



# Plugged **in**

FACULTY & STAFF NEWSLETTER



**EAST CAMPUS WELCOMES  
SAFETY MONITOR FROM ADVO**

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**SSS STAFFERS COMMITTED  
TO STUDENT SUCCESS**

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**COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF  
BLACK & WHITE COOK-OFF**

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**AWARDS AND ACCOLADES  
ARE PLENTIFUL IN THIS ISSUE**

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VOLUME VII





# Three Priorities Deserve Our Focus

By Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart  
Amarillo College President

I've spent the first three months as president listening to and learning from you. I have been so impressed with your deep commitment to our students, College, and community. After our conversations, I am more convinced that our priorities as employees and as a College should focus on three things.

## 1. No Excuses

We recently received Leader College status nationally because of our No Excuses plan. We need to maintain this commitment to help students. Specifically, our No Excuses plan should continue to focus on improving student success through:

- Course Redesign for Gateway Courses
- Developmental Education Acceleration and IBest Expansion
- Systemic Approach to Poverty
- Tutoring Expansion and Integration
- First-Year Seminar (QEP)

The data is showing these interventions are working. You, as faculty and staff, built these interventions and are executing them with keen insights. I am so proud of your efforts. No Excuses is working because YOU are living it.

## 2. Culture of Caring

As we discussed during our Fall General Assembly, AC must move to a College of "we" rather than a group of "they." We

have a campus leadership team of 29 people, representing each division, serving as the Culture of Caring group. Specifically, this group is planning for ways we can build relationships across the institution, improve our "wayfinding" and signage for students, and thinking about ways to improve our communication institutionally. The bottom line – we must care for and help each other and our students, and the College should provide the necessary systems of support to make it possible.

## 3. Improve Processes

Often, your efficiency and effectiveness are hampered by internal processes that may not be designed to support you. We have several task forces working to improve and simplify our processes. Specifically, we have teams of people identifying the appropriate paper-based forms that could be moved online. We have teams of people identifying philosophies and processes to ensure all employees are oriented, trained, compensated and honored. We have teams identifying ways to incorporate, connect, and simplify student processes – especially those affecting students in the first year. We are reviewing our risk-management and safety processes to make sure we support and honor every employee. If we are going to improve student success, we must simplify and improve our internal processes.

Certainly, these three priorities will require a great deal of work. After meeting with and listening to you this semester, I am confident we have the right employees, with the right commitments, to make it happen.



## LVN Graduates Achieve 100-Percent First-Time Pass Rate

The Vocational Nursing Program has been notified by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing that its most-recent graduates achieved a 100-percent first-time pass rate on the national licensure exam.

All 26 May graduates of AC's Vocational Nursing Program passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX).

"It is commendable when any nursing program achieves a rare perfect score like this," said Dr. Richard Pullen, dean of the Division of Nursing. "The Vocational Nursing leadership and faculty have worked diligently to achieve this success."

By achieving perfection, the May cohort even surpassed the exemplary first-time pass rate exhibited by AC's preceding class of vocational nurses, which attained a 90-percent pass rate on the NCLEX. The national average is about 85 percent.

"We are thrilled, but we also have high expectations," LaVon Barrett, director of the Vocational Nursing Program, said. "Ours is an academically rigorous program supported by outstanding faculty, and that's a combination designed to achieve excellent outcomes."

"I am proud of our faculty and our students, alike."



## New Hire Helping Change East Campus Culture(s)

**M**eet Sam Schuster, standard-bearer for a pair of dissimilar yet inseparable cultural manifestations being embraced these days at the East Campus.

Sam, 25, is the new part-time safety monitor, which naturally places him at the forefront of recent efforts to immerse the East Campus in a culture of safety.

Yet because he has been diagnosed with an intellectual disability and resides at a non-profit, care-providing agency called Advo, Sam also is simultaneously helping the East Campus blaze the trail to a culture of disability-inclusion in the workplace.

“It’s a win-win for everybody,” says Lyndy Forrester, dean of technical education, who approached Advo about hiring one of its residents. “We get the added value of an eager safety monitor, and putting Sam to work and teaching him new skills adds value to his life, too.”

The dean had an uncle who suffered brain damage. She saw first-hand how thoroughly uplifted he was after finally landing a job.

“I have a soft spot in my heart for the mentally disabled, so I approached Advo to see if they had a good fit for us,” she said. “What we got in Sam is a really great guy who can do a little bit of everything, and everyone is better off for it—we believe he is, and we *know* we are.”

Sam joined the AC family this semester and immediately began bolstering the safety effort—drawing attention to untucked shirttails and improperly deployed protective eyewear, inspecting smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, identifying and remediating spills—but his duties were swiftly expanded as his versatility became apparent.

Nowadays you might find him doing anything from painting or cleaning to scanning and shredding. He helps stock the food pantry. He handles the steam cleaner with ease. When asked, he operates a drill press or studies for CPR certification. Before long, he’ll be licensed to drive a forklift.

“He’s a joy to have around, extremely likeable” said Walt Webb, instructor of industrial technology, who supervises Sam. “He’s no different than any of us. Anything we do, someone had to show us how to do it the first time. If he’s uncomfortable with something, he lets us know, but he loves to build things and he likes to learn.”



Sam Schuster operates a drill press with Walter Webb looking on.

No matter the chores of the day, Sam is keen to oblige.

“I like machines,” Sam said. “I really like to be out here. I get to do different stuff. I like everything ... well, except sweeping dust. It gets in the air and messes up my allergies.”

Sam enjoys watching TV and playing flag football in his spare time. East Campus held a fundraiser Nov. 12 to gather funds to help send Sam and his twin brother to a Special Olympics state football tournament in Waco.

“We support him because he’s one of us, part of the team,” Lyndy said. “He’s such a pleasure to have around, and he’s doing a wonderful job.”



## AC Recognizes Exceptional Employees

**Ina Fiel**, executive secretary to the dean of technical education, is legendary at AC for her unique combination of extreme proficiency and winning demeanor. Those very attributes helped her garner Classified Employee of the Year recognition at General Assembly. Among her family members, however, Ms. Fiel is best known for her talkative nature. Yet so stunned was she to receive the award, words simply would not come.

“I was in absolute shock and wanted to cry,” she said. “Talk about stage freight, it was the most awesome, humbling, unbelievable experience and I couldn’t think of a thing to say.”

If Ina’s muteness was understandable to a compassionate audience of her peers, it was a stunner to her mom, Martha Hickox who, unbeknownst to her daughter, had been secreted into the back of the auditorium.

“She texted my entire family that me being rendered speechless was actually possible,” Ina said. “They had a hard time believing it, though, since I’m always running my mouth.

“But what a thrill—and having my mom there was icing on the cake.”



Ina Fiel enjoys some East Campus fresh air



Bob Austin takes part in the ice-bucket challenge.

Also honored at the event was **Bob Austin**, vice president of student affairs, who was named Administrator of the Year. Having just concluded a month-long stint as interim president of AC, Bob was not so much tongue-tied as he was tongue-in-cheek.

His spur-of-the-moment stand-up routine included rib-ticklers about how shocked he was at not having won the award sooner (he has nominated himself many times before, he quipped), how as a third-grader he’d been so excited over winning an art award that he wet his pants, and how his mother remains under the impression he is still president. “She’s never even heard of Russell Lowery-Hart,” he said.

Then, of course, he let it be known how truly honored he was by the award.



## Academic Landscape Changes; Three Deans Named

The academic landscape changed dramatically in September when the College announced two major reconfigurations and named three new deans.

The ungainly Arts and Sciences Division was replaced by the creation of two more-manageable divisions — the Liberal Arts Division under the deanship of Dr. Dan Ferguson, and the STEM Division, with Dr. Kathy Wetzel serving as the inaugural dean.

“I’m honored and excited, and I look forward to working with all members of the faculty to help them reach their goals and realize their dreams,” Wetzel said.

Ferguson said the new Liberal Arts Division is well stocked with exceptional people. “I am honored and humbled to lead a great team that I know will accomplish fantastic things for AC and its students,” he said.

Nursing was equally impacted amid the academic transformation. The newly created Division of Nursing becomes the umbrella for both the LVN and the ADN programs, each of which had previously been numbered among programs in AC’s Health Sciences Division.

Dr. Richard Pullen, a 2009 Piper Professor who since February had served as interim director of the ADN Program, was chosen to serve as the new Division’s dean.

“I’m extremely grateful to be placed in a position where I can continue to help guide and mentor faculty,” Pullen said. “The Nursing Division’s new structure brings the LVN and ADN programs together in a way that we can celebrate each other’s uniqueness and, ultimately, better serve our students, and serving students and this community is my number one goal.”

Jerry Moller, acting vice president of academic affairs, said the Arts and Sciences Division had long since become too large and too widespread to be overseen by a single individual. Meanwhile, he said, the nursing programs had grown to a size that compelled dean-level oversight, someone able to focus on the litany of issues and challenges specific to nursing education.



Dr. Kathy Wetzel



Dr. Dan Ferguson



Dr. Richard Pullen





## Six Receive Faculty Excellence Awards

**P**resentation of the Faculty Excellence Awards served as an unofficial kickoff for the Fall semester. The Awards, co-sponsored by the President's Office and the Dean's Council, were presented in August. They are designed to promote and reward faculty innovation and commitment to student success.

The awards and winners are listed in the order they were presented:

### **Excellence in Instructional Strategies – Mark Shadix, instructor of physical sciences**

*For his use of learning catalytics that enable pinpointing of specific topics students do not understand. Resulting data and action led to a 16-percent pass-rate increase.*

### **Excellence in Curricular Innovation – Tony Tackitt, instructor of radiation therapy technology**

*For his innovative nature and desire to promote quality online instruction, leading to the first complete online program for Health Sciences.*

### **Excellence in Professional Development – Dolores Arambula, instructor of ESL**

*For her exemplary performance and efforts in helping recruit, enroll, advise and engage students for ESL, CE and FYS courses at the Hinkson Campus.*



Dolores Arambula is diligent in helping students at the Hinkson Memorial Campus in Hereford.

### **Excellence in Student Completion – Dr. Claudie Biggers, professor of biology**

*For her leadership in creating the new Science Enrichment Center and implementing policies and procedures for its effective management.*

### **Excellence in Community and Workforce Innovation – Bob Mathews, instructor of truck driving**

*For his strong leadership and advocacy of advisory committees and industry feedback—before they were buzzwords—creating a superior truck driving program.*

### **Excellence in Part-Time Instruction – Alan Cox, instructor of social sciences**

*For his positive impact over 21 years as an adjunct, sharing his passion and engaging his students in a manner that makes history real and meaningful.*



## A Reorganization for Panhandle PBS

**E**llen Green, chief executive officer for Panhandle PBS, has announced a reorganization—a division of leadership responsibilities—within the media organization licensed to Amarillo College.

The recent resignation of Linda Pitner, longtime general manager of Panhandle PBS, created a void at the helm, but also an opportunity to reevaluate the leadership structure of the dynamic organization. Green therefore elevated two Panhandle PBS mainstays to equally manage the disparate functions of the entity.

Chris Hays has been named general manager and will oversee programming, production, the Web, engineering and College radio station FM90.

Lynne Groom has been named manager of development and community engagement for Panhandle PBS and is charged with corporate support, memberships and community initiatives.

“This is a great opportunity to reorganize our staff so that we can maximize the strengths of our creative and development teams,” Green said. “I am confident that Chris and Lynne will work hand-in-hand to make Panhandle PBS the very best it can be.”



Lynne Groom and Chris Hays will manage Panhandle PBS.





## Nobody Stews Over Chili Reception

Confident chefs turned out in force for the Chili Cook-off on Oct. 23 at the East Campus, where the theme was "Black and White." The People's Choice Award for best chili went to EC Rosie Riveters of the Women in Industry Club. More than \$1,000 was raised at the event for United Way.







# FACULTY AND STAFF ACCOLADES

**Heather Atchley**, director of student life, received AC's First-Year Experience Student Advocate Award and thus will be AC's nominee for national recognition. The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition annually accepts one nominee per campus nationwide. Ten will be notified in January that they have been named Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates.



**Charles 'Wade' Olsen**, assistant professor of emergency medical services, received a letter of appointment Oct. 31 to the Education Committee that supports the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council. His two-year term is effective Jan. 1, 2015. A licensed paramedic, he has been an EMS provider since 1987. "I'm thrilled to be selected for this," he said. "This puts AC and West Texas at the forefront of the EMS policy conversation."

**Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart**, president, has been appointed by the American Association of Community Colleges to serve on its Commission on Global Education. He attended his first meeting Nov. 12-13 in Washington, D.C. The appointment is grounded in AC's recent ascension to Leader-College status in Achieving the Dream, and to the proliferation of international travel opportunities afforded AC students.

**Four superheroes** were unmasked at General Assembly. The Superhero Awards are for members of the AC workforce "who have gone above and beyond" to ensure student success. **Carol Bevel**, general accounting manager, drew the moniker Hospitality Queen (she doles out treats at registration); **Kelly Jones**, instructor of physical therapy, was dubbed Kelly Green Bee (she raised non-profit awareness with a Be the Change Tree); **David White**, web and communications specialist, is now called Information Man (he enlightens so many); and **Kelly Murphy**, VA coordinator in the Registrar's Office, was dubbed Caring Kelly (a perfect fit).



In fact **Murphy** cares so much about her VA responsibilities that others outside the College have taken notice—and action. Recently, at the request of none other than U.S. Rep. Mac Thornberry, Murphy was presented with a flag that had been flown over the U.S. Capitol in her honor. An accompanying letter from the congressman stated that the gift "is in honor of your commitment and service to the veterans of AC."



Kelly Murphy, right, is presented with a flag courtesy of U.S. Rep. Mac Thornberry.

**Kristin McDonald-Willey**, director of institutional effectiveness, was among those who received Top 20 Under 40 awards as presented Oct. 24 at the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce banquet. This recognition is aimed at "young professionals who are developing their leadership skills and showing growth and promise in their business roles in the community."

**Panhandle PBS** was selected to receive the Outstanding Media award presented Nov. 12 by the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Texas Plains Chapter, to mark National Philanthropy Day. Our PBS member station was noted for having partnered with organizations across the Panhandle to enhance the quality of life.



## SSS Staffers Committed to Student Success

By Cara Crowley  
President's Chief of Staff

Welcome to Grants Gab. Today we are highlighting the accomplishments of AC's Student Support Services (SSS) grant projects. In September 2010, AC was awarded three SSS grants to specifically support low-income, first-generation and disability students. The SSS projects annually assist 340 Health Sciences, Nursing, Moore County, and STEM students. By providing distinct support activities including access to individualized and group tutoring, advising and transfer advising, university campus tours and transfer support activities, cultural awareness events, and financial literacy workshops, our SSS projects are making a difference in AC's student-success initiative.

The SSS Health Sciences project is led by Jeannie George. Jeannie and her staff collaborate with faculty and leaders in the Health Sciences and Nursing areas to support 120 students. During November and December, they will be offering workshops on study skills, test-taking strategies, and transferring to a university in addition to continual tutoring sessions. The SSS Health Sciences area will also be open late the last two weeks of the semester to provide additional student-success resources to participants.

The SSS Moore County Campus (SSS MCC) project is led by Alexa Maples. Alexa and her staff support 100 MCC students with their SSS project. The SSS

MCC project focuses primarily on early alert activities, including check-ins with participants and faculty after the first four classes, six-week student success grade checks, and mid-term grade reports. In addition, SSS MCC assists MCC with the campus-wide study day camps during finals week.

The SSS STEM project is led by Linda Hendrick. Linda and her staff support 120 STEM majors with a variety of student success activities. In addition to ongoing tutoring efforts, SSS STEM is coordinating with AC's STEM division to provide campus tours for AC STEM students at Texas Tech, WTAMU and Texas Tech Health Sciences. SSS STEM staff are also involved with student organizations including Society for Women Engineers, Amarillo College Engineering Society, and Finishers.

Please join me in thanking our SSS staff members for their dedication to their projects. Because of their commitment, students in these programs have not only graduated from AC but enrolled in and graduated from four-year universities. Numerous SSS graduates have successfully completed graduate school or medical school. SSS graduates have likewise obtained outstanding careers in the fields of healthcare, engineering, biological and physical sciences, and computer science.





# Accelerate TEXAS



Nola Bartling, academic advisor, informs a visitor about AC.

Each November, community colleges across Texas celebrate adult-education initiatives—the kind aimed at putting people to work or into better jobs—through a variety of events celebrating Accelerate TEXAS.

AC did its part Nov. 1 and 2 by toting a wealth of interactive resources and other nifty props to Westgate Mall’s Center Court for a weekend of show-and-tell in conjunction with the College’s Adult Education and Literacy Grant.



Derek Lyon, instructor of diesel mechanics, stands by to meet and greet mall patrons.



## Pilot Program Streamlines Radiography Record Keeping

In two years at Amarillo College, a typical student of radiography is required to spend about 1,800 hours training at healthcare facilities in and around Amarillo, performing hundreds of x-ray, ultrasound and related patient procedures. With about 50 students in the program at a given time, mandatory documentation of the hours spent and the procedures performed piles up fast when it’s relegated to paper, as it has been in years past.

But not this year. Becky Burton, director of AC’s Radiography Program, elected this semester to pilot an electronic data-keeping system available through Typhon Group Student Tracking Systems. For a modest set-up fee of \$250, and an annual administrative fee that’s even less, AC, at least this year, has a secure electronic student-tracking system that has vastly reduced the paper load.

And in addition to comprehensively tracking and logging who is doing what, where, the system also supports student scheduling, curriculum mapping, secure document management, and student portfolios and biographic databases.

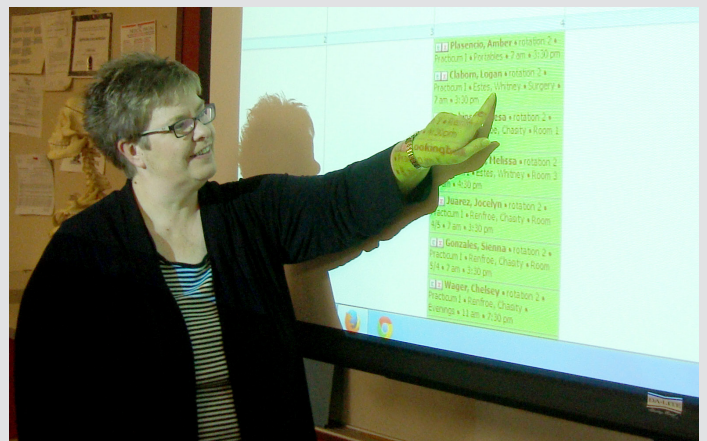
Not only has the system streamlined accreditation-mandated record keeping for AC faculty, but administrators at the clinical sites are beneficiaries, too; they no longer have to chase down paperwork to authenticate a student’s immunization records, for example—they simply access Typhon Group.

“We get amazing, invaluable data, a reduction in paperwork and a wealth of data we never had before,” Burton said. “We see how many exams students are doing per site, per room. Because it is secure, we can now see age demographics of

the patients examined. We believe this system will improve our scheduling and therefore our ability to ensure equal opportunities for students.

“Our clinical sites seem equally pleased by the data,” she said. “They can see the work flow, which studies are recurring the most, and on which days. They see how much time our students are taking with specific exams. It’s been very well received.”

It’s a pilot program at present, but all indications are that AC’s Radiography Program will be utilizing Typhon Group Student Tracking Systems into the future. The program did cost students in the program a one-time fee of \$78, for which they get three years of accessibility; however, Burton says that expense was more than offset for students by eliminating a costly textbook from curriculum requirements.



Becky Burton explains Typhon data tracking.





## Wyatt Showers Praise on Energy-Conservation Effort

I was on board with it right from the get-go, this notion that AC ought to book passage on the energy-conservation bandwagon. If, like me, you regularly set up camp in front of the TV for a grueling 7-to-10-hour stretch of NFL action on any given Sunday, then you know full well that Saturdays each fall are best devoted to conserving one's energy, and that's what I'm (literally) prone to do.

In fact, as the talented Carly Simon might intone, *Nobody Does it Better*. That's right Carly, I'm all about *An-tic-i-pa-tion* on Saturdays during pro football season, and I'm not shy about flagging my own dear wife for encroachment should she dare tote even the skimpiest of honey-do lists anywhere near my neutral zone.

Typically this evokes her *You're So Vain* look. And you know me: I'm dying to make a quip about how she might have pried me off the floor with "SIMON SAYS, do these chores," but I hold my tongue lest I invite a personal fowl (us chickens learn where to draw the line).



But the point is, I'm just as staunch a fan of energy conservation as the next guy. That's why my mind was wide open when Terry Hawthorne came on board as our energy-savings guru. He's a really sharp guy, Terry is. Sure he was bound to ask us to turn off some lights and raise or lower the thermostats here and there, but how painful could that be, right? We comply mainly because we understand it's the right thing to do—maybe it was actually our own noble idea all along—not something we were coerced into, and we smugly move on.

And then I went for a post-workout shower at Carter Fitness Center. And the water was not as hot as it normally is. And my first thought was: dang that Terry Hawthorne! And my next thought was: here I am in the shower and I'm thinking about Terry Hawthorne. And that made me more uncomfortable than the temperature of the water.

And so I say: well played, Terry, very well played, indeed.

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**Editor's Note:** Terry Hawthorne allowed that I could have fun at his expense if I added a reminder that the fast-approaching Thanksgiving holiday will be a perfect time to practice our energy-saving downtime procedures. Terry asks us to turn off our gadgetry, especially computers, maybe even refrigerators, during this extended absence. He also denies having tweaked water temperatures at the Fitness Center, where the showers are hot once more so long as you don't terry—er—tarry.



## AC Is Military Friendly

AC has once again been named to the list of Military Friendly Schools by G.I. Jobs, the premier magazine for military personnel making the transition to civilian life.

This time the designation is for 2015. The magazine features the top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace student veterans. The list containing about 1,600 schools was compiled through extensive research and a data-driven survey of more than 12,000 VA-approved schools nationwide.

About 300 veterans are presently enrolled at AC, which has been labeled Military Friendly each of the past six years.

AC employs a veterans' affairs coordinator in the Registrar's Office—Kelly Murphy—to personally assist veterans with the financial aid process and to ensure educational credit is appropriately granted for certain military experience.



## Holding Court



Bruce Moseley, at right, coordinator of the Legal Studies Program, accompanied several student members of the Legal Society of Amarillo College to Austin in September to visit the Capitol and the Texas Supreme Court. Thanks to a hook-up with Texas Rep. Four Price of Amarillo, third from right, their tour of the Supreme Court was up-close and personal.