

AC Plugged In

Faculty & Staff NEWSLETTER

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Pilot Program for English Takes Flight

AC's First Title V Redesign Effort Deemed a Success

Karen Taylor notices them right off—those students who huddle behind walls of idiom they've conjured up to elude the spears of syntax being flung at their heads, if not their hearts.

"You can tell which ones have run into a grammar Nazi," Taylor, adjunct instructor of English, said. "They come in here expecting to hate it."

Disdain for gatekeeper courses in English may soon dissipate at AC, though, and student beneficiaries will have a Title V grant and the faculty who wielded it to thank.

The grant, which AC received in 2010, may seem the most credit-worthy of the change agents, at least to an outsider looking in; it did inject \$3.2 million over five years into AC coffers, much of it earmarked for redesigning gatekeeper courses to reflect a national model. The gratifying windfall even provided the impetus to wrap up an infusion of classroom technology long in the works throughout AC's literary cornerstone, Ordway Hall.

No unfunded mandate, this.

But Dr. Dan Ferguson, chairman of the English Department, swiftly and rightly points to members of the redesign team as the true movers and shakers here. Eleven in strength, and bolstered by department-wide input, the team met on a weekly basis throughout last summer and conscientiously framed new models for Composition I and II that were rolled out for piloting in 36 sections this spring.

"Our goal was to improve student success without sacrificing academic rigor," Ferguson said. "We wanted to better engage our students, address student motivation, and ensure that students in different sections of the same course have similar experiences, without placing limits on academic freedom.



Karen Taylor, adjunct instructor of English, interacts with students in a group setting that encourages student engagement.

"I believe we made great strides toward each of those ends," he said. "I'm extremely pleased because we had enthusiastic buy-in from our faculty. Their efforts not only generated credible models that we're piloting now, but the cohesiveness of the team also served as an unanticipated catalyst for unifying the entire department."

The redesign team, a blend of veteran educators and new ones, full and part time, began the herculean task by looking within. They compared the marrow and methodology of the courses they teach, revealing wide discrepancies that took

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Presidents Sign on Dotted Line

Presidential and collegiate unity was on display Nov. 30 when Dr. Paul Matney of AC, Phil Shirley of Clarendon College, and Dr. Jud Hicks of Frank Phillips College formalized a partnership whose members will institute policies that ease and improve transferability between the institutions; align programs and program offerings; and provide greater overall options for students.



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them by surprise—three essays assigned by one teacher compared to six by another, for example, all for identical credits.

With guidance from the grant's redesign beacon, the National Center for Academic Transformation, and veritable carte blanche afforded by the vice president for academic affairs, they forged ahead.

"They found pretty quickly that they were all over the place," Cara Crowley, coordinator of the Title V grant and director of HSI projects, said. "That they achieved a consistent approach for teaching Composition I and II that works for both students and faculty is remarkable and due, I think, to great faculty participation and outstanding leadership.

"It was a totally faculty-led effort and I'm pleased and very excited by the results."

One vital component the team developed is the Learning Objective Repository (LOR) for faculty. The dynamic online warehouse provides English Department faculty with access to, among other things, shared active learning strategies, student essay examples from across the department, even motivational tips for students. It also sets parameters for course assignments that do not infringe on widely disparate faculty preferences.

The use of more technology is stressed in pilot classes, and student engagement, where AC has underachieved in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, is being stressed more than ever before. Also worth noting is the scrapping of expensive composition textbooks; students in the program are required only to purchase a \$20 rhetoric handbook.

Ferguson and Matthew Goodman, instructor of English at the Moore County Campus, served as co-chairs for the redesign team. They were joined by professors Dr. Mike Bellah,

Dr. Bill Netherton and Margie Waguespack; assistant professor Frank Sobey; instructors Theresa Jiwa and Jim Taylor (Hereford); and adjuncts Joyce Herr, Daniel Klaehn, and the aforementioned Karen Taylor.

"I think our collaborative efforts have been most rewarding," Goodman said. "This process not only lent a linier sensibility to the department, but it turned out to be a very student-centered redesign.

"The LOR is a living, breathing resource to which we're constantly uploading new information. Already we're using it to discover great in-class and out-of-class activities, the sort of things you wish you'd have come up with yourself, and it's all for the students' benefit.

"This whole experience gave us the opportunity to make the best courses we could make, while maintaining academic freedom and rigor."

When the semester ends, the pilot program will be evaluated, possibly tweaked, and probably offered again next fall.

"We'll keep the discussions going," Ferguson said. "We don't see any reason to rush into this by calling what we've accomplished so far a done deal. A pleasing aspect of this grant is that it gives us the freedom to experiment and learn what truly supports student success and see where it takes us."

The course-redesign portion of Title V moves forward at AC this summer on another front as faculty in the Math Department begin their effort to give Intermediate Algebra and College Algebra institutional makeovers.

A template has been established by those of the literary persuasion, a viable starting point indeed, but no one expects any plagiarism here.

Pi ought never to represent the ratio of student essays to the number of participles left dangling.



‘No Excuses’ Embraces AC

Since Damen Lopez considers the city of Amarillo the “epicenter of No Excuses,” it is little surprise that Amarillo College has been named the first post-secondary school to join the No Excuses University (NEU) network.

Lopez, founder of the NEU movement, notified AC Jan. 30 that its application has been officially and readily accepted by the NEU committee.

“We are ecstatic to be the inaugural College welcomed into the No Excuses network,” Russell Lowery-Hart, vice president of academic affairs, said. “It now falls to us here at AC to frame what exactly a No Excuses College looks like.

“A large part of it certainly will be our focus on the people who fill our classrooms. Our students not only deserve to be challenged by very high academic expectations, they have every reason to expect our vital support in pursuit of their dreams.

“If we get this right, and I know that we can, I believe our model will be emulated wherever No Excuses concepts are utilized.”

When AC approached Lopez about extending the No Excuses concept into higher education—with the emphasis on college success—the NEU committee was not long in delivering its response.

AC Foundation: Did You Know?

By Tracy Dougherty
AC Foundation

We are often asked by staff and faculty exactly what the AC Foundation does. Hopefully this will explain its purpose and how we assist students and further the development of AC through enrichment of the education programs offered.

About half the students who apply for a scholarship at AC will receive one. We awarded \$360,000 in 2010-2011. The average per student is \$350-\$500. The types available range from nursing and nuclear medicine, to business, law enforcement and industrial technology. We also have limited funds available for emergencies.

Each scholarship has guidelines that the student must adhere to and if they do not, they will lose it. Often the guidelines include maintaining a certain GPA and enrolling in a certain number of hours. Occasionally the scholarship will not be awarded if the

student does not meet the criteria set forth or drops out of school. Recipients are announced each year in late April.

The annual deadline for the general scholarship application is March 1. Applications are available in our office on the second floor of the CUB and on all AC campuses. They must be accompanied by a transcript and a 200-word, typed essay. Late applications are never accepted. We have other deadlines for certain divisions due to UIL competition and auditions. They are listed at www.actx.edu/foundation.

All students are urged to apply for General Scholarships. If students want more information, they can stop by the Foundation office and talk to Tracy Dougherty or Kay Campbell, or call 371-5107.

The Foundation needs YOUR help. You are the conduit to students, and we ask that you help us educate them about the availability of funds for their education.



Hoop Dreams

Bob Austin, dean of student affairs and coach of the faculty and staff basketball team, exhorts his minions to feed the ball to his big man, Dr. Michael Barnett, assistant professor of biology, during a game Nov. 23 vs. the coed intramural champs.

Meanwhile, referee Trent Oneal, instructor in fitness and life services, offers up a technical foul. Due to suspicious scorekeeping, both sides claimed victory.





Eagles Inspire Dean of Health Sciences

Bill Crawford, dean of health sciences, is as patriotic as the next guy, but that's not why his office tastefully teems with replicas of our national emblem.

Neither is it due to his childhood interest in these majestic birds of prey. Oh no, the convocation of eagles in Bill's office is tied to an even deeper conviction.

The true genesis for Bill's winged display can be found in a Bible verse his wife, Connie, pointed out years ago when he was elevated to department chair. Here's why:

"It was very stressful when I became department chair," Bill said. "I was experiencing so much stress that some of it was trailing me home.

"Connie knows the Bible pretty much front to back. Thankfully she introduced me to Isaiah 40:31. It changed my whole outlook."

The verse reads: "but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

To underscore the verse, Connie bought Bill an eagle sculpture that swiftly became the polestar of his work environment. That eagle, and that for which it stands, helped reinvigorate Bill's faith, while rendering subsequent bouts of stress markedly short-lived.

Of course that lone eagle wasn't alone for long. Bill soon came across another he liked and bought it. Suddenly he was a

collector of these birds of a feather. His wife's gift thus became the keystone of a collection that today features sculptures, wall hangings, cups and paperweights, some bearing that special verse.

"The eagles that surround me, many of which are gifts from relatives and friends, are a constant reminder of Isaiah 40:31," Bill said. "When struggles come our way, and they do, Isaiah's words remind me that if we trust and have faith, we will receive the strength and comfort we need."

It is strictly a coincidence that Bill's original interest in eagles was hatched in his youth, back when Amarillo meteorologist Dan True occasionally showcased photos of them on TV.

That was a few years before Bill began what is the longest tenure of anyone presently employed at AC. It's a career that has unfurled thus far during nine presidencies, no matter if you're counting commander-in-chief types, or the last nine presidents right here at AC.

An instructor of radiography at the outset, Bill migrated to AC as a part-timer in 1968, when Lyndon Johnson held the nation's top political post and A. B. Martin presided over the College. Those high offices have since changed hands eight times apiece. Bill, meanwhile, has stayed the course.

And while others might meander into a 44th year of service in the plodding creep of a tortoise, not Bill; he soared in on the wings of eagles.

Creative Mind Lectures Examine NYC

It's not too late to get in on the Creative Mind Humanities Lecture Series, which features a smorgasbord of appetizing orations about the Big Apple—three dates remain.

New York: Tales of a City features lectures in February and March that focus on unique aspects of our nation's most populous city, from the performing arts to its violent past and its renowned nights of revelry.

All the lectures are free and open to all.

Thursday, Feb. 23—Dr. Adrienne L. McLean, University of Texas at Dallas

12:30 p.m.—*On Their Toes: How New York Became the Dance Capital of the World*
WSC, CUB, Oak Room

7:30 p.m.—*A Wonderful Town: New York in the Film Musical's Imagination*
Business & Industry Center, Auditorium

Thursday, March 1—Dr. Alexis McCrossen, Southern Methodist University

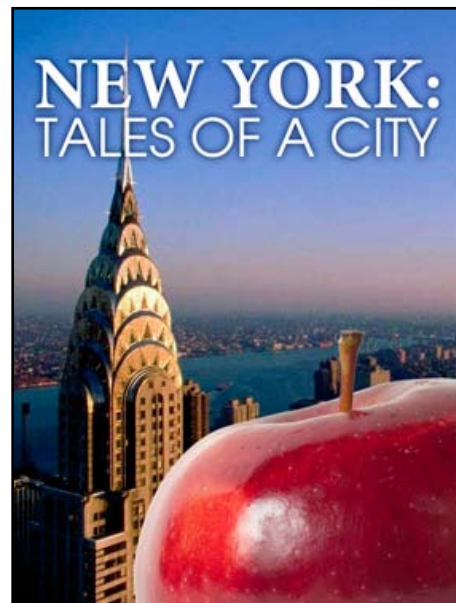
12:30 p.m.—*New York's Astor Place Theater Riots, 1849*
WSC, CUB, Oak Room

7:30 p.m.—*Days of Rest, Nights of Revelry: Sunday and New Year's Eve in New York City*
Business & Industry Center, Auditorium

Tuesday, March 8—Dr. James Laughlin, Amarillo College

12:30 p.m.—*Too Much Mustard: Early Days of Jazz*
WSC, CUB, Oak Room

7:30 p.m.—*Too Much Mustard: Early Days of Jazz*, including a live performance by the AC Jazz Ensemble and dancing.
WSC, Concert Hall Theater



Faculty & Staff Accolades



Edie Carter, associate professor of mathematics, has learned that she will be inducted into the Tascosa High School Rebel Hall of Fame Feb. 21 during a ceremony in the high school auditorium.

Dr. Sheree Talkington, assistant professor and director of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, received her doctoral degree Dec. 18 from Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pa.



Kerrie Young, instructor of nursing, presented posters and an abstract that she co-authored with Dr. Dennis Dove of Texas Tech and Lisa Robinson of WTAMU at the National League for Nursing conference in January at San Diego, Ca. The abstract, which has been accepted for publication, is titled "Use of Simulated Pages to Provide Opportunity for Inter-Professional Education (IPE) of Medical and Nursing Students."

Young, also faculty sponsor for AC's Student Nurses Association, took six student officers to the Texas Student Nurses Association annual conference in February in Irving.

Sheryl Mueller, chair of the Nursing Department and **Dr. Richard Pullen**, professor of nursing, co-authored an article titled "Writing Successful Grant Proposals" that appeared in the January issue of *American Journal of Nursing*.



Dr. Pullen and Angie Downs, instructor of nursing, had a manuscript accepted for publication in the July 2012 issue of *Nursing Made Incredibly Easy*. It is titled "Caring for a Patient with Migraine Headache."

Dr. Pullen also had a manuscript accepted for publication in the July 2012 issue of *Nursing Education Perspectives*. It is titled "Helping Students with Critical Thinking through Scholarly Writing."

Badger of Honor awards last semester went to **Lynaé Jacob**, chair of the Speech Department, and **Donna Pergrem**, academic advisor. The award recognizes outstanding efforts to assist and engage students.



Dr. Shawn Fouts, dean of career and technical education, had one of his blog posts recently included in a 2011 Pearson-published textbook, *Communication in Society*, by J. Alberts, J. Martin and T. Nakayama. Another of his blog posts has been selected for the next edition.

Bruce Moseley, coordinator of the Paralegal Studies Program, wrote an article titled "Using the Web to Recruit New Students" that was published in the winter 2012 edition of *The Paralegal Educator*.



Reception Honors Wetzel, who Learns of Another Award

The dust from a reception for Dr. Kathy Wetzel, chair of the Department of Mathematics, Sciences and Engineering, had barely settled when news of an additional accolade reached AC.

Wetzel, who was honored at the CUB Nov. 28 by Faculty Senate for just having been named Outstanding Community Colleges



Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation, has since received exciting news on another front.

Precisely, Wetzel learned in January that AC's Math Outreach Center (ORC) is the winning entry in the National Council of Instructional Administrator's (NCIA) Exemplary Initiative – Access, Persistence and Completion competition.

Wetzel will accept the award at the NCIA's International Conference on College Teaching and Learning April 11 in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

The OCR was established under Wetzel's leadership in 2005. It's a drop-in, no-charge individualized assistance lab that provides about 23,000 tutoring sessions annually for students who, data shows, have seen their test scores rise by as much as two letter grades.

"I'm so proud of all the hard work that goes on in the ORC," said Wetzel, who has previously accepted OCR-related honors in the form of a Star Award from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the John Champaign Memorial Award from the National Association for Developmental Education.



Farmer: Patrons of Lecture in for Treat

Our own Dr. Brian Farmer, aside from being a professor of social sciences and author of a pair of books with “Radical Islam” in the titles, is eminently qualified based on yet another rationale to assess the selection of AC’s impending Distinguished Lecturer.



Farmer, it turns out, heard the former first lady of Egypt speak once before, in 2007, when she addressed the Phi Theta Kappa honor society during its international convention in Nashville.

“It was fantastic,” said Farmer, author of such topic-related books as *Understanding Radical Islam* (2006) and *Radical Islam in the West: Ideology and Challenge* (2010).

“We’re definitely in for a treat. She is worth listening to.”

Dr. Jehan Sadat, wife of the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, will lecture at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 1 at the Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts.

General admission seating is \$15, or you can attend a private reception before the event for \$60 and enjoy accompanying reserved seats. Tickets are available at the Washington Street, Hereford Campus, and Moore County assistance centers.

Long before her husband was assassinated in 1981—and basically ever since—Jehan Sadat has been an outspoken advocate for women’s rights and has challenged traditional Muslim women’s roles in society. She is even credited with playing a leading role in Egyptian civil rights reform that led to alimony and custody rights for women.

Such intrepid feminism tends to grate on Islamic fundamentalists, the likes of which assassinated Anwar Sadat in 1981.

Amarillo College Student Government Association Presents
THE 2012 DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

Jehan Sadat

Political and Human Rights Activist
and Widow of Anwar Sadat



THURSDAY, MARCH 1ST

Reception: 6-7 p.m.

Lecture: 7:30 p.m. • Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts

Book signing to follow

“She is a polarizing figure who has taken stands that put a target on her head,” Farmer said. “Her husband was shot to death by extremists, yet she continues traveling the world to advocate the things she believes in.

“Not too many of us have that kind of courage. She stands and she delivers.”

Jehan Sadat has master and doctoral degrees from Cairo University and today serves as a senior fellow at the University of Maryland. She will sign copies of her bestselling autobiography *A Woman of Egypt* following the lecture.

And don’t forget: The Distinguished Lecture Series comes to us courtesy of the Student Government Association, and all proceeds go to student scholarships.

Dumas Quest Program Receives Timely Grant for Textbooks

Dumas High School students who qualify through the Quest Program to attend Amarillo College Moore County Campus (AC-MCC) will be certain to receive textbooks in the foreseeable future thanks to a generous grant from the Dumas Economic Development Corporation.

The Dumas Education Foundation, which administers the Quest Program, applied for the community grant to bolster its Quest Textbook Project. The payoff is

a check for \$8,100 that DEDC officials presented during a brief ceremony Jan. 19 at the Moore County Campus.

This is the second time in as many years that the Quest Program has been awarded a textbook-aimed community grant from the DEDC. Shawn Frische, director of the Dumas Education Foundation, said a stipulation of the grant is that it be matched by the receiving party, which actually doubles the windfall.

Quest, which was launched in Dumas in 2007, guarantees financial support, including tuition, fees and textbooks, for AC-MCC-bound students from Dumas High School who meet certain criteria.

Frische says meeting that guarantee has become an escalating challenge because about 200 students are presently being subsidized by the Quest Program, and the annual bill for textbooks can be as much as \$30,000.

Benefit Bank of Texas Debuts at AC

The Benefit Bank of Texas made its statewide debut Feb. 8 at AC. It was an historic event that drew Diana Maldonado, state director of the Benefit Bank, to explain how trained volunteers at AC and other pilot sites in Amarillo will utilize the web-based portal to help fellow Texans access billions of federal benefit dollars that go unclaimed each year.

When used by trained volunteers, and AC has 15 of them, the Benefit Bank connects low- and moderate-income Texans to a myriad of public benefits ranging from food stamps to Pell Grants.

“Each year, thousands of families in Texas do not claim an estimated \$8.3 billion in federal work supports in the form of food assistance, tax credits, public benefits, and student financial aid,” Maldonado told a large gathering in the Student Service Center on the Washington Street Campus. “The Benefit Bank is a pathway to better lives.”

Trained volunteers at AC are: Angie Alvarez, Nancy Brent, Lulu Cowan, Andrea



DeLeon, Danette Fenstermaker, Melodie Graves, Tyler Grisham, Holly Hicks, Patsy Lemaster, Ernesto Olmos, Maury Roman-Jordan, Brenda Rossnagel, April Sessler, Danette White and Kim Zimmer.

AC is joined locally in this endeavor by Amarillo Independent School District; Central Church of Christ; Coalition of Health Services; Faith City Mission; Family Support Services; First Presbyterian

Church; Paramount Baptist Church; Region 16; Salvation Army; and WT Family and Community Services.

The initial launch of TBB-TX covering Public Health Region I is made possible by an implementation grant from The Don and Sybil Harrington Foundation and the Walmart Foundation's State Giving Program.

It will be fully operational by Feb. 24.

Plugged In Winter Photo



Good & Plenty

Donations to the AC Pantry have exceeded expectations, according to Lynaé Jacob, chair of the Department of Speech and Theatre (at right), and Karen Logan, administrative clerk (left), whose brainchild it was to stockpile food and toiletries for students in need. The Pantry is fully stocked and, while continued generosity is certainly encouraged, the organizers are looking for students to take advantage of the resource. They ask you to send them those students you know who could use a sack or two of groceries a month to help them get by. The Pantry is open from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Just call Karen at Ext. 5267 or Lynaé at Ext. 5343 to make sure someone can be there to help.