

The Chronicle

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March 2023 Issue

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GET TO KNOW PROFESSOR DAN PLATT

Alyssa Monroe

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Dan Platt is a new English professor here at DMACC. Platt was born and raised in New Jersey near Philadelphia.

He spent his teenage years there and went to College of New Jersey and grad school at the University of Oregon.

"I like New Jersey. I feel like it's an underrated state. There are parts of it that are very pretty. I kind of grew up hiking in South Jersey."

When asked about why he chose English he said, "I feel like I've always enjoyed reading and writing and watching movies from a young age. And so, that was kind of an opportunity to like, really spend more time doing that. And I think it was one of the places where I got validation as a kid, you know, my teacher was like, 'Oh, you're good at writing,' or that sort of thing. And so, I kind of leaned in that direction."

He remembers reading "Lord of the

Flies," as a freshman and feeling like it opened up some interpretive possibilities for him. He was excited by the possibility of the allegory of that story and the idea that it could mean more than just some kids on an island. He grew up in a pretty religious household, and was surrounded by Bible stories that interpret the significance of things, and like understanding metaphors and how that all works. From a young age, Platt was surrounded by stories that have this sense of possibility.

Platt was teaching at Graceland University in Lamoni, but left the college due to a new opportunity, one of his friends is Vice President at Southwestern Community College in Creston and offered him a job during the pandemic. He ended up moving from Lamoni to Des

Moines, where he bought a house there. He was commuting there which is an hour and 15 minutes one way and it was a nightmare according to him. During his drives to work, he listens to a lot of audiobooks. But eventually, he realized he was spending a lot of money on gasoline

and the commute was kind of killing him. So there was a job opening here at DMACC, he jumped on that opportunity. "People have been super kind and friendly and I'm grateful for the opportunity".

Platt also picked up the opportunity to become Phi Theta Kappa Advisor while here at DMACC. He was involved in PTK at Southwestern.

"I got roped in by someone who was really looking for another helper and she was also retiring at the time. Super great person who was really helpful to kind of like guide me in Phi Theta Kappa stuff. And so I got a chance to be the advisor of SWICC and kind of get invested in the organization."

He says for more of a complex answer why he is invested in PTK is he was always really invested in honors education. He was involved in the honors program as an undergraduate, and he also worked at the Honors Program at Graceland.

"I really like some of the opportunities that honors programs create for people to just do a little bit more. Also with PTK like I like getting kids money, like it makes me feel good to know when they can get scholarship money for being awesome, and I know that like someone who has student loans into pain to pay for college, and so having the opportunity to like help students make that a little bit more affordable by tapping into some of the scholarship money that's available through Phi Beta Kappa that makes me feel good, you know, knowing that I can do that."

"I care a lot about people who like making their lives better," replied Platt when asked why he teaches. He hopes that he can accomplish that to some de-

"I CARE A LOT ABOUT
PEOPLE WHO LIKE
MAKING THEIR LIVES
BETTER,"



Photo of Dan Platt by Alyssa Monroe

gree. He worked in the nonprofit sector for a period of time, doing environmental work.

“I felt like I got more done working directly with people and inspiring them than like, I could try to create, like, social change through the nonprofit sector.” The biggest challenge as a teacher for Platt is, problems that are bigger than he can solve, like when he sees students who are struggling being able to pay for college or like mental health issues. He feels like it can be demoralizing to see.

Platt hopes to accomplish it with co-advisor Katie Gallagher, just to build Phi Theta Kappa. His goal here is to help to build that organization and create opportunities for students. There's a lot of potential to make that a really strong organization that creates cool opportunities for students.

Another goal of his is showing students that there's value in good writing and good communication. The humanities and the arts are facing a kind of crisis right now, there's a push against funding for arts and humanities.

“I think those programs are a threat and just kind of resetting the value of those kinds of programs, right, good writing, good public speaking, you know, reading books and watching movies in the value of that kind of thing for a complete education for a person.”

His last goal is sustainability, making connections with students who are motivated by environmental issues.

Platt is definitely DMACC biggest supporter when asked what his favorite metro restaurant is he said

“I gotta give it up to the culinary students because this ICI is the best restaurant in Des Moines.”

According to Platt Proof used to be the best restaurant in Des Moines.

Platt also loves cooking, during the pandemic he made sourdough as seen on Tik Tok.

If you are ever in need of coffee, Platt has your back. Platt takes his coffee black and makes it very strong.

“When I was in college, my roommate, Dave would say, Dan you gotta make me some of that rocket fuel.”

“So please do come by; I grind the beans myself and I use a French press which I think is still the best way to make coffee.”



Dan Platt accepting his Horizon Award at the Phi Theta Kappa Iowa Spring Convention.



Platt's coffee bar in his office.

Robert Zortman: GAMING OFF THE GRID

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With almost three million views, 27,000 subscribers, and coming on their fifth year of content, Gaming Off The Grid is a YouTube channel run by DMACC student Robert Zortman, and his friend, Wes. They started the channel in April of 2018 and have been seeing success since.

So how did they become content creators on YouTube?

“It started because we like couch co-op gaming, and that’s kind of dead in today’s current market,” Zortman said.

He met his channel mate, Wes, when he saw his band was looking for a bass player. They both enjoyed gaming, and Wes even had a room in his home dedicated to it. So, from there the idea for a YouTube channel blossomed and they began filming.

“Now it has kind of taken over and the band has stopped; it’s kinda crazy how it’s all connected,” Zortman said.

Their most popular video, XBOX Buying Guide, has 68,000 views and takes viewers through whether buying an original XBOX is worth the money. But they do a wide variety of content.

“It goes all over the board, some weeks it will be retro stuff, some weeks it will be modern, some weeks it will be game hunting and flipping,” Zortman said.

Zortman feels like their wide variety both hurts them and helps them, but throughout the years they are able to change and grow. They used to post every day, but with time they learned that quality is better than quantity and now they have stuck to a biweekly posting schedule along with two live streams a week.

This doesn’t mean less work though. They still spend around 40 hours a week making and editing videos and content, with each video taking at least a couple hours to edit. Luckily, they do get a little bit of revenue, but Zortman says not enough to live off of.

Being a YouTube creator

does have its downsides, although most of the reaction to their channel is love, along with everything else on the internet they get some trolls.

“Now we just fight them with kindness, which usually makes them more upset,” Zortman said.

In the game room, they have and actively use almost every game console, and use multiple televisions. But Zortman has a soft spot for Sony PlayStations.

“I think my favorite [gaming console] of all time has to be the PS2, just because the library is insane and I grew up playing it,” Zortman said.

Zortman just started his first semester as a video production major, though this is not his first semester at DMACC. About six years ago he came here for carpentry and pursued that as a career but decided to focus more on the channel. He realized that he was loving where the channel was going and wanted to make it a full time thing.

“I think the goal is to do creative stuff,” Zortman said.

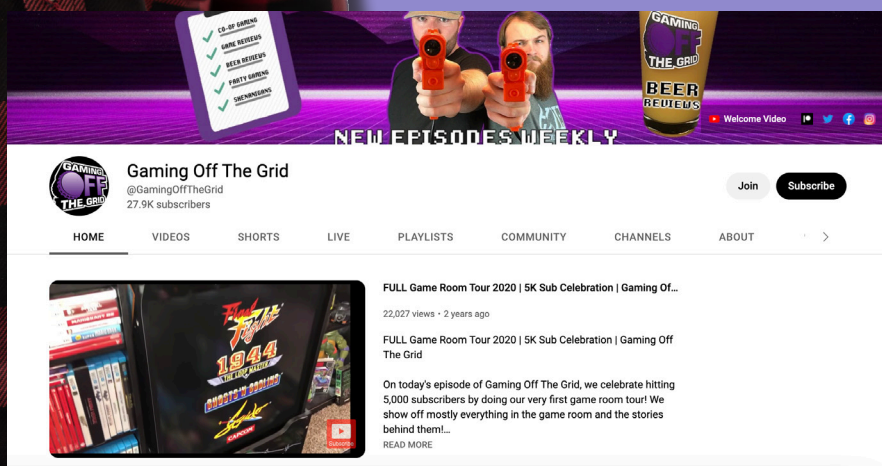
He hopes that their channel will encourage viewers to go out and game, oldschool, because gaming online is not the same as sitting down with your friends in person and talking smack.

“Bring that experience back because you can’t beat it,” Zortman said.

Something very important to their channel is a livestream that they do every September on YouTube. It is a 24 hour charity livestream that they do for Children’s Cancer Connection, which is an organization located in Johnston, Iowa that helps families affected by

childhood cancer. Last year they raised over 10 thousand dollars, and in the past four years of doing this they have raised over 22 thousand dollars.

Check out the Campus Chronicle podcast and their YouTube page if you want to learn more about Gaming Off the Grid and Robert Zortman.





Terry Harrison

Q: Why did you choose to be a security guard at DMACC?

A: After retiring from law enforcement, I was not ready to live the retired life. Security work here at the college was a good fit for me to continue helping people.

Q: Fun fact people may not know about you by looking at you?

A: I like to scuba dive and have scuba dived with sharks.



Sania Loatman



Q: Why did you choose to be a security guard at DMACC?

A: [It is a] really good environment.

Q: Fun fact people may not know about you by looking at you?

A: I used to be a first chair violinist.

Emily Houck

Podcast Producer
erhouck@dmacc.edu

Dwayne Allen



Q: Why did you choose to be a security guard at DMACC?

A: [I was] in law enforcement since 1998. So becoming a security guard was kind of a natural transition.

Q: Fun fact people may not know about you by looking at you?

A: I like cartoons, my favorite would probably be Deputy Dog.

Kevin Scheuermann

Q: Why did you choose to be a security guard at DMACC?
A: They had an opening and I applied for it, after doing research and it seemed like a great place to work.

Q: Fun fact people may not know about you by looking at you?

A: Chocolate gives me nightmares.



DMACC'S TIKTOK BAN

Sam Metcalf

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With the security concerns surrounding TikTok, Gov. Kim Reynolds banned the popular app from state devices. The same week, DMACC President Rob Denson followed suit by banning it from DMACC devices as well.

On Dec. 13, 2022, Reynolds put out the following press release:

"It is clear that TikTok represents a national security risk to our country, and I refuse to subject the citizens of Iowa to that risk," said Reynolds. "They trust us with their personal and confidential information, and we will take every step possible to protect it, including from the Chinese government. The safety of Iowans is my number one priority and that includes their cybersecurity."

Four days later DMACC President, Robert Denson, banned TikTok on all DMACC-owned devices and prohibited DMACC-related accounts. "Although Community Colleges might not be included legally, there is sufficient evidence of the risk and concerns of Cyber consultants that DMACC and the other Iowa Community Colleges have agreed to comply with the Governor's directive," Denson said in an email to faculty and staff.

Data collection is nothing new. Companies such as Meta (formerly Facebook) and Alphabet Inc. (parent company of Google) have been known to track

massive amounts of data on their users and sell it. Meta has been in particular trouble, with over \$1 billion in fines from the European Union alone. If you would like to personally see who they have sold your information to, you can do so via the "Download your data" function required by GDPR (EU law).

What makes TikTok unique is that the parent company, ByteDance, is a privately held Chinese company. Due to the data privacy laws in China, any data stored on Chinese soil can be accessed by the Chinese government. The Chinese government has caused two well-known incidents in Iowa over the past 10 years which has caused distrust among Iowans. Those being the Iowa Corn Seed theft in 2016, and the Chinese government-run media putting an ad in The Des Moines Register against the trade war in 2018. This distrust persists even though the Chinese government has tried to form close relations with Iowa, via investments and president Xi Jinping's long held connection to Muscatine Iowa.

At first glance it may seem that this would have little effect on the policies at DMACC. However, according to Todd Jones, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, the loss of TikTok has major implications on DMACC's marketing

strategy. TikTok represents an important platform for recruiting students with 60% of the users being between the ages of 16 and 24, the prime age for DMACC students.

Todd Jones said "We have also looked at TikTok and decided that we can still use a third-party vendor who doesn't use a DMACC-owned device.", later he added "We will still be advertising on TikTok."

Some students also see TikTok as a potential risk.

Sarah Logan, 26, cybersecurity major from Indianola, said, "I do think it's a security risk, especially since it is targeted towards the younger generation who aren't as well diverse on security and maybe don't understand what they are

accepting."

Arathea Stilwell, 20, graphic design major from Trujillo, Peru, echoed Sarah's thoughts.

"TikTok has spyware, they

also have a lot of abuse of underage people, which is also a security risk that many do not think about."

Some students aren't especially concerned about TikTok.

Addison Brockshus, 20, graphic design major from Grimes, said, "Yes [it's a security risk], but everything is a security risk on the internet. That's why I don't see it as an issue to use it," she said.

"YES [IT'S A SECURITY RISK], BUT EVERYTHING IS A SECURITY RISK ON THE INTERNET. THAT'S WHY I DON'T SEE IT AS AN ISSUE TO USE IT," SHE SAID.

Photos by Alyssa Monroe



Iowa loses First in the Nation Spot in Democratic Election Calendar

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The Democratic National Committee has officially revoked Iowa's "first in the nation" status for the Democratic caucus after 51 years. South Carolina will be replacing Iowa in first place, followed by New Hampshire and Nevada third. The Iowa Democratic caucus has been the subject of many criticisms over the years with the culmination of these criticisms coming to a head in 2020, when the Iowa Democratic Party rolled out a new app that which caused mass confusion, delaying caucus results for several days.

For those who are unfamiliar with the Democratic caucus process, it can be a bit complicated. A democratic caucus is a meeting that takes place at a precinct, usually in a community center or elementary school gymnasium. Throughout Iowa, there are over 1,600 precinct locations. At your precinct, you meet with members of your community to talk about which candidate you are supporting. Representatives make speeches for their pick to persuade people to their side, and seating arrangements are made to show which candidate you support.

If your candidate gets less than 15% of

the support, you must choose to support another candidate or sit out. This process can take hours. After this process, the viable candidates' votes are counted, and they win county delegates, more supporters mean more county delegates. Then the state of Iowa counts the number of county delegates and weighs them to estimate their equivalent number of state delegates. In the event of a tie, a coin is flipped to decide where a state delegate is placed. It is unknown how many delegates are awarded this way.

There has long been criticism of Iowa's first-in-the-nation spot. Democrats argue that Iowa is not diverse enough to represent America in such an influential way. Iowa's population is over 90% white, and nearly 18% of the population is over 65 years old. Another major criticism is that the caucus is simply inaccessible to the working class. Not everyone has the time to take out of their day to participate in the caucus, specifically working-class people, thus they are underrepresented. The process of caucusing can also be intimidating for many people. It isn't easy to show up in front of the members of your community and go against the majority opinion.

After the 2020 Democratic caucus, the public has lost confidence in the caucus process. After the Iowa Democratic Party rolled out a new smartphone app that caused over 100 precincts to report inconsistencies and caused results to be delayed for a week ending with two candidates declaring victory in Iowa.

But what does this mean for Iowans? Losing our first-in-the-nation status for the Democratic caucus will have an undeniable impact on Iowa's economy. According to Catch Des Moines, Des Moines' local economy alone was boosted by an estimated \$11.3 million the week of the caucus. Candidates usually begin preparation for the caucus two years in advance. According to the Wesleyan Media Project, Candidates spent over \$44 million in advertising in Iowa leading up to the 2020 caucuses, a 131% increase from 2016. This economic blow will be softened by the Republican party deciding to keep Iowa's first-in-the-nation spot for the republican election calendar, however, the loss of the Democratic caucus will definitely still be felt.

London Study Abroad

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Seventeen students and two faculty members at DMACC left on Feb. 10 to study abroad in London, England. They will come back to the states April 8, which will make it eight weeks studying there.

During the visit, students have a variety of liberal arts courses to choose from. This will include subjects such as English, speech, humanities, history, journalism, and philosophy.

English, speech, and journalism professor Aimee Langager and English Professor Bethany Sweeney are leading students in the study abroad program together this semester. Their goal is to get students excited about learning while also exploring life in a different country.

I got the chance to catch up with a couple of students who were going on the trip to get an overall idea of how they are approaching going across the pond.

DMACC student Matt Scienszinski,

second-year, Mortuary Science major from Cedar Rapids, said he isn't an experienced traveler, as he has stayed in only Iowa for most of his life.

"It's only until recently I've been able to afford traveling to places around the country. London is just the next step in my traveling adventures. Being far away from family is going to be a new experience; having to wrap my head around this new level of self-identity independence is something I'm still coming to terms with," Scienszinski said in an email interview.

Despite not being able to travel much, Scienszinski said he is pretty excited although nervous about visiting a new country. He also credits the internet for connecting with friends in Europe that he'll get the chance to meet in person.

"I am both incredibly ecstatic and incredibly anxious to spend time about it! Europe is a hub of different cultures and cuisines, it'll be exciting to have food I never knew existed. I also have a few friends in Europe that I'm looking forward to meeting in person, thanks to the internet," he said.

Another second-year student from DMACC going on the trip named Jaden Vega is also in the same boat as Matt.

"I am a bit nervous about being away for so long. I heard that sometime during our stay we will experience homesickness. This is my first time being out of the country, but I think it's going to go pretty well," she said.

Vega also noted that she is nervous about navigating public transportation since it is vastly different from the states.

Langager provided an update on how things are going two weeks into their stay and cites some of the field trips they have been on so far.

"Things have been going pretty well. The students have been super engaged with learning and figuring out how to live in London."

Langager said the group has been busy. "We went to the British Library, Leadenhall Market, Tate Modern, Harrods, Jack the Ripper, and the Tower of London just to name a few," Langager said in an email interview.

Skwinkles, spicy watermelon flavored thin gummy worm

Takis, spicy chips with different levels of spice

Duvalin, a pudding with a thicker consistency



Mazapan, peanut flavored candy

Conchas, Mexican sweet bread

Pulparindo, a thin spicy taffy but it doesn't stick to your teeth

Inside a Mexican Grocery Store: La Tapatia



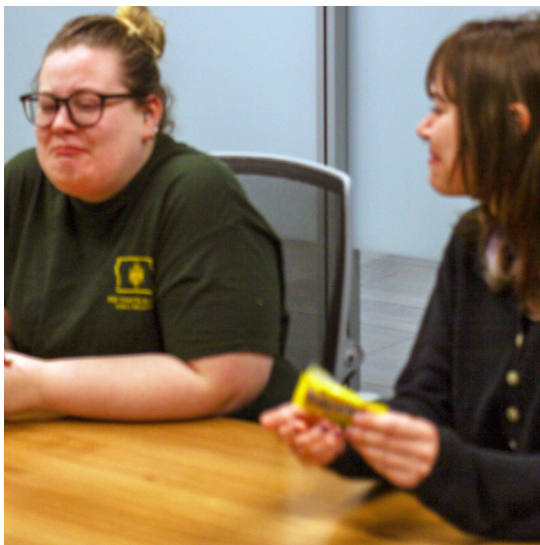
Friends Try Mexican Candy

I encourage you to try some Mexican candy and snacks. You can go find all these items at La Tapatia, but that's not the only Mexican store in the area. There are many more Latino owned small businesses in the area where you try some great Mexican foods, snacks and candies.

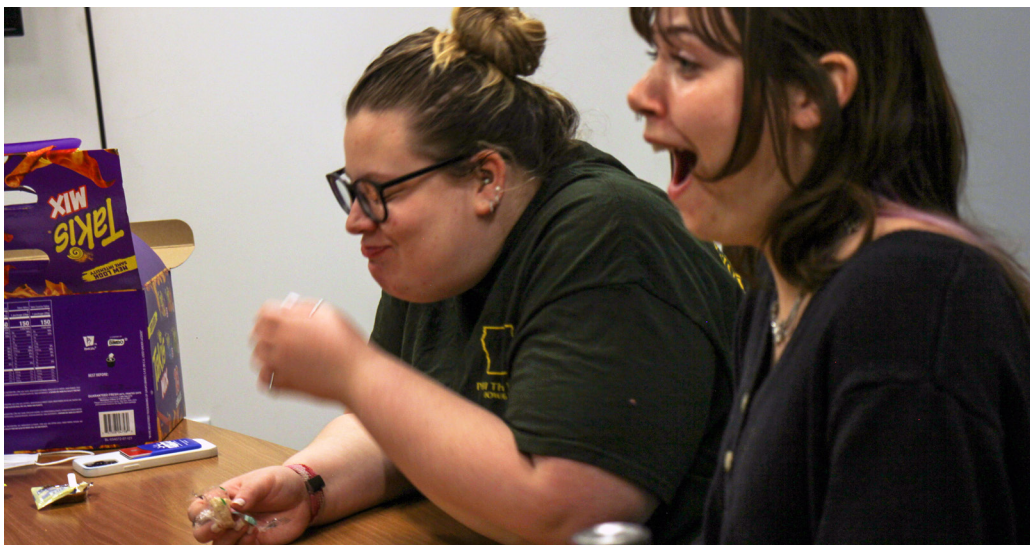
La Tapatia: 1440 Des Monies St, Des Monies, IA 50316

La Premium Michoacana: 1434 Des Monies St Suite 4, Des Monies, IA 50316

Café Con Leche: 2905 Hubbell Ave, Des Monies, IA 50317



Check out our YouTube channel for more reactions!
[@campuschronicle](#)



Behind the Camera

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Elizabeth Milburn, also known as Elly, is in her final classes for her photography degree.

Elly is from the small town of Melcher Dallas, Iowa.

"I enjoy being down home in a small town. I like the community. It's very close-knit," Elly said.

She plans on opening a studio down there.

"About six years ago, my parents bought me a camera for Christmas and I just kind of just fell in love with it. They wanted me to branch out on different things that I might like to try and got me a cheap little camera for Christmas and I just fell in love with it, so I went with it," Elly said.

Elly picked DMACC because it is one of the best-rated programs in Central Iowa, and it was also the closest, this way could stay close to home and be involved with her little brother's sporting events.

Her favorite class has been Fashion Photography. She enjoyed the hands-on learning that they did with the fashion class and getting to work with a few different clothing brands and models, and being able to make connections that they didn't have before that class.

"Major career goals would definitely be owning a studio back home, being able to live solely off of the money that I make from photography."

Her passion is doing portraits, for families and seniors. She recently started to enjoy wedding photography.

"I've recently got into (weddings) and they're a lot of work but are fun."

When asked about her editing style she said, "It's more of a naturalist editing style. I don't try to make vibrant colors pop too much unless that is the goal of the entire photo shoot. I try to keep everything natural. I don't try to Photoshop too much because I think that people will see the true beauty that you capture through your camera if you don't edit way too much."

Elly's typical school day consists of getting up and driving an hour to school, sitting through three to four lectures, doing some photo shoots, editing, and working on an online class.

When asked what she is most excited about Portfolio day she said, "Well, I am excited to see other people's work that I hadn't really got to see a lot of kind of just in the class with the same group of people for the last two years. And I'm excited to see what videography and graphic design and everyone has to offer."

For new students entering the photography program, she says to be "very open-minded and be ready to learn because that first and second semester is when they dump a lot of information on you, and it's a lot to take in, but in the long run it helps a lot."



Follow Elly on social media for her photography journey!

Facebook: [Elly Milburn Photography](#)

Instagram: [Ellymilburnphotography](#)

TikTok: [Elly.milburn.photography](#)

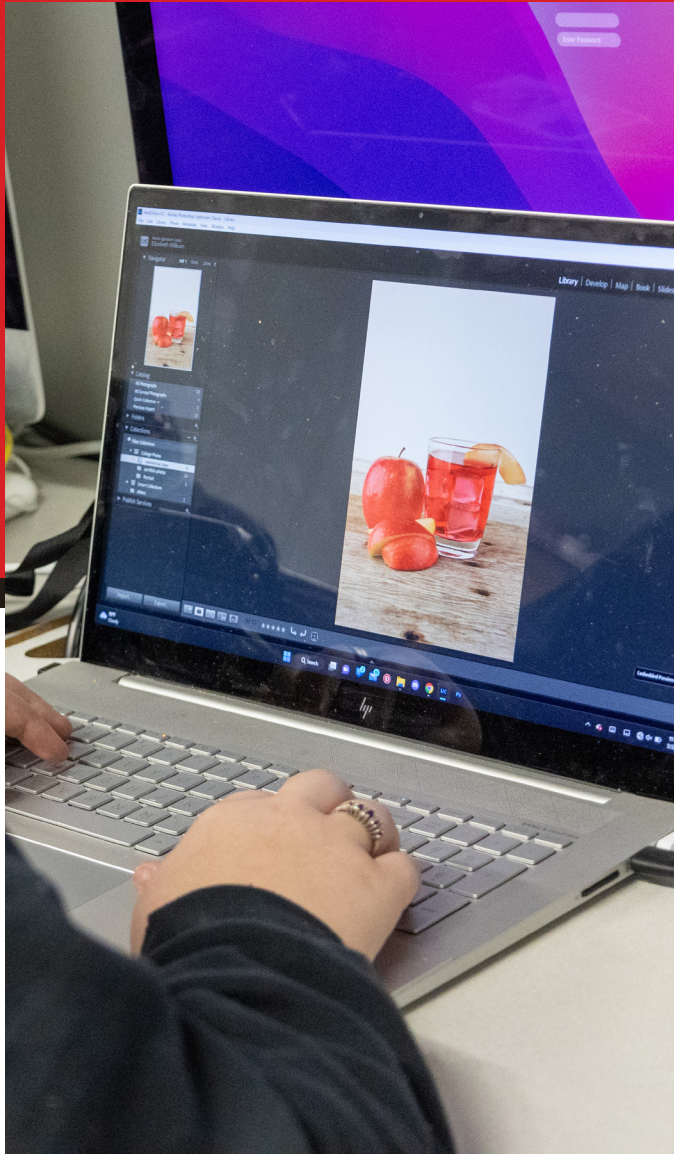


Elly poses with her camera for a headshot.



Elly demonstrates what a typical portrait session would look like in a studio classroom. The picture below is the outcome from the studio session.





Elly completes a drink assignment for commercial class. She also edits the final product. The pictures above is her final version.



The pandemic's lingering effects on college

Nick Longo

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Although COVID rates have been declining, the pandemic has had a lingering effect on higher education, which along with most other schools, was forced to go mostly virtual in March 2020. DMACC would not resume full face-to-face classes until Fall 2021.

DMACC Ankeny Speech Professor Karen Christiansen says she has been giving students more grace and patience when turning assignments in, understanding that there is a lot of pressure added onto them.

"I take more late work than I used to. I think this is directly tied to the pandemic, because of the amount of leeway professors gave to their students," Christiansen said.

During the height of the pandemic, students had to adapt to online learning, figure out how to connect with their

peers, and face the fear of the unknown, all while trying to be academically successful.

Because students and professors had to switch learning modalities overnight, this has affected how many professors have adapted to the needs of their students.

Some students, once they switched to more online and virtual learning have not looked back, and have enjoyed every step along the way. Others think it is a nuisance and want to build that in-person connection again.

Newton resident and business student at DMACC Taylor Danley highlighted how he felt about the switch to remote learning.

"I adjusted to online learning because I had to, but this was more of an inconvenience for me because I prefer in-person learning. I am more of a hands-on learner and pride myself on being teachable," Danley said.

Danley said however that the disruption caused him to take a step back and reflect on what really mattered to him.

"I really started figuring out other ways to grow outside of school. Honestly, the pandemic helped me more as a person because I was able to step back and zone in on life. But I still feel bad for my senior class of 2020, because we missed out on so much," he said.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a disruption in the real-life connection between students and professors. Colleges went virtual, which meant no more face-to-face interaction, which made it harder to create a rapport between professors and students.

English Professor Ann Kiesel at the DMACC Boone Campus says that a lack of face-to-face connection really hurt the relationship-building aspect between her and her students.

"Switching to virtual classes as an older higher education instructor was a huge learning curve for me. There were

more distractions for students at home and sometimes the connectivity of students or professors would be lost," Kiesel said.

Kiesel also stated that many students were suffering from mental health problems due to the

pandemic. She focused on how students were impacted emotionally by everything that was happening.

"The pandemic decreased many students' motivation and increased their anxiety; we have seen a lot of students drop out because of that. Deadlines are important but as professors, we also need to be good listeners, because there is a lot of anxiety out there," she said.

Kendra Schmitz, a junior at Drake University, said it was difficult to manage the workload when going back to in-person school.

"It was hard going from a full schedule to doing nothing all day, every day. It did not feel like a holiday or summer break. I

did not have assignments again until August 2020 when I started college. It was even harder going from not having any assignments to do for months to having tons of assignments for hard classes," Schmitz said.

Schmitz also said that she began procrastinating and getting into some bad habits. This caused her grades and mental state to deteriorate.

"I found myself pushing assignments until the very last minute and lost motivation easily. My work ethic was gone. I also did not pay much attention in my virtual classes because there were no attendance requirements," she said.

This sudden disruption to Schmitz's normal routine caused her grades to suffer and she was not her normal self.

"My grades took a drastic hit, and I would get fatigued after an hour or two of schoolwork, unlike in high school," she said.

Schmitz also stated that the option to go to virtual learning was critical during the height of the pandemic and appreciates how professors have been more flexible.

"Professors and universities have gotten better about dealing with student illness. When I had the flu last spring and couldn't go to class, my professors were very understanding and allowed more flexibility with assignments," she said.

Of course, after spending a year or two alone away from big crowds and formal in-person settings, it takes time for people to adjust to their regular pre-pandemic routines. One positive aspect of going through this was that people adjusted to online learning and still have that option today.

However, students are still adjusting to face-to-face classes. English professor Marc Dickinson from the DMACC Ankeny campus says he has noticed a difference from before the pandemic up until today, in how his students have adjusted to coming back into the classroom.

"I feel like when students come into class, they're rusty. Even teachers are rusty. In my class, there isn't as much participation as opposed to the past," Dickinson said.

Dickinson also stated that as face-to-face enrollment went down, online enrollment went up. He feels as though

"I feel like when students come into class, they're rusty. Even teachers are rusty. In my class, there isn't as much participation as opposed to the past," Dickinson said.

students these days are more comfortable with the online format of learning.

“People have their own decisions on whether they want to do in-person or online classes. I am more dependent now on discussion boards.

There is a barrier with in-person classes and the pandemic is a little to blame for it,” he said.

On the one hand, students have access to more classes that might not be available in person. On the other hand, students might feel frustrated that not enough classes are being offered in person.

Speech, English, and Journalism Professor Aimee Langager at the DMACC Urban campus feels that the flexibility

and accessibility of classes have been beneficial for students all over the state.

“The pandemic has allowed for more flexibility in scheduling and increased access to classes. Having different

modalities and virtual classes has been great for students who need options to work around work,” Langager said.

Services which used to be only face-to-face are also be-

ing online more since students aren’t on campus as often, Langager said.

“There were more online advising appointments being set up, students were getting help from the Academic Achievement Center, which was great. It can be

difficult sometimes getting students the resources they need if you take away the face-to-face environment,” she said.

One of the biggest changes in higher education since the pandemic hit was the switch to online, remote learning. This appears to be the direction a lot of students and professors will take as we go into the future.

Professor Christiansen said she believes that going to a hybrid model of learning might not be the best choice for making connections with students and faculty.

“There is power in community, I feel like the networks you can make and build during college years are really important still. I feel that is what is tricky right now about higher education because it is leaning more toward a hybrid way of learning,” Christiansen said.

“There is power in community, I feel like the networks you can make and build during college years are really important still,” Christiansen said

My Arizona Trip

Over winter break, I went to Scottsdale, Arizona for a few days before I had to come back for the spring semester. It was my first time going to Arizona and everything about it was surreal and breathtaking.

Scottsdale is a big city and a wealthy high-end area as well. It has a population of 242,753 people, which is over 30,000 more people than Des Moines. Plus, a median household income of about \$97,000.

I was there visiting my cousin, who has lived there for the past few years. The weather was perfect probably because it is warmer and nicer compared to Iowa. It turned out to be in the sixties and seventies most of the time I was there.

The first night I landed, we went to an NBA game between the Miami Heat and The Phoenix Suns which was an exciting start to the stay. We did some hiking and sightseeing, the scenery there is top notch with all the mountains, trails, and golf courses even.

We even played some golf, even

though I was very rusty as it has been a long time since I played. It was a nice escape from home, and it turns out a lot of people from Iowa were there as well. I could tell from the license plates we saw driving past us and even saw a couple of people I knew on my flight.

I do not get to travel very often so it made me appreciate going and exploring a new place. A lot of people from Iowa had the same idea to go someplace warm and exciting while we try to get past the winter blues. It made me wish I had stayed there longer, and I even imagined just staying there and not coming home. Although that wasn’t realistic, of course.

Thankfully, I did not see any scorpions or rattlesnakes while I was there. That thought was in the back of my mind while I was in Arizona. My cousin said he does not see them very often which is comforting.

The west coast just has a lot more to see and things to do I feel like. I would love to move out there someday if I could. I am visiting Arizona again though,

that is for certain.

I would encourage anyone who does not travel much to start doing just that.

There is a lot more to life than being in the same place, with the same people, and having the same routine every single day.

Arizona has several great food places to try and trails to hike on. They have many golf

courses for people to play on if you’re into golf. TopGolf is there too if you want to practice your swing. It also doesn’t get much better than sixty, seventy-degree weather during the winter months of the year.

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Avatar: The Way of Water... Worth the wait?

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Ask me on any given day what my favorite movie is, and I am going to say “Avatar.” I’ve had that same response since 2009 when the movie was first released. I was fascinated by the potential for “real” avatar technology and I fell in love with a culture that was pure fantasy. The movie was captivating, interesting, and elicited an array of emotions. In regards to production; the graphics were phenomenal and character development was a 10/10. The ending left you craving more of the action-packed science-fiction drama that was just gifted to your entertainment needs.

So that’s what I did. I waited, and waited, and waited.... for over a decade. I think I realistically watched “Avatar” 50 times or more. I mean, they left the ending wide open for a high-grossing film. “Avatar” really had the potential for becoming a top-selling franchise, if we are being honest. Yet, there I was, 10 years later, waiting for that potential to surface. I think I heard at least one

rumor per year during that waiting time, of a second Avatar coming to fruition.

So, when my husband mentioned “Avatar 2: The Way of Water” was being produced, I immediately rolled my eyes. When he then told me that he was serious, I ran to my computer faster than my kids run away with my phone. There it was, finally. I spent the next few months drooling at the idea of sitting in a theater watching a movie I had waited 14 years for.

Fast forward to the night of the movie. In the back of my mind on the drive there I was terrified that my 14 years of anticipation and excitement would go to waste. My biggest fear came true. After 3 very long hours and 12 minutes, I left the theater in shock. I was truly disappointed in the blatant waste of an opportunity. Same narrative, same character development, and almost a complete rewind of the first movie. Only, everything was in water. It was fish instead of birds, water instead of land, the same characters only 10 years older, and it was not nearly as exciting. The bad guys were overplayed, and the good guys always come out on top. The plot was

so dry that I could hardly pay attention. I caught myself checking my phone, and going to get snacks. I am sure there are events in the movie I missed due to my complete disinterest in the whole production, even while sitting in front of the screen.

Once I left and would try to discuss it, I noticed something. People either loved it, or really hated it. There were no in-between reviews for “Avatar: The Way of Water.” None that I heard anyway. Do better, Cameron. You owe me for this.



What does the future hold for Aaron Rodgers?

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Well, the longtime Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers has the decision to make: either get traded to the New York Jets, retire from the NFL altogether, or return to the Green Bay Packers. That last option probably would’ve made the most sense if you asked me a few months ago, but now it is looking pretty unlikely. The front office and Green Bay Packers organization came out and said recently that they would prefer to get rid of the four-time NFL MVP.

This is probably due to the fact that the team is rebuilding and Rodgers isn’t getting any younger. Plus, he hasn’t historically been the best teammate or leader, especially when he is playing with a lot of younger players. You also take into consideration that he is the highest-paid quarterback and player in the NFL, who is set to receive \$50.3 million in 2023, despite being uncertain about

his future.

Let’s say that Rodgers does get traded to the Jets; he won’t be there for very long. Rodgers said that he doesn’t want to reach any ridiculous milestones like Tom Brady (who is now retired...I think), so that means if he gets traded he will only play for a season or two to get one last shot at a second Super Bowl Trophy. He will however be 40 in December, but we still don’t know for sure if he will come back and play or not.

Aaron Rodgers also just recently completed a darkness retreat for a few days to help him gain clarity on what he wants to do going forward. He still hasn’t made his decision yet, but he and the Packers have been in contact with the Jets, and in fact, Rodgers flew to New Jersey (since that’s technically where the New York Jets play) today to talk about a possible trade.

As a die-hard Packers fan, it will be really hard and painful to see him play for another team. On the other hand, it was going to come to an end sooner or later, and it still might not be over just yet. It



Image courtesy Canva

was a great run in the green and gold for Rodgers, but I personally think it is time to move on.

Honestly, he might even choose to retire if he can’t figure things out with the Packers or Jets. Whatever he chooses to do, I think I can confidently say he’s played his last game as a Packer. He will definitely be a locked-in first-ballot Hall of Fame quarterback and he was one of the best quarterbacks ever.

Boba on Ankeny Campus!

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Campus Ground is back... but with Boba. Still located in Building 6, near the Academic Achievement Center, on the Ankeny campus. It is open from 7:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday. It has a relaxing atmosphere with big windows and plenty of seating to sit and enjoy your drink or even to study. They have many options of boba like classic tea, fruit tea, flavored milk teas, and they also have lemonade fusions. There are different options of toppings as well like tapioca pearls, brown sugar crystals, mango crystals, lychee jelly, coffee jelly, and assorted jelly.

Lucy Hernandez: I got the Taro drink with brown sugar pearls. I really liked it, so I'd give it a 10/10. The combination goes together perfectly, I cannot describe the taste, but it was good. I have gone back since the first time I went. I got the same thing because it was just too good! Next time I will get something different. I would recommend everyone to give it a try.

Alyssa Monroe: I got the Black Milk Tea with Tapioca Pearls toppings, I've

only had it one other time so this was still a new experience for me. I didn't know you could make your own mixture, so I tried the pre-made one. Mine tasted like coffee so it was super good and perfect for me. I had previously tried their Taro at the Spring into DMACC. Both drinks were really good. I would definitely go back and try more of their drinks, I would recommend students to try their drinks. It's also in a cute cozy area with space to drink and study.

Maria Hernandez: I got what I usually get at Boba shops, which is the Strawberry Milk Tea with Tapioca Pearls. It was a pretty good price for the drink and tasted good, especially for just opening up. The staff was also very helpful and gave a lot of suggestions if you have trouble ordering. I think that it is a great option for students to get another type of study drink that Cafe X has not previously offered. I also like that it is not in building 5 so students can experience different locations on campus. One tiny thing that I didn't like about the experience was the straws because my Boba pearls kept on getting stuck in the straw which made it hard to drink. But I am very excited to come back and try more of their menu!



Photos by Alyssa Monroe

Glass Onion Review

I never watch movies twice, like ever. And if I do, it's usually years after I watched it the first time, never the next day. But there was one movie last year that changed that pattern for me, and I've seen it four times now. "Glass Onion" has been on repeat since its release on Netflix in December.

Filmmaker Rian Johnson ("The Last

Jedi," "Looper"), wrote and directed "Glass Onion," which is the newest film in the "Knives Out" franchise, covering a new mystery with the same detective. The film follows Detective Benoit Blanc (Daniel Craig) as he gets invited to a murder mystery party hosted by Miles Bron (Edward Norton) on his private island. Along with Blanc, Bron's closest friends are invited, each with a big secret of their own. When a murder happens on the island, Blanc steps up to the challenge.

I have been a huge fan of "Knives Out" since it came out in 2019, so I was very excited to watch another film of the same universe. And it is safe to say that I liked this one better. "Glass Onion" takes on a little more of a comedic take on a mystery, more so than the past film. I also felt like, as an audience, we got to know Blanc's character better, which adds a nice touch to the film. The cinematography was beautiful and engaging with comedic zooms that made me want to watch more.

The depth/lack of depth of the characters is also another strong suit of the film. On the outside, characters like

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Miles Bron seem like they have so much depth to them and that they are more than the audience would think but that is far from the truth. Like the title of the film, "Glass Onion," there are layers but at the end of the day you can see right through it. But if we take a look at Andi Brand, there is so much more than what meets the eye.

But the plot twist is what keeps me coming back because everytime I watch the film, I watch it from a different perspective and with different knowledge. It truly feels like a unique viewing everytime. I typically do not see myself attracted to mystery movies but I think the humor along with the casting makes this a fun watch.

This is not to say that it doesn't have its downfalls. The beginning of the movie feels slow until about a third into it. And I also wish that the ending was not so rushed.

Overall, I would say that this is an easy watch that will have you on the edge of your seat. Although it is not a sequel to "Knives Out," I do feel like it is a good idea to watch that first so that you can get more context.



My American Dream House

Alyssa Monroe

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Most people want to move out of their parent's house the second they turn 18 so they can feel like an adult, some might call their own place the "American Dream." Most move into apartments for someone they move into houses around the college they attend. And that's what I wanna do. I am going to be out of college soon and I'm turning 22. My boyfriend has been graduating for the last two years and has been working at his job now for two years. We decided he will be buying the house in his name and I will be helping pay the mortgage when I am more established. So far, it's been more of a nightmare than a dream. Moving into a house is a lot of work. My boyfriend and I will be together close to

Let me tell you it's one of the most difficult things we've ever done as a couple and for me as a person.

two years by the time I'm ready to move, which will be during the summer when I graduate college.

We want to buy a house because we like to entertain people and be the host of parties and get-togethers. In the next five years we also probably want to start a family and get married so buying a house just seems like the right decision for us.

Let me tell you it's one of the most difficult things we've ever done as a couple and for me as a person. My boyfriend and I like opposite things when looking into buying a house. This journey has been to a lot of companies and finding what's right for us. We both agree the Des Moines and Ankeny area is pricey and we don't like the environment. We have been looking at smaller areas around the metro but we still are open to Des Moines. He wants a big garage

with a big yard and isn't as concerned about the house as much. For me I am more focused on the house, because it might be a forever home. I don't mind having a big yard since we love hosting bonfires at my family's house.

What we've noticed so far, if you find a house you like, you basically need to book a tour right then and there because it's going to be sold within a day or two. This has happened to us; we thought we found the one. An ad online said there was an open house but unfortunately it was sold the day before we went to visit. Most banks don't want to lend to us because we don't have a long credit history. We both went to college debt free and have never taken a loan out. We both have credit cards and we have good credit scores because of that but unfortunately we've only had them for four years. So most banks see that I've never taken anything big out in our names, so it 's hard to prove we can be reliable to pay a loan. My boyfriend did get approved for a house loan thanks to his bank.

I would recommend having credit cards and maybe taking out a small loan. The more credit history the better, which is hard to do when most of us are in college and that's definitely a big loan. College loans could help show the bank that you are reliable to pay off debt and be able to pay on time. It's also difficult if you don't have an established career. Thankfully my boyfriend has been in his career for two years now and was an apprentice before going full time.

Once he got approved we've been searching for our perfect home or at least a starter home. We found many dream homes, but they are too far from the metro where he works and our family is. We definitely make sacrifices in our wants for our perfect house. We have decided we will stick to a two car garage, hopefully three, if we are lucky. We are open to a smaller house and upgrading homes later on. We would really like some land for a dog and bonfires but with Des Moines it's hit or miss. That's where we are currently on this journey. We are still currently actively looking for homes in the metro area. Hopefully next

time I'm writing about this topic will be about buying a first home and doing renovations.

I would recommend reaching out and to someone who knows more, thankful my dad used to be a home inspector so we bring him to all the houses we tour. I would also recommend before thinking of buying a house get your financials in order, start saving for a down payment and extra money if for a example the house doesn't come with a stove for an example. If you have a decent savings I would go to the bank and get per-approved, make sure you understand the different types of loans and pick what's right for you. My biggest thought is having a financial checklist so you can start the process. For us, I feel like going to an open house helps us gain experience and learn what we should be asking and helps determine what we need in a house vs our wants. The biggest advice I got for everyone is to get a house inspection before signing the deal. My dad isn't doing a deep dive into the house when he walks through it with us, so hiring someone who will find everything wrong or right with the house is necessary. I would say don't be scared if there is something wrong with the house, it could be something minor. Just remind yourself this is a long and not easy process, the average first home owner is 33 years old according to the National Association of Realtors survey.



Image courtesy Canva

Pandemic results in DMACC daycare woes for students

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Are you a parent attending or working at DMACC? Are you on the waitlist for the Childhood Development Center? Well then, you're not alone.

You and 59 others currently remain on the waitlist for an opening in the daycare center on campus. Since the daycare is also open to the public, there are at least 23 children attending that don't have a tie to DMACC, according to the center.

What should be a convenient service to DMACC students with kids has frequently become a source of stress. In fact, only 25% of the children at the development center are children of DMACC students, those of students. I met with Sherri Sciarrotta, the coordi-

nator of the child development center, to find the driving force behind the lack of priority for DMACC students, faculty, and staff.

When I asked her why student parents were on a waitlist while the community held positions, she had a very simple answer, the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the pandemic, DMACC went mostly virtual and the campus almost entirely shut down. In order to keep the Childhood Development Center running, they opened the center to the community.

I can understand the daycare not wanting to cut children already admitted during the pandemic, but I would like to see the daycare start to prioritize DMACC students, faculty, and staff.

According to the Center, the current percentage of non-DMACC children is 40%, while 25% are children of DMACC

students and the remaining 35% are faculty or DMACC "affiliated" children.

To add to my frustration, I learned yesterday that community members pay student rates.

The rate for a child aged two and over is \$210 a week for full-time care. This is above Iowa's local average of \$186 per week. The rate for an infant is \$255 a week also well above the local average of \$218 per week.

While there are some third-party scholarships and tuition assistance, that help is dependent on those third parties, and not guaranteed by DMACC. That's \$1,120 a month. That is a whole monthly income for some families.

I would like to see the DMACC childcare center not only prioritize DMACC parents but find a way to offer a weekly rate closer to or below Iowa's average.

Funnel Week at the Capitol

The Iowa Senate is in the midst of its so-called "funnel week" for budgeting bills - a week in which proposed budgets will either pass or fall short. This will determine funding for various programs across the state. One of the programs affected by this process is Iowa's community colleges, who are facing possible budget reductions under Governor Kim Reynolds' updated proposal.

The original proposed budget expansion for community colleges was \$8.7 million, with DMACC slated to receive \$1.7 million of that. However, under Governor Reynolds' updated proposal, the budget would be reduced to \$5.4 million, with DMACC receiving just over \$1 million.

This news has sparked concern among students and faculty, who rely on state funding to provide quality education and resources. The proposed budget reduction could result in reduced services, higher tuition costs, and a strain on the college's ability to meet the needs of its diverse student body.

Student representatives from com-

munity colleges across Iowa visited the Capitol on Feb. 28 to advocate for continued support of community college funding. The representatives met with lawmakers to express the importance of investing in Iowa's community colleges and the impact that the budget could have on students.

Community colleges play a vital role in Iowa's workforce development, providing affordable education and training programs that prepare students for in-demand careers. These programs are especially important for students who may not have access to traditional four-year universities or who are seeking career changes later in life.

It is crucial that lawmakers recognize the value of community colleges and the critical role they play in the state's economy. Reducing funding for these institutions could have long-term consequences for both students and the state as a whole.

As the budgeting process continues, it is important for students and faculty to stay informed and engaged in advocat-

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ing for community college funding. By voicing their concerns and advocating for continued support, they can help ensure that DMACC and other community colleges across Iowa continue to provide quality education and resources to all students. Students and faculty can learn who their representatives are, as well as a complete list of phone numbers and emails through the government's official website at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/> contacts.



Photo courtesy DMACC

DMACC Transfer College Fair



Coe College: Small private school with small classes with the average size of 16 students, located in Cedar Rapids area, which gains students opportunities to internships .



Iowa State University: They offer many opportunities in and out of the class room, Many different clubs and opportunities to study abroad, offer many internships.



Bellevue University: Wide range of degree and certificate programs . Connected learning programs which is meeting once a week learning options.



Iowa Wesleyan University: Small school and will provide a good education and you gain hands on experiences.



Luther College: Students gain travel opportunities and nursing connections which gains them hands on learning with small community vibes.



Buena Vista University: Small private College with lake life at the center, student have the opportunities to go canoeing and ice skating. Many academic opportunities and majors.

Photos by Lily Hastings

Spring into DMACC Recap



DMACC Criminal Justice Club: The Club is designed to give students a chance to learn more hands-on, practical applications in the field of criminal justice.
 Advisor Tim Spooner: tjspooner@dmacc.edu



Phi Theta Kappa: This group develops leadership and service, for an intellectual climate for exchange of ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship for scholars, and for stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence.
 Advisor: Dan Platt: djplatt1@dmacc.edu



DMACC Fashion Club: Fashion Club is a way to learn, network, and have fun with individuals who enjoy fashion! Monthly meeting every second Wednesday of the month in Building 8 room 9.
 Advisor: Alecia Mintle: amintle@dmacc.edu



Future Business Leaders of America: This group will help you develop leadership, communication, and networking skills while you interact with other like-minded professionals in a business setting.
 Advisor: Susan McCoy: smmccoy3@dmacc.edu



Student American Dental Hygienists Association (SADHA) and Student Dental Health Experts (SDHE): The club is associated with the Dental Hygiene program to help students to get scholarships and gain learning opportunities.
 Advisor: Jackie Kollasch- jskollasch@dmacc.edu



Community Service Club: Student-lead club that assists others through volunteering.
 Advisor: Aaron Alford: alalford@dmacc.edu

Photos by Alyssa Monroe

DMACC students share their secrets

I tore my knee on
Stage with a
Stripper

I have a secret tiktok
& instagram to stalk
my exes

I have a
Kiss list

I worry
I'll be alone
forever

I'm going to
flunk this semester

I think
grape
Jolly ranchers
are the
best flavor.

government
corrupt!

i pretended to
know German
to impress
a girl

I have two cats
but only told
my apartment
about one

I have a
favorite
child.

I had a teacher try to
harass me
high school

I have a crush on
my professor
:)

I sometimes steal my
str's clothes b/c she
steals mine lol.

I sleep eat & my
weakness is Donuts!!