

TO SERVE, PROTECT & CONNECT

REACH MAGAZINE

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I am proud to see the difference Tarrant County College continues to make in the lives of our students and throughout our community. In May, we awarded 7,812 degrees and certificates – including 359 associate degrees through our Early College High Schools – to individuals who will take the next step on their academic and/or career paths in pursuit of meaningful work that supports their families and undergirds our community. So many of the people we graduate perform the very jobs – in our own backyard – that we rely upon for our health, safety and well-being. Consider this: in the last five years, TCC has educated and trained 472 basic and degreed peace officers, 63 emergency medical services technicians, 126 information security specialists, 331 firefighters, 150 paramedics, 152 HVAC technicians, 179 sign language interpreters and 162 substance abuse counselors, all of whom perform vital services that may go unrecognized until those services are needed. Even more noteworthy: in the same five-year period, TCC has educated and trained 1,317 nurses and 1,091 teachers. When speaking before community groups, I share these numbers and ask people to consider who might provide these services were TCC not in existence.

Two years ago, we introduced our Three Goals that guide every decision we make on behalf of our students, faculty, staff and community. We are committed to operating as One College that is Student-Ready, putting the student at the core of each of our programs and offerings, and we will continue to Serve the Community through partnerships with area school districts as well as business and industry. In our 54th year, we recognize that our mission must evolve as our regional needs are evolving. Looking into the future, and with the continuing growth of Tarrant County's population, TCC is strongly committed to connecting students (of all ages) to education and training which matches the local jobs, career opportunities, interests, and leadership needs of our local community and economy. We will continue to partner with business and industry to identify future skills gaps and develop programs that ensure a trained workforce will be ready to step into those available positions. We will continue our partnerships with area school districts to ensure students follow their high school endorsements seamlessly with a guided pathway at TCC, enabling them to abbreviate their time in school so they move from academic path, to degree/credential, to career efficiently and effectively. And we will continue to place a premium on the input of our community and business partners so that, together, we are developing world-ready students prepared to keep our region economically competitive.

As an example, input from our industry advisory groups revealed a growing demand for skilled workers in cybersecurity and human resources. Accordingly, we worked to develop two certificates – Level 1 for computer security specialists and information security analysts, and Level 2 for ethical hacking – available completely online through TCC Connect. Additionally, we developed and now offer an Associate of Applied Science degree in Business Administration-Marketing and an Associate of Applied Science degree in Human Resources Management, also completely online. These new programs exemplify our continued focus on creating programs that meet employers' future needs while also accommodating students' needs for accessibility with flexibility given concurrent life responsibilities.

Partnership takes many forms; our students benefit from the input from area business industry, as area business and industry also benefits from TCC. Since 1997, TCC's Corporate Solutions and Economic Development (CSED) organization has worked to develop customized training specific to the needs of its client businesses, community organizations and industry associations. This year, DFW International Airport expanded its partnership with TCC to provide customized educational and training opportunities to more employees at the Airport, and will be offered at no cost to DFW Airport employees. On average, CSED trains nearly 4,000 workers annually. We fully expect this number to increase as we broaden our scope of training programs designed with future business and industry needs in mind.

I am proud to report that our people have embraced our Three Goals and are working on various principle teams dedicated to achieving these goals through intentional, well-developed strategies and offerings that will help us better serve the needs of the 21st century student and workforce.

On behalf of TCC's leadership, faculty and staff, thank you for your continued support of our mission. We appreciate your partnership and confidence as we strive to be the community's partner of choice.

Eugene Giovannini
Chancellor, Tarrant County College

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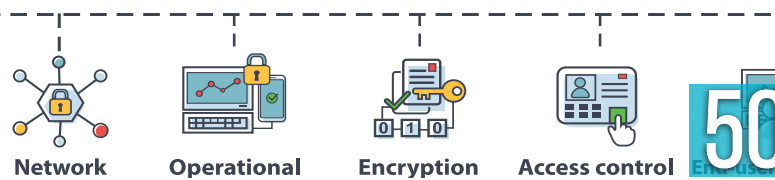
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Modern World Has Positions Going Unfilled

From Inspiration TO EDUCATION

TCC DEVELOPS NEW PROGRAMS TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS

by Alexis Patterson

From accounting to welding—and some seven dozen fields in between—virtually any career can begin at Tarrant County College.

At brick-and-mortar campuses across Fort Worth, Arlington and Hurst as well as a dedicated online and weekend learning campus known as TCC Connect, the College offers Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees for students interested in transferring to a four-year institution, along with more than 65 Associate of Applied Science degrees designed to accelerate entry into the workforce. There also are more than 150 certificates and skills awards resulting from specialized career training. On the way to degrees, certificates and awards, students can choose from 1,300 active credit courses. Then there is the wide range of non-credit classes for personal enrichment and professional training.

Clearly, TCC has a robust variety of offerings to allow students to reach their goals. Yet the College's work to provide the best options is never finished.

"We are always evaluating what to add or revise," explained Candy Center, District director of curriculum and educational planning, who notes that a market analysis is always the first step in any change to parallel current, future and emerging employment trends.

The process that follows is both extensive and intensive, particularly for credit programs. The faculty, academic leadership and District Academic Affairs teams make sure that each area of study will provide quality programs and meet the requirements of the College as

well as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and accrediting agencies. Industry advisory boards help shape instruction to match employer needs.

"When TCC brings a program or course to the point of enrollment, it has been thoroughly vetted and meets our high standards," Center said. "It's an extremely exciting area of work."

"What we're doing opens the doors for more students to realize their dreams and strengthens the economy."



Candy Center
District Director of Curriculum
and Educational Planning

New TCC programs coming on board in the 2019-20 academic year include Human Resources Management and Nondestructive Testing, Inspecting and Evaluation.

Human Resources Management

As companies of all kinds expand in North Texas, there will be heightened demand for human resources experts to serve their employees. TCC Connect leadership realized the College had a unique ability to

train Tarrant County residents to fill those positions.

"What makes this different is that it is a credit program offered fully online," said Kenya Wilson, instructor of human resources in the TCC Connect Business and Technology Division. "That benefits non-traditional students by letting them get their degree or certificate while managing competing responsibilities."

That is one of the draws for Cade Quimby, a first-time college student who enrolled specifically for Human Resources Management.

"I made it a personal goal that no matter where I am in life, I'm at least going to earn an undergraduate degree," Quimby shared. "Now I'll be able to more easily keep working while I go to school."

There is a definite need for professionals with the skills Quimby is set to learn. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, careers in HR will grow more than 12 percent across the region through 2022, outpacing the state and nation. Meanwhile the number of HR jobs across the country is projected to stand at more than 1.27 million by 2026.

HR employees oversee recruitment, implement employer policies and procedures, handle staffing issues, prepare and maintain records and administer benefits.

"Human resources is not just about paperwork anymore," said David Curtis, a consultant, co-founder of Helping Others with People Solutions (HOPS) HR and a member of the advisory committee. "There is a lot of mediation, strategic work and complex issues that HR professionals now manage. All these functions involve understanding federal and local regulations while balancing the employees' needs and the business's success."

To prepare, students will build their knowledge through courses including Employment Practices, Employee Relations, Basic Mediator Training, Benefits and Compensation, Human Resources Information Systems and Strategic Management, among others. Classes lead to a Level I certificate (24 credit hours), Level II certificate (42 credit hours) and Associate of Applied Science (60 credit hours, including core curriculum coursework). The degree can be completed in two years, and a certificate can be earned in as little as one.

The awards reflect the College's "guided pathways" model, allowing students to begin at an introductory level and earn stackable credentials as their knowledge increases.

"In addition to providing basic, entry-level training,

the certificates can supplement a current human resources professional's education and prepare them for certification exams," said Wilson. "Upon completion of the associate degree, students will be qualified for starting positions such as human resources specialist, benefits coordinator and training specialist, or they can continue at a four-year institution for a bachelor's degree."

TCC students will be able to join local HR associations at discounted rates, to network with and learn from those already employed.

The career comes with significant earning potential. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, human resources specialists had a median pay of \$60,880 in 2018, while the median pay for managers was \$113,300. Wilson says entry and assistant-level positions obtainable by recent graduates can pay more than \$45,000.

"This is a great field for individuals with strong interpersonal skills, but there are both collaborative roles and those that have more of an independent focus," said Wilson. "Whatever aspect of human resources you go into, it's rewarding. Plus, many HR tasks are difficult to automate. That makes it a smart choice, especially when you have many years in the workforce ahead."

Quimby is ready to get started.

"I'm excited. It's great to think about being able to work on my



people skills, be a member of a team and allow others to have a better experience throughout the workday.”

Curtis looks forward to his ongoing work with faculty and students.



“To be a part of this means a lot. HR can have a negative image, and I am trying to change that by showing employees compassion and empathy while working within the laws and policies of the company. By assisting in the development of the next generation of professionals, I can pass on that perspective.”

David Curtis

Advisory Committee Member and Co-founder of HOPS

Classes began in Fall 2019. In addition to the Human Resources Management degree and certificates, TCC offers non-credit human resources options. Students can train to become human resources office assistants, while business owners and others can learn human resources essentials. Non-credit preparation is also available for the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) certification exams.

Nondestructive Testing, Inspection and Evaluation

For fields such as aerospace, construction, nuclear power, shipping and oil, component safety is paramount—and that’s where nondestructive testing professionals come in.

“In any line of work where you have metal or composite structures and it’s critical that they don’t fail, you have these technicians,” said Clint Grant, dean for aviation, business and logistics at TCC Northwest. “Their job is to inspect those parts without destroying them, ultimately aiding in the prevention of potentially catastrophic events.”

The College offered a nondestructive testing and inspection degree in decades past, connected to welding. As technology evolved, and components no longer were made just of welded steel, the nondestructive testing training ended in the late 1980s.

But demand began to grow for nondestructive testing technicians with a completely different skill set. In 2017, a group of local industry representatives approached TCC with a request: create a modern version of the program with a special emphasis on aerospace.

“There’s a lot of aerospace here in North Texas, and it’s growing. Plus, we have an aging nondestructive testing and inspection workforce,” remarked Glenn Rodriguez, manager of quality operations for Bell and a 1982 graduate of (then) Tarrant County Junior College with a nondestructive testing degree.



“I’m within three to five years of retiring, and there’s a lot of people like me. We have no one to fill the positions. Educated nondestructive testing personnel are hard to find.”

Glenn Rodriguez
Manager of Quality Operations for Bell

The College launched into action and found there were no public programs in the region to train nondestructive testing technicians—and the other Texas community colleges that offer nondestructive testing education, in Amarillo, Houston and Corpus Christi focus on the oil, gas and shipping industries. TCC had an opportunity to fill a great void.

“We realized this was an important area of study to offer and that it needed to happen quickly,” Grant recalled.

To develop the Associate of Applied Science in Nondestructive Testing, Inspection and Evaluation, TCC worked with Rodriguez and others from the American Society for Nondestructive Testing to form a committee that would guide efforts. Grant also visited existing training in other regions to research best practices.

The resulting degree program—housed at TCC’s Erma C. Johnson Hadley Northwest Center of Excellence for Aviation, Transportation & Logistics at Alliance Airport—will give students a core curriculum foundation (including trigonometry coursework, as requested by the advisory committee) while teaching the five core nondestructive testing methods. For example, students will learn how to use ultrasound waves and materials that penetrate part surfaces to detect cracks and flaws that cannot be seen by the human eye. Graduates are prepared for the Level 1 industry certification exam (Levels II and III certification can be obtained only with professional experience).

“Our students will be able to go on to a variety of jobs. In aerospace, they could be stationed on the campus of a major employer such as Bell or Lockheed Martin, or they could work on a tarmac inspecting components of airplanes,” Grant said. “New graduates can make \$15 or \$20 an hour, and the salary goes up from there. There are technicians out there with substantial experience who form their own businesses and do incredibly well.”

Rodriguez and others who prompted the development of the Nondestructive Testing, Inspection and Evaluation degree know they found the right partner.

“TCC was very open to the idea and set out immediately to bring it to fruition,” said Rodriguez. “This is a great addition to the College and provides a solid entry point to a career with a lot of demand.”

Classes are expected to begin in spring 2020.

“We’re looking forward to getting students into the field and providing additional support for aerospace companies and other industries,” said Grant.

In the future, the College hopes to offer each nondestructive testing and inspection technique as a non-credit certificate—allowing technicians who may specialize in certain methods to expand their skills. While a four-year degree is not required in nondestructive testing, those who complete the associate degree may choose to transfer and pursue a Bachelor of Applied Science in an area such as management or engineering.

Meeting Workforce Needs

These new offerings illustrate TCC’s role in the process of building the local workforce and connecting graduates to the jobs of today and tomorrow.

“Whether initially based on input from partners or

our own analysis of data, we develop credit and non-credit programs that focus squarely on high-demand, high-wage and high-skill careers,” emphasized Center.

That makes the College valued by business and industry and a key player in Tarrant County’s success.

“TCC’s work aligns with the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce’s strategic goals of increasing the region’s talent supply and percentage of adults with postsecondary degrees and certificates,” said Anthony Edwards, the Chamber’s senior vice president for talent development, attraction and retention.



“As companies expand and relocate in the Fort Worth region, TCC is filling a skills gap and helping ensure our community can support the economic growth ahead.”

Anthony Edwards

**Fort Worth Chamber’s Senior Vice President
for Talent Development, Attraction and Retention**

The Program Process

TCC follows a rigorous process to bring a course of study to fruition. The steps fall into six categories:

- **Market analysis.** The curriculum and educational planning team uses data to predict future jobs and trends.
- **Presentation of need.** The team makes a presentation to administrators, sharing analysis of data and program viability.
- **Decision point.** Administrators evaluate all information and decide whether to move forward based on factors such as the employment forecast, current TCC offerings, other area training and needed resources.
- **Program development.** Working with industry partners, TCC develops objectives, curriculum and graduation standards. The College also works with appropriate accrediting agencies to secure approval for the offerings, creates a budget and brings on board faculty and staff.
- **Spreading the word.** The College develops a marketing and recruitment strategy to raise awareness.
- **Enrollment.** Students register and begin classes.

For more information on the full slate of TCC’s academic and workforce programs, visit tccd.edu/offerings.

VETERANS RESOURCE CENTERS

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO HELP VETERANS MAKE
A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO COLLEGE LIFE

by Bill Lace

Navigating the currents of higher education is seldom easy, but can be especially challenging for students who embark from a very different way of life – the military. Fortunately, guidance is available at Tarrant County College through the Veterans Resource Centers.

“I like to think of it as a lighthouse that becomes a beacon,” said Bill Alexander, veterans counselor at TCC Northwest. “Veterans have a unique perspective because of some of the experiences they’ve had.”

Mike Sherer, who spent almost three years after leaving the Army sleeping on a concrete floor in a metal building due to financial problems, saw that beacon. So did Briona McLemore, homeless for six months after her separation from the service. Same for Nicole Hearne who, while not actually diagnosed with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), is “super vigilant” and uncomfortable in a classroom when other students are sitting behind her. They’re among some 3,700 other student veterans for whom the centers are places of resources and, occasionally, of refuge.

The Veterans Resource Centers, one on each campus, grew from what Valerie Groll at TCC South called an “awesome vision” in 2013 to meet the needs of vets leaving the service and using their educational benefits. “They needed a place where somebody knew about their benefits and could maybe provide some counseling, some transitional support,” she said.

The logical site for the first center, then called VetSuccess, was at Groll’s campus. It not only had a healthy veteran population, thanks in part to its numerous technical programs, but it also was close to the Veterans Administration office, the VA Medical and Outpatient

Clinics and the Texas Veterans Commission. Indeed, from its inception, VetSuccess has been a true partnership between the VA and TCC, which now hosts two VA employees on TCC Northeast and TCC Northwest.

As the veteran population grew and diversified across the District, however, the administration moved toward placing a center on each campus, with the last one opening at TCC Northeast this fall. No longer will the veteran have to travel to another campus for specialized services.

According to Rebecca Griffith, district director of admissions and records and coordinator of the District’s programs for veterans, the increase in veterans reflects the number of people leaving the service after deployment to the Middle East and the fact that Texas is “an extremely veteran-friendly state,” with programs ranging from free auto license plates to free college tuition under the Hazlewood Act. Other factors include the large number of military installations in the state, its job growth and its lack of a state income tax. Little wonder that Texas is home to more vets – 1,680,418 -- than any other state except California.

TCC’s Veterans Resource Centers provide several valuable services, but finances usually top the list. No matter what the vets face, Groll said, “If they’re living in their car and not sure how they’re going to eat, it’s really hard to focus on healing. So money is very important because it’s fundamental to their basic needs.”

When new vets come to Groll’s center, their first stop is with Chelsea Kervin, an enrollment specialist who can guide them through the various benefits offered under the GI Bill®. Once the financial picture is clearer, they interview with either Groll or Michelle Mastick, her part-time assistant, but the getting-to-know-you session works both ways. “We’re establishing a trusting relationship,” she said. “Trust is very

important with this population, and when trust is broken or not established, it’s really hard to make progress.”

The new veterans are asked about their goals and expectations and, in turn, learn about the various service available to them through the Veterans Resource Center, other offices on campus or agencies in the community, such as the VA. Should such services be needed, the veteran, instead of merely being told to go to a given department, agency or website, is treated to a “warm handoff.”

“The important part to us is that we know who we’re sending them to,” said Abdel Casiano, who works part-time in TCC South’s center. “So, if I’m sending someone to the Writing Center, I know someone over there to go talk to and say, ‘We have this veteran who needs help. Can you see him?’ And if I can, I’ll take him over there personally and introduce them.”

The warm handoff also extends to faculty. “Even when I help a veteran plan a class schedule, I’m choosing specific teachers,” he said. “I say to take these people’s classes. They’ll get you to a university level. I know how they work with veterans, and this will be a really good fit for you.”

Casiano is a veritable poster child for the Veterans Resource Center. He freely admits to having barely graduated from Kennedale High School and having “zero interest” in college, joining the Navy instead. Once out, higher education still wasn’t on his to-do list, but he wanted to become a police officer and lack of college was a barrier. “Then, when I met my girlfriend and now wife, she suggested I go to school,” he said. “I told her it wasn’t for me, but she pushed me. I came to VetSuccess and it was the best decision I ever made. It was here I met Valerie (Groll), and it was a very comforting experience. She handled me with kid gloves. It’s like she knew my transition from the military was already rough.”

He eventually earned an Associate of Arts from TCC, transferred to TCU for a bachelor’s in social work and is now working on his doctorate in social work at The University of Texas at Austin. What’s more, thanks to his veteran’s educational benefits, he made it through TCU debt-free.

In Casiano’s unofficial role as sounding board/mentor, he’s prepared for the new veterans who doubt their ability to earn a degree. “I share my story,” he said. “Nine times out of ten, by the time they come to us, it’s because they realize they need more education. But they, too, joined the military because they did not want more school. I tell them that who they were doesn’t define who they are now, and that they have an opportunity to change.”

Often, he said, veterans he has advised





return and thank him, saying, “I didn’t think this was for me, but I absolutely enjoyed it.”

Getting into college and being in college can be two very different experiences, however. “The military and higher education could not be any more diametrically opposed,” said Alexander. The military, he explained, is a very structured, rigorous environment and he should know, having served nine years in the Navy before coming to TCC Northwest as a student 20 years ago. “In the service, one is told where to live, what to wear, what to do and when to do it.

Furthermore, he said, “We do what we call ‘live life together.’ Not only do we work together, but after work we’re communing with each other. And our wives are friends. Our kids grow up together.”

Additionally, there is what the veterans have lived through.

“We bring experiences into a classroom that other people have not considered, from combat experience to traveling around the world and living overseas.”



Bill Alexander
TCC Northwest Veterans Counselor

The openness and liberality of campus life can thus be hard on vets, especially those who have experienced combat. “They can be hypersensitive, hypervigilant,” Groll said. “Just walking on a college campus – lots of students, lots of noise, sudden sounds. I mean, it’s all overwhelming.”

The veteran’s unease doesn’t necessarily end at the classroom door, but it may take on a new form – annoyance at the conduct of their classmates. “The first time I have veterans coming to me with a concern, that’s usually what it is,” Alexander said. “They don’t understand how they can successfully navigate a class when other students are doing this or that, or acting to a faculty member in a way that’s completely disrespectful.”

In such cases, the veteran’s bewilderment with college life may take on a tint of anger. “In the military, your superior tells you to do something and you do it,” said Sherer, who saw combat as a sergeant in Iraq. “The consequences are too great not to. If I

tell someone to put on his helmet and he doesn’t and ends up dead, I’m responsible for that. So, you have this frame of mind, and people don’t understand it.”

Hearne, a Navy intelligence specialist who has her eye on a nursing career, has found group work difficult. “People don’t have that sense of follow-through that we were trained to have, because if we didn’t follow through, people died,” she said. “So, I’m having to take a step back to be able to change my thinking.”

As a Navy corpsman, McLemore could tell younger people she supervised to sit down and be quiet. “I can’t do that here,” she said of her younger classmates. “They show up whenever they want to. They talk to the teacher however they want.”

It’s hard, she said, to hold her tongue, and she hasn’t always done it. “I kind of forgot where I was and used language that wasn’t the best,” she said.

Salty language is another common problem veterans’ counselors deal with. “Sometimes the language becomes rough and colorful and certainly is not widely accepted in the civilian world, much less in higher education,” Alexander said.

“We kind of get to talk them down,” said Casiano.

Often, the campus veterans talk *each another* down. “We always seem to gravitate to one another,” Hearne said. “It’s nice to know there’s a safe place to go and talk with somebody who understands. It’s that feeling of community you miss when you leave the service.”

That community is also a source of help with coursework. “I recently had a student who said he was having trouble with a geology class,” Groll said. “I looked at the roster for that class and said, ‘You have eight vets in that class. There’s your resource.’”

She maintains a spreadsheet listing which courses every vet is taking. If someone needs assistance, she sends out an email to others enrolled in that course asking if they’d be willing to help. “I’ve never sent out an SOS and had nobody reply,” she said. It’s the ethos of military life in which one depends on and unhesitatingly come to the aid of the person to the left or right – what Alexander calls “battle buddies.”

Veterans have some issues, however, that are beyond the College’s ability to solve. That’s why the veterans’ counselors are constantly out in the community, making and maintaining contacts with the Veterans Administration, Mental Health-Mental Retardation, United Way, Workforce Solutions, Good Samaritans and Veterans Court. “We want those agencies to tell people to go to the Veterans Resources Centers at TCC, because they know they can trust what they’re getting from us,” said Groll. “Again,

it’s that warm handoff so that our veterans have that trusting feeling like going from one base to another.”

TCC’s student veterans are appreciative of the centers and their staff members. “They are absolutely amazing,” Hearne said. “I think they’re definitely on the right track. They make a really big effort to have a physical presence (on campus) so they can let people know the resources available to them.”



“We come here just to keep ourselves from being in our own thoughts. It’s our safe place.”

Briona McLemore
Former Navy Corpsman

Sherer acts as an unofficial recruiter for the TCC Northwest center. A friend and fellow vet was trying to decide between TCC and Weatherford College, and Sherer told him, “Go talk to Bill (Alexander) before you make that decision. Let him figure out what’s best for you. He’ll give you the right answer regardless.”

“Bill is amazing,” said McLemore. “He is very thorough and takes care of us. I love Bill.”

Working in the Veterans Resources Center is, indeed, a labor of love. “I am very fortunate to serve those who have allowed me my freedom,” said Groll, whose father, husband and son have been or are in the service. “I’ve been involved in the military all my life, and I’m proud to be able to give back.”

“I absolutely love my job,” said Casiano. “To be able to come back for Valerie, to have her to ask me to come back and share my experiences and help others. I wouldn’t change it for the world.”

It took another counseling position at another college for Alexander to realize “what my lifelong calling was, and that’s to serve my brothers and sisters as I knew I could. I couldn’t get to Tarrant County College quick enough, and there’s nothing else I can think of that I’d ever want to do.”

For more information about how TCC serves veterans and military-connected families, visit tccd.edu/military.



TCC PLUS MAKES TEXTBOOKS MORE AFFORDABLE

INCLUSIVE ACCESS PROGRAM ALSO MEANS STUDENTS ARE READY ON DAY ONE

by Tyson McMillan,
Department Chair of Computer Science and Information Technology,
Sharon Moore,
Assistant Director of Student Learning Materials

As a college committed to being student-ready and serving the community, Tarrant County College continually evaluates opportunities to make education more accessible and more affordable. To say that textbooks are expensive would be an understatement, so like many other colleges, TCC is offering an Inclusive Access program through which students will have textbooks on the first day of class at a very affordable cost. Underscoring the benefits of more savings – both in time and in money – for TCC students, this inclusive access program is called TCC Plus.

This new program is one way the College meets the needs of our increasing population of 21st century students for whom digital technology is a given. For those students who still need to touch or hold a traditional textbook, a reasonably priced print option is available.

History

In October 2016, the former vice chancellor of finance invited three members of the District faculty association Joint Consultation Committee (JCC) and several campus presidents to attend the Educause conference, an annual event focused on information technology solutions to higher education issues. TCC attendees were united around the central purpose of balancing faculty selection of quality resources with cost savings for our students.

During the conference, TCC faculty had the opportunity to speak with every major publisher regarding models for saving students money on textbooks. One of the more impressive models that emerged from those conversations was “inclusive access.” Early that year, the U.S. Department of Education released new regulations that allowed

federal funds to be used in a fee-based model (with strong restrictions) in favor of students. Among other things, students had to be able to opt-out of the fee, and textbooks had to be delivered digitally at below market prices. Nationwide, today’s inclusive access programs follow the themes set forth in those regulations.

The Educause conference provided abundant research materials, which participants brought back to TCC. The meetings of the conference ignited a fire that would become the current TCC Plus program.

Through extensive research of colleges and universities where this program was in place, the team recognized a common theme of energized faculty using digital, innovative teaching models; however, after hearing first-hand testimonies from students about the benefits of inclusive access, the fire became an inferno. Team members became more determined than ever to build a program that worked best for TCC and the students it serves.

Forming the Project Team

It all began in 2017 when a cross-functional project team was formed that focused on the three A’s: Access, Affordability and Achievement.

In the spring of 2018, the pilot (or “soft launch”) of Inclusive Access included 23 faculty members from multiple disciplines who willingly volunteered to be early adopters of the program.

Research performed by the team indicated inclusive access implementations are really many separate systems and processes working together for the common purpose of student savings. “It required reaching beyond common academic silos and implementing very manual processes,” said Tyson McMillan, chair of the JCC. “While we are doing something that has never been done before in the history of community colleges and that is exciting, it is also very manual. The team’s mantra became ‘Automatic does not happen automatically.’”

What is TCC Plus?

TCC Plus is a program that allows students to include the price of their digital textbooks in their tuition payment, access the digital textbooks online and be fully prepared on the first day of class. Most digital textbooks are nearly half the price of course materials available through the publisher or bookstore and the cost is covered by Financial Aid funds. Digital textbooks also include a reasonably priced print option.

To locate TCC Plus courses and the pricing for the digital textbooks, students can log in to WebAdvisor and find the sections designated by the plus sign icon.

The program began with 23 sections and grew to 82 sections for Fall 2018. For Fall 2019, more than 250 sections

are designated as TCC Plus courses, with more courses expected to be added each term. TCC students saw an average savings of \$56 per course material and a 98 percent opt-in rate for the program.

Benefits

Both faculty and students benefit from TCC Plus. Enthusiasm for the program is growing among faculty. Faculty members have academic freedom to participate in the program and assurance that students can have textbooks on the first day of class. “Students can hit the ground running. Also, they like the convenience of not having to track down books at the bookstore or online,” said Steve Smiley, computer science instructor at TCC Northwest.

Shereah Taylor, associate professor of education at TCC South, agrees. “Access to materials on the first day has given students the chance to follow along with the syllabus and course calendar from the beginning,” she said. “When students see the course expectations along with the textbook on the first day, they know what is expected immediately and can pace themselves accordingly. As the coordinator of Teacher Education at TCC South, I have committed our introduction course to using TCC Plus.”

Additionally, faculty members have access to ancillary tools to enhance instruction, as well as data showing students are accessing digital materials. “I strive to provide students with the most affordable options possible,” said Randy Jackson, department chair of Business and Computer Science at TCC Connect. “I will continue to explore additional courses to add TCC Plus to as well as to continue communicating the benefits for students to faculty.”

TCC students benefit from the program in a number of ways. Textbooks are more affordable than the printed versions; however, there is a reasonable cost print option available. They are covered by Financial Aid funds. Digital access is available the first day of class on Blackboard. Finally, students may opt out of TCC Plus by the Census Date in the semester.

Moving Forward with TCC Plus

Incorporating TCC Plus in a course requires many departments to work together. Inclusive Access is expanding nationwide, but the technology supporting it is in the process of being developed. TCC is ahead of the game on many fronts and will continue to find ways to automate and make Inclusive Access a leading choice for faculty and students.

For more information about TCC Plus, visit:
tccd.edu/tccplus.

TAKING A *Hands-On* APPROACH TO HISTORY

ASSISTANT ART PROFESSOR RESEARCHES POTTERY MADE BY
FORMER SLAVES AND CREATES PIECES TO HONOR THAT LEGACY

by Kendra Prince

When she was making mud cakes on her grandparents' farm as a child, little did Earline Green know that one day she would not only teach others to work in clay, but also study and create pottery to honor a historical legacy. Her interest in working with clay developed while she was teaching middle school in Dallas a few decades ago.

Green, who joined Tarrant County College in 2008, holds a Master of Fine Arts in Ceramics from Texas Woman's University. She has tremendous respect for the medium and the history associated with it.

"Clay is a challenging medium that requires PATIENCE," said Green. "The best part of the year is when (the students) start taking things home. If the trash is empty, I know it has been a good year. When they leave and they are smiling, you can't beat that. You can't replicate that feeling."

She says she teaches ceramics on a therapeutic level, with the first few weeks of the course focused on massaging the clay and learning how the medium responds in different stages. Her students research pottery from ancient civilizations before creating vessels in ancient styles with surfaces that reflect their personal choices.

In addition to her work as an educator, Green is an artist. Through her own home-based studio, she crafts customized ceramic tiles and murals, as well as stoneware. She also volunteers with the Empty Bowls Project, coordinating the annual production of some 200 bowls, the sales of which benefit the North Texas Food Bank and Tarrant Area Food Bank.

The Journey

Donna Rowland, a student of Green, said, "She gives you a lot of history. It piques your interest. It inspires your passion and lights a fire underneath you. Mrs. Green opened a perspective I didn't know."

Fellow student Jessica Allen agrees. "She (Green) takes you on a journey of understanding the ceramic arts," she said. "If you walk into a room and see a beautiful vase, you may appreciate its form, but if you understand its history, its journey, you have a deep appreciation for what is in front of you. Mrs. Green takes each student on this journey and inspires them to continue the story of ceramic art in their own words."

Green took a journey of her own. During graduate school in 1991, she learned about Reverend John McKamie Wilson, a Presbyterian minister and slave owner, and his slave potters in Texas; information about them, however, was hard to find. Yet, Green never lost her desire to discover more, particularly as she learned there had been a trail of slave potters stretching from North Carolina to Texas. In the summer of 2011, she took a field trip with her husband to Edgefield, South Carolina, in search of anything she could find about celebrated slave potter, Dave Drake (also known as "Dave the Potter" and "Dave the Slave").

While attending the 2014 National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference, she heard a presentation about Drake. "My takeaway from this experience was I wanted the same recognition for the Wilson Potters," said Green. Once again, she searched for information. This time, the images of two African American men appeared in her search, along with a link to the Wilson Pottery Foundation.



Green began collecting information about Wilson Pottery and visited the Wilson Pottery Museum in Seguin, Texas in 2015. During the spring of 2016, she created replica pottery pieces for an exhibition at the TCC South Student Center. In October 2017, Green attended the annual Wilson Pottery Show, where she met Wilson family members and supporters. The experience deepened Green's commitment to the Wilson legacy.

Within weeks, Green submitted her application for Faculty Development Leave so she could work with the Wilson Pottery Foundation and create replicas of their work.

The History

The images of the two African American men Green found in 2014 were of Hiram and James, two of the 20 slaves who traveled with John M. Wilson and family to Seguin from Missouri during the winter of 1856-1857. Green's research indicates the anti-slavery sentiment in Missouri probably threatened Wilson's way of life, prompting his move to Texas.

Wilson took over as minister at the Presbyterian Church in Seguin and became headmaster of Guadalupe College, as well as a contributor to the agricultural production in the area. He hoped to make a profit while helping those in the area preserve food for a longer period of time. Stoneware was the primary method of preservation in the South at the time, but because no stoneware was being

produced in the area, the cost of pottery was high.

"From the high price of stoneware, and the demand for it, I felt that the pottery business would be profitable and a source of convenience and pecuniary advantage to the country," Wilson said in an article in *The Texas Almanac* of 1870.

In 1857, Wilson – along with his son and a man believed to be his son-in-law – secured a 25-year lease of 315 acres in Guadalupe County to start a pottery business. The lease cost one dollar. The property provided the natural materials needed to build a manufactory and shelter for workers and stock, as well as a supply of water, clay and stone required to produce pottery.

According to Michael K. Brown in his book, *The Wilson Potters: An African-American Enterprise in 19th-Century Texas*, "During the 19th century, slaves were rarely trained to make stoneware. Instead, in the lower South, pottery making was an activity largely confined to the craftsman's family, as these regional establishments tended to be small-scale operations."

An exception to this rule was the Edgefield District where slave potter Drake worked. By 1820, local industry grew at such a pace that slave labor was introduced.

The Wilson Potters worked at three sites. The first, Guadalupe Pottery, opened in 1857 and operated similar potteries in the Edgefield District of South Carolina.

While Wilson did not create pottery himself, Hiram and

James were trained in the craft. Either they learned in Texas or were trained when they lived in North Carolina, prior to living in Missouri. It appears, though, they were trained by someone connected to the Edgefield District, according to Brown.

Following the Civil War, African Americans proved pivotal in providing essential goods and services during Reconstruction and afterward. Wilson's slaves, including Hiram, James and Andrew, George and Wallace, were now emancipated and in keeping with common practice, they took Wilson's last name as their own.

In 1869, John M. Wilson (who, at that time, had a partnership with Marion J. Durham) sold his half interest in Guadalupe Pottery to Durham. The Guadalupe Pottery split into two shops when Hiram, James, Andrew, George and Wallace broke off from the original pottery to form their own pottery company, H. Wilson & Co., which was the first African American-owned business in Texas. Durham ran the other shop, Durham & Chandler, along with John Chandler and Isaac Suttles.

"Hiram Wilson Pottery is an important object of study because it represents a local effort by Texas freedmen to start a business," said Joey Brackner, director of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture and host of the Alabama Public Television series, *Journey Proud*. "What makes it even more interesting is that they were open to other pottery techniques than those employed during their enslavement," according to Brackner, considered by many to be an expert on the Wilson Potteries.

H. Wilson & Co. operated until shortly after Hiram's death in 1884. Then, James Wilson joined Durham & Chandler, which ran until 1903.

The Craft

According to Michelle Verret Johnson, project manager for the William J. Hill Texas Artisans & Artists Archive through the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, it is significant that "the pottery was ultimately produced at two sites by Hiram Wilson and at all three sites by James Wilson. Both men acquired and mastered their skills as slaves and went on to open the first enterprise in Texas owned and operated by former slaves."

Johnson described the pottery as "strikingly handsome, featuring simple yet elegant utilitarian forms." Some Wilson Pottery used salt glazing, producing earth tones ranging from silvery grays and blues to deep greens and browns. "Wilson Pottery is some of the most valuable and collectible today, not only because it is beautiful and well made, but also because of this legacy," Johnson said.

Wilson Pottery initially used alkaline (ash) glaze, characteristic of pottery produced in the Edgefield District in South Carolina. Brown, also curator of the Bayou Bend Collection with the Museum of Fine Arts,

Houston, said, "The alkaline glaze assumed a range of colors from straw yellow, to celadon green, to reddish brown or dark brown. A number of factors could determine the color, such as the composition of the clay, the vessel's placement in the kiln or its proximity to the heat."

H. Wilson & Co. potters created pieces of various form including bowls, jars, jugs and churns, but it was the innovative elements that distinguished them. They fashioned handles in a horseshoe shape, unlike the typical crescent ones. Churns were created in a unique baluster-shape with rims to support lids. According to Green, the pottery also was signed, which was unusual for that period.

The H. Wilson & Co. Pottery Project

According to Green, the scope of the H. Wilson & Co. Pottery Project is to create artwork to help promote the H. Wilson & Co. legacy. She chose to do this through contemporary appropriation, or the reinterpretation of older works of art by reintroducing the work in a current context. "The process of contemporary appropriation encourages critical thinking on a creative level," said Green. "It teaches students how to research ancient styles, reinterpret the form and produce works of art based on their personal experiences." Green is creating a variety of jugs and vessels inspired by Wilson storage containers. To date, she has created about 20 jugs, ranging from one to six pounds each. The next set will range from six to 12 pounds each.

Green currently serves on Wilson Pottery Foundation's Board of Directors. According to Paula King-Harper, board secretary, Green's "dedication to the ceramics craft and her hunger for Wilson Pottery is inspiring." She says Green's redesign of H. Wilson & Co. pots "are sure to generate family and collector excitement."

"It's rare to have the time to devote and the access to resources to focus on a single creator, except in the event of an exhibit or other special programming," said Johnson, who met Green at the Wilson Pottery Show in October 2018 and has been corresponding with her weekly ever since.

Johnson credits Green's research with better interpretation of the Wilson Pottery pieces in their archives. "Earline's work can generate a renewed interest in Wilson Pottery and Texas stoneware in general, which may prompt others to visit our museum and view the pieces with a greater appreciation for the circumstances of their creation." Currently, the Hill Archive has more than 100 pieces of Wilson Pottery, 20 of which were recently added thanks to their partnership with the Wilson Pottery Foundation.

The Legacy

With this project, Green wants to focus on the potters' legacy. "I feel the legacy deserves to be protected.

There's nothing more important to me than sharing their legacy as African-American potters," she said. Because so little is known about H. Wilson Pottery outside the state of Texas, Green said she plans to introduce the legacy to a population beyond its current regional status through publications, exhibitions, short YouTube demonstration videos and a documentation section on (her) website.

Early next year, Green plans to host an exhibit at TCC South of her pottery inspired by the Wilson potters. Following the exhibit, she would like to continue making an unspecified number of pieces each year and donate them to art auctions to support the ceramic arts.

Additionally, Green has been invited to present her research on H. Wilson & Co. at the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts conference.

Green plans to continue working with the Wilson Pottery Foundation to help preserve the H. Wilson Pottery legacy and move it forward to a national audience, which she believes ties in perfectly with TCC's goal to serve the community and be its first choice for partnership.

She also sees the project as supporting the student experience through active learning, which involves students in the learning process, rather than being passive recipients of instruction.

With regard to the Wilson Pottery legacy, Green has, herself, become an active learner.

Michelle Verret Johnson sees the benefit of the legacy. "It transforms the stoneware into tangible evidence of the complex nature of the relationship between these enslaved men and their owner's business dealings before and in the immediate aftermath of emancipation," she said. "The African American Wilsons became master craftsmen as enslaved potters and after emancipation, used those skills to survive and ultimately thrive. That is so much more than we know about most of their contemporaries, which greatly benefits us today."

To learn more about TCC's continuing education pottery and ceramics classes, visit tccd.edu/enrichment.





The Rapidly Changing News Landscape

TCC PREPARES A NEW GENERATION OF MULTI-CHANNEL FACT FINDERS AND STORYTELLERS

by Reginald Lewis

Fake news. Social media. Technology. Digital influencers. The 24-hour news cycle. These trends – some new, some old – have left an indelible mark on the news media landscape. Gone are the days of waiting for the morning newspaper or evening newscast to learn about local, national and world events. Now, information is at everyone’s fingertips, minute by minute and across different formats, devices and technologies. Thanks to technology, people expect to get their news in real time.

As a result, traditional media outlets like newspapers, TV and radio continue to expand their digital extensions to keep their audience engaged. Traditional reporters and news personalities are being replaced with “influencers” and regular people. Social media, which is the main source of news online, allows anyone with a mobile device to “break” a news story if they are in the right place at the right time. There are more than 2.4 billion internet users, with nearly 64.5 percent receiving breaking news from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram versus traditional media.

This dynamic, through which anyone with time and a “gadget” can become his or her own media channel, has caught the attention of newsrooms and journalism schools across the country. A new generation of students is following the siren song that is the reporting and storytelling power of social media and other technological advances. To meet this growing demand, many colleges and universities have revised curricula to help teach students how to move fluidly from one medium to the next.

“Good 21st century journalists need to be platform-neutral, meaning they need to understand how to tell stories in any format: text, video, audio, photos and even graphics,” said Chris Whitley, director of student publications at Tarrant County College and advisor for *The Collegian*, TCC’s student-run newspaper. “They can’t always do everything, but the ones who are the most versatile are also the most marketable.”

Underscoring the College’s commitment to being a premier institution that prepares students for jobs of the future, TCC offers journalism courses

that are responsive to its students, community and the industry. Roughly 200 students register for journalism classes across the District each semester, and many have gone on to work for reputable news organizations throughout the country. And since 2015, *The Collegian* has won more than 200 awards from state, regional and national organizations.

“TCC presented me with the unique opportunity to figure out what I wanted to do in the media field,” said Selby Lopez, digital sports producer for *The Dallas Morning News* and Dallas Wings beat writer. “While at TCC, I dabbled in the announcing field, scriptwriting and other things before eventually growing attached to print/digital media. TCC gave me all the tools I needed to experiment in various fields to figure the best fit and trained me in the basics of newspaper writing through *The Collegian*.”

In his current role, Lopez posts content sent in by various writers, creates headlines for those stories, promotes them across *The Dallas Morning News*’ social media platforms and refreshes content to enhance engagement.

Like Lopez, journalists have to deal with the rise of fake news – stories or hoaxes designed to deliberately deceive readers on social media – which is harming the credibility of journalism across the globe. News organizations, tech companies and scholars are trying to figure out how fake news travels and why some people believe it enough to seek it out. What can reputable journalists do to fight the spread of fake news?

“I think the most important thing is to only put out information in stories or social media when you’re sure it’s true or you’ve heard it from a reliable source. I think one of the things our audience can’t stand is when people go on social media trying to make more of a situation than it really is.”

Selby Lopez

Digital Sports Producer for *The Dallas Morning News* and Dallas Wings beat writer

Whitley added, “As a journalist, I’m always interested

in the source material. If a fact has been passed along that looks sketchy, I want to know where that fact originated, particularly if that’s central to understanding something important. If I can’t verify that fact either through a hyperlink to the original reporting or a Google search to trace it, then I can’t take that fact seriously.”

In today’s news environment, more than ever before, journalists need to practice the art of fact checking, which has become more difficult to handle in the era of fake news. The pressure is high for journalists to get the facts right in modern news, which is why TCC instructors are committed to training students to think like independent fact checkers.

“Our students are clearly instructed on research as well as ethical and legal accountability in the Web Age,” said Brandt Sleeper, chair of the Communication Arts Department at TCC Northeast.

“It is a delicate balance of objectivity in getting information from multiple sources to get diverse viewpoints and confirm facts.”

Brandt Sleeper
TCC Northeast Communication Arts Department Chair

Sleeper’s broadcast journalism students also learn multiple ways to verify sources: direct phone research, in-person research and online research, which includes aggregates, blog specialists, user generated content and social media.

Students working for *The Collegian* are taught the mechanics of a story and how to edit content for accuracy. “Fact checking is the most important facet of journalism behind writing the articles,” said Juan Ibarra, editor-in-chief for *The Collegian*. “If people were to write things without fact checking, who knows what false ‘facts’ would be spread. All too often, I have seen people share articles from *The Onion*, a parody news site, because they believe it’s a true story. The spread of misinformation helps no one and only facilitates a culture of lies.”

As organizations continue to tackle the problem of fake news, people are turning to reporters for credibility, according to a 2019 Institute for Public Relations Disinformation in Society Report in a survey of 2,200

Americans, 46 percent of the respondents said they have at least “some trust” in journalists to provide accurate news and information. Among professions, journalists and college/university professors came out on top. Local newspapers (63 percent) and local broadcast news (62 percent) fared well for perceptions of trustworthiness.

“Journalism is about integrity, fake news is not. It is important to distinguish the two. Fake news is rarely a product of reliable journalism. A reputation for journalistic integrity will rebuild the trust of the general public.”

Brandt Sleeper
TCC Northeast Communication
Arts Department Chair

Believe it or not, recent developments haven’t been all bad for the hard-news business. Media operations like NPR, FOX News, HuffPost, Politico and BuzzFeed are enjoying strong earnings. The entire U.S. news industry brought in \$5.1 billion from digital advertising on 2018, according to the News Media Alliance. News organizations such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have seen a spike in subscriptions since the 2016 presidential election.

Interestingly, the current political climate and the rise of fake news are producing a record number of journalism students interested in becoming writers, editors or TV producers. TCC instructors stress that journalism students may have Republican, Democratic or independent political points of view; however, many will begin to “find themselves” while taking classes at TCC.

When TCC journalism students graduate with a degree or certificate, they join an engaged network of alumni working for some of the most legendary news organizations in the country. “One of our former students, John Harden, who I’m proud to say is one of three former *Collegian* staffers currently working at *The Washington Post*, did a story recently using data to figure out how people use the phrase “thoughts and prayers” after tragedies,” Whitley explained. “It was remarkable how you can track the changing interpretation of that phrase simply through a data analysis. And that’s John’s job. He was hired specifically to analyze data. It allows him to see trends based on facts and numbers that sometimes go against the conventional wisdom. I think

there’ll be more reporting like this in the future.”

TCC currently offers students an opportunity to earn an associate degree in Journalism & Mass Communication or Radio & Television Broadcasting/Broadcasting Journalism, along with two certificate options. “Our students are active in the evolving trends in news delivery,” said Sleeper. “In addition to traditional broadcast news formats, several of our students engage in video streaming of weekly podcast shows reflective of the growing interest in this area. We are also in collaboration with the Journalism department to explore opportunities for the creation of media content for online and on-demand news delivery, expanding their traditional print publications.”

Students in the Radio, Television & Film program have an opportunity to develop production and performance skills using state-of-the-art equipment. Have a great voice? TCC offers an eight-week Voice Acting & Audio Marketing certification program that prepares students for both on-air and voice-over positions. Voice-over work includes audiobooks, television, radio and public address. Students also learn how to set up a home studio and launch a voice-over career.

To learn more about TCC’s journalism program, visit tccd.edu/journalism.

To read *The Collegian* online, visit collegian.tccd.edu.

To learn more about TCC’s radio, television and film program, visit tccd.edu/radiotv.



TOP AWARDS WON BY *THE COLLEGIAN* 2018-2019

FIRST PLACE

Texas Associated Press Managing Editors

- Best Newspaper, University and College Division 2018

Texas Community College Journalism Association

- News Writing
- Feature Writing
- News Photo
- Headlines
- Editorial Cartoon
- Overall Excellence, Website

Society of Professional Journalists
2019 Region 8 Mark of Excellence Awards

Winners

- Best Editorial Cartoon
- Breaking News Reporting

Finalists

- Breaking News Photography
- Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper

National Mark of Excellence Awards

Winner

- Editorial Cartooning

SECOND PLACE

College Media Association Pinnacle Awards

- Best Editorial Cartoon

Texas Community College Journalism Association

- Sports Feature Writing
- Editorial Writing

Texas Intercollegiate Press Association

- Overall Excellence
- Feature Story
- General News
- Illustration
- Cartoon Strip/Panel
- Newspaper Design – on site

THIRD PLACE

College Media Association Pinnacle Awards

- Two-Year Newspaper of the Year
- Two-Year Best College Media Outlet of the Year

Texas Community College Journalism Association

- In-depth Reporting
- News Photo
- Feature Photo
- Non-Photo Journalism

Texas Intercollegiate Press Association

- Breaking News
- Special Design Print
- Feature Photo
- Social Media Breaking News

FOURTH PLACE

Associated College Press

- Best of Show Award/Two-Year Colleges

Since 2015, *The Collegian* has won more than 200 awards from state, regional and national organizations.



MODELING THE WAY

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION OFFERS NONTRADITIONAL, PEER-LED TUTORING IN DIFFICULT COURSES

by Bill Lace

Illie Harrison sits in microbiology, a course with a fearsome reputation among Tarrant County College health sciences majors, for whom it's a must-take, must-pass proposition. Only one of every four students makes it. She listens attentively, taking notes and asking questions – just like any other student. Except she's not a student. At least, not in this class.

Oh, she took the course all right, but it was during the previous semester – made an A, too – but she's in this class as part of TCC's Supplemental Instruction (SI) program through which a student who's done well in the course sits in a second time around and holds separate sessions to explain concepts or clarify sticky parts of the faculty member's lecture.

Hung Vu of the TCC Southeast biology faculty was unsure when approached about participating. "I was hesitant," he said. "I asked, 'What is this – tutoring?'"

"Look at it this way," he was told. "A student in your class seeks help from someone who's already been successful in that course. They're then joined by another student and another and still more."

"But how," Vu asked, "will the student helping them know what material's being covered?" "They'll know," was the answer, "because they've been sitting in that class all along."

The clouds part. The dawn breaks. "I'm now for Supplemental Instruction 100 percent," he said.

Kaheh Azimi at TCC South, on the other hand,

was on board the second the gangplank was lowered. "Chemistry is a difficult subject," he said. "A lot of students struggle in there, so I thought this would be a good idea. I didn't need convincing. I just went for it."

SI was developed in the early 1970s at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, which had changed from a private to a public institution several years before, thus reducing admissions selectivity. Some programs, primarily in the graduate health sciences, experienced high dropout rates. Doctoral student Deanna Martin was hired to develop a program to combat the problem. The solution had to be cost-effective, verifiably successful and could not include "remedial" courses because of the negative connotations attached and the attendant tuition cost to the student.

Martin knew that tutoring could be effective, especially if done by the students' peers, but was expensive if done one-to-one and difficult to evaluate. Her solution was to target the course instead of the student. The "tutor" would be a student who had done well in that course, was less expensive to hire and, by sitting through the lectures, would be better able to address specific topics covered by the instructor.

The program was successfully piloted in 1973, expanded to the undergraduate curriculum in 1981 and that same year was named an Exemplary Educational Program by the U.S. Department of Education. It has since expanded to more than 1,500 colleges and universities in 30 countries.

TCC was relatively late to the party. It wasn't until 2013 that Chris Darville, formerly with TCC South's Counseling Office, was tasked by TCC South President Peter Jordan and then Vice President Larry Rideaux to develop an SI program. Darville started small with a few courses, mostly related to technology and math programs.



"The results were very good, but the really impressive thing that happened was when we had a summer school course with mandatory SI sessions built in right after class. One hundred percent of those students were successful."

Peter Jordan
TCC South President

Eventually, however, all student SI participation became optional.

Shortly afterward, the Board of Trustees approved \$1.4 million for expansion of the program to all campuses. Darville was called on to direct it as director of learning success.

Darville moved on to become senior director for YES Pres Public Schools Inc. in

Houston, but his program continues to flourish. Those few sections have expanded to 179 in Fall 2018, the last semester for which statistics are available, and their SI sessions targeted more than 4,000 students in 42 courses.

These courses are selected by a combination of enrollment, difficulty and their SI history. The criterion first examined is a course's DFW rate – that is to say, the percentage of grades of D or F and the number of

Tarrant County College
Supplemental Instruction

withdrawals – any of which, based on TCC’s criteria, mean a student has not been successful. The DFW rate is then aligned with enrollment as the College tries to get the greatest impact from the program. Given comparable DFW rates, a course with a larger enrollment is more cost efficient.

Just because a course has a high enrollment doesn’t mean it’s necessarily the best candidate for SI. “Composition I should reach a lot more students,” said Colleen Fitzpatrick, SI coordinator at TCC Trinity River, “but that’s a course where, at least for my campus, we don’t have the best attendance at SI sessions.”

Participation in SI is not mandatory for faculty members, so not every class section of an SI course is included. Thus, faculty enthusiasm for the program plays a significant role in both how many SI leaders – the experienced students who lead the SI sessions – are hired and who those students are. District Director of Academic Operations Rosalyn Walker said that, in addition to seeking qualified students, “we take recommendations from faculty. They may have outstanding students whom they would like to see hired.”

It makes sense, Azimi said, to have an SI leader whose experience has been with a faculty member in whose class they serve. “It will give that student a familiarity with the concepts of the course and details and things that I emphasize in my classes because different people obviously have different points of emphasis,” he said.

Faculty recommendations and a good grade in the course aren’t enough, however, to assure employment. “I’m personally OK with the student having earned a B in the course,” Fitzpatrick said, “because sometimes it means they had to struggle.” Someone who breezed through the course, she said, might come across as abrasive and condescending, and students in the class “won’t come back to SI sessions because they won’t feel comfortable.”

According to Walker, SI leaders need both personality and passion. They need not only to be able to impart knowledge, but also to “model the way”

for the other students – participating in discussions, taking notes, asking questions. “Other students who generally sit in the back with headphones on may start thinking that maybe they should get a notebook,” she said. “The SI leaders are the premier students every teacher would want in class.”

SI leaders earn, on average, about \$13 for every hour spent in the class, every session and every conference with the faculty member. That’s about \$1,200 for a three-semester-hour class. “A pretty good gig for the SI leaders,” Walker said.

Money aside, there are ancillary benefits to the SI leaders. “It helps you polish your skills, and you develop the love for transferring and sharing information,” said Brunilda Santiago, a TCC Southeast faculty member who was the first SI coordinator at the campus, “and if you can explain something, that’s when you can truly say you understand it.”

Harrison, a student in SI classes before becoming a leader, agrees. “Not everything a faculty member says is important, but some things are incredibly important” she said. “So being able to pinpoint those as an SI leader made me better able to do that when I’m a student listening to a lecture.”

“It really helped me because you have to have time management and be able to engage people with different personalities and still be professional,” said Cindy Ramirez, also a veteran of SI classes. “Students would ask questions that made me think and make sure I knew the right answer and how to answer appropriately, and that benefited me tremendously.”

Supplemental Instruction can make for some improvement in faculty members. “Absolutely,” Azimi said, “because there are some things that they (his students) won’t tell me, but they’ll share with their SI leader. So, it’s very beneficial.” And Vu recalled instances where SI leaders, who had taken his class, were able to point out important information that somehow had not been brought out in a lecture.

But such extra benefits of SI, in addition to being unquantifiable, are beside the point – which is to improve student success, and there are plenty of figures

showing that SI does just that. According to a report by TCC’s Office of Institutional Research, the 1,805 students who participated in Fall 2018 SI sessions had a success rate – earning a grade of C or better – almost 20 percent higher than non-participants and withdrew from, or “dropped” the class, about half as often.

The degree of participation – how many times students attended SI sessions – made a big difference. Those attending even once had a success rate about five percent higher than those who did not, and those attending 10 or more sessions had a success rate of 91.4 percent as compared to the 59.5 percent rate of non-participants.

The success rate gaps within some courses were notable. Students who attended SI sessions of Biology 2401 – Anatomy and Physiology II succeeded at a rate of 82.8 percent against 52.9 percent for non-attendees. In History 1301 – U.S. History I, the success rates were 91.4 compared to 69.4 percent.

Sadly, however, most of the students in SI sections don’t take advantage of the program. About 57 percent don’t make it to a single session and, overall, their grades suffer as a consequence. “The students who participate make almost a full letter grade higher than their peers,” Walker said. “And not only do they make higher grades, but they retain more, and that shows up in subsequent classes.”

The faculty do their best to encourage participation. “I’m the cheerleader,” Santiago said. “On the first day of class, I introduce the SI leader and throw in the stats of my students who attended the sessions last semester.”

Vu said he virtually threatens his students, telling them they’ll regret it if they don’t embrace SI. But Kelly Wiggins at TCC South takes the opposite approach. “I usually start out by saying, ‘I’m not your mama. However, I’m older than you, and I know a thing or two and I promise you that if you go to SI, you’ll be glad you did.’”

Wiggins realizes that many students have other demands on their time, such as work and family, but said they need to think long-term. “I totally empathize,” she said, “but I tell them, ‘If you can

back off work just a little, it’ll pay off in the long run.’ There’s no elevator to success; it’s all stairs.”

Supplemental Instruction can’t claim all the credit for increased grades. Since participation is voluntary, it follows that it’s the highly motivated students who elect to participate. And such students are likely to make better grades regardless.

That was the case with Harrison, whose goal is medical school. “From the first day of class, I was determined to do well by any means,” she said. “I figured that it (SI) couldn’t hurt me and might help me, so I had no hesitation.”

“I thought this was exactly what I needed,” said Ramirez, “especially with the sign language program, which is so difficult. As a student, you want to learn more, and SI was just another resource. I was very excited to go and attend.”



“You interact with the material in a different way than you would if you were studying by yourself. When you have students collaborating and talking together, you understand it at a deeper level. Supplemental Instruction makes you a better student and helps you build relationships with people. It has been pretty transformational for me.”

Ciera Knabe
TCC Student

And also for the faculty, said Wiggins, who summons up a Willy Wonka analogy on SI. “It’s your little golden ticket to get through to your students,” she said, “your little golden ticket to student success.”

For more information about Supplemental Instruction at TCC, visit tccd.edu/supplemental.

FINDING YOUR INVISIBLE WORKFORCE

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HOW STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM CAN FILL IN-DEMAND STEM JOBS NATIONWIDE

by Amber Meyers, TCC Northeast Speech Instructor

America faces a looming crisis in the workforce. According to the 2018 Deloitte Skills Gap in Manufacturing Study, more than 2.4 million STEM positions will go unfilled in American manufacturing and design in the next nine years.¹ This gap hamstringing an entire American industry, one that drives nearly every other jobs sector. This gap is unsustainable if America hopes to maintain global economic dominance. Luckily, there is a growing pool of talent that, with the right supports in education and the workplace, could help solve this dilemma.

Recent numbers by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention predict approximately 50,000 students, at a minimum, will graduate from high school annually while experiencing life on the autism spectrum.² These students are generally uniquely suited to careers in the STEM professions. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) makes communication, especially nonverbal communication, more difficult but grants an enhanced knack for pattern recognition and atypical thinking.

Sadly, without targeted supports in the credentialing phase of post-secondary education, the potential evaporates and America loses a vital talent resource.

Earlier this century, providers identified just one ASD child in 250, so this loss of economic potential was easily overlooked. However, at the current rate of diagnosis (1 in 59)³, the practice of overlooking these students is not a sustainable model in a world of advancing technology, artificial intelligence, programming and all the sub-careers these fields generate.

Maddeningly, the statistics for very capable students on the autism spectrum in higher education are grim. At just 18 percent involvement, these students (many with strong STEM potential) are the least likely to enroll in school or achieve gainful employment in the two years after high school graduation of any measured disability group (learning disabilities, visual or auditory impairments).⁴

What is needed to discover this untapped workforce

is stunningly simple and has, in small pilot programs, proven successful. We must change the way community colleges recruit and support students in order to achieve completion rates commensurate with ability.

In order to recruit this once-invisible population, it's important to understand the K-12 system. High schools try to prepare ASD students for post-secondary education through a federally mandated process. TCC faculty or staff can join the process to recruit students and inform their parents of TCC programs and targeted support services. Once enrolled, best practice research suggests that more intensive orientation and a cohort-style schedule increased completion and success rates.

ASD students should, ideally, begin TCC with instructors who have additional, research-proven training to understand the small tweaks to curriculum delivery and assessment, that help bolster ASD student success. Students with ASD organizational difficulties additionally benefit from targeted tutoring sessions covering the content as well as the context of higher education culture. To fully utilize existing supports at home (supports with years of individualized design), it is important to offer support and continued information on the transition into adulthood to students, their parents and other key stakeholders (as allowed under FERPA regulation).

As the rates of diagnosis continue to rise and the unique talents specific to the ASD community emerge from new research, TCC holds both opportunities and mandates from the community. As an example, a software developer with one kind of creative thinking may design an application for modern efficiency. That program must be “de-bugged.” This is a specific skill that may seem dull to a neuro-typical programmer. Yet, this is a task that appeals to many on the autism spectrum. It provides for the comfort of routine (the same daily task) and plays to

the ASD ability in unique pattern recognition. Hiring and supporting the ASD worker in just this one field benefits the business community by increasing the talent pool. A small number of adults with ASD are currently succeeding in solid, six-figure salary jobs in data analytics, programming, research and myriad other STEM-related fields. In discussion with these successful people, one will hear of the mentor or supportive person who helped the now successful employee understand corporate culture and communication and manage daily interactions. TCC can begin this process as the support service provider.

TCC exists as a “student-ready” college. The smaller class sizes and more individualized instruction offered at TCC make for the smoothest possible transition into higher education for the very capable, but sometimes distracted, ASD student. Once students experience success in higher education and earn transfer credits or the certifications needed for meaningful employment, TCC graduates emerge prepared with skill sets for university culture or workplace success – with skills that seem “just in time” for the digital revolution. There also is a need to train “success coaches” to work with employees with ASD as more Fortune 500 companies are recognizing the talent pool and seek qualified work coaches to provide support.

To ignore ASD potential and the need for STEM graduates in such a quickly growing population damages our community. It seems STEM-capable students miss out on the pathways to adulthood their peers enjoy once they leave the protective bubble of high school. As a global economic powerhouse, we are doubly missing out as well. Instead of earning the credentials they need to contribute to the tax base with well-paying jobs, many young adults with ASD draw on social service safety nets, never gaining the pride of self-sufficiency their peers experience as they venture into the work world. The cost to



Medicaid for a citizen with ASD is shockingly six times higher than for similarly aged young adults. In 2005, the CDC reported average expenses of \$10,709 for every client with ASD vs. just \$1,812 for those without.⁵ There also is a moral mandate – people living with high-functioning ASD have suicide rates nine times higher for men and 13 times higher for women.⁶ The psychological boost afforded to contributing members of society who feel accepted by peers can negate the dismal statistics. But we must act.

The choice seems easy. Education provides for equity when proper supports are in place. Education leads to meaningful contributions in the workforce. Without targeted support in higher education, life prognoses seems grim: unemployment, dependent status and wasted potential.

In reality, America can't really afford to lose 50,000 high-potential graduates every year when our STEM need is so high. We must begin the work before we lose the market to countries who utilize the skills of every citizen, not just those who fit the desired mold.

The solution begins now.

To learn more about TCC's Autism Spectrum Disorder Program, visit tccd.edu/academics/cee/preparatory-education/transitional-skills/autism-spectrum-disorder-program.

¹ "2018 Skills Gap in Manufacturing Study." Deloitte.com, 2018.

² Jaslow, Ryan. "Autism Rates Rise 30 Percent in Two-Year Span." CBS News, 2014.

³ "Data and Statistics on Autism Spectrum Disorder." CDC, 2019.

⁴ Anne Roux, et. al. "National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood." Drexel University 2015.

⁵ "New Data on Autism." CDC, April 2019.

⁶ Kirby, Anna, et.al. "A 20-year Study of Suicide Death in a Statewide Autism Population. Autism Research, 2019.

SMOOTH TRANSITION

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE THROUGH SMOOTHER TRANSFER PATHWAYS

by Reginald Lewis

Transfer students are starting to feel the love as a growing number of four-year schools try to woo them to campus, boosting enrollments and diversity in the process. More than half of all Texas college students begin their academic career at a community college like Tarrant County College, which offers high-quality programs with affordable tuition and fees. In 2015, nearly 37,000 public community and technical college students made the transition to a Texas public university in 2015, a 3.3 percent increase from the prior year.

Studies show that community college students who transfer to selective schools have equal to or higher graduation rates as those who enroll straight from high school. That's because they are ready for academic success. Name the top universities in Texas and chances are TCC has someone currently enrolled. College and universities want students who already have demonstrated success at college.

"Students from Tarrant County College are truly hard working and dedicated to their academic success," said Bree Rogers, admissions counselor for The University of Texas at Arlington. "I've been recruiting at TCC Trinity River each week for over a year and it has been a great opportunity for students to come meet with me to discuss their transfer pathways, while also working with the campus Transfer Center."

Thanks to the more than 60 articulation agreements TCC has established over the years, students can transition smoothly from TCC to four-year institutions in Texas and several other states. Under most of the agreements, students completing 60 semester hours and maintaining a certain GPA can transfer with all general education requirements fulfilled. Not only do articulation agreements help minimize educational costs for students, they also establish a pathway

to completion through efficient course alignment.

"While recent initiatives have focused on the important role community colleges play in technical workforce development, the fact is that many students entering community college aim to earn a bachelor's degree," said Elva LeBlanc, TCC's executive vice chancellor and provost.

"As we focus on being an institution that is student-ready, TCC will continue to identify and implement strategies that help students make informed decisions regarding transferring credits to partner institutions."

Elva LeBlanc

TCC Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

According to Tarrant County College's 2019 Transfer Success Report, more than 2,700 TCC students qualified as being first-time transfer students to a Texas public four-year college or university in the fall of 2017. The top two institutions for TCC students transferring were The University of Texas at Arlington with 1,195 transfers and University of North Texas with 580 transfers. According to WGU Texas, which offers online bachelor and master degrees through competency-based programs, TCC is the top provider of transfer students each year for them as well.

Creating Articulation Agreements

So, how is an articulation agreement established? "The process begins with the executive leadership or



academic department at a college or university initially contacting Tarrant County College,” said John Spencer, district registrar and director of academic support services. “After confirming the prospective partner aligns with TCC’s mission, vision and values, the two sides begin crafting details about dual admission, program specific agreements, AAS (Associate of Applied Science) to BAS (Bachelor of Applied Science) agreements, reverse transfer and each school’s joint obligations.”

Once a final version of the Memorandum of Agreement is ready for signing, the partners typically hold a signing ceremony to officially announce the partnership. In recent years, TCC has announced agreements with Baylor University, Hardin-Simmons University, Midwestern State University, Tarleton State University, Texas Christian University, Texas Southern University and WGU Texas. Many of the College’s educational partners can be found on TCC campuses recruiting students and employees looking to further their education.

Visiting the Transfer Center

As soon as students hit campus, they are encouraged to drop by one of the six transfer centers in the District to learn about transfer options. While there, they can meet with a coordinator of transfer and scholarship services to get information about four-year schools, transfer scholarships, majors and degree plans. “Working with the TCC transfer coordinator made it easy for me to transfer by making sure that the courses I took would indeed transfer so that I did not waste my time once I got to a university,” explained Rais Smith, TCC Southeast alum who is currently working on her master’s degree at Tarleton State University.

Each semester, TCC offers many opportunities for students to find the right school and major. For example, there are Transfer 101 information sessions, grad fest and transfer celebrations and transfer fairs featuring 50+ schools—all to help students make the right decision.

“This is TCC, and students are not all the same,” said Laura Escamilla, coordinator of transfer and scholarship services at TCC Trinity River. “We see students that come in and know more than

we do, they’ve done their research and they’ve completed everything that they needed to do and they just want us to say, ‘Yeah, you’re good.’ And then you have the students that need a little bit of guidance. They know what they want to study and are looking at one, two or three universities. Then you have the ones that come in and they no clue. They’re looking in state, out of state and out of country.”

Terrell Shaw, coordinator of transfer and scholarship services at TCC Southeast, keeps a busy schedule each semester. When he’s not meeting with students, he may be on the phone trying to bring recruiters to his Arlington campus. “There are several deciding factors that dictate where students will transfer: money, career pathway, family or life ties, university culture and familiarity with the institution. The most impactful of those would be family or life ties. Sometimes they need to take care of an older family member or a younger brother or sister.”

Helping a student choose the right school requires a variety of skills, which often includes playing the role of mentor or counselor. “Sometimes we’re here for emotional support,” said Brittini Hollis, coordinator of transfer and scholarship services at TCC Connect. “There’s this one student who is 40 and she has 12 kids, but she carries a very high GPA. She wanted to go to medical school and was just accepted into UNT. She was trembling and didn’t think she could do it. I had to tell her she was already doing it. She just wanted someone to tell her that she could do it.”

Throughout the year, several TCC alumni come back to share stories about their accomplishments and how TCC prepared them for the next level. “Going to TCC right after high school was the best decision I could have made,” said Estefany Mendoza Salazar, a graduate of TCC Trinity River.

“Being there gave me time to think of what I wanted to major in and what university was best for me. The support and knowledge I got there allowed me to excel in my classes, which led to me landing a full ride at UT Arlington.”

Transfer Scholarships

Many schools offer lucrative scholarships to high-achieving transfer students, making the overall cost of attendance more desirable. Texas Wesleyan University, for example, recently revamped its transfer scholarship packages. “Amounts and opportunities for TCC students are now significantly increased. No matter their GPA, TCC students will be able to receive a scholarship from Texas Wesleyan,” said Djuana Young, associate vice president for enrollment at Texas Wesleyan University.

“We are confident our new transfer scholarship packages, which are renewable for three years, will allow us to reach more TCC students than ever before and help them realize their goal of a bachelor’s degree.”

For years, The University of Texas at Arlington has acknowledged the preparedness of TCC transfer students. “Many TCC students have received some of our top transfer scholarships, including the Terry Foundation Scholarship, the Transfer Scholarship and the Phi Theta Kappa scholarship,” Rogers explained. “While the path for transfer students can be rocky, UTA is designed as a university that understands how to support all students.”

As one of the key economic generators in the region, TCC continues to look for opportunities to establish articulation agreements with higher education institutions to create pathways for students, employees and graduates to further their education at the bachelor and graduate levels. Ensuring smoother transfer pathways represents a critical step in meeting the goals of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s 60x30TX strategic plan, which calls for 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 year olds to hold a degree or certificate by 2030.

To learn more about TCC’s transfer programs, visit **tccd.edu/services/transfer-center**.

To obtain detailed academic and financial information about TCC’s Transfer partners, head to one of the District’s Transfer Centers:

Northeast Campus
817-515-6096
ne.transfercenter@tccd.edu

Northwest Campus
817-515-7712
rachelle.alvarez@tccd.edu

South Campus
817-515-4122
817-515-4126
sandra.bermejo@tccd.edu

Southeast Campus
817-515-3230
se.transfercenter@tccd.edu

Trinity River Campus
817-515-1198
laura.escamilla@tccd.edu

TCC Connect Campus
817-515-8024
kerri.holt@tccd.edu



NOT YOUR PARENTS' HIGH SCHOOL



NEW OPTION GIVES FORT WORTH STUDENTS A COMPETITIVE EDGE IN THE WORKPLACE

by Rita L.B. Parson

Educational options in Fort Worth are now more electrifying and fluid, thanks to the infusion of local industries into the early college high school run collaboratively by Tarrant County College (TCC) and Fort Worth ISD at TCC South.

Students at the TCC South/Fort Worth ISD Collegiate High School now augment earning an associate degree with marketable skills in two top industries. The enhancement is possible because TCC and Fort Worth ISD partnered with Oncor and the City of Fort Worth Water Department to improve their students' economic potential.

Opened as TCC's sixth Early College High School four years ago on TCC South, this fall the school began transitioning to a Pathways in Technology Early College High School (PTECH). This model originated in New York to prepare students for life after high school.

"Partnering with Fort Worth ISD and TCC in the

PTECH initiative provides an important opportunity to develop curriculum that will help shape the minds of future Oncor employees who may not have otherwise been exposed to careers in energy," said Tiffany Richmond, ONCOR Customer Operations executive associate. "Our participation helps to bridge the gap locally between business, education and government to develop a quality workforce with a globally competitive advantage."

Similar benefits are anticipated by the City of Fort Worth Water Department.

"By helping these students learn about other industries, it gives them options that they may not have ever received or learned about. It gives them a chance to see different aspects of these industries in person and to apply what they have learned in school at an early age," said Sheree Collins, administrative services manager for the Fort Worth Water Department. "I have learned going to college

for four or more years is not the answer for everyone. However, experience and knowledge are irreplaceable in whatever career a person decides to choose."

Inviting Oncor and the Fort Worth Water Department to participate as initial PTECH partners was a natural outgrowth of their previous investment with early college high school students, said Lisa Castillo, founding principal of the ECHS, and now, Fort Worth ISD executive director of CHOICE and enrichment programs including PTECH.

"We have had an amazing relationship with Oncor, which has worked with our students over the last four years to bring enjoyable, hands on energy-related activities and fun events," Castillo said. "We particularly partnered with Oncor and Fort Worth Water because of their belief in growing our workforce and keeping them here to grow our community."

While all students in Fort Worth and surrounding districts are eligible to apply, selection is based upon the lottery with priority going to Fort Worth ISD students, said David Saenz, Fort Worth ISD senior innovation officer. Tuition is free for accepted students, with Fort Worth ISD paying for books.

"Fort Worth ISD hopes to do our part in supporting the economic success of our area by ensuring our students are prepared with the necessary skills to take on these valuable jobs," Saenz said. "This model will provide our students guaranteed interviews with our partners. This provides a pathway to a strong income while also meeting the needs of the workforce in Tarrant County."

Sophomore Giselle Villa, who wants to pursue a medical career, perhaps as a gynecologist, recognized the benefits of the program and made the tough choice to transfer.

"I'm not going to lie. It was a hard decision to make. I had already started high school and was comfortable with my classes and peers. I had planned to stay there and graduate," said Villa, the first in her family to attend college. "I decided to enroll into PTECH after doing research and speaking to students as well as teachers. They explained to me the three different pathways allowing me to graduate with my high school diploma, associate degree and certifications."

Recognizing the significant financial savings this path represents helped to clarify her decision to enroll. "I was astonished by how much money and time I would save (and) the advantages it would give to my future whether it be enrolling into a university or applying for a job. I know it won't be an easy road, but in the end all I want – as a student, daughter and friend – is to make everyone proud," Villa said.

Her father, Alan Villa, appreciates his daughter's desire to save money, freeing up more of their budget for her brother and sister. "Our goal as a family is that our three children go to university," he said.

Intrigued by the unique benefits afforded ECHS students, Stephen Coll targeted it as the place to teach when he relocated to Fort Worth. He is pleased to remain through the PTECH transition because "it serves to embody our district policy of college- and career-readiness," he said.

Coll said the biggest change he anticipates is the opportunity

to teach students what he called "employability skills."

"I learned these as the 'soft skills': team work, collaboration, professionalism, etc. These were not taught during my formal education. I picked these up as I entered the workforce," he said. "Now, our students will learn those alongside their requisite classes for their chosen course of study."



"Any time you can accomplish two objectives with one lesson or program, it creates a win-win. They will get the academic knowledge through their high school and college courses, but most importantly, they will get the work experience with our industry partners. They are getting two things for the price of one, an excellent 'twofer' in my opinion."

Stephen Coll
ECHS Instructor

The Collegiate Programming initiatives in Fort Worth not only enhance the future of local students, but they impact the state's economy by making a direct contribution to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) 60x30TX strategic plan. The goal is to ensure that 60 percent of residents, aged 25-to-34 years old, hold a certificate or degree by 2030. The current Tarrant County rate of 31 percent of its residents holding at least a bachelor's degree, based on Towncharts Data, is improving each year.

"This past year, our existing early colleges produced 258 students who graduated with their associate degrees before graduating with their high school diploma. These students also graduated with no debt," said Fort Worth ISD's Saenz. "We are now working to replicate this success and are in the process of planning the launch of five more early college models that will be based at our comprehensive high schools."

The planned expansion plus the three standalone collegiate high schools within the District will bring Fort Worth ISD's early college high school programs to 10.

"By 2021, we hope to have a collegiate model in every one of our comprehensive high schools so all students have an opportunity to select this early college pathway," Saenz said. "Together with TCC, we will work to build educational opportunity for our students so that they can prosper economically while contributing to the economy of Fort Worth and the surrounding areas."



WORK HARD. PLAY HARDER!

by Gina Brasseur

The most important decision a student can make in their higher education journey is choosing which school they will attend. When weighing the pros and cons, there are numerous benefits to starting that journey at a two-year college. Tuition per credit hour is lower, schedules are more flexible and classes are offered year-round. But a common misconception is that students at two-year colleges will miss out on the ‘real’ college experience outside of the classroom. If they attend a community college, some assume, students will miss out on experiences like socializing, student organizations or even sports programs. However, students at Tarrant County College can experience all this, plus more. TCC offers a robust schedule of intramural sports, competitive teams and tournaments available to all students. And the benefits extend far beyond the classroom.

The Classroom Connection

Outside of class time, TCC students have numerous opportunities to participate in team intramural sports and open gym times. Available activities range from volleyball and soccer, to dodgeball and disc golf. “Basketball is our most popular intramural,” says TCC Northwest Administrative Assistant of Health and Physical Education April Miske. “Many, many students show up to play.”

But the classroom benefits of time spent on the field or court caught the attention of one professor.

“Research is rapidly growing that supports the benefits of physical activity on brain health and learning,” says TCC Southeast Kinesiology Department Chair Melissa Evans. “Exercise supports the growth of new brain cells, sharpens focus and increases attention. It can enhance the brain’s processing speed of new information.” Other benefits include

sharpened memory, eased task-switching, lifted moods, reduced anxiety and more. “Healthy students are better students. They miss less class, they’re more attentive, and they’re able to be more successful in the classroom and their professional lives.”

At an orientation meeting for new students taking online courses through TCC Connect, Evans emphasized the importance of physical activity. She impressed upon them that physical activity is a crucial part of the learning process, especially when spending so much time with a computer or handheld device. “Our bodies were never designed to be stationary, except to sleep. Sometimes people forget how really important movement is.”

Evans recently published her research findings indicating a direct correlation between exercise and more productivity in the classroom. “Strategies involving [physical activity] interventions show great promise for enhancing academic achievement, but more extensive research is needed to identify specific factors that will positively enhance learning among the college population,” she wrote.

The benefits of physical activity and team sports aren’t limited to improved functions of the brain. There are many other auxiliary benefits, too. According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), physical activity can reduce the risk of depression, improve bone health, promote a favorable body image, improve attention span, improve mental health and prevent weight gain. There is also strong evidence that exercise can help people feel less anxious, enjoy improved sleep and and better control of emotions. “Being motivated to exercise and eat healthier has caused me to become happier, more confident and have more energy,” boasts a student review of the KINE 1164 Introduction to Physical Fitness and Wellness course.

Intramurals

All current TCC students, faculty and staff can participate in on-campus intramural sports, no matter their skill level or background. The goal of intramurals is to provide friendly, structured recreation for the whole TCC community, along with some good-natured competition. It also provides a way for students to get to know each other and socialize outside of the classroom.

One popular activity is the twice-yearly Toro Boot

Camp Challenge on TCC Southeast. Participants run, crawl, scramble, balance, tumble and zig-zag to complete fitness stations throughout an obstacle course. Challengers compete for the best overall running time in both a male and female division, with winners receiving a TCC duffel bag and bragging rights for the semester. “We strive to make the course challenging, but we want all fitness levels to have fun and be able to participate, so it’s not excessively intense,” explains Kinesiology instructor Shahzad Nazir.

Campus organizers intend to add new intramural sports and activities to the schedule as the demand increases. Students are encouraged to volunteer in leadership roles and to recruit fellow players. Many facilities also are being improved and updated. At TCC Northeast, a new mesh fence recently was installed around the sand volleyball court so players won’t have to chase the ball too far if it goes out of bounds. One tennis court also was recently converted into four pickleball courts, much to the delight of many players.

TCC offers approximately 20 different intramural sports for students and staff. Coordinators schedule game times, hire officials and provide equipment. There are no fees to join, no practices to attend and all skill levels are welcome. Playing for fun is emphasized over winning.

The teamwork and personal accomplishment of these activities have positive effects on many students. “Many of our Kinesiology majors grow with self-confidence. They participate and get jobs in their field,” said Miske. “One recent student was hired at a local gym already. He was so confident and helpful in leading sessions here, he was able to take that experience to his new job.”

Just Play ‘N’ Fun

The Tennis On Campus club gives students the chance to take a break from school work, release some stress and have fun on the courts. “It’s meant to be a fun, recreational experience for students to do things socially,” says Tim Sebestra, club coordinator and coach.

The club consists primarily of former high school athletes and other advanced players. Club students from all campuses play twice a week at TCC Northeast but also travel to regional and state tournaments throughout the school year.



“We want students to be able to be involved in the college experience beyond just going to class, then going to work or home,” says Sebestra.

First-year student Brent McCall agrees. “I played tennis in high school. My friend here at TCC was in the club and encouraged me to join. There’s a lot of good people here.”

But the Tennis On Campus club is more than just an opportunity to hit the courts. Club members also are deeply involved in community service. Twice a year, they host round-robin tournaments for students and community members.

“We’ve even had some players enroll here at TCC after playing in the tournament and learning about what we offer,” according to instructor Kim Kerby-Dickman.

Half of all profits raised at the Tennis On Campus community tournaments are donated to charity. Currently, the club donates to Cancer Care Services, a local cancer charity that supports patients, caregivers and survivors.

Community service projects such as this recently won the club Texas Club of the Year from the U.S. Tennis Association (USTA). Along with that honor came an invitation to the USTA Tennis On Campus National Championships in Orlando, Fla. “We were the only two-year college invited to the tournament. It was really exciting,” says Sebestra. “It was a once

in a lifetime experience for some of these students.”

Because physical fitness is an integral part of everyone’s health and well-being, TCC’s commitment to serving students isn’t limited to the classroom. The whole student is supported, welcomed and engaged inside and outside the classroom.

Intramural Sports Offered at TCC

- Volleyball
- Sand Volleyball Tournament
- Basketball
- Flag football
- Soccer
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Golf
- Disc Golf
- Obstacle Course
- Dodgeball Tournament
- Toro’s Bootcamp Challenge
- Lift-a-thon
- Community walking/running event

For more information about sign-ups, dates and locations, visit tccd.edu/services/student-life/intramurals.

Love the Players, Love the Game

On a beautiful sunny day in early April, family, friends and colleagues gathered at TCC Southeast for a moment of celebration and remembrance. The celebration? For the new competition-class disc golf course opening on campus. The remembrance? Of the man who initiated the project.

In late 2017, Danny Aguirre, TCC Southeast Kinesiology Department chair, and Javier Arrendondo, facilities manager, began to conceive a fully developed disc golf course at the recommendation of the Campus Beautification Committee. As they walked along the location of the course, they envisioned potential designs that would leverage the natural elements and foliage in the landscape.

With plans beginning to take shape, the project was put on hold when tragedy struck a few months later. Aguirre suddenly passed away at age 39. As a 10-year employee of the college, Aguirre had worked tirelessly for his students and was dedicated to helping others. “He was the type of employee that any president would want on their campus,” said TCC Southeast President Bill Coppola.

After Aguirre’s passing, it was decided that the project would continue in his memory. TCC alumni and local disc golf expert Colin Wickstrom soon heard about the project and volunteered

his time to help the project come to fruition.

“I settled on a 12-hole design that utilized the creek, woods and the rolling hills more than the open areas. Disc golfers love trees. They provide obstacles, interest and most importantly, shade,” said Wickstrom.

Wickstrom, Arrendondo, lead groundskeeper Mark Villanueva and former facilities manager Brian Goodwin then came together with others to build the Danny Aguirre Memorial Disc Golf Course.

Family, friends and colleagues gathered under the shade of the nearby trees to watch as Wickstrom, Aguirre’s mother, Sally Aguirre, and others cut the ribbon to officially dedicate and open the course. Aguirre’s brother, Luke, threw the ceremonial first putt.

The 12-hole course is described as moderately hilly in a wooded area at the edge of a creek. It is designed to be beginner-friendly, but is also technical enough to appeal to even the most advanced players. The short course is 2,533 feet, and the long course is 3,165 feet. Both courses are par 36. The public is welcome to use the course during daylight hours when the campus is open.

To organize an event or reserve the course, contact the TCC Southeast HPE Department Office at **817-515-3601**.



COMMITTED TO SERVE, PROTECT AND CONNECT

TCC POLICE MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON CAMPUS
AND IN THE COMMUNITY



by Kendra Prince

According to a Department of Justice special report published in 2015, the percentage of public higher education institutions using sworn officers was 92 percent, compared to 38 percent for private institutions. Tarrant County College is no exception with an elite, highly trained police force committed to keeping the College safe for faculty, staff, students and the community. However, it hasn't always been that way.

In an article in *The Atlantic*, Bill Taylor, former police chief of San Jacinto College in Texas, said law enforcement in higher education started in the 1960s and '70s – an era characterized by widespread student unrest amidst the Vietnam War and racial segregation.

That was true at (then) Tarrant County Junior College's (TCJC) South Campus as well. According to Mitchell McEwing, former dean of students, "A lot of unrest came from the community onto the campus." McEwing addressed it through listening to student concerns and stressing classroom rules to keep everyone on the same page.

"Race relations were sometimes a little tense, but not nearly as much as conflict over the Vietnam War," said Larry Story, assistant history professor. "I had veterans of that war, and other wars, in my classes as well as war protestors, so it got pretty tense sometimes."

When Jerry MacLachlan became director of public safety for TCJC in 1970, the College had only a security force primarily responsible

for locking buildings and writing parking citations. Under his leadership, that changed.

MacLachlan revamped the department into a police force over which he became chief. He implemented several changes including extensive background checks, pre-screening psychiatric exams for applicants and 10 weeks' time with a field training officer for new graduates from the Police Academy. Additionally, MacLachlan provided officers with state-of-the-art equipment and weapon specialists responsible for training.

Close to 50 years later, the TCC Police Force now has 85 peace officers, 12 security guards and 13 communications officers/dispatchers.

The requirements to join the force are still high, including a preliminary test, a panel board interview, medical and psychological tests and finally, an interview with the chief. "It's most important to be respectful," said Assistant Police Chief Leigh Dietrich. "If you're not respectful of the people you serve or the people with whom you serve, that's not something I can train into your being."

Community Policing

Respect plays into the Community Policing Model, which TCC has used since the inception of its force. Community policing involves police partnering with citizens and local agencies to reduce crime and disorder. "That policing model has really taken off. We have a dual purpose, not just arresting people,"



said Dietrich. “We can do that, but we focus more on keeping the environment safe and secure while also educating people. It works very well for us,” she said.

Several TCC police officers have come from a municipal background, working for a city or county. Dietrich says municipal work can be fun and exciting with the ability to gain experience quickly, but the disadvantages include high call volume and pressure on officers. “You’re just run ragged,” she said. “That’s just not us. Our officers are not so overloaded that they cannot do the community policing we want.”

TCC South Police Captain Darren Clark joined TCC after serving on police forces for the cities of Azle, Weatherford and Westworth Village, as well as the Weatherford College Police Department. “While municipal police departments use law enforcement to reduce crime, TCC Police use engagement with the campus community to build trust and respect. This trust and respect helps create a safer environment where meaningful learning can take place,” said Clark.

Sometimes, officers have to educate individuals about the meaning of their badges. Patrol Officer Johnny Holland pulled over a woman at TCC Northwest. She said, “Why are you pulling me over? You’re not a real cop,” treating him as if he were a security guard. “Once I explained the difference between the police and security, she apologized,” said Holland.

Building relationships takes time. According to Dietrich, officers are committed to building a bridge to students “just by being there.” She smiled when she mentioned Captain Jerome Albritton, police commander at TCC Trinity River. “We call him ‘The Mayor,’” she said. “He’s always out of his office, meeting the students and answering questions.”

Serve

Service is one of the five qualities displayed on challenge coins given by TCC Chief of Police Shaun Williams. “Everything is our job,” said Dietrich. “Ask us. If we can’t handle it, we can find out who can. Reach out to us for help.”

Captain Terry Moak, campus commander for TCC Northeast, says the police do their job with a service heart in mind. “Always trust the officers to have empathy,” he said.

That service can take various forms. George Rangel, patrol officer at TCC Southeast, says some days are busier than others. Calls for service can range from criminal offenses, student conduct, lost/stolen items, vehicles that are damaged or impaired —locked with the keys inside or in need of a jump start — locked rooms and people who are ill or injured. And then, there are snakes. “Three in the last few weeks,” said Rangel.

TCC also offers an eight-member honor guard that serves at funerals and special events. As a member of the honor guard, Patrol Officer Tien Tran served at four of the five services for the Dallas Police Department officers who were killed in the line of duty during a protest in Dallas in July 2016. Tran was amazed at how much support officers received from those they served in the community. “We had overwhelming support from the public during those days,” he said. “People were lining up for miles along the highway and city streets to pay respect during the funeral processions, not only for the officers killed in action, but for the entire law enforcement profession as a whole.” Tran said it was a valuable reminder of how important the job of the police is, protecting and serving the people in the community, regardless of the narratives

painted by those who oppose law enforcement.

Acts of service by the TCC Police rarely receive that same level of recognition, but they continue to serve faithfully, along with their leaders. Dietrich shared an experience at TCC’s May Owen Center, where her office is located. One Friday, she was walking to her car close to 6 p.m., when most of the offices within the College were closed. A car pulled into the restricted lot at the back of the building. The driver was looking for help and seemed exasperated.

Even though it had been a long week for Dietrich, and she was more than ready to go home, she stopped to help him. He was a student who needed his financial aid paperwork so he could get his tax refund and drove to TCC for help after a long day on the phone with no resolution. Dietrich listened as the student poured out his frustration, then ran inside to see if anyone could help him. There happened to be one person available that evening who provided the contact information he needed, which Dietrich gave to him, along with her card, telling him to call her the following Monday if he didn’t get the help he needed.

“Sometimes it’s just that little thing, listening to someone so they can be heard,” said Dietrich. “Is that the police officer’s job? Probably not, but I have no doubt that anyone who works for me would do the same thing, and probably more so.”



Leigh Dietrich
Assistant Police Chief

Protect

Protecting TCC and the community is a priority for the police. “I do not ever want a student, faculty member or community member to say, ‘I came up last night and I didn’t feel safe here,’” said Dietrich.

Administrative Captain David Herndon considers the police to be ambassadors for the College – to help, not give a hard time. “We want (faculty, students and staff) to feel safe here on campus. We want them to feel comfortable enough to let us know when crimes happen to them.” Herndon oversees the compilation of area crime statistics for the Clery Report, a federally mandated report made available to employees and students every October.

Terry Moak agrees. “We’re here to serve by providing a safe environment,” he said. The longest-tenured member of the TCC Police with 27 years of service at the College, Moak says law enforcement changed with Columbine, referring to the shooting massacre that left one teacher and 12 students dead at a Colorado high school in 1999. “When I got into law enforcement that was unheard of. It just didn’t happen very often,” he said. “Now, it’s increased ten-fold. Any given week or month, you hear about an active shooter at a school or a college.”

Patrol Officer Gwen Parker, who is responsible for the TCC Opportunity Center, says officers go through hours and hours of annual training to prepare. “The emphasis is always on awareness,” she said. “You never know what is going to come around the corner. With TCC being high density, we want to be aware of what is doing on in the world. There have been high school and college shootings, so we’re always on watch. I would say hyper-aware.”

Moak admits training for active shooter situations has increased greatly. “The way officers respond to that has totally changed,” he said. “In the early ‘90s, it was ‘contain and wait’ for SWAT and let them handle it. Now, if you have a hostile or active shooter situation, we go in. That’s how we’re trained.”

Holland says TCC police really care and go all out for those they serve. “When you see me, know I am looking out for you. I see what you don’t see,” he said. “I’m a sheepdog. So, I want you to go be a sheep. Do what sheep do and know that the sheepdog has your back.”

Connect

There are times that problems lead to solutions. That happened to Albritton, who found himself at a loss to assist a Deaf student in distress in 2016. He reached out to Sammie Sheppard, coordinator of the Sign Language Interpreting Program. The request for assistance came at a perfect time, because Texas had passed a law (SB 1987) earlier that year requiring all peace officers to receive training in interacting with drivers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. “If we’re going to protect and serve someone, we need to be able to communicate,” said Albritton in an interview with Channel 11 News.

In response to that need, the TCC Sign Language Interpreting Program and the TCC Trinity River Police created “Hands in the Air! Let’s Communicate!” a class to empower officers to understand and better communicate with Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons. Albritton invited other police agencies to participate, and, according to Sheppard, the room was packed.

A month before the class, a North Carolina man who was Deaf, was shot to death by a state trooper during a traffic stop, which led to heightened awareness among law enforcement. His family members believe that if the officer knew the man was Deaf, the outcome might have been different.

During the class, officers learned how to identify a Deaf driver on a traffic stop and important Dos and Don’ts in interacting with someone who is Deaf.

Responses to the class were positive. Sheppard has already received more requests for classes, and says her team is ready to help.

“The more people can interact with police officers in situations where law enforcement is not necessary, the more people can see police officers as humans trying to help other. This helps build trust so our efforts are more effective during a crisis.”



Darren Clark
Police Captain, TCC South

In the fall of 2018, following the “Cookout with the Cops” event at TCC South, Clark was approached by three students with the idea for a Unity Summit to foster dialogue between the police, students and community members. Clark collaborated with them, and the event took place in March 2019. Community members listened to presentations and a panel discussion from police, prosecutors and community members where relations between the police and the community was the main topic. Clark spoke on people-focused policing.

“Through our conversations, participants realized that many of the views espoused in the media were based on less than factual information or (viewed) through certain lenses that did not paint the entire picture,” said Clark. “Ultimately members of the group grew to respect each other for their similarities rather than the differences.”

The Community Policing at TCC works and garners praise. “TCC’s Police Force amazes me,” said Tahita Fulkerson, who most recently served as interim president for TCC Northeast. “I’ve worked on every campus and have never seen anything less than an authentic commitment to protecting us – obviously – and also a commitment to service.”

Officers feel respected, which Patrol Officer Juan Rosales said is the “result of the way students are treated by law enforcement. The students and teachers know that the police are watching out for them.”

Dietrich tells those considering becoming an officer and working at TCC, “Don’t do it for the money. Do it for the people. To do it here is 10 times better, because we are so appreciated here!”





87 YEARS AND COUNTING

TCC PROFESSOR FOREGOES RETIREMENT TO IMPACT MORE LIVES IN THE CLASSROOM

by Alexis Patterson

61 That’s the average reported age at which retired Americans ended their careers, according to a recent Gallup report. Ebbie Smith passed that by more than a quarter-century ago, and he is still going strong in his role as adjunct professor at Tarrant County College Northwest. For Smith, who turned 87 in 2019, continuing his work is a natural choice.

“I am committed to teaching and my students,” explained Smith. “Also, I’d rather be busy than bored.”

By all accounts, he has stayed busy throughout his life, which began in Houston in 1932. While a student at Conroe High School, Smith selected his career path: he would teach. That suddenly changed, however, when Smith felt called to enter the ministry. During his senior year, he became a Baptist minister.

After graduating from high school, Smith enrolled at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene to study theology. To pay for his education, he worked two jobs in the campus

dining hall and as a janitor.

“Those jobs helped tremendously,” Smith noted. “The experience of working and attending college led to developing the habit of carefully using time and keeping up with differing responsibilities.”

He managed those responsibilities well. During his junior year of college, Smith accepted the position of pastor for a church in Millersview, about 100 miles south of Abilene. He also married his high school and college sweetheart, Donna Rodman. Despite the changes—and a long commute—the Smiths persisted in their education and graduated from Hardin-Simmons in 1954.

Life then brought the couple to Fort Worth, where Smith enrolled at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. While earning his Master of Theology and Doctor of Philosophy, he served as pastor or interim pastor for multiple congregations—and started a family. He and Donna would ultimately have three sons and a daughter.

A few months following Smith’s graduation from Southwestern Baptist, the family set sail for Indonesia to serve as missionaries. During the time abroad, which began in 1961 and spanned 15 years, Smith began combining his Christian service with his original career goal. He taught at the Indonesian pastor training school using the native language. He also earned another master’s degree, this one in the field of missions.

While the family’s missionary experiences were gratifying, Indonesia was a place of great tragedy. In 1973, son Roger passed away after a motorcycle accident. The family buried Roger in the island nation. Faith kept the Smiths going.

The family returned for a furlough in the United States about a year following Roger’s death, living in Houston but planning to return to Indonesia. After a few months, however, Smith began to sense that something else was in his future.

“One day I came in and my wife said, ‘I don’t know how to say this and have been dreading bringing it up, but I have a growing feeling that God does not intend for us to go back to Indonesia at this time.’ I told her that I had been feeling that as well,” remembered Smith. “The next day, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary called and asked me to teach in Fort Worth.”

The family moved north, and Smith started his career as a full-time professor. He taught in the fields of missions and Christian ethics.

“Dr. Smith is brilliant yet as humble as any man I’ve met,” said Jim Burgin, who studied under Smith in the 1980s. “His door was always open, and you would often find him in a group of students talking about ethics—as if he were just another student in the mix but subtly guiding the conversation to a positive conclusion.”

Smith’s instruction had a lifelong impact on Burgin, a pastor for Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex and the leader of Grace Street Fellowship.

As Smith shaped the lives of students at Southwestern Baptist, he also became a student again—earning a master’s degree in sociology from the University of Texas at Arlington. Then, after more than two decades as a Southwestern Baptist faculty member, Smith decided to retire from the classroom. He worked at a funeral home and later as a hospice chaplain. Yet, Smith felt compelled to return to teaching. About 10 years ago, he joined TCC.

He began teaching in the departments of sociology and philosophy at TCC Northwest. Smith quickly became a student favorite, known for insightful, engaging instruction as well as his compassion.

“Without actually bringing my pastoral function into the classroom, I find that my experience in that area enables me often to realize when students are going through personal

crisis situations. It is my hope that I am able to be of some small help to them,” said Smith.

In addition to teaching, Smith writes and publishes books through a ministry he cofounded called Church Starting Network. He also has written for other publishers. In all, Smith has authored a dozen books (including two novels), coauthored four books and coedited as well as contributed to an authoritative textbook on missiology.

Smith has continued all this work even when others might have chosen to stop. Around the time he was hired at TCC, Smith and his wife lost their eldest child Randy due to health issues. And a year or so ago, the couple moved into assisted living. Smith also realized he was no longer a safe driver.

“My eyesight at night played a part, and after falling and breaking my leg, the issue increased,” said Smith. “I decided something was amiss with knowing you were a less safe driver but still driving to school to teach ethics.”

So he turned to ridesharing. One day the Lyft app happened to connect him with driver William Pierce—a former student at Southwestern Baptist.

“I was really happy to get back in touch,” said Pierce, who ended up transporting Smith to TCC more than once. “We were able to have great discussions, and I enjoyed getting to know him outside the classroom. I hold him in very high esteem.”

So do his current students, such as Jannat Alsammarraie.

“His class is very joyful and interesting. Professor Smith throws jokes in the middle of class and makes everyone laugh,” said Alsammarraie, who studied world religions under Smith in summer 2019. “He teaches like he is telling a story.”

Alsammarraie—who has recommended Smith’s classes to friends—notes that he has a special way of connecting with students.

“He treats people the way they like to be treated. For example, since I am wearing a hijab, he said, ‘Alsalam Alaykum’ to me the first day I entered class,” she recounted. “I appreciated that.”

For Smith, those he teaches are his motivation.

“Every semester, I have students who are gifted and have the capacities for contributing greatly to society. I teach to help these students reach their potential. Every semester, I have students who stand on the edge of giftedness who need some stimulation and push to move ahead. Every semester, I have students who need to develop skills and determination to continue. I teach to participate in the development of all these students,” he said.

Smith does look ahead to the future; he has indicated an intention to retire from teaching at 90, but “who knows,” he added.

In the meantime, busy he will stay.

GETTING ACQUAINTED

A Q&A SESSION WITH KENYA AYERS,
PRESIDENT OF TCC NORTHEAST

”

by Suzanne Groves

TCC Northeast welcomed Kenya Ayers as president in July 2019. A second-generation educator, her experience in both academic and student affairs gives her a holistic perspective on higher education. Suzanne Groves, executive director of Communications, Public Relations & Marketing, met with TCC’s newest president to learn more about her background and what she wants for the students the College serves.

Q: First, tell me about your name. Did you know other Kenyas in your growing up years?

A: I have met just a few other Kenyas. I am a product of a time when people of African-American descent were stepping into great pride in heritage and culture.

Q: Tell me about your career thus far.

A: I feel blessed and fortunate. It’s amazing to me, even on the hardest days, that this is the work I get to do. My journey started with me working in academic advising through a graduate assistantship. I was studying clinical psychology. I had a graduate assistantship in my master’s program that was paying my way through my master’s program, and the assistantship that I secured was in an academic advising office. While I was doing therapy and testing with adolescents in my clinical internship, I found that we were affecting more change with the college students that I worked with through advising in an initiative called the Academic Mentoring Program at Eastern Michigan University.

Students there were matched with mentors and connected with academic support skills and services, then able to come off of academic probation and really see a turnaround. I

thought, “I love this.” Once I started doing that work, I got hooked. Soon after, I got a full ride to a doctoral program in clinical psychology. I was the first in my family to have that kind of opportunity to earn a doctorate, but I knew I needed to be on a college campus, so I walked away from that Ph.D. program.

I felt called to work in higher education, and my career has been a progression through student affairs and academic affairs simultaneously. I’ve been fortunate to be able to go back and forth between both. I started in academic advising, I did academic support work, I’ve been a dean of students, I’ve been an associate dean for academic affairs, and I became an associate provost, then served as an academic dean and a vice president.

Q: What inspired you to pursue a career in education?

A: I’m a second generation educator. My mother is happily retired from her career as a principal in the Detroit

public school system. It was the rides in the car with mom where she would be unwinding and talking about her day. Some people shy away from the idea of administration; I thought, “This is awesome.” I saw it as helping people. I saw it as being positioned to have resources and to have a voice at a table where you can effect change. I loved visiting the

school that she led. We talked through really thorny challenges. She was in the Detroit public school system and oversaw a kindergarten-8th grade building that was large for their district. She worked with union problems. I learned a lot just watching her. My love of learning came both of my parents, who really instilled the value of education.

Q: When you think about your career and your life up to now, what is your proudest achievement?

A: There is work that I have done in equity and inclusion on many fronts with women, for students of color, along the lines of socioeconomic status, along the lines of international and immigration issues that has really significantly opened doors of opportunity for others to bring their goals to fruition. That makes me proud that I’ve done something that matters.

Q: Were there any hurdles you had to overcome along your journey and, if so, can you describe the situation, the outcome, what you learned?

A: One thing I’ve experienced quite a bit in my career is being underestimated, probably for a variety of reasons. It may have to do with the intersectionality of identity as a woman and as a woman of color. There have been many times where I walk into a room, and I’m not what people expect to see. For whatever reason, I just don’t fit the bill of who they were expecting.

I just focus on doing great work, representing my organization well and bringing my best to the table. I think there were times in my career when my identity was a hurdle for some. Now, I just see it as an opportunity to broaden people’s view of who is successful and what excellence looks like. So, I embrace that opportunity.

Q: What do you think are the greatest challenges in education today?

A: In some ways the work we do is like turning the Titanic. We have organizations that are modeled on middle-class norms, but we aren’t necessarily educating students who come from a middle class paradigm. So, there’s an opportunity for us to shift our way of thinking, not always inviting our students to accommodate to the way that we operate.

For example, we must ask what needs to shift in the classroom to ensure students have what they need from Day One. Because if it takes until Day 15 for me to realize the student doesn’t have a book, they’re too far behind. How do we shift what we’re doing to meet the needs of our learners?

As academics, we are trained to look at the world through the lens of our discipline. We’re not always inviting colleagues to understand the broader focus, the more strategic look that higher education requires today. That’s a real opportunity. The ways in which we partner with our communities, and the ways in which

we’re invited to be more entrepreneurial, is a very different way of thinking than when many people came into academics.

Q: Describe your leadership philosophy.

A: I believe very strongly that the work we do should be people-driven and data-informed. It is important to be communicative and clear, to communicate vision and invite people. I’m a very invitational leader, so you’ll hear me use the word “invite” often. Invite people to come along and partake in the vision too. Ownership matters. That is what I really like about TCC’s Three Goals and Eight Principles work. It has shifted the work of the District. It’s shifted the work of the College, and people are thinking about transformation. There are so many opportunities for ownership, for people to say they really can be part of where the College is going. I really believe strongly in this level of engagement.

Q: What do you want students to know about you?

A: That I want them to have a phenomenal experience with TCC. I want them to finish what they’ve started. As much as I like seeing them around, want to get to know them and look forward to engaging with them, I also look forward to their continued success beyond our organization. What brings me joy is that I’m now in my 30th year as an educator, and I still have relationships with students from that long ago. I also hope the students will come to know my heart -- that my heart is always for their best. That I will always engage them in conversation about where they’re going. And it doesn’t matter if they’re a student at 13, 14 or if they’re a student at 70, 80, I want to know what their vision is for their own lives. Our role is to help them bring that to light.

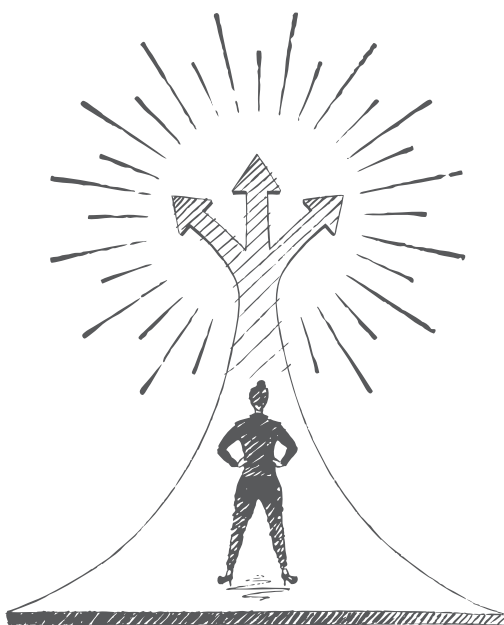
Q: Who was your greatest influence and why?

A: My mother. My mother epitomizes a woman of wisdom, faith and strength. She models the difference that education can make in someone’s life. She grew up in the projects of Detroit and became a principal of one of the Detroit public schools. So she’s been a real mentor. She’s been a great pattern for my life. She’s the person I most respect and most admire.

Q: Finally, if I were a first-time college student sitting in your office right now, what advice would you give me?

A: So often, our first-time-in-college students are so anxious, they believe they don’t know how to do this college thing and that everybody else does, or that they’re not going to get where they want to go. It’s all this noise in their heads.

I’d just say, just stop and breathe. You’re already amazing. You’re already wonderful. You will get through this. You will be proud of yourself. Just take your time. Learn the Campus. Understand that there are professionals here who are here to support your success, and we believe in you. We invite you to believe in yourself too.



THE NEXT STEP TO SUCCESS

CAREER SERVICES FACILITATES TCC STUDENTS' TRANSITION FROM COLLEGE TO THE WORKFORCE

By Alexis Patterson

After completing Tarrant County College's Aviation Maintenance Technology program, Clark Bohrer was ready for his first job. From aircraft propellers to landing gear systems, he had mastered every class.

"I've known since I was a kid that I wanted to work around airplanes, so I was excited to get started with my career," said Bohrer, who graduated in 2019. "I felt really prepared for actually working in the industry."

What he wasn't as prepared for, however, was securing a position.

"It was a little nerve-wracking to think about getting to that end goal," Bohrer remembered. "I knew what I wanted to do but not exactly where. I just wanted to get a job and get my hands dirty."

Bohrer had the perfect opportunity to take a step in that direction through a specialized job fair organized by the College's Erma C. Johnson Hadley Northwest Center

of Excellence for Aviation, Transportation and Logistics. He knew that before he attended the fair, he needed to get prepared. Bohrer turned to the experts with TCC Career Services, which was collaborating on the event.

With offices on each campus, Career Services provides comprehensive tools and resources that allow students and alumni to identify fields where they will excel, develop job search skills and locate internships and employment.

"All students are encouraged to begin their career planning early, to have the best chance of landing the position they want," explained Tracy Williams, coordinator of Career Services at TCC Northwest. "We are here to help every step of the way."

While setting students up for a smooth entry into the workforce, TCC's Career Services offices work directly with area employers to raise awareness of job openings and meet the business community's needs.

"The College is a great partner for companies of all

industries building their presence and operations in North Texas," said Williams. "We have a vast number of students being trained with the latest technologies and practices in a wide variety of fields."

Every day, dozens of those students take advantage of Career Services' one-on-one support, which includes guidance for acing interviews and getting the interview in the first place.

To get his cover letter and résumé in peak form before the aviation job fair, Bohrer sat down with Cassie Fennel, student development specialist in TCC Northwest Career Services.

"I went to her with what I thought was a pretty good idea of a résumé, but together we completely remodeled it and wrote a cover letter that was more appealing," said Bohrer. "With her advice, I could present myself in the best light."

Fennel notes that Bohrer had the necessary knowledge and excellent potential—and was committed to setting himself apart among job seekers.

"Clark was a great listener, asked wonderful questions and took my suggestions seriously to showcase his qualifications for an employer to recognize," she said.

Like many of his peers, Bohrer had not yet held a job in the field he studied. Fennel worked with him to highlight the marketable skills he developed through his education and experiences. The process was transformative. When Bohrer attended the fair, multiple employers sought him out for interviews, including US Aviation Academy.

"Clark's cover letter and résumé definitely stood out," said Erica Mahan, who handles talent acquisition for US Aviation Academy. "His résumé was clear and easy to read, and it had everything that I look for. Clark's cover letter painted a personal picture—who he is, what his background is and where he wants to go."

Mahan attends TCC job fairs regularly.

"It's really important to get in the field and do grassroots recruiting," she remarked. "I get to have real conversations with applicants about what our company represents."

Offerings by Career Services extend beyond individual student assistance and promotion of employment opportunities through fairs, other on-campus recruitment and an online network. Career Services offices partner with academic departments to bring industry professionals to classes and special events, creating stronger connections between college and what's to come.

"Talking to those actually working in the industry enhances understanding of a chosen field," said Williams. "Picturing the reality of their profession gives students a more focused goal while getting their education."

And visits by industry professionals are about more

than providing technical, job-specific information. TCC Northwest Career Services recently worked with Christina Ross, associate professor of speech, to hold a mock office party. Williams' staff identified professionals who could come to Ross' Business & Professional Communication class and mingle with students in order to enhance conversation and networking skills.

"With Career Services' connections, we found people who work in fields many of my students were interested in, and the Career Services team also networked with students during the party, telling them about their services and possible jobs with specific majors," recalled Ross, who turned to Career Services to assist with mock interviews for the course as well.

Ross is TCC's faculty lead for guided pathways, the process of helping students navigate coursework, earn a degree or certificate and begin a career. She works closely with Career Services in this role.

"The guided pathways model begins with students' career exploration and identification of a professional goal," said Ross. "Career Services also gives faculty and advisors a better understanding of the career and employment options for students in various majors and programs."

In addition, Career Services works with TCC Financial Aid to post student worker jobs—which come with both immediate and future benefits.

"Those positions give students the ability to stay on campus and earn money," said Williams. "Plus, students gain real experience and learn to work as part of a professional team. Those things serve them well as they enter the workforce outside of college."

Seeing students achieve their goals is extremely rewarding to the Career Services team. Fennel was thrilled to learn Bohrer was hired on the spot as an aircraft maintenance technician at US Aviation Academy.

"It is a proud moment when students contact me to let me know they got the position they were applying for," commented Fennel. "They are always so appreciative and excited, and it is very satisfying knowing I played a part in something they worked so hard toward."

Both Bohrer and Mahan, US Aviation Academy's recruiter, highly recommend Career Services.

"A lot of people need assistance in this area," Mahan pointed out. "Even experienced pilots and aviation mechanics I meet can struggle with their résumé and how to do an interview. TCC students are fortunate to have this resource."

For more information about TCC's career services, visit tccd.edu/careerservices.



FILLING THE NEED

HEALTH SCIENCES PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN PROVIDING SOLUTIONS THAT WORK NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

By Paul Sturiale

Joseph Cameron Jr., dean of Tarrant County College's Health Sciences, and his two assistant deans, Troy Moran, Sr. and Brenda Clark, share a common passion: "Fill the Need."

Whether it is students' needs to be prepared for workplace success, the medical community's need for a professional workforce or the community's need for high-quality health care, TCC leaders recognize that the Health Sciences Department plays a critical role in providing solutions that work now and into the future.

Since 2016, department leaders have been molding the 15-program curriculum to meet current and projected personnel needs over the next decade. In addition, the department has several more programs in the planning stage. Once the full curriculum is in place, TCC could graduate up to 200 allied health professionals annually.

Health Sciences programs include training in skills that complement and support the care offered by public and private medical institutions and practices. TCC trains students in technologies related to anesthesia, medical diagnostics, anesthesia surgery, nuclear medicine, radiology, magnetic resonance imaging and vascular interventional radiography. The classes also train students in complementary medical staff skills like medical assistant, health information, respiratory care and long-term care administration.

"Many of our older students come here to qualify for a second career. They have worked in other professions that are being phased out or are military veterans seeking job skills that fit today's workplace. But they see the medical field as a secure one because they know that they'll always have a job in health care."

Brenda Clark

Assistant Dean of the Health Sciences

Curriculum flexibility is especially important to medical institutions that rely on TCC to supply students and graduates who fulfill their present and emerging needs, says Virginia Chandlee, manager of Clinical Experience, Academic Affairs at John Peter Smith Health Network and a member of TCC's Allied Health Advisory Board.

"TCC consistently calls us to get our response on what new programs we anticipate needing and where our present staffing shortages are. Their academic dean has looked at the needs and trends in the area and has tailored programs to meet those needs," she said. "We take students and put them into the clinical rotation so we get to see them in action while they are in an actual clinical setting and then when they graduate, we can take them over to Human Resources to get them onto our staff."

When they successfully complete courses — online, at regional locations like TCC Northeast, Northwest and Southeast or at the Center of Healthcare Professions at TCC Trinity River East — students earn an associate degree or certificate of completion that often qualifies them to immediately pursue a degree at a four-year institution or secure a job with a medical facility or practice.

The certification represents a solid investment in their future, says Cameron. "We are very proud of the fact that our programs are extremely affordable, successfully transition graduates into the workforce and offer such a high return on their investment. It isn't uncommon for starting salaries to be four, five, even up to eight times higher than the cost of TCC tuition and fees," he said.

Marcus Johnson, director of Cardio Pulmonary Services at Methodist Mansfield Medical Center in Mansfield, feels that TCC's programs provide a great return on investment for medical facilities. "When you work in healthcare, you spend a lot of money on resources, and your most important resource is the human resource. And the people I get from TCC always exceeds my expectations. More than half (of staff), almost 60 percent, are graduates of the program and they are so prepared when they come in that the learning curve is minimal," he said.

Cameron and his staff are building their curriculum to reflect input from hospitals and medical leaders throughout Fort Worth and professional organizations such as the Tarrant County Medical Society. "This is a logical step for us because our campus is the only one in the Medical District," Cameron said. "So we have easy access to many of the leading medical providers and facilities in Tarrant County. We want to take advantage of that location and those relationships in whatever ways best help our students."

In addition to specific skills that benefit students in the short term, the classes teach wider perspectives on the community's changing medical needs. In that way, says Cameron, students are better prepared to take advantage of new technologies and emerging diagnostic and treatment trends.



"We are answering the needs of our community partners, while providing opportunities for all."

Troy Moran, Sr.

Assistant Dean of Health Sciences

Nicole Boncic, a first-year sonography student whose internship at Dallas Medical Center required three days on site at the Center and two days of classes at TCC Trinity River East, found that the transition to real-world medical service was very smooth because "I felt that I was definitely clinically ahead — definitely ahead — when I started because our instructors are really, really awesome. They know their subjects, so we are able to apply what we've learned at school right away in our work." This semester, she is serving an internship at Parkland Health and Hospital System in Dallas before she graduates in 2020 with an associate degree.

Cameron's thoughts on new technologies are echoed by David Woolsey, president of Integrated Ultrasound Consultants, a member of TCC's Advisory Board and Interview Board and a guest lecturer in Health Sciences classes. Woolsey's company has been using Health Sciences students as interns for several decades and over the years, has hired about 15 students as full-time sonographers and ultrasound technicians.

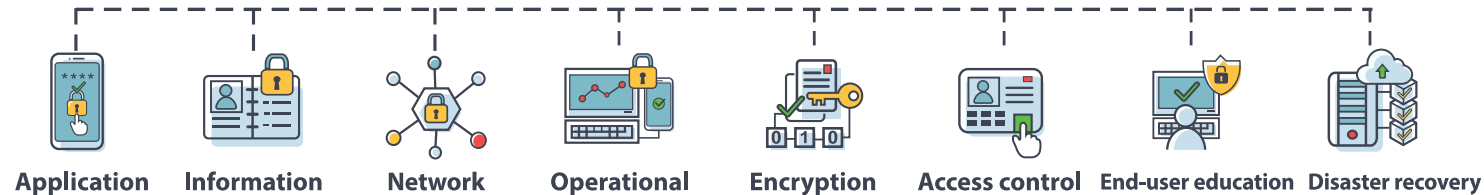
"I can't just hire new grads. They have to have some familiarity with the modality. It's a credit to TCC that they have good quality control and that they turn out high-class students. At the same time, it's important that you have a system in place where you can train people. A lot of the students are prepared really well as far as the physiology and anatomy of the (Muscular Skeletal Ultrasound) exam are concerned. It's just basically putting that knowledge to use in a real-world setting to give them the experience to round out their education," Woolsey explained.

Department leaders regularly monitor emerging trends in medical technologies, projected workforce needs and industry guidelines from the American Association of Community Colleges, the U.S. Department of Education, Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

Advancing technologies and research are creating new challenges for educators. Cameron and TCC's leaders welcome the changes as they continue molding Allied Health Sciences programs to do what they've always done: Fill the Need.



THE GROWING NEED FOR CYBERSECURITY



By Eli Mercer, Dean of Technology, Health & Business,
TCC Northeast

Cybersecurity is an issue of ever-increasing importance in our modern world that no longer affects just a few. With recent high-profile security breaches at companies such as Facebook, the Dow Jones and FEMA filling the headlines, the general public's interest and concern is growing. Even small- and medium-sized businesses are facing major risks if not properly staffed. In response, companies are looking to hire skilled cybersecurity talent to help keep them and their data safe. However, employers are running into a lack of available, trained professionals for hire, leading to large numbers of cybersecurity positions going unfilled for extended periods of time.

According to a recent Identity Theft Resource Center Report, the business sector experienced the largest increases in cybersecurity breaches in 2018. Data indicate less than half of all companies globally are ready for a cybersecurity attack. The fact that companies capture important consumer data for marketing purposes is exacerbating people's concerns, making it even more important for companies to fill cybersecurity talent gaps. Customers are concerned for their own data and increasingly holding the companies they frequent accountable for the protection of their information. There is even a webpage designed for consumers to determine if their data has been compromised: www.haveibeenpwnd.com. The popularity of such sites demonstrates growing public concern and the potential of diminishing consumer trust if unresolved.

Cybersecurity in business is rapidly evolving. In previous decades, many companies did not consider cybersecurity a priority. As a result, they have historically chosen to assign cybersecurity to an individual in their firm who typically handles a range of technical tasks but may have little or no cybersecurity training. In today's changing market, the traditional IT person may continue to wear many different hats, but business owners are waking up to the need to ensure the individual in charge of cybersecurity is adequately trained and qualified to safeguard the company from cyberattack.

Additionally, the rising need for employees at all levels to have basic information security training is leading to a call for more diverse and robust teams of cybersecurity professionals with expertise in every aspect of the organization. Traditionally under-represented groups such as non-IT professionals are now a major focus for growth, with a broader representation of the workforce with women, non-traditional students and minorities being recruited to this field. Cybersecurity is now everyone's concern, which is why it is important and timely for TCC to prepare a workforce of multi-faceted individuals trained in cybersecurity to meet this marketplace need.

The jobs are there, awaiting qualified individuals to fill them. According to www.cyberseek.org, the DFW area currently has 12,000 cybersecurity job openings – a 60 percent greater concentration than the national average. There are 12,000 to 23,000 employed in cybersecurity in DFW currently, representing a 5.6 percent growth in the

field, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationwide, there are 314,000 cybersecurity job openings with a zero-percent unemployment rate and a large number of job openings. These statistics add up to a major opportunity for anyone trained in cybersecurity.

As discussed by a panel of regional leaders on The DFW Cybersecurity Workforce in April 2019, this shortage is having an acute effect on the regional economy. Speakers from the industry reviewed the cybersecurity crisis from several angles. According to one speaker, "Issues affecting the shortage of talent in the cybersecurity field include generational differences, a changing business culture overall and the mentality of the industry that only a few companies need these people and only a few need these skills."

Each member of the panel shared stories of need for cybersecurity talent. However, they also were optimistic that this problem can be resolved with targeted education and training. Panelists emphasized the need to shift the way of thinking in education and the workplace to view security as part of everyday existence.

Of the 12,000 area IT security positions currently open, some only require an associate degree or certificate. Other entities are seeking skilled individuals in traditional business roles who have a good understanding of how cybersecurity principles affect business. Two such jobs are cybersecurity analyst and vulnerability analyst. Others are seeking candidates with bachelor's degrees and work experience. The question, however, often boils down to what talent employers are able to find available for hire. This shortage can present opportunities for skilled IT professionals seeking a new area of specialization as well as non-IT professionals seeking ways to add new skills to their résumés. There is particular demand for talent with combined business skills and cybersecurity skills.

During the Dallas April 2019 panel, attendees were encouraged to "just apply" and express interest. Nathan Howe, chief information security officer and adjunct professor at The University of Texas at Dallas, said that sometimes one can apply with limited experience and learn on the job. There is such a lack of qualified applicants that if one has the skills and integrity to do the job, the potential for being hired is there, with or without a four-year degree. Individuals who complete any level of cybersecurity-related degrees and certificates are at a strong advantage.

In her *Forbes* article, "New Collar Workers – Who are They and How are They Contributing to Our Labor Shortage?" Scholley Bubenik defines a new-collar worker as "an individual who develops the technical and soft skills needed to work in technology jobs through nontraditional education paths. These workers do not have a four-year degree from college. Instead, the new-collar worker is trained through community colleges, vocational schools, software boot camps, technical certification programs, high school technical education and on-the job apprentices and internships."

According to their website, IBM states they are looking for new-collar workers, who they define as workers who share their values and ambitions, not necessarily those with a degree or a background in cybersecurity. They are openly seeking these workers, conducting a full recruiting program for these on their webpage.

How does TCC fit into this picture?

- TCC recently formed a Districtwide committee to optimize and grow its offerings in Cybersecurity.
- TCC offers a competitive program with an established reputation in the marketplace.
- TCC features two Associate of Applied Science degrees – in Cybersecurity and Convergence Technologies – Information Assurance as well as numerous certificates.
- TCC recently updated its Cybersecurity courses to meet emerging employer needs and the program is rapidly expanding on all campuses with a flexible schedule of classes both in-person and online.
- TCC is actively seeking opportunities to partner with regional employers to offer internships, apprenticeships and employment-while-in-school options for TCC Cybersecurity students.

The opportunity is here. TCC has the ability to fuel the regional economy and through the next decade, fill thousands of jobs in Tarrant County and across the State of Texas. The College also has the capacity to scale and meet the educational needs of students both at TCC and in conjunction with partner high schools and universities. Employers stand ready with high-paying jobs and career advancement opportunities.

For more information about TCC's Cybersecurity program, visit tccd.edu/academics/cybersecurity.

SUPPORTING *Lifelong Learning*

by Rita L.B. Parson

They started differently – various years, at varying ages and for varied durations. But at the end, co-workers Shannon Hall, Rosemary Wilson and Linsey Zimmerman celebrated their latest academic achievements on the same day.

Support and motivation from family and friends notwithstanding, the lifelong-learning culture at Tarrant County College enabled these three – who work in the office of TCC District Admissions – to earn their degrees. Single moms Hall and Wilson, both enrollment associates, earned a Bachelor of Science in Applied Science and a Bachelor of Applied Science in Business Administration, respectively. Enrollment specialist Linsey Zimmerman earned a Master of Science in Management and Leadership, three years after earning her Bachelor of Science degree. All graduated from Tarleton State University in Stephenville on May 10.

Hall started her journey 21 years ago and has been driven by her desire to inspire her daughters. It took Wilson about a decade to reach her goal. She initially chose marriage and children over the academic scholarships available as a high school graduate. Encouragement from her mentor, coupled with her desire to advance her career, was the impetus for Zimmerman to return to school to seek multiple degrees.

“Enrollment Services staff members interact with our students every day. Having their own experiences as students in higher education helps employees relate to the students we count on them to serve,” said Rebecca Griffith, district director of Admissions and Records who manages the recent graduates. “Encouraging these employees to take classes also helps them understand complex situations and develops critical thinking skills. Our work is very demanding and to reach these accomplishments in addition to working full time takes dedication.”

Zimmerman’s efforts to earn her graduate degree were bolstered by TCC’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP).

“TCC implemented a tuition assistance program that really

helped me finish my degree sooner and not have to worry about paying tuition,” Zimmerman said, adding that she used TAP to pay for three of the five semesters for which she was eligible. “I am so grateful I did not have to rely on student loans to fund my degree.”

Supporting the College’s commitment to lifelong learning, TCC’s TAP began accepting applications on July 1, 2017. The program is available for all benefit-eligible, full-time faculty and staff who have been employed full time for a minimum of one year. Courses that qualify for reimbursement must be taken for academic credit and offered by a regionally accredited college or university. The courses must appear on a degree plan and must result in an earned grade of “C” or higher or the “CR” or “Pass” designation for capstone or dissertation research hours.

“Our goal in providing learning opportunities is to support talented people to succeed at meaningful work,” said TCC Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Elva LeBlanc. “Lifelong learning contributes to our efforts to transform the College into one that is student-ready. We want faculty and staff to succeed at making a difference in the same way that helping students meet their educational goals enables them to make a difference in their lives.”

Learning should never end for TCC students or employees, according to Caitlin Graves, coordinator for the Center for Teaching and Learning. “TAP allows our workforce to become stronger and better able to serve students, the institution and the community. Having a better-educated workforce, one with better knowledge and skills, benefits TCC as a whole. Additionally, (TAP puts TCC) on trend with institutions that offer similar programs and puts us ahead of those that do not provide this benefit.”

Data show that tuition assistance programs are gaining ground nationwide. “Half of U.S. employers provide education assistance,” according to the Society for Human Resource Management 2018 Employee Benefits Survey, quoted by writer Rebecca Koenig in her article, “Companies Lure Workers With

(Nearly) Free College Tuition” in *U.S. News and World Report*.

In the last two academic years, nearly 300 reimbursements have been made to 202 employees, 92 of which were reimbursed both years. In Fall 2019, family members of full-time TCC employees will receive an educational benefit making them eligible for tuition reimbursement for courses taken at TCC.

The Tarleton graduates credited TCC’s lifelong-learning culture as a major contributor in their ability to pursue their degrees and were appreciative of their supportive supervisors.

“This culture has taught me that I am a lifelong learner and I never want to stop learning,” Hall said. “Without the support I received from all of my supervisors, I would not have been able to finish my degree. I anticipate it will make a big difference in my career. I am always on the lookout for a new position at TCC where I can be of greater help to our students.”

Zimmerman attributes TCC’s culture for helping her grow and develop.

“I no longer want to settle for who I am at this moment because I know I can do more by obtaining new skills and learning new things,” she said. “Though I took online courses and had the ability to work on homework and my courses anywhere, having a consistent work schedule enabled me to plan activities and find a work/school/life balance.”

Benefits are not limited to these graduates. “Earning a degree has given me inner confidence and it has inspired my

children to work harder at achieving their goals and believe that they can do anything through hard work and belief in themselves,” Wilson said.

For those contemplating pursuing further education, Hall encourages them to do it. Get started now!

Don’t put it off until everything is perfectly situated, because it never will be the right time,” she said. Once you get started, keep pushing forward until your goals are reached. Don’t let anyone or anything get in your way.”

Wilson encouraged degree seekers to persevere “even when it becomes challenging,” suggesting steps to ensure success. “Surround yourself with like-minded, positive-thinking individuals who have similar goals or who have already accomplished what you are pursuing,” she said. “Get help when or if you need it. Ask advice of those who have already received the degree you are seeking.”

Zimmerman agrees. “Go for it! You can do it! You will have to make sacrifices, but that degree is worth it,” she said. “It will open doors for you that a night out with friends or family cannot.”

However, she cautioned, “Remember to find a balance between work, life and school. While school took precedence over my social life, I still made sure to find time to go to engagements that were important to me. Sometimes, you just need a break from studying.”



SERVING THEIR COMMUNITY

TCC DONORS INVEST IN FUTURE GENERATIONS

By Paul Sturiale



If Shalyn and Al Clark shared a middle name, it would be “Service.” Their professional and personal philosophies are intricately wrapped around the concept of being a good neighbor through community service and involvement. That’s pretty appropriate for two entrepreneurs who both are senior agents for State Farm Insurance, with offices in Hurst and Arlington.

Based in Hurst, Shalyn’s community involvement includes prominent roles in a variety of public service and nonprofit organizations, including a long-standing relationship with TCC Northeast and a prominent role in the TCC Foundation. In addition to supporting their alma maters (Baylor University for her, University of Minnesota for him), they also support an elementary school in Arlington, the University of Texas at Arlington, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD, a scholarship for TCC students through the TCC Foundation and social service organizations in both communities.

“We are big believers in investing in education and the future generation,” said Al. “We feel that it is important to be part of our community. It makes us a good neighbor. We are both interested in making a difference in people’s lives. So that’s part of what we do.”

For Shalyn, public service also is very personal. She became involved with TCC Northeast after a local city councilman recruited her for the Campus’ Business Advisory Committee. That led to an introduction to the TCC Foundation and, ultimately, to a three-year stint on the Foundation’s Board of Directors.

To celebrate her 25th year of business in 2007, Shalyn created a scholarship, the Shalyn and Al Clark Insurance and Financial Services Endowed Scholarship, to support a student in each of the fall and spring semesters to pursue an associate degree or certificate of completion in business or insurance-related studies, such as accounting, business, management, marketing, office administration or small business management.

“I just felt like that would be kind of a lasting way to help out the community and help out the College. And, it would be something more significant that

I could do to celebrate my 25th work anniversary,” said Shalyn. “So I started taking advantage of some matching funds (from State Farm Insurance) every year until I got to the point where I could endow my scholarship.”

Shalyn also has made her partnership with TCC an intricate part of her work life. Her 15-person office, which is located near TCC Northeast, has employed a steady stream of TCC graduates and student interns in sales and service/support roles. Some former TCC students even have made careers of the opportunity by working there for more than 17 years.

“We talk about making an investment when you hire someone,” said Al. “To have a successful business, you need people who have the skills and the intelligence to be prepared to be a successful employee.”



“Having more educated and better trained individuals in our community makes a huge difference in what companies come here. And I think the community college makes a huge difference in making sure we have a skilled and educated workforce in place.”

Al Clark

TCC Foundation Donor

That’s the spirit of service that serves everybody well.

The Clarks also have planned for future TCC students by including the TCC Foundation in their estate plans. As a result, Al and Shalyn are members of the Trailblazer Society, which recognizes those who include the TCC Foundation in their will or estate planning.

For more information about the TCC Foundation or Trailblazer Society, please call **817-515-5277**.



MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

By Paul Sturiale

From the spacious, second-floor veranda off Scott Womack's Caribbean-style den, it's easy to enjoy his beautiful view of a peaceful inlet of Eagle Mountain Lake in North Fort Worth. The retired insurance-executive-turned-marina-owner loves beautiful horizons, like the ones he sees for Tarrant County College students from the Azle-Eagle Mountain Lake area. Since 2017, Scott has established three scholarship funds through the Tarrant County College Foundation to support local high school graduates to pursue a certificate of completion or an associate degree.

After a brief stint at The University of Texas at Arlington following graduation from Azle High School, Scott ultimately enrolled at TCC Northwest, where he quickly saw the benefits of having senior faculty staff, rather than graduate students, as instructors. He also saw the bigger long-term value that education offers because students gain a wider view of the world around them.

The tall, broad-shouldered sailor credits TCC as the stepping stone to completing his four-year degree from Texas Wesleyan University in 1992. During his TCC period, he said, "I was prepared — because of the partnership between (then) Tarrant County Junior College (TCJC) and Texas Wesleyan — to step into the main courses right away. All of my class credits transferred, so I didn't have to waste a lot of time, money and effort because class credits wouldn't transfer to another school."

That led to a successful, lifelong career as a leading marketing executive for Sentry Insurance Company and an ongoing dedication to learning and discovering. "At TCJC, I had fun and enlightening

moments, like in my Introduction to Management class. It introduced me to management theories from proven management theorists that I was able to use in my job. It made it more interesting because I formed ideas about how I could be a good manager, and I had the academic and professional credentials that allowed me to become a leader in my company," he said, adding that "the accounting classes helped me to understand the financial side of it. I learned things like reading profit-and-loss statements and keeping books. And I still use that knowledge today in managing my marinas."

Like many of the Foundation's donors, Scott also supports several local charities and public service groups because he sees the important impact their collective efforts have on students' ability to make the most of their education to create better lives.

"I am trying to take care of the kids who live around Eagle Mountain Lake," he said. "I believe strongly that education is the difference between someone working their lives at or near minimum wage or making a better life for themselves and their families.

"And I'm not just talking about academic degrees, that's why I stress certificates of completion. They can be enough to help someone get their foot in the door to a good job and a good career. If you have some form of education, I think as long as you're bringing value to a company, you can be successful," he said. "I hope that if people who take a couple of courses see the value of the knowledge that's available, they will continue to pursue it to achieve their success."

To learn how to support TCC students through a Foundation scholarship, please call **817-515-5277**.



SERVICE AND SUCCESS: CONRAD HEEDE ASSUMES ROLE OF TCC DISTRICT BOARD PRESIDENT

By Alexis Patterson

Conrad Heede has led a life distinguished by service and success. From his years as a biochemist and hematologist in the U.S. Naval Reserve during the Vietnam War to his commercial real estate career, Heede has left his mark professionally. He also has given back to his community, including as a member of the Grapevine Rotary Club and through his work as a trustee for the Tarrant County College District.

Heede has now taken on a new role: president of the TCC District's Board of Trustees.

"I've served about eight years on the Board and felt like I had the knowledge and experience to lead," explained Heede, who represents District 2, which includes Westlake, Southlake, Colleyville, Grapevine and Bedford, as well as parts of Euless, Hurst and Richland Hills. "I am honored and humbled to have been elected by my fellow Board members."

Heede was appointed to the Board in 2011 and won his first election in 2015, but his experience with TCC predates his time as a trustee. As a Tarrant County resident, Heede took classes in real estate, language, tennis and exercise at several campuses. He also came to know TCC leaders through his Rotary activities.

"I think all members come on to the Board thinking they have a good idea of what TCC is and does," Heede noted. "But after serving and becoming exposed to all the things TCC does for our students and our community, we come to realize what an incredible responsibility we have in helping to guide TCC now and into the future."

The Board's decision to hire Chancellor Eugene Giovannini

stands out to Heede as a pivotal moment in ensuring the College's ongoing progress. He is also proud of the most recent budget adopted by trustees. It is fiscally conservative, with members adopting the effective tax rate, resulting in a half-cent tax rate decrease; the budget also provides employees a well-deserved raise and allows the College to hire additional faculty and staff, invest in new technology, improve learning environments and put aside funds to prepare for future bond interest payments.

Heede looks forward to more achievements.

"I anticipate even deeper partnerships with the business community and an expansion of our working relationships with the school districts and four-year schools. We want to ensure our students come to us prepared for higher education and have seamless transitions available to them for other scholastic and workplace endeavors," said Heede. "The Board not only supports these activities but has become more personally involved in establishing and fostering these relationships."

He embraces the work ahead.

"Rotary has two mottos: 'Service Above Self' and, my favorite, 'He Profits Most Who Serves Best,'" reflected Heede. "Although trustees serve without financial compensation, I—as do my fellow trustees—get a feeling of accomplishment that comes only from serving others in a meaningful way. We thoroughly enjoy providing the oversight and direction that leads to the success of TCC students, especially those who need our help most."

The TCC Board of Trustees generally meets the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. in the College's May Owen Center.

