



# Plugged in

FACULTY & STAFF NEWSLETTER



## DIRECTORY



### BUILDING NUMBER / NAME

- |                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 FMC - FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CENTER | 12 SSC - STUDENT SERVICE CENTER       |
| 2 BCS - BIBLE CHAIR OF THE SOUTHWEST | 13 RUSS - RUSSELL HALL                |
| 3 BBC - BAPTIST BIBLE CHAIR          | 14 WSC - WARE STUDENT COMMONS         |
| 4 ORDW - ORDWAY HALL                 | 15 CUB - COLLEGE UNION BUILDING       |
| 5 DUTT - DUTTON HALL                 | 16 WARR - WARREN HALL                 |
| 6 DURR - DURRETT HALL                | 17 SCIE - SCIENCE LABORATORY BUILDING |
| 7 ENGR - ENGINEERING BUILDING        | 18 CFC - CARTER CENTER                |
| 8 EXTH - EXPERIMENTAL HALL           |                                       |

ADN PROGRAM GARNERS  
A STATE COMMENDATION

EMPLOYEE TURNOUT BUOYS  
AC CARES VOLUNTEER DAY

COLLEGE NAMED FINALIST  
FOR THECB STAR AWARD

\$2.6 MILLION GRANT TO HELP  
STREAMLINE DEV. EDUCATION

FALL 2015  
VOLUME VIII





# Adherence to Goals is a Recipe for Greatness

By Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart  
Amarillo College President

**A**marillo College is a good place, full of good people, doing good work. Yet, we face some challenges, not all of our making.

Our budget and enrollment reductions have forced us to rethink our approach to recruiting, scheduling, advising, educating, and graduating our students. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

The ultimate measure of Amarillo College employees will not be in our past successes or current challenges. Our measure will be how we respond to the needs of our students.

We, you and I, must put students above self and community above College. We must rebuild our systems and our jobs to ensure students complete what they start. We have established 5 goals to help us measure up.

## Goal #1: Completion:

- Improve persistence
- Increase completers (certificates, degrees, transfer)
- Decrease time-to-completion

## Goal #2: Align with Labor Market Demands:

- Graduates obtain well-paid jobs
- Graduates perform well as employees

## Goal #3: Increased Learning:

- Increase student engagement

- Increase performance on student learning outcomes
- Adjust programs and courses based on competencies

## Goal #4: Equity Gains:

- Increase enrollment of sub-populations
- Increase completion of any sub-populations

## Goal #5: Fiscal Effectiveness:

- Innovative
- Entrepreneurial
- Responsible

Systemically and effectively meeting these goals will ensure we measure up during this confusing time. We have students who need us. We live in a community that depends on us.

Amarillo College is a good place, full of good people, doing good work.

However, a John D. Rockefeller quotation frames the journey before us: “Don’t be afraid to give up the good to go for the great.” We can be a great place, full of great people, doing great work. When we focus our work on the five goals, greatness emerges—it lies just around the corner. When we focus on our fears rather than our goals, settling for “good” will ensure we never measure up.

Hold tight. Tough times never last. Tough people do. Greatness is coming.

We will measure up. We can do this. No excuses. 



## Wow Team Challenge Finalists

The President’s Cabinet has selected the final 10 teams in the 2015/2016 Wow Team Challenge. These 10 teams will present their ideas on Tuesday, Dec. 1 in front of a panel of community members who have been selected by President Russell Lowery-Hart.

Finalists (the top three teams) will be announced Dec. 4. Those teams will present their ideas at the spring General Assembly in early February, where the winner will be announced.

These teams remain in the running for the \$10,000 grand prize:

### Ballzy Badger Buddies

*Idea: Scholarship and Payment Plan Changes*

### Bodacious Badgers

*Idea: Pay for 15, Get 3 free (we’re talking hours)*

### Brainy Turtles

*Idea: Cool School – The AC Way!*

### Crouching Tiger, Striking Badger

*Idea: WOW – Week of Welcome*

### Eager Beavers

*Idea: AC’s STAR (Student Text and Reminder)*

### Mostly Optimistic Octopi a La Mode

*Idea: Virtual Mentoring Program*

### Radical Rabbits

*Idea: Finals Smackdown!*

### Wascally Wolverines

*Idea: Lil’ Badgers: School for our Pre-Schoolers*

### Wiffy Weasels

*Idea: Wowber – Student Transportation*

### Wowed Walruses

*Idea: BUGL – Before You Get Lost (way-finding tool)*



## THECB Names AC Finalist For a 2015 Star Award

**A**C launched its No Excuses Poverty Initiative to help a growing number of economically disadvantaged students better their odds of achieving their dreams.

Gains have been made, confirmation of which came Oct. 12 when the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board released its list of 2015 Star Award finalists.

The short list of seven includes AC's *No Excuses Poverty Initiative: Creating a Systemic Approach to Overcoming Poverty Barriers in Higher Education*.

Winners will be revealed Nov. 20.

Long a bellwether of successfully innovative endeavors across the Texas higher-education landscape, the Star-Award program was established in 2001 to recognize exceptional programmatic efforts.

"We're thrilled by this recognition because it means our systemic

approach to helping students overcome poverty-related barriers is making a difference right here at home," Jordan Herrera, social services coordinator, said.



Five distinct sectors comprise AC's poverty initiative: Social Services, Food Pantry, Mentoring Program, Career and Employment Services, and Predictive Modeling.

AC has demonstrated gains over the past three years in the percentage of students who: complete initial college-level courses; persist from one semester to the next; complete courses with a grade of C or better; and either earn a certificate or degree or successfully transfer credits elsewhere.

Should AC capture a Star Award in November, it will be the second one brought home to Amarillo in the past six years. AC's Mathematics Outreach Center claimed the prestigious accolade in 2009. **AC**



## Peer-Mentoring Attracts \$100,000

A peer-mentoring program credited with helping improve success last year among first-time students at AC has received a welcome endorsement from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

AC is the recipient of a \$100,000 grant courtesy of the THECB's Work-Study Student Mentorship Program.

The funds will provide for continuation over the next two years of the peer-mentoring program AC successfully implemented in 2014 to establish a system of students helping students, not just academically, but in navigating all aspects of their first collegiate year.

AC employed 11 peer mentors part time last year. Their primary focus was mentoring students in First-Year Seminar (FYS) classes, a core requirement for first-time students. By year's end, the percentage of FYS students to achieve grades of C or better had increased by 5.3 percent.



## Hot Stuff!

There was a good bit of heat in evidence at this year's SECC East Campus Chili Cook-Off, contained in the fare, that is.

The event raised \$960 in all, a sum that was earmarked for the AC Food Pantry by the team that captured the People's Choice Award for Best Chili—the Business Office.

The Judge's Choice for Best Chili went to the President's Cabinet, and the judges named Employee Development/Human Resources the winner of Best Theme.

On the SECC Committee: Bob Austin, Eric Wallace, Heather Atchley, Ernesto Olmos, Pam Madden, Edie Carter, Nancy Brent, Kelly Murphy, Mary Dodson, Richie Garza, and Rebecca Archer.



Scott Rankin, director of the Mortuary Science Program, and Andrea Farias, senior staff assistant for Intervention Programs, dish up a spicy cup of chili.



## Schrocks Among Clans Making AC a Family Affair

One certainty that's increasingly obscured by the proliferation of first-generation collegians is this: for many clans hereabout, attendance at AC is akin to a family affair.

For one thing, it is not unusual for individuals to meet their spouses while attending AC. For another, offspring of alumni commonly become legacies and, after starting families of their own, they end up supplying the College with the rudiments of yet another scholarly brood.

Success literally breeds success at AC.

One such story with kindred appeal comes from Alice Schrock, staff assistant for continuing education. A native Amarilloan, Alice married Bob Schrock, and the two traveled extensively throughout his lengthy tenure with the Air Force. Then they settled down here in her hometown, where Bob attended AC on the G.I. Bill.

All five Schrock children followed in their father's AC footsteps. Robb, the eldest, joined the Navy after just one year, but all the others completed degrees at AC. Thanks to grants and scholarships—this was before Alice joined the AC workforce and became eligible for family tuition waivers—they emerged debt free and more than prepared for WTAMU, where each of the final four received at least a bachelor's degree, some a master's.

"AC gives you a definite advantage and the perfect foundation," said Alice. "It's not only affordable, but it bridges the gap from high school to maturity. Most of our kids were involved in Student Government, too. It motivated



them, helped them to succeed and helped them learn the importance of service.

"Student organizations really kept them engaged."

Two of the Schrocks even *became* engaged at AC. Both Christopher and AnnMarie found their spouses at the College, and today, in the finest tradition of the family affair, AnnMarie's daughters are taking gymnastics and ballet at AC.

While Alice and Bob's youngest son, David, remains single, their youngest daughter, Teresa, married a fellow who actually attended Texas Tech.

"We've forgiven him for that," Alice jokes, "but I think his high school counselor needs a talking to." **AC**



## That's a Wrap

Doug Adcock, director of the Emergency Medical Services Professions Program, was pleased early this semester to call attention to the new artwork—known as a vehicle wrap—that adorns the AC ambulance.

The ambulance was obtained in 2014 on the strength of a Perkins Grant, but funding for the artwork that distinguishes it as AC's own took a spell longer to amass.

It is the first new ambulance ever acquired by the program, which until 2014 relied on a 1987 model that was well-used even before AC acquired it. This new model can be used to stage mock medical and trauma scenarios



in which "patients" undergo triage and treatment before being realistically transported back to the Program's headquarters on the West Campus—transported in style, that is, thanks to the new eye-pleasing wrap.





## Texas Board of Nursing Commends ADN Program



The Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program today can be labeled nothing short of commendable—this according to the Texas Board of Nursing, which on Oct. 27 released annual data that, while preliminary, is of utmost importance to nursing education in Texas.

The data reveals that 94.78 percent (109 of 115) of AC's program graduates from October 2014 to September 2015 passed the national licensure exam on their initial attempt, propelling AC's ADN Program once again into the upper echelon of ADN programs statewide.

Only 17 of the state's 69 ADN programs achieved at least a 90-percent pass rate, and with an exemplary first-time pass rate of 94.78 percent (the College's best showing since 2004), AC easily placed among the top 10.

Even more commendable, however, is the rapid about-face punctuated by AC's latest pass-rate data. The Board of Nursing in January 2015 placed AC's Program on Full Approval with Warning status following back-to-back years in which AC's annual first-time pass rates fell below 80 percent.

But beginning in 2016, just one year following the Board's warning, AC officially returns not only to Full Approval status, but garners a coveted Board commendation along the way.

"We owe our rapid turnaround in first-time NCLEX-RN pass rates to two primary factors," Dr. Richard Pullen, dean of nursing and ADN Program director, said. "First, enhanced teaching and testing and intensive remediation from a dedicated faculty provided a strong foundation for student success. Second, diligent studying by our graduates played a major role in their success."

Dr. Janice Hooper, consultant for education with the Texas Board of Nursing, readily endorsed AC's efforts.

"The faculty were diligent in implementing measures to improve the pass rate," Hooper said. "Board staff commend the director and faculty on this achievement!"

AC's historically superlative ADN Program, it should be noted, is no stranger to Board of Nursing commendations. This latest is the seventh one to come AC's way since 2004. **AC**



## Sex-a-Peel?

President Russell Lowery-Hart was the unenviable winner of a fundraiser conducted this Fall by the Student Government Association.

The finalists were Heather Atchley, director of student life, and the president. Votes were cast in the form of monetary contributions, and the so-called winner was required to don this humorous costume and do a little dance at the Clock Tower.

Dr. Lowery-Hart obligingly danced and made a couple of other appearances around the Washington Street Campus, but then the banana split.





# Volunteers Impact Community

The first AC Cares Volunteer Day drew about 200 employees, family and friends to service on behalf of eight charitable organizations throughout Amarillo. A great deal was accomplished.

The College on Oct. 24 made a meaningful difference for:

- ACTS Community Resource Center
- Habitat for Humanity
- Senior Citizen's Center
- Faith City Mission
- High Plains Food Bank
- The Children's Home
- Salvation Army
- Red Cross

Much was cleaned, repaired, built or painted. Here are just a few examples of AC's impact that day: Children's Home estimates AC saved them more than \$3,000 in labor costs by trimming trees, etc.; Food Bank credits AC with salvaging 11,916 meals from 14,300 pounds of food; Red Cross reports the installation of 81 smoke alarms within the community.

The workers gathered for a picnic to cap the eventful day.







## AC Granted \$2.6 Million for Developmental Education

**A**C naturally aspires to vastly increase retention and success rates among the growing number of students who arrive under-prepared for college-level coursework and are obliged to take not-for-credit developmental classes in reading, writing and/or math.

Fortunately the U.S. Department of Education fully intends to help.

The Department of Education in September awarded AC a Title V grant that will provide \$525,000 annually for the next five years—a total award of \$2.6 million—to facilitate the College’s plan to overhaul its entire system of developmental education.

The windfall will benefit all high-need students at AC, where failure rates among students in developmental courses range from 25 to 60 percent.

Among the many innovative solutions put forth in AC’s Title V grant application are plans to redesign and then firmly link developmental curricula to career pursuits; establish a centralized advising center; and implement a fast-track test-preparation program that promotes student success. Revamped teaching strategies that promote interaction and collaboration also received mention.



“This grant validates what we are doing. Title V recipients are typically few and selected from hundreds of applicants,” said Dr. Deborah Vess, vice president of academic affairs. “The DOE understands that we’ve already come a long way and that our plan is viable.”

About 70 percent of students who enroll at AC require at least one developmental course. Such courses historically have been non-credit classes, but AC’s Title V plan will aim to link developmental education to credit-bearing courses where students will receive opportunities to apply the skills they are learning in developmental courses.

“We keep students in a remedial pipeline too long,” Vess said. “Developmental sequences are too long and have not achieved the goal of getting students into credit-bearing contexts.

“We will redesign our courses, teach them more creatively, engage our students more, and shorten the sequence,” she said. “And as our developmental students succeed, they will also be completing courses for college credit that will apply toward a real outcome, a certificate or degree.” **AC**



## Transfer Club Steers Students to Universities – Literally

Thousands of students attend AC each year intending to use the school as a viable springboard to universities that offer the advanced degrees they crave

But uncertainties muddle pathways. Which university will be the perfect fit? Which credit hours will be accepted?

Such uncertainties led a couple of administrators – Heather Atchley and Ernesto Olmos – to spearhead something new this semester, a bar-raising student organization known as the AC Transfer Club. It is catching on fast, with 125 members and counting.

“We want students to be successful, not just at AC, but wherever they go,” said Atchley, director of student life, whose notion it was to fund the club by discontinuation of the pricy Distinguished Lecture series.

Naturally AC always has made transfer information readily available – even employs a transfer coordinator in Olmos, associate director of advising. Olmos coordinates events that bring recruiters to AC campuses.

But the Transfer Club goes literally miles beyond that; they loaded up 18 club members in October and drove to Lubbock for a first-hand look at Texas Tech. They met key personnel,



had questions answered, got a glimpse of the future.

Olmos, as club sponsor, invites all AC students to email him at [efolmos@actx.edu](mailto:efolmos@actx.edu). That’s all it takes to become a member of the club and be privy to emails detailing upcoming events, such as a November visit to West Texas A&M University that’s in the works.





## AC Recognizes Exceptional Employees



### Administrator of Year

**D**r. Richard Pullen is no stranger to awards that testify to his prowess as an educator, but this year his administrative effectiveness has entered the spotlight.

Pullen, dean of nursing and director of the Associate Degree Nursing Program, is the 2015 Administrator of the Year. He was described at General Assembly as “a consummate professional whose demeanor enables success,” and a person who “believes that the foundation of success of any program is accomplished by taking care of people first.”

Pullen, himself a graduate of the AC Nursing Program, joined the faculty here in 1994. By 1999, he had captured the John F. Mead Faculty Excellence Award, and a mere decade thereafter he was named a Piper Professor by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation—as prestigious as it gets in Texas.

Yet Pullen today is an administrator, not only a dean, but the director of an ADN program that just this fall received a prestigious commendation from the Texas Board of Nursing.

“I’m very fortunate, honored and humbled,” Pullen said. “I simply try to provide direction, guidance and encouragement, putting people first, all of which I hope results in student success, which is really what it’s all about.”



### Classified Employee of Year

**T**his year’s top classified employee was characterized at General Assembly as having “constant positivity and kindness” that rubs off on coworkers and students, alike, “a true role model for Amarillo College.”

Jo Beth Hill, administrative assistant for student affairs, who consistently arrives each day at the Washington Street Campus before most anyone else, is that role model.

“I am so lucky, so blessed, because I feel like I have the best job at AC,” Hill said. “It’s a great day any time you get a chance to help students. I love working with them and helping them.”

Nominations supporting her for the award stated that Hill’s customer service skills are so exemplary that examples of her personal touch have been incorporated into the training process for new employees throughout the Division of Student Affairs. Nominators also praised her adherence to the Culture of Caring and how she makes those she encounters, students or employees, feel like family.

Not stated but also true: she bakes award-winning pies.

Hill is a 13-year veteran of AC. “I’m extremely honored,” she said. “I have the nicest bosses, people who I genuinely love and respect. It’s such an honor to work with them.”





## FACULTY AND STAFF ACCOLADES



### Penelope Davies Named Piper Professor Nominee

**Penelope Davies**, instructor of mathematics, has been selected as AC's nominee this year for recognition as a Piper Professor. Each year, the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation selects 10 educators from among nominations submitted by each college or university in Texas, teachers who demonstrate outstanding achievement and dedication to their profession.

Davies, long integral to the success of AC's Math Outreach Center, joined the College in 2009 as a learning specialist. She was nominated by AC faculty. Official announcement of awards will be made May 2, 2016, and winners will receive cash awards of \$5,000.

**Jason Norman**, director of advising, has been invited to serve on the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Core Values for Academic Advising Task Force. The task force is charged with reexamining and rewriting the NACADA Core Values that provide a framework for professional practice.

**Eric Wallace**, previously coordinator of intervention programs and specialized training, has been named director of Criminal Justice Programs. He succeeds Tomi Gray, who is now dean of continuing education.

**Hank Blanchard**, coordinator of Law Enforcement Programs, recently oversaw an effort that culminated in a 100-percent pass rate among graduates of AC's Panhandle Regional Law Enforcement Academy. Moreover, it was the Academy's 14th consecutive class to achieve a perfect 100-percent pass rate.

**Lyndi Shadbolt**, associate professor of nursing, this semester completed her master's degree of nursing at Western Governor's University. The MSN is her second master's degree. She previously earned a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies from West Texas A&M.

## Employment Milestones

The following faculty and staff have qualified for length-of-service pins since the Spring *Plugged In*:

### CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

#### SEPTEMBER

Tim Hicks, 25 years  
Robert Adams, 20  
John Gonzales, 20  
Suzette Overstreet, 15  
Harriet Brewer, 15  
Harvey Caughey, 10  
Homero Campos, 10  
Melanie Gray, 10  
Brian Frank, 10  
Sandra Thomas, 5

#### OCTOBER

Diana Steward, 20 years  
Donna Pergrem, 15  
Karen Craghead, 15  
Lori Lane, 10  
Dale Stanton, 10  
Kevin Moore, 10  
Berthe Kajibwami, 10  
Adam Gonzales, 5  
Olga Prieto, 5  
Bryan Perryman, 5

#### NOVEMBER

Linda Hendrick, 15 years  
Joy Brennenman, 10  
David Ruches, 10  
Karen Christian, 5

### ADMINISTRATORS

#### NOVEMBER

Melodie Graves, 5 years

### FACULTY

#### SEPTEMBER

Judy Isbell, 30 years

#### OCTOBER

Teresa Smoot, 10 years  
Dewayne Higgs 5



## Martha's Colorful Collection Grows



Like a lot of folks, Martha Ainslie was jazzed when silicone Culture of Caring bracelets began popping up at AC, but for a different reason than most.

Martha, four years a member of the custodial team, has been collecting such message-bearing wristlets since 2007. Dozens of the colorful bracelets hang in her kitchen and advocate everything from Amarillo Crime Stoppers and the American Red Cross to SpongeBob SquarePants and the Texas Longhorns.

She even has one that states “Boys R Stupid!”

“That’s one of my favorites,” she says, eyes a-twinkle.

Her true favorite bracelet actually says “Favorite One.” It was a gift from her

late brother, whose church group had them made.

Martha started her collection while tidying up following an after-school program; she discovered a couple that had been discarded and took them home. She’s been stockpiling bracelets ever since, and AC, what with resource fairs and student organizations, has been a great source.

She wears them upon occasion, too, like the red, white and blue bracelet she donned for Constitution Day. When the latest examples cropped up—espousing Family, Fun, Innovation, Yes and Wow—she naturally was tickled.

“They’re colorful and they stand for something good,” Martha says. “One says Fun, and I do have fun just collecting them.” **AC**



## Names Affixed to Honor Benefactors

AC expressed its greatest appreciation for the generosity of some particularly steadfast benefactors by attaching their names to a building, a center and a mall.

In a ceremony conducted on Sept. 29th, signage on the Washington Street Campus was unveiled in commemoration of the Ware Student Commons, the Natalie Buckthal Tutoring Center (located within), and the open-air Oeschger Family Mall (adjacent).

The lead gift of \$1 million was given by Amarillo National Bank, owned by the Ware Family. ANB Chairman Richard Ware II says the bank views

the donation as an investment in Amarillo’s future.

Repurposing the library building to serve as a student commons has long been high on the College’s wish list, and renovations to the first floor began over the summer.

Once the transformation is complete—sometime next spring—students who enter the Ware Student Commons will be immersed in the vanguard of the College’s No Excuses initiatives, a one-stop nerve center for student success. It will house the Natalie Buckthal Tutoring Center, named for the late Natalie Buckthal, a longtime member of the AC



faculty and of boards governing the AC Foundation and the Amarillo Museum of Art.

To access the Ware Student Commons, visitors likely will traverse the updated mall area east of the building, a span henceforth to be known as the Oeschger Family Mall. Sharon served three terms on the Board of Regents and has chaired the AC Foundation Board.





## Dental Assisting Achieves National Accreditation



The Dental Assisting Program was formally granted national accreditation in September, a testament to the perseverance of program facilitators and a milestone presently shared by only seven other such programs in Texas.

The accreditation, seven years in duration, was granted by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), which operates under the American Dental Association to establish educational standards of ethics and excellence that help ensure the public receives care from skilled professionals.

Graduates of AC's Dental Assisting Program now will qualify to sit for a national-certification exam that, upon

passage, grants them eligibility to work anywhere in the country.

However, it is because most AC graduates pursue careers in the Texas Panhandle that Program Director Dana Scott set out more than three years ago to meet the rigorous accreditation challenge; CODA's endorsement will most greatly impact the community served by the College.

"We are obligated to our students to provide them with the best quality education possible, and we're obligated to our dental employers to provide the best possible employees," Scott said. "When we do that, we fulfill our ultimate obligation, which is to continuously improve the dental health of our community." **AC**



## Incog-neato



These costumed characters turned out Oct. 30th to participate in the AC Wellness Committee's Costume Fun Run at Carter Fitness Center.

Besides getting plenty of exercise, they collectively raised \$110 for the AC Food Pantry.



## Rolling Out the Welcome Mat

Greeters blanketed the Washington Street Campus during the first days of the fall semester, welcoming students and helping them find their way.

It was an opportunity to get some fresh air and meet students, and dozens signed up for one shift, two, or even three. Other volunteers, meanwhile, pitched in to help out in the Financial Aid Office and the Assistance Center.



*Sarah Davis of the Office of Vice President of Academic Affairs, helps a student decipher a class schedule.*



*Kathy Roth, cash management coordinator in the Business Office, steers a student around a construction site.*