

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we celebrate Carl Sandburg College's 50th anniversary, I continue to be amazed at how we have grown.

Our first classes were held in various locations in downtown Galesburg. It was not long before we moved to our Main Campus along Lake Storey Road, with the initial courses taking place in temporary buildings, which served as our first classrooms. In the 1970s, our district roughly tripled in size to 3,000 square miles, making a college education more accessible to the people of west-central Illinois than ever before. Around the same time, 120,000 square feet of permanent buildings were erected, effectively creating our Main Campus. We quickly transformed from a few trailers in a field to the beautiful, inviting college campus we have today. Along the way, we also expanded our offerings with the Branch Campus in Carthage, to the Center for Manufacturing Excellence on the Main Campus and to the Annex in downtown Galesburg, which provides a dedicated home for some of our career and health education programs.

Nearly 20,000 students have graduated from the College since we opened our doors. I often tell people that no matter where they go in our communities — whether it be to a hospital, a doctor's office, a dentist office, an auto repair facility or one of the many businesses downtown — there's a good chance that at least one person they encounter took classes at Sandburg. The scope of our alumni network stretches far and wide, well beyond the borders of our district, and it continues to grow each year.

And throughout these 50 years, one central focus has been at the forefront of every decision we made — the students we serve. Just a couple of years ago, our Board of Trustees made our mission statement even more succinct: "to provide all students with opportunities for success." We see evidence every day of how we carry out that mission. Classes going textbook-free to help students save money. Classes that afford students the option of attending in person or studying online. New skilled labor programs that include the opportunity for a paid internship. A student who uses a robot to be next to her classmates via Skype.

Take a moment to think about the strides education has made and how much Sandburg has changed in 50 years. We have gone from holding some of our first classes in the basement of local churches to having students 75 miles away from the classroom using a robot to interact with their peers. Education is an ever-changing environment, and we're making every effort to move in step with it. It has been a remarkable 50 years for Carl Sandburg College. I cannot wait to see what is in store for the next 50!

Dr. Lori L. Sundberg, President
Carl Sandburg College