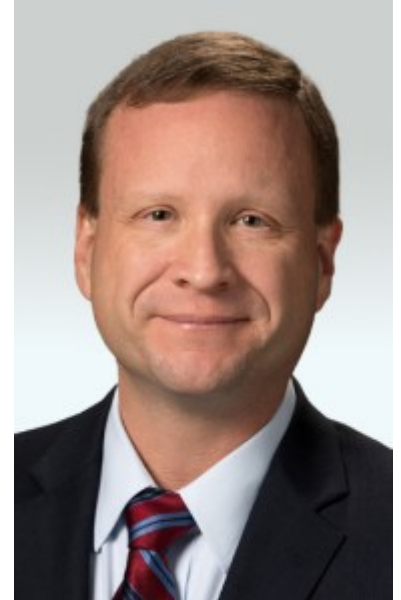


President Dr. Jeremy Thomas recently was interviewed by the [Quad Cities Regional Business Journal](#) for a Q&A, with topics such as what attracted him to the college and his first impressions of the community.



“Six months after coming to the Quad Cities by way of Oklahoma and Texas, Black Hawk College President Jeremy Thomas says he is amazed by the QC community’s love for BHC,” the article says.

“The former provost at Oklahoma City Community College also is excited by the possibilities ahead for the Moline community college he has led since the retirement of former President Tim Wynes on June 12,” it says.

“In a recent Q&A with the QCBJ he shared his impressions of the Quad Cities and BHC as well as current and future plans for serving students at the community college which boasts campuses in Moline and Kewanee.”

Read the full article compiled by Kenda Burrows - [Q&A with Jeremy Thomas: President excited by BHC’s possibilities](#)

Trace your higher education journey.

I had originally planned to be a band director and majored in music. I learned that this was not my path, but it took me some time to figure out that it was higher education.

After college, I was hired by Kappa Kappa Psi, National Honorary Band Fraternity, Inc., as their chapter field representative. I traveled to more than 170 college campuses hosting

meetings and workshops on topics such as hazing, alcoholism and fundraising. It was this experience that taught me that I had a love for higher education, and except for a one-year stint in a secondary school system, I would spend the next 25 years in higher education.

I've worked at all institutional levels and college types, including a university, rural two-year, urban two-year, large and small colleges. I have been in the classroom, in admissions, as an advisor, recruiter, dean, vice president, provost and now, president.

Any lessons you learned that you'd like to share?

I have learned so much over the years. I have learned how important we are to changing the lives of our students. I often refer to this as a generational change opportunity. I've also learned that our faculty and staff will go above and beyond to make our students successful. Finally, I have learned to mentor young professionals because it may be your support that helps them become future presidents.

What were your first impressions of BHC and the Quad Cities?

I continue to be amazed by the great things our people are doing at Black Hawk College. There is a lot of energy and love for the college.

I've had a blast getting to know the community, and I think they've been excited to have me participate in their events. My family and I spend many nights and weekends at some sort of gathering, and it has been a great way for me to learn about everything the area has to offer.

What attracted you to BHC and the QC after serving colleges in Texas and Oklahoma?

As I was looking for college president opportunities, I honestly hadn't looked this far north, but then I received two pieces of advice. A former president of mine told me that I was being too narrow in my search and then a former colleague sent me a text and said that I should look at Black Hawk College. He convinced me that the college had the potential to grow and was poised to move in a positive direction. I was looking for colleges with the potential for innovation and growth. Black Hawk has that potential, and I am excited for the possibilities.

Share your thoughts about BHC's major capital investments and your own wish list.

We have some exciting improvements to our campus facilities, and I think everyone is going to be proud of the end result. Our buildings have served us well, but it was time for much needed upgrades, including space that will allow us to expand in the future.

Looking forward, it is my intention to make investments in direct-to-workforce programs such as automotive, sustainable fuels and technology. And to nobody's surprise, I would like to find ways to expand our arts programs and areas of the campus that have both college and community functions. I am not sure what that looks like yet, but I am committed to growth of programming that enriches our community.

COVID-19 created skills gaps from kindergarten to college. How is BHC responding?

We've been working with our high school partners to identify challenges our students may face and then develop plans to address those challenges. Our federally funded TRIO program has been more proactive in reaching out to students, particularly as it pertains to math and writing tutoring. Our English and math departments received a grant from ASPIRE to redevelop our developmental course ladder. Working closely with this group has resulted in many classroom and scheduling strategies aimed at helping developmental students who may have fallen behind during the pandemic.

Workforce continues to be an issue, and BHC has been working to address it. Anything new you can share?

We will have a new Occupational Therapy Assistant program starting in Fall 2025, we're developing a pathway with flight schools so that pilots can earn degrees, expanding our manufacturing curriculum to our East Campus, continuing the expansion of our Cybersecurity program, and offering our new Court Reporting program to meet the region and state needs.

What other challenges do you see for BHC?

Keeping our costs low will be our biggest challenge. We will need to offset increased costs through grants, donations and partnerships. All three of those take a lot of work, and this work is essential to keeping our tuition affordable.

As we look to the future, I am reminded that there is a lot of innovation around new technologies that I think we will need to embrace and educate our students on how to use it.

I continue to be amazed by how much Black Hawk College is loved by the community. I look forward to helping chart a path that benefits the people of our area.

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