

# THE BRONCBUSTER

2024-2025

## Annual Report



**GCCC**  
CELEBRATES  
**544**  
GRADUATES

**EMPLOYEE  
EXCELLENCE  
AWARDS**

**SIGNIFICANT  
ENROLLMENT  
INCREASE  
FALL 2024**



801 Campus Drive | Garden City, KS  
www.gcccks.edu | 620-276-7611

A digital  
version  
is available  
online!



# GCCC BOARD OF TRUSTEES



SHANDA SMITH



DAVID RUPP



BOB LARSON



LEONARD HITZ



DR. MERILYN DOUGLASS



JEAN CLIFFORD

## MISSION

Garden City Community College exists to produce positive contributors to the economic and social well-being of society.

## VISION

GCCC will be the premier educational nexus to progress, providing world class learning in a dynamic environment. From here, you can go anywhere.

## BUSTER VALUES

**B**old Innovation

**U**nwavering Integrity

**S**ervice & Collegiality

**T**rust, Transparency, & Accountability

**E**mpowered Creativity & Academic Freedom

**R**esponsible Leadership

**S**tudent-Centered Focus



# MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT RUDA

Thank you for taking the time to review the 2024–2025 Annual Report for Garden City Community College. This past academic year has been one of extraordinary progress, growth, and celebration—both for our institution and the vibrant community we are proud to serve.

We began the year with a historic achievement: record-breaking enrollment for Fall 2024. GCCC delivered a total

of 23,118 credit hours by the end of the fall semester, the highest in our 105-year history. This milestone not only reflects the growing demand for accessible, affordable, and high-quality higher education in Southwest Kansas but also affirms the trust our students and families continue to place in us as their college of choice.

Our commitment to student success continues to earn

recognition beyond our campus. This year, GCCC was named among the top 100 community colleges in the nation eligible for recognition through the U.S. Department of Education’s Postsecondary Student Success Recognition Program, placing us in the top 5% of all public two- and four-year institutions across the country. This distinction is a testament to the dedication, passion, and excellence of our faculty,

staff, and students, and underscores the impact of the personalized support and high academic standards we uphold.

Student achievement remains a cornerstone of our identity. Our Nursing program once again achieved a perfect 100% pass rate on national licensing exams for both the Practical Nursing (PN) and Registered Nursing (RN) programs, reinforcing our reputation for preparing outstanding healthcare professionals.

Beyond the classroom, student excellence was on full display: our Criminal Justice Competition team excelled at regional events, our nationally ranked Meat Judging Team continued to break records, and our Phi Theta Kappa honor society chapter earned prestigious national accolades. These accomplishments reflect not only academic rigor but also the drive and talent of our students as they prepare to lead in their respective fields. GCCC Athletics also excelled academically, with nine programs earning All-Academic First Team recognition for overall team GPA by the National Junior College Athletic Association.

As we celebrate these successes, we also remain focused on the future. This year, GCCC launched a transformative partnership with Kansas State University to expand access to four-year degrees right here in Southwest Kansas. Through this collaboration,

students can complete a GCCC associate degree and seamlessly transition into K-State programs, which will be delivered remotely with hands-on lab experiences available locally. The first offering, a bachelor's degree through K-State's College of Agriculture, is designed to help close the gap in our region's bachelor's degree attainment rate, currently 17.9%, compared to the statewide average of 33.9%. This initiative marks a significant step toward strengthening our local workforce and expanding educational opportunities for students across the region. GCCC also continues to build on its collaboration with Newman University, offering nine bachelor's degree programs that can be completed in Garden City, including agriculture, elementary education, business, applied artificial intelligence, nursing, computer science, certified financial planning, data science, and game development.

These advancements have been made possible, in part, thanks to the unwavering support of our partners and neighbors. We are deeply grateful to organizations like Golden Plains Credit Union, which generously supported scholarships; LiveWell Finney County, whose investment in a new outdoor video board in our campus quad will enhance student life and engagement; and Scooter's Coffee, which has invested

in video boards at athletic facilities and sponsored the new campus coffee shop, Billy's Brewhouse. These gifts, along with many others, embody the spirit of collaboration and shared purpose that defines our community.

The report you are about to explore outlines these stories and more, including a comprehensive review of our financial data and student demographics. As we reflect on this historic year, we remain grounded in our mission: to produce positive contributors to the economic and social well-being of society. This mission guides every decision we make and every initiative we pursue.

At Garden City Community College, we take pride in carrying the word **community** in our name. Every achievement we celebrate reflects the partnerships and people who make our mission possible, as well as the students we serve. Thank you for your continued trust, support, and belief in what we do.

As always, it's a great day to be a Buster.



Dr. Ryan J. Ruda  
**President,**  
**Garden City Community**  
**College**

# GCCC ACHIEVES RECORD GROWTH IN FALL 2024 ENROLLMENT

GCCC celebrated record-setting enrollment in Fall 2024, marking a major milestone in its 105-year history. The college reported 23,118 total credit hours at the end of the semester—the highest ever recorded—surpassing the previous record of 23,108. Student headcount increased by 7.44% to 2,136 students, reflecting continued growth in enrollment.

This growth exceeded statewide trends, as Kansas community colleges saw a 5.9% increase and state universities experienced a 2.3% rise, according to the Kansas Board of Regents.

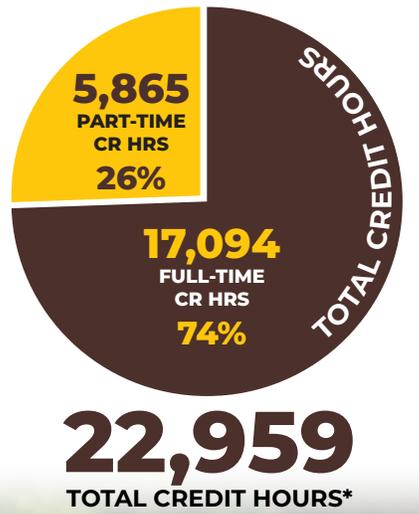
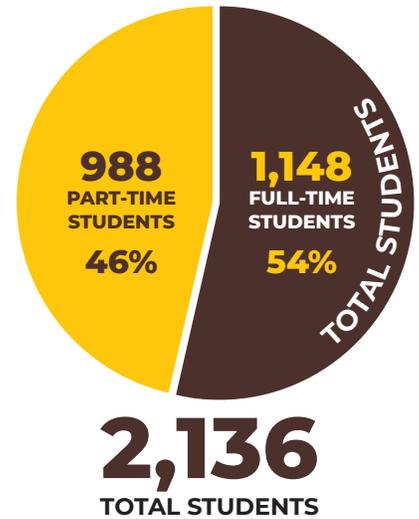
GCCC President Dr. Ryan Ruda credited the achievement to strategic

enrollment management, expanded academic and technical programs, enhanced student support services, and growing dual credit offerings, as well as the dedication of faculty and staff. “We saw the results of intentional efforts to grow and serve our students more effectively,” said Dr. Ruda. “This record enrollment was a testament to the quality of education we provided and the collaborative spirit across our campus.”

GCCC continued to serve a diverse student population, with 67.4% of students from Finney County, 79% from Kansas, and additional students representing 38 states and 35 countries.

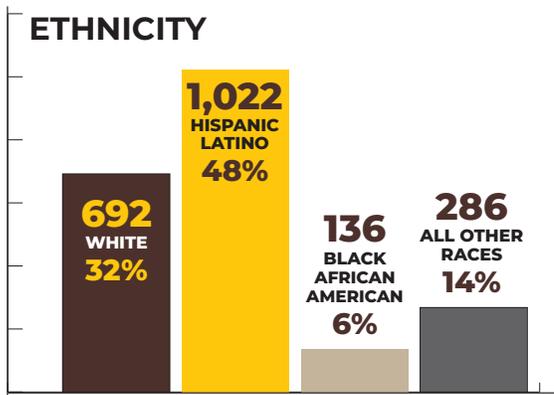
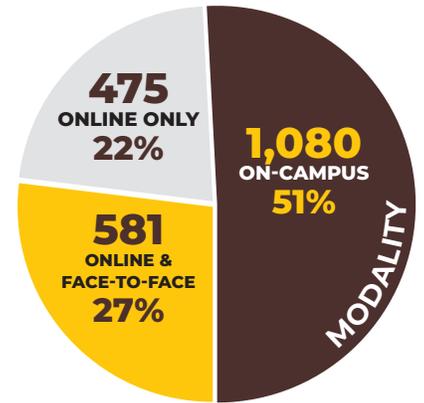
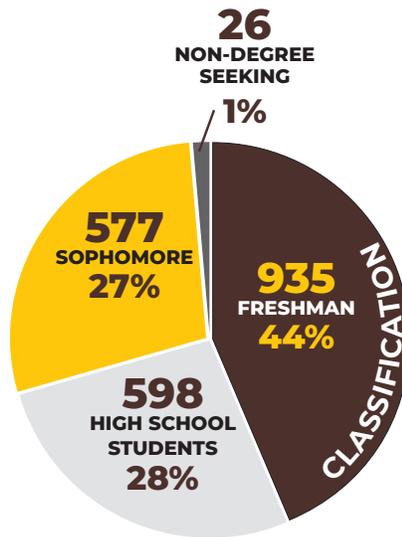
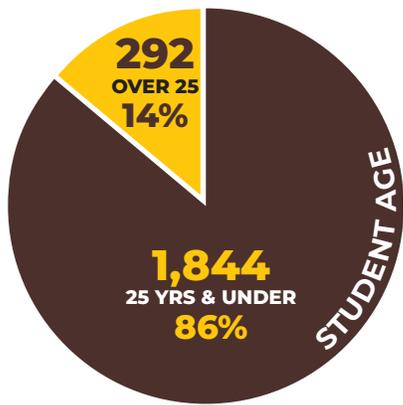
***The record enrollment reinforced GCCC’s role as a regional leader and global educational hub, demonstrating its commitment to student success and its mission to help students START HERE. GO ANYWHERE.***

## ENROLLMENT FALL 2024

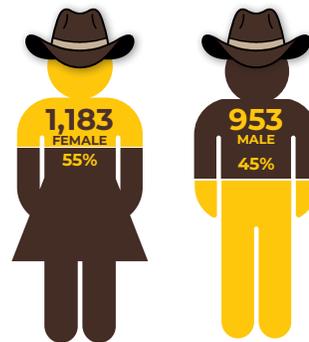


*\*Based on Fall 2024 certification as of September 24, 2024. Enrollment continued to increase through the end of the fall semester.*

# STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



## STUDENT GENDER



## RESIDENCY

**1,688**  
KANSAS RESIDENTS

**79%**  
FROM KANSAS



**67%**  
FROM FINNEY COUNTY

**340**  
OUT OF STATE STUDENTS REPRESENTING

**38**  
STATES

**108**  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS REPRESENTING

**35**  
COUNTRIES

ALL FIGURES ARE BASED ON FALL 2024 CERTIFICATION - SEPT. 24, 2024

## GRADUATION STATS

**544**  
TOTAL GRADUATES

**383**  
ASSOCIATE DEGREES

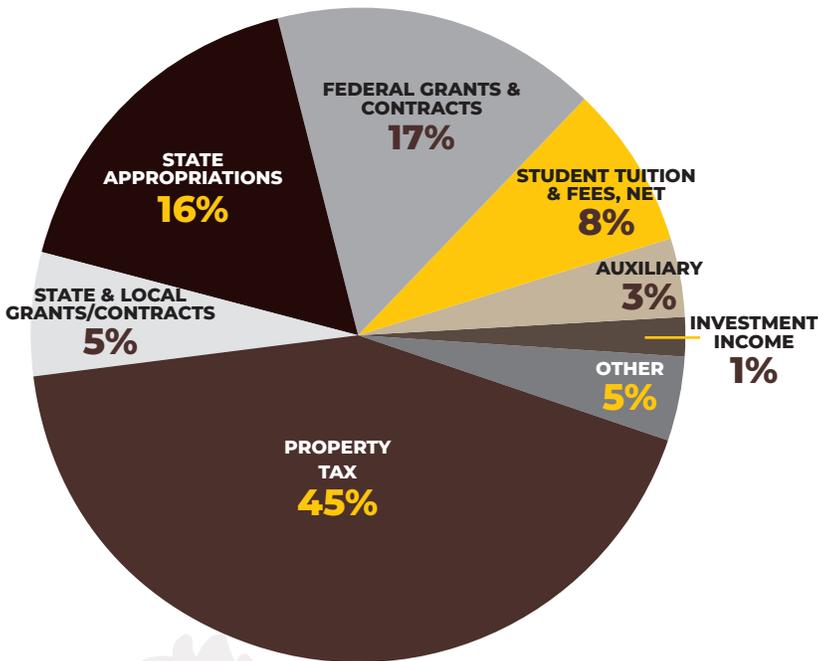
**161**  
CERTIFICATES



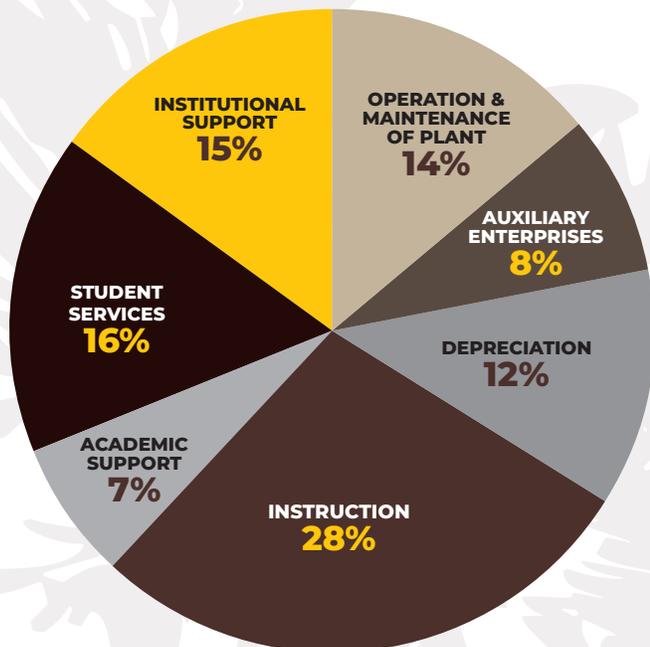
**330**  
or **61%**  
TRANSFER/  
GENERAL  
EDUCATION  
DEGREES

**214**  
or **39%**  
TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION  
DEGREES &  
CERTIFICATES

# REVENUE & EXPENDITURES 2024-2025



## REVENUES BY SOURCE \$38,711,550



## OPERATING EXPENSES \$37,914,718

### OPERATING REVENUES DECREASED BY \$428,338.

This reflects a decrease in federal grants and contracts of **\$655,473**, primarily as a result of less activity for the Congressionally Directed Spending and Title III grants in the current year.

### OPERATING EXPENSES INCREASED \$1,538,125, OR 4.25% FROM 2024.

This was primarily due to overall increases in instruction, student services, institutional support, and depreciation and amortization. Instruction, student services, and institutional support increased as a result of additional staff. Depreciation and amortization increased due to asset acquisitions, projects being finalized and capitalized in the current year and the recording of amortization expense associated with right-to-use leased and subscription assets.

Figures based on schedule of expenditures of federal awards in the college's annual audit report presented to the GCCC Board of Trustees in January of 2026 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

*Financials audited by  
Lewis, Hooper, & Dick, LLC, Certified  
Public Accountants*

# FINANCIAL AID STATISTICS 2024-2025

## ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

Type of Award	# of Students	Award Amounts
Institutional Scholarships	766	\$1,812,154
Endowment Scholarships	282	\$286,479
Federal Pell and SEOG Grants	859	\$4,780,229
Miscellaneous Funding/Assistance	212	\$643,304
State Scholarships and Grants	72	\$128,637
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$7,650,803</b>

Many students received multiple awards from these funding sources.

## STUDENT LOANS

OF THE **2,854**  
STUDENTS ENROLLED  
AS UNDERGRADS AT GCCC

**290**

UNIQUE BORROWERS

**\$1,462,873**

IN STUDENT LOAN DEBT

That's roughly  
**10%**  
of students needing  
to borrow federal  
student loans  
to attend GCCC!

## WORK STUDY (FEDERAL & INSTITUTIONAL)

**57**  
STUDENTS

**\$104,625**

TOTAL PAID TO WORK STUDIES

The GCCC Financial Aid office also focuses efforts on educating borrowers to be responsible during repayment. GCCC assists students in making responsible decisions, and staying informed during student loan repayment.

**0%**

GCCC BORROWER  
DEFAULT RATE

**0%**

NATIONAL BORROWER  
DEFAULT RATE FOR ALL  
INSTITUTIONS

**0%**

NATIONAL BORROWER  
DEFAULT RATE FOR  
PUBLIC 2-YEAR COLLEGE

FY 2022 cohort default rates were significantly impacted by the pause on federal student loan payments that began March 13, 2020. During the pause, borrowers with ED-held student loans were not required to make any payments, and no borrowers with ED-held loans entered default.

# IT'S ALWAYS A GREAT DAY TO BE A BUSTER!

## 2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS



*GCCC TEAM (Left to right): Robert Scrivner, Julian Francis, Ahtziri Mendoza, Nathali Grijalva, Alondra Renteria, Ashley Osegueda, Anabel Orrantia, Olivia Wilds, Kash Sheets, Kenzie Lopez, Leslie Jaco, Brandy Unruh*

## GCCC CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMPETITION TEAM EXCELS AT 2024 REGIONALS

The Garden City Community College Criminal Justice Competition Team, Tau Epsilon Lambda (TEL), hosted the Region III American Criminal Justice Association (ACJA) competition from October 11–13. The event welcomed four university teams to campus, with GCCC standing out as the only community college represented. Students and faculty competed in categories including Crime Scene Investigation, Firearms, Written Testing, and Physical Agility. Despite competing against larger and more experienced programs, GCCC earned placements in every category.

Team members delivered strong performances across the board. Highlights included first-place wins in Written Testing, Physical Agility, and Crime Scene Investigation, as well as multiple top placements in Firearms, both individually and as teams.

## GCCC AMONG TOP 100 COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENT SUCCESS

GCCC was named one of the top 100 community colleges in the nation eligible for recognition by the U.S. Department of Education's Postsecondary Success Recognition Program. As part of the Department's "Raise the Bar" initiative launched in April 2024, the program identifies institutions that demonstrate exceptional performance in advancing

student success through equitable access and meaningful outcomes. GCCC's inclusion places it among the top 5% of public two- and four-year institutions across the country.

The Department evaluated schools based on their ability to enroll low-income students and students of color, support them through graduation or transfer, and prepare them for gainful employment and upward mobility. GCCC's recognition highlights its dedication to supporting a diverse student population and fostering long-term success.



*Read the full article*



*Read the full article*



# GCCC ENDOWMENT ROOM RENAMED IN HONOR OF OMAR D. ANGELES



Read the full article

The Garden City Community College Endowment Association announced the renaming of the Endowment Room in the Beth Tedrow Student Center (BTSC) to the “Omar D. Angeles Endowment Room.”

Mr. Angeles secured the three-year naming rights for this significant meeting space during the 2024 GCCC Endowment Scholarship Auction. In recognition of this honor, a commemorative plaque was presented on July 12, 2024. The Omar D. Angeles Endowment Room continues to serve as a vital hub for activities, meetings, and events.

From left: Lenzy Kuebler, Omar Angeles, and Dr. Ryan Ruda with the plaque signifying the Omar D. Angeles Endowment Room.

## GCCC AWARDS 2025 TOMMY AUSTIN COMMUNITY IMPACT HONOREES

Sister Janice Thome (left) and Sister Roserita Weber (right)



Garden City Community College proudly presented the 2025 Tommy Austin Community Impact Award to Sister Roserita Weber and Sister Janice Thome during its Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration. Sponsored by the GCCC Student Government Association (SGA) and bUSters United,

inspired attendees with powerful stories of service and dedication that honor Dr. King’s enduring legacy.

The Tommy Austin Community Impact Award honors individuals whose selflessness and dedication reflect the values of the late Tommy Lou Austin—a cherished community leader and the first African American woman elected to serve as City Commissioner in Garden City. Tommy’s life was defined by tireless advocacy, compassionate leadership, and a commitment to uplifting others, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire.

This year’s honorees, Sister Roserita and Sister Janice, exemplify the same spirit of dedication and compassion. Together, they have devoted decades to empowering and uplifting the Garden City community and beyond.





## GCCC HOSTS **FLYING DRONE WORKSHOP**



*Read the  
full article*

GCCC, in partnership with Halkin Inc., hosted a Flying Drones Workshop on Thursday, April 10, 2025. The free event welcomed both students and community members to explore drone technology through an informative workshop followed by a hands-on flying session. Attendees also enjoyed a complimentary lunch as part of the experience.

The workshop was led by Savannah Sanburg, GCCC Associate Professor

of Communication and Halkin's Director of Education and Curricular Development; Yuriy Drubinskiy, GCCC Assistant Professor of Robotics; Grant Hall, Halkin CEO; and Ryan Hall, Halkin COO. Following the instructional session, participants took to the GCCC Quad to apply their new skills in a live drone-flying experience. The event concluded with a drawing for two drones, giving lucky attendees the chance to take home their own equipment.

## GCCC, NEWMAN UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP HELPS **STUDENTS EARN BACHELOR'S DEGREES IN GARDEN CITY**



*Read the  
full article*

In 2023, Garden City Community College and Newman University launched a partnership to bring bachelor's degree programs directly to Garden City. Over 60 students have enrolled

in the HERE bachelor's degree program, which was designed to make higher education both accessible and affordable for Garden City students. It offers flexible class schedules, including

in-person, online, and evening options. All GCCC graduates with an associate degree automatically qualify for a \$20,000 scholarship toward a Newman University bachelor's program.

# GCCC PTK CHAPTER RECEIVED \$18,000 DONATION FROM FRAZEE FOUNDATION FOR CAMPUS BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT



Dennis Burns, Vice President at Commerce Trust, and Winsom Lamb, PTK Advisor, stand at the center as Burns presents a check to support PTK's campus beautification project. They are joined by PTK students, GCCC President Dr. Ryan Ruda and Scott Kedrowski, Dean of Advancement & Alumni Relations.



Read the full article

Garden City Community College's Phi Theta Kappa chapter received an \$18,000 donation from the Frazee Foundation to support a student-led beautification project near the Penka Building. As part of their

annual College Project, PTK students proposed enhancing the outdoor patio with new seating, landscaping, and signage outside of the Penka Building. GCCC leadership partnered with Commerce Bank to secure

funding, resulting in \$17,000 for the project and \$1,000 for scholarships through the GCCC Endowment Association. The project will be completed during the 2025-2026 academic year.

## GCCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HOSTS TAILGATE EVENT

The Alumni Association hosted its second Annual Alumni Tailgate on Saturday, October 26, at Bronbuster Stadium. The event brought together GCCC alumni for a morning of camaraderie and celebration ahead of the football game, creating a festive atmosphere for reconnecting with fellow Broncbusters.

Attendees enjoyed catering provided by Great Western Dining and showed their school spirit as they cheered on the GCCC Broncbusters in their matchup against the Iowa Western Community College Reivers.



# GCCCA ADULT EDUCATION RECEIVES POSITIVE REVIEW FROM KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

The Garden City Career Connections Academy (GCCCA), which oversees Garden City Community College's adult education program, received high praise from the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) following an on-site review on September 12, 2024. The KBOR team found the program fully compliant, identifying zero areas of

concern, and commended its outstanding service to adult learners.

The review highlighted several promising practices, including strong connections with GCCC Advisory Committees and the effective use of supplemental tutors from the college, both recognized as exemplary. KBOR also applauded the program's

emphasis on student confidentiality, noting the structured data practices and professionalism of the GCCCA staff. The visit reaffirmed GCCCA's reputation for quality and dedication in adult education.

*Read the full article*



# FRAZEE FOUNDATION DONATES \$10,000 TO GCCC FINE ARTS PROGRAM



Garden City Community College received a \$10,000 donation from the Perle and Catherine Frazee Foundation to support its Fine Arts program. The funding was used to purchase two advanced Cone Art Kilns, replacing outdated equipment that had served the college for more than 30 years. These state-of-the-art kilns, known for their energy efficiency and support for advanced firing techniques, significantly enriched the creative and educational experiences of GCCC students. The gift continued a strong partnership between the Frazee Foundation, administered by Commerce Trust, and the college, following previous support for the Medical Assistant Program in 2023.

*Read the full article*



*(Left to right): Dr. Ryan Ruda, Art Instructors Michael Knutson and Brian McCallum, Dennis Burns, Vice President at Commerce Trust, and Scott Kedrowski, Dean of Alumni and Advancement.*

# GCCC NAMED “MOST PROMISING PLACES TO WORK IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES” FOR FIFTH TIME



Garden City Community College has been named an *Honorable Mention* in the 2025 Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges program by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) and *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*! This marks the fifth year GCCC has received this national distinction, following recognition in 2024, 2023, 2020, and 2019.

NISOD and Diverse recognize community colleges for best-in-class student and staff recruitment and retention practices, inclusive learning and working environments, and meaningful community service and engagement

opportunities. The research team used a web-based survey approach to examine categories such as family friendliness, salary/benefits, and professional development opportunities to determine the list.

GCCC is the only institution in Kansas to be recognized on the 2025 list, joining 21 other community colleges nationwide.



Read the full article



## GCCC SGA HOSTS HALLOWEEN FEST TRUNK OR TREAT

GCCC's Student Government Association (SGA) hosted the GCCC Halloween Fest Trunk or Treat on Friday, October 25 in the GCCC Transportation Building. The festive event welcomed community members of all ages for an evening of Halloween fun. With free admission, attendees enjoyed hot chocolate, candy, games, and a variety of family-friendly activities. The event served as a celebration of community spirit and student engagement at GCCC.



# GCCC RECEIVES \$50,000 CONTRIBUTION FROM LIVEWELL FINNEY COUNTY FOR NEW VIDEO BOARD IN QUAD

GCCC announced the completion of a state-of-the-art video board in the campus quad, made possible by a generous \$50,000 donation from LiveWell Finney County. Standing 9.5 feet tall, the digital display was designed to serve as a central information hub for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Installed outside the Saffell Library, the video board provides real-time updates on campus events, announcements, and critical information. Its prominent location and accessibility enhanced communication and engagement across campus. The project reflects GCCC's ongoing commitment to improving campus life and using technology to foster a more connected and informed community.



Read the full article

From left: Dr. Ryan Ruda, President, GCCC; Callie Dyer, Executive Director LiveWell Finney County; Heather Wright-Renick, Clinical Grant Coordinator, LiveWell Finney County; Beth Koksall, Director of Community Health, LiveWell Finney County; Donna Gerstner, CDRR Grant Coordinator, LiveWell Finney County; Scott Kedrowski, Dean of Advancement & Alumni Relations, GCCC.

# FIVE HIGH SCHOOL DUAL CREDIT STUDENTS EARN ASSOCIATE DEGREES FROM GCCC

In an impressive academic accomplishment, five local high school students graduated with associate degrees from Garden City Community College, before receiving their high school diplomas.

These students completed all requirements of GCCC's Dual Credit EDGE program, earning their associate degrees while still enrolled in high school.



Learn more about  
**EDGE**  
DUAL CREDIT@GCCC



Read the full article



**Bianca Araiza**

Lakin High School

**Jesus Chanez**

Greeley County High School

**Kayda Garcia**

Lakin High School

**Austin Ritsema**

Lakin High School

**Alexander Rodriguez**

Scott Community High School

# GCCC CONFERENCE ROOM RENAMED IN HONOR OF LORETTA SCHULTZ

The GCCC Endowment Association announced the renaming of the conference room in the Student & Community Service Center (SCSC) to the “Loretta Schultz Conference Room.”

The renaming followed the 2024 GCCC Endowment Scholarship Auction, where Hannah Schultz secured a three-year naming opportunity for the space in memory of her late mother, Loretta Schultz. A commemorative plaque was presented to Hannah in recognition of this dedication on July 12, 2024. The Loretta Schultz Conference Room continues to serve as a valued venue for important meetings and presentations at GCCC.



*Lenzy Kuebler (left) presents Hannah Schultz with a commemorative plaque signifying the Loretta Schultz Conference Room.*

Read the full article



# PITCHING IN: GCCC BASEBALL TEAM STEPS UP AS BIG BROTHERS

During 2024, the Garden City Community College Baseball team made an impact far beyond the field through a powerful partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Finney & Kearny Counties. In response to a growing need for male mentors in local schools, the team stepped up in a big way, volunteering over 1,400 hours with children throughout the fall and spring semesters. Their efforts went well beyond community service, building meaningful, lasting relationships with at-risk youth that significantly improved school performance, self-confidence, and emotional well-being for the children involved.



*Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Finney & Kearny Counties*



Read the full article

# GCCC PHI THETA KAPPA STUDENTS »» RESTORE HISTORIC VICTORY BELL



## KANSAS PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP HELPS GCCC STUDENTS ACHIEVE CAREER GOALS WITHOUT THE DEBT

Two recent Garden City Community College graduates, Trinity Pierce and Kayla Harris, have proved that a high-quality education doesn't have to come with a high price tag, thanks to the Kansas Promise Scholarship.

The Kansas Promise Scholarship is a state-funded, last-dollar program that covers tuition, fees, books, and program-related costs for eligible Kansas residents enrolled in high-demand programs. Designed to eliminate financial barriers and build the Kansas workforce, the scholarship makes college more accessible for students across the state.



**KANSAS PROMISE  
SCHOLARSHIP  
@GCCCC**

Earn a college degree or certificate at no cost to you with the **KANSAS PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP!**

Learn more!



*Read the full article*

Garden City Community College proudly announced the successful restoration of a long-standing symbol of school pride and community spirit, the Broncbuster Victory Bell, thanks to the dedication and leadership of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society student members.

For PTK members, the project was a powerful reflection of the organization's four pillars: Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Fellowship. Through this effort, students engaged in meaningful service work, developed leadership skills, and collaborated with peers, faculty, administrators, and community stakeholders.

*Pictured left to right: GCCC PTK graduates pose with restored Victory Bell during the 2025 Commencement, Baylee Hutcheson, Nathan Peters, Roxy Stone, and Dakota Smith.*



Read the full article

## GCCC LAUNCHES NEW COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER PROGRAM

Garden City Community College launched a new program, Community Health Worker (CHW), designed to prepare individuals for rewarding careers in healthcare and social advocacy. This program addresses the increasing demand for professionals who serve as trusted liaisons between healthcare providers, social service agencies, and the communities they support.

Community Health Workers play a vital role in improving healthcare access, promoting wellness, and advocating for underserved populations. GCCC's CHW program equips students with the skills needed to support public health initiatives, provide informal counseling, and connect individuals with essential resources such as food assistance, housing, and health related services.



Read the full article



Learn about the CHW program

## GCCC HOSTS LISTENING TOUR IN SCOTT CITY

Garden City Community College hosted the second session of its "Building Community Connections: GCCC Listening Tour" on Thursday, February 20, in Scott City, Kansas. The event, held at the Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center, welcomed community members for open dialogue over complimentary coffee provided by Security State Bank. The initiative aimed to strengthen relationships with local school districts and stakeholders by gathering regional insights and sharing updates about the college.



*"Through these visits, we aim to create a space for town hall-style discussions where we can connect with stakeholders, listen to their priorities and concerns, and identify ways that Garden City Community College can better serve them," Dr. Ruda said.*

# GCCC AND KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCE **NEW PARTNERSHIP TO EXPAND BACHELOR'S DEGREE ACCESS IN SOUTHWEST KANSAS**

GCCC and Kansas State University (K-State) formed an educational partnership aimed at expanding access to bachelor's degree programs for students in Southwest Kansas. This collaboration was designed to eliminate the need for relocation by allowing students to complete their four-year degrees locally—a significant step in addressing the region's lower attainment rate of bachelor's degrees, which stood at just

17.9% compared to the state average of 33.9%.

Through the initiative, students can complete 60 to 75 credit hours at GCCC before transitioning to remotely delivered K-State courses, supplemented by in-person lab experiences. The initial focus of the partnership was a new bachelor's degree through K-State's College of Agriculture, tailored for students with associate degrees and offering

specializations in animal science, crop science, or agribusiness. GCCC and K-State also plan to conduct a community survey to guide the development of future programs aligned with regional workforce needs in fields such as Agriculture, Education, and Health and Human Sciences.

Read the full article



*Pictured above from left: Jesse Perez Mendez, K-State Provost and Executive Vice President, and Richard Linton, K-State President, signing the official memorandum of understanding with Dr. Ryan Ruda, GCCC President, and Dr. Marc Malone, GCCC Vice President for Instructional Services and Chief Academic Officer, on December 11, 2024 at Garden City Community College.*



## GCCC PRESIDENT **RUDA APPOINTED TO BOARD**

GCCC President Dr. Ryan J. Ruda has been appointed to the Board of Directors for the Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA), a national organization dedicated to advancing the mission of rural-serving colleges across the United States.

Dr. Ruda is one of only 13 higher education leaders

nationwide selected to serve on the RCCA Board. The RCCA provides strategic guidance and advocacy to support its member institutions, which serve 89.3 million people living in rural communities.

Read the full article



# GCCC DPS HOLDS ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP

The Garden City Community College Department of Public Safety (DPS) hosted a dynamic three-day summer camp from June 3–5, 2025, for high school juniors and seniors. The camp offered students immersive, hands-on experiences designed to explore career opportunities in Fire Science, Emergency Medical Science, and Police Science/Criminal Justice.

Participants engaged in practical activities and training exercises that introduced them to the critical skills and real-world scenarios faced by public safety professionals. The event aimed to inspire interest in these essential fields and provided a valuable preview of the educational and career paths available through GCCC's Public Safety programs.



# GCCC ANNOUNCES 2025 NISOD & 2024-25 LEAGUE EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS

GCCC is proud to recognize outstanding members of its faculty and staff as recipients of two prestigious national awards: the 2025 NISOD Excellence Awards and the 2024-2025 League Excellence Awards.

The 2025 NISOD Excellence Award honorees are Dr. Jean Ferguson, Professor of ESL, and Misty Wren, Coordinator of Title III Outreach. These awards, presented by the National Institute for

Staff and Organizational Development, honor individuals who demonstrate an exceptional commitment to their

students and colleagues. Nominations are submitted by peers, highlighting the respect and appreciation of fellow educators.



**2025 NISOD EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS**  
*Dr. Jean Ferguson (left) & Misty Wren (right)*



*Read the full article*

In addition, the 2024-2025 League Excellence Award recipients include Caroline Bradshaw, Associate Professor of Allied Health; Sara Gaut, Assistant Professor of Science; Chip Schuler, Director of Residential Life; Emmett

Statzer, Head Coach for Men's and Women's Track and Assistant Athletic Director; and Nancy Unruh, Registrar. This award, presented by the League for Innovation in the Community College, celebrates exceptional faculty, staff, and leaders who

have significantly impacted student success and community advancement.

GCCC congratulates all honorees for their dedication, service, and exemplary contributions to the college and the community.



## 2024-25 LEAGUE EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

*Left to right - Caroline Bradshaw, Sara Gaut, Chip Schuler, Emmet Statzer, & Nancy Unruh.*



*Read the full article*

# GCCC STEM HOSTS TEACHER SUMMIT



The GCCC STEM Success Center hosted the STEM Teacher Summit on June 16. This free professional development conference was designed for elementary and secondary school STEM teachers looking to expand their knowledge, enhance their teaching methods, and explore innovative STEM curriculum for K-12 classrooms. Over 100 educators from Southwest Kansas attended the event, which also offered the opportunity to earn professional development points.



*Read the  
full article*

# GCCC ENDOWMENT ASSOCIATION 47TH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION



The GCCC Endowment Association hosted its 47th Annual Scholarship Auction on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at the Finney County Fairgrounds. Sponsored by Commerce Bank, the event embraced the theme “An Evening of Stars: Illuminating Futures,” celebrating the achievements of Garden City Community College students

and the transformative power of scholarships. This event benefits academic and technical scholarships for GCCC students.

Attendees enjoyed a lively evening featuring both live and silent auctions, as well as a cash raffle. Auction highlights included trips to Cancun and Nashville, an African safari hunt, concert

tickets to Jelly Roll and Post Malone, and meet-and-greet passes for Larry the Cable Guy, among many other exciting offerings.



*Read the  
full article*

# GCCC'S PHI THETA KAPPA CHAPTER EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION & REGIONAL AWARDS

Read the full article



GCCC announced that its Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter, Alpha Xi Upsilon, was recognized as a 2024 REACH Chapter by the national Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. This prestigious designation celebrates and rewards PTK chapters that excel in membership engagement by achieving exceptionally high rates of membership acceptance.

PTK's REACH (Recognizing Excellence in Acceptance and Completion with Honors) Rewards program honors chapters that support PTK's mission of providing recognition and opportunity to students. The GCCC chapter received special Phi Theta Kappa graduation stoles, which student members can wear during graduation as a symbol of their academic success and college completion.



*Pictured above from left: Winsom Lamb, GCCC PTK Advisor; Gabby Biernacki, GCCC PTK Student; Nathan Peters, GCCC PTK Student; Macie Knoll, GCCC PTK Student; Tammy Hutcheson, GCCC PTK Advisor.*

# GCCC AND SCCC PARTNER FOR REGISTERED MEDICAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM IN LIBERAL

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Garden City Community College and Seward County Community College (SCCC) signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to expand educational opportunities for students in Liberal and the surrounding

areas. This agreement establishes a partnership for a Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) program taught on the SCCC campus by instructors from both colleges.

GCCC's Medical Assistant program equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide medical office administrative services and perform essential clinical duties under the supervision of physicians. The program covers a range of competencies, including patient intake and care, routine laboratory procedures, pre-examination and examination assistance, medication administration, and first aid. Upon successful completion of the full program pathway, students earn a Certificate C and are eligible to sit for the American Medical Technologists National RMA Exam.

# GCCC NURSING PROGRAMS ACHIEVE 100% NCLEX PASS RATE

GCCC proudly announced that all students from its 2024 Practical Nursing (PN) and Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) programs achieved a 100% pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). All 24 PN graduates passed the NCLEX-PN, while all 20 ADN graduates successfully completed the NCLEX-RN, administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN).

This achievement reflected the strength of GCCC's nursing education, supported by state-of-the-art simulation labs and robust clinical partnerships with local healthcare providers. These resources provided students with essential hands-on experience, preparing them for licensure exams and successful careers in the nursing field.



Learn more about the Nursing Program



Read the full article



# GCCC LAUNCHES NEW SPEECH AND DEBATE TEAM

Garden City Community College is proud to announce the launch of its new Speech and Debate team, Phi Rho Pi, beginning in Fall 2025. This inclusive and dynamic student organization is open to all GCCC students, regardless of major or prior experience.

The GCCC Speech and Debate team is designed to empower students with enhanced public speaking, critical thinking, and argumentation skills through various competitive and collaborative events. Members will have the opportunity to represent GCCC at local, state, and national tournaments, gaining valuable experience and confidence in public discourse.

Read the full article



# GCCC RECEIVES AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES

GCCC was honored with the President's Citation Award at the annual Kansas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (KAHPERD) Conference, held in Emporia, Kansas, on November 8th. Presented by the state organization, this award recognizes GCCC's substantial contributions to improving the quality of life for Kansans, particularly through its impactful health and wellness initiatives that benefit students, employees, and the broader community.

The award underscores GCCC's dedication to fostering a culture of wellness both on campus and in the community. Key efforts include a range of health and wellness programs, employee-led initiatives through a benefits committee, and valuable resources for personal and mental health support.

Read the full article



Dr. Ryan Ruda, GCCC President, accepts the 2024 President's Citation Award alongside Jaime McVey, GCCC Assistant Professor of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation and 2024 KAHPERD Conference.

# BUSTERCON COMIC CONVENTION RETURNS FOR A BIGGER, BETTER SECOND YEAR



BusterCon, western Kansas' only comic convention, returned for its second year on February 15, 2025, at Garden City Community College, following a successful debut. The 2025 event was larger, with double the number of attendees and 50+ vendors, offering an expanded experience for fans and community members alike.

In addition to celebrating pop culture, BusterCon served a meaningful purpose as a fundraiser for bUSters United, a student and faculty-led organization focused on supporting the GCCC community.

Read the full article





## GCCC RECEIVES DONATION FROM GOLDEN PLAINS CREDIT UNION TO SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIPS

Garden City Community College received a generous \$6,000 donation from Golden Plains Credit Union (GPCU) to support student scholarships. This contribution was made possible through the successful collaboration of the Buster Nation Night fundraising initiative.

During the home basketball games on Wednesday, November 20th, Buster Nation Night celebrated GCCC pride and community support. The event featured exclusive T-shirts designed to unite the campus and the broader community. Proceeds from the event were dedicated

to funding scholarships, providing students greater access to education and opportunities to achieve their goals at GCCC.

Read the full article



Front Row: Dr. Ashley Urban – Education Program Manager Kansas ICCAE; Ada Chanthavong, Ruth Herrera. Back Row: Víctor Herrada, Miguel Bustos, Esteffan Lucero, Aruchi Mbato.

## GCCC STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN 2025 FBI & KU CYBERSECURITY CONFERENCE

Read the full article



Six Garden City Community College students, accompanied by Associate Professor of Computer Science Ron Carlson, participated in the 2025 FBI & KU Cybersecurity Conference, held April 3–4 at the University of Kansas Memorial Union in

Lawrence. The event provided an immersive opportunity for students to explore cutting-edge cybersecurity topics, network with industry professionals, and deepen their understanding of real-world digital security challenges.

The annual conference, co-hosted by the University of Kansas (KU) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), brings together leaders from government, industry, and academia to discuss emerging trends and pressing issues in the cybersecurity field.

# GCCC ENDOWMENT ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP CELEBRATION BRINGS TOGETHER STUDENTS AND DONORS

The Garden City Community College Endowment Association proudly hosted its annual Scholarship Celebration on Tuesday, October 29, 2024, at the Dennis Perryman Athletic Complex. The event brought together over 265 student scholarship recipients, donors, guests, board members, and GCCC staff for an evening of connection, recognition, and celebration.

The Scholarship Celebration provides an opportunity for students and donors to connect over a shared meal, fostering meaningful relationships and reinforcing the value of community support in education. Following the dinner, GCCC Presidential Ambassadors presented prize baskets provided by the Endowment Association Board to two scholarship recipients.



## KANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGES JOIN TOGETHER TO PROVIDE **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR KANSAS STUDENTS**

The Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference (KJCCC) has taken a significant step toward investing in Kansas student athletes by approving a new bylaw requiring all member colleges to reserve at least 25% of their athletic Letters of Intent (LOIs) for Kansas students. The decision was made during a KJCCC meeting, where participating colleges came

together to support the change. The policy will take effect starting with the 2026-2027 academic year and will apply across all sports offered by the member institutions.

Dr. Ryan Ruda, President of GCCC, highlighted the unique relationship between community colleges and their local supporters. "One of the strengths of Kansas' community college

system is the strong support we receive from local communities and taxpayers. There's a special sense of pride and excitement when local students are on the field or court," he said.

*Read the full article*



# GCCC STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES TRIO PROGRAM HOSTS FIRST-GENERATION MIXER

The Student Support Services (SSS) TRIO program at Garden City Community College hosted a First-Generation Mixer on November 6, 2024, in the Thomas Saffell Library Lobby. Open to students, employees, and community members, the event celebrated the achievements

of first-generation college students, those who are the first in their families to pursue a bachelor's degree.

The mixer provided an opportunity for first-generation students, faculty, staff, and community members to connect, share

their experiences, and build supportive networks. Featured speakers included GCCC Instructor Sara Gaut, Garden City Commissioner Tom Nguyen, and Assistant City Manager Derek Ramos, who shared inspiring stories of their own journeys as first-generation graduates.



# GCCC'S 36TH ANNUAL HISPANIC STUDENT DAY



The GCCC Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO) hosted the 36th Annual Hispanic Student Day on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 in the Dennis Perryman Athletic Complex at GCCC.

Hispanic Student Day is a unique and special opportunity to empower and encourage students to continue their education and make decisions that increase their educational opportunities and thus achieve a better future. Area high school students learned about college through various sessions and activities.

# GCCC MEAT JUDGING TEAM EARNS NATIONAL TITLES AND BREAKS RECORDS IN FALL COMPETITIONS



2024 Reserve National Champions (left to right): Coach Skyler Glenn, Peyton Kneebone, Andrew Dorris, Luis Varela, Aaron Morales, Baylee Hutcheson, Areli Rodriguez, Janessa Dwyer, Jean Cumming and Coach Dr. Clint Alexander

The GCCC Meat Judging Team extended its winning streak this fall with standout performances at two major competitions, highlighting both national success and record-breaking talent.

On October 27, 2024, the team earned Reserve National Champion honors at the High Plains Contest, part of the American Meat Science Association National Championship, hosted by Cargill in Friona, Texas. GCCC placed second overall, claiming National Champion in Lamb Judging and Reserve National Champion in Beef Judging, Placings, and Questions, along with third in Beef Grading and

fourth in Pork Judging.

Just weeks earlier, on September 21, the team captured the Champion Team Overall title at the Beef Empire Days Contest with a school-record 3,803 points, marking their third consecutive win at the event. They earned first place in Pork Judging, Beef Judging, Questions, and Total Beef, with top-three finishes in Beef Grading and Lamb Judging.

Aaron Morales led the team with a historic 992 points, the highest individual score in GCCC history. He took first in Pork Judging, Placings, and Questions, setting a new program record in the latter.

Teammates Janessa Dwyer, Luis Varela, and Baylee Hutcheson also placed in the top ten. Alternates Peyton Kneebone, Andrew Dorris, Jean Cumming, and Areli Rodriguez were recognized for strong performances.

These back-to-back wins reflect GCCC's ongoing excellence in meat judging and the hard work of both students and coaches.

Read the full articles



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