



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Illinois Central College Celebrates 2,215 Graduates at 2026 Commencement Ceremony**

East Peoria, IL (05/18/2026) – Illinois Central College (ICC) proudly celebrated the achievements of 2,215 graduates during its 2026 Commencement Ceremony on Sunday, May 17, at the Peoria Civic Center. Family members, faculty, staff, and community supporters filled the Arena and joined virtually via livestream as the graduates were recognized for earning more than 2,355 degrees and certificates. This year's graduates include thirteen high school students from Dunlap, Peoria, and Washington who graduated simultaneously with both their high school diplomas and their associate degrees, and 140 graduates who received more than one degree or certificate.

ICC Interim President Bruce Budde thanked the graduates for being a source of inspiration to college employees. He said, "Every graduate here today has a story that reflects determination, growth, and purpose. You came to ICC to move forward. To build skills. To create new opportunities. To change your future. It has been our privilege to support your hard work. We are proud of what you have accomplished and confident in your continued success as you transfer, enter the workforce, and advance in your careers."

The ceremony also recognized exceptional achievements:

- Sage Bollenbach and Mary-Claire Murray were named Transfer Students of the Year.
- Bryce Lawles was presented with the Certificate Student of the Year award.
- Kaitlyn von Nordheim received the Applied Science Student of the Year award.
- Faculty honors went to Jennalynn Cisna, Music Instructor, and Jennifer Balsimo, Dental Hygiene Instructor.
- Esther David, Student Trustee, delivered an inspiring student address.
- Randy Yedinak, Resident Circuit Judge of Livingston County, gave the keynote speech.

A recording of the ceremony is available at <https://icc.edu/event/commencement-2026/>.

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Illinois Central College is a two-year community college with campuses in East Peoria, Peoria, and Pekin, Illinois, providing a high-quality, affordable education to prepare students to enter the workforce or to transfer to a four-year institution. ICC is the 2020 awardee of the National Community College Charles Kennedy Equity Award from ACCT, a 2022 and 2025 EDA Good Job Challenge Institution, and the Lead College for the state of Illinois' Workforce Empowerment Initiative. ICC also conducts original research in agricultural fields, including water quality and soil conservation. For more information, visit [icc.edu](http://icc.edu).