

# AC Plugged In

## Faculty & Staff NEWSLETTER

Volume II

Summer 2010

### Biology Building Named for Steve Dutton

#### Employee Groups Champion Effort

The late Steven Dutton seldom traversed Amarillo College unnoticed. In the neighborhood of six-and-a-half feet tall, there was just too much of the reedy biology professor to overlook. Still, it was his actions and his aura—not his eye-catching elevation—that made Dutton a big man on campus.

A doer and a leader, Dutton's superlative 34-year teaching career at AC ended in 2007 when at age 61 he succumbed to cancer. But recent events have



***"He was such a huge part of everything that happened at AC."***



ensured that his legacy at the College will live on.

The Board of Regents approved a recommendation June 22 to rename the Biology Building on the Washington Street Campus in Dutton's honor. It will henceforth be known as Steve Dutton



Hall, and a dedication is being planned for this fall.

"Steve left us a wonderful legacy," AC President Paul Matney said. "This is a fitting tribute to a truly beloved, dedicated and remarkable faculty member."

Dutton had three non-concurrent turns as chairman of the Biology Department, the third despite serious illness. A native Amarilloan, he joined the faculty in 1973 and also served three terms as president of the Faculty Senate. And he still found time to spend a year as president of the Texas Community College Teachers' Association.

"He was such a huge part of ev-

erything that happened at AC, and so much of what he did was over and above the call of duty," said Deann Merchant, a retiree who spent 30 years on the psychology faculty at AC.

See **DUTTON**: next page

#### **In This Issue**

- [President's Message](#)
- [Mead Award Winners](#)
- [Classified Employees Lunch](#)
- [Solar Technology Grant](#)
- [What's Happening](#)
- [Emergency Management](#)
- [AC Accolades](#)
- [No Excuses University](#)
- [Faculty Senate](#)
- [Plugged In's Summer Photo](#)

# Framed Photographs Soon to Adorn Amarillo Campuses

**By Ellen Green, Dean  
Communication and Marketing**

Several years ago, Amarillo College welcomed Dr. Vincent Tinto as our guest speaker during August General Assembly. Tinto is a Syracuse University professor and well-known expert in student success and retention. His best-known work is probably his heavily cited book, *Leaving College*, in which he examines the idea that institutions can help students thrive by creating a sense of belonging. In fact, Tinto argues



that the overall feel of a college becomes extremely important in determining the relationship between the student and the school and is one of the major reasons a student

will be successful or drop out. Tinto looks at the physical makeup of a campus and asks, "Is there a sense of community and pride shown by faculty, staff and students?"

While visiting our Washington Street Campus, Tinto was struck by the bare walls and commented on what he called its "lack of personality and celebration of student life" – ouch! It's true, Tinto's less-than-stellar opinion of our campus, or at least what he would call the "feel" of our campus, hurt. More importantly, today Tinto's theory linking student success at least in part to the physical makeup of an institution is widely accepted by both academics and architects. As a result, we've spent bond money creating "sticky

spaces" for students to gather together, study or just drink coffee in our new and remodeled buildings. In addition, the Department of College Relations has designed attractive signage for light poles along Washington Street and inside the mall area.



In the coming weeks, you will also begin to see large framed and matted photos mounted in buildings across all our Amarillo campuses. College Relations

commissioned Ken Pirtle (recent AC retiree) to take the photos over the last year. We hope you enjoy the new additions to our campuses and appreciate how each celebrates student life and helps to create a sense of pride in our college and our community.

## DUTTON: continued

Bill Crawford, dean of the Allied Health Division, said Dutton seldom missed college events. "He attended every pinning ceremony for the nursing program since I can remember," Crawford said.

The renaming effort was conceived and championed by AC's three employee groups—Faculty Senate, Classified Employees Council and Administrator's Association—and by Student Government. Those groups presented the Regents with a signed resolution lauding Dutton's lengthy dedication not only to the Biology Department but to the betterment and success of all things AC, especially the students.

"The best memories I have of Amarillo College involve the numerous instructors who truly care about their students, and Steve was definitely one of those," said Chris Adkins, a former

AC student who presently is working toward a Ph.D. in pharmaceutical sciences at Texas Tech's Health Science Center. "I will never forget him."

Dutton always had time for the extracurricular at AC. In 1995 he even became a founding member of the AC Ex-Student Association. His dedication to higher education was officially recognized in 1991 when he was singled out for AC's highest faculty accolade, the John F. Mead Faculty Excellence Award.

"Of course others cared about the College, too," Richard Howard, retired assistant professor of biology, said. "But there was a special place in Steve's heart for AC and everybody sensed it. That's not something you can fake; you either have it or you don't.

"And he had a unique gift of balancing people, even those with challenging personalities. People got along with

each other because of him. That's a big thing right there."

AC was not Dutton's sole focus; he was a captain in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1971-1985, an assistant scout master for Troop 35 from 1986-1990 and a director on the board of the American Red Cross from 1988-1993. But it is to AC that Dutton will forever be connected, it having been estimated that he directly impacted the lives of more than 12,000 students.

"His courses were really challenging because he wanted you to understand what you were doing and why," said J.R. Gonzales, a former student of Dutton's who is now an instructor of biology at AC. "Part of Steve still lives within me because what I do in the classroom is what I learned from him—a dear friend and mentor.

"He will always remain in the hearts of those within the Biology Department."

# No Sign of Things Slowing Down at AC

By Dr. Paul Matney  
President of Amarillo College

"This and that . . ."



It surely seems like nothing EVER slows down at Amarillo College. There's a reason for that . . . such as a record summer enrollment of more than

4,100 students. Also, registration for fall continues at a pace well ahead of last summer. I appreciate the tremendous job everyone is doing to advise, register, teach and support these students.

Summer is a good time to reflect on the progress we made on our institutional priorities for 2009 – 2010. Last August at opening General Assembly, I presented the following five priorities:

- Develop a process to seek College-wide input for a new institutional Strategic Plan for 2010 – 2015,
- Establish and promote a culture that defines, embraces and values student success,
- Infuse a spirit of collaboration and teamwork throughout the College,
- Continue our important Information Technology improvement journey, and

- Establish a reputation for consistently, clearly, quickly and effectively responding to the needs of our various constituencies.

Thanks to all our employee groups (faculty, classified staff, and administrators) I believe we have made significant progress on each priority. We'll present our 2010-2011 priorities at open fall General Assembly on August 18 which will align nicely with our new Strategic Plan.

Last March, AC employees were asked to participate in an online survey of organizational excellence administered by the University of Texas. We have received the results of this survey, which will be shared with all employees soon. The Cabinet is reviewing survey results as well as responses from the faculty survey which was also administered during the spring. Our goal is to use survey results to improve Amarillo College.

Our new vice president of academic affairs, Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, is now on board. Dr. Lowery-Hart is an exceptional educational leader—bright, articulate, collaborative, and passionate about students. He will serve us well. Many thanks to the 16-member search committee for its hard work on this important task. I know we are all indebted to Jerry Moller for his superb service as acting vice president. Jerry's experience, integrity, dedication, and professionalism kept us moving forward. Jerry, we're grateful!

What a pleasure it was to recommend to the Board of Regents at their June meeting that the Biology Building be re-named Steve Dutton Hall. Our three employee groups and the Student Government Association unanimously recommended this name change, which the Regents enthusi-

## President's Message

astically supported and approved. We look forward to a building dedication later this fall.

A special thanks to those of you who participated in some way in developing our new Strategic Plan 2010–2015, which will chart our future course at AC. The writing team is putting the finishing touches on the Plan which includes our institutional mission, values, vision, goals, strategies and tasks and is scheduled to be presented to the Board of Regents in August. The final document will be published electronically and be distributed soon.

I've just completed Round 4 of "Listening and Learning: A College Forum" at all six campuses. The main topic was an explanation of the process of balancing next year's budget in light of the challenging economic realities in Texas. We have tightened our belt, but we are positioned to continue serving our students well.



## OPERATION EDUCATION

Removing obstacles that stand in the way of a college education is the aim of Operation Education, a festive mobilization of Amarillo College resources to help anyone who is hungry for higher education and, well, for a free hamburger.

Operation Education, free burgers and all, is a unique come-and-go event from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 5 at AC's northeast Amarillo location—the Community Link Center—2412 N. Grand St.

Prospective students will be treated to personal assistance with applications for financial aid and even admission to Amarillo College, if they like, so spread the word.



# Gibson, Harding Share AC's Mead Award

Two Amarillo College professors whose dedication to student success is widely acknowledged by students and faculty alike have been selected as co-recipients of the 2009-2010 John F. Mead Faculty Excellence Award.

Jill Gibson, assistant professor of mass communication, and Dr. Deborah Jean Harding, assistant professor of psychology and sociology, received AC's foremost faculty accolade during commencement exercises in May.

Victoria Taylor-Gore, assistant professor of art and chair of the

Mead Award committee, said it is rare when two members of the faculty receive the award in the same year.

"It was done just once before," she said. "Everyone on the committee agreed this year that we had two equally strong candidates and so we decided to honor them both."

The award was created in 1988 and named after the second Amarillo College president, whose unique contributions to AC included leading the College during the challenging 1930s and returning as a full-time member of the faculty in the 1960s.

*Here's what the honored recipients had to say . . .*



**"I** love the interaction with the students and the other faculty. Each of our students and our faculty come here with experiences, ideas and so much to share and give. All kinds of things happen over the course of 16 weeks. A relationship is built between myself and the class, and between class members. We have some intimate moments. In my opinion, building an interpersonal bridge is the basis for all learning.

"I love the mission of a community college. We are here for the students who might not otherwise get the chance. AC does a great job of building bridges into the community, and I'm excited to be a part of that. I'm grateful to my boss, Jerry Moller, and to President Paul Matney. They took a chance on hiring me and I'm delighted to have been able to validate their trust."

**-Dr. Debora Harding**, a writer of songs, poetry and, soon, a novel, who is passionate about gardening and family, especially her husband and best friend, Jim, and son Jesse, who she calls the "apple of my eye." She also is committed to preserving our planet for the future of life.



**"I** feel so honored to have been chosen for the Mead Award, especially since there are so many excellent candidates for this award at the College. I am grateful for the opportunity to teach at AC. I have always loved learning and I want to share this love of learning with every student I teach.

"I strive to create a learning environment that is energetic and enjoyable. I hope my students have at least half as much fun as I have! There are so many things I love about teaching at Amarillo College: the 'light-bulb moment' when a student understands a key concept, the excitement of the beginning of a new school year (and the excitement of the end of each school year), the opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of my colleagues on the AC staff and faculty, the enticement to always keep learning.

"There is nowhere else I would rather work."

**-Jill Gibson**, who enjoys spending time with her husband, Jeff of AC's IT Division, her 13-year-old triplets and "three obnoxious dogs." She also makes jewelry, paints and likes reading fiction.



# Classified Employees Celebrate Year's End



*It* was a luncheon. It was a fiesta. It was the Classified Employees End of Year Celebration June 17 at the Business & Industry Center.

The come-and-go affair also featured door prizes and festive hats.

Pictured are: (top left) Linda Drees, Rebecca Archer and Donna Pegrem; (top right) Kelly Hixon and Joy Brenneman; (center) Lori Merriman, Rhonda Higgs and Brenda Sadler; (bottom left) Alan Greer; and (bottom center) Barbara Sherill and Nan Kemp.



# NSF Grant Puts AC on Solar Path

The National Science Foundation has awarded a grant of \$798,424 to support establishment of a Solar Energy Technology component at Amarillo College.

Jack Stanley, chairman of AC's Sciences and Engineering Division, was notified of the award July 22 and says the funding will enable AC to add a solar component to its Renewable Energy Program.

"We are gratified by this generous award and excited about the opportunities it will create for our region," Stanley said. "Our Solar Technology option will focus on the development of skills necessary for installation, maintenance and manufacturing of solar energy technology."

AC applied for the grant through the auspices of the NSF's Advanced Technological Education Program. The funding will be used primarily to procure qualified faculty and cutting-edge laboratory equipment.

Stanley said AC will begin developing classes for the solar option this fall with a goal of enrolling the first solar students in spring of 2011.

The NSF grant comes on the heels of another sizable grant that recently bolstered AC's Renewable Energy Program.

AC received \$414,000 in May from the Texas Comptroller's Office to purchase and equip a pair of 44-foot gooseneck trailers with self-contained training labs.



## AC Reads Flags of Our Fathers

One of the most recognized photographs of war and one of the men featured in it became the genesis for a powerful book that will serve as the 2010 Common Reader at Amarillo College.

*Flags of Our Fathers* by James Bradley is a biography of his father, John Bradley, and the five other men who combined to raise the American flag on Iwo Jima during World War II.

*Flags of Our Fathers* will be distributed to all incoming freshmen this summer, and the entire College community will be encouraged to read the book and use its contents to engage the newcomers.

Employee copies are available in the Advising Center on the Washington Street Campus.

Additionally, several events are planned throughout the year to complement the selection, not the least of which is a lecture by the author

himself. Mr. Bradley will deliver his free lecture at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 28 at the Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts.

*Flags of our Fathers* tells the story of the diverse men who raised the immortal flag on Iwo Jima and details their lives before going to war and the sacrifices they made in service to their country before, during and after the conflict.

A photograph of the famous flag-raising earned Joe Rosenthal of the Associated Press a Pulitzer Prize and remains a transcendent image of the war.

"I'm delighted with this year's Common Reader selection. This is a book about the high price of freedom and what constitutes a true hero," Courtney Milleon, director of Student Success Programs, said.

"I can't wait for the discussions to begin."

## What's Happening

The **Third Thursday** at the Amarillo Museum of Art on Aug. 19 (beginning at 7 p.m.) will feature the work of Victor Moscoso, a master of psychedelic art who garnered international attention for his rock and roll posters during 1967's "Summer of Love." The exhibit is titled *Swirl*

Dance. Starbucks Coffee will be served.

The official dedication of **Steven Jones Hall** will be at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 29 at the new three-story allied health building on the West Campus. All AC employees are invited to attend.

The **General Assembly** is 9-11 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 18 at Ordway Auditorium. The annual gathering of all AC faculty and staff will again be preceded by a Continental Breakfast

from 8-8:45 a.m. between Russell Hall and Lynn Library, and a Fall Kickoff Celebration/Luncheon will be served from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on the Washington Street Mall. Additionally, some interesting breakout sessions have been added for all employee groups to enjoy in the afternoon. Watch your email.

Mr. **James Bradley**, author of *Flags of Our Fathers*, will speak at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 28 at the Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts. The lecture is free.

# New VP Starts Out with a Little Heavy Lifting

Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart's first order of business as vice president of academic affairs at Amarillo College required a little elbow grease; he rearranged the office furniture in his new digs on the first floor of Lynn Library.

But one flurry of reorganizational activity does not necessarily portend another. Nobody should expect the former associate provost at West Texas A&M University to alter much more than his desk location for the foreseeable future.



Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart takes a breather while rearranging the furniture in his new office.

"I envision spending my first six months here trying to integrate myself into the AC culture, getting to know my new collegiate family," said Lowery-Hart, who officially began his new AC duties on July 1. "Sudden change makes very little sense."

"I look forward to learning about our academic strengths and about the opportunities we have to improve student success," he said. "I am deeply honored to be given a chance to join this effort because AC is committed to serving students, to responding to our workforce needs, and to providing hope of a higher education to all our citizens."

Lowery-Hart emerged in May from a trio of finalists for the job. The Board of Regents approved his hiring with a unanimous vote that pleased no one more than AC President Paul Matney.

"This was an outstanding opportunity to hire an exceptional, proven leader in higher education, someone who is bright, collaborative and passionate about what we do," Matney said. "He is very well respected in our community, and he will be a tremendous asset to Amarillo College."

Lowery-Hart is a product of Slaton who obtained his bachelor's degree in speech communication in 1991 from WTAMU. He went on to obtain a master's degree in 1993 from Texas Tech University and a doctoral degree in gender and diversity in communication in 1996 at Ohio University.

## Moller, as Interim VP, Kept AC's Train on Track

Jerry Moller is a former coach who values teamwork, so it was no great surprise when he agreed to serve as acting vice president and dean of instruction for Amarillo College.

The only unknown was whether or not he could make enough time to accommodate the voluminous demands of AC's preeminent academic position. Much to the benefit of the College, he did.

Moller, of course, already had a jam-packed agenda, one dictated by his dual role as chairman of the Behavioral Studies Division and dean of academic transfer programs. But when illness forced AC President Steven Jones to the sidelines and Vice President Paul Matney became interim president, someone was needed to fill the void at VP.

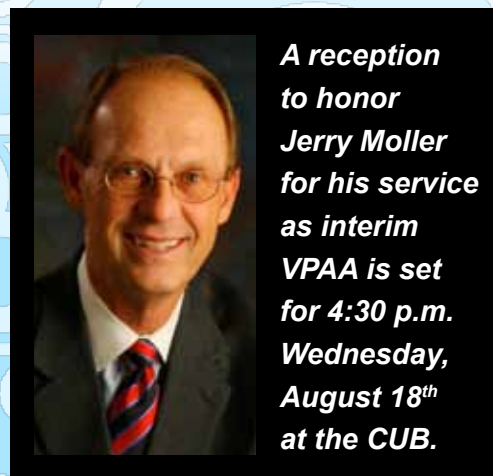
That water was willingly carried by

Moller who, beginning in January of 2009, spent 18 months serving in multiple roles at the administrative helm.

"I will be forever grateful to Jerry Moller for his exceptional service as acting vice president during the past year and a half," AC President Paul Matney said. "His background, experience, integrity and level-headed thinking played a key role in his successful leadership of our academic areas."

In July, Moller gladly relinquished his "acting" vice presidency to Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, the newest member of AC's administration. "I don't think I'm going to get bored now that that's over," Moller said. "Actually, I feel like I've been a little remiss by neglecting my divisional responsibilities."

"I'm just so thankful that I had good people in my division who stepped



***A reception to honor Jerry Moller for his service as interim VPAA is set for 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at the CUB.***

up and took care of business," he said. "I missed my interaction with them. I'm excited to get back to business as usual."

It's no wonder. Moller, though remunerated accordingly, suddenly was faced with commitments and

See **MOLLER**: next page



# Being Vigilant Not Always Popular, but Best Choice for Emergency Mgt.

**By Rusty Cornelius**  
**Director of Emergency**  
**Management**

The last few months have been very good to Amarillo College from my Emergency Management perspective, though they have demonstrated our need to remain alert.

We had a natural gas leak on 24th Street parallel to the Byrd-Parcels Building not long ago. During the process of locating the leak, Atmos Energy discovered a gas line running into the campus near Warren Hall. That line did not appear on their distribution maps and was removed. I am glad we did not locate the gas line during a trenching operation. Now, fortunately, that is one hazard we will not have to worry about.

The rains following the Fourth of July brought lots of water to the East Campus. The overnight rains totals of July 6 and 7, 2010, were in excess of 10 inches and forced the temporary closure of Exit 80 on I-40 and Highway 60 at Eastlake.

This isolated the East Campus and our housing units for several hours.



Combined with the high water rescue of two people, it was a very dangerous time to be on the east side of Amarillo. Things would have been very different had the rains come during the day.

The first part of the summer had a Tornado touch down near Bushland. We maintained open lines of communication with the National Weather Service and the Potter-Randall Office of Emergency Management. We were able to monitor this storm system almost from the time it formed over New Mexico and traveled east toward Amarillo. If the tornado would have touched down a few miles further east, or after touching down its direction of travel had been eastward, the tornado warning system would have

been activated. Since everyone was able to monitor the storm with very high levels of confidence, there was no need to activate the system.

Compare that though with storm systems you cannot monitor for long periods of time. Weeks later, a nighttime storm front impacted Amarillo from north to south and indicated a tornado. The warning system was activated. Luckily no tornado formed. Sometimes being vigilant is not very popular, but as history shows it is when you drop your guard when really bad things happen.



Photo by Jeff Herman, Physical Plant

## **MOLLER:** continued

responsibilities that far surpassed those of chairman and dean. You could find him in his office after hours, most Saturdays and plenty of Sundays, a schedule interrupted only by a suddenly hectic College-travel schedule and the unanticipated insertion of some heart stents that might have placed someone with less fortitude on the injured-reserve list.

Not Jerry Moller; he barely called a time-out.

"Yes, I had some health issues," Moller admits. "But overall I feel very fortunate to have had the op-

portunity to fill in (as VP). I especially appreciate the people who provided support, from the administrative assistants to the President's Cabinet to the faculty. Everyone was great—especially when I wasn't smart enough to figure things out for myself.

"I've developed better relationships with a lot of people who I don't ordinarily get to work with, and I am gratified if my being in the job allowed the institution to not feel a need for haste in finding a permanent vice president. It gave the institution, I think, a chance to do its due diligence and get the right person for the job, which I believe is how it turned out.

"I was more fireman than visionary ... I didn't want to make any decisions that were long-term or that would change the course of anything. I wanted to keep the train on the track. I hope that's what I did."

Dr. Matney certainly believes that to be the case.

"Even now, Mr. Moller is assisting Dr. Lowery-Hart during his transition to the institution," Matney said. "I am both professionally and personally grateful to Jerry Moller for his remarkable and steady service to the College. I know that as dean of academic transfers he will continue to play a vital academic role in service to our students and our faculty."



# Applauding AC's Walkers/Runners

Applause goes out to all the Walk/Run-A-Thon participants. "Sun Adventure Sports" was kind enough to donate water bottles for all the hard workers. Eleven participants reached the 600-minute goal for the month of June and received T-shirts thanks to Amarillo College Student Activities.

## Way to Go:

Carol Bevel  
Chelsea Amaya  
Danielle Arias  
Diane Sharber  
Janet Merten  
Kathy Martin  
Priscilla Hunt  
Rachel Gillespie  
Tammy Hughes  
Terry Polley  
Vicki Swiedom

All other participants were eligible in a drawing for a "Bebe Nails" manicure and an intramural T-shirt.

Congratulations to:

Dee Partin - "Bebe Nails"  
Crystal Brown - Intramural T-shirt

Walker/Runners with at least 360 minutes in July will receive a \$10 off any service at "The Scarlet Door."

Don't worry, if you have not started it's not too late. Simply submit your minutes to Trena Rider ([tjrider21@actx.edu](mailto:tjrider21@actx.edu)) each week. July minutes are already in; however, you can start chalking up minutes between now and August 20th. The top walker will receive a \$20 gift from "Buck's Sporting Goods." There will also be more drawings for items such as: Free lunches at "Eat Rite Restaurant," or "Get Fit T-shirts," and "Scarlet Door" prizes.

Just keep moving and stay fit for life!

And SAVE THIS DATE: Friday, Sept. 17. The AC-5K (Run/Walk) will commence at 8 p.m. More information will be forthcoming.

—Trena Rider



## Amarillo College Accolades

Several members of the AC faculty were promoted at the Board of Regents meeting April 27. Promoted from instructor to assistant professor were: **Debra Avara**, sociology/government; **Dr. Michael Barnett**, biology; **Monique Dupuis**, mathematics; **Dr. Deborah Harding**, psychology/sociology; and **Patricia Maddox**, English. Promoted from assistant to associate was **Dr. Claudie Biggers**, biology. Promoted from associate to professor were: **Dr. Carol Buse**, computer information systems; and **Rathna Prabhakar**, math/engineering.

**Jarrold Madden**, information support specialist and graduate student at WTAMU, has been granted membership to the National Society

of Leadership and Success, which helps people discover and achieve their goals.

**Jan Martin**, director of the Medical Laboratory Technology Program, has been inducted as a Presidential member of the West Texas A&M University chapter of the National Society for Leadership and Success. The society is international in scope and provides leadership and training and networking opportunities. Martin and **Kim Boyd**, instructor of medical laboratory technology, formed a team and walked in the March of Dimes Walk back in April.

**Toni Gray**, director of criminal justice programs, and **Jason Norman**, director of advising, have just been named Top Twenty Under 40 award recipients by the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce. The Amarillo College duo will be among those honored at the chamber's annual Celebrating Business Excellence Awards Banquet on Thursday, Aug. 26 at the Amarillo Civic Center.



## AC Writer's Corner

New for the English Department is the AC Writer's Corner, where trained tutors are standing by to assist students in becoming more confident and effective writers. Visit the south end of Ordway Hall and check it out.





*Lou Ann Seabourn, Beverly Vinson and LuLu Cowan work on goodie-filled paint cans for San Jacinto fifth-graders.*

## AC Supports No Excuses Initiative at San Jacinto

**B**lanca Contreras has only just completed the fifth grade at San Jacinto Elementary School and already she has her sights set on attending college and becoming a nurse.

"I want to help people," is how she puts it.

Perhaps a willingness to help is contagious at San Jacinto, an elementary school brimming with economically challenged students who, thanks to a great deal of help, suddenly are dedicated to attending college—one and all.

Of course foremost they owe that notion to San Jacinto's dedicated faculty and staff, all of whom bought into an initiative called No Excuses University. However, Amarillo College also has played a pivotal role in the unique enterprise that aims to instill "college readiness" in the entire student body.

AC officially adopted San Jacinto in spring of 2009 and since has contributed a great deal of time and effort to the No Excuses University initiative.

From art projects to tutoring, field trips and a well-attended parents' night at AC, the College thus far has held up its end of the partnership beyond even the expectations of Doug Curry, San Jac's gung ho principal.

"It has already exceeded our wildest dreams," Curry said.

"More than 70 AC people were involved in the partnership this past year, and they made an incredible difference.

"AC has helped us get better."

The list of AC's contributions to No Excuses University at San Jacinto is lengthy and stems from all employee groups and plenty of students. It even includes introduction of GED opportunities for San Jacinto parents by folks in AC's High School Equivalency Program.

One parent already accepted that challenge, obtained a GED and is expected to attend AC this year.

"I think it's amazing and wonderful that so many of our employees helped make this a really successful partnership," LuLu Cowan, special assistant to the president, said. "Each employee group has been very supportive and developed innovative and exciting ideas to help connect our institutions."

To help get San Jacinto students amped about higher education, AC mobilized in a variety of ways. Student government tutored. The biology and art clubs introduced fun projects. Faculty let the adoptees pop in on lectures. The Administrators Association assembled goodie-filled paint cans for fifth-grade graduates. Numerous field trips took the youngsters to KACV, the Museum of Art and the Natural History Museum. Multiple departments pitched in during a Parents' Night at AC.

Instructor Rene West photographed fifth-graders attired as they one day hope to appear in post-collegiate careers. The photos were displayed on Lynn Library's first floor for Parents' Night.



*Blanca Contreras wants to be a nurse.*

"I was impressed how much the students researched the careers they were aspiring to pursue," she said. "The visual project made me even more impressed with the 'No Excuses' curriculum and how it is such a positive force in those kids' lives."



# A Collaborative Effort Paved Way to Honor Dutton

**By Carol Buse**  
**President of Faculty Senate**

The highlight of the summer -- indeed the entire 2010 Spring Semester was the June 22 Board of Regent's vote to rename the Washington Campus Biology Building to Steve Dutton Hall. Individuals from all employee groups, Faculty Senate, Classified Employees Council, and Administrator's Association, as well as the Student Government worked together to bring this momentous event about.

The movement to rename the Biology Building in honor of the late Steve Dutton began a year ago with students initiating the discussion. According to April Sessler, "When students approached me over a year ago with the idea of naming the new science building after Steve Dutton I quickly explained why that couldn't happen, but it really planted a seed in my mind. When it came up that the biology building would need a

new name, there were several of us who looked at each other with 'are you thinking what I'm thinking!' It was great that all the representative employee and student groups pulled together to submit the idea and what a fitting tribute to a dedicated faculty member who spilled out his influence and knowledge in that building to thousands of AC students. "

## Faculty Senate

A committee was formed to develop the resolution. It was made up of Lola Hornstra (administrative), April Sessler (associate dean of enrollment management), Joy Connors (associate director of financial aid), Linda Hendrick (director of telecommunications and networking), Holly Hicks (Classified Employees Coun-

cil), Claudie Biggers (vice president of Faculty Senate), Heather Atchley (director of student activities), and Tyler Adams (president of Student Government Association). Supporting members included Lana Jackson (Faculty Senate), Gina Garrett (Classified Employees Council), and David Ziegler (Administrator's Association).

All employee groups were truly unified in this endeavor.

"I think it is exciting that they honored integrity, hard work and a passion for teaching. The truth is that without the combined efforts of everyone this would never have happened," said Claudie Biggers, the Faculty Senate president at the time of the vote.

And April Sessler remarked, "Funny how one small idea can actually bring about positive action and change when there are several people of like mind! What a great way to recognize all the values we claim to hold dear."

## Plugged In's Summer Photo



*Instructor Keith Bassett, left, with assistance from Luke Morrison, personal enrichment coordinator at AC, explains the intricacies of crime-scene analysis to young teens who attended Crime Scene Investigation Camp June 14 on the Washington Street Campus.*

[Back to Top](#)