

The Campus Chronicle

Inside:

DMACC

FASHION

INSTITUTE

PRESENTS

LUMINOUS INTERLUDE



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Note from the editor

Lara Jones
Multimedia Editor

At the start of my time at DMACC during the fall of 2023, I had no interest in joining any clubs or committing myself to a large number of extracurriculars. My focus was on getting an education and swiftly getting out.

Very soon, these plans went out the window, and I found myself spending a few days every week in The Campus Chronicle office, learning the art of journalism. In the beginning, we started with a relatively large staff, meeting every week to work out our first fully fleshed-out paper, but by the middle of that semester, all the work had fallen to just me and one other peer.

We worked as diligently as we could and managed to meet our deadline to release an entire paper. It was the first rewarding moment of my college career — to see all of our hard work condensed into a twelve-page spread and distributed on campus.

I write all of that to say that it has been a joy to work for The Campus Chronicle newspaper. It gave me the chance to explore different creative outlets; it didn't matter if I was producing podcasts, filming videos for Instagram, or getting to meet and interview exceptional individuals. All of it has made me not only a better writer and creative thinker but also a better team player.

From the first issue I helped to craft right down to this final one, it has been a rigorous, rewarding process, and as you read through the pieces covering the fashion show, president Denson's retirement, or the spring musical, I hope you can feel the time and effort that myself and the rest of the Chronicle staff put into making this last magazine the crowning achievement of our year.



DMACC President Robert Denson. Photo by Kennedy Ballinger (Chronicle archives)

President Rob Denson announces retirement after 22 years

Derek Jensen
Staff Writer

Rob Denson, DMACC President for 22 years, will be retiring from his position effective December 30, 2025. The Iowa native took the position on November 1, 2003, after the DMACC Board reached out to him about the position as he was working as President of Northeast Iowa Community College.

Denson said the decision to retire, though not easy, is still the right one. The 78-year-old said he is ready to experience life with his wife, Pat. The two are ready to travel around the country and plan to keep Ankeny as their home.

Denson grew up in Homestead, Iowa, attending a one-room school during his early education. As a college student, he drove a semi truck to pay for tuition, an activity he still holds a passion for today, driving the official DMACC semi in parades around the state.

Before becoming the president of DMACC, Denson practiced law for 18 years as an attorney. He also spent five and a half years as president of Northeast Iowa Community College.

DMACC has seen much growth during Denson's time. Today, the college has a \$141 million annual budget and the lowest tuition fees of any college or university in the state.

DMACC under Denson has secured partnerships with major business leaders such as Intel, Microsoft, Google, Amazon, and even the TSA (Transportation Security Agency), which Denson said he is particularly proud of. DMACC has a program specific to the TSA run by the Criminal Justice program.

Denson said that the Culinary Program is another major success for DMACC. Recently, the program celebrated 40 years of a French chef exchange program, where DMACC students are sent to France to practice culinary art skills in one of the most prestigious culinary countries in the world. Denson said that DMACC has earned the French Order of Agricultural Merit from the French government due to the school's culinary programs, citing that as one of the most memorable moments during his tenure with the college.

Denson has consistently found himself on the front pages of *The Campus Chronicle* throughout his time as president. He was offered the position after the previous president, David England, was arrested and

charged with conspiracy to manufacture and deliver marijuana out of his home and was subsequently removed from his position on March 12, 2003, forcing the DMACC board to swiftly find a replacement. On September 17, 2003, *The Chronicle* featured an article introducing DMACC students to Denson.

Weeks later, another story detailed Denson's "whirlwind tour," in which he visited the then-six DMACC campuses over the course of 12 hours.

Not long after he visited all the DMACC campuses, he made a commitment to the expansion of the Ankeny campus. An \$8.6 million expansion took place, adding over 300 new parking spaces as well as expanding multiple buildings, adding more classrooms.

In February of 2007, *The Chronicle* reported a record enrollment of 11,664 students. At the time, Denson said, "More and more students are finding out that DMACC offers a great product that helps them achieve their career goal."

During the fallout of the 2008 recession, *The Chronicle* reported that DMACC had been finding new ways to cut costs, \$1.4 million to be exact. This was done to keep the school as affordable for students as possible.



French Order of Agricultural Merit

Denson said at the time, “We are trying to save costs for the students while being able to keep the school functioning as well.”

Denson had his own salary frozen for the year to save money for the college.

The college experienced challenges in the 2010s. In 2014, DMACC secured a partnership with the YMCA to build a new \$15 million facility on the Ankeny campus, proposing free membership for DMACC employees and students.

“We are going to redesign the whole Student Activities Building. We will have a food court, a nice coffee shop, expand the bookstore, more student office space, student activity space, lounges, computer labs, as well as at least eight lanes of swimming and everything that the Y has,” Denson said.

Although a recreation center was built, the deal with the YMCA fell through in 2015, with *The Chronicle* reporting that DMACC and the YMCA couldn’t make the numbers work.

In September 30, 2015, *The Chronicle* reported that a 6 percent drop in enrollment resulted in a 2.9 percent increase in tuition. On top of these issues, some classes were at risk of cancellation due to a lack of students registering for classes.

2016 saw an end to this stagnation. Building 5, the Student Center, opened its doors during the fall semester, followed by the new recreation center, Trail Point.

“The new student center will be a giant benefit to the student life of all of our Ankeny Students and greatly improve their total campus experience,” Denson said.

In January 2017, President Trump signed an immigration ban preventing people from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia from entering the country. In response, Denson sent an email to all DMACC students that said, “Our mission is to provide quality, affordable, student-centered



Denson driving the DMACC semi.

education and training designed to empower all students in their pursuit of life’s opportunities and career goals. We embrace students from around the world to become part of the DMACC community as we strive to fulfill our mission.”

In November of 2024, Denson was awarded the The Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit “Karen L. Evans Immigrant Champion Award” award, acknowledging his support for immigrants in the community.

The *Chronicle* reached out to faculty to discuss Denson’s legacy.

Bethany Sweeney, the Pathway Academic Chair of Education, Communication, and Humanities and Study Abroad Coordinator, provided statements and opinions of the DMACC College Council members, some students, and herself.

One current criticism of Denson revolves around an issue faced by many colleges in today’s political climate.

Some faculty members believe that a lack of support for marginalized students harms the student body as a whole. College presidents of today are commonly forced into a position where they must decide between government funding and providing support to disadvantaged students.

Cody Chesmore, an English professor at the Boone Campus, said, “If the next president does not prioritize these ideals, we will see a continuation of students suffering, education being dismantled with no protest, and destruction of the core concepts of democracy in education.”

Sweeney said, “In his dedication to DMACC as a whole, President Denson is willing to make sacrifices that will have an outsized impact on specific student groups to preserve the institution, its funding, and its political standing. Personally, I believe that such compromises run the risk of ul-

During Denson’s time, DMACC has seen substantial growth and investment

- » Urban Campus expansion (2005)
- » New Health Sciences Building (2005)
- » The FFA Enrichment Center (2010)
- » Partnership with TSA to provide security training (2011)
- » Iowa Culinary Building renovation (2016)
- » Renovated Building 5 Student Center and Trail Point facilities (2016-2017)
- » Ames Hunziker opens, providing general education options (2005)
- » Perry Van Kirk brings community college to Perry (2011)
- » Southridge, with specialized programs, opens its doors (2013)
- » Evelyn K. Davis Center opens, providing job training and career services (2013)
- » Capitol Center opens, offering nursing and education courses (2017)
- » Templeton location opened, offering general education (2022)

timately harming the integrity of the institution and diminishing its educational and moral authority.”

The College Council outlined what they wish to see in the new president.

The council stated they want a leader who will defend students, balance education and politics, and one which is open and responsive to staff.

They said they wish for the next president to support the continuation of the College Council to allow faculty, staff, and student representation in decision-making.

Sweeney said she hopes for a president with experience in the education field, similar to the presidents she previously worked under at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the University of California, Irvine. Sweeney said the presidents of those universities often come from the staff within those universities, rather than businessmen and women, which is a practice becoming more common in universities and colleges around the country.

As for Denson, the College Council makes its appreciation for him known. He was a major factor in the creation of the College Council itself and has made many notable impacts on the college. Though his methods haven't always been popular amongst everyone, many agree that Denson has never put DMACC second. Sweeney said that Denson

has found major successes in his time at the school, lowering tuition, bringing in unique programs, and expanding the success of preexisting programs.

Sweeney said she believes that his legacy will be a positive one after the dust settles. The funding opportunities he's provided for the school have changed its landscape, not to mention its physical landscape changing with renovations and construction projects.

It's known that he is very proud of how he handled communications throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, keeping the school very well-connected through his weekly messages.

His approachability has always been something that students and staff have appreciated. Danielle Forkner, a student of the Urban Campus and President of the DMACC

Honors Advisory Board, said, "Thank you, President Denson, for always going to events for us students and being supportive of us! You are amazing!"

Denson said he is very proud of his involvement in the DMACC community, having gone to countless concerts, plays, banquets, and other school functions. He urges the incoming president to do something similar.

Denson and the College Council agree that students need to be the primary focus of his replacement. His biggest piece of advice to this unknown replacement is to "get out and about," visiting all of the campuses connected to DMACC, from Perry to Templeton.

This advice mirrors his first day on the job when he made his whirlwind tour of the six campuses. At the time, Denson said, "My job



suit with a campus wide ban? Find out what the DMACC community has to say about the idea on pages 4 and 5.
Chronicle Photos/David Rogers

President Denson shares thoughts on possible DMACC smoking ban

an addiction and we are going to help people deal with it.

NEWS
Denson speaks at Chronicle's press conference

By KIM MCCALLISTER
CHRONICLE STAFF

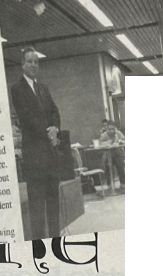
On Jan. 21, a group of about 100-125 students were in the student center in Building 5 to interview new DMACC President, Robert Denson.

Denson has been the president of DMACC for approximately three months and is planning on sticking around.

Students voiced concerns about the parking situation on campus. Denson said that expansion is in the plans for the future.

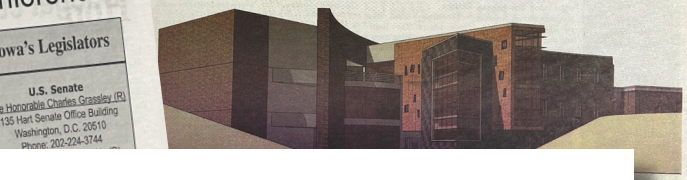
Students were also concerned about tuition increases for next year. Denson said, with the recent budget cuts, student tuition will increase next fall.

Denson said that DMACC is growing.



Iowa's Legislators
U.S. Senate
The Honorable Charles Grassley (R)
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: 202-224-3744

DMACC has raised nearly 2/3 of \$13 million for new building



News that is timely, relevant and interesting to the DMACC community.

DMACC has raised nearly 2/3 of \$13 million for new building

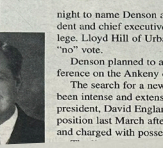
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DMACC Presidential Search a Success

By Amber Bryant-Tapper
NEWS EDITOR

DMACC administrators and staff say the selection of Robert J. Denson as the college's next president is a "a terrific choice for DMACC."

"They like



night to name Denson as the fourth president and chief executive officer of the college. Lloyd Hill of Urbandale cast the "no" vote.

Denson planned to attend a news conference on the Ankeny campus Tuesday.

The search for a new president has been intense and extensive. The previous president, David England, resigned his position last March after he was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana.

Denson's experience at other colleges and at the state level will benefit DMACC.

Denson earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Iowa State University in 1970, a master's degree in educational administration from ISU in 1972 and a law degree from the University of Florida in 1979. He and wife, Patricia, have two adult children, Robyn and Cliff.

David England: Trying to Overcome

By Amber Bryant-Tapper
NEWS EDITOR

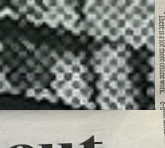
March 12, 2003 came as a shock to students, faculty, even strangers off the street, when David England, former president of Des Moines Area Community College was arrested.

DMACC's Budget

Crisis Hits DMACC's Budget
President Denson remarks "No Need to be Afraid"

By TIFANIE PETERMAN
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

Go green, spend less, save more, and cut costs. Many of these



DMACC, like everyone else has been finding new ways to cut costs and save money because of the statewide budget cut. The school's overall budget is \$140 million and the school is currently

Another way other schools have started to cut costs is by asking faculty to take furloughs. DMACC faculty will not be asked to do so because of the recent high amount of students and the full class, officials can't have faculty not in classes.

DMACC to absorb 2.5% budget cut

By AMBER BRYANT-TAPPER
NEWS EDITOR

DMACC is losing over \$500,000 due to the recent state budget cuts.

"We're going to absorb this cut," said Robert Denson, president and chief executive officer of DMACC.

Denson said DMACC has programs

that generate revenue, including a corporate training program and continuing education.

DMACC will attempt to make up the loss from this budget cut using the income from these programs, Denson said.

Denson believes an increase in spring enrollment could make up for part of the cut as well. In the previous two years,

spring enrollment has decreased by 35 to 40 percent.

Kim Linduska, senior vice president of academic affairs, said DMACC made up for last year's budget cuts with a mid-year increase. Linduska said there was tuition increase of \$3 per credit hour in June 2002, and another increase of \$3 per credit hour in November 2002.

Denson said he will not agree to a mid-year tuition increase this time.

"I have refused that from day one, to the students," he said.

"I believe we should strive to 'grow' our way out of this state funding issue, rather than resort to 'cutting' our way out," Denson said in an e-mail to DMACC faculty.

Children listen to message of the little engine

By AMBER BRYANT-TAPPER
NEWS EDITOR

DMACC's president, Robert Denson, had four-year-olds repeating "I think I can, I think I can," as he read "The Little Engine That Could" to children in the DMACC Child Development Center on Nov. 26.

Denson joined the children for snack time and convinced a young boy to eat his time and convinced a young boy to eat his time as the boy's mother, Tammy Rosenberry, watched from an observation booth.

"You got him to eat pineapple," Rosenberry said to Denson. "If you come back here, I'll let him eat sweet



New classes this fall

Continued from Pg. 1

DMACC is offering a variety of new classes this fall. The school is offering a variety of new classes this fall. The school is offering a variety of new classes this fall.

Iowa moves toward K-12 phone restrictions

Katie Hirth
Staff Writer

On Jan. 24, Gov. Reynolds proposed a bill that would ban “Personal Electronic Devices” in the classroom for grades K-12. This would not affect any post-secondary education institutions like DMACC. The Iowa Senate passed the bill Monday March 24, it will now move to the House for a vote.

Not only would this bill ban cell phones in classrooms, but it would also require instruction related to the effects of social media to be incorporated into the health curriculum for students in grades 6-8. The bill, however, would not set the standard for how cell phones would be banned; that is up to the district’s discretion.

A Pew Research poll from 2024 found that 72% of high school teachers reported phones being a “major problem” in the classroom. However, in school districts with phone policies, 60% of high school teachers said it was very or somewhat difficult to enforce policies compared to 30% of middle school teachers.

A 2022 study from the New York Institute of Technology found that phones in the classroom negatively impacted students’ learning. The study stated, “The negative association between cell phone use and course comprehension is consistent with previous studies. This finding adds to the growing body of literature that suggests that distracted students perform worse in the classroom.”

Out of the 106 students in the study, those who put their phones away reported “higher levels of course comprehension, lower levels of anxiety, and higher levels of mindfulness.”

One supporter of the bill is Micheal Davenport, who teaches theatre and social studies at Roosevelt High School in Des Moines.

He said in an email interview, “When [students] are glued to their phones, they miss out on the deeper understanding that comes from real conversation, inquiry, and critical thinking”

Davenport also said, “Education should prepare students for real-life challenges, and that includes teaching them the value of being present in the moment rather than lost in their screens.”

On the Governor’s official website, Gov. Reynolds said, “Cell phones are not only a distraction but a deterrent to development in the classroom ... Let’s return the classroom to a place for learning, growth,



Photo illustration by Katie Hirth

and connection to give students their best chance at success.”

Although this does not impact DMACC students, and DMACC does not have an official cell phone policy, some professors have their own policies to minimize classroom phone use and foster a better learning environment.

Rachel Murdock is the Design, Media, and Arts Pathway Chair at DMACC. Murdock said, “My own policy is that you only use computers or phones in class if you are doing classwork. My syllabus says: ‘Computer Ethics: Personal and university computers and devices should be used only for class-related activities during class. Phones should be in your bags or pockets.’”

Luke Mueller is a sophomore from Des Moines who is studying business at DMACC. He said in an email interview, “I feel like I learn a lot more the less I’m on my phone. But most of my teachers are pretty lenient when it comes to phone usage, more of a ‘you use you lose’ mindset.”

Ansira Irakoze, a freshman from Altoona studying liberal arts, said in an email interview, “It’s too easy to be distracted by texting and social media! Your notifications will still be there when class is over.”

When asked if DMACC should have an

overall phone policy, Irakoze said, “I feel like DMACC should have a phone policy, but they should be flexible and reasonable. Unlike high school, where stricter rules might be necessary, college students are adults and should have the freedom to manage their own phone usage.”

Although technology is distracting for some, for others it can be an aid.

Those who have learning disabilities, such as those with motor, vision, or speech impairments, might require the use of technology in the classroom in order to access material and more easily process it.

Students with motor impairments can use tablets to improve coordination. NOVA Chat is a speech-generation device that has text-to-speech programs to help students with reading and speaking in class. There are also personal magnification devices for those with challenged vision.

In January of 2024, the Department of Education released guidelines for assistive technology and noted that these devices improve child motivations and outcomes. The Iowa bill, HS106, does not currently make exceptions for students with disabilities, but they would presumably be protected under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

DMACC Daily moves to the “Portal”

Jayden Park
Staff Writer

There are changes being made to the DMACC Daily, which has been around for close to 30 years, keeping students, faculty, and staff up-to-date about what's going on at the school.

The DMACC Daily used to be a daily email to staff, faculty, and students to notify them of upcoming events and other news on campus.

In December, the emails were discontinued. They are being replaced by the new SharePoint system accessed via the my.dmacc.edu portal, which DMACC officials say will be more individualized.

Todd Jones, director of marketing and public relations at DMACC, said, “The DMACC Daily was taken down in December to remove the DMACC D’s.” This stems from an ongoing lawsuit with Drake over the “D” school logo.

He also said the DMACC Daily was on an old SharePoint system, and while they took it down, they moved it to a different and newer operating system. They made this change over winter break to not disrupt any DMACC Daily users and saw it as the perfect chance to make the move.

DMACC Website Coordinator Noah O’Toole said, “The DMACC Daily ran on a version of SharePoint that Microsoft stopped supporting. That was one of the catalysts for us to redo the website and some services. [...] Winter break was a good time when everything calmed down a little bit so that’s when we chose to stop the old DMACC Daily and transition into the new server.”

As the change is being implemented, some students and professors on campus feel a little in the dark about what’s going on around campus.

Rohwen Smith, majoring in Cybersecurity, from Polk City said, “It can be hard finding news or announcements. I usually just walk around Building 5 and look for the signs they put up.”

Smith said he had no clue that the Daily was shut down over winter break and he hadn’t even heard about it until it was mentioned in class by a teacher. He doesn’t follow any social media accounts, but he said he plans to check out the new Daily.

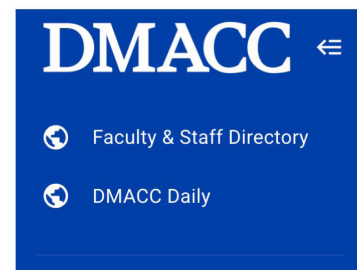
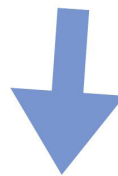
First-semester student AJ Crowover, majoring in Business Analytics and Finance, said he had never heard of the DMACC Daily before but he rarely looks for announcements as he usually keeps to himself and “does his own thing.” Crowover said he follows the main DMACC general account on Instagram.

Kylie Vazuez, from Ankeny and majoring in Dental Hygiene, said she used to get the daily emails but has not seen them recently and had no clue that they had shut down. She said sometimes it can be difficult finding announcements around campus. She follows DMACC on Snapchat, but said she almost never looks at it. Her mom encouraged her to join the DMACC community on Snapchat, but she said she rarely checks any activity on the app. Vazuez plans to possibly check out the new Daily.

O’Toole also said emails are not going to be sent out like they used to as the new version updates daily in real time, and you can check it anytime you wish.

O’Toole said that the DMACC Daily is more of a self-serve application and staff or faculty can submit their posts and it will automatically upload to SharePoint. He said they are making it easier for everyone involved and more user-friendly.

Changes to the DMACC Daily



Jones said, “The DMACC Daily used to be very time intensive because the public relations person wrote all the stories and submitted them. We have been looking for a solution that would push this out across the college and make it more self-serve, like Noah said. We think we have got there and it is easily accessible on MyDMACC and is a great product, but just frees us up to do more traditional public relations activities.”

O’Toole said that he hasn’t heard any feedback from anyone as it took a while to migrate over to the new system for the new DMACC Daily. He hopes to get an announcement out soon and make sure everyone is aware of the new changes and that it is back up and running.

Jones adds that there have been some announcements that the Daily was down from student services. When the Daily was down, there was an email to faculty, staff, and students as a backup plan.

DMACC Social Media Specialist Susan Cruz-Rodriguez said DMACC has many social media

accounts for students to follow to keep up to date. Most of the district-wide ones are on Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

She said, “There is a lot for prospective students, alumni, community partnerships, staff pride points and milestones [to find]. But anything internally that students would want to know of, like what’s going on in Building 5, I highly suggest following campus-specific platforms.”

The DMACC Ankeny campus is a bit bigger than the other campuses and has many social media platforms that students can follow, including the DMACC Intramurals account @dmaccintramurals, the DMACC student activities council @dmaccsacankeny on Instagram, and their Facebook account as well.

Most of these campus-specific accounts will help give students a rundown on what is upcoming at the campus. The big platforms are usually dmacc_bears for just DMACC information in general, not specific to just the Ankeny campus.



DMACC's "Ride The Cyclone"

Jayden Park
Staff Writer

DMACC's Theatre program performed their musical, "Ride The Cyclone," April 4-6 and April 10-13.

Drama Professor and Program Chair Carl Lindberg said the show is "fun, free, 90 minutes, has no intermission, has great music, has great performances, and lots of things to laugh at and gawk at."

The Theatre Program's website summarizes the musical: "In this hilarious and outlandish story, the lives of six teenagers from a Canadian chamber choir are cut short in a freak accident aboard a roller coaster. When they awake in limbo, a mechanical fortune teller invites each to tell a story to win a prize like no other — the chance to return to life. This popular musical is a funny, moving look at what makes a life well-lived!"

Poet Nickel, from Pleasantville and majoring in liberal arts and acting, performed as Dance Captain and serves as Ricky's understudy in the ensemble.

Her favorite part about the play is how close everybody is as a cast and how fun the whole process has been. As they have put the show together, "Sugar Cloud" has become one of her favorite songs. She said it is very fun to get up and just

dance and sing and is such a fun part of the show.

Nickel said her favorite and most memorable moment was when the main cast was sitting up front and watching her perform her one song, "Space Age Bachelor Man," for this one night and one night only as understudy practice at a rehearsal. The director had the whole main cast get up to join the ensemble and finish out the number and dance through it. She said this was a very cool moment for her to watch happen and get the whole view and was super encouraging to have everyone get up and dance while she was ad-libbing and doing the splits.

She has been in theatre for five years and said she started seriously at the start of high school. This is her first show she has officially understudied for, and it has been a big learning curve.

Nickel said it is hard to "accept that it's my role but at the same time not. It has been a struggle throughout this entire process." Nickel said she has been alleviated more now that the understudies got a chance to do a run of the show. She said she didn't think she had ever felt so appreciated walking away from a rehearsal.

She said she handles her nerves by knowing herself and her experienc-

es with stage fright and knowing that when the show starts, it'll be over and worth it and remembering that it's going to be a blast to do. Nickel said, "If I don't see a future in theatre, I will make a future in theatre."

Brent Williams is from Ottamwa, majoring in theatre. He was a member of the ensemble and had a role as Misha's understudy. He said he has been involved in theatre since he was 4 years old. He likes the different contrasting styles in music and dance throughout the musical, including rapping. Williams said, "Each character has completely different styles, and it's just so cool to see them work together and make a fun, kooky musical."

His favorite song is "Talia" because it goes from a super funny rap song to him making a bunch of compliments to his girlfriend and really switches on a dial. Williams said, "One of the hardest things is getting into character. [...] Sometimes I judge my characters a lot, and that's a difficult thing for me." He said that sometimes accents can be difficult, especially certain words with a Ukrainian accent, which he has to practice over and over again.



Production photos by Krister Strandskov

e" musical takes you on a ride

Joey Brevik played Ricky Potts in the show. Brevik is from Johnston, majoring in liberal arts, and hopes to get an acting certificate next fall. He has been active in theatre for about six years. Brevik said he went through a lot during the start of February, and getting to know a good majority of the cast and feeling like a genuine human being around them while knowing he has a safe space meant a lot to him.

He said he sees a lot of himself in Ricky Potts. It was the right timing for him as he said, "It's been a timepiece of what I was and how much I have grown."

Brevik said he loves his song "Space Age Bachelor Man," but he believes the most important song of the show is "Sugar Cloud."

Brevik said, "I remember the first day we ran through it and I hadn't heard the soundtrack yet [...] I actually cried when I first heard it."

He said the overarching theme is acceptance, and you can feel this from the portrayal of Constance, especially in "Sugar Cloud," with the heart and soul put into the performance. With a strong and dark presence of death in the show, Brevik thinks "Sugar Cloud" makes everything come home and tie together.

He said a big challenge he is expecting is dealing with the emotion of the show; as Brevik said, it is a very emotionally heavy show, and all of the underlying things going on in his life, as well as the standard he is keeping to, is a challenge in itself. He said it is a struggle trying to live up to everything he wants to be because this show is very important to him, and many important people in his life will be there watching him.

Brevik said the show has helped him grow his self confidence: "The best thing I could ever do for myself when I'm nervous is think about the people I love [friends and family], and I'm very lucky to be in a show where I'm looking at people that I love."

Charlotte Proctor, from Altoona, majoring in liberal arts and acting, played Constance. Her favorite thing about Constance is that she is very honest and can't be anything but herself. She said, "Even in the moments where she's trying to hide it, [her true self] still comes out."

Her favorite song is "Mine Return," and she said she loves the harmonies throughout the song and the show in general and said they are quite complicated.

Proctor said this show has been unique as everyone is called to rehearse every night, and there really is no time off or relax time. The practice usually takes place for three hours five days a week, which Proctor said can be tiring and carry fatigue but also can be rewarding as well.

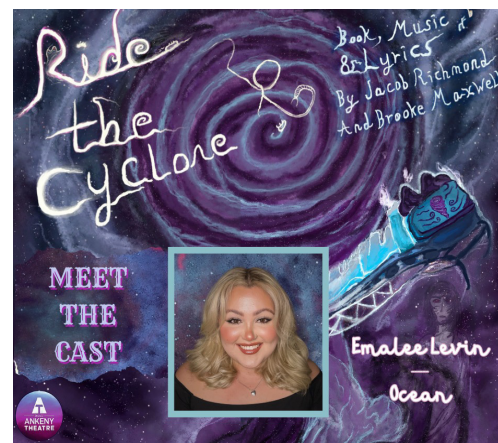
Emalee Levin from Ames, majoring in liberal arts and acting, played Ocean. She has been in theatre on and off since she was in elementary school but has been taking it more seriously recently.

A selfie courtesy of Emalee Levin.

She said she likes that she gets to do such a weird show with all her friends. She said, "I like how weird [the show] is, like it feels like a fever dream, and it doesn't feel real." She likes her character, Ocean, she feels more complicated than what she seems to be and feels lots of emotions all at once

Her favorite song is "It's Not A Game/ It's Just A Ride," and she can never get through it without crying. She said the show is about death and trying to appreciate your life while you can and said this song really sums this up and is very emotional.

Levin said she hopes to have a future in theatre because musical theatre has her



Production photos by Krister Strandskov

heart. She said she tried to avoid musical theatre for a long time because of her own confidence issues, but getting back into it has been the best decision she has made for herself because it is so fun.

While theatre performances at DMACC are not new, Professor Lindburg said the theatre program has been in place for two and a half years and the acting program even less than that, so these programs are relatively new.

He said he thinks of the process like a "duck on a pond." Ideally, most people come see the show and enjoy it and laugh

and think while the directors, designers, choreographers, music directors, stage managers, crew members, production manager, and the technical directors all are trying to find funds and actors, and student designers and the large group of people are the legs under the pond. He said, "The duck on the pond mentality is always the goal."

He said his favorite thing while either directing or producing the show is sitting in the audience and watching their reactions to everything, so every scene is his favorite in a way. He said he thinks

that with this particular production, there will be lots of very interesting audience reactions.

Lindburg said, "I don't have a specific favorite scene or moment in this script, I just think there will be some very memorable audience reactions and I'll get some interesting emails and responses."

He said his favorite quote is, "They'll never know how hard you worked, but they'll know how long it took you." He said this relates well to the musical because the actors have worked so hard and it is a really great group of students.

Professor doesn't settle for cubicle life

Isaiah Cardines

Writer

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For many, especially for students in college, career changes are daunting. But for Jeffery Gard, an English instructor in his first year at DMACC, the decision to leave behind the rigid structure of corporate life and pursue the college world was a significant change for the better. With a Ph.D. in English from Northern Illinois University, Gard has spent the last 15 years teaching composition, embracing curiosity, creativity, and connection with students.

Originally from Beloit, Wisconsin, Gard's early career path wasn't in education. He was a part of the business world, writing procedures for customer service operations and engaging in freelance work for websites. However, the rigidly structured and highly monitored corporate environment left him unfulfilled. "I was so bored. I hated my job," Gard recalls. "I lived in a cubicle that was smaller than what you're seeing right here with shorter walls. And day to day, literally our supervisors were tracking everything that we did throughout the day... down to bathroom breaks."

The repetition of corporate life pushed Gard to seek something more meaningful. His wife, a teacher herself, encouraged him to pursue a career in education. Initially reluctant (especially at the thought of teaching high school), he was intrigued by the possibility of teaching at the college level. The transition required him to leave his job, earn a master's degree, and eventually a Ph.D., but the moment he stepped into the classroom as a teaching assistant, he knew he had found his calling. "I loved it. I loved it because I didn't feel trapped," he says.

Switching from a year-round corporate schedule to an aca-



English Professor Jeffery Gard

demic calendar provided Gard with a newfound sense of freedom. "In the corporate world, you're on all year round, and maybe you're lucky to get two weeks off," he explains. "But in academia, I get to set my own schedule, focus on projects that matter, and invest my time into something I genuinely enjoy." However, the transition wasn't without its struggles, as returning to school full-time meant taking a significant financial hit, but for Gard, the investment was worth it.

Beyond teaching composition, Gard has a deep passion for writing, particularly in the realm of flash fiction. Flash fiction refers to short stories under 1,000 words, often as short as 25 words.

"It's a little bit like poetry in that every word you write matters," he explains. His background in journalism, where being efficient with words is key, played a huge role in shaping his writing style. Inspired by authors like Ernest Hemingway, whom he admired for what he called economical storytelling, Gard began writing and submitting flash fiction pieces. To his surprise, many were published.

"There are even contests you can enter online," he notes.

His work has appeared in publications such as *Reflex Fiction*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*, and *Havoc Publishing*, with many of his stories falling into the speculative fiction genre, encompassing science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

Even with dabbling in various other novels and longer works, Gard finds flash fiction the most satisfying medium. "If you're busy all the time, and professors usually are, you can write one a day. If you're writing a novel, that takes months, maybe years," he says. The fast-paced nature of flash fiction allows him to quickly generate stories and receive feedback, something that appeals to both his creative instincts and his busy schedule.

In the classroom, Gard fosters a philosophy centered on trust and curiosity. With the rise of AI and concerns over academic integrity, he chooses to approach students with open communication rather than immediate suspicion, saying, "I would rather trust my students and work with them than constantly suspect them of cheating."

He also takes a flexible approach to deadlines, understanding that students juggle various responsibilities outside the classroom. "Students are adults. They have jobs, families, and sometimes emergencies. I'd rather treat them as peers and trust that they want to do the work."

Gard's emphasis on curiosity extends beyond his own writing and into his teaching style. He aims to cultivate a sense of wonder and exploration in his students, believing that curiosity leads to lifelong learning.

"If you're not curious about anything in your work, why continue to learn?" he asks. He encourages students to explore different genres and formats, embracing everything from classic literature to graphic novels.

In regards to favorite writers, Gard finds it nearly impossible to pick just one. "People ask, 'What's your favorite book?' and I think, 'Well, my favorite book is the one I read last week that I really liked,'" he says, laughing.

He tends to be drawn toward science fiction and fantasy, with authors like Becky Chambers and Tamsyn Muir standing out in his recent reading list. But Gard said he appreciates everything from Shakespeare to contemporary graphic novels.

As for advice to students, Gard keeps it simple: "Don't settle and be curious."

He emphasizes the importance of choosing a career based on passion rather than financial incentives.

"Don't pick a major or a career just because you think it's going to make a lot of money. Pick something you're genuinely interested in. If you're good at it, the money will come," he advises. "And always stay curious ... about your world, your work, and the people around you. It keeps your mind young and makes you adaptable."



DMACC's Fashion Lumin Interlu

**Jayden Park
Jaedyn Henry**
Staff Writers

The DMACC Fashion Institute hosted the 11th Annual Fashion Show on April 25 and 26 in the Building 5 Black Box Theatre. This year's theme was "Luminous Interlude." Producer and Fashion Design major Nyiel Mayen, from Des Moines, said the theme is inspired by night and day.

Mayen said it is their first year being able to help lead the show. She said she is proud of the name and theme that they came up with this year, and collaboration with other students has been one of her main goals.

Fashion Professor Ann Gadbury said this show is different from previous years: "There is a different crew each year, and the new crew includes new concepts and themes. The show is run how the crew wants to be, and the trends and styles are ever-evolving. Fashion will always advance based on what designers are looking for in innovation and what might be influencing them."

Gadbury said her favorite thing about the show is seeing their confidence and assertiveness come through. She said, "[Students] become able to tackle challenges and use their creative thinking. They start to learn what they are capable of and what they might need help with. It's the learning of the learning process and learning of ourselves and what we are capable of."

"Fashion is fun, and people need to remember that. It's art and it doesn't have to be taken so seriously," Gadbury added.

Grant Jones, from Virginia Beach, also majoring in Fashion Design, is the show director. He said past shows have struggled with music, but through Mayen and her friend, who produces beats, they can "curate their own music and make stuff specifically for the show and what the students are feeling and vibe with."

Show: Luminous de

Jones said the big goal is to make sure to showcase students' creativity and designs in the show and showcase what they can do.

He said a big responsibility is communication with each other and working as a team, along with making sure they are getting things done and everyone is doing their roles. He said the past couple of semesters and this show have taught him what it's like to be a leader and work with peers to create something awesome for the designers in the program, and giving them an opportunity to showcase their creativity.

Jones offered advice for future students: "Our professors are amazing at their jobs and dedicated to students and the program, so I would suggest building a relationship with them so they can get the help they need when they do need it." He said he wishes he used them more for guidance and went to them when he needed help.

He said he believes in making sure people feel confident in what they wear and in sustainability. He said a lot of his style inspiration comes from New York City.

"Luminous means shedding light in a dark space [...] We were drawn to the duality of day and night like the contrast the sun and moon have." He said it is a different theme that had not been seen before in past shows.

Jones was recently accepted into a New York City school for Fashion Business, and he plans to transfer his DMACC credits into a bachelor's degree. He said he will be in New York City getting experience with internships and working in the industry.

He said he wants to be a fashion stylist as his end goal. "Finding clients who are everyday people who need styling guidance and don't have style themselves, and need someone to guide them."



Left and above: Models walk the runway in the Black Box Theatre, by Lara Jones.
Below: Behind-the-scenes, by Mack Dreessen.





Photos by Lara Jones and Jaedyn Henry.

Lacie Reitsma (pictured upper right on the next page), from Ankeny and majoring in Fashion Design, is one of the designers featured in the show. She has been designing for a year and a half since she was a senior in high school. She came to DMACC because she was interested in learning how to sew, but the actual sewing class only ran in the spring semester, so she 'settled' with fashion.

Reitsma said, "I realized that all the things I was drawing and painting were

things I did because I liked what they were wearing. I thought it would be cool if I could draw something, but then make it real. That was the first time I realized maybe I want to be in fashion, and I should start taking classes for it."

Reitsma said the theme is "kind of like a prom theme." She said the scariest part about the Fashion Show is getting her designs done on time. She said, "You think you have all this time, and then you start sewing and things go wrong, and you have to make sure every-

thing fits. There's always something, even if you think everything is perfect, there's always gonna be something."

Reitsma started working last summer on her designs and has been thinking about them since the show ended last year. She said, "It's scary and stressful, but then the show comes and you get to see your designs on stage and you're like yeah I did that!"

She said her inspiration for her designs is Barbie. She said she has a lot of Barbie dolls in her house that she admires and



looks at every day with all their cool outfits, which inspire her and her designs.

She said, "I love Barbie so much and I am an OG Barbie fan, even before the movie."

She said seeing her designs in the show is a relief, seeing all the hard work she put into it, and seeing others admire it and take pictures. She said people doing this and telling her they love it makes it all worth it. She quoted Lady Gaga's song "Applause": "I live for the applause. That's what plays in my head when people are clapping and they like my design. It is such a good feeling and

makes me so happy. It would be a shame if no one got to see all the work you did that you worked so hard on."

She said she sees a future in fashion and wants to bring it to Iowa. She said a lot of people don't see Iowa as a center for fashion, but she said they view it in that way because no one is working on it, and there has to be someone to bring the fashion, and that is how you will start the flow of fashion. She said, "I want to try to bring more fashion to Iowa. We need something here."

Show producer Mayen said she plans to move to New York after DMACC, while also focusing on her clothing brand. She hopes to get an internship, as she said her ultimate goal is to be in couture and avant-garde if it were ever to be available for her.

Her advice for future producers is to look back on previous things. Look back at Instagram, look back at the archives, look back at the emails, because there's a platform already ready for you, so you don't need to come empty-handed and stressed out.



JAYDEN'S March Madness Review

Jayden Park
Staff Writer

March Madness is now over and it all went by in One Shining Moment. There was excitement, disappointment, celebration, let-downs, and champions crowned. However, one thing there wasn't much of was upsets.

On the men's side, all four #1 seeds made it to the Final Four for the first time since 2008, which was the only other instance in tournament history that it had happened. On the women's side, the Final Four was made up of three #1 seeds along with a #2 seeded UConn team. There were not many upsets to report as everything was essentially chalked, and the top seeds advanced.

Paige Bueckers and Azzi Fudd, along with the UConn team, finally got their long-awaited championship together and brought the glory back to the storied franchise that Head Coach Geno Auriemma has built over the years. The UConn Huskies won their 12th NCAA National Championship under Auriemma, the most in men's or women's college basketball history.

They beat the South Carolina Gamecocks 82-57 and Azzi Fudd won the Most Outstanding Player award of the Final Four. The Huskies also had help from star freshman Sarah Strong, who scored the most points in an NCAA tournament by a freshman, along with Kaitlyn Chen, a key transfer from Princeton.

On the other side, Walter Clayton Jr. and the Florida Gators won their first National Championship since 2006 and 2007 in a thriller, beating the Houston Cougars 65-63 with Clayton winning Most Outstanding Player in the tournament. He scored 34 in the Final Four but had a lackluster 11-point performance in the championship game, but still made the right plays when it mattered, most importantly guarding the potential game-winner and causing a turnover in the closing seconds.

As the Gators have been saying throughout this tournament, "Gator Boys stay hot." Clayton got help from Will Richard, who scored 18, and Alex Condon, who added 12, and most importantly, Albert and Alberta,



the school mascots, who hyped the team up every step of the way.

The Iowa teams had a tournament to forget and did not perform up to many expectations. The Iowa Hawkeye women had made the national championship in the previous two years and looked to make another run this year, adding Lucy Olsen. However, those dreams were ruined in the second round of 32, where the #6 seed Hawkeyes fell to the Oklahoma Sooners.

#11 seeded Audi Crooks and the Iowa State Cyclone fell to the #6 seeded Michigan Wolverines in the first round.

The #11 seed Drake Bulldog men started the tournament with the upset of #6 seeded Missouri but lost to #3 seed Texas Tech in the second round.

The #3 seed Iowa State Cyclone men made it out of the first round but got upset in the second round by #6 seeded Ole Miss.

The Drake women along with the Iowa men missed out on the Madness after a lackluster season.

Hopefully, next March, these Iowa teams have more success and can make deeper runs in the tournament.

My predictions from my first March Madness article stood pretty strong until Duke's heartbreaking loss to Houston in the Final Four. The Duke Blue Devils beat my other pick, Alabama, in the Elite Eight. Duke held a lead of 64-55 on Houston with about 2 minutes to go in the game. It looked as though all roads lead to Duke playing in the National Championship game for the first time since 2015, the last time they won it all.

However, the Cougars went on a 15-3 run to end the game and had one of the greatest comebacks not only in the Final Four but in the history of the tournament and beat Duke 70-67 to advance to the Championship game and later lost to the eventual champion Florida Gators. This was a top 10 saddest moment I have witnessed in my life as Cooper Flagg lost a gut-wrenching and heart breaking game.

On a better note, Paige Bueckers got her long-awaited championship after an injury-riddled journey, finding her storybook ending.

The UConn team ended up beating USC in the Elite Eight after JuJu Watkins tore her ACL in the second round, the same injury that Paige dealt with and forced her to miss an entire season in 2022.

There were many ups and downs in the March Madness tournament this year, and my personal brackets did pretty well but also faced these ups and downs.

I hope one year I or someone else in the world can do the unthinkable and pick a perfect bracket. The NCAA bracketology experts say there is about 1 in 9.2 quintillion odds to pick a perfect bracket by just guessing and about a 1 in 120.2 billion odds to pick a perfect bracket if you know "a little something" about basketball.

Until next March, when the Madness all happens again and upsets hopefully make a return.

DMACC partners with Intel for AI workforce training

Katie Hirth
Staff Writer

DMACC and Intel have a new partnership to create an AI-focused certificate class through its Continuing Education program. DMACC is the first school in the state of Iowa to offer this program.

The 8-week non-credit class started in Fall 2024. The program aims to help students build AI skills to become workforce-ready, as more and more businesses have integrated AI into their everyday practices. Starting in Fall 2025, DMACC will offer an associate's degree (AAS) in Artificial Intelligence. It is a 60-credit degree plus the certificate from the 8-week class.

Intel, founded in 1968 and long known for making microprocessors, has an AI education workforce program in the U.S. to prepare current and future workers with AI skills. According to their website, their goals are for students to gain technical confidence in AI, enhance employability for AI-related jobs, and produce evidence for employment. This program started in 2020, and since March 2024, over 110 schools in 39 states have joined.

In a press release from September 2024, DMACC President Robert Denson said, "We're excited to be the first college in Iowa to offer the AI for Workforce Program in partnership with Intel ... Our goal is to help our students build the skills they need to flourish in the growing field of artificial intelligence and to give Iowa companies a competitive edge."

The program is aimed at people already in the workforce and looking to learn more about AI, those working in IT, or those looking to make a career shift. This also offers the opportunity for prospective students interested in AI to become proficient.

In an interview, Powers said, "AI has become transformational even in education and how we teach. It's becoming transformational in the medical field, in agriculture, and to be able to offer that to students and consumers in the region, I think, is so wonderful."

Ryan Doser is a digital marketing consultant and YouTuber in Central Iowa who works closely with AI. He uses AI in his day-to-day life and business to help clients get the best results for their marketing campaigns and grow their networks.



Illustration by OpenAI

According to Doser, more companies are using AI to remove "robot work" that used to eat up hours every week. From emails to campaigns and even blog posts. AI is taking over the work that humans normally do.

Doser said in an email interview, "Understanding the basics of AI isn't optional anymore, especially for white-collar careers. Whether you love it, fear it, or fall somewhere in between, AI isn't going away... If you're not at least familiar with the basics of these platforms, you're going to fall behind fast."

Pending DEI legislation puts some DMACC activities on hold

Katie Hirth
Staff Writer

A bill passed by the Iowa House and moving toward a vote in the Senate would prohibit public colleges or universities in Iowa from requiring students or faculty to engage in certain diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices.

The bill would make it so that students are not required to take any DEI-related classes or coursework to graduate unless they are getting a degree in that specific field. Professors would also not be required to include these topics in their courses. They also would not be asked to attend workshops or trainings on these topics as a condition for things like promotions or pay raises. The professors could, however, still teach lessons or have discussions in their classroom relating to DEI if they choose.

On January 25, DMACC sent an email to faculty and staff stating: "We are watching

closely and seeking additional guidance, and we will communicate more definitive plans when we have them." The email went on to state their current preliminary steps:

1. Diversity Commission meetings are on hold until further notice.
2. DEI Task Force meetings are on hold until further notice.
3. Some training courses that include DEI components have been removed until further notice.
4. Certain DMACC websites that may conflict with state or federal legislative action will be taken down until further notice.

Republican Rep. Steven Holt, from Denson, told KCCI, "A better name for diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, in my opinion, would be adversity, inequity, and exclusion, because that is what these programs do. Indoctrinating young people to see everything through the prism of race is incredibly destructive."



Democratic Rep. Mary Madison, from West Des Moines, told KCCI, "These bills are not about improving education or governance. They are about censorship, exclusion, and erasing important conversations that prepare students for the real world."

The Chronicle reached out to DMACC for an official comment. Daniel Ryan from DMACC said, "Our understanding is that the DEI bill is still being debated and has not yet been signed into law. Given that this is pending legislation, we don't have any comment at this time."

THERAPY DOGS LIFT SPIRITS DURING *National Crime Victims' Rights Week*

Derek Jensen

Staff Writer

On Wednesday, April 9, therapy dogs from the Animal Rescue League visited the DMACC Ankeny campus as part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. ARL volunteers Rusty Shore and Cyndy Phelps brought dogs Bennet and Oakley to Building 5 after Criminal Justice major Kierstin Trost reached out to them.

Shore, the owner of Bennet, has been volunteering with the ARL since March. He does his best to bring Bennet to volunteer events while balancing his full-time job. He said he loves to bring Bennet to school events.

The ARL's therapy dog program, "Therapets," is active across central Iowa with the goal of helping people decompress. Some of the places the program has gone to include federal buildings, manufacturing plants, K-12 schools, and college campuses. They often work with the "Child Serve" program, focusing on assisting troubled children.

Phelps said one of the most satisfying moments from her and Oakley's time volunteering was when a high school student said, "I can go on now, I can finish the day" during a high school visit on finals week.

Trost, the event organizer, said the National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a national event that "has a national theme people loosely follow; DMACC is one of the (Des Moines) metro schools that participate."

The therapy dogs were just one of many NCVRW events at DMACC. There were tables set up in Building 5 where students could find resources to help in the case of becoming a victim of many crimes, largely revolving around abuse. The

day ended with a "healing bonfire" provided by DMACC Fire Science program chair Brent Conklin.

On Tuesday, the events began with "What They Wore," an art installation in Building 5 by DMACC fashion students, featuring clothing worn by crime victims.

There was also a multitude of presentations from keynote speakers and first responders. One speaker was Emma Dedic-Sakanovic, who talked on Tuesday about her experience surviving the Bosnian war.

On Wednesday, Brenda Bash Cooper from the Iowa Department of Justice, Victim Assistance Section, gave a talk called "Vicarious Trauma for First Responders."

Author Cheyenne Hanson presented a talk Wednesday morning and afternoon, discussing overcoming trauma and transforming it into something positive, with both presentations live-streamed.

Trost became a student organizer through her commitment as a Criminal Justice work-study student. When asked by her chair professor what would be a fun event for students, Trost said, "Dogs for sure," and reached out to the ARL.

Attending students certainly agreed. "I love to hear the laughter from the room," said Criminal Justice Major Mika Canon.

Ian Grimes, a fellow Criminal Justice Major, agreed, "I love dogs!"

Trost said, "I'm glad people actually came; we've got a lot of events for the week, and this is just one of the early events. Over the past day and today, we've already seen a couple hundred people."

Trost wanted to use the event as a way to help students, ask-



Photos by Jaedyn Henry

ing them to reach out for help if needed, mentioning the many resources around campus. She

also suggested keeping an eye on the student activities council to see monthly events.

Q&A with Chronicle's Kiofwe

Derek Jensen
Staff Writer

Kiofwe Kapepula (Kio) is the DMACC Campus Chronicles graphic designer, taking the position in January 2025. He is an African-born student, having moved to America with his family in 2013, where he began his high school education. While living in Africa, Kio was constantly moving, having lived in four different nations before he and his family emigrated to America.

Kio agreed to an interview with the Chronicle to explain his life story and give insight into both what life was like in Africa and what life is like today in America.

Could you tell us about your early life in Africa?

I was born in D.R. of Congo in 1997, and in 2000, my parents moved to Zambia. In 2002, my parents moved to Zimbabwe when I was around 5. Then, around 2004 to 2005, we moved to South Africa. We didn't go to school that much because of the constant moving from country to country.

I remember in 2007 we moved back to Zimbabwe, where we stayed in a refugee camp. I was around 8 or 9, and I went to school in Tongogara Primery school, that's the name of the camp.

Walking to school (at the camp) took 30 minutes. School started at 7:30 a.m., which meant you'd have to wake up at around 5:30 a.m. to get ready for school. Sometimes, walking to school a bus is going the same way and they might give you a ride, just telling us to hop in. Other times, buses would just drive right past.

When moving to America, was there any culture shock?

After moving to Massachusetts, I was surprised that we didn't have to wear uniforms, that was required back home. Another shock was moving between classes throughout the day. Back home, we would stay in the same room, and the teachers would move between classes.

What did you do in terms of high school sports?

My freshman year, my first year in America, I didn't know much about sports, but I wanted to join. In my sophomore year, I decided to try out, but I was late to the try-



Right: Kio works on layout in the Chronicle office. Photo by Derek Jensen.

outs for soccer, and I got mad about that. From trying to join the soccer team, I met some people who were in football who encouraged me to try it, and so my junior year I decided to tryout for football and got onto the team.

What was it like having to move to a new state during high school?

At the end of my junior year, my parents decided to move to Ohio. I didn't want to move, but I was only 17, so I had to go with. I was in Ohio during my Junior year and first two semesters of my senior year. I played football in Ohio until around Thanksgiving, then I moved back to Massachusetts.

How was it moving back to your original high school?

Most of my teammates were like "Oh, you're back! Where did you go?" and I moved back during track season, so everyone saw me at a meet and were like "Oh, Kio is back!" That was pretty exciting, at the same time, I felt like I missed out, but I did like Ohio too. That's just how some things happen, you know?

How did you end up in Iowa?

After high school, I wanted to go to college, but things didn't work out how I wanted. I talked to my dad about it, and he asked

if I wanted to go back to Ohio, so I did. I went to Sinclair College in Ohio for a semester. Over the summer in 2019, my sister invited me to visit them in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

I spent almost three weeks there, and after that, I decided I wanted to stay in Cedar Rapids. I went to Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids for two semesters, but things weren't working out for me very well, I couldn't progress my career. In Cedar Rapids, people always said Des Moines was where to go for job opportunities.

What made you want to do Graphic Design, and how did you end up in the DMACC Campus Chronicle?

This is my last semester, and I had to apply for an internship. I saw the Chronicle had an internship, and my professor encouraged me to try out the internship here. After talking to people about my love for art, they told me that I should try graphic design, and it just made sense.

When I joined graphic design, I realized I had no idea about it, but I chose to stick to it and move day by day. For the future, I hope to get some sort of job in graphic design, I would be willing to move if it gave me the chance to pursue graphic design.

What fencing taught me



Derek Jensen
Staff Writer

After quitting my job last September with the goal of focusing on school, I wanted to join a club to fully immerse myself in the college experience. After searching around some, I decided to join the fencing team, the DMACC Blades. Immediately upon joining the club, I noticed that no one was overly competitive; all members had the goal of improving themselves and their teammates.

Three others and I joined the team around the same time, being directly coached by Coach Steven Behrends to learn the fundamentals of *épée* fencing, and allowed us to practice until we bought our own equipment. All of the new fencers had zero experience with the sport, but the veteran members were quick to welcome us, having been in our position not long ago.

Fencing tournaments are hosted by many different groups across the country, and the DMACC team travels to these events with the goal of getting individual members

ranked and improving the overall skills of all participants. Before going to my first tournament, I traveled with the team to watch veteran members participate in a Minnesota tournament.

The atmosphere at the tournament was supportive and energetic — members of the club would consistently watch their teammates fence and cheer for them. Win or lose, the attitude would be positive. Slowly, the entire club was eliminated from the tournament until only one fencer representing DMACC remained. The entire team followed his bout closely, but it ended with a very close score of 15-14 in favor of his opponent.

Our first meet after the tournament had the coaches telling fencers things that they noticed throughout the tournament. The constructive criticism was important, as the goal of everyone was to improve for the next tournament and win a medal for DMACC.

On March 1, I, along with a few other club members, got our first opportunity to participate in a sanctioned tournament. The tournament was team-structured and allowed us newer fencers to have veterans to fall back on in tense situations. The experience of being on the strip fencing against people who have been part of the sport for years is a completely different experience from practice, but we were well prepared.

Once again, the team came out to support one another, and I could feel my confidence increase with all of the encouragement. The newer fencers, myself included, all per-

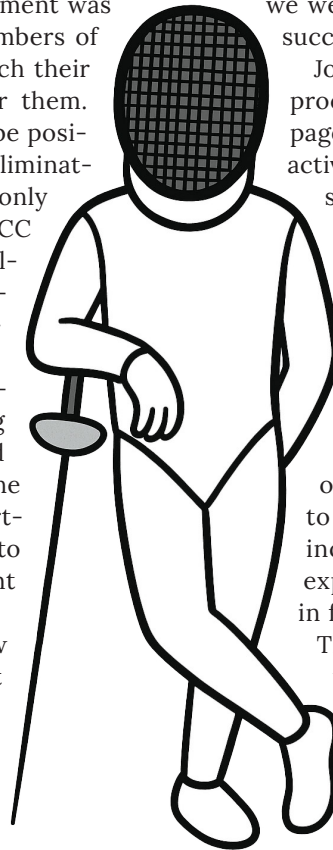
formed well, winning individual bouts and pulling their weight at levels we didn't expect ourselves to be able to before being put in the moment. The DMACC fencers didn't win a medal in the tournament, but we went away with a feeling of success.

Joining a club is a very easy process; DMACC has a club page that lists all currently active clubs that the college sponsors. I went for fencing as I wanted to try a sport I had never experienced before, but there are many more options for students to join clubs that do similar trips and meetings. The Fashion Club has had opportunities in the past to travel to different cities, including New York City, to experience and participate in fashion shows.

The ability to do something like this is in the hands of most students, but it is up to the students to take advantage of the opportunities given to them.

Every competition, members of the Blades would cheer on their club members. It's been a great experience making connections with my teammates and competitors.

As someone whose experience with sports has always been team sports, I was surprised to see how the DMACC Blades turned the usually individualistic sport into a team community.



SPRING BREAK

Mission Trip Becomes Life-Changing

Isaiah Cardines
Staff Writer

I initially didn't think this trip was for me. Spring break was arriving fast, and class deadlines had to be met. But as the time drew near, I got asked one last time if I was going before the prices went up. That night I reconsidered, so I looked over my schedule, considered my priorities, and realized that I had both the time and the funds to go. As part of my local church and fellowship, that's how I found myself heading down South on a mission trip to evangelize this past Spring Break.

Over the course of the trip, I learned and experienced many things, met a variety of people, and even went to the largest aquarium in the United States. But one thing that stuck out the most was that, despite trying to adjust to talking to others, the biggest takeaway was learning to truly listen and understand them.

To start off, this mission trip was organized by my local church, Walnut Creek, in downtown Des Moines, in connection with local churches in South Carolina and Georgia. Altogether, around 160 of us participated, hailing from various metro colleges, including Iowa State, Drake, and Simpson.

As part of the DMACC group, we set off for Georgia on March 15, driving all throughout the night. After a long journey that made us exhausted with aching knees, we finally arrived. Becoming familiar with our host Five Points Church later that eve-

ning, which was only about a year old in the heart of the "Bible Belt," it was here that we would start our mission during a warm, clear week in the sun.

Renting a few Airbnbs nearby, our group went out onto the University of Georgia campus for four days in pairs of two. Going into this, I felt that I would have to be doing a lot of talking. It initially became a big deal trying to figure out what to say, how to say it, and especially how to do it regarding faith and beliefs in a meaningful and respectful manner. There was also the challenge of getting turned down when trying to converse, which quickly became the norm and overall part of the experience.

However, when the opportunities arose, they were rewarding. For every person too busy to talk, there were others who had time. After introducing ourselves and explaining what we were doing, conversations began to flow naturally. I thought it important, along with sharing our faith, to get to know the people we spoke with, whether on why they attended UGA, their backgrounds, and what led them to their beliefs.

Listening to their perspectives became just as valuable as sharing my own.

For example, my partner Beckett and I struck up a conversation with a guy named Ethan. After we had introduced ourselves, he mentioned that he had to walk to a meeting but graciously allowed us to join him on his mile-long walk



Members of the trip pose with the Georgia Bulldog statue. Photo courtesy of Beckett Newton.

off campus. Along the way, he shared that he grew up Catholic but wasn't as involved as he'd liked to due to college and work. We explained some of our beliefs while he shared his own, and he expressed appreciation for what we were doing. The conversation remained respectful and engaging, making it a meaningful exchange, not just in sharing our message but in gaining a better understanding of each other's perspectives.

During the trip, I even had the chance to go on a group trip to the Georgia Aquarium, the largest one in the United States, where I saw whale sharks, huge manta rays, and sea dragons. Looking back now, I see that this mission trip (hopefully) impacted others' lives but has also made a lasting impact

on my own. I initially thought this experience would be about correctly sharing how to speak and share my faith effectively, but it taught me that and more. I understood that listening to others, hearing their perspectives, and engaging in those meaningful conversations made this mission trip truly life-changing.

For anyone considering a similar experience, I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and, if possible, travel. You can always work to get your money back, but these kinds of experiences are once-in-a-lifetime. Whether it's through mission work, local community service, or simply engaging in deeper conversations, there is always an opportunity to grow, connect, and make an impact.

Clark's accomplishments are adding up



Katie Hirth
Staff Writer

The past year has been an exciting one for Caitlin Clark, with many awards and accolades. These are the Top 4 things Caitlin Clark accomplished this year.

1. Many Awards

Caitlin Clark had a historic 2023-24 season. From winning many in-season awards such as BIG Player of the Week multiple times, becoming the all-time leading scorer at Iowa, in the BIG, D1, and Nationally in both Men's and Women's Basketball. She also won many postseason awards as well. Including,

- Unanimous Big Ten Player of the Year
- First-team All-Big Ten
- Naismith Player of the Year for the second year in a row
- AP Player of the Year for the second year in a row
- Honda Sports Award for the second year in a row
- Second consecutive Wooden Award
- Third Nancy Lieberman Award
- Second consecutive James E. Sullivan Award

2. Helped lead Iowa to second consecutive NCAA Championship game.

Caitlin Clark during the 2024 Big Ten tournament final.

John McClellan, Creative Commons.

Caitlin Clark topped off her senior season by leading Iowa to their second consecutive NCAA Championship game. Throughout the season and NCAA Tournament Clark had been a stand-out for the Hawkeyes scoring nearly 200 points through the tournament alone. Clark scored 30 points in 40 minutes in the championship game. But it wasn't enough to overpower a challenging South Carolina team, who went a perfect 38-0 through the 2023-24 season, Iowa lost in the Championship game for the second year in a row 87-75.

3. Declared for WNBA Draft and got drafted #1

Before her senior night game at Iowa, Clark announced on social media that she would be declaring for the 2024 WNBA draft, a move that surprised none. She was expected to be the number one overall pick.

Clark said, "I think just going into senior night having that decision clear not only for myself but our fans and my teammates I think that was super important."

On top of declaring she also got drafted as expected as the Number One overall pick to the Indiana Fever. This would be the Fever's second number-one pick, both being back-to-back.

4. Jersey Retirement

To top off her Iowa career Clark got her jersey retired at Iowa on February 2, 2025. The team announced her jersey retirement in a postseason celebration in the spring of 2024. Clark's jersey being retired came as no surprise to no one. Clark holds the record in scoring at the university among other accolades.

The former head coach for Iowa Lisa Bluder gave Clark her



Caitlin Clark shoots during the 2024 Big Ten tournament final. Courtesy John McClellan, Creative Commons.

flowers saying, "I've spent my entire career trying to empower young women, that's what it's all about. You've done more of that in the last four years than anybody could imagine."

Many have long said since her freshman year at Iowa that she was "over-hyped," a "ball hog," or just any comment they can make to bring her down. However, I feel like the numbers and awards speak for themselves. Many have even said she grew the game. And the numbers speak for themselves there as well. In 2021 in the NCAA cham-

pionship game, the viewership was 4 million. In 2022 it was at almost 5 million. When Caitlin Clark and Iowa played in 2023 it reached nearly 10 million viewers. When Iowa went back to the championship again in 2024 it reached almost 19 million viewers. That is four times as many viewers than it was back in 2021. The men's championship game in 2024 only reached 14 million in 2024. All of this goes to show that Clark was worth the attention she was receiving and how she grew the game in ways others couldn't.

TOP 10

Katie Hirth
Staff Writer

Things to do
in the DSM
metro
this summer



With the semester coming to a close, it's time to start making your plans for this summer. Whether you are taking summer classes at DMACC this summer or just using summer as a well-needed break, here are the top 10 things going on in and around Des Moines this summer.



1. **Iowa Cubs game:** times and dates vary, but the I-Cubs play all summer at Principal Park in Des Moines. Cost: Prices vary depending on seating.

2. **Adventureland:** Opens for the season May 17. Cost: Tickets start at \$45.

3. **Tulip Time:** May 1-3 in Pella. Cost: Free; with goods for sale at the event.



4. **Downtown Des Moines Farmer's Market:** May 3 through October 25, 7 a.m.- Noon. Cost: Free; with goods for sale at the event.

5. **The Broadway musical "Hamilton":** June 3-15 at the Des Moines Civic Center. Cost: tickets start at around \$120 and vary depending on seat, with the highest price being \$200.

6. **Des Moines Arts Festival:** June 27- 29 at Western Gateway Park, Downtown Des Moines. Admission is free.

7. **Ankeny SummerFest:** July 11- 13 at the District at Prairie Trail in Ankeny. Cost: Free.



8. **Hinterland Music Festival:** August 1-3 in Saint Charles. Cost: three-day tickets start at \$330.

9. **Knoxville Nationals:** August 6-9 at the Knoxville Speedway. Cost: Tickets start at \$60.

10. **Iowa State Fair:** August 7-17 at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Cost: Advanced Admission is \$11; at the gate is \$16.