Volume IV Summer 2012

AC Adds Social Services, Career Center

Student Success Catalyst for two Newest Resources

Trudy Banner's phone began ringing even before she was fully settled into her new office on the first floor of the Student Service Center. Among those initial calls was a mother's plea for children's shoes.

Banner soon realized she had better hit the ground running—that taking baby steps just wouldn't do.

Banner is social services coordinator at AC. It's a new, grant-funded position with a No-Excuses bent: an advisor specifically charged with advocating for students whose life issues threaten their academic goals.

"We want students to be successful," said Banner, previously lead counselor at Caprock High School. "Too many students start but don't finish—due to child-care issues, utility bills, medical problems, whatever. We've got to try and get them through the rough patches."

Banner wants those of us who cross paths with students who are at crossroads of their own to not only refer those students to her office in the Advising Center, but to let her know they may appear at her doorstep—Ext. 5441 or trbanner@actx.edu.

"If I have some background when they come in it lets the student know the referrer cared enough about them to



Trudy Banner, left, will coordinate social services efforts at AC, while Renée Burnam directs Career and Employment Services.

give me a heads up," Banner said.
"Trust and confidence skyrocket when that happens, and that goes a long way toward a positive solution.

"I know I can't fix everything, but I know the system and the resources that are available. I'm at least one person who can listen, and sometimes that in itself is the main thing students with life issues need."

To be sure, life issues have a way of impeding one's journey through higher education. But AC has other students who do finish yet discover their paths don't necessarily align with the careers they seek.

Because AC embraces the No Excuses philosophy, another new,

grant-funded resource was added over the summer: Career and Employment Services.

Located on the first floor of Lynn Library, the career center is under the direction of Renée Burnam, whose 19 years with AISD includes seven years as the district's career guidance counselor.

Career and Employment Services is a comprehensive career-planning service for students and alumni, alike.

"This is an on-campus destination for students and alumni, a place where they can work toward their careerachievement goals with someone who is focused solely on that," Burnam said.

(Please see SUCCESS, Page 2)

You've Done More with Less, Deserve Raise



By Dr. Paul Matney
Amarillo College President

As usual, summer is passing too quickly, and before we know it, fall classes will signal another academic year at Amarillo College.

The AC agenda has been busy this summer with classes for more than

3,700 students, budget planning, final preparations for our important SACSCOC re-affirmation of accreditation visit in September, and submission of our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) which proposes a new First Year Seminar course. Other summer projects include design planning for the new AC Hinkson Memorial Campus in Hereford and the new Career and Technical Center at the Moore County Campus in Dumas.

A budget workshop was presented to the Board of Regents in June. Our <u>budget priorities</u> for next year include:

- · Offsetting significant state appropriation reductions
- · Funding student success initiatives
- · Employee raises
- SACS Re-affirmation
- · Several new positions in growth areas
- Technology upgrades

To fund these priorities, it was necessary to develop the following <u>budget strategies</u>: tuition and fee increase (adopted by Regents last March), an ad valorem tax rate increase, use of reserves, and budget re-alignment to improve student success.

Soon, Regents will set the tax rate for next year. Unlike last year when the tax rate remained flat, this year we are recommending a 5.34% increase in ad valorem taxes over the current tax rate. The increase is 6.15% over the effective tax rate. With the proposed tax increase, the average

Message from the President

homeowner in Amarillo would pay \$11.48 more in AC taxes this year than last year.

Like for most of the nation, the economic challenges in Texas brought on by the recession of 2008 meant position reductions and modest salary increases during the past three years. I'm pleased to report we are recommending a 3.5% salary increase next year for all full-time employees employed on or before June 1, 2012. During the past couple of years, we've asked you to do more with less, and you deserve a raise.

This month at their regular meeting on Aug. 28, our Regents will adopt the tax rate and the 2012–2013 budget.

I am most appreciative to our budget managers across the campuses who worked diligently to submit their budgets with cost savings in mind. And I am grateful to our senior leadership for their work in balancing this budget.

I'm proud that throughout the budget process this year all of us remained focused on our #1 critical priority—<u>improving student success and completion.</u> With our No Excuses Plan we are committed to "moving the needle" on student success! If you wish to hear more about the budget process, priorities, and strategies, Terry Berg and I will present a detailed report on the budget at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Aug. 23 in the Oak Room of the College Union Building. All employees are invited. The program will also be streamed live on your desktop.

I'm convinced nobody does a better job of providing quality educational opportunities for students at an affordable cost than Amarillo College. On Aug. 27, with the freshness and excitement of a new academic year, we'll once again begin the important work of what we do best—serve our students. I wish each of you a great year!

SUCCESS: continued from Page 1

"We believe in getting people into jobs that provide a livable wage, and we believe in finding ways to reduce barriers that keep people from achieving their career goals. We want this to be the sort of asset that both propels our students and helps sustain our community."

Burnam will be assisted by Susie Regan, who joined AC in July and most recently served in the Residence Life Department at Elmhurst College, Illinois. Margie Vitale, senior advising associate in the Advising Center, will provide career assessments. Reach the center at Ext. 5147.

The career center will foster connections with employers, graduate schools, professional schools and internship opportunities. It will present special programs and offer job-search coaching and résumé assistance.

Texas Workforce Solutions has a presence within the facility, and area employers will be encouraged to conduct interviews on-site.

"The bottom line is we need better outcomes," Bob Austin, vice president of student services, said. "In both cases—social services and career services—we've evaluated our students' needs and deemed it necessary to scale up the services we're offering.

"We need to be connecting students to the jobs for which they are being prepared," he said, "and we know that life issues are the foremost barrier to student success, so we must strive to connect those in need with all available social supports."

And just so you know, Trudy Banner found new shoes for that mother's child, the same day.

Rowh to Fill Mentor's Shoes

Mark Rowh understands better than most the spacious nature of the shoes he has been asked to fill as dean of the Health Sciences Division; he got his first birds'-eye view of them as a radiography student at AC in the late 1970s.

Those shoes belong to Bill Crawford, one of Rowh's first teachers here, who retired Aug. 17 after 44 years serving AC, the final two as dean.

"Bill was a mentor to me when I attended AC," Rowh said. "I admired him then for being so intelligent, and I will always admire him for the things he has been to me and to the College and the community.

"Bill Crawford leaves a legacy that is tried and true. He will be missed, for his

leadership, his sense of humor and his kindness," Rowh said.

Rowh, program director of nuclear medicine at AC since 2002, was named dean on Aug. 9. The announcement punctuated a three-month search among candidates from throughout the country, according to Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, vice president for academic affairs.

"I am thrilled to welcome Mark to the academic affairs leadership team," Lowery-Hart said.

Rowh joined the AC faculty in 2002 as director of the Nuclear Medicine Program. Among Rowh's first responsibilities as dean of health sciences will be to undertake a search for his own replacement as nuclear medicine program director.



Mark Rowh was named dean Aug. 9.

See the last page of Plugged In for a glimpse of Bill Crawford's festive retirement party.

Faculty & Staff Accolades



AC award winners Kelly Murphy and Bruce Moseley are flanked by State Rep. John Smithee and Phil Wilson, executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation, at Texans Caring for Texans.

Shortly after the spring issue of *Plugged In* was released, **Bruce Moseley** became the recipient of the 2012 John F. Mead Faculty Excellence Award. The award was announced at May commencement, and no fewer than two dozen nominations supported Moseley, director of the Paralegal Program, for AC's highest faculty honor. Also, Mosely and **Kelly Murphy**, graduation specialist in the Registrar's Office and recipient of last year's Classified Employee of the Year Award, were both honored Aug. 14 at the Texas Caring for Texans awards ceremony at West Texas A&M University. This honor goes to employees of state agencies who demonstrate exceptional work performance and/or community service.

It was also back in May when **Mike Duval**, chief of the AC Police Department, emerged victorious in his campaign for Potter County constable, Precinct 3. Duval will retire from AC on Aug. 31 and assume his duties with the county thereafter.



Roman-Jordan

Maury Roman-Jordan, director of outreach services at Community Link, was the recipient of the Connect Award given at the Women of Distinction luncheon for Girl Scouts of Texas Oklahoma Plains on Aug. 1 at Amarillo Botanical Gardens. Women of Distinction recognized Roman-Jordan as a "role model and potential leader for all girls."

Dr. Richard Pullen, professor of nursing, and **Lyndi Shadbolt**, associate professor of nursing, co-authored a manuscript that has been accepted for publication in the journal *Nursing Education Perspectives*. It is titled "Mentoring Faculty to Write for Publication" and is slated to appear as an article in spring 2013.



Pullen

Pullen also learned on Aug. 14 that he achieved certification in medical surgical nursing by examination through the Medical Surgical Nursing Certification Board as authorized by The Accreditation Board for Specialties in Nursing Certification. The title "**C**ertified **M**edical **S**urgical **R**egistered **N**urse" (CMSRN) is a mark of distinction in nursing practice, education and management.

Pullen and **Claudia Reed**, instructor of nursing, and **Mark E. Rowh**, dean of health sciences, produced a manuscript that is scheduled to appear as an article in the January 2013 journal *Nursing Made Incredibly Easy.* It is titled "Managing Patients with Ankylosing Spondylitis."

Two New Campuses Soon to Rise

Big changes loom large on AC terrain in both Hereford and Dumas.



A ground-breaking ceremony is set for 10 a.m. Friday, Aug. 31 for the Everett & Mabel McDougal Hinkson Memorial Campus in Hereford.



A ground-breaking event for the Career and Technical Training Center in Moore County will be sometime in October.

A ground-breaking ceremony has already been scheduled in Hereford for the Everett & Mabel McDougal Hinkson Memorial Campus. And something similar is being planned in October for the new Career and Technical Training Center that will greatly expand offerings for patrons of the Moore County Campus.

"It's going to be a hectic year and a challenging one," Bruce Cotgreave, director of the physical plant, said. "But it's an exciting time, too. Both these new buildings will be highly energy-conscious, commercial structures built to last."

The new presence in Hereford is first on the agenda, and the ceremony to break ground there will be at 10 a.m. Friday, Aug. 31 at the construction site.

The official address of the new campus will be 1115 W. 15th St., but since no such signage yet exists, those looking to attend this historic event are being directed to the 1100 block of West 15th Street, southwest of the new hospital.

"It's very exciting to be part of the growth that's happening in northwest Hereford," Daniel Esquivel, executive director of the Hereford Campus, said. "Our community is thrilled because this new location will finally give the College a traditional presence, something the people of Hereford can identify with and call their own."

AC opened its Hereford Campus in 2005 in a wing of an old elementary school and remains there today, but record enrollments have long since stretched the facility to its limits.

The new campus, which will take about a year to complete, was made possible by William C. Hanshaw's \$3 million donation last year. A resident of Scottsdale, Ariz., he asked only that campus be named in memory of his loved ones. Its 30,000 square feet will easily serve Hereford's student body, which peaked in fall 2011 at about 500.

Moore County's new building will sit on about 11 acres north of Dumas, at 115 Success Blvd., land donated by the Dumas Economic Development Corp. It will contain about 29,000 square feet for industrial training, computer labs, the expanding renewable energy program, and more.

Plans for a ground-breaking ceremony there in October are pending.

Respiratory Care Reaches Rarified Air

Achieving reaccreditation is great for any program, but it is extra special when it is granted with nary a citation or recommendation of any kind.

That's the outstanding recent result for AC's Respiratory Care Program.

Director Valerie Hansen's program was given a clean bill of health by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care, which when it meets in November will make the announcement official.

The period of reaccreditation is 2012-2022.

Twenty new students are accepted into the program each year. They receive the training necessary to become eligible for both Certified and Registered therapist exams, and that keeps the Panhandle's medical community and its clientele breathing easy.



Common Reader Author to Speak Oct. 11 in Amarillo

> See the Common Reader webpage for more details

Amarillo College will welcome author Timothy Egan on Oct. 11 for the fifth annual Common Reader program.

He will be the guest of honor at a luncheon being planned at AC, and he will deliver a public lecture at 7 p.m. in the Heritage Room at the Amarillo Civic Center.

Egan's book *The Worst Hard Time* reflects back on life on the High Plains during the Dust Bowl.

The entire community can get involved in this year's Common Reader program as AC undertakes a shoe drive like the Red Cross did during the Dust Bowl. Anyone can participate by contributing a new pair of tennis shoes that will be donated to Mission Amarillo.

Debra Avara Develops a Capital Idea

Books about Money Plant Seeds of Financial Wisdom



Money may not grow on trees, but it certainly is capable of growing elsewhere, given the right conditions.

Knowing this, Debra Avara has been planting seeds of fiscal wisdom she hopes will induce students to grow a little lettuce of their own—easing them from the salad days to their just desserts.

Avara, assistant professor of social sciences, is the author of a batch of books actually quite far removed from the garden-variety. They are meant to instill basic financial literacy in three distinct groups: high school and college students, challenged adults, and students in middle school.

"I'm not trying to be the next Suze Orman," said Avara, referencing the internationally acclaimed financial expert. "But so many young people have not been taught about money, how it can work for or against you.

"I want to impart basic information about compounding interest, about how credit cards work, about buying cars, things I wish I'd known long ago. I like to think my books reflect principles of the No Excuses philosophy adopted here at AC," she said.

Drawing from her own life experiences, and from an epiphany she had as a master's student that clarified once and for all the principles of money, Avara completed her first book in 2009. She used Lulu.com to self-publish "What WE Should Have Learned in High School about Money, Sex and Marriage."

Her students ate it up.

Pearson Learning Solutions liked it, too, and published the second edition, which is available at the AC Bookstore. A third edition focusing solely on money is forthcoming.

Avara's sister, who has a challenged adult daughter, was equally impressed. She persuaded Avara to rewrite the monetary portion of the book for a challenged audience.

Avara did just that, simplifying her message with three books of three chapters each, accompanied by workbooks. They are available on CD, too, and in Spanish. She used them in June to help orchestrate a "Money Management Workshop for Challenged Individuals" on behalf of Uniting Parents on AC's Washington Street Campus.

"Programs for challenged adults typically explain there are 10 dimes in a dollar, but not how to write a check," Avara



Debra Avara has written books she hopes will spread basic financial literacy among three unique audiences.

said. "We need to quit holding them back."

Avara's middle-school project was curiously kindled by an episode of the Ellen DeGeneres Show. It featured a school in Nevada, where about half the students are either homeless or on the brink.

So Avara wrote "The Money Maze, Don't Get Lost in the Middle!" There's also a workbook, and a Spanish version was just released.

"It was a challenge to write a book for people who have no money," Avara said, "but the same principles apply. It's about not making wrong turns people usually make."

Once it was ready at Lulu.com, Avara had a slew of books printed and shipped to Nevada.

"They are even using them to teach the parents," she said. "It's exciting to contribute in a small way."

Not *that* small a way. Avara bore the cost of printing and shipping those books.

Avara, you see, is out to enrich, not to get rich. Some believe there are bank accounts for that sort of capital, too.

Administrators Horse Around



Danielle Arias of the Moore County Campus tosses a horseshoe as Lulu Cowan, special assistant to the president, looks on.



Megan Eikner, associate director of continuing education, makes her way across the "raging river" at Mesquite Ranch.



Registrar Diane Brice, left, and M.J. Coats, continuing education consultant, celebrate the saddling of a horse.

Summer Retreat Features Challenging Team-Building Activities

How many AC administrators does it take to saddle a horse? Four if they try it at Mesquite Ranch. That's where the AC Administrators Association staged a summer retreat in June.

Mesquite Ranch is located a few miles northwest of Amarillo and provides equineassisted, team-building programs for all sorts of folks.

Quartets of AC administrators were challenged to interlock arms and saddle horses using only the two unfettered arms left dangling at the fringe of their akimbo-like formations, and the brawn was applied only in response to specific commands given by the "brains" stationed in the center.

AC's collaborative efficiencies were further tested by the grueling "raging river." It could only be crossed on feeble steppingstones fashioned from a mishmash of ranching refuse, while rascally "river snakes" enthusiastically tried to impede progress and swipe bridging gear.

Many an administrator slept well that night.



These horsemen are, from left, Jackie Smith, director of program operations at KACV, Daniel Esquivel, executive director of the Hereford Campus, Hank Blanchard, coordinator of law enforcement programs in criminal justice, and John Salazar, director of customer services. These cowboys saddled their horse in short order.

FYS...QEP...OMG!

By Jill Gibson

QEP Committee

The Problem

When they begin at Amarillo College, 85-90% of students say they intend to earn an associate's degree, earn a certificate, or transfer, according to internal data.

Three years later, less than 30% have achieved that goal.

Why are so many unsuccessful? When they arrive at AC, the majority of students lack the academic preparation and key skills and behaviors needed to ensure success. They are unfamiliar with the college culture and have not defined their educational and career goals.

"They come without a lot of confidence. They don't actually know how to study. They don't know how to communicate with the teachers. It would help a great deal if they knew expectations," said Gay Mills, office administration professor.

Reading professor Ann Hamblin agrees. "They're unrealistic. They have so many problems with employment, with maintaining their homes. They're single parents, keeping two or three jobs," Hamblin said.

AC students themselves say that they are not prepared for college.

"You have homework almost every other day, papers due this day, a quiz this day—you didn't have all that in high school. I don't think I was ready," said education major Brandon Johnson.

Undeclared major Colton Clark added, "High school does not prepare you for college at all—it's completely different."

Institutional research illustrates just why AC's first-time-in-college students are struggling. Research from 2011 shows that 67% of these students were the first in their families to attend college, and 82% of entering students required some form of remediated coursework. Furthermore, AC's first-time-in-college retention rates are around 49% each year. In other words, after one year of attendance, half the students have left school without graduating or transferring.

AC tracked students who enrolled in 2008. At the end of three years, 12.7% had graduated, 12.5% had transferred and the remaining students were no longer accounted for—they essentially 'dropped out.'

The Process

In 2009, AC faculty and staff investigated these issues and identified college readiness as a major challenge. Then, as part of the college's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Reaffirmation of Accreditation process, representatives from across AC employee groups spent the next two years building a data driven, research-based plan of action, a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), that would address the college readiness issue and enhance student learning.

The QEP team drew upon the work of the Conversations on Student Success and Community College Student Survey of Engagement (CCSSE) committees to develop a strategy that could have the best impact on the largest possible number of students.



The Plan

The resulting strategy is the No Excuses! First-Year-Seminar or FYS. Emerging evidence from multiple institutions has demonstrated the FYS to be successful initiative that results in better outcomes for students. The FYS course is strategically designed to connect students to personnel, courses, programs and services.

Developed by faculty and studentservices personnel, the First-Year Seminar is a three-credit academic transfer-level hybrid course that will help students identify personal learning styles and strategies; become more efficient lifelong learners; prioritize



responsibilities; align educational and career goals with personal interests; and more.

Pilot FYS courses offered in 2011-2012 received positive reactions from students. "It really is a great step for those leaving high school entering the real world. It got me in the right mindset of what it takes to be successful in college," said exercise science major Keith York.

"It helped me realize why I'm here and why I chose the major I did," noted biology major Taylor Ishmael.

"I got more support, more information and, I'm going to be more successful because of it," said engineering major Jeff Buster.

General studies major Serenity Hoffman concluded, "I honestly think incoming freshmen should take it because I know it helped me a lot."

The Point

Beginning in fall of 2012, the FYS will be required for all general studies and undeclared majors and recipients of the ACE Scholarship. Eligible faculty and staff from all disciplines will be trained to serve as FYS instructors who will work hand-in-hand with advisers, Career Center personnel, financial aid staff and others to meet students' needs.

Nationwide, most all colleges and universities are establishing the FYS as a best practice. Currently, more than 80% of colleges and universities across the nation report having some form of First-Year-Seminar. Multiple studies have found the seminars increase academic performance and persistence and boost degree attainment.

As the central point of AC's Quality Enhancement Plan, the FYS will be the focus of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Reaffirmation of Accreditation onsite visit in September. SACSCOC must approve AC's QEP before the program will be fully implemented. In five years, the college must turn in a report on the QEP's success. Read AC's QEP document at sacscoc.actx.edu/qep.

Center City Shares Cost of AHS Monument



Center City Executive Director Beth Duke presented Dr. Paul Matney with a check for \$11,817 in July, funds that constitute a matching façade grant for the new historical monument on AC's Downtown Campus.

The monument commemorates the historic home of Amarillo High School, Elizabeth Nixson Junior High, and the Red School House. It was dedicated

on May 30 on AC property at 12th Avenue and Polk Street.

The old Amarillo High burned down in 1970 and was rebuilt in southwest Amarillo.

"The monument was a great partnership with Center City, AC, and reunion classes of Amarillo High School," Duke said. "We believe this historic marker will be a gathering point for reunion classes for years to come."

Center City's design review committee led by Dusty Barrick approved the matching grant for the historic marker.

Center City administers the façade grants as part of its ongoing program to give downtown Amarillo a more welcoming appearance.



Pilot Recycling Program Begins in September

By Ellen Green
Chief of Communication & Marketing

Amarillo College will contract with the local company, KB Recycling, for paper pick-up on its Washington Street Campus beginning Sept. 1. Individual bins will be placed in most offices in the following buildings: Student Services Center, Byrd Business, Parcells Hall, Lynn Library and the College Union Building (CUB).



Employees and students without bins can collect their paper and deposit it in larger recycling containers located on the first floor of the CUB, in the hallway outside the campus bookstore.

This recycling effort is considered a pilot project for the year 2012-13. Eventually AC would like to offer the service to all of its campuses. Please help recycle by depositing used paper in the bins provided.

In addition, recycling aluminum and plastic is a great way to help the environment. As you probably know, there are large green bins around town for recycling.

Here are just a few reasons why we should all make recycling a priority:

Eliminating Waste

Materials in a landfill can take a long time to break down, and the EPA says that paper products make up 33 percent of the solid waste of cities and towns. By recycling paper, you can keep it from taking up space in a landfill.

Saving Trees

Recycling paper can dramatically reduce the number of trees that need to be harvested for paper products.

Saving Energy

For every ton of plastic that is recycled, we save the equivalent of two people's energy use for a year, the amount of water used by one person in a two-month period and almost 2,000 pounds of oil.

Finally, while the United States makes up only about five percent of the world's population, it produces more trash than anywhere else on the planet at 1,609 pounds of trash per person per year. That's 40 percent of the world's waste.

Let's all do our part to recycle – we shouldn't let our planet go to waste.

Colleagues Honor Newest Professor Emeritus



Therese Jones, seated at left, listens as Dr. Paul Matney sings her praises at a reception for AC's newest Professor Emeritus.

Faculty Senate sponsored a reception on May 31 for Therese Jones who, after unanimous springtime approval by the Board of Regents, became AC's newest Professor Emeritus.

Jones taught mathematics at AC from 1973-1999—26 years in all—and she chaired the Division of Sciences and Engineering from 1988-1999.

Several of her seven children were on hand for the reception, as were some grandchildren, and a number of Jones' former colleagues stepped up to the podium to offer words of kindness and thanks.

"I think this set a new standard for what a Professor Emeritus reception should be like," Dr. Paul Matney said. "I'm so glad she was honored this way.



Jones

"Therese consistently demonstrated great devotion to students, to faculty and to the College. She was an outstanding leader, and she managed it all while raising seven exceptional children."

Among her many professional accomplishments while working at AC, Jones was instrumental—she was the principal investigator for the grant—in helping Amarillo School District establish the Amarillo Area Center for Advanced Learning (AACAL), and she served on its advisory board.

Later, she helped establish AC as a TexPREP site in Texas, where high school students with aspirations of becoming engineers could spend time on campus during the summer.

PLUGGED IN SUMMER PHOTO



Bill Crawford received plenty of cards and gifts at his retirement party, including this Day Clock, for "when the day is more important than the hour."

A Festive Send-off

Bill Crawford's 44-year run at Amarillo College concluded with a well-attended and festive celebration Aug. 15 at the West Campus, where the outgoing dean of health sciences spent so much of his storied career.

An instructor of radiography when he came to AC as a part-timer in 1968, Crawford went on to become an associate professor, a divisional chair, an assistant dean and, finally, dean.

Visual evidence belies his lengthy tenure at AC. While it's unlikely the veteran radiographer is equipped with X-ray eyes, his evident vitality is that of a man who still might just leap tall buildings in a single bound.

Forty-four years under his belt and the man finds a way to retire in his prime.

Classic.