



March 19, 2025

Illinois Community College Trustees Association

401 E. Capitol, Suite 200

Springfield, IL 62701-1711

Re: 2025 ICCTA Gregg Chadwick Student Service Scholarship

Dear ICCTA Awards Committee,

The Illinois Valley Community College Board of Trustees is pleased to recommend Ashton Watkins of Dana, IL for the ICCTA Gregg Chadwick Student Service Scholarship.

Ashton has been a stand-out student leader at IVCC. Ashton has been involved in Project Success (TRiO program), Socrates Café, Student Lobby Day, choir, the student newspaper, Chem/STEM Club, Round Table Gaming Society, and the ECE program. Ashton is not only a participant, he steps up as a leader. Ashton was a project manager for Project Success in 2024-25, Vice President of the Hispanic Leadership Team, Officer for Chem/STEM club, Student Government Programming Board, and the President of Round Table Gaming Society. He also was a student worker for the ECE Resource Center and now serves as a Peer Tutor on campus. Ashton was an active participant in our Student Lobby Day, Board of Trustees Candidate Forum moderator, and serves his community as a volunteer firefighter.

Always willing to take the initiative, Ashton demonstrates a strong commitment to his responsibilities by thoroughly researching any project. He is not afraid to put his name out there as a point of contact and is driven by a desire to make a positive impact.

The IVCC Board of Trustees wholeheartedly recommends Ashton Watkins for the 2025 Gregg Chadwick Student Service Scholarship.

Sincerely,

Everett Solon

Board Chair, Illinois Valley Community College

It is our privilege to nominate Ashton Watkins for the 2025 Gregg Chadwick Student Service Scholarship. Thank you for allowing Illinois Valley Community College to nominate him for this prestigious award. Ashton has been involved in Project Success (TRiO program), Socrates Café, Student Lobby Day, choir, the student newspaper, Chem/STEM Club, Round Table Gaming Society, and the ECE program. He also was a student worker for the ECE Resource Center and now serves as a Peer Tutor on campus.

Criteria 1: How does this student stand out, serving as a strong role model for others and engaging others in community service?

According to Aseret Loveland, Project Success Counselor, Ashton is a standout leader, particularly when it comes to promoting events and service projects among his peers. His infectious energy allows him to effortlessly connect with others while ensuring that everyone has fun in the process. He is humble and creates an environment where even those new to the experience feel comfortable and welcome. Ashton's voice instructor noted that "He stands out amongst other students by being very involved here at IVCC. He works hard to get other students active and involved in clubs and activities at the college."

Ashton is not only a strong student in the classroom, but his participation in the state lobby day impressed Professor Mike Phillips. The group met with seven legislators and a few other key individual, where they discussed issues and the meeting process on the drive down, and the students (including Ashton) took the lead at each subsequent meeting. This is a great way for students to show their service to the college community by advocating for students across the state, as well as at IVCC.

Criteria 2: Have the student's efforts made a lasting or meaningful contribution or impact on the college or community?

Always willing to take the initiative, Ashton demonstrates a strong commitment to his responsibilities by thoroughly researching any project he leads. He is not afraid to put his name out there as a point of contact and is driven by a desire to make a positive impact on others. During his final semester, Ashton's ambition was clear to Aseret when he ran for student government while also serving on the Hispanic Leadership Team, Project Success Leadership Team, and even creating

a gaming social group. On top of that, he works as an academic tutor. Inspired by a need for greater community involvement, Ashton founded a group aimed at connecting community organizations with college students willing to volunteer for specific projects. He plans to collaborate with the Marketing Department to get this group off the ground before he graduates and transfers.

ECE Program Coordinator Tammy Landgraf shared the impact Ashton had on her program specifically. Ashton was instrumental with the classroom renovations for D228, setting up the ECE Lab, and updating the Resource Center. He moved the entire ECE Lab to the basement, cart by cart, box by box, shelf by shelf, and then back again, all without a nearby elevator, and without complaint! According to Tammy, “The Early Childhood Education Lab would not have been up and running without the efforts of Ashton Watkins!” This contribution will last long beyond his time at IVCC.

Criteria 3: How much time has this student devoted to community service during their college enrollment?

Specifically in Project Success, Ashton has dedicated over 50 hours to community service, which includes organizing bake sales, assembling Easter baskets for local foster youth, and giving campus tours to visiting students. His dedication to giving back to both his community and the college is evident in everything he does. Moreover, he serves as a volunteer firefighter, further showcasing his commitment to making a difference. Most recently, Ashton served as a student moderator for a Board of Trustee Candidate Forum and did an outstanding job.

Criteria 4: How has the student's volunteer work been recognized and valued by their peers and community leaders?

Ashton’s dedication and hard work have not gone unnoticed. He was nominated for and received the Outstanding Project Success Member Award, an honor given to students who excel by attending workshops, leadership events, and volunteering, all while maintaining a strong GPA. Ashton was also selected for the Rising Leader Award for the Hispanic Leadership Team in 2023-24.

Ashton’s service to our campus community is tremendous, as you can see from the list of the organizations he participates in. He has also stepped up as a leader for multiple groups. He was a project manager for Project Success in 2024-25, Vice President of the Hispanic Leadership Team, Officer for Chem/STEM club, Student Government Programming Board, and the President of Round

Table Gaming Society. He is always at the forefront for student events, stepping in to assist wherever needed.

ECE students immediately connected with Ashton because he had such a welcoming personality and kind heart. In the Resource Center, there is a white board that showcases ECE student involvement across campus and in our community. Ashton was a frequent face and name on the board. He would humbly brush off our compliments when we would call him out for his service and efforts.

Summary

Ashton has excelled during his time at IVCC and has emerged as a stronger leader and communicator through his service to the campus. We thank you for considering Ashton for this tremendous honor.