

Alanna Nelson

February 27, 2026

Kishwaukee College
21193 Malta Road
Malta, IL 60150

Greetings,

As a community college student, I see every day how different our campus really is. We have high school students earning early credits, recent graduates with a fresh start, and adults returning to school after years in the workforce. Some are parents. Some are working full-time. Some are still figuring life out. That mix is what makes community college special, but it also means that the division we see in the country does not stay outside the campus doors.

In 2026, political and social tension are very real. People feel strongly about their beliefs, and sometimes those beliefs shape how they treat others. I have seen how quickly disagreement can turn into assumptions or hostility. School should be a place for growth, not another space for division. We do not all have to agree, but we do have to respect one another.

To address this, I propose creating structured gatherings where students can meet in a safe and guided environment to have real conversations. These would not be debates meant to prove who is right; they would be spaces where students listen to understand, speak from personal experience, and learn how to challenge ideas without attacking the person behind them.

This plan is grounded in the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Gandhi believed in satyagraha, standing firmly in truth through nonviolence, and in swaraj, which teaches that real change begins with self-control. Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community centered on justice, reconciliation, and recognition of our shared humanity. Both leaders showed that nonviolence is not passive; it requires discipline, emotional control, and courage.

Each session would begin with simple grounding techniques, such as a moment of reflection or guided breathing. This would help students approach discussions calmly. From there, conversations would focus on understanding the roots of division and learning healthier ways to respond. The goal is to prevent differences from becoming personal attacks.

As a community, we have more in common than we sometimes realize. If we intentionally create spaces where we teach respectful engagement, the campus can become an example of what

nonviolent leadership looks like. In a divided nation, that example matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alanna Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and a prominent 'N'.

Alanna Nelson