



## From the desk of Dr. J

Hello Prairie Stars,

As we approach the close of another semester, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your hard work and dedication. Your efforts this semester have been instrumental in our success, and I hope you take time to reflect on all that we've accomplished together.

Additionally, I wanted to share some strategic changes that have taken place or are soon to take place within the division:

- Career Development Center will transition from the Student Engagement portfolio to the Strategy & Partnerships portfolio. This shift will allow us to continue our focus on divisional partnerships both internal and external.
- Retention work in Student Affairs: Lisa McGuire will transition to oversee key retention activities within the division, namely assuming oversight of the Necessary Steps Program.
- With Lisa transitioning to retention initiatives. New Student Orientation will remain within the Strategy & Partnership portfolio but will become a more shared operation within the division.

I am excited about these strategic shifts and confident they will empower us to continue striving toward becoming the best division of student affairs we can be.

As you prepare for the well-deserved winter break, I encourage you to find ways to prioritize your wellness. Rest, recharge, and spend time doing what brings you joy and balance. Taking care of yourself is essential to the work we do and the impact we make.

Wishing you a peaceful and restorative break.

Dr. J



## Student Spotlight

Meet Cassie Goudreau, a dedicated sophomore in the Capital Scholars Honors Program, set to graduate in 2027. As a first-generation college student, Cassie is blazing a trail through higher education with her passion for academics and her drive to make a difference.

Cassie serves as a Undergraduate Student Senator for the Student Government Association, a Peer Mentor and Sophomore Representative for the CAP Honors Steering Committee, and a Student Ambassador for the Office of Admissions. Additionally, she gives back to the community through her work with Leadership for Life (L4L), participating in volunteer events and civic engagement projects.

Reflecting on her journey, Cassie shares that the challenges of being a first-generation college student have shaped her leadership and mentorship. "I understand the specific perspectives and concerns of first-year college students," she explains. Her role as a peer mentor in the CAP program has been especially meaningful, allowing her to guide incoming students through their transition to college life.

For Cassie, the close-knit community at UIS stands out. It's here that she has found support, created lasting friendships, and gained the opportunity to advocate for her peers. As a student leader, she is committed to fostering a positive campus environment and making a lasting impact within the UIS and Springfield communities.



## Cheers for Peers

This year over 9,000 pounds of food were collected for the Central Illinois Foodbank by students through the Trick or Treating for Canned Good program hosted by the Volunteer and Civic Engagement team. More than 130 UIS students went door-to-door in Springfield neighborhoods during the annual Trick-or-Treat for Canned Goods event on Oct. 27. The students were split into 10 teams and collected both food and grocery items.

This event is made possible by Jill Hawkins and Connie Komnick. While they of course spend hours planning, coordinating, and implementing the program, they also have a deep love for the impact this event makes.

Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Engagement Steven Johnson had this to share about Jill and Connie's work, "I want to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation for the incredible work being done by the Volunteer and Civic Engagement staff. These two remarkable professionals work tirelessly to provide transformative opportunities for our students to engage in volunteering, civility, and personal development. Their commitment to creating meaningful experiences is evident in every initiative they lead and every partnership they build".

**Congratulations to the Kudos Award Recipients for November & December!**

The Kudos Award program provides an opportunity for members of the Division of Student Affairs to recognize individuals within the UIS community for excellence as they "go the extra mile" to help their colleagues, such as helping out in a pinch or contributing their time or efforts to projects outside of their regular job duties.

<b>Daniel A. Aguilar</b>	<b>Alexis Mahr</b>
<b>Kathy Battee-Freeman</b>	<b>Ron Nelson</b>
<b>Chris Combs</b>	<b>Andrew Sims</b>
<b>Dre Duvendack</b>	<b>Patty Sullivan</b>
<b>Marie Watson</b>	

You can nominate a member of the UIS community for a Kudos Award at any time by completing the nomination form found on the QR code below



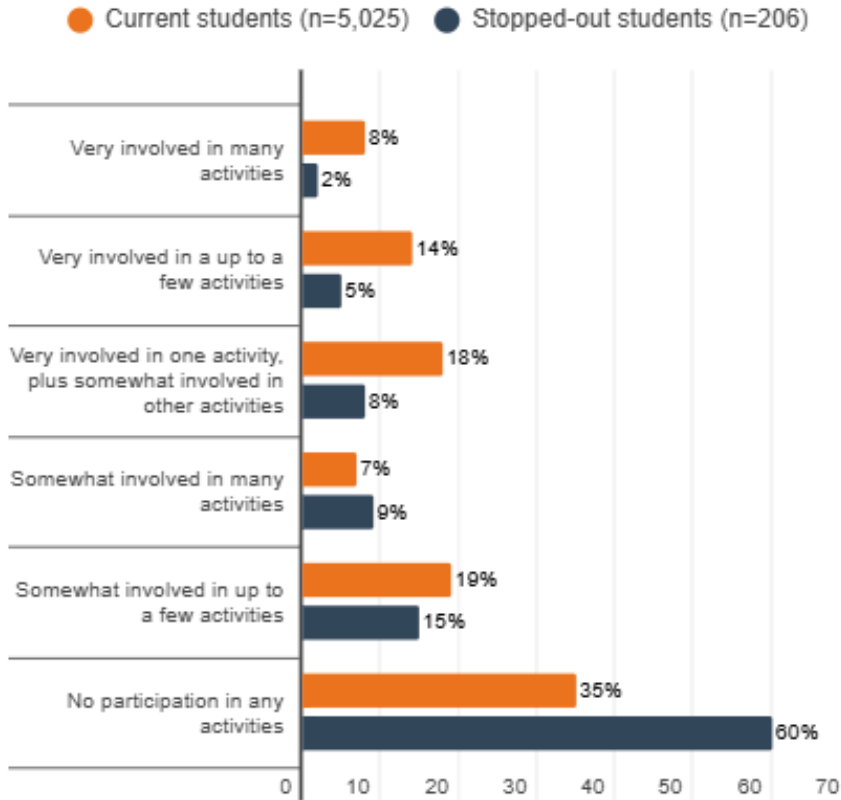
## Professional Development Corner

[This article from Inside Higher Ed](#) explores the relationship between involvement in campus activities and student satisfaction. Findings from a Student Voice survey indicate that **students engaged in extracurricular activities for even 1-5 hours per week report significantly higher satisfaction levels compared to those with no involvement.**

Additionally, increased involvement is linked to making social connections more easily, emphasizing the role of campus events in fostering community. However, students often express challenges in finding out about events, with many advocating for centralized event calendars and improved notifications. These insights suggest that strategic communication can enhance student engagement and retention efforts.

# Involvement in Campus Activities, Current Students Versus Stop-Outs

How college undergraduates and former college students with no degree describe their involvement in campus activities, paid and volunteer work, and research opportunities



Source: Student Voice annual survey, May 2024, and July 2024 Student Voice survey of former students with no degree • Student responses to the question "Were you involved in campus activities (including student or departmental clubs and organizations, research opportunities, a paid position, or other volunteer roles) when you were in college?"

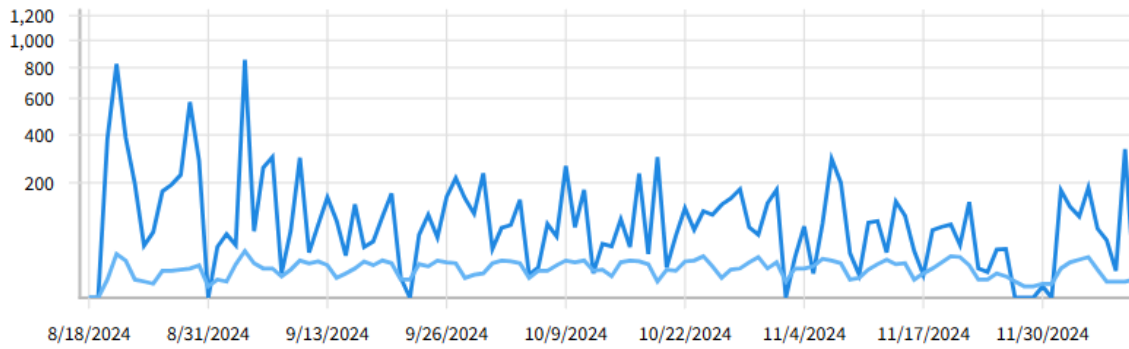
## Insights & Updates

Taking a look at the data collected through event registration and event check-in through UIS connection for the Fall 2024 semester you can see that there were over 1500 opportunities for students to engage on-campus, hosted by 80 organizations/departments, with over 13,000 check-ins. This snapshot includes events registered by campus departments and registered student organizations!

Branch Events  to



Total Events  Total Attendance



Total Events	<b>1525</b>
Organizations That Held Events	<b>80</b>
Unique Attendees	<b>1735</b>
Attendance Records	<b>13228</b>

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