

February 2025

The Spring semester is well underway, and while we may have more winter weather ahead, I am ready for warmer days. Spring cannot come soon enough!

Spring 2025 Census

Enrollment continues to trend positively. The [Spring 2025 Census](#) figures are in, and I want to express my appreciation to each of you for your contributions in making this possible. Your hard work and dedication are truly admirable—thank you!

Special Task Force Created

As [announced](#) last week, I have established a special task force to address proposed legislation in Missouri and recent federal actions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Jefferson College remains deeply committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, faculty, and staff. While not mentioned in the initial announcement, I want to note that the co-chairs of the Diversity Committee are also part of this task force. Our first meeting is scheduled for later this month, and I will keep you updated on our progress.

Board of Trustees Meeting Updates

The full agenda for the Board of Trustees meeting last Thursday can be found [here](#). The College has recently transitioned from Diligent BoardDocs to Diligent Community and although we are still working through a few challenges, a special thank you to Heidi Hogan and Jennifer Baine for their hard work in facilitating this change!

Save the Dates

Extended Cabinet Meeting

- When: Monday, February 24, 2025, 2:30 p.m.
- What: Join us via [Google Meet](#). All employees are welcome!

Preview Day

- When: Saturday, March 8, 9 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Volunteer Opportunities: Volunteers are needed for set-up and event activities. If you're available, [please sign up here](#). For questions please contact Jaclyn Birks at jbirks@jeffco.edu or ext. 3216.

Foundation Auction

- When: Saturday, March 29, doors open at 5 p.m.
- Highlights: Performance by the Jefferson College Jazz Band.
- Get Involved: Learn about donations, volunteering, or purchasing tickets [here](#).

Theatre Department presents *The Video Gamapalooza*

- When: February 27 - March 2, 2025
- Join Us: A wild and rollicking ride through the history of arcade games, computer games, and newfangled apps! Get your tickets [here](#).

Jazz Ensemble to Perform at Jazz St. Louis

- When: Tuesday, March 4, at 7:30 p.m.
- What: You will not want to miss this thrilling opportunity to see our students perform at the premiere jazz venue in the region! Tickets are required and can be purchased [online](#).

Anonymous Questions

These questions were answered at the January 27 Extended Cabinet meeting.

What is the college's policy on office coverage during lunch hours? Our department office closes for an hour each day at lunchtime, which makes it difficult to conduct necessary business during my break period. Are there guidelines or expectations for keeping offices accessible during lunch to assist faculty and students?

If an office has sufficient staff, staggered lunch coverage is expected. However, if an office is staffed by only one person, it may close during their 30-minute unpaid lunch break in compliance with labor regulations.

Can the college have the December paychecks issued out to employees before we go on Christmas break instead of at the end of the month?

The College follows established payroll policies to ensure consistency and alignment with finance best practices. Non-exempt employees are paid for the pay period covering the 16th of one month to the 15th of the next, while exempt employees are paid for the full calendar month. Payday is set as the last banking day of the month, per policy. The College understands that the holiday season can bring financial challenges, so we encourage employees to utilize the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which offers financial planning and personal budgeting resources.

When will the college start making policies? The current Supervisor's discretion is not working. Every department is run differently and has different rules, which creates or allows favoritism. When brought up to a supervisor, the supervisor's supervisor, and HR, the answer is always supervisor discretion, which is a problem as most people in offices are treated differently depending on whether they are favored or not. If one person in an office is allowed to do something, everyone in the office should be allowed to. I understand we all have different jobs and responsibilities but it should be the same rules for everyone.

The College strives to ensure that all employees and supervisors adhere to policies and procedures. That said, the application of some policies may vary depending on the nature of a position's responsibilities, FLSA exemption status, or individual performance. Supervisors are given discretion within established guidelines to make decisions that best meet the needs of their departments while remaining in compliance with College policies. Favoritism, however, is not acceptable. If you believe favoritism is occurring or a policy is being applied inconsistently, I encourage you to bring your concerns to Tasha Welsh directly. If you have already spoken with Tasha and feel the issue remains unresolved, please don't hesitate to come back to Tasha or reach out to me so we can continue working on a resolution.

I am seeking clarification regarding the policy that allows employees to give gifts to supervisors at our company. In many organizations, such practices are typically prohibited to avoid the perception of favoritism, conflicts of interest, or potential bribery. Allowing gift-giving from subordinates to managers could inadvertently influence decision-making, create an uneven power dynamic, and lead to feelings of pressure among employees to provide gifts in hopes of gaining favor or advantages.

Given that prohibiting such practices is often considered a best practice in many workplaces, why this policy is permitted at Jefferson College in all departments? Could you please share more about the rationale behind this approach and how Jefferson College ensures that such interactions maintain fairness and equity? Thank you for your time and clarification on this matter.

There is no policy at Jefferson College regarding giving gifts to supervisors. The College believes all employees are ethical people and expect our supervisors to be ethical and not allow gifts or bribes to influence their management.

I would like to bring up a concern about the power imbalance between unionized (protected) tenured faculty and non-union staff. Some faculty take advantage of the lack of protections for staff, bullying or being hostile because they know we don't have the same support or resources to push back.

This dynamic creates a toxic/hostile work environment and leaves staff feeling powerless to address unprofessional behavior. It also affects morale and productivity. I believe adding protections like a clear grievance process, anti-retaliation measures, and better accountability would make a big difference in creating a fairer, more respectful workplace for everyone. Thank you for your time and consideration.

The College is committed to fostering a respectful and professional work environment for all employees. Board Policy II-025 outlines the expectations of conduct for all employees, regardless of tenure or profession unprofessional behavior, including bullying or hostility, please report it to your supervisor first. If the issue is not addressed, you are encouraged to escalate the matter to HR. The College's grievance policies provide a clear path for addressing questions, problems, and misunderstandings. Retaliation is clearly defined and not tolerated under these policies.

What steps should I take if employees in my department are regularly stealing time, and my supervisor is aware of the situation but chooses not to address it?

If employees in your department are not accurately reporting their work hours and your supervisor is not addressing the issue, report the concern to the next supervisor in the chain of command or directly to HR.

What happened to the Continuing Education program for the community at Jefferson College, and are there any plans to revive it or introduce similar community-focused learning opportunities?

Quite frankly, in 2017 due to budget constraints the College had a reduction in force and eliminated some activities, one of which was community education. Shortly after, the pool closed. Unfortunately, the College does not have the resources to offer a full community-focused non-credit community education program. However, we have the resources to offer a full community-focused non-credit community education program. Partnering with the use of the field house by dance and tumbling programs...the Friday's Speaker Series, partnering with the use of the field house by dance and tumbling programs or the Little House of Neurodiversity held here on Friday nights, PACE, athletic and band camps, the community band, and other things like this.

Why is it that employees who receive permission to miss the College's graduation ceremony in May, usually because of attending a family graduation ceremony, must use a full 8 hours of PTO for what is basically a 2 hour ceremony? Even if this is legal, how is it fair or respectful of the "work-life" balance?

Depending on whether you are administration, faculty or certified staff depends on the amount of leave used for Commencement. Administrators are charged a full day of leave as they miss Commencement as they are expected to attend both ceremonies. Faculty have Commencement as a contract day and are compensated for a full day, so therefore, a full day of leave is utilized when they are excused from attending Commencement. Certified staff who are excused from Commencement, utilize a half day of leave as their leave is accumulated differently than faculty and are expected to attend only one ceremony.

Reminder: Anonymous questions for Cabinet can be submitted through [this link](#). These questions are answered at the Extended Cabinet meeting and then shared in future President's Updates.



As always, my door is open. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly via email or phone. Thank you for all that you do to make Jefferson College a great place to work and learn.

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