master's degree program, allowing him to begin master's courses while completing his bachelor's program. By 2021, he officially held a Master's Degree in Human Resources.

Eddie attributes his success to NCC and the instructors who provided him with a high-quality education that prepared him extremely well, not only for transferring to a four-year college, but also for entering his profession. He stated,



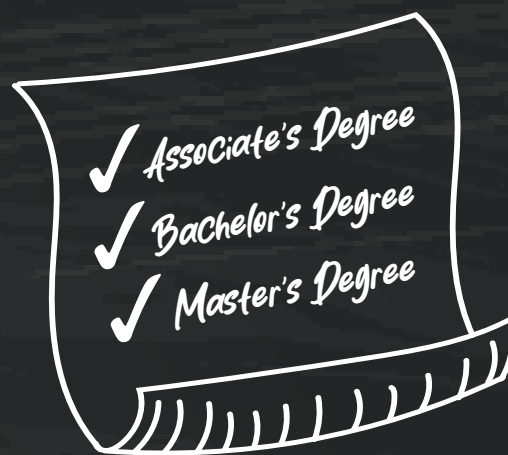
The education I received at NCC was just as good, if not superior, to the education I received while pursuing my bachelor's and master's degrees. I am thankful for my instructors and the knowledge I obtained at NCC.

Eddie is currently employed as the People Operations Manager at Diamond Vogel in Orange City. In this role, he collaborates with senior management and the company's executive team to raise employee engagement, humanize the company's processes, and simply make employees a top priority. He and other members of his team travel throughout the Midwest to Diamond Vogel's various locations to train employees and implement various initiatives on engagement and culture. One recent initiative carried out by Eddie's team yielded a 50% reduction in employee turnover after just one year!

Beyond his role at Diamond Vogel, Eddie actively contributes to the education industry. He is passionate about encouraging individuals to obtain an education and seize available opportunities. He serves as an adjunct instructor for Northwestern College teaching Human Resources Management courses. Additionally, he provides internships for area college students, working with a handful of student-interns each summer. Finally, he is a member of the Advisory Board for Northwestern College's Business & Economics programs. As a program advisory member, Eddie shares his real-life experiences and recommends improvements for the college's programs.

Having spent a majority of his working years in various production positions, Eddie values his corporate-level position and genuinely empathizes with his employees. Eddie's journey to where he is today looks a lot different than many of his peers, but he is grateful for his experiences and perspective. He recognizes the importance of treating people well and investing in them, a philosophy reflected in his daily work. Eddie's journey is a testament to the success that can be achieved through education and determination, making his story an inspiration for others.

Eddie's success is our story!



Eddie Valdes
'18 Associate of Arts



Amanda LaRoe
'24 Agriculture

Career pathways within the Agriculture Industry are endless, spanning from farm management and agricultural sales to livestock or crop production and agricultural finance. Many students know they would like to pursue a career in agriculture, but may be uncertain of the specific path to take. Moreover, students are often looking for flexible, affordable and expedited paths to start their careers. The Agriculture program at Northwest Iowa Community College is designed specifically with these types of students in mind.

Amanda LaRoe's love for agriculture ignited during her childhood on her family's farm in Michigan. Growing up with a mother who was passionate about showing horses, Amanda embraced the same enthusiasm, actively participating in showing horses, beef cattle, and swine. Throughout her school years she remained actively involved in Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H and continuously held jobs related to agriculture.

While Amanda was certain about pursuing a career in ag, she was uncertain of her specific path. During her senior year of high school, she began to research programs that could be completed online. She desired to go to college and obtain a degree but didn't want to accumulate a lot of debt or have to move too far away from home.

An online search for ag programs led Amanda to discover the Agriculture—Online Program offered through NCC. She and her parents researched the program and were intrigued by the variety of courses, online delivery format, and affordability that the program provided. Despite NCC being over 11 hours away, Amanda began the program in the fall of 2021.

A degree



at your fingertips

Throughout the program, Amanda worked as a Barn Manager for a local horse barn and was also involved in a cow-calf operation. It was during this time that she discovered her passion for animal feed science. She enjoyed learning the science and intricacies behind feeding livestock, including what to feed and when. She explored different positions related to feed science and eventually secured the position of Feed Nutritionist at Chelsea Lumber Company.

Despite the distance, Amanda and her parents wanted to visit the school that was providing her with so many opportunities. In the fall of 2021, after beginning the program, Amanda visited NCC for the first time. She and her family enjoyed their time on campus and were grateful for the opportunity to visit northwest Iowa.

Amanda completed her degree in the spring of 2024 and continues to hold the position of Feed Nutritionist at Chelsea Lumber Company. This position mainly involves assisting customers in selecting feed products for their livestock. Amanda also handles inventory of various feed and animal supplies.

Although uncertain of her next step, Amanda is certain her future lies in the agriculture industry. Whether she pursues further education, explores opportunities in corporate nutrition, or remains in her current position serving her loyal customers, she is grateful to have turned her passion into a career.

Alongside her role as a Feed Nutritionist, Amanda remains actively involved in 4-H, serving as the Assistant Swine Superintendent and Superintendent for Herdsmanship at her local county fair, where she judges livestock hygiene and sanitation.

Amanda credits NCC for providing her with the ability to focus on starting her career while completing her degree, stating,

“

I enjoyed that the program was entirely online, allowing me to work at my own pace on various classes within the agriculture industry and build my résumé while going to school. Enrolling at NCC provided me the opportunity to jumpstart my career in agriculture.

Amanda's success is our story!

Let the GAMES

A large, detailed illustration of a soccer ball with black and white panels, positioned as if it has just hit a white goal net. The net's strings are visible, creating a complex web of lines around the ball. The background is a light, textured gray.

For many, this moment seemed unlikely. When the idea of adding collegiate sports was first broached over a decade ago, it faced skepticism, appearing somewhat out of character for NCC. Founded as a technical school, NCC forged its path by offering high-quality skill training and has grown into a comprehensive community college offering the first two years of a bachelor's degree. NCC is now continuing to evolve with the addition of college athletics.

Starting in Fall 2024, NCC is set to embrace a new chapter in its evolution by introducing sanctioned collegiate soccer. The timing for this move into collegiate sports aligns with a broader trend among community colleges, where athletic programs are becoming more prevalent. This shift not only provides students with increased extracurricular opportunities but also contributes to fostering a more collegiate atmosphere, potentially boosting enrollments.

The decision to adopt sanctioned collegiate sports gained momentum when the Sheldon Community School District proposed a collaborative effort, suggesting the sharing of a turf field. This partnership opportunity underscored the relevance and timeliness of expanding NCC's extracurricular offerings. Plans to join an athletic conference and establish a sanctioned soccer team quickly gained traction.

What does this development mean for NCC? It involves hiring coaches, acquiring gear, adapting meal plans and housing to accommodate athletic needs, and, crucially, recruiting student-athletes. In a landscape where many colleges offer athletics, recruiting top talent requires coaches to build relationships, foster an appealing culture, maintain robust academic programs, and secure support and scholarship funding.

BEGIN



ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS:

Currently, NCC awards scholarships annually to students based on their chosen program of study, academic achievements, or other distinctive qualifications that merit financial support. However, none of these scholarships were specifically designed to aid student-athletes. Recognizing the importance of attracting top players to bolster our sports programs and subsequently enhance NCC's enrollment, there is a dedicated effort to expand our scholarship offerings.

One significant initiative was launched last August—the inaugural annual Shoot for Success fundraiser. This event marked the beginning of our commitment to generating additional scholarships tailored to support student-athletes. Looking ahead, there are more opportunities on the horizon to contribute to athletics through various means, including participating in events, attending games, purchasing apparel, or becoming a member of the Thunder Athletic Booster Club. Keep an eye out for upcoming opportunities, and let's rally together to cheer on the Thunder! GO THUNDER!

SPORTS SHOOTING AT NCC:

NCC initially ventured into collegiate sports programming several years ago with the introduction of intercollegiate sports shooting to its campus. At that time, the program primarily consisted of students already enrolled at NCC, engaging in sports shooting as an extracurricular activity. Scholarships specifically tied to sports shooting were limited.

However, as the program has continued to expand and NCC has shifted its focus toward recruiting collegiate athletes, there's a noticeable change in the Sports Shooting Team's emphasis. The strategy now involves actively recruiting students to choose NCC for their sports shooting endeavors. To facilitate this transition and support aspiring athletes, NCC organized its first annual NCC Shoot for Success fundraising event in August 2023.

The day-long competition attracted 50 participants and successfully raised over \$8,000. The entirety of these funds is earmarked for scholarships aimed at supporting students involved in sports shooting. This initiative underscores NCC's commitment to nurturing and encouraging excellence in sports shooting among its student body.

WAYS TO SUPPORT STUDENT ATHLETES AT NCC

- **ATTEND** any of our upcoming athletic events:
2nd Annual Shoot for Success Sports Shooting Fundraiser
August 24, 2024, at the Rock Valley Gun Club
To learn more, register, or sponsor the event, contact
Morgan Granstra
mgranstra@nwicc.edu
800-352-4907 ext. 230

Soccer home schedule (see page 13)
- **GIVE A GIFT** to the NCC Foundation, indicating it is to be used for Soccer or Sports Shooting Scholarships.
- Create a **NAMED SCHOLARSHIP** to support athletics.
- **INFORM POTENTIAL STUDENTS** of the opportunities in athletics at NCC and encourage them to check out our offerings.
- Become a member of the soon-to-be-created **THUNDER ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB**.
- Consider **"ADOPTING" AN ATHLETE**. This may involve notes of encouragement, care packages, or even inviting them over for a family meal. Local support can be very impactful for students who may be far away from their homes.

For more information on any of these opportunities, contact

Kristi Landis
klandis@nwicc.edu
800-352-4907 ext. 164

WAYS TO DONATE

MAIL

NCC Foundation
603 West Park St.
Sheldon, IA 51201



VENMO

@NCCFoundation



ONLINE

nwicc.edu/ncc-donation-form



GET TO KNOW



Brian Lauck 
Head Sports Shooting Coach

Brian Lauck brings a unique combination of passion, expertise, and leadership to the collegiate sports scene. Since assuming leadership of the NCC Sports Shooting Team in 2019, Lauck has not just built a team but a community, emphasizing mutual respect, dedication, and personal growth.

Brian embarked on his coaching career in 2014. With a background in aviation management and graphic design, he brings a unique perspective to coaching, one that values precision, strategy, and creativity.

The Rewards of Coaching

For Lauck, the joy of coaching comes from witnessing his athletes integrate the skills they've honed into their performances, culminating in new personal records. "Watching an athlete put all the skills together that they have been working on and finishing with a new personal best is incredibly fulfilling," Lauck shares, capturing the essence of NCC's sports shooting principles—personal growth, skill mastery, and breaking new ground.

A Broader Influence

Beyond his role at NCC, Brian contributes his expertise to the Cherokee County Youth Shooting Sports, ensuring that younger enthusiasts also benefit from his experience and passion for the sport. This dedication to nurturing talent at all levels underlines his commitment to the sport's future and to developing skilled, resilient athletes.

Coaching Philosophies and Insights

Over the years, Lauck has learned that effective coaching transcends the teaching of technical skills; it's about fostering resilience, adaptability, and a growth mindset in his athletes. "It's about dedication to the process, not the outcome," he reflects, underscoring a philosophy that resonates with both seasoned athletes and newcomers.

Looking Ahead

With an optimistic view of the future, Lauck is excited about the team's trajectory. "We will be now offering scholarships," he announces, highlighting NCC's commitment to supporting talented sports shooting athletes. With numerous inquiries about the 2024 season, the future looks promising for NCC's Sports Shooting Team.

Beyond the Range

Off the range, Brian's life is just as dynamic. He has completed a half marathon, a 100-mile bike ride, a 1-mile ruck hike while carrying 100-pounds of weight, and the challenging 4x4x48 run, all within a year and a half. A fan of the color orange, bacon cheeseburgers, Pearl Jam, and the iconic Blues Brothers movie, Lauck also enjoys skeet shooting, cycling, and family trips. He embodies a spirit of continuous self-improvement, a principle he applies both in his personal endeavors and in his coaching philosophy.

A Final Note

Coach Brian Lauck's story is a testament to the transformative power of sports in shaping lives and futures. "Be it physical or mental, try to be better than yesterday in all aspects of your life," he advises, a philosophy that guides his coaching and personal life. With Lauck at the helm, NCC's Sports Shooting Team is poised to achieve new heights, inspiring the next generation of shooters to aim for the stars.



DJ Van't Hul 
Assistant Sports Shooting Coach

In the world of collegiate sports passion, dedication and a keen eye for potential are the hallmarks of exceptional coaching. Assistant Coach DJ Van't Hul embodies these qualities, guiding the NCC Sports Shooting Team with expertise and enthusiasm.

A Coach's Journey

With roots in the Rock Valley community where he completed his high school education, Van't Hul's journey in coaching began with the Rock Valley Clay Crushers in 2013, marking a decade-long commitment to sports shooting. His path reflects a deep-seated passion for the sport and an unwavering dedication to nurturing young talent.

The Joy of Coaching

For Van't Hul, the most rewarding aspect of coaching is witnessing the evolution of his athletes. "Watching the athletes progress in the sport," he notes, "captures the essence of my coaching philosophy. It's not just about the victories or the scores. It's the personal and athletic growth of my team members that fuels my passion."

A Philosophy of Inclusiveness and Growth

Having learned that the best athletes might not always be the most naturally athletic, DJ prioritizes coachability over raw talent. He looks for recruits who, regardless of their initial skill level, show a willingness to learn and adapt. This approach has cultivated a team that values growth and perseverance, contributing to NCC's success in the competitive arena of sports shooting.

Looking to the Future

Van't Hul thinks NCC's sports shooting and soccer programs are poised for continued success. He envisions a future where the teams grow not just in skill but also in diversity, attracting students from various regions of the country. His excitement for the upcoming season is tangible, especially in welcoming back returning athletes and integrating new talent into the team.

More Than a Coach

Outside the realm of coaching, DJ is a man of many interests. An avid outdoorsman, he finds excitement in hunting and fishing. Woodworking allows him to channel his creativity into works of art, while his role as a father to Landon, Marley, and Ellanor keeps him grounded and fulfilled.

His personal favorites—ranging from the color black to the enjoyment of a good steak, and from the impactful series Band of Brothers to the cherished memory of his nephew's graduation in Georgia—paint a picture of a man deeply connected to his family, his hobbies, and his values.

THE COACHES

A Continued Legacy

As the NCC community looks forward to another promising year, DJ Van't Hul's influence on the sports shooting team is undeniable. His approach to coaching, centered on progress, adaptability, and personal growth, ensures that NCC's athletes are not just prepared for competition but also for life's broader challenges. With Coach Van't Hul at the helm, the future of NCC sports shooting is bright, marked by excellence, diversity, and unity.



Jesse Kuehler

Head Men's Soccer Coach



Jesse Kuehler stepped into the role of the Head Men's Soccer Coach on January 3, 2024, marking an exciting opening chapter for the soccer program at Northwest Iowa Community College. Bringing vision and a passion for the game, Kuehler is set to lead NCC's soccer program into its inaugural season with enthusiasm and expertise.

A Journey Through Soccer

Kuehler began his coaching career in August 2015 as a student coach for Briar Cliff University after completing an impressive academic and athletic journey that included graduating from Spencer High School in 2011, attending Iowa Lakes Community College from 2011–2012, and concluding his education at Briar Cliff University from 2012–2015. His coaching experience spans youth clubs, high schools, and colleges, including roles at Sporting Iowa, Norwalk High School, Spencer High School, and, most recently, Iowa Lakes Community College, where he contributed to winning the NJCAA D2 National Championship in 2023!

Coaching Philosophy

For Kuehler, the most exhilarating part of coaching is forming lasting relationships with student-athletes and competing alongside some of the best players and teams. He emphasizes the importance of patience in coaching, acknowledging that building a successful program takes time and dedication. Kuehler looks for recruits who are hardworking, confident, composed, responsible, and respectful, believing these qualities are crucial for both individual and team success.

Vision for NCC Soccer

As NCC's soccer program kicks off, Kuehler is optimistic about its potential. With strong support from the school and community, he envisions establishing a culture of excellence from the very beginning. Kuehler is confident that NCC soccer can quickly become a formidable competitor in the conference.

Excitement for the Season Ahead

Kuehler is eagerly anticipating the arrival of his team on campus and the start of training on August 1. He is particularly excited about the mix of talented recruits joining NCC from both domestic and international backgrounds, promising a diverse and dynamic team.

Beyond the Pitch

Away from soccer, Kuehler enjoys the simple pleasures in life. His favorite color is red, and he loves indulging in chicken alfredo. Kuehler has had the honor of meeting Tony DiCicco, the World Cup-winning coach of the USA Women's Soccer Team. He is a fan of the movie Top Gun, enjoyed traveling to England to coach soccer, and rocks out to Motley Crue.

A New Chapter at NCC

Kuehler is more than just a coach; he's a mentor, a strategist, and a huge fan of the game. As he prepares to lead the NCC Men's Soccer Team, Kuehler brings not only a wealth of experience but also a profound understanding of what it takes to build a team from the ground up. With a focus on culture, community, and competition, Coach Jesse Kuehler is poised to guide NCC soccer into a promising future.



Tre Thomas

Head Women's Soccer Coach



NCC is proud to announce Tre Thomas as the Head Women's Soccer Coach, a role he assumed at the beginning of 2024. Thomas brings to NCC a fresh and ambitious vision for the inaugural women's soccer program, backed by a robust coaching background and a passion for developing young talent.

A Rich Coaching History

Thomas's coaching career kicked off in 2019, marking the beginning of a journey dedicated to nurturing and guiding young athletes. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Sports Management from Southwestern College, and spent a year at Cloud County Community College (both located in Kansas). Thomas's educational and athletic journey has equipped him with a deep understanding of sports management and coaching. His experience spans notable institutions and clubs, including Bethany College, Sporting KC, FC Dallas, and Garden City Community College.

Coaching Philosophy

For Thomas, the joy of coaching lies in recruiting young talent and introducing them to new aspects of soccer. He values patience, understanding that success in coaching and team development takes time. In recruits, Thomas looks for qualities beyond just skill: He prioritizes how individuals act as teammates and people, their coachability, and their motivation and desire to learn and play.

Vision for NCC Soccer

With the NCC women's soccer program in its infancy, Thomas is optimistic about its future. He believes that with strong support from the school and the community, NCC has all the necessary ingredients for success. "To the top," Thomas says, reflecting his ambition for the program's trajectory.

...Continued on page 19



New Competitive Sports Logo Unveiled

NCC announces the launch of its new competitive sports logo, marking a bold step in the evolution of the College's athletic identity. This fresh emblem, a reimagined version of the College's beloved mascot, Thunder, is designed to embody the fierce competitiveness of NCC's athletes while honoring the institution's rich history.

The new logo is a dynamic reinterpretation of Thunder, crafted to showcase the fierce competitiveness inherent in NCC's sports teams. This design divergence is critical; it serves to distinguish the combative spirit in the athletic arena from the friendly, approachable persona of Thunder, which we've proudly maintained for our general College activities and community engagements. Our goal is to ignite a spirit of athletic prowess without altering the welcoming image of our mascot, which continues to be a hit with children and families.

A pivotal element of this new logo is the lightning bolt. This is not merely a nod to Thunder's electric persona but also homage to the storied history of NCC, particularly our award-winning electrical programs. The bolt symbolizes the energy, speed, and sharpness that our athletes bring to the field, resonating with the 'Thunder' in our name and our institution's legacy in electrical excellence.

"Northwest Iowa Community College has consistently celebrated achievements across the spectrum, from academic success to athletic victories. This new logo stands as a powerful symbol of our dedication to excellence in sports," said Kristin Kollbaum, Director of Marketing & Communications. "With the launch of our new soccer programs, along with our existing Sports Shooting Team, it seems like the perfect time for this reimagining of Thunder."

We are excited to see how this emblem galvanizes our teams and supporters, igniting a spirit of ambition and pride."

The athletic logo is expected to debut across various athletic platforms including team uniforms, promotional materials, and digital media. It represents not just a visual change but a pledge to foster a competitive and dynamic sports culture within the College.

For more information about NCC athletic offerings contact Beth Sibenaller-Woodall, Interim Athletic Director, at beths@nwicc.edu, or call her at 712-324-5061.

AUGUST

Saturday 24
Women 2PM | Men 4PM
 **vs.**
Central CC (Columbus)

Wednesday 28
Women 2PM | Men 4PM
 **vs.**
Lake Superior College

Northwest Iowa Community College

SOCCER schedule

2024

 Home games played @ Sheldon High School

  @ncc Iowa_msoccer, @ncc Iowa_wsoccer

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 1
Women 1PM | Men 3PM
 @
Mineral Area College

Wednesday 4
Women 1PM | Men 3PM
 @
Garden City CC

Sunday 15
Women 3:15PM | Men 1PM
 @
Briar Cliff University

Saturday 21
Women 3:30PM | Men 1PM
 @
Marshalltown CC

Wednesday 25
Women 3:30PM | Men 1PM
 **vs.**
Northeast CC

Saturday 28
Women 3:30PM | Men 1PM
 **vs.**
North Iowa Area CC



OCTOBER

Wednesday 2
Women 3:30PM | Men 3PM
 @
Iowa Lakes CC

Saturday 5
Women 3:30PM | Men 3PM
 @
Scott CC

Monday 7
Women 2:30PM | Men 12NOON
 **vs.**
Dakota County Tech

Saturday 12
Women 3:30PM | Men 1PM
 @
Hawkeye CC

Wednesday 16
Women 3:30PM | Men 1PM
 **vs.**
Iowa Central CC

Saturday 19
Women 3:30PM | Men 1PM
 **vs.**
Southeastern CC

Wednesday 23
Women 3:30PM | Men 1PM
 @
Western Iowa Tech

Men's Conference Game Times:

First Round: Friday, Oct. 25 @ No. 1 Seed
Quarterfinals: Saturday, Oct. 26 @ Higher Seed
Semifinals: Tuesday, Oct. 29 @ Higher Seed
Championship: Saturday, Nov. 2 @ Higher Seed
District Championship: Friday, Nov. 8 or Saturday,
Nov. 9 @ Region 6/9 Champion
National Championship: Nov. 17-23, 2024 Wichita, KS

Women's Conference Game Times:

First Round: Saturday, Oct. 26 @ No. 1 Seed
Quarterfinals: Sunday, Oct. 27 @ Higher Seed
Semifinals: Wednesday, Oct. 30 @ Higher Seed
Championship: Sunday, Nov. 3 @ Higher Seed
District Championship: Saturday, Nov. 9 @ Region
6/9 Champion
National Championship: Nov. 17-23, 2024 Wichita, KS

*Sports Shooting Schedule to be released in summer

CAREER ACADEMY

Information Technology Career Track Launched at NCC Career Academy with State Grant Support

NCC is excited to unveil a new Information Technology (IT) career track at the NCC Career Academy, an educational initiative aimed at addressing the growing demand for IT and automation skills in the workforce. This development is made possible by a generous state grant from the Career Academy Incentive Fund, amounting to \$556,000, dedicated to outfitting a state-of-the-art classroom and computer lab with essential IT equipment, including servers, switches, and firewalls, which enable hands-on learning experiences.

The new IT track enhances the Career Academy's existing Applied Technology offerings, including the Engineering Design and Welding career tracks, and aligns with the principles of Manufacturing 4.0. This includes a focus on cybersecurity, data management, and automated manufacturing, further broadening the academy's commitment to advancing technological education and workforce readiness in line with current and future industry standards.

Seamless Transition into Advanced IT Education

Students of the Academy will progress through a designed, college-level curriculum for high school students starting their junior year, beginning with NCC's Help Desk Technician Certificate in the first year, followed by the CompTIA A+ Certification and an NCC Information Technology Specialist (ITS) Diploma by the end of the second year at the academy. This foundation prepares them for further education through the second year of the Information Technology Specialist Associate of Applied Science degree program through NCC and/or immediate employment in the Information Technology field.

A Collaborative Framework for Success

The concept of the Career Academy in Sioux Center was developed by the College and built on the information gathered from business and industry partners, the Manufacturing Sector Board, and the Health Care Sector Board. As the College looked to expand the offerings at this regional center, the Information Technology Specialist Advisory Committee provided input on what would be needed to provide a quality expansion at the facility. These partnerships underscore the importance of community and industry involvement in shaping a relevant and responsive curriculum and educational model.

Dr. John Hartog, President of Northwest Iowa Community College, shared his excitement for the new initiative: "From the outset, we've approached the development of the Sioux Center Career Academy with the understanding that it's a long-term journey, not a quick race. This perspective has guided us as we unveil the variety of opportunities available at the Career Academy. The generous grant from the state has significantly propelled us toward completing our goals as stated in our strategic plan, making the IT Career Track a critical component in the comprehensive suite of offerings at the Sioux Center Career Academy."

Hartog continued, "We're not just enthusiastic; we're invigorated by what the future holds for our students and the regional workforce."



The addition of the IT Track is a testament to our unwavering dedication to bridging the educational gap with the demands of the industry, advancing our students to the forefront of technological innovation.

With robust partnerships and an industry designed curriculum, we're not just preparing students for the future, we're actively shaping it, establishing new benchmarks for IT career readiness."

IT TRACK PROGRAM STRUCTURE:

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	OUTCOME
Students earn NCC's Help Desk Technician Certificate	Students can earn CompTIA A+ Certification and an Information Technology Specialist (ITS) Diploma (prepared to enter the second year of NCC's ITS program for an Associate of Applied Science degree)	Students leave with two industry-recognized certifications and a college diploma

OVERALL BENEFITS

Financial Savings: Students are exempt from tuition costs for classes completed while still in high school, providing significant savings on future college expenses.

Career Exploration: The Academy offers a chance to explore various career options within a field, helping students make informed decisions about their futures.

Hands-on Experience: Through industry partnerships, students gain valuable exposure and practical experience in a career field.

Accelerated Training: The program is designed to cut training time significantly, allowing students to enter the workforce or pursue further education sooner.

Industry Certifications: Students have the opportunity to earn certifications recognized by industry, enhancing their employability upon graduation.

Career Focus: The Academy helps students develop a clear career focus, setting academic and personal goals that align with their interests and aspirations.

Smooth Transition to College: By participating in college-level coursework, students become accustomed to the rigors of post-secondary education, easing the transition from high school.

Personal Development: The program aims to boost self-esteem and confidence, providing students with the skills needed to succeed in their personal and professional lives.

Tailored Instruction: Small group settings ensure personalized attention, catering to the specific interests and needs of students.

SAVE



GET A HEAD START
ON YOUR EDUCATION



EXPLORE



JUMP INTO YOUR
CAREER SOONER

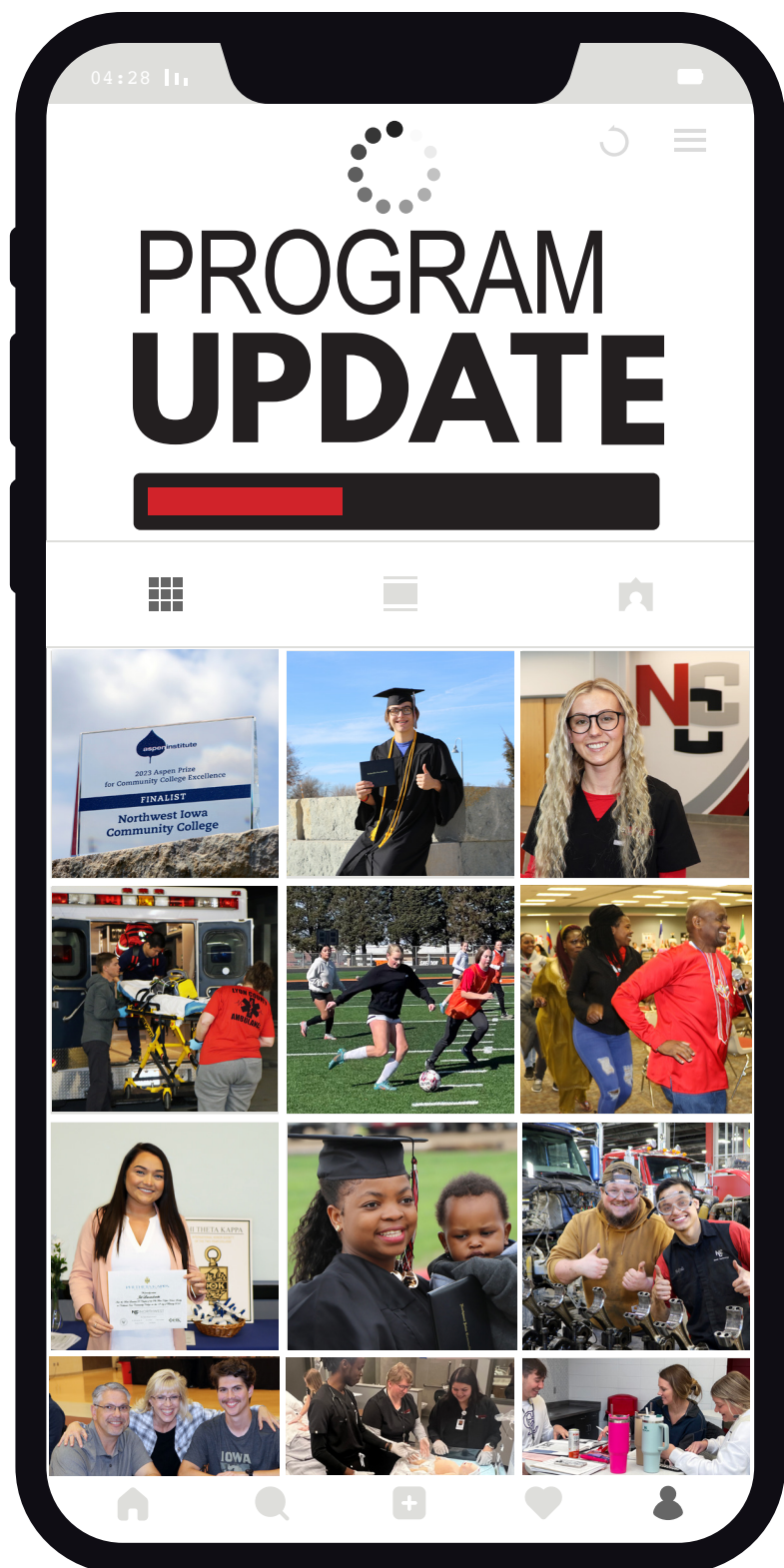


HOW TO ENROLL

Starting in the fall of 2024, the Sioux Center Career Academy, in partnership with local school districts, will offer career tracks in Health, Education, Engineering, Welding, and Information Technology for students entering their junior year of high school. Participating high schools:

- Boyden-Hull Community School District
- MOC-Floyd Valley Community School District
- Rock Valley Community School District
- Sioux Center Community School District
- West Sioux Community School District
- Netherlands Reformed High School
- Unity Christian High School
- Western Christian High School

For students from the participating schools who are interested in these programs, please reach out to your high school guidance counselor for further details. Registration opens in March 2024. If your high school is not among those listed and you wish to participate, please contact:
Sarah Breems-Diekevers
Northwest Iowa Community College
712-324-5061, extension 137
sbreems-diekevers@nwicc.edu.



**Check out the latest updates
from around campus!**

Online/Associate of Arts/Transfer Majors

NCC currently offers over 30 programs of study that are delivered entirely online! Many of these program offerings have on-campus options as well. A majority of Associate of Arts students blend their program, choosing to take a mix of online and on-campus courses.

Automotive & Light Duty Diesel Technology

The Automotive & Light Duty Diesel Technology program was recently recognized as a Top Four Finalist in the School of the Year Contest put on by Tomorrow's Technician and WIX® Filters. The program will receive a \$500 gift card from WIX® Filters and recognition on the Tomorrow's Tech website and in their newsletter. Students recently visited Certified Transmission in Omaha, NE, where they were able to experience the commercial side of rebuilding transmissions. During this trip, students also had the opportunity to take a tour of the Peter Finks Muscle Car Museum.



Diesel Technology

The Diesel Technology program continues to partner with area companies and organizations. During the fall 2023 semester, Ziegler CAT taught a Failure Analysis Course on campus that all Diesel students were able to attend. This was a great experience for our students. Diesel students are currently fixing an oil leak on a truck for the Sioux City Food Pantry, and continue to work on a variety of projects and gain hands-on experience. During the spring 2024 semester, students worked on engine overhauls on a number of trucks and pieces of equipment, rebuilt transmissions, performed repairs on radiators and clutches, and more. The Diesel Technology program performs all service and repairs on NCC's Powerline trucks and fleet of maintenance equipment, and performs in-depth repairs for NCC's Heavy Equipment program.

Engineering Design/Design Technology

Engineering Design/Design Technology students have been utilizing Industrial Maintenance Trainers in their Fluid Power course, which provides them additional hands-on training in hydraulics. The program continues to bring in area industry partners to speak with current students. Recently, Interstates Electric visited to discuss how design fits into their industry and also highlighted current job openings with the students.

Health Information Technology/Medical Coding

The Health Information Technology (HIT) and Medical Coding programs have been experiencing increased enrollment over the past two years, with over 25 students in our first-year courses. The programs recently completed state-required program evaluations which take place every five years. This comprehensive review of curriculum, textbooks, resources, costs, placement, and student, graduate and Advisory Committee feedback resulted in an overall program score of 94%.

Heavy Equipment

Heavy Equipment students worked hard over the spring semester getting the College's fleet of equipment serviced and ready to begin spring and summer projects. The program is looking forward to working on another parking lot project at NCC with the help of other area contractors. The program is at capacity for the fall 2024 semester and has a waitlist in place for students wanting to begin the program.

Industrial & Commercial Wiring

The Industrial & Commercial Wiring program invites you to follow them on social media: facebook.com/nwicc.electrical. Follow along to stay updated on the latest program news, see current projects the students are working on, and stay up-to-date on current job openings at area electrical companies. The demand for licensed electricians remains high. The program is at capacity for the fall 2024 semester and has a waitlist in place for students wanting to begin the program.

Industrial Instrumentation & Control

Students thoroughly enjoy the 40-day internship experience during the second year of the program. Graduates of the Industrial Instrumentation & Control program remain highly sought after. Each year, the program is approached by companies seeking to sponsor students. Currently, the following companies have sponsorship opportunities set up with this program: Cargill, POET and Wells Enterprises.

Medical Laboratory Technology

The Medical Laboratory Technology Program began in fall 2023 with 4 students at NCC. These students work hard at combining textbook information with hands-on labs to increase their knowledge base. These students are an example of how educational partnerships (Kirkwood Community College and NCC), along with industry partners (clinical and lab settings), can help shape healthcare in this country to be a success.

Nursing

Currently, there are over 130 nursing students enrolled in 6 different cohorts. This fall, the program celebrated an outstanding 100% pass rate from all three of our May graduating cohorts. Fall 2023 included work on finalizing curricular changes for the Practical Nursing program which will go into effect with our Fall 2025 cohort. We welcomed over 20 healthcare facilities and RN to BSN programs in February 2024 for our semi-annual Career/College Fair. This is a way for our students to interact directly with prospective employers and learn about advanced educational opportunities. Our simulation center is used many days a week, providing real-world practice for our health students in a safe, high-tech environment.

Paramedic

The NCC Paramedic program began fall 2023 with 12 students. Students have been working hard to gather information to make good clinical judgements, deliver high quality patient care during clinicals, and learn how to be a great healthcare provider. Our program combines in-class instruction, with in-the-field training, along with high-intensity simulation and exams to produce a well-rounded, holistic clinician.



Pharmacy Technician

The Pharmacy Technician program is a fully online program that fills the gap of healthcare partners needing pharmacy technicians in the field. This program is dedicated to taking the burden off of local pharmacies and healthcare entities by training pharmacy technicians online while they work in-house for area employers as a trainee.

Powerline

The Powerline program is currently accepting students for the summer 2026 semester. The program has a waitlist for all earlier start terms. Faculty are working on updating the physical requirements for incoming students to enter the program.

Radiologic Technology

The 2023 Radiologic Technology graduates had a 100% board pass rate and all are employed full-time. The program currently has the highest number of students in its history and is at capacity for the fall 2024 semester, with a waitlist in place for students wanting to begin the program.

Welding

The Welding Program offers a diverse range of options for its students. A welding certificate is available to students who desire training in only one welding process. For students who desire to further their skillset, a diploma or Associate of Applied Science degree is also available. Welding is not only a popular choice among college students, it is highly sought-after by high school students as well.



PACESETTER OF THE YEAR

Dr. John Hartog, President, has been honored with the “Pacesetter of the Year” award at the District 5 National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) Conference, held October 4–6 in St. Louis, Missouri.

The “Pacesetter of the Year” is a significant award, given to a community college president or CEO who shows exceptional leadership and support in communications and marketing. Dr. Hartog was nominated for this honor by members of his own Marketing Department, including Kristin Kollbaum, Director of Marketing & Communications, and Lori Richards, Creative Services Coordinator.

The nomination for Dr. Hartog included answers to critical questions that highlight the values and impact of a true pacesetter in education:

1. **Advancing the Institution:** Dr. Hartog’s innovative strategies have significantly elevated NCC’s profile and advanced its mission both locally and regionally.
2. **Regional and National Influence:** His efforts have contributed to the broader community college network, enhancing their visibility and impact on the national stage.
3. **PR Principles and Local Support:** Dr. Hartog has consistently applied sound public relations principles, significantly boosting NCC’s marketing efforts and enhancing its local presence.
4. **Community Support:** Under his leadership, NCC has seen increased community support, reflecting his success in building strong local partnerships.
5. **NCMPR Support:** Dr. Hartog has actively supported NCMPR’s mission, contributing to the organization’s growth and effectiveness.

Lori Richards stated, “Dr. Hartog has been a supportive collaborator and leader in NCC’s strategies to highlight a true commitment to student success. We are proud of our students, and Dr. Hartog’s support helps ensure their important stories are shared.”

This award is part of the NCMPR Conference, where marketing and communication professionals from community colleges gather to share ideas and celebrate achievements. District 5, which NCC is a part of, consists of colleges from various regions, including Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Manitoba, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Recipients of this district award automatically to be eligible for the national award which will be given out at the national NCMPR conference to be held in Seattle, WA, in March 2024.

Dr. Hartog expressed his gratitude: “This award is a testament to our collective commitment to excellence in communication and community engagement. It reflects the great effort of all of our College’s employees.



Together we work hard to provide education, and we do everything we can to open doors of opportunity for our students, graduates, and industry partners.

We love to tell our story, and northwest Iowans love to hear about their beloved Community College. I am fortunate to work with such a great Team of people, and I am grateful that together we can share in this recognition.”

Note on Award Acceptance: Due to prior commitments, Dr. Hartog was unable to attend the awards ceremony in person. However, he recorded a heartfelt video message expressing his gratitude, which was presented at the ceremony. Dr. Hartog officially accepted the award at the January NCC Board of Directors meeting.

FOUNDATION NEWS

Embracing growth, change, and exciting opportunities is at the heart of the transformations happening in the NCC Foundation Office. Let's take a closer look at how these shifts are bringing positive changes to our office.



EMBRACING GROWTH

We are thrilled to share that our student base is growing, with record enrollments at the college. This growth sparks an increased need for scholarships.

The diverse and evolving student demographic is teaching us valuable lessons about adapting to change. We continue to explore ways that our scholarship offerings can ensure our student base has the support they need to succeed. Recognizing the importance of catering to different student groups, we are making thoughtful adjustments to our scholarship programs to better meet the evolving needs of our student body.



NAVIGATING CHANGE



DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES

We are excited to embrace these possibilities and use fresh resources to enhance our commitment to student success.

In our journey to meet the unique needs of our students, the Foundation Office has introduced the following changes:

- We adjusted our scholarship offerings to meet the needs of our Associate of Arts students better! The Thunder Scholarship caters this demographic by offering twelve \$2,500 scholarships to qualifying students.
- After a decade of laughter and camaraderie, we are closing the chapter on our annual Reds, Whites and Women fundraiser to make way for more events that support our growing population of NCC student athletes.
- With the implementation of scholarship software, we are seeing a record number of students applying for scholarships. This gives us the ability to spread our scholarship allocation to even more deserving students than ever before.

As the world changes, the NCC Foundation Office is not just adapting, but also embracing the changes. We are excited for what new opportunities come our way!

Thomas *Continued from page 11*

Excitement for the Future

Thomas is particularly excited about launching the new program and witnessing the community support that surrounds it. The process of building the team and program from the ground up offers a unique opportunity to mold the culture and standards from day one.

Recruitment and Team Building

Recruitment is well underway, with Thomas aiming to finalize his roster by the end of April. His focus on creating a cohesive and talented team promises a competitive debut season for the NCC Women's Soccer Team.

Beyond the Field

Away from coaching, Thomas's interests are as diverse as his coaching background. He enjoys the color Carolina Blue, indulges in steak, and has had the opportunity to meet numerous famous athletes, including Monta Ellis and various MLS players. A fan of I Am Legend, Thomas also finds relaxation in playing video games and enjoys vacations in Branson, Missouri. With Drake as his favorite music artist, Thomas's personal tastes reflect a well-rounded individual with a rich life outside soccer.

Looking Forward

Thomas is more than just a coach; he's a trailblazer determined to establish a strong, competitive women's soccer program at NCC. With his leadership, the future of NCC women's soccer looks bright, promising exciting times ahead for the College, its athletes, and the supporting community.

As NCC and its community rally behind Coach Tre Thomas and the women's soccer program, there's a sense of anticipation for what the future holds. Under Thomas's guidance, the NCC Women's Soccer Team is set to embark on a journey filled with growth, success, and the shared joy of the game.

**Mark
your
calendar**

ANNUAL NCC RETIREES

Appreciation Day!

Wednesday, September 25

- Eat at the new NCC Cafeteria
- Cheer on the Thunder at an NCC Soccer Game at Orab Field
- And more! Be watching for more details!

upcoming

NE

CALENDAR

of

EVENTS

Join us!

Summer Classes Begin

Tuesday, May 21

Golf Classic

Monday, June 3

Summer Commencement

Friday, July 19

Fall Classes Begin

August 21

Shoot for Success Fundraiser

Saturday, August 24

1st Home Soccer Game

Saturday, August 24

NCC Retirees' Appreciation Day

Wednesday, September 25