



Plugged



FACULTY & STAFF NEWSLETTER



LOWERY-HART CHOSEN AS
SOLE PRESIDENTIAL FINALIST

FACULTY DUO SURVIVES
MARINE BOOT CAMP

PHOTOS: COLLEGE BIDS
MATNEY FOND FAREWELL

CAMPUS FACILITIES NAMED
TO HONOR ICONIC LEADERS

SUMMER 2014

VOLUME VI



A Call to Greatness

AC HOLDS FUTURE OF COMMUNITY IN ITS HANDS

By Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart
Vice President of Academic Affairs

Our community needs Amarillo College in profound ways. When you look at the trends from the state demographer, Amarillo is becoming less educated and poorer. Simply, if these numbers are going to change for Amarillo, it will be because of the No Excuses work you are doing.

Our No Excuses student-success agenda is building a foundation that could change our students' lives, and dramatically improve our community as a result. Our No Excuses philosophy and processes facilitate students' ability to achieve success throughout their pathway – and our students are improving.

No Excuses Data

- Our first goal is for students to successfully complete developmental courses.

2009 | 14% 2013 | **11%**

Most of our efforts have focused on keeping students out of developmental education courses. This decrease must be evaluated, but may actually indicate our plan is working.

- Our second goal is for students to successfully complete initial college-level (or gateway) courses.

2009 | 50% 2013 | **52%**

Through course redesign efforts, our students are improving their success rates in these entry-level courses. This is significant because these courses provide the skills students will need as they progress.

- Our third goal is for students to complete courses with a grade of C or better.

2009 | 18% 2013 | **24%**

Because of our expansion of tutoring and integrating tutor centers as requirements within courses, our students are mastering key concepts and improving their overall success.

- Our fourth goal is for students to persist from one term to the next.

2009 | 47% 2013 | **51%**

Through our systemic approach to poverty and the First Year Seminars, students are accessing important services and defining their life plans that help them stay in school.

- Our fifth and most important goal is for students to earn a certificate, degree, or transfer.

2009 | 18% 2013 | **19%**

We have a great deal of work ahead of us if we are going to help our students obtain a credential at significantly higher rates. Yet, even though our student success plan is only two years old, we are starting to see improvements in their completion rates. This should encourage us all.

We should celebrate the improvements our students are demonstrating toward our No Excuses Goals. This is very encouraging, but our focus must not waiver. Our community needs and demands significant improvement in these targets. We have the interventions in place. They are working. Yet, the significant improvements we need will only come from you.

For us to truly embrace No Excuses, it means that ALL employees should aspire to be a No Excuses professional. I am calling us all to greatness, as members of the Amarillo College family– which means we

will all work together to embrace the six “C’s” of a No Excuses professional.

- **Committed:** We are committed to being the right person for each student by expecting students' best efforts and then guiding them to excellence. We are committed to being the right person for each other by supporting efforts to improve student success from our colleagues across the institution.

- **Courageous:** We will have the courage to confront the status quo when it impedes student success. We will have courage to ensure our important work is not deterred by those who tell us our dreams for students are unrealistic or impossible.

- **Collaborative:** We support and trust each other in our work toward student completion.

- **Creative:** We are innovative and embrace new ways to better serve our students. We are not satisfied with continuing the “AC way” if our data shows we can do better.

- **Character-centered:** We will do the right thing for our students and each other.

- **Completion-focused:** College completion and career readiness drive our efforts, no matter our job descriptions or reporting structures – we are all on the college completion team.

AC really holds our community's future in its hands – our hands. By embracing our commitment to being a No Excuses professional, together we really can change the path for our students and community. I can't imagine a better group of people in which to trust our community's well-being. I look forward to taking this journey with you.

Regents Name Lowery-Hart Lone Presidential Finalist

AC Regents took a big step July 23 to fill the large shoes of former President Paul Matney; they unanimously chose Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, vice president of academic affairs, as sole finalist for the post.

That brings the far-reaching presidential search to the cusp of completion. The process will be finalized if a majority of Regents cast a final vote in Lowery-Hart's favor when they convene for a regularly scheduled meeting Aug. 26—6 p.m. at the College Union Building.

Such a vote is necessitated by a state law that requires a minimum 21-day public-notice period between the naming of a sole finalist and a final vote.

"It's been a long process and a good process to get to this point," Don Nicholson, chairman of the Board of Regents, said. "Our search committee, which included regents, faculty, staff and students, did a good job of picking a finalist we can be proud of and support."

Lowery-Hart has served as AC's vice president for the past four years, but his academic leadership extends well beyond AC—from his presidency of the Panhandle Twenty/20 consortium for the Top 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle, to the chairmanship he held of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Undergraduate Advisory Committee.

Earlier this year, Lowery-Hart was the recipient of the National Academic Leader of the Year Award as bestowed by the National Council of Instructional Administrators.

"I'm overwhelmed and honored by the support of the AC community and the Amarillo community," Lowery-Hart said.

College Complies with New Clery Requirements

On March 7, 2013, President Obama signed a reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Notably, VAWA amended the Clery Act to require institutions to complete statistics for incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and to include certain policies, procedures, and programs pertaining to these incidents in our Annual Security Report (ASR).

The new information will be added to the ASR and available to students, employees, and prospective students and employees by October 1, 2014. The ASR is posted on the Amarillo College Police Department (ACPD) website, or you can view a printed copy at the ACPD located in Durrett Hall. A printed copy will be furnished upon request at no charge. In addition, the department maintains a printed copy of the daily crime log, which is available for your review.



Partnership Renewal

The presidents of AC and WTAMU (at least as of May 8) met downtown to officially renew the Destination WT agreement. It enables AC students to save time and money when selecting WT as the next step in pursuit of their academic goals.



Justin Furstenfeld to Perform in September

Justin Furstenfeld, whose innovative talents spurred alternative rock band Blue October to Platinum-selling heights, will appear on stage Saturday, Sept. 6 at AC's Ordway Hall on the Washington Street Campus.

"An Open Book: An Evening with Justin Furstenfeld" will feature segments of the spoken word, some Q&A and an acoustic set (softer versions) of some Blue October fan-favorites.

Proceeds from the show, which is being sponsored by AC's Mass Media Program and the Student Life Department, will benefit AC students.

The show begins at 8 p.m. with special guest Ashleigh Stone, a pianist, vocalist, songwriter and mainstay for Divine Anthology.

Tickets are on sale at the Amarillo Civic Center and any United Supermarkets—any Panhandle Tickets location, www.panhandletickets.com—at a cost of \$20.

Faculty Duo Gung Ho after a Week of Marine Boot Camp



Jim Laughlin receives instruction while aiming an M16.



Patricia McGuire is gung ho aboard an amphibious personnel carrier.

Encumbered by oversized battle fatigues and an unwieldy rifle, Patricia McGuire slogged slowly but surely through the U.S. Marine Corps bayonet assault course at Camp Pendleton.

Most unnerving was the sound of gunfire that belched from loudspeakers strategically placed along the course, but that too failed to foil the Amarillo College instructor of physical education, who, truth be told, could have selected a more relaxing summer getaway.

Ditto for Dr. James Laughlin, professor of music, who might easily have spent the week of June 16-20 ensconced in less-percussive environs, attuned perhaps to his beloved woodwinds.

But Laughlin and McGuire were agreeably enlisted by the U.S. Marine Corps to spend that particular week immersed in an Educators Workshop in sunny San Diego. The Marine Corps conducts these exclusive seminars quarterly, giving

selected high school and college teachers plenty of first-hand knowledge to impart to inquisitive students.

"It was a really cool adventure," McGuire said. "I got all out of sync on the bayonet course because my fatigues were way too big and the gunfire from the speakers was nerve-racking, but it was a great learning experience.

"Still, it was all I could do to keep that rifle out of the dirt."

Forty educators were selected from a host of applicants to attend the June workshop. The opportunity for AC's faculty sprang from an event the AC Wellness Committee sponsored in May called Fitness Combat Challenge. Not only did students get a taste of the rigors of a Marine-style obstacle course, but the Marines who conducted the event did a little recruiting while they were here; they sought a few good teachers willing to endure a modicum of boot-camp discipline and

a slew of perception-altering edification about what really makes today's Marine Corps tick—all expenses paid.

The Marines encouraged McGuire to apply after witnessing her enthusiasm during the Fitness Combat Challenge. They then made a beeline for the Music Building.

"They consider the recruitment of good musicians essential in the military," Laughlin said. "Music is vital for their pageantry. It's ceremonial and traditionally enhances the esprit de corps. They actively recruit music teachers to attend these workshops."

They initially approached (department chair) Dr. Steven Weber, but he had a conflict and passed the paperwork on to Laughlin.

"I jumped at the chance because I've had students who expressed interest in military music careers, but I never really understood the audition process,"

Laughlin said. "I'm really glad I did this. It was a very valuable, fun and enlightening experience. I had all sorts of questions about the process, and they answered them all."

The cohort toured several Marine camps in the bay area, where the wide array of career choices in today's Corps became readily apparent. They enjoyed first-class accommodations and saw plenty of high-tech equipment and fancy gear, but they also received intermittent doses of the draconian boot camp that legend salutes.

For starters, they were delivered by bus to the famed yellow footprints upon which every Marine recruit stands at attention on day one, so they did too. The tongue-lashing that ensued was brief and merely for effect, a poignant reminder that the blueprint for drill sergeant infamy—derision enhanced by rage—is still very much in play.

"He was yelling at us and I was tearing up," McGuire said. "Not because of my own nervousness ... I was thinking of all the kids that have to go through something like this for, oh gosh, like 12 weeks. For us it was only 15 minutes.

"It was a memorable introduction to the Marines, though, and then they told us about a lot of things you don't see in the movies, all the incredible career and educational opportunities," she said.

"You soon realize that for 18-year-olds who may not know what they want to do, this isn't a bad choice at all. It certainly doesn't have to be the last choice."

The cohort of educators interacted with some recruits in training, even shared their tables for chow. They also got to run the bayonet course, do calisthenics and obstacle courses, and fire M16s at the rifle range (AC's duo demonstrated exemplary marksmanship).

The teachers' own "graduation" from boot camp coincided with that of a company of recruits having just completed a capstone event called the Crucible. The celebration was enhanced by some of that spot-on musical pageantry. It was a rewarding, eye-opening week, and the educators emerged from it not only with newfound appreciation for the Corps, but with gratitude for the Corps' appraisal of teachers in general.

"We heard from several Marines," Laughlin said, "even from officers, who had tears in their eyes when they told us they owed everything to the teachers in their lives because they'd made such a huge impact on them personally. They hold teachers in the highest regard, possibly more so than any other profession.

"Their respect for educators clearly was heartfelt, and we heard it from all the ranks."

No way you'd let your rifle scuff dirt after hearing sentiment like that.



Edie Carter Garners Prestigious Mead Award

A gifted professor of mathematics, Edie Carter nevertheless might yield to a calculator if she's ever inclined to tally up the profusion of notes, cards and letters that students pour into her office.

Thank-you notes, culmination announcements and other unsolicited personal greetings pile up on Carter's desk each semester, a towering reflection of the profound and extensive impact she has on students. Yet they constitute only a fraction of the rationale behind her selection for AC's highest faculty accolade.

Carter in May was named the 2014 recipient of the prestigious John F. Mead Faculty Excellence Award.

"Edie is truly a role model to many," Dr. Kathy Wetzel, assistant dean of arts and sciences, said. "She is a phenomenal teacher who is greatly admired by students and faculty, alike."

Carter is the coordinator of developmental math and schedules classes and oversees faculty who serve about 1,500 students each semester. The veteran mathematician also supervises the Math Testing Center, and she teaches a full complement of classes of her own.

Because her students so consistently achieve success, expressions of thanks—heaps of cards and letters—have become the norm.

"I get so many cards that say 'I'm getting pinned' or 'I had you for beginning math and now I'm graduating,'" Carter said. "It's very gratifying."

Though students can and do successfully seek her out on campus as often as six days a week, Carter also is a familiar face throughout the community. She serves as vice president of marketing for the Golden Spread Council of Boy Scouts of America and serves on the Community Prayer Breakfast committee. She also is active on the Tascosa High School Hall of Fame committee and in Bible Study Fellowship.

As the 2014 recipient, Carter receives a plaque, \$1,000, and a paid trip to a teaching seminar or professional meeting in the year ahead.

"I am humbled, honored and grateful," Carter said. "Working at AC, I have been blessed to be surrounded by so many people who are committed to academic excellence. We are better because we work so well together."



CURTAIN CALL FOR PAUL

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He came to Amarillo College as a student, an unheralded freshman, and departed decades later as its 13th president—heralded indeed—an AC odyssey that came at last to terminus Aug. 1 when Dr. Paul Matney officially retired.

Matney enjoyed a 42-year career in higher education, the final 35 right here at AC, where he served as president or acting president since 2008. He previously was an AC instructor, professor, associate vice president and dean.

Prior to his leave-taking, Matney was honored by co-workers and College supporters at a pair of farewell functions July 1 on the Washington Street Campus. Many turned out to bid him fond adieu.

“I love Amarillo College, and I mean that in the deepest sense of the word,” Matney said. “I will follow AC with a keen interest and enthusiasm. I wish for each of you only the very best.”





Campus Facilities Named for Joyner and Daniel

The Board of Regents paid unanimous tribute in May to a pair of past Amarillo College leaders by voting to attach their iconic names—Louise Daniel and Dr. Bud Joyner—to selected campus facilities.

The newly remodeled meeting room on the first floor of the CUB on the Washington Street Campus henceforth will be known as the Louise Daniel Room. The laurel was conferred posthumously on the twice-elected Regent who chaired the Board before her passing in 2003.

The other christening enacted by Regents honors Joyner, the College's lone President Emeritus who served two non-consecutive terms as president (1992-1999 and 2002-2003) and spearheaded AC's successful \$26 million bond issue of 1994, the genesis of AC's Downtown Campus. The newly dubbed Bud Joyner Auditorium will grace the Downtown Campus in perpetuity.

Joyner, who Regents named President Emeritus in 2004, has since served or led numerous civic organizations, from the Amarillo Area Foundation to the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce. The Amarillo Globe-News named him its Man of the Year in 2012.

Daniel, who chaired the Board of Regents before illness compelled her to resign in 2003, was a highly involved, longtime educator and a staunch advocate of the College. A 1951 graduate of AC and its 2003 Distinguished Alumna, she also served on the Amarillo Community Development Advisory Committee, thereby participating in the creation of the Tyler Street Resource Center.



This meeting room in the CUB is now the Louise Daniel Room.

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Accolades

Among his final acts as president, Dr. Paul Matney singled out four especially dedicated members of the AC workforce to receive President's Special Achievement Awards—two from the music faculty and two from the President's Office.



Dr. Matney with Brenda Sadler, left, and Lori Merriman.



Dr. Matney with Dr. Jim Rauscher, left, and Dr. Steve Weber.

Matney honored his executive secretary, **Lori Merriman**, and his executive assistant, **Brenda Sadler**, both for their supreme commitment to the smooth operation of the office; he then lauded **Dr. Jim Rauscher**, professor of music, and **Dr. Steve Weber**, chair of the Music Department, for their passionate support of the College and music at the College and within the community.

AC Regents selected **Bob Austin**, vice president of student affairs, to serve as interim president until culmination of the search for Dr. Paul Matney's successor. Austin is serving in that

capacity and will do so at least until Aug. 26, when Regents take their next vote.

Lynae' Jacob, who chairs the Speech and Theatre Arts Department, has been named a UIL state judge for theatre (one-act plays) for a second time in as many years—2014-2015—and she has also been selected again to serve as a regional judge. The UIL will use her expertise in the 4A and 5A regional mix.

Marcia Julian, instructor of nursing, MSN, RN, has had a manuscript accepted for publication in the journal *Nursing Made Incredibly Easy*. It is titled "Caring for a patient with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease."

Linda Pitner, general manager of Panhandle PBS, recently was re-elected to a second, one-year term as chair of the Texas Public Broadcasting Association, which oversees collaboration of the 12 independent public television stations across Texas.

Jill Gibson, assistant professor of speech and mass communications, has been named inaugural coordinator of the newly named Matney Mass Media Program. "I am incredibly honored ... but I'm just part of the team," Gibson said. "The biggest honor is having Dr. Matney's name associated with our program."

Betty Ray, mailroom clerk and reigning Classified Employee of the Year, was honored Aug. 12 by Texans Caring for Texans during a ceremony at West Texas A&M University. The initiative bestows awards to employees from state agencies who make an especially positive impact through their work. Note: **Dr. Paul Matney** gave the keynote address.

Hawthorne Chosen to Lead Transition to Energy Efficiency



Hefty energy costs are unavoidable in the day-to-day operation of an entity as large and widespread as Amarillo College; however, effective strategies to enhance energy efficiency can translate into sizable savings.

To that end, the AC Board of Regents recently entered into a partnership with Cenergistic, an award-winning Texas-based energy-conservation company which advocates a behavior-based approach and estimates the College can save upwards of \$2.9 million over the next 10 years—above the cost of program implementation and without making any new capital investments.

To spearhead the proactive, multi-campus initiative, AC has hired Terry Hawthorne, an energy specialist with senior management

experience at Xcel Energy. Hawthorne, who had served as Xcel's jurisdictional business energy consultant since 2011, officially joined the AC workforce as energy specialist on July 28.

"This is an exciting opportunity in which the challenge is to determine the optimum energy resources we need to get the job done," Hawthorne said. "There are big changes we can make and small ones, and everyone who works at the College needs to understand that even by making small changes in our behavior, we can make a very big difference in the amount of energy we use, without sacrificing comfort or productivity."

Hawthorne will work irregular hours, auditing buildings day or night and especially during down times—over weekends and holidays. He is also charged with informing the AC workforce about the best practices that have made Cenergistic a national leader in energy-conservation programs.