



**Criminal Justice Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** March 30, 2026

**External Participants:**

Chief Lin Dargas – Cortland Police  
Officer Lucinda Brunner – Cortland Police  
Sergeant Christian Kunz – DeKalb County Sheriff’s Office  
Commander Steve Lekkas – DeKalb Police  
Deputy Chief Dan Smaha – Belvidere Police

**Internal Participants:**

Dr. Jessica Berek – Interim Associate Vice President  
Jescelynne Gibbons – Associate Dean of Instruction  
Joseph Przybyla – Criminal Justice Faculty  
Courtney Walz – Director of Development  
LaCretia Konan - Associate Vice President of Community Engagement  
Catherine Macias – Administrative Specialist

**I. College Updates**

- A. Spring 2026 enrollment declined by 1%, enrollment growth anticipated for Fall 2026.
- B. The College’s all-inclusive tuition model, including textbooks, has received national recognition.
  - i. The Criminal Justice program uses Open Educational Resources (OER) that can be used across several semesters.
- C. Tuition will remain flat for the upcoming year, and the College will continue its all-inclusive tuition model.
- D. The College anticipates \$30 million in capital improvements over the next three to four years, focused on essential infrastructure upgrades.
  - i. Construction of a new greenhouse will begin later this month following Board approval.
  - ii. The roof of the Caukin Building will be replaced this summer.

**II. Department Updates**

- A. Mock Interview Updates
  - i. Event received positive feedback and partners expressed interest in participating again in the future.
  - ii. Partners discussed returning on campus in the fall to interact with students as part of the final project in the Crime Scene Investigations class.
- B. Spring Semester Updates



# KISHWAUKEE COLLEGE

## i. Program Enrollment

### 1. CRJ Enrollment increased 0.5%.

- a. The majority of enrollment is supported by non-criminal justice majors, including student athletes and students seeking the eight-week course format for scheduling or financial aid reasons.

## C. Internship Placements

- i. The internship program requires 225 hours per term and allows scheduling flexibility along with the incomplete grade contract option to complete hours beyond the semester.

- 1. Konan provided business partners with information on the Illinois Community College Workforce Grant that will reimburse employers up to 50% of student's wages and encouraged employers to contact her for more details.

## III. Partner Updates

### A. Hiring/Labor Market Needs

- i. Przybyla asked business partners about observed deficiencies in student writing skills and the need for continued curricular focus on writing across the curriculum

- 1. Business partners noted deficiencies in incoming students' writing skills and report using Grammarly, an artificial intelligence writing-support tool that provides real-time feedback to improve written communication.

- a. Business partners stressed the importance of face-to-face classes and that students need to understand that law enforcement does not have a regular Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm schedule before they pursue a career in the industry.

- 2. Business partners noted concerns regarding candidates' limited life experience, influenced in part by social media and inaccurate information from other sources.

- a. Dargas, Cortland Police, noted that their department's current hiring practices rely on experienced law enforcement. Due to continuing law enforcement retirements, future hiring will require formal testing processes and the establishment of a police board.

### B. Other Updates

- i. An increased trend was noted across industries of students entering the workforce with associate degrees and pursuing bachelor's degrees later with employer support.