



# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## A Note from Dave Facer

Chair of the CEI Alumni Committee

Welcome to the very first edition of the CEI Alumni Newsletter! We're thrilled to launch this new way of staying connected and celebrating the incredible momentum happening at College of Eastern Idaho. Whether you graduated last year or decades ago, you're an important part of our Falcon legacy. This new alumni group is just the beginning of something special—a community where stories, milestones, and shared pride take center stage.

We're growing, evolving, and thriving—because of you. With every student success story and campus milestone, your influence continues to ripple forward. Thank you for helping us build CEI into the vibrant, student-focused institution it is today. I can't wait to see where we go together.

## Falcons Take Flight with Record Enrollment

CEI kicked off the new semester with incredible energy. Spring enrollment surged by 12% in headcount and 9% in credits—proof that CEI is a top choice for students across Eastern Idaho. Even more impressive, 78.3% of degree-seeking students returned from fall to spring, reflecting the deep connections students feel on campus. For alumni, it's a reminder that the college you helped shape continues to thrive, and your legacy is alive in the success of today's learners.

## Celebrating Falcon Fest

Campus came alive with Lunar New Year celebrations, trivia competitions, and grocery bingo during Falcon Fest. A standout highlight was the deep, reverberating rhythm of taiko drumming, which echoed through the halls of CEI thanks to a live performance by local community artists Junko Jacobsen and Quinten Fairchild. Their ensemble used handmade drums—including one crafted from an old wine barrel—to bring this traditional Japanese art form to life.

"It's not just following the rhythm," Jacobsen shared. "It's a workout... it always makes me happy." The immersive sound and powerful movement captivated students and staff alike, creating a moment of cultural appreciation and shared joy.

"As a community college, we value opportunities to bring people together and create a welcoming environment," said Hailey Mack, Dean of Students and Student Affairs. "This event was a collaborative effort to celebrate shared traditions."

The vibrancy and joy of Falcon Fest are a reminder that CEI is more than just a college—it's a community enriched by cultural connection and student celebration.



# SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS



## Nurses Lead the Way

From just 35 students in its early days to over 220 today, CEI's nursing program has grown into a top-ranked powerhouse—officially earning the title of #1 Nursing Program in Idaho. That recognition reflects not just the excellence of our faculty and students, but also CEI's investment in meeting critical healthcare needs across our region. Our students benefit from hands-on training in simulation labs and real clinical placements that prepare them for success from day one.



## Cybersecurity in Action

The Cybersecurity Department at CEI proudly hosted a regional round of the national Cyber Patriot competition. The event welcomed local high school teams to campus and introduced them to the dynamic world of cyber defense. CEI students and faculty worked side-by-side with competitors, offering a glimpse into the real-world skills and opportunities available in the college's expanding IT and cybersecurity programs. Events like these create hands-on leadership opportunities for students and continue to establish CEI as a leader in technical education.



## CEI Smiles Brighter

CEI's dental assisting and hygiene students teamed up with local volunteers to provide over 40 free dental procedures during the CEI Smiles event. It was a meaningful day of service that gave students the chance to apply their skills while helping the community. By engaging in real-world patient care, students gained confidence, experience, and a deeper connection to their future profession.



## Learning by Doing

A large-scale emergency simulation brought together students from health programs and local high schools to practice crisis response. Meanwhile, Ethics students visited courtrooms to learn firsthand about justice systems. These immersive experiences show CEI's commitment to experiential learning—something alumni often cite as a cornerstone of their success.





# SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS



## POST Academy Launches a New Era

One of the most exciting announcements of the spring was the creation of the CEI Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Academy. After years of advocacy, Idaho Falls—previously the largest city in Idaho without its own academy—finally has a local training hub for new officers and deputies. Located at CEI's Workforce Training Center, the academy will serve 80 to 100 recruits annually and offer both a Detention Academy and a Patrol Academy.



With unanimous approval from the Idaho POST Council, and strong regional partnerships, this program is already reshaping law enforcement training in eastern Idaho. "CEI has been the best partner we could have ever hoped for," said Idaho Falls Police Chief Bryce Johnson.

The Detention Academy, which launched in April, trains individuals 18 and older to work in jails, while the Patrol Academy—starting in July—will include training in firearms, investigations, emergency vehicle operation, and scenario-based field simulations.

"This resource will mean major cost savings and a quicker turnaround for departments to get new officers hired and on the street," said Sgt. Bryan Lovell of the Bonneville County Sheriff's Office. Recruits will no longer need to travel to Pocatello or Meridian, reducing burdens on departments and families alike.

Trevor Elordi, CEI's VP of Workforce Training and a retired officer himself, sees this program as a "labor of love," emphasizing that the goal is not just training—it's preparing officers who are physically, mentally, and emotionally equipped to serve their communities. "We want them to experience realistic scenarios in a controlled environment, so they step into the job truly ready," he said.

POST at CEI is a bold investment in safety, service, and student opportunity—and alumni can take pride knowing their institution is leading the charge.

## Falcons Go National



CEI Esports continues its winning streak—advancing to national competitions in Valorant, League of Legends, and Overwatch 2. What began as a student-led club has become a competitive team where students sharpen their skills, build community, and represent CEI on a national stage. The program continues to provide scholarship support and a platform for student success in and out of the arena. Esports is also drawing new students to campus who are excited to compete while earning a degree—making it a true win-win for CEI.



# SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS



This state-of-the-art facility is more than a building—it represents CEI's bold vision for innovation and the future of technical education in eastern Idaho.

Designed to support the region's growing industries, Future Tech will house high-demand programs in advanced manufacturing, engineering, cyber systems, and more. With its cutting-edge labs and collaborative learning spaces, the facility will empower students to explore careers that didn't even exist a generation ago. The building's flexible design also ensures it can evolve with the workforce of tomorrow.

The enthusiasm surrounding this project is contagious, and alumni can take pride in knowing this next chapter of CEI is rooted in the same mission that's always guided us: access, opportunity, and forward momentum. As President Barber and the Board of Trustees laid out their strategic goals—centered on student success, innovation, and strong community partnerships—it was clear that Future Tech is not just a place. It's a promise.

## Future Tech Rises

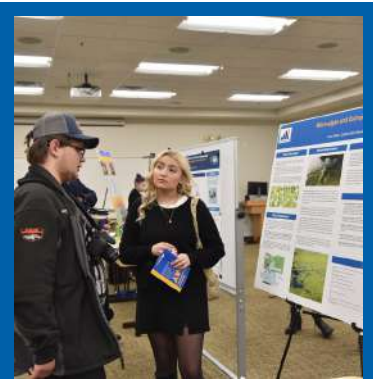
Future Tech reached a major milestone this March with a celebratory Topping Out Ceremony—an age-old tradition where the final beam is placed atop a new structure. The crowd's excitement was electric as students, faculty, staff, and community partners gathered to witness this symbolic step forward.



## Student Presentation Day Debuts

In a first for CEI, Student Presentation Day invited learners from every program to showcase their projects—from research presentations and capstone demonstrations to creative portfolios and business proposals. It was a celebration of curiosity, applied learning, and student voice—core values that define the CEI experience.

Faculty mentors and community members alike praised the quality of student work, noting the confidence and professionalism on display. The event is expected to become a standing tradition, offering alumni a unique window into the next generation of CEI talent.





# THE GREAT RACE FOR EDUCATION RETURNS



Teams of four runners navigate a course filled with physical and mental challenges, while clue masters back at base race to solve riddles and direct their teammates to the next checkpoint. The event wraps up with high-stakes elimination rounds, and only one team claims the title of Great Race Champion.

Beyond the bragging rights, the Great Race is all about community, connection, and raising funds to support CEI students. With sponsors like Mountain View Hospital and Idaho Environmental Coalition, plus a pre-race Facebook auction where teams can buy advantages (or sabotage their rivals), this event is as strategic as it is spirited.

Get your coworkers, friends, or fellow alumni together and join the race. Whether you're running, solving, or cheering from the sidelines, it's a great way to support education—and have a blast doing it.



Mark your calendars—one of eastern Idaho's most entertaining summer traditions is back! The Great Race for Education: Mt. Olympus Edition returns for its 16th year on **July 18, 2025, at The Waterfront at Snake River Landing**. Hosted by the CEI Foundation, this legendary event isn't your average 5k—it's part obstacle course, part scavenger hunt, and 100% fun.

## Grate Race Fast Facts:

- **Date:** Friday, July 18, 2025
- **Location:** The Waterfront at Snake River landing
- **Teams:** 4 runners + 2 clue masters
- **Bonus:** Pre-race auction with advantages (and sabotage!)

Think you've got what it takes? Learn more at [ceigiving.org](https://ceigiving.org)

